

A New Era Dawning

When the Knights of Columbus instituted a Commission on Religious Prejudice we expected nothing else from it but perfunctory findings and apologetic platitudes. But by its fearless honesty the commission is doing more for the church in America than anything that has happened since the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore. It places the blame for anti-Catholic prejudice not alone upon Protestants, but courageously calls upon Catholics to bear their just proportion.

"If Catholics can not thrive in this country," says Hon. Joseph Scott, a member of the commission on religious prejudice, "they have no chance anywhere. We are living among a class of people who are fair-minded and sincere and who wish to do the right thing by us and our Church."

"Religious prejudice," the report says, "has come down to us from centuries of strife when Catholics and Protestants took turns in persecuting one another, and together persecuted the Jews. . . . We plead for that sympathy and unity among neighbors which the common history, the common interest, the common destiny of the whole American people make imperative in the fulfillment of their hopes and aims. . . . The appeal to the people of Buffalo, N. Y., by 100 of the leading Catholic and non-Catholic citizens of the city for more sympathetic relations in all civic affairs, though setting a worthy example to the nation, was not a complete success because professional politicians, Catholic as well as non-Catholic, undertook to incite their respective sympathizers to vote according to a preferred list. . . . To vote for a member of any denomination solely on account of his religion, or to vote against him solely on that account, is equally reprehensible. Religion and politics must be kept separate in this country, or both will be ruined."

The commission in its report urges the Knights of Columbus to enter with clean hands the work of eliminating religious prejudice; to substitute lectures and educational methods for popular pastimes; to enlighten themselves on the problems confronting the citizens of this country; to become closely identified with right movements in every community for the betterment of public morals, the furtherance of social justice and the very best citizenship.

The report recognizes that our apparent connection with the liquor traffic is one of the main causes of religious prejudice against us, and reminds all of the urgent appeal of the Council of Baltimore that Catholics should get out of the dangerous liquor traffic.

It truly says that some Catholic papers "are edited entirely for profit and are not truly representative of Catholic teaching." It fitly describes others as "rash propagandists which furnish ammunition to professional non-Catholics." It deprecates violence toward anti-Catholic speaking and every interference with free speech and free press.

Father L. Johnston, though much more prone to condemn than to commend, especially laymen, says of the report: "It is a masterly survey of the entire subject. Coming from laymen it is classical."

Louisville Evening Times says: "Besides untiring energy, Mr. Callahan brings to this great work high civic ideals, a warm human spirit,

and a real devotion to the advancement of human happiness." Col. P. H. Callahan is president of the Peoples' Forum in Louisville, Ky., and vice-president of an organization formed within the democratic party to obtain the passage of a state constitutional Prohibition amendment for Kentucky. His broad-minded Catholicity and his deep interest in civic righteousness fit him for the great work of the Commission on Religious Prejudice, of which he is the chairman and the soul.

The Rev. E. L. Powell, a fellow-townsmen of his, complimented the Colonel on his address to the Junior Order of Mechanics in Louisville thus; "Your admirable address was a real contribution towards better feeling, and a prophecy of a time when this country shall not permit its politicians to exploit religion, and thus divert the minds of the voters from issues vital to the commonwealth."

Col. Callahan's wide range of thought and observation help him to get a good perspective of men and their motives. He wrote to the editor of the Columbiad: "It is with keen enjoyment that I read the Yellow Jacket or the Menace as compared to my mental feelings when I read the Iconoclast, and realize how Catholics are having their legs pulled. This paper is an organ of the liquor interests living on the reputation of Brann its former editor, who boasted of infidelity. It fights prohibition, and throws a sop to Catholics occasionally in the form of criticism of the Menace, just to keep them on the side of the liquor interests."

To Father J. F. Noll, Col. Callahan wrote: "It is not news to me to learn that there are a great many anti-Catholics in the prohibition party; the same is true of the other parties. However, in their national convention at St. Paul, where their representatives were gathered, with only four Catholic delegates and very few favoring the movement, when confronted with the religious issue, the prohibitionists did their very patriotic duty by turning down Sulzer, the candidate of the anti-Catholic societies."

To Mr. Frank McDermott of Seattle, Washington, the Colonel wrote the following, which is good advice to Catholics throughout the country: "Catholics in your community can do nothing which will reflect so much credit on themselves and their religion, and simultaneously minimize religious prejudice, as to be prominently identified with every anti-liquor and Prohibition movement."

On the subject of the state of Kentucky deriving revenue from betting at horse races, he says: "Any kind of partnership between gambling concerns and municipalities or states ought to be offensive to the sense of decency in the twentieth century." Many a cleric does not possess or at least does not manifest such a keen sense of morality as this layman.

Perhaps no man in all America is better fitted to be chairman of the Commission on Religious Prejudice than Col. P. H. Callahan. His candor with friend and foe is admirable. His progressive spirit breathes out in these words to Father J. Wynne, S. J., editor of America: "Our Catholic celebrations have consisted altogether of too much praise and compliments. In this twentieth

century we congratulate ourselves on what we did in the thirteenth. To live on the reputation of our ancestors is contrary to the spirit of America." The same progressive spirit is manifest in these words of Benedict Elder, secretary of the commission: "St. Vincent de Paul held that, instead of pointing out to unbelievers our great men of the past, we should make haste to fill their places now vacant."—From Catholics and Prohibition.

DRINK IS ENGLAND'S GREATEST DANGER

A remarkable speech was made on the liquor question in London at a public meeting recently by Captain John MacNeill of Toronto, attached to the Canadian Y. M. C. A., says "The London Chronicle," which quotes Captain MacNeill as follows: "Today Canada is dry from coast to coast, with the exception of Quebec, which is four-fifths dry under local option. In addition, our people had the pledge from our department of militia for a dry canteen, with the understanding that it would not only obtain in the training camps of Canada, but in their overseas operations as well. It was with that assurance that thousands of our homes gave up their sons."

"And our men have come to England—with what result?—they have been debauched through drink."

"Some of your people may say that they should have been able to stand against it. Perhaps so—I am not defending them, though I could. Remember that they are away from all the restraints of home life and the refining touch of their woman-kind. Remember, too, that the accessibility of the drink, more than the desire for it, is one-half the occasion for drunkenness, especially when it is urged upon our men through a mistaken sense of hospitality."

"At this very moment in London there are tens of thousands of traps set for the feet of our men. So far as we can see there is no serious attempt to restrain or suppress this vice in the streets of London. What reply will you give to the parents of a Canadian boy who, demoralized by drink, and through drink smitten by disease, rendered unfit for France, listed for home—rather than face it he blew out his brains with a revolver in a Canadian camp I visited a few weeks ago? . . ."

"May I say to you solemnly, if England should lose this war because of drink (and drink, we believe, is now the only enemy that can defeat her), or if England should unnecessarily prolong the war with great sacrifice of life in her effort to protect the drink, or even if England should win the war in spite of drink, which for her own sake we pray she may not do—you will have put upon the bonds of empire, in relation to the overseas dominions, such a strain as they have never known before, and such a strain as we can not promise they will be able to survive."

Kalifornea

In Hammond, Indiana, a Hungarian applied for naturalization papers the other day, and the following dialog ensued:

Clerk: Who is President of the United States?

Hung.: Meester Vilson.

Clerk: Who makes the laws?

Hung.: De Kungress.

Clerk: Who elects the President?

Hung.: (without batting an eye):

Kalifornea.

He got his papers.—Everybody's.

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