

THE CATHOLIC JOURNAL

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Friday, April 28, 1922.

Right Line

We understand that there are many Free-Masons who pursue exactly the same course as that outlined in the following article in "The Square", a Masonic monthly, and we wish there were more of them:—

"We may be without warrant of the law for excluding Roman Catholics from Freemasonry, but we have ample warrant in Masonic ideals and practices, for refusing all applications from members of the Roman Catholic Church. The psychic gateway to a Masonic lodge is, I submit, too narrow to admit Roman Catholics. We ought to refuse admission to all such applicants, for the sake of the Fraternity, for the sake of the Applicant, for the sake of our principles of Neutrality.

"1. For the sake of the Fraternity. A Roman Catholic can only become a Freemason by forsaking his Church. He must either be a bad Mason or a bad Roman Catholic. He cannot be a good Mason and a good Roman Catholic. A man who leaves his Church, for the sake of Freemasonry, may easily be tempted in different circumstances to leave Freemasonry, for the sake of his Church. There exists, for this reason, a justifiable doubt as to whether such applicants are ever fit and proper persons to be made Masons.

Further, if we admit a Roman Catholic we confirm him in the idea that Freemasonry will supply him with what he fancies is lacking in his Church. This encourages the applicant to hold exaggerated opinions concerning Freemasonry, with undoubted, undesirable reactions which cannot but be injurious to the Fraternity.

"2.— For the sake of the applicant. A Roman Catholic, who kneels at the door of a Masonic lodge, either renounces his past profession of religion or practices a species of unworthy casuistry, for he knows that his action will exclude him from absolution and communion. While, as Masons, we hold no opinions concerning these peculiar religious rites, as Masons we cannot knowingly assist another to exclude himself from the benefits of his religion, no matter what opinions we may hold as private individuals regarding them.

"A Roman Catholic may apply for admission to the Fraternity, averring that he no longer conforms to the rules of his Church, and that he does not consider them binding upon him. To such the answer should be, that while Masonry regards all forms of religion with equal friendly good will, it offers no substitute for any, nor does it welcome applicants who, in order to qualify for admission, have to acknowledge that they have only a formal connection with the religion they profess.

"3. For the sake of Neutrality. A Roman Catholic again may seek admission to the Fraternity as a protest against Rome. He

should be told that Freemasonry will not open its doors for any such purpose, that the Fraternity exercises perfect neutrality in regard to all forms of religion and will not break such neutrality, by knowingly encouraging any member of any organized religion to do anything, which runs counter to the rulings or teachings of that religion. A Roman Catholic believes in God, but he also believes in an infallible Church, and that infallible Church specially forbids him to be a Mason.

"We are aware that some Roman Catholics are Freemasons, but we do not understand how or why. It would be unmasonic to suggest, without proof, that they are unworthy brethren as prima facie what their obligations have made them, but in consonance with the three explanations already given, we would never vote for the admission of a Roman Catholic applicant unless there were some very extraordinary reasons why he should be received."

Not New

Because someone has proposed that the United States Government should maintain a representative at the Vatican, the same as some other nations of the world now do, there has been a great outcry in certain bigoted circles as if it were a new and novel proposition, a distinct innovation, as it were.

Being new and Catholic, too, of course the bigots could not stand for it at all. To do so, they charged, would be making the United States a vassal of the Pope and so on, and so on.

But is this a new proposition? It is not.

Thomas F. Meehan is entitled to our thanks for his comprehensive, if brief, article in "Columbia" entitled "Ministers to the Holy See". He points out that the United States was diplomatically represented at the Vatican during the administrations of Presidents Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan, Lincoln and Johnson and under the direction of such representative American Secretaries of State as James Buchanan, John M. Clayton, Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, William L. Marcy, Lewis Cass, Jeremiah S. Black and William H. Seward.

During the Civil War Archbishop Hughes, of New York executed diplomatic missions to the Pope by direction of President Lincoln and in our days, Chief Justice William Howard Taft, while Governor General of the Philippines, was sent to Rome by the late President Roosevelt to settle the conflicting claims between the religious orders and the Spanish Government.

