

alternative that has prompted the curious outburst which has found expression in this book. And the fear is well grounded, as Mr. Coulton is quite aware. Though Mr. Coulton hates the Catholic system, he respects Roman Catholics, and this is what he prophesies in our regard:

If Roman Catholicism, while fearlessly facing the truth, could still remain united, and if non-Roman Catholics, while insisting on truth of detail, failed finally to find any closer union amongst themselves than the mere agreement to repudiate Roman Catholicism, then in the long run Roman Catholicism would conquer and deserve to conquer (p. 120).

Of these two conditions, the first, as we know, has always been verified, and the other, it seems to us, is in course of verification; so that we may confidently look for the fulfilment of Mr. Coulton's prophecy in the divine victory to follow.

Anglican Essays is an astounding book. Its inaccuracies are so plentiful, its arguments so weak, that it will produce but little effect except on such as imbibe without criticism every syllable that they read. The only telling argument is that which seeks to show that Anglo-Catholicism is not Anglicanism, nor yet consistent with Anglican tradition. With this we agree. Yet in common fairness, must confess that the fiercely dogmatic Anglicanism of Elizabethan and even later days seems to us equally incompatible alike with the "scientific" attitude towards Christian dogma adopted by the Archbishop of Armagh, with its implicit scepticism and its worship of the human goddess "Reason," and with the vague demand for radical change, so forcibly uttered by Mr. Raven, with its corollary that as yet we know neither what Christianity is nor what it shall become in the future. While if this be in truth the sequel to the Protestant factor in Anglicanism, the Anglo-Catholics are right in thinking that the sooner this factor is eliminated the better for all concerned, and the better chance too of that reunion which even the most Protestant exponents of Anglicanism seem, though with misgivings born of ignorance and fear, to contemplate as at least a remote possibility.

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THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST

IN every nation which has known Christianity, just as in every Christian man, there is an endless conflict between the natural and the supernatural, and a considerable section will always be found that rejects the latter and prefers to remain on the natural plane, limiting its vision to this earth and hence falling easily into the vices of the pagan, the deification of self and the deification of the State. We are accustomed to speak of the two "Nations" in every modern State, the Poor and the Rich, whose discord is a national peril. Even were their interests harmonized, there would still remain the two "Nations" of the religious and the unregenerate to prevent, by their divergent views and policies, any realization of the Perfect State in this world. Nowhere has this truth been better illustrated than in the history of the great French nation. The two opposed spirits are evident as early as the thirteenth century in *Le Roman de La Rose*. Seldom has there been so strange a dovetailing of the work of two utterly different characters. The Horatian maxim,

*"servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit et sibi constet,"*¹

has here been forgotten or ignored. The work of one author, Guillaume de Lorris, has the freshness and purity of spring-tide. Jean de Meun, the other, is sometimes as nasty as Chaucer's wife of Bath, and his mind is strongly tinged with worldly cynicism. It is good to find such a critic as Professor Saintsbury giving a decided preference to the work of the earlier poet.² Gaston Paris attributes to Jean de Meun

a bold, cynical, nowise religious, eminently burgesse spirit and at times quite modern . . . there is an attack against celibacy, even ecclesiastical, which Alain of Lille, . . . would not have dared. In this, as frequently elsewhere, John of Meun reminds us of Rabelais.³

To pursue our sketch—the anti-papal tyranny of Philip the

¹ "Let [the poem] preserve to the end the characteristics with which it started and be consistent with itself."

² *The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory*, 1897, pp. 301—302.

³ *Medieval French Literature*, Eng. Transl. Dent, p. 113.

Fair was followed by civil wars and their moral ruin. In the fifteenth century we have the strange pathetic career of Villon, at his worst also a forerunner of Rabelais, at his best a voice of touching penitence. In the sixteenth century we have Rabelais himself, who lacks not apologists, but is, no Christian can doubt, justly condemned by Kenelm Digby:

Than the spirit of Rabelais, perhaps no more deadly corrosive exists on earth to destroy vital principles; honour, love, every noble and heroic affection, fade away before it; but nothing, perhaps, throughout the whole range of human prevarication, can be more contrary to nature, and to the very instinct of youth, for it must be acknowledged, that the animal nature itself has a certain delicate sense of what is becoming and graceful; the whole man abhors whatever will not admit of being in some degree elevated by the imagination to assume a beautiful or noble aspect; no antipathy between things most averse in nature, holds a stronger enmity than his mind with what is essentially and irredeemably foul.¹

Apart from this monster of filth, who was also, *horribile dictu*, a Catholic priest, the reign of the vicious Francis I. was indeed a time of corruption, like that of Henry II., well pictured in Walter Pater's little masterpiece, *Gaston de Latour*:

It was the reign of the Italians just then, a doubly refined, somewhat morbid, somewhat ash-coloured Italy in France, more Italian still. What our Elizabethan poets imagined about Italian culture—forcing all they knew of Italy to an ideal of dainty sin such as had never actually existed there,—that the court of Henry so far as in it lay, realised in fact. Men of Italian birth, "to the great suspicion of simple people," swarmed in Paris, already "flightier, less constant than the girouettes on its steeples," and it was love for Italian fashions that had brought king and courtiers here this afternoon, with great *éclat*, as they said, frizzled and starched² (etc.)

