

## EDITORIAL

**S**INCE this review is repeatedly accused of engaging in political propaganda we feel it necessary to protest to those who are irritated by what they call our politics that **BLACKFRIARS** has no merely political aim of any kind. On matters where men are free to state and discuss opinions we have striven to preserve an open mind: opinions we have endeavoured to put forward as opinions and not as dogmas or certainties. On matters where justice and truth seemed to demand plain speaking we have not hesitated to speak, even though that speaking seemed to favour an unpopular cause. But in a time of tumultuous passion that man is rarely a favourite who affects to be dispassionate, who tries only to be partial towards what seems to him just. We all nurse our prejudices and we only listen with eager enthusiasm to the man who speaks for our side. It is the partisan utterance that wins a hearing; and the fact that **BLACKFRIARS** has, at one and the same time, been assailed as the enemy and hailed as the champion of a single political cause might seem to point to a certain success in impartiality.

We have, all of us, our own national prejudices, our ingrained loves and hates. We are all cursed with the blight of nationalism—that corporate egotism which we disguise as a virtue and call patriotism. It is not the monopoly of any one people. We are all more or less infected by it. It is a disease that the European war has fed and fomented into a blazing passion. The present frightful state of the world is manifest

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witness of the dread evils brought about by an exaggerated insistence on nationalism. The world seethes with racial conflict. France is still suspicious of Germany ; Russia, as a result of war from without and anarchy within, is in an agony of famine and disease ; the complicated Polish affair in Upper Silesia is a wrangling point for the Powers ; Greece and Turkey are still unplaced ; Palestine is on the verge of turmoil at the prospect of an organized Jewish immigration ; the Balkans are still a *mixum gatherum* of tribal squabbles ; Ireland is still clamouring for what England says cannot be given. The world presents a pretty spectacle for the angels—if indeed they are permitted so sad a sight which would seem incompatible with their beatific joy.

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A very important article in the recent *Dublin Review*, by Monsignor Prior, Pro-Dean of the Rota, on “ Pope Benedict XV in the War and after,” might be read as an excellent corrective for a too intense and unbalanced nationalism. Therein the unique position of the Pope during the war is admirably set forth. He was the one neutral who refrained from taking any active part in the war, who, when he interfered, did so not to gain an advantage or to circumvent any of the belligerents, but to alleviate suffering and in some way to temper the horrors of war with a healing touch. He was the one neutral who “ was not enriched by the war, but rather impoverished,” yet “ by the secret Pact of London, signed in the spring of the year 1915, by Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy, the Pope was expressly and by name excluded from any share in the Peace negotiations at the end of the World War.”

There were those of course who, “ while deaf to the Pope’s entreaties to consider some means of compromise to end the appalling massacre, were quite

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willing to assign to him a post like that of the referee in the boxing ring, to cry out at the incidents of foul play and register hits below the belt, without prejudice to the right of the onlookers to applaud where his judgments coincided with their own, and to hiss where they differed." The Pope's silence was justified by excellent reasons. Moreover, he "was resolved that the gigantic weapon in his hands should not serve the particular purposes of any of the belligerents to the detriment of others." "As Vicar of Christ he had a mission of mercy to all without exception. . . ." "The full record of his merciful interventions, while Europe was rent by the terrible catastrophe, will never be known, but enough is in the possession of the public to show that his services were immense."

We know how his counsels of peace were unheeded. His Peace Note of August 1st, 1917, was falsely declared to have been engineered by Germany.

Truly the Pope was during the war the one dignified figure in the world, and it is a hopeful sign when governments that do not recognize his spiritual authority are tacitly acknowledging his moral power by renewing diplomatic relations with the Papal Court. "Never has the papal throne been surrounded by so numerous and influential a diplomatic corps, nor at any previous time has His Holiness had so many representatives of his own at the different seats of secular government."

Monsignor Prior alleges as one of the reasons for the inevitable failure of the League of Nations "the exclusion of the greatest moral force in the world, the Holy See, from any share in its deliberations." The Pope, by virtue of his sublime office as Christ's Vicar, brings us as near as possible in this human world to God's point of view. As the universal pastor he has at heart the good of *all* before the good of any individual or community. He is not complicated by the strifes

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of party or “swayed by gusts of public opinion” as are the politicians. “He competes with no one in the world’s markets. . . . His tenure of office can never depend on any particular decisions he is pleased to give; his judgment cannot be stampeded by cries of alarm from the public Press; in any and every case his position is stable as the everlasting hills as long as his life endures.”

In all the puzzling conflict of these days, in all the jumble of petty national hatreds, Catholics at least can cling to the comfort that besides being the subjects of this or that realm they are also the citizens of that City of God which is ruled by the successor of Peter the Fisherman.

EDITOR.



### *FLOS PARADISI*

(To H.A.H.V., born 8th July, died 10th July, 1921.)

*“Roges pro nobis quia scimus te in Christo.”*

HE smiles, small Ambrose, in his narrow bed.  
He left us with his little word unsaid,  
Our Lady’s medal claspt in tiny hands.  
He smiles, he sees and understands.

Mere babe he is not, his the thoughtful brow  
Of faith long-tried and proven, love intense.  
In him some aged saint, we know not how,  
Is one with new-born innocence.

Ah! little Ambrose, in God’s home eterne,  
Thou pleadest aye in heaven’s litanies  
Thy parents’ cross, torn hearts that bleed and burn,  
Twice theirs, since now for ever His.

H. E. G. ROPE.