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Friday, Dec. 3, 1920.

Advent

Once more the wheel of Time has spun round and again we face the beginning of a new ecclesiastical year. The season of Advent is upon us—the seasonal preparation for the great, solemn and joyous feast of Christmas.

Indeed, when the first Sunday of Advent arrives, we have reason to be happy we are Catholics. Christmas means something to us. It is not only a day for feasting, present giving and jollification. It symbolizes for us the advent of God's only begotten Son on earth, to experience the joys, sorrows and temptations of mortal man, just to save mankind from the consequences of the sins of our first parents. Had there been no birth of Christ centuries ago, there would have been no Heaven for us to look forward to, no reward to expect, no Catholic Church, no sacrifice of the Mass.

Hence we Catholics should observe Advent and prepare ourselves that the true Christmas spirit may enter our soul.

"Chained Bibles"

A favorite theme with some fanatical and ignorant bigots is to charge us with chaining the Bibles in the Catholic Churches so that the laity could not get at them, much less read and study the Sacred Scriptures.

These precious persons either are ignorant or they prefer to state the half truth in order to score their point against the Catholics. It is quite possible these persons are unaware that the present system of shelves and bookcases is less than a century old or that the ancient tomes were unlike these compact, easy-to-store volumes of today. Moreover, many of the older books were priceless and precious because of their handwritten pages, akin to the engrossing of today, their hand embossed and embellished borders and covers and it was necessary to chain these to their desks lest the covetous reader purloin them. And the book lover of today knows full well that he has need to chain his rare volumes lest his friends—who never would rob a till or burglarize a bank—do not borrow permanently these precious tomes.

Not only bigots but everybody interested in books and historical accuracy would do well to read the article on "Chained Bibles" by Father John M. Lenhart in the "Catholic World" for October. In brief compass he has covered the topic in entertaining and instructive manner. In opening, he says that the chained Bible calumny against the Catholic Church has passed so long for established fact and has spread so widely that many may be surprised to learn that Bibles were chained both by Catholics and

Protestants for over two centuries after the Reformation, and Protestant English Bibles may still be seen chained in some churches and libraries of England. (Part of the charge against the Catholic Church is that she prevented the Bible from being translated into the vernacular by retaining the Latin version and keeping that chained up for personal use only by the clergy and learned persons.)

Father Lenhart traces the systems adopted from early days to house and store books and also touches upon the development of libraries from early days to the present. Chained Bibles were introduced along about the Thirteenth Century and continued all through the Reformation and were "the vogue" down to the early part of the Nineteenth Century and the Protestant sects availed themselves of the prerogative to preserve safe their Scriptures fully as often and as generally as did the Catholics. Even today there is a collection of 1500 books—not all Bibles, at that, in the Protestant Cathedral in Hereford, England.

It is a matter of note that the Vatican Library in Rome was the first to adopt the plan of unchained books in 1587 under Pope Sixtus V. It was not until 1792 that Merton College in Oxford took off the chains. In Holland the books of the City Library of Amsterdam were unchained in 1778 while the chains were retained in the library at Enkhuizen until 1839. It is a matter of note that the first library to be fitted with the present accepted wall system, minus chains, was completed in the Library of the Catholic Monastery of Escorial in Catholic Spain in 1584. Father Lenhart cites an instance of an English Bible chained in East Winch by an Anglican minister as late as 1884, while he avers that from 1578 to 1775 a chained English Bible was seldom missing in the Anglican parish Church. He asserts that "more books were chained during the two centuries succeeding the Reformation than during the three centuries preceding it while he cites Blades' in "Books in Chains" as boasting that the Chaining of Bibles in churches was a genuine Protestant usage which first originated in the Royal Injunctions given by Henry VIII., Edward VI and Elizabeth for the setting up of English Bibles in churches.

Like many another cruel inuendo against the Catholic Church, when given the acid test of Truth as established by honest research, is only a shadowy myth and scarcely a shadow at that.

Speaking of the shortage of coal and commenting on the failure to stop export of coal when it is needed so badly in this country, the Union and Times says: "How great this relief might be may be seen from the recent report, prepared for the Senate by the Interstate Commerce Commission, in which it is stated that the enormous quantity of 30,273,379 tons of coal was shipped from this country during the first nine months of this year. It is evident, moreover, that this unrestricted exportation of coal has enabled the mine owners to maintain here the prevalent high prices of the fuel. The present maladministration at Washington is apparently more concerned with keeping liquor out of our cellars than with putting coal into them."

There is nothing new in the announcement that certain civic organizations are to have a lobby at Albany. Heretofore each organization has maintained its own "force of legislative accelerators at the State Capitol." The proposition is now to pool issues and reduce overhead expense.

