

## NOTES ON THE MONTH.

### PAPAL ELECTION.

At present it is the privilege, dating from the middle ages, of the College of Cardinals to choose the Roman Pontiff. But the *Standaard* and the *Cité Chrétienne*, in a manner that seems to rule out mere idle rumour, report that the present Pope has it in his mind to revise the method of election and extend the vote to the body of bishops. Significance is seen in the fact that the number of Cardinals has been allowed to fall from the seventies to the fifties. The report is to be accepted with the greatest caution, but if the step is taken—and the present Pope has a way of springing things on the world, all complete and worked out, and is not a character to be baulked by difficulties when a principle has been established—two important effects would follow. The numerical preponderance of Italian electors at a conclave would disappear, and the whole Church, including the Catholic East, would take a more active part in the government of the Church. The implications on the question of Reunion are considerable and happy. The spectre of Vaticanism would stalk diminished in the minds of many who are both attracted and repelled by the Roman system as they conceive it.

### THE TRACTARIAN CENTENARY.

This year we celebrate one of the most important religious movements of modern times. Protestants and Catholics alike see where its logic leads, but the organ of that indeterminate body between, Catholic in its tastes but essentially Protestant in its form, has already begun to displace Newman for Pusey as the first genius of the movement. The contrast is drawn between Newman with his passion for speculative coherence and completeness and Pusey with his concern for solid and sober historical fact. This may pass muster at first. But it is worth noticing how the theory has worn better than the archaeology, and remains closer to life. Thought is more durable than learning. It is not without point that while the monument of the one is a religious congregation and a growing number of people living his thought, the monument of the other is a library.

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### THE ATTITUDE OF CATHOLICS.

Controversy is bound to crop up. Before it all begins, may we with delicacy offer our sympathy and prayers in the celebrations? Despite its incompleteness, what Catholic would deny the working of divine grace in the impulse of the Catholic Revival among Anglicans? And what Catholic should not be but grateful that in the fight against paganism he has allies without? That many hold to so much of Catholic truth and morals, in whose prayers with and through Christ he shares.

### TRENT AND THE VATICAN.

It is said that Pusey confessed there was no fundamental difference between his idea of the Church and the Roman Church as she had been left by the Council of Trent, but that accommodation with the Church of the Vatican Decree he found impossible. It would have been tragic if the Council of the Vatican had been really a sword of division, but better this than an easy accommodation, with the real nature of the Church glozed over—for she is a living authority speaking in all ages, not only in the Bible and the Fathers; always young with no need to live in the memories of the past. But a firm definition of principle is not quite the same as an uncompromising mood. The latter may be founded in legitimate pride in a majestic human tradition. Many of the objections to Rome can be traced to an undue emphasis on one of her essentially human qualities, or to a phrase. Submission, for instance, which should not, but may, suggest servility. Who was it who said: 'I never submitted to the Church, I was lifted up'?

### SUNDAY CINEMAS.

*The Week-end Review* notes how little popular support lies behind the 'noisy rattle of the Sabbatarians,' and how strong is the 'demand for reasonable Sunday recreation among ordinary English citizens.' That is just the point, 'reasonable recreation.' Few have intervened in the controversy with the strong sense of Canon Palmer of Ilford. He was strongly opposed, he wrote, to the opening of cinemas at all until such time as there was a proper censorship, but when films have been purified he would not

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be opposed to the opening of cinemas on any day of the week.

### VOLUNTARY EFFORT TO RELIEVE UNEMPLOYMENT.

Various voluntary schemes are in operation in different parts of the country to palliate or cure the evils of unemployment—allotments, social and recreational facilities, workshops, training centres. The B.B.C. is about to supply a public service for which it is peculiarly fitted. A commissioner has been appointed to travel about the country and report on these schemes. The results will be broadcast. This may do much to co-ordinate the various schemes of voluntary effort, and to extend them. It is a commentary on the weakness of government when it comes to solid construction that the Prime Minister, in launching the programme, can do little more than stand by and give the Government's blessing on it.

### CONTRACTS AND THE AMERICAN DEBT.

Whatever may be the motives of international financiers, it is clear that the country generally supports Mr. Chamberlain's appeal to the morality of keeping business contracts. Payment on the nail, although difficult, is a gesture of which the spiritual force more than outweighs the economic damage. The average man feels we have met our debts like gentlemen, a glow to be respected, although with it there is a semi-humorous feeling of 'take it, and I hope it chokes you.' Gold is not so digestible as it used to be. All this may be sentimentality, and not morality, but anyhow it is better than a motive of mere economics. Mr. Belloc speaks of the admirable spectacle of unity which the nation presents on these occasions. The suggestion is that it is mainly a matter of artificial discipline, imposed from above. But the matter is more native than that, more part of a tradition. With all its faults, English business still retains some of the substance of commercial integrity. Contracts may be good, they may be harmful; they must be honoured. This was the virtue of the old Individualist Industrialism, of which the spirit still lives. Catholics have little cause to like M. Herriot, but there was dignity in his last appeal to the Chamber before his fall, that a great nation should not go back on its signature.

