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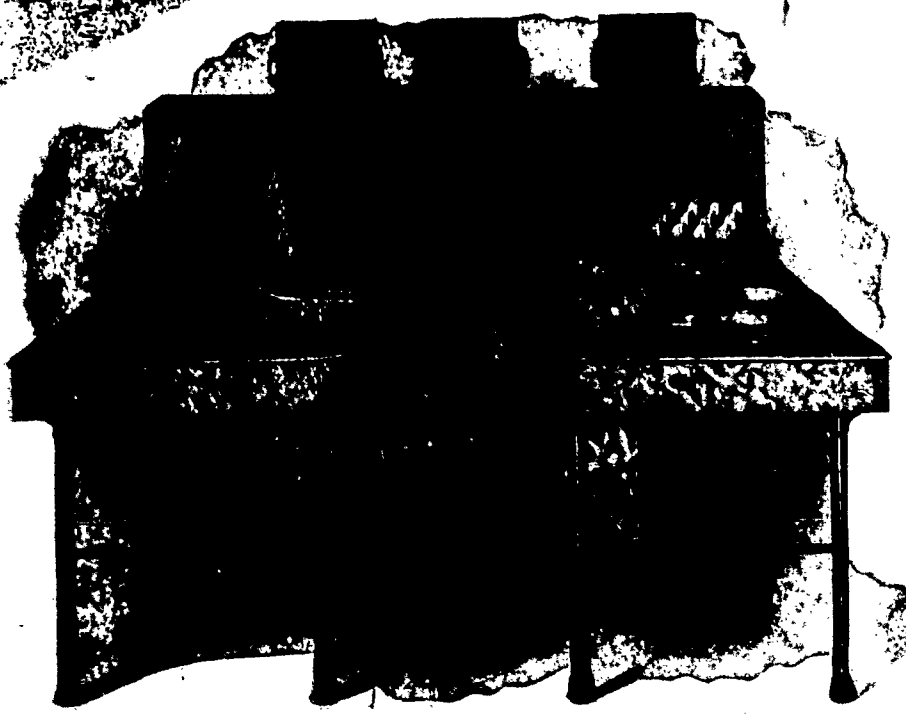
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PERRY'S PIES

The Catholic Press
And the Journalist

BY REV. J. DANIHY, S. J.,
Regent of Marquette University,
School of Journalism

It is, perhaps, a truism to say that the great war has given an incredible impulse to Catholic social activity. The opening of the war found us, as it found almost everybody else, utterly unprepared for the great tasks that confronted us. We had to learn to think in terms of thousands and millions, both in regard to money and men. How well the country in general, and the Catholic Church in particular met this is a matter of history, and need not be dwelt upon here; but with the signing of the armistice the conviction deepened in the minds of our leaders that their work was just beginning.

Peace brought its problems, as insistent and as difficult as those of war. The need of getting the country back upon a peace footing had to be grasped with it. It is still going on and will continue for many years to come.

There is a consensus of opinion among all Catholic leaders that the opportunities of the Church in America are greater now than at any other time in our history. And with that conviction, there is a realization that we must expand and develop, increase and perfect the means at hand.

It was this realization that led to the formation of the National Catholic War Council and later to the development of the National Catholic Welfare Association, with its different sections and bureaus covering all the activities of the church. One of the most important and one of the most promising for the future of these departments is that devoted to the Catholic press.

Taking over the equipment and facilities of a Catholic press association, this new department has begun what we hope will prove the stepping stone to great things in Catholic journalism.

With the approval and co-operation of the Hierarchy, not only the development of the Catholic papers now in existence, but the realization of the long cherished dream of Catholic dailies is on its way to fulfillment. The great drawback of lack of means should no longer cripple the growth of the Catholic press. With the organization of the Catholic news service, our editors are assured of accurate, up-to-the-minute reports of all important events in the Catholic world. Of course this will take time; but with the energetic men at the head of affairs we can look with confidence to the future.

But what about the third great requisite, more important in itself and harder to secure than financial backing or news service? I mean the need of trained men to take up the ever increasing responsibilities of the Catholic press.

So far this work has been done, and well done, by men who have sacrificed their opportunities in life to serve the Catholic church. A large number of those now engaged in this work may be considered as pioneers in the field; theirs it was to blaze a trail through the wilderness. With the means, or rather want of means at their command, they have rendered meritorious service. In spite of the handicaps of lack of support, lack of co-operation and inertia on the part of a great many Catholics, these men have placed the Catholic press in a position of honor in this country.

Now that their work is bearing fruit and Catholic journalism is on the verge of an expansion beyond the most sanguine dreams of a decade ago, it behooves us to ask where are we to find the men to continue and carry on the work.

There is no profession in the world that demands a broader culture, a wider range of ideas and more exact information than that of the journalist, and therefore, there is no profession in the world which requires a more complete and systematic preparation on the part of the aspirant. People, we know, depend upon the papers not only for amusement and news, but to a very great extent for their views and their opinions on all questions in life.