More horrible even than Rabelais was the false prophet of Geneva, Calvin, also an apostate cleric, whose Huguenot sectaries carried a Mahommedan desolation far and wide over France. Anything less like the real Huguenots than the dashing cavaliers of Macaulay's ballad could hardly be imagined!

¹ *Comptam*, Book VI., ch. vi., 1852, p. 295.

² Ch. vii., pp. 171—172: cf. ch. iii., p. 81, etc.

According to Mézeray the sacrileges everywhere committed by the Huguenots roused in the people feelings of horror and indignation: for in all places where they became masters, the images of saints were smashed, relics were thrown to the winds, the altars and the sacraments were profaned, and priests and religious outraged, so that all that history has recorded of the atrocities perpetrated by the Goths was effaced by the barbarism of the Huguenots. In 1562 they burned all the charters of the cathedral of St. Theudere, near Vienne. At Tarbes they not only burned the charters, but the cathedral itself, leaving mournful traces of their sojourn throughout Béarn and Bigorre.¹

In the seventeenth century the picture is on the whole brighter:

Of what importance saintly men considered this sweet filial feeling towards God is shown very remarkably by an observation which Cardinal Bellarmine made when he visited France. He said he was struck with the devout piety of the French, in this sense of the word piety, and that the people seemed to him in consequence better Catholics than the Italians. So at least he is quoted by Lallemand.²

And yet, this seventeenth century, whose Christian character François Coppée championed against his friend Huysmans,³ saw the sceptical work of Bayle, father of the encyclopædists, and the rise of Jansenism, while a truly horrible demoralization, consequent upon civil wars, is depicted in a letter written by St. Vincent de Paul to Pope Innocent X. in 1652:

The Royal Family is torn by dissension, and the people are divided in rival factions, the towns and the provinces are alike made miserable by civil war; villages and cities are devastated, burnt; the labourers do not reap what they have sown, and no longer sow for future years; everything is at the mercy of the soldiers; from them the people have to fear not robbery only, but actual murder and every sort of torture; most of those who dwell in the country perish of hunger if they escape the sword. Even the priests are not spared, but are cruelly treated, tortured and put to death. Every maiden is dishonoured and the nuns themselves are exposed to the wild excesses of the soldiers; churches are profaned and robbed and ruined; and almost all those which are still standing are deserted by their pastors, so that the people are left destitute either of Mass or of the Sacra-

¹ J. M. Stone, *Reformation and Revivalists*, p. 407.

² Faber, *All for Jesus*, 1855, pp. 60-61.

³ *La Bonne Souffrance*, p. 232.

ments, or of any spiritual consolation. Also that happens of which it is horrible to think and even more to speak, the most Blessed Sacrament of the Body of our Lord is treated with utter contempt even by Catholics, for they throw the Holy Eucharist to the ground and trample It underfoot that they may steal the sacred vessels that contain It. And how far do the heretics go who have no sense of this Mystery? I dare not and will not enter on description.¹

This state of things in the Christian seventeenth century of civilized, chivalrous France, furnishes indeed a fruitful theme for meditation.

The testimony could not be more unimpeachable nor the picture more hideous; it rivals the sack of Rome in 1527 under the Catholic Emperor Charles V., who loved to pose as a Constantine, a sack wherein Catholic Spaniards and Lutheran Germans were rivals in sacrilege and horror. To read the story, even in the sober pages of Pasteur, is enough to bring physical nausea. Yet that were a small price to pay for a realization of the essential barbarity of war, the *ultima ratio regum* which is in fact a confession that reason has failed. Call to mind after this the endless series of drum and trumpet "history books"; they appear no more true to life than the historical novels of Mr. G. A. Henty, against which one's instinct revolted even in boyhood. Granting that war is sometimes inevitable, sometimes just, there is yet no need to lie about it, to suppress the truth about its moral and material evils, to represent God's punishments and scourges as if they were blessings to boast of; there is no need to describe purgatory in terms of a pleasure excursion. This literary conspiracy to disguise the character of warfare from the rising generations explains how it is possible to send multitudes to the slaughter under lying watchwords, multitudes who have no real quarrel one with another, and who under wiser guidance might see that their highest interest is peace and co-operation. Tolstoy, in his earlier and better work, the artist Verestchagin and General Sherman agree in thinking that "war is hell." One would think that it were wiser to appeal frankly to the latent heroism of those called upon to endure the rack than to pretend that the endurance of the rack is a gay and splendid adventure.