Superintendent West evidently thinks \$12,000 a year in Philadelphia would not compensate him for the loss of pleasant associations in Rochester.

Selfish

There is no dispute that selfishness is on the increase, likewise that selfishness helps to breed bad manners. Indeed, some hold that bad manners are a forerunner of selfishness. One of the public traits in manifestation of selfishness is the person who tries to monopolize all the seat in a railroad passenger coach or to occupy at least twice the space in a street car that his nickel, or seven cents or ten cents or whatever the fare per person happens to be in that locality.

At least one railroad is prepared to move mildly against the "seat hog." The Pennsylvania Railroad Company has just issued this order:—

"While, of course, there is not a whole seat for every passenger, trainmen should see that seats are not turned over and an undue amount of space monopolized by any one passenger. To go further than this, however, and forbid the turning over of seats, even when there is plenty of room, is unnecessary. After all passengers have been provided with seats, conductors will exercise their judgment in permitting the turning over of seats. Passengers should be required to exercise proper care to prevent the soiling of seats in placing their feet thereon."

"The Faith Is Europe"

In his latest book, "Europe and the Faith", Hilaire Belloc says Europe will return to the Faith (Catholic) or she will perish, for the Faith is Europe and Europe is the Faith.

While much of the ground covered by Mr. Belloc has been covered by non-Catholic historians, they did not see it as he sees it, for, as he says in his introduction, "the Catholic sees Europe from within". He goes on:

"The Catholic brings to history self-knowledge. As a man in the confessional accuses himself of what he knows to be true and what other people cannot judge, so a Catholic, talking of the United European civilization, when he blames it, blames it for motives and acts which are his own. He himself could have done those things in person. He is not relatively right in his blame, he is absolutely right. As a man can testify to his own motive, so can the Catholic testify to unjust, irrelevant, or ignorant conceptions of the European story; for he knows how and why it proceeded. Others, not Catholic, look upon the story of Europe externally as strangers. They have to deal with something which presents itself to them partially and disconnectedly, by its phenomena alone he sees it, all from its center to its essence, and together.

As one of Mr. Belloc's admirers puts it: "That is not only Mr. Belloc's attitude toward history; it is also the Catholic attitude."

In the eyes of the anglo-manicians it is all right for the Lithuanians in the United States to protest against what they style "indignities", on the part of the Poles; but if Irish sympathizers in America protest against English brutality in Ireland, straightway we are berated as "unfriendly to our Allies." The war is over and we have as much right to protest against conditions in Ireland as England has to invade our shores with a horde of propagandists bent upon convincing us that we ought to return to the rule of the Mother Kingdom.

The Times Union says that while the Union Club authorities displayed poor judgment, to say the least, in displaying the British flag in New York just when a memorial mass for Mayor MacSwiney was in progress across the street in St. Patrick's Cathedral they were within their legal rights. Were they? If so then the law should forbid public display of any other national flag than the Stars and Stripes.

One would think the employment bureaus would be very busy when it is apparent there are more men than jobs but the state men in charge of the Industrial Commission's free employment service report they are busier now than they were last summer or last year when there were more men than jobs.

So far the weather has favored the man with a sparse supply of coal.

If we hazarded a guess it would be that the League of Nations will wait a while before the United States is enrolled a full-fledged member.

There isn't any doubt that the 10 cent fare unit is what the street car magnates hope to see universally established.

If a King is restored in Greece does this presage a return of other monarchs, deposed as a result of the war, to their former thrones?

Governor "Al." Smith should do well in business.

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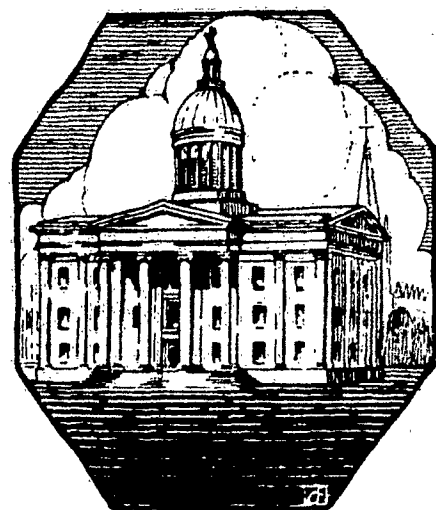
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"Why Worry"

"No, I don't worry any more," a man told us the other day. "Every Saturday night I take \$2 down to the Rochester Savings Bank, just as if I owed it to them, and sometimes add a little the wife has saved during the week. I used to wonder what I would do if I should get sick, or lose my job, but I don't worry now; it's all provided for."
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