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### MORALITY.

A business code may be stricter and tighter than morality. Had this country decided against an immediate payment of the debt, it is interesting to speculate on the moral defence that could have been put up. The perfect notion of a debt postulates the complete distinction of the contracting parties; yet the American debt was incurred by a member of and in the interests of a group to which America belonged, was entirely spent in America and enhanced American prosperity. The moral obligation of payment falls on a free and capable person; yet payment of the American debt is bound up with a tangled political situation out of the power of this country alone to control, and threatens the carrying out of graver duties to our own citizens and to the peace of Europe—for the unity reached at Lausanne, inadequate as it was, did mark an advance in international relations. In general, there would seem to be enough grave inconvenience to satisfy a rigorous moralist in refusing to pay.

### ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL.

The royalties received this year (in spite of a gesture of refusal) by the Persian Government as their share of the profits of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company during 1931 amounted to the trifling sum of £300,000. Last year, however, they received on the same account a sum exceeding £1,000,000, and in previous years they had received even more.

When one remembers that the Persian Government never contributed to the costs of the enterprise, never took any risks and never made any effort to gain anything from the oil stored up under Persian soil, it is difficult to sympathise with their complaints and, still more, with the arbitrary action they have taken in cancelling the Concession.

It is sometimes objected: 'After all, it is their oil.' But 'their oil' might have remained theirs for the next five hundred years without a single Persian subject troubling himself to exploit it.

A Government more experienced in economic affairs might consider itself lucky to find a foreign firm ready to

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take risks, to sink capital and do the hard work necessary to get the oil spouting, to have it conveyed by pipe-line from the heart of a fearful desert to a port on the broiling Persian Gulf and, in so doing, to provide work for thousands of Persians, creating schools, roads and ports, as well as paying handsome royalties to a Government which offers few or no facilities to the Company and treats British interests and representatives with scant courtesy—but the new *régime* in Persia, while abandoning something of the procrastination of its predecessors, has also abandoned most of its predecessors' geniality.

### THE BRITISH POSITION.

Here is a case where Imperial development appears to have right on its side. Work is a deeper title to possession than is the increment of a thing held without effort. The claims of the worker in the Capital *v.* Labour dispute (if you care to adopt the opposition) support the British case. It will be interesting to observe the Labourite attitude, and whether the firmness of official action will be threatened by sentimentality at home. The pipe-line must be a strong line.

### A NEW INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT.

Backed by the Bank of England through the Bankers Industrial Development Company, a steel company has set itself to work the ironstone beds south of Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire. Everything is being prepared for the large-scale production of basic Bessemer steel. There are advantages: employment for thousands, independence in regard to outside sources of supply. But it is to be hoped that public authorities will be vigilant in preserving the amenities of the district. The development threatens to be particularly disfiguring, with blast-furnaces and extensive quarrying, for the deposits are spread under the surface and are not reached by deep and narrow shafts. The country of the hunting prints—of wide rolling fields, high woods on the ridges and willow courses along the bottoms must not be desolated like another Cleveland. Yet it will if it is left to private and uncontrolled exploitation.

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### PRIVATE PROPERTY AND PUBLIC WELFARE.

The right of the individual to possess stable and productive property is natural and in itself independent of civil authority. Its purpose is the careful, orderly and peaceful development of the earth so that everyone can live in security, sufficiency and decency. When its exercise strikes at this, it is defeating its own end. Concentration in the hands of the few, private exploitation to the detriment of the amenities of life for the many, do this, and can, and should, be checked by drastic State action. This is not Socialism, but the curbing of Individualism precisely in the interests of private ownership.

