

STRANGE BUT TRUE

By M. J. MURRAY



An unusual 15th-century MADONNA & CHILD, TOLEDO, SPAIN.



ST. MARY OF EGYPT CHURCH, ROME, was formerly A PAGAN TEMPLE. Church in 872 the space between the columns was walled up to increase the size.



MONTFERLAND, FRANCE, IS A PERFECT MEDIEVAL CITY. Many houses are named by the houses of the Virgin Mary. This is the "HOUSE OF THE ANNUNCIATION".



Facing the ADIEU. This is the "HOUSE OF THE ANNUNCIATION".

AN AMERICAN PEACE

By John O'Connor

There are few students of journalism or intense readers of the daily press who will place the New York Times lower than second on their list of great papers. To most people in the field the Times leads the world of journalism in both news coverage and objective reporting.

365 times a year (except leap year), the respected and balanced daily rolls to press about ten o'clock. And whether it is the mail edition or a 5 A. M. extra, in a remote corner of the large and famous city room with its scores of chattering machines, endless belts, battered desks and eyed-shaded men, you will find Neil MacNeill, the assistant managing editor who puts one of the world's greatest papers to bed.

Neil MacNeill is known to many people as an integral person and an editor par excellence. In his new book "An American Peace," he shows the fruits of handling the tremendous flood of news that nightly pours over his desk. Some of the finest correspondents in the business work with him from their far-flung posts... and out-towers will tell you that he has access to the finest message (teletype file) in the country.

FILLED WITH FACTS This is by way of saying that "AN AMERICAN PEACE" (42 pp., Scribner's) is one of the most comprehensive works to come out of present crop of books. It is not a bible of facts, neither is it a literary gem with nothing behind its brusque style. But it does contain a tremendous amount of facts and observations which one cannot ignore. The only trouble is... trying to grasp the entire picture at once. If you could do that, you'd probably be somewhere near that fabulous desk on the 3rd floor.

MacNeill is no philosopher, although the chapters on the rights of individuals and the state are strongly reminiscent of Aquinas and Mercier. He is, bluntly, a newspaperman and a great one. He has had a hand in the coverage of every major news story since 1914, including both world wars, 27 of those years with the Times. For the past 14 years he has been in charge of the news. And while he has watched the cables and stories cross his desk during these years, he has never lost his touch with sound philosophy nor his feeling for the rights of the down-trodden. It is for this reason that he insists on "An Economic Bill of Rights." The political bill of rights has too long stood alone.

Having studied the various peace conferences and seen them fail; having examined the workings of Nazism in Germany, Fascism in Italy, and Democracy in England and France, he has, one may assume, a better grasp of world affairs than the ivory tower editor

CUES AND CLUES

Library Signpost By Rev. Benedict Edmund

Some extra good books for the children's corner under the Christmas tree are the following:

Let Me About God, by Mary Alice Jones. . . . Delightfully illustrated by Felagic Doane with colored scenes that give the feel of the goodness of life, this book will delight youngsters, aged 7 to 10. Prayer for a Child, by Rachel Field. . . . Its entrancing illustrations by Elizabeth Orton Jones are better than its text which sets forth a rather wishy-washy sort of piety. Also for small children.

Mary, My Mother, by Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O.P. . . . A Polla folk tale about "why the Pussy-Cat Washes Himself as often."

The Christmas Anna Angel, by Ruth Sawyer. A charming Christmas story about a little girl and boy on a Hungarian farm. Illustrated by the queen of all illustrators, Kate Beredy.

For the older children, don't forget that the classics are a sure-fire gift: *Treasure Island*, *Oliver Twist*, *Heidi*, *Mosses*, *The Little Women*, *Little Men*, to name just a few. And, of course, Father Gerald Brennan's books, which word-of-mouth publicity has made so popular, proving that they have what it takes with the young ones.

Miss Monahan of C. W. Smith's Book Store, in the Sibley Building at 242 East Ave. in Rochester, is an expert in the field of children's books. A call by telephone to the store would find her most willing to discuss your juvenile book problems.

The theater here in our local newspapers one day last week gave ample evidence for the need to renew the pledge of the Legion of Decency last Sunday. It was an affront to decency. Yet these same papers have the policy of refusing all advertisements for alcoholic drinks. They might be requested a little more for this, if they were con-

sistent enough to extend their refusal to advertisements with "cover-up" pictures of women.

Two weeks ago, the column of books on December Saints was guilty of a strange omission: the Feast of St. Francis Xavier on December 5. Margaret Yee's book on the Saint is very readable in her own special style and Pagan's play *A Saint in a Hurry* is a good dramatic portrayal of that great apostle of the East.

One of the best Catholic monthly magazines you could get for yourself or your friends is *The Sign*. It has timely articles, many of them written by the best in the field. It always runs two or three short stories of better-than-the-ordinary caliber. Its play and theater reviews by Jerry Colter are a good cover-all picture of a difficult territory. It has a fine Question and Answer department. Its correspondence pages show what intelligent and interesting people are its readers. And it is copiously illustrated with fine photographs and drawings. All in all, it is worth much more than the two dollars which its editors ask for the twelve issues. Write to The Sign, Union City, N. J.

Catholics who send Christmas cards which do not express the true meaning of Christ's Birthday ought to be ashamed of themselves. A genuine Christmas card says more than Merry Christmas; it has a text or a thought from the rich treasury of the Scripture and of the sacred writers. Such a thought is a genuine gift to a friend. I know of people who are on the watch all during the year for some saying that they will want to put on their next Christmas cards. They start early in the Fall handmaking their own cards, and engraving their selected texts on them. Such a card is a true gift. It's as if the sender were saying, "Thoughts are gifts as truly as anything is; here's one for you. I've spent no money for it, but I have spent a lot of time looking for it. May it give you much joy!"

