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"I would make any sacrifice, even to the pointing of my right hand and holding, in order to support a Catholic newspaper."—Pope Pius X.

Editorials

HOLLYWOOD EXPLAINS

From Broadway and Hollywood comes a counter charge against the drive for screen decency which bristles with deception and downright bad taste...

Ordinarily we would be inclined to gloss over these illogical statements which broach the borders of the fantastic and not dignify them by recognition but, rather than have our people give them the slightest semblance of a creditable standing, they must be answered and answered promptly.

Returning from Europe this week, Lynn Fontanne, whom the American theater loves to call one of its "first ladies" characterizes the church drive against indecent movies as "more or less silly," contemptuously adding:

"Oh, are they doing that again? I don't think that a play or a picture, however indecent, has the slightest moral effect. People are not fundamentally altered. I do think that the good taste of children can be adversely affected by witnessing crude or vulgar plays. But as for affecting them morally, what can they see in public which compares for indecency to what they see to each other in private."

As startling as this comment may seem, it is entirely understandable when one considers that it comes from an actress who lent her talent to such a page of obscenity as "Design for Living," which a prominent member of the Pulitzer Prize jury once termed the filthiest act ever perpetrated on the American public in the good name of drama.

So Miss Fontanne doesn't think that a play or picture "however indecent has the slightest moral effect." Then she must be alone in her thought for some of the greatest stars of her own calibre and keen students of the drama prominently Mr. Hayes the czar of the movies "have admitted the moral responsibility of the screen regarding what he calls "that virgin thing" the child's mind.

It is a well known fact that the stage and the movie set the style for such things as women's clothes and wearing apparel of all kinds. Even habits of speech have been affected by the slang and vulgarisms of the screen. Youngsters with criminal records have admitted that they learned methods of crime from gangster films.

It's surprising to find that this actress actually conceded that crude and vulgar plays affect the "good taste" of children. But she refuses to believe that it affects them morally. It is an old saying that good manners are minor morals.

The immature minds of children are most impressionable. Most parents and educators are agreed on this. And we believe that every thinking person, (except Miss Fontanne, of course) will concede this fact.

But, again, how can you expect a logical treatment of the subject from a mind hardened in the ways of a theater which is condemning itself to oblivion by the very moral tone of its productions? To Rochester this week came a Hollywood scenario writer whose reasoning, while more tempered than Miss Fontanne's, followed along the same lines.

He said that despite censorship, entertainment for adults must tackle adult problems without "sentimental subterfuges."

He didn't amplify on that "sentimental subterfuge" theme but he failed to remark that Hollywood does not differentiate between adult and children's entertainment. And, after all, there's something to that.

In a large measure, Hollywood aims its product at adult audiences but we know that a large part of these audiences are children. The writer, in one breath, declares that he wants to offend the cardinal sin of trying to do "no good" and in another comes a frank admission that he would like to have over a hundred thousand children but from now on he would like to be good.

The scenario writer classed all his illegitimate children with the brazen, saying that if they were legitimate, they would be able to get a job. He said that he would like to have over a hundred thousand children but from now on he would like to be good.

clean picture. And he says this in the face of the infallible box office answer that such a film as "Little Women" grossed more money than a half dozen of the shady pictures all rolled into one. And what's more, we always believed the motion picture industry prided itself on being a national force for better education. But, if we are to believe this writer, many people attend the movies to be entertained and not educated. Of course, it never occurred to him that a picture can be both entertaining and instructive.

And so off he goes to Hollywood to write another scenario. With men of his turn of mind writing scripts, the Legion of Decency members must become more vigilant than ever despite Hollywood's promise to put its house in order.

AFFRONT TO AUBURN CATHOLICS

Devoted to the interests of the Church in all parts of the Rochester Diocese, the Catholic Courier finds it can not but take cognizance of a grave affront offered the Catholics of Auburn within the last fortnight.

In the annual issue of the "Arrow," the Public High School paper of that City, appeared an article defamatory of Catholic nuns and monks. Entitled, "It Happens Today," the story, written by a young woman of the graduating class and published under the auspices of the High School, carried, without attempt at substantiation, the appended claim: "This is a true story."

What reaction followed; how the Catholic pastors of the city forced a special meeting of the Board of Education, seeking redress; how a public apology was issued by the Board, and later by the Principal of the High School, is given in detail in the news section of this issue of the Catholic Courier.

