

Rev. Dr. Owen B. McGuire

Happy Fourth of July and a Correspondent on Chesterton.

This is the Fourth of July. It is the day we celebrate, but as it falls this year on Saturday, it is also the day I write for the CATHOLIC COURIER. There is much life and activity in what the immortal "Dokey" called the "body pollytick." But, in fact, it is (here in Elmira) a sultry, muggy day. The air is soporific rather than stimulating. Paul Vincent Carroll has fallen asleep in the Abbey Theater. So let us leave him rest awhile.

The Fourth of July recalls some of the happiest days of my youth. At Innsbruck the Jesuit Fathers allowed the American "boys" two special holidays, all the more appreciated because on those two days the other students had to attend class at the University. Needless to say, the two festivals were the Fourth and Thanksgiving.

We celebrated usually in a hotel perched on the summit of a hill that overlooks the Inn Valley, one of the scenic beauty spots of Europe. It is beautifully described in her "Roman Spring" by Mrs. Chanler, who spent a summer in that same hotel. Our banquet, as we dared call it, was enlivened between the courses by toasts, a report from "the historian" and a poem. We had, in fact, believe it or not, a real poet, a boy from the Green Mountains of Vermont. After his return to America he wrote two little volumes of poetry, highly praised by the critics. One of these was "The Knight of Ach-

ester"—The Knight of the Achseu Valley, another beauty spot of the Tyrol.

AMERICAN SLANG

His poem at the banquet at which I am now thinking had the title "The Lay of the Post-Tark." It was a mock-heroic description of the life of a turkey from "that morning in May when the little Turk bustled his shell" until the fatal day in November when "he rumbled like a Turk on the table." The poem consisted of 18 stanzas and each of the stanzas ended with a line which at that time was current slang.

And that reminds me of what a strange phenomenon is this American slang. A word or phrase in this category of speech comes into use, springs up over night, nobody knows how or whence, lives for a time a vigorous life, is on the lips of every man, woman and child from the Atlantic to the Pacific, then dies down suddenly from no apparent or explainable cause and is forgotten. Yet while it lives it is most expressive, its meaning is understood by everybody and in one word or phrase it conveys as much as could be put by Mark Twain—or Dorothy Thompson!—in a long sentence. In general however, it is a manifestation of the character of the American people. It does prove that we are a young and joyous people, and that we can easily cast aside things that seem to be growing old—as we do our

cars—and by now even, without regret.

OLD CHESTNUTS

In 1928 I had an experience of how a slang word dies out and is soon forgotten. In that year on a trip across the Atlantic I became acquainted with a family from New Jersey. Father, mother and daughter. The father was an M.D. and the daughter had just graduated from a Contract School in Washington, D. C. They were Catholics. One day they were telling me with amusement of how one of the passengers had told them an old, stale story or joke, as if it were a new revelation. "I said that's what we used to call a 'chestnut.'" To my surprise, not one of the three had ever heard of the word in that sense, but understood until I explained. And yet in the history of American slang there is probably not one word which for a period, that I well remember, was so much used and so well understood as "chestnut." Its use had become a mania. In hearing an old, stale story or joke repeated, instead of saying "I laughed at that the first time I heard it," or "That's a piece of old repeats," etc., you had but to say "Chestnuts!" It was brief and all-embracing. An enterprising individual in New York struck the practical idea of turning a penny from the current mania. He invented a little "Chestnut Bell" which the men placed on the lapel of their coat and the ladies on their "shirt waist" (then in vogue) so that, to avoid censure, instead of shouting "Chestnuts!" they had but to ring the bell. Yet, within a short generation thereafter, an educated American family had never

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Arctic to Army



Heading the call for Chaplains, the Rev. Robert Diastoli (above), of San Antonio, O'Connell missionary in the far northern part of Alaska, several hundred miles within the Arctic Circle, has returned to the United States for collection in the Army Chaplain Corps. Father Diastoli traveled over 1,500 miles by dog-sled to reach a railroad station in the course of his long trip home. (Catholic World photo.)

BUY WAR BONDS

World Catholic Urged To Pray For Palestine

JERUSALEM, August 27.—The text of a petition to Our Lady for the protection of Palestine, which "more than any other country" belongs to her, has been urged on Catholics throughout the world. The text of the petition reads as follows:

"O Mary, Immaculate, protect Queen of Heaven and of earth, which we protectively believe thy sacred throne. Full of mercy, since in thy goodness and in thy boundless power, we beseech thee to turn a loving glance upon Palestine, which more than any other country, belongs to thee, since thou hast granted it with thy birth, thy virginity and thy sorrow, and from thee hast given the Redeemer to the world."

Remembering that there especially thou who constituted our tender Mother, the dispenser of grace, Wrote, thou art, with special protection over thy native country, shield from it the access of error, for it was there that the Sun of Eternal Justice arose, bring about the speedy fulfillment of the promise which came from the lips of thy Divine Son, that there should be one God and one Shepherd.

"Obtain for us that we may serve the Lord in unity and justice, during all the days of our life, so that by the merits of Jesus, and with thy advocacy and we may pass at last from this earthly Jerusalem to the heavenly city of the heavenly son, Amen."

Workers and Employers Launch Great Offensive!

Every worker, every employer should read the war message from Rochester industry on Pages 10-11.

During July, Retail Stores are leading in a drive for increased sale of War Saving Bonds and Stamps.

"Fight! Work! and SAVE!"

A War Message on WAR BONDS from the President of the United States

"...The American people know that if we would raise the billions which we now need to pay for the war and at the same time prevent a disastrous rise in the cost of living, we shall have to double and more than double the scale of our savings.

"Every dime and dollar not vitally needed for absolute necessities should go into WAR BONDS

and STAMPS to add to the striking power of our armed forces.

"If these purchases are to have a material effect in restraining price increases they must be made out of current income.

"In almost every individual case they should be big enough to mean rigid self-denial, a substan-

tial reduction for most of us in the scale of expenditure that is comfortable and easy for us.

"We cannot fight this war, we cannot exert our maximum effort, on a spend-as-usual basis.

"We cannot have all we want if our soldiers and sailors are to have all they need."

—Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Buy War Savings Bonds

SHOOT STRAIGHT WITH OUR BOYS

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