Among the fallacies diligently taught in 1914—1918

¹ E. K. Saunders, *Vincent de Paul*, 1913, ch. ix, p. 163.

was the uplifting and regenerating effect of war. Against this I may quote an authority no militarist can well cavil at:

It is a well-ascertained fact [writes Cardinal Gasquet] strange though it may seem, that men are not as a rule made better by great and universal visitations of Divine Providence. It has been noticed that this is the evident result of all such scourges, or, as Procopius puts it, speaking of the Great Plague in the reign of the Emperor Justinian, "whether by chance or Providential design it strictly spared the most wicked."¹

It is a grievous pity that these truths are not borne in mind by those who lightly appeal to arms whenever a national crisis comes, a "crisis" which in its last analysis is most often a dispute between rival traders regarding markets or raw materials. War is the outcome of secularism; Mammon, as this Review has heretofore explained,² has Mars as his henchman. And secularism thrives when the Church grows weak. In his study of Gallicanism, de Maistre showed clearly how the Jansenists (who, together with Calvinists, exerted great influence through the Parlement) prepared the way for the encyclopædists. With Voltaire the two hosts are definitely mustered in hostile array, and his period finds fit consummation in the horrors of the Revolution. To and fro the fight has raged ever since, and the victory is not yet won. Compromises, concordats, restorations there have been, but no decisive triumph of the Faith, while the subversives renew from time to time their efforts to abolish religion and sanity.

Ozanam and Lacordaire were under no delusions as to the restoration of religion in France, while the secular university's monopoly remained. Veuillot's battle was a long and fierce one, not only with infidels, but with Gallicans also. The France of Veuillot and Count de Mun stood over against the France of "George Sand," de Maupassant, Zola and the masonic politicians. The France of Combes and Viviani found ranged against it the France of René Bazin, François Coppée, and the Catholic rally. The present moment seems in many ways analogous to the treacherous Restoration period. Avowed anticlericalism has now as then, for the time being, lost the ascendancy, but is perhaps all the more dangerous on that account, "the viler as underhand, not

¹ *The Black Death*, ch. x., pp. 250—251.

² *THE MONTH*, Oct. 1918, "Mammon and Mars."

openly bearing the sword." Now as then, many, whose trustworthiness will need much testing, find it expedient or politic to profess Catholic sympathies or allegiance, and the militarist mania, once more recurrent in some quarters, causes a cross-division which may weaken the Catholic forces.

On the other hand, the utterly simple, unaffected piety that so-delighted Cardinal Bellarmine is found to-day, and not in Brittany alone. The writer was at Chartres in July, 1914, and there and then some holy nun said to him, "mais je pense que j'aime les bons un peu petit plus," though she loved *les méchants* also, and "nous sommes trop mauvaises pour la France," therefore expecting to be driven out, but "nous nous reverrons en Angleterre." In all sincerity these saintly women thought they were so unworthy that Almighty God would not allow them to remain in France. There are characters up and down the pages of Huysmans and those of René Bazin that wanderers in provincial France can hardly fail to come across, characters that prove *la douce France* to be still living, utterly sincere, courteous, generous, devoted, like Rousseline and her father in Bazin's *La Terre qui meurt*, true children of the crusaders. In Brittany and the Norman-Breton borderland nothing can exceed the unaffected Catholic courtesy experienced by travellers. Again:

Thou art praised for thy science; thy art and thy grace,
For the courage so high that belongs to thy race,
But when all is admired, and all has been said,
There's nothing surpasses thy love for the dead.¹

Is this, I wonder, the dominant aspect of France to-day? Is it still generally true that "no Frenchman goes about singing nowadays, whether in town or country, unless it be a song of revolt or bloodshed. This disappearance of healthy and calm joy is one of the most serious heads of accusation which our time can formulate against those who dominate it. If England is no longer 'merry England' nor France 'La Gaie France,' it is because the vital principle has been weakened in each, because men have despised, and disenchanted the soul of each of these nations, once so noble and charming, by robbing them of the Faith?"²

In all great countries, as we said to start with, there is, in varying degree, this great division, which answers to the

¹ Keats H. Digby, *Short Poems*, 1865, p. 43.

² Reginald Balfour, in *Dublin Review*, Jan. 1907, p. 163.

cleavage between the Church and the world. Many change sides, many are unconscious of the side on which they are fighting. There are sincere Christians,—Lutheran, Anglican and others,—who are unconsciously fighting in Rome's cause, there are bad Catholics, lapsed and worldly Catholics, whose lives aid the cause of Antichrist. In France, owing to the clearness (which is compatible with a certain narrowness) of the French mind, the division is perhaps easier to mark than elsewhere. But the fact of this division is, I believe, the truth of the matter, and it is a great pity that it should be lost sight of. Those who have been assuring us so volubly these nine years past that all evils, past and present, had their source in Germany, are now tending to say the same of France, with the same reckless inconsequence, for unhappily it is true, wherever "public opinion" is manufactured by linotype, that "even with men who hold the Catholic faith with true loyalty, their vaster outlook upon things is practically uninfluenced by a directly Christian philosophy of things."¹ Two fundamental truths in especial are utterly forgotten, namely, the origin of evil, and the permanent cleavage between the Church and the world *in all countries*. None has the monopoly of good or bad. In the calm light of reason many of the axioms of 1914—1918 are seen to be palpably absurd. But amid the clash of arms the laws are silent, the arts also, and, under modern conditions at least, it would seem that reason follows in their wake.

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¹ Abbot Vonier. *The Christian Mind*, p. 208.