As We See It

By DAN PATRICK

Now that Father's Day is just around the corner, we can expect press and radio eulogies for that somewhat myopic individual who walks in and out of cartoons when the post-Christmas bills are due.

The place of Father in the present-day whirlwind is somewhat uncharted. To some he is the beloved tyrant so graphically pictured in Clarence Day's "Life With Father."

To others he is an individual who is merely interested in the so-called family circle because he somehow manages to keep the various members on their respective financial feet. Father has fallen so low in the esteem of some families that he is secretly looked upon as a necessary evil.

All of these caricatures are, of course, quite foreign to the Christian concept of a Father and his job.

As we see it, Father's primary business is to bring up a family. There are, however, numerous erroneous definitions of what "bringing up" really means.

Of course it means providing support but it does not end so simply. Father should exercise the same concern over his child's spiritual, physical and social development as he does over the support of the child.

Too many children look upon Father as a distant relative and the fault doesn't always lie with the children. Father's preoccupation with business and friends may prove a contributing factor.

Of course, the war has distorted Father's role in family life to a marked degree.

To meet inflationary prices, many a father had to step up his working time. Precious hours which ordinarily should be spent with his children are alloted to extra work.

And then again these working hours too often have been extended far beyond their normal course by the inevitable results of too much money and too little common sense.

The calls of war have placed thousands of miles between some families and Father. There are thousands of Fathers who have never seen their children. And there are other thousands of Fathers who never will. They are the Fathers who have made the supreme sacrifice, leaving their children virtual orphans.

With the end of the war in Europe, it is time at least for a start toward the return to normalcy in family life and family relations.

A good way to begin this procedure is the restoration of Father as head of the family and the proper discharge of his duties in that capacity.

Father's Day is a pretty empty gesture if it means just an annual reminder of the fact that Father exists and, after all, we ought to remember the old boy at least once a year. It is trite but true that every day should be Father's Day not only for the children but for Fathers as well.

It is interesting to read the comment of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt on the latest antics of the American Communists who apparently are reverting back to the old party lines of world revolt.

"It frightens us to see," Mrs. Roosevelt wrote, "any group in our midst proposing to propagandize instead of cooperating where possible and letting people think and act for themselves. This might lead to war at home and abroad. Therefore the French communist leader and the American Communists who encourage a policy of world revolution have done the peace of the world harm.

"The American Communists had been cooperative where they could be. But now, as we understand it, they are out to force Communism on our democracy. That we will not tolerate."

"The sooner we clear up authoritatively this whole situation of communists outside the Soviet Union," she said, "the better chance we will have for peace in the future."

Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built.—Abraham Lincoln.

"From the evidence on hand today, we cannot scientifically prove that the Nordic or the Negro is superior or inferior, one to the other."—Rev. John W. Cooper.

Nothing contributes more to the cheerfulness of things than the habit of looking on the good side of things. The good side is God's side.

Man can attain eternal salvation, but not by his own powers alone. He cannot be saved without the assistance of God.

In place of more people per square mile, what we are looking for is more square people per mile.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY

The Literary Cavalcade

Spring Cleaning

By John O'Connor

I wish that Harry Sylvester had written a better final draft in Dayspring, (Appleton-Century, $2.50). He has tackled one of the most difficult subjects possible; the working of actual grace in the soul of a casual convert.

The book will not get widespread sales, because the people who do not have an understanding and grasp of the spiritual theme will not understand the book itself. Equally dangerous to literary and moral standards are some of the opinions of our self-appointed amateur theologians who condemn the book because of the realities pictured in it. However, the major and integral reviewers in the Catholic press such as John S. Kennedy have seen fit to mention it and give praise where praise is due. . . . and only where it is due.

For myself, I think Sylvester should have let the wine mature a bit longer in the oaken cask of effort. As published, it was a good job — but it could have been a better one. But I cannot in conscience, join the forces so intent on a book-burning!

Is there anything wrong with a book showing the problems confronting a half-hearted convert amongst a group of amoral people? There are degenerate people in the world. Abnormal people do exist. So do spiritual extremists such as the penitentes of New Mexico — evidently selected for the novel because they contrast so well with the bored sophisticates of Hollywood and the Long Island set who live in an atmosphere fraught with sex, style, and Scotch. We also have the puny brained intellectual of the university or the editorial office; and we have soon too many of them already!

The author sets Spencer Bain down in the midst of these chosen contrasts. An anthropologist, he joins the penitentes after being baptized — and the acceptance of the sacrament was for him but the means to an end. As his research continued, he meets diabolists from the mountains and adultresses with mountains of money. He misses the modern, selfish scientist he has married and who doesn't believe in children. He sees murder committed before his eyes.

He marches in the bloody Good Friday procession of the penitentes. Through the holes in his hood, he can see the unbelieving, the faces of the moderns. He fights off any desires towards temptation without knowing exactly why. He finally loses his chance for a major position because he is a Catholic. And as a fitting anti-climax, his successor turns out to be a devout man who is also a specialist.

A number of the characters in the work are caricatures more than they are credible persons, and the work suffers, for he becomes too sharply bitter. But he has taken on a challenging topic and I dare say has done as well as any coming novelist could. It is by no means easy to get this point across and unless you are adult and can appreciate the intellectual wanderings of the confused and the spiritual difficulties of the graceless, you have no part in reading this work.