The Vatican now enjoys diplomatic relations with France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Brazil, Chile and Peru. These have full embassies. Ministers are sent by England, Argentina, Austria, Bavaria, Bolivia, Columbia, Costa Rica, Haiti, Holland, Rumania, Venezuela, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugoslavia, and Luxemburg. Semi-official relations have been established by China, Japan; Turkey and Lithuania. It is expected Japan soon will be represented by an ambassador of first rank. By the way Cardinal O'Connell won his first honors by establishing friendly relations between the Mikado and the Pope, while on a special mission to Japan. His appointment as coadjutor Archbishop of Boston and Cardinal followed in due course. It is reported he could have been a Cardinal in curia—which would have necessitated continuous residence in Rome. Had he accepted, Papal history might have been different.

All this is sufficient to show there is warrant for an American diplomatic representative at the Vatican. If England can do so, surely the American Anglo-maniacs should find no fault.

Welcome!

Rochesterians generally are glad to welcome to the city the St. Gregory Society delegates for their annual convention, as we always are glad to welcome any organization or body of men and women formed to advance the interests of humanity, or science or art.

Catholics have especial interest in the St. Gregory Society because it is devoted to upbuilding of corrective ecclesiastical music and to hasten the day when operatic music will no longer invade the Catholic services but will be confined to its own special field.

Father Peter and Eugene Bonn have spent their lives working for a higher standard not only in Church music but also in secular music as well. They are beginning to see their hopes realized and the coming convention here in Rochester will mean much to them as their confreres will find here in Rochester that higher standards prevail than in most of the large cities.

The Oath

Bishop Turner, of Buffalo, has inaugurated a campaign to inspire more respect for the sanctity of the oath administered in our courts of justice. Commenting thereon, a secular daily says:—Many will be surprised at the plan of Bishop Turner, of Buffalo, to organize a campaign in behalf of the sanctity and dignity of the oath as administered in our courts. Most of us have thought that the oath is virtually always regarded as sacred. It is possible, however, that we are mistaken, for the Bishop says, a prominent criminal lawyer of the West told him that "90 per cent. of the oaths taken in law courts result in perjury." This is a pretty large percentage, and it is possible, that the lawyer, not being under oath, exaggerated a bit.

However, there is some room for improvement in the matter. In most courts, the clerk administers the oath in a manner not calculated to inspire the witness with respect for the dignity of the proceeding or of the solemnity of the obligation undertaken. This would not necessarily result in perjury. It should never cause such result. Nevertheless, it is likely to leave a witness in a less serious frame of mind regarding his obligation to stick to facts than it would if the oath were administered in a serious solemn manner.

Wonder if Lloyd George was really as surprised at the German-Russian treaty as he pretended to be?

The proposed new club house of the Knights of Columbus will be a real Catholic civic center if it is built and equipped as given out.

A King in Egypt! Instead of Monarchy disappearing, it would appear that there are more kings and queens in the world than before the great war was fought.

So Empress Zita is penniless? Truly, the lot of deposed monarchs is not the rosiest in the world.

Whether we should exclude the big cars from the streets of Rochester is problematical. But there is no doubt that we should insist that every means be taken to make our streets safe for all the citizens.

Will Hays has barred the Ar-buckle films from the screen. So far, so good. Now let him bar indecent films even if the private life of the star is what it should be.

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Doyle

The creator of Sherlock Holmes, now turned "spiritist" is touring the United States raking in American shekels by his lectures on the spirit world. That even the non-Catholics are not fully accepting Sir Conan at his own valuation is evident from the following editorial in the Post Express, written we suspect by the clerical member of the staff:

The noted British novelist, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, has come over here to tell of evidence—scientific, he terms it—which has convinced him of the reality of life after death. If he can demonstrate the truth of this to doubters and agnostics, why not? It is a tenet of Christianity almost universally accepted; yet there are many minds of a certain order—excellent people often—who desire nothing more than to believe it and would welcome any proof that might dispel their lingering doubts. As far as inter-views in metropolitan papers set forth Dr. Doyle's religious convictions, there seems to be little in them with which orthodox can properly quarrel save that he does not find the theory of everlasting punishment credible or to his liking; and no more, for that matter, do a lot of the rest of us. His descriptions of life conditions on the "other side" are cheerful on the whole and may be taken for what they are worth. He believes in graded states of blissfulness and blessedness—lower and higher heavens, so to call them—and progressive development into them out of temporary purgatorial states: It might be added that he finds the lower realms or habitats, of which alone he claims to have any information, three-dimensional like our material world.

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