### A CURE FOR THE CRISIS?

Distress has been widespread before, but never in the midst and precisely because of plenty. We lack the capacity neither to produce nor to consume, but simply to relate the two. We have not enough money. Not, in the main, because it has been cornered by a few, but because there is not enough to go round. There is an ample supply of goods; heaven knows the unsatisfied demand there is for them; but the money to buy them is short. Real plenty, of produce and need; artificial famine, of the medium of exchange. Why? Is it because the manufacture and issue of money is controlled by the banks; by private companies, that is, whose interests demand that money should not be too plentiful? If so, the remedy is for the State to displace them and itself control the supply of money, regulating the amount by the abundance of goods in relation to needs. Money in itself is only a means of exchange. It is valuable, not because it is gold or silver or paper, but because it is backed by goods. We commend to the attention of our readers two articles by Lord Tavistock in *The New English Weekly* (December 1st and 15th), entitled *Why are we poor?* and *How we may become rich—and why we don't*. It is increasingly realized, if often unconsciously, that the teaching of St. Thomas on usury is not merely of academic interest, and that, in the end, bad morality turns out to be bad economics as well.

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all real culture. If we wish to think, we must needs step aside from all this acceleration of life; if we wish to make our lives and our souls, to develop our own tastes, and not those of other people, we must make our own environment and control it.

This, in the present world, is becoming impossible. Everything is centralised and standardised—the result of the machine; everything is broadcast from a point and not focussed to a point. If we wish to preserve our individuality and our freedom we have to escape as far as we can all the propaganda around us, and create some refuge where the world cannot trespass.

The home is the sane man's castle, and it is there that he must retire to seek and find himself.

Our fight for freedom is being waged around the home, and there are signs on every side that victory is going to the aggressor. The home is falling before the disintegrating force of contemporary life.

One of the chief factors in this disintegration is the separation of work from the place where men live. This has arrived in our great industrialised areas through the advent of the machine. The crafts have been destroyed, the homesteads deserted. The home is no longer the centre of man's interest; it is becoming more and more just the place where he sleeps. In increasing numbers people are assembling for their amusements in theatres, cinemas and dancing halls, and for their meals in restaurants and clubs . . . . All things tend to become more and more social and less and less domestic. The husband is away all day at work, the children are away all day at school. And in many cases the house is so mechanised that the housewife has leisure enough to spend most of her time out of it, and even to go to work. Home-making is almost a lost art.

In addition to this dissipation of life, due to the machine, there is the insecurity which can in part be attributed to the same cause. When industry is in the hands of a few, and the father of a family has to depend entirely on the wage given to him by a master, in the direction of

whose business he has no control, there must always remain the spectre of insecurity.

The mechanisation of life on the one hand and the insecurity, due to prevailing economic conditions, on the other, have had a disastrous effect on the constitution of the home: there are fewer children. With this lamentable fact the disorganisation of the natural economy of the home is complete, and as an educational environment for the rearing of children it is to little purpose.

For the home, to be effective for Christian education, must have three predominant characteristics—namely, stability, security and population. To safeguard stability the Catholic is pledged by the marriage vow to community of life and fidelity until death. Security, in the celebrated phrase of Leo XIII, will be found 'solely in the inexhaustible fertility of the earth,' because it is a 'store-house which will never fail, affording man the daily supply for his daily wants' (*Rerum Novarum*).

It would seem, therefore, that if we are to restore the first two conditions of home-making—*i.e.*, stability and security—we must establish in the land a Catholic peasant population, and that if the leakage from the Catholic ranks in England is due in large measure to the disintegration of the home, the first and most important remedy is economic.

Speaking on this subject in *The Sower* (No. 102), Dr. McQuillan says:

'There is a growing feeling that the leakage problem, like the land problem and similar social problems, is being treated with arid discussions and endless articles, while the leakage itself increases because next to nothing is done. Any attempt to stop the leakage has hitherto been fruitless because very few understand its cause, and such activity as has been displayed has chiefly taken the form of artificial stop-gaps. I submit that the leakage is essentially a town problem. It is the urban arrangement of society which causes the leakage. There is no leakage in a country district where there is a resident priest. Such lapses as do take place there are rare individual cases, to be



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treated as such, but they do not constitute a problem. The obvious remedy is to empty the cities.'

This Catholic movement back to primary conditions will restore the natural economy of the home and remove the chief causes of disintegration and leakage by giving it stability, security and population, thus laying the foundation of national culture. With that contention most of us, I think, are in complete agreement. One of the means of avoiding the demoralising influence of present-day social conditions is flight.

But there is another side to the picture. Are we to assume that the *only* remedy is flight, and that because the Catholic home has been grievously afflicted by urban centralisation it cannot be built and fortified to survive in such an environment? Is the town, as such, destructive of Catholic family life?

Let us put the question another way. The modern town is the product of the machine—*i.e.*, the machine used selfishly for the enriching of comparatively few individuals. Are we to assume that a similar centralisation, perhaps less intense though none the less urban, which is the product also of the machine controlled in some way by the State for the social services and the common good, is also destructive of ideal home life?