Harry Sylvester has been in many controversies regarding the Catholic press and Catholic magazines, all the while doing more than quite well writing for the lucrative paying weeklies such as The Saturday Evening Post or Colliers. Yet he bids fair to fulfill the prediction of Dr. Henry McNeill of Fordham University to the writer some years ago. Dayspring cannot be considered top-flight material by any means. But it is a definite and favorable sign.

Theodore Maynard has come forth with his almost annual work. This time he offers "Too Small a World the life of Mother Cabrini" — and the work is happily free of the footnotes a scholar such as he can add to a book when wont to (Bruce $2.50). I still think Maynard is at his best when handling poetry —but don't misunderstand, this biography of a future American saint is needed and well done.

Meanwhile you may be glad to know that Margaret Monro, of A Book of Unlikely Saints fame has given us an invaluable key to an invaluable mine in her Enjoying the New Testament (Longman's $2.50). Her work is necessary — if you feel it necessary to understand the New Testament as a whole.

A closing note: I am advised that "34 Charlton" has been sold out through three editions and Rene Kuhn's fine first novel will soon be available again. Three editions in a month is good going.

Library Symposium By Rev. Benedict Thomas

Card. Newman's 'Kindly Light'

In June of 1833, John Henry Newman, returning from a Mediterranean voyage, wrote a hymn which has endeared his memory to countless thousands. He called it "The Pillar of the Cloud," but it is better known as "Lead, Kindly Light." The boat on which he was returning was becalmed, and it seemed to the sensitive voyager to correspond to his own state as it was at the time, awaiting the blowing of the Spirit to give him impetus and direction. He was still an Anglican, and was to be for twelve more years. But there was unrest and frustration within him. The sea voyage gave him welcome leisure and stimulated his imagination and sensibilities. He beguiled the hours and gave expression to his heightened thoughts in sacred poems, eighty-five of them, all told, during the six months' voyage. What exact alchemy made "The Pillar of the Cloud" take so strong a hold on popular affection it would be next to impossible to discover. Others of the eighty-five are equally expressive and simple. But perhaps none of them are so touched with the fire of yearning for God and with the pathetic sense of that night of the soul which baffles all good people in their aspiration for union with God.

Newman's prayer does not ask "to see the distant scene—one step enough for me." Already thirty-two years old, he would not have surmised how really distant the future scene was going to be, and how full of turmoil and storm and anguish. But always the kindly Light was to be with him, leading him out of the night and growing to zenith brightness in the Promised Land of the Church. For twelve years more he was to be en route in the wilderness. The kindly Light brought him home to England in time for the bombshell of Keble's sermon on the National Apostasy. "One step enough for me," Newman had prayed, but the steps were going to be fast and some of them breath-taking. The immediate outcome of Keble's sermon was the inauguration of the "Tracts for the Times" which brought the now famous Oxford Movement into being, a movement which was to have the profoundest effect upon England's religious life, and which was destined to bring thousands into the Church of Rome from the Anglican communion. The campus of Oxford seethed with historical and theological discussion. Newman's influence over the young men was enormous, and many of them were ardent champions of the precise demonstrations of orthodoxy with which his Tracts were trying to establish the point that the Church of England was not a Church in schism.

But the further he went, the more untenable appeared to him the position of the Church of England. By 1840 his doubts about the Church of Rome began to wane. The famous Tract 90 was the most conspicuous point of departure on his route to Rome. The persistent attack of the Anglican Bishops on it was sign sufficient to Newman that the Established Church of England had repudiated the ancient Catholic doctrine. In September, 1843, he resigned the curacy of St. Mary's. There were still doubts and difficulties to be settled, and it was not till two years later that the kindly Light brought him out of the night into the full morning of communion with the Holy See.

Newman was received into the Church and made his general confession on October 8, 1845. He was forty-four years old, and the Spirit had brought him far since that time, now long past, when he wrote "Lead, Kindly Light" on his sea voyage.

He was to live forty-five more years, most of them as a priest, and the last twelve of them as a Cardinal. They were to be strange years —years of alienation from most of his old friends and memories, and years of frictions and misunderstandings with his new-found brothers within the Church, many of whom were suspicious of the converted lion in their midst. But they were years of fruitfulness, too — great championing of the Truth and great guidance to souls. His pen remained active and brilliant to the end. Though his active projects all ran awry, his books are imperishable; and some of the greatest of them are from the autumn years of his life — The Idea of a University, The Grammar of Assent, Apologia pro Vita Sua, The Present Position of Catholics in England, The Dream of Gerontius.

This year we celebrate the centenary of Newman's conversion. There are to be due observances in England and America, and commemorative articles are even now being written and published in the magazines. Every educated Catholic should know something about Newman's life and position in the history of the modern Church. For his life there is, of course, the indispensable and peerless autobiography, the Apologia pro Vita Sua; there is also the very complete and greatly-documented life by Wilfrid Ward (2 vols.), and also several lesser complex biographies like the one by J. Lewis May. Look up the files of your local public library on Newman and see what is available for your use. The Catholic Reference Library also offers quite a good collection.