Apologies, of course, are good. They are manly. Causing, however, only momentary embarrassment, they can be quickly forgotten. Only in the light of subsequent events can their worth, their lasting influence be measured. At any rate, it is still, we understand, a moot point with many in Auburn, whether proper reparation has been made. The official or officials who passed favorably on the vilifying article appearing in the "Arrow," are still members of the staff at the High School. If they have been reprimanded, the public has as yet not heard of it. No attempts are being made to recall distributed issues of the offending "Arrow." And so the defamation will live on, to the anguish of Catholics. And to the shame of Auburn!

As we know the Catholics of Auburn, they have much to commend them. They are orderly, peace-loving citizens. In the professions, in business life, they rank with the best. Throughout this Diocese, they are celebrated for their piety, for their devout practices. Vocations to the priesthood and sisterhoods from Auburn have been so numerous as to excite wide comment. And they make up a good 40 per cent of the population of their city.

It was into the faces of such people, gentle, unoffending, respectful of the rights and feelings of others, from a place where culture is supposed to be cradled, from their High School, jointly conducted and owned by them and their neighbors, that affront was hurled.

Strange! Passing strange! Such liberty is not usually taken with people who are not negligible. The answer? We do not know. But experience has taught us this much, that unless they are united, unless as a class they have made themselves known, felt, respected, unless they have as a class made themselves, let us say, formidable in their community, Catholics nowhere may expect immunity from attack and unjust discrimination. We do not wish to be considered belligerent. We are just seeing things as they are. We are just realists. We realize that the Millennium has not yet dawned. Great numbers of our non-Catholic neighbors are our friends. But not all of them. Not yet. Why, then, beguile ourselves into a false sense of security, later to be sharply awakened, as were the Catholics of Auburn, by a surprise attack. "Beware of men" said Jesus Christ. He counseled us, it is true, to be "simple as doves," but he also admonished us to be "wise as serpents." We do not enjoy quoting these words of Jesus Christ any more than he enjoyed uttering them in the first place. But they were necessary then; they are necessary now.

Mindful of what happened at Auburn — and of what can happen elsewhere — Catholics in every community, large or small, should feel the need of something above and beyond the machinery of parish or parishes. Call it a spirit, a pervasive, unifying spirit. A force, benign, yet powerful; peaceful, yet vigilant. Or an influence, that is known, felt, respected throughout the community. Call it what you will, but summed up, it is nothing other than Catholicism — alive! Without this, though homogeneous, our forces, our efforts are scattered. Consequently, parochialism is not enough. And what is more, personal sanctification is not enough. It never was enough. If ever we thought it was, Pius XI has disabused us of the thought. We may not remain within ourselves. Outside of ourselves there is a cause to be advanced, to be defended, to be protected, and of that cause we dare not be forgetful.

For the Catholics of Auburn, the Catholic Courier feels it can bespeak the sympathy of the whole Diocese. Unless bereft of feeling, no one can fail to appreciate what they have undeservedly suffered. Realizing that prevention is better than cure, we have sought to offer some few hints that may serve to save them and others from like embarrassments in the future.

Current Comment

Evil spirits are at us all the time, trying to get in at any crack they can find. They take advantage of any weak spot anywhere.

Americanism: Inventing benevolent schemes to help the people make money; leaving them at the mercy of crooks after they make it.—New Britain (Conn.) Record.

Many times, says an anonymous writer, God answers our prayers, not by bringing down His will to ours, but by lifting us up to Himself. We are strong enough to no longer need to cry for help.

Diocesan Recordings

"Strange But True," to use the caption over our cartoon on the editorial page, there are many diocesans who do not realize the extent of the Diocese of Rochester. Including the See City and the deanery cities, Auburn, Geneva, Elmira and Corning, this division of the Church comprises cities, towns and hamlets in the counties of Monroe, Livingston, Wayne, Ontario, Seneca, Cayuga, Yates, Steuben, Chemung, Tioga, Schuyler and Tompkins. We have found that this will be news to many. Catholic people in those counties are all part of the flock of the Shepherd in Rochester. In publishing this newspaper, the diocesan organ, we are endeavoring to record fairly and justly the happenings in the whole diocese with the common cause in view at all times.

