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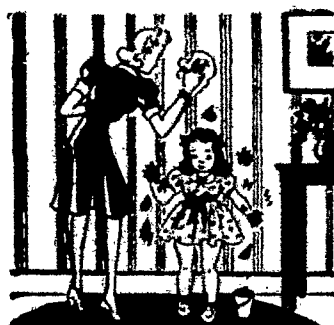
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Rev. Dr. Owen B. McGuire COLUMBUS, GALILEO, and ARTHUR BRISBANE

That, I admit, is a strange title; for the reader may naturally ask how are those three names inter-related? There is not any close relationship between them. It is true; but they have been jangling through my mind for the past two or three weeks, and their natural impact in the process has raised questions about what is recorded of all three of them.

I have said that I have been on a vacation from doing nothing. It was spent mostly in New York. While I was there, a new Life of Columbus by Prof. S. E. Morison was published. The subject has interested me for many years. I did not buy the work; the price was prohibitive: \$10.00. An abridged edition was published at a lower price; but it lacks the documentation which is the important element in any work which pretends to give a new view of the life and character of the "Admiral of the Open Sea"—which is the title of Professor Morison's work, the title also which Columbus demanded and received from "The Catholic Sovereigns."

While I could not buy and read the work, I did in New York what I could not have done in Elmira. I went to the book-shops and newsstands and got a number of papers and magazines which contained lengthy reviews of the work. A FALSEHOODS SCORED

From a perusal of these reviews, I gathered that Professor Morison's Life is "the best yet." He demolishes, they tell me, a number of myths, falsehoods and downright lies and calumnies that have been current about the great Discoverer—that he was not an Italian, that he was a Galician or more probably a Catalan, that he was a Converso (a Christian of Jewish extraction), that he was a great liar, that he had been a pirate, that he was a mystery man, that he was a poor navigator that the Discovery was due more to others than to him all these and many more falsehoods have, according to the reviewers, been demolished by Professor Morison.

It was all interesting for me and gave me pleasure. While I was living in Spain, there was constant discussion and at times heated controversy in newspapers, magazines, and books about Columbus. Some of these writers, while giving him credit for his great achievement, set out to prove that he was not a Genoese at all, but a Spaniard! A South American who had published two books on this thesis in his homeland came to Spain and carried on his propaganda by writing and lecturing. His claim was that Columbus was a Catalan. Others claimed that he was a Galician. But most of these writers were bent on belittling Columbus.

In this latter class was a historical novel by Blasco Ibañeta, the author of "The Four Riders of the Apocalypse," a book which, when translated and published in this country made a pot of money for the author.

It also increased his prestige at home; and by the same token increased the interest in his novel "In Search of the Grand Khan," when published in 1922.

It deals with the first voyage, the voyage of Discovery. It is more history than novel. The author just uses the novel form to put over his historical thesis. It is also well documented, with, however, much suppressio veri et suggestio falsi. From beginning to end the book shows an implacable hatred of Co-

lumbus, and a tendency to boost the Pinzon Brothers to the extent of making them and not Columbus the heroes of the first voyage. It was Blasco's last book. He had promised another on the second voyage but died before finishing it. But my experience in Spain explains why I rejected in what the reviewers had to say of Professor Morison's work.

BEST KNOWN LIFE

It is, I think, the fifth Life of Columbus that has been published in English within the last two or three decades. The best known of these is "Christopher Columbus" by Salvador de Madariaga. Senyor de Madariaga has been recently referred to in a Catholic publication as "a Spanish Catholic," and I have had a letter from a Secretary in the State Department at Washington to ask if this is true. I would say it is not true. No Catholic could write some things found in his book "Spain"—written in English (he had been Professor of Spanish Literature at Oxford) and published in 1931.

He corrected, however, many of the falsehoods about Columbus and does justice to the Catholic Sovereigns and to the Commissioners that held the proposals of Columbus to be impossible of execution; namely that by sailing westward he could reach the coast of Asia within a month or six weeks.

Madariaga, in my opinion, spoils the effect of his book by his obsession to prove that Columbus was a Converso. By actual count he attempts to prove this in 45 passages, some of them extending to three or four pages. I say this spoils the effect of his book, not because the question is of great importance, but because the arguments he adduces to prove his thesis are puerile and shake confidence in the judgment of the author.

His purpose is to show that if we assume Columbus to be of Jewish extraction, we have the key to his character, and to what he wrote and strove for. When the book was reviewed in America by my late Father Whelan (who claimed that the author had proved his thesis) I told him what I can repeat now: "Columbus may possibly have been of Jewish extraction, but the arguments adduced by Madariaga certainly do not prove it."

COLUMBUS' LANGUAGE

To take one of his arguments as an example: Columbus, he says, always wrote and spoke in Spanish, never in Italian. The assumption is that a Christian family of Jewish extraction who had been settled in Genoa for two or three generations (this the author concedes) had continued to speak Spanish in their new home. For the sake of argument let us concede that the Columbus were of Jewish descent and had come from Spain originally. What then?

In the first place, it is ridiculous to compare such a family to the Sephardim who were expelled from Spain and settled in Salonika, preserving the Spanish language there even to our own time. They preserved the language because it was a bond that united them as Jews and distinguished them from the native Greeks. The Columbus in Genoa could have had no such motive for preserving Spanish.

Then, a man of the class to which the Columbus belonged (his father was a weaver, and as a side issue kept a tavern) could grow

(Continued on Page 17)

'Quiz' Corner

Where in the Bible are the promises of the Sacred Heart contained?

The promises of the Sacred Heart are not contained in the Bible. They are a private revelation made to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a Visitation, nun who lived in France from the year 1647-1690. She was canonized in 1920. Whereas it would be imprudent for a Catholic to doubt the revelations made to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, nevertheless, Catholics are not bound to believe them on faith.

What dispositions are necessary for worthy reception of Holy Communion?

The state of grace and the right intention. The state of grace is the freedom from mortal sin. The right intention consists in the sincere purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united to Him in charity and of seeking in this Heavenly Food a remedy against all spiritual weakness and defects and not to approach the Sacred Table out of routine or vanity or worldly motives. Of course it should be unnecessary to remark that the person must be fasting from midnight.

Why is the Blessed Mother referred to under the title of House of God?

It is a symbol title given the Blessed Mother in the Litany of Loretto denoting Her personal perfection and Her office of Divine motherhood. She was the house wherein God dwelt and for His sake a house of gold that is adorned with the most precious virtues.

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