There is an overdose of sentimentality about current devotion to Our Lady. As a test of that, all that one has to do is to examine the wonderful Office that the Church has assembled for the Feast and Octave of the Immaculate Conception. There is strength mingled with tenderness, and simplicity with nobility.

Father Raoul Plus, S. J., writes: "Certainly, I pray as you that earth be kind to us. But for mercy's sake, don't forget the heaven that is in you. . . . May human happiness continue to smile on your God dwells there. God in your soul, is that nothing? but if it withdraws bit by bit, look within you. It is everything."

'Gloomy Dean' Blames Luther

We have seldom been able to see eye to eye with the "Gloomy Dean," William R. Inge, a well known Anglican clergyman. But recently he wrote something in a Protestant periodical, the *Observer*, which agrees in the main with that leading Catholic historian and philosopher have written as to the connection between Martin Luther's false teachings and some of the modern world's ills such as tyrannical one-man political rule and economic Bourbonism, the prolific sources of revolution and Communism. Dean Inge wrote:

"If we wish to find a scapegoat for whom all our ills may be laid, the villain which Germany has brought upon the world. . . I am more and more convinced that the worst evil genius of the century is not Hitler or Mussolini or Franco, but Martin Luther."

By his theories, such as private interpretation of the Scriptures and making the Church subject to the State, Luther paved the way for false philosophies which make man autonomous, independent of God, and accountable only to himself.

This principle of private judgment in moral and religious matters was upheld by Henry VIII when he divorced himself from his lawful wife, Catherine of Aragon, and servile clergymen like Cranmer encouraged him in his revolt against Christian morals.

The teachings of Luther and other so-called reformers in Germany, England and elsewhere opened the door to absolutism in economics, politics and other spheres of life. These theories justify the totalitarian State, which is not responsible to God for the people's welfare and need not recognize their inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

However, it is well to note that Dean Inge speaks of a "scapegoat." That term means a person or thing taking the blame for others. The modern world and its leaders for centuries in government, education, economics, literature, etc., cannot justly put all the blame on the ill-starred ex-monk of Wittenberg and of the sixteenth century.

They, as well as he, had a conscience. And the Church founded by Christ has continued to operate in many lands. Her divinely appointed leader, the Sovereign Pontiff,

from his watchtower has continually proclaimed Christ's teachings. Unfortunately, the warnings of such acknowledged statesmen as well as Churchmen as Leo XIII were ignored by the world. In its blind reliance on machinery and materialistic science, it forgot first

principles about man's dignity, his God-given rights and his dependence on his Creator. And, as like the prodigal, it has brought upon itself great and unnecessary sufferings from which it can be saved only by returning to the Father's house and to His son, the Prince of Peace.—The Michigan Catholic.

United States Could be Converted in Four Years

If each adult Catholic in the United States were to win but one convert in the course of one year, the conversion of the whole nation would be effected in less than four years.

Sixty percent of the people of the United States are not affiliated with any church. Most Americans are open-minded (as witness even the South, known for its anti-Catholic feeling, giving a warm reception to "Going My Way"). People are susceptible to the drawing-power of truth properly presented. Even those who are professed members of some non-Catholic creed hold the false thesis that one church is as good as another and thus imply their willingness to follow the truth wherever it may lead.

thing which might antagonize, such as belittling the beliefs of others. It is best to maintain a positive attitude and simply present the beautiful and attractive doctrines of the faith in an appealing manner. The one who is led to the knowledge of Christ and His Church, will be eternally grateful. (Milwaukee Herald-Citizen).

Many Catholics would like to take an active part in winning souls for Christ, but do not know where to begin. The first and indispensable step is prayer. "Without Me you can do nothing." Faith, however, "cometh by hearing"; so the convert-maker must study in order to be able to speak the truth. He must know the answers. This is the second step. A thorough knowledge of a book like Father Conway's "Question Box" should be sufficient to meet this need. The third step is grasping the opportunity to present the truth. If the Catholic is prepared with a ready answer to even the simplest questions, he makes a deep and lasting impression. Short answers are the best. At times attempts are tentatively made in giving the conversion to religious matters. If further interest is evinced, he must take the fourth step of bringing the person a book on the faith, or, better still, of bringing him to a priest to discuss the matter. Sometimes parishes have convert classes to which the prospective Catholics might be invited. It is wise to make the point that no one is used to bring anyone into the Church and that no priest would convert who is not thoroughly instructed in the faith.

BAPTIZING AN INFANT AT HOME

Sometimes when an infant is too sick or feeble to be brought to the Church to be baptized, the priest goes to the home or hospital, and there baptizes him without any extra ceremonies. But when that infant recovers (if it should) the parents have a moral obligation to bring the child to the Church in order that these ceremonies may be supplied by the priest.

If a sick adult friend—not a Catholic—should express a wish to be baptized in the Catholic faith, and the calling of a Catholic clergyman may cause trouble or embarrassment, do not delay in baptizing that friend. If this sacrament is given by yourself, it will be just as valid as if given by a Catholic priest.

Do not be disturbed about your god-parents. The Church does not require the presence of god-parents under such circumstances. She is concerned about the sacrament of baptism being administered to him. That is all that counts. — Baltimore News.

"AS WE SEE IT" BY DAN PATRICK will appear next week.