Strange again but true are many of the reactions to the campaign of the Bishops of the United States to eliminate the salacious and crime-infested motion pictures. We have heard that some Catholic College girls, only a few, thank God, believe that no one will pay any attention to the provisions in the Legion of Decency pledge after they sign it. This is a skeptical view to take of Catholic people's virtue of obedience and of their given word. Perhaps some will fall by the wayside as happens in every worthwhile cause, but sufficient will realize the importance of adhering to a pledge given and of being obedient to lawful authority.

The strangest reaction to the Legion of Decency pledge proposal, we think, was in the delay of a man signing the pledge until after he had seen an indecent picture that he wanted very badly to see. The idea of the pledge was to forestall such action and not to allow patronage of the box office to witness films that are outright indecent. Such response to the Bishop's plea if given by everyone would defeat the whole purpose of the campaign and allow Hollywood producers to go along turning out the type of pictures that have brought condemnation upon them. If that man has a child he might think of the child's future in being allowed to see pictures which offset entirely the character training being given in Catholic schools.

Another has told us that the Catholics should not enter into such a campaign. Why should Catholics stand back when a force threatens to disrupt the morals and manners of a nation? We believe the Bishops of the United States have gone into the matter thoroughly, have secured evidence of the results of allowing the indecent picture to continue and have acted only after full deliberation of the evil consequences. They are in a position to ascertain facts far better than individuals in a restricted community. Information released by the Bishops thus far is sufficient to show the need for Catholic Action in this vital question.

We are being besieged to present a White List of the current motion pictures. We should like to do nothing better for them than to do nothing at all. We would be assisting in promoting the worthwhile entertainment which in turn would show at the box office that people do want better motion pictures. Every available source is being tried to get such a list. The difficulty seems to be in authoritative provisioning. Just as quickly as we receive an authentic list we shall publish it in a prominent place in the paper.

To Miss Carolyn Ruth Doran of Elmira, we say thanks for the following: "Congratulations on your special editions — especially the 'Movie' issue this week! Looks like a metropolitan newspaper."

Our Holy Father in addressing members of the Roman Press and commending them for their services during the Holy Year recently, after speaking of the "great, incommensurable satisfaction together with the great responsibility, which journalists invariably experience," went on to say: "When your work is consecrated to truth, to virtue, no one can ever measure the beneficial effects, no one can ever measure the splendor of good, the furrow of light that goes to so many minds and intelligences; even to the distant places, as far as those minds and intelligences will receive at least a reverberation of this goodness. But on the other hand, if the words of the writing are not always, or at all, at the service of truth and virtue, then they incur the gravest responsibility; since the way is opened to vast evil and devastating implications, the victims of which cannot be counted. The purpose that is derived from the reflections and which you must carry out is admirably expressed in the lofty, magnificent, incomparable words of the great writer, our Alessandro Manzoni, when to the lords of the word — and the journalists are the lords of the word, since theirs is also the art of the word, the art of telling — to those who desire to become al-

STRANGE BUT TRUE Catholic Facts But Little Known

By M. J. MURRAY

Illustration featuring a cathedral, a monk, and a man with a horn. Text includes: 'Every year in which the feast of Saint James (July 25th) falls on a Sunday the Spanish town of COMPOSTELLA CELEBRATES A HOLY YEAR which is endowed with similar spiritual privileges to the Jubilees of Rome. THE CATHEDRAL OF COMPOSTELLA POSSESSES THE RENOWNED SHRINE OF SAINT JAMES AND WAS A PILGRIMAGE PLACE OF EUROPEAN FAME BEFORE THE REFORMATION.' 'The cell of the Dominican monk SANOMAROLA is carefully preserved in FLORENCE as he left it over four centuries ago.' 'With this horn, a sort of early amplifier, hymns have been announced in the church at Thorny near Peterborough, for countless generations.' 'TASMANIA HAS TWO TOWNS WITH THE NAME OF PARADISE AND ALSO TWO HELL'S GATES AND A HELLFIRE BLUFF.'

THE LIBRARY SIGN POST

An unsigned letter recently addressed to the writer of this SIGN-POST column made a strenuous protest against some quotations from Cardinal Newman placed in the column two weeks ago. Although courtesy does not demand recognition of an unsigned letter, practical reasons make it advisable to reply in this case with an open letter.