The journalist, by his profession, is a critic and teacher and should realize the responsibility of his position. A glance at almost any of our daily papers would show you the wide range required of a man who would intelligently interpret, comment and criticize the news of the day.

How easily this painfully crude "fake science" as they call it in the news room, could be excluded to make room for clear, popular articles that would bring forth while information to the reader. Again, consider the extreme stories of evolution, the cave man and his tribe. Could stories of this kind find their way into print if the journalist were grounded in some principles of philosophy? Take the serials and evening's story that are printed in the average daily, could this silly, sentimental slush ever find its way into print if the literary editor were able to recognize real literature when he saw it? Or would he dare print it if he realized the far-reaching influence of his work?

Newspaper men are prone to excuse the cheap wit, the vulgar humor in jokes and cartoons, the tawdry sentiment and the glaring headline by saying that this is what the public want, when we know that the real reason is that this is all the writer can give.

All this is bad, and if there is nothing more to be said against them, would go a great way toward justifying the strictures of thoughtful men on the secular papers. But all this is in itself, trivial compared with the grosser faults found in so many of our papers. The playing up of the sensational, the suggestive and the sordid details in the news has become the prevalent vice of a large number of our newspapers. Again they tell us that this is what the public want; and again we might justly conclude that this is all the writer can give.

Statistics compiled by the Marquette University School of Journalism from the angle from which crime, scandal and divorce stories are treated throughout the country, show an alarming tendency on the part of once conservative journals to play up the sensational,

the lewd and the revolting side of life.

Hitherto the Catholic weekly has had a field of its own, free from the necessity of reporting news which did not directly concern the welfare of Catholics; therefore it stood aloof from the more secular news of the day and did not have to enter into competition with the journals whose defects we have just enumerated. But now, if the press is to expand, if we are to have our own Catholic dailies, and if they are to be real newspapers touching all sides of life and not merely the religious, they may reasonably be asked to furnish an antidote for the poison found in so many papers.

To do this properly would suppose that the material must yield to the fundamental training of the journalist of today. More than all else, the Catholic journalist must have a solid foundation in the principles of the moral law. Many of his readers will not admit the authority of the church, but all of them can be reached by putting the question upon a high ethical plane. He does not need to appeal to the church, if he be properly trained in ethics, to prove that the material must yield to the spiritual, sentiment to reason, convenience to duty. He must be convinced himself and must convince others that only that news is permissible which is fit to print and that in editorial comment, in the feature and human interest story nothing can be placed before the reader that would debase his emotions, weaken his will or lower his ideals.

The more we think of the future of Catholic Journalism and the influence of the men who will be at the head of it, the more we are impressed with the need of a broad journalistic training which includes among the first essentials of its course not only familiarity with literature and science in general, but also a solid training in logic, sociology, psychology and ethics.

IS WORLD'S LARGEST ISLAND
Distinction Undoubtedly Belongs to
New Guinea, If Australia is to
Be Excluded.

New Guinea, also called Papua, is the largest Island in the world, excluding Australia. It lies north of Australia and south of the equator, and has an area of about 215,000 square miles, with an estimated native population of about 1,000,000. Of the total area in 1914, the southeast portion, 80,000 square miles, with a population of 200,000, was a territory of the Commonwealth of Australia; the northeast portion, 70,000 square miles, with a population of 120,000, was the German colony of Kaiser Wilhelm's land, and the west portion, 152,000 square miles, with a population of 600,000, was part of the Netherlands East Indies. An expedition of Imperial Australian troops took possession of the German territory on September 24, 1914, and the former German possessions in New Guinea have been allocated to the Australian Commonwealth. The area of the territory under British control has thus been increased to about 160,000 square miles, with an estimated native population of 320,000.

Real Test of Friendship.
The loftiest test of friendship—understood as companionship—is the power to do without it. And in this world of external confusions and separations, there is often such need. We do not yield the friendship, but must forgo the companionship. Then comes the proof of our capacity for sacrifice, our loyalty to the highest of all. We turn our faces from each other, but never our hearts, and walk our opposite ways. Gradually the heavens widen and deepen above us; we find ourselves breathing new, yet strangely familiar atmospheres, sweet with the breath of the old affection; we see ourselves—each sees the other—met once more in a Presence which has never forsaken us—the presence of one who puts his cross into the hands of all holiest friendship, saying "Conquer by this!" There is no danger of losing love, here or hereafter, if it is only real; for love is the one indestructible element in the universe. —Lucy Larcom.

Velocity of Light.
Physicists never tire of efforts to increase the accuracy of their knowledge of the fundamental facts of science. A determination of the velocity of light by the Fizeau toothed wheel method was made at Nee. These experiments were remarkable on account of the great distance over which the beam of light employed was transmitted. Previously such a beam had been caused to travel about fifteen miles but on this occasion the reflecting mirror was so placed that the total distance traversed by the beam, going and returning, was fifty-seven miles. The mean of 1,109 observations gave for the velocity of light 186,225 1/2 miles a second.

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