Dear "Searcher for Truth":

It would be much easier to answer your letter if I only knew your name. Did you feel that we Catholics are so far from charity that you would have dire consequences to fear if you signed your name to your outspoken challenge? Write as often as you wish, but always hereafter with your signature: what is there to be afraid of, except perhaps a change of heart? But you called yourself a "searcher for truth." A searcher for truth has nothing to be afraid of — not even a change of heart.

You make it quite plain that you do not like the words of Cardinal Newman quoted in this column two weeks ago. You say: "In the statement that error is the life of Protestantism, Cardinal Newman did not use very good judgment — possibly because he knows little about the teachings of the Protestant Churches." — If Cardinal Newman and others of your faith will take the time to read the words of Jesus, there would be no such criticism of Protestantism as he puts forth.

Do you know that Cardinal Newman was a convert to the Catholic Church from Protestantism; that the first forty-five years of his life were spent under decidedly Protestant influences; and that he was one of the most famous ministers in England for about fifteen years before 1845? Certainly John Henry Newman knew Protestantism and Protestant doctrines as few men have ever known them. Of his early Protestant training he says this: "Of course I had a perfect knowledge of my Catechism."

As to his knowledge and love of the Bible, listen to his own testimony in his autobiography from which I also took the above quotation. He says: "I was brought up from a child to take great delight in reading the Bible; but I had formed no religious convictions till I was fifteen." His sermons, both Anglican (and later on) Catholic,

filling over ten volumes among his collected works, are amply studded with Biblical quotations and references; and while I will not say of him (what was said of the ancient Fathers of the Church) that, if the Bible were lost, it would be possible to reconstruct it from the quotations in his works, yet I am not exaggerating when I say that anyone could get an adequate idea of the Bible's contents out of Newman's works alone.

In his "Essay on the Development of Doctrine," I find the following pertinent passage: "It (the Scripture) cannot, as it were, be mapped, or its contents catalogued, but after all our diligence, to the end of our lives and to the end of the Church, it must be an unexplored and unsubdued land, with heights and valleys, forests and streams, on the right and left of our path and close about us, full of concealed wonders and choice treasures. Of no doctrine whatever which does not actually contradict what has been delivered, can it be peremptorily asserted that it is not in Scripture; of no reader, whatever be his study of it, can it be said that he has mastered every doctrine which it contains."

In the light of all this can it still be fairly said that such a man is not deeply versed in the Bible? Or that he never took time to read the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, as you stated in your letter?

Such, then, was the man whom you accuse of knowing neither the words of Jesus nor Protestant teachings. The verdict of History places him among the greatest of Protestant ministers before his conversion to the Catholic Church, and agrees that his knowledge of Scripture, theology, philosophy and history, surpassed that of most of the men of his time. Cardinal Newman is the last man to be accused of narrow-mindedness and ignorance. He ranks among the ten greatest men of the Nineteenth Century.

And now a brief word about the Newman passage to which you objected: "Protestantism is fierce, because it does not know you; ignor-

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ance is its strength; error is its life." This was quoted from a series of lectures which Newman gave in 1851, six years after his conversion. The lectures were occasioned by Protestant outbreaks against the Catholics of England; the agitation of the time was so keen against the Church that it was no libel to call Protestantism "fierce." If you read the lectures, (you can find them under the title "Present Position of Catholics in England") you will find that, when Newman refers to ignorance as the strength and to error as the life, of Protestantism, he is not dealing with Protestant doctrine, (that seldom entered into the scope of these lectures), but rather he is referring to Protestant ignorance of Catholics. It is this, he says, which makes Protestantism fierce against the Catholic Church. The facts of history bear witness to the truth of such a statement; you claim to know the true history of the 16th century, why not complete your information with a historical study of the next three centuries? And remember that as a "searcher for truth" you will not close your mind to what writers on the Catholic side have to say. Unless you can prove that they are lying, fairness demands that you read them. God keep you, dear "searcher for truth," until next week, when you may expect a second installment of my reply.

Yours in Christian charity, The keeper of the SIGNPOST, P.S.—As this is an open letter, I am under no obligation to reveal my identity. You may learn it, if you wish, by inquiring of the Catholic Courier editors.

Do all for the love of God not men.

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