Or to state the problem still more briefly: Can the Catholic urban family already stabilised by the marriage vow be guaranteed economic security and room to expand in population?

The answer turns on the guarantee of security. And again we are confronted by the machine.

In discussing machinery, whatever our personal views and prejudices may be, we have always to remember that the present Pope has conspicuously given it his blessing. He has done this in so many ways and his attitude is so well known that it is enough merely to recall the fact.

The fundamental problem, then, remaining to be solved is whether economic security is possible in the modern town. To help in our brief examination we will ask our-

selves three questions:

1. What is the machine?
2. Is the machine good or bad in itself?
3. What control has man or can man have over the machine?

The answer to the first question is that the name *machine* is given to those complicated instruments or tools which transmit force or direct its application. It is important to remember that there is no essential difference between the simplest instrument like a lever or saw and the most delicate and complicated machinery, such as the automatic telephone or watch or motor-car; they all transmit force or direct its application by some particular means that has been discovered by observation and experiment.

Secondly. The machine cannot of itself be good or bad; what makes it good or bad is the use to which it is put. This can easily be seen by taking a simple illustration. A man fashions a steel blade. This is an instrument that can be put to a variety of uses. In itself it is neither good nor bad; any goodness or badness in relation to it depends upon the motive of the human agent. A man might, for instance, mount the blade on a hickory shaft and use it as a scythe to cut grass or wheat, or he might use it as a weapon to slay his family. Every instrument, whether it be a pocket knife or a fleet of aeroplanes, is good or bad according to the motive or mind of the principal human agent using it.

Thirdly. Do men control machinery as an instrument for the benefit of mankind (or if they don't, *can* they do so?), or is the machine making the peoples of the world so machine-minded and machine-dependent that it is in fact governing and modifying men, individually and collectively? This question is exercising the mind of every modern observer.

Mr. Belloc, writing in *The Listener* (Feb. 2, 1932), says:

'It is quite obvious that in some degree every new instrument, if its use be permitted, will affect human life . . . but in what degree? Everything lies in the

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answer to that question, and, indeed, all the more important questions set for mankind depend upon this point of degree.

‘What we have to determine is not whether machines in part control mankind. Of course they do. Not whether we may not on occasions subject them to our will. Of course we can. But does the initiative lie mainly with us, with our wills as individuals and as groups of individuals, or are we in the main the passive subjects of blind forces which our own activities have let loose?’

The question to which we are now addressing ourselves is not—does the initiative rest mainly with us? but—can the initiative be gained by us, presuming that it has been lost?

If civilisation is to survive, the answer to this question must be in the affirmative, for man is greater than the sum-total of the instruments he uses and the environment which he creates.

But how is he to regain this initiative, presuming (and there can be little doubt) that it has been lost? This is the vital question of the hour. Are we to submit to the mechanisation of life which will inevitably lead to determinism and Communism in one form or another? Or are we to fight for individual and family liberty in the knowledge that all men are greater than the things they have made—greater than the State?

There are two answers:

First. A complete and uncompromising break with the machine in a simple and straightforward endeavour to establish a free peasant population.

Second. The method of co-operation suggested by the present Pope in his recent encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. The reader will probably remember the context. The Holy Father is speaking of class-warfare, and he goes on to say:

‘The war declared against private ownership has also abated more and more in such a way that nowadays it is not really the possession of the means of production which is attacked, but that type of social

rulership, which, in violation of all justice, has been seized and usurped by the owners of wealth. This rulership in fact belongs, not to the individual owners, but to the State. If these changes continue, it may well come about that gradually the tenets of mitigated Socialism will no longer be different from the programme of those who seek to reform human society according to Christian principles. *For it is rightly contended that certain forms of property must be reserved to the State, since they carry with them an opportunity of domination too great to be left to private individuals without injury to the community at large.*

May we not, therefore, reason, basing our argument on the principle formulated by the Holy Father which we have italicised, that machinery, in certain of its forms, must in some way be controlled by the State, since in our present demoralised society it provides individuals with an irresistible temptation to exploit the community?

In the same encyclical the Pope refers to the manner and scope of this State control. We will quote the reference at length:

' Within recent times, as all are aware, a special syndical and corporative organisation has been inaugurated which, in view of the subject of the present Encyclical, demands of Us some mention and opportune comment.

' The State here grants legal recognition to the syndicate or union, and thereby confers on it some of the features of a monopoly, for, in virtue of this recognition it alone can represent respectively working-men and employers, and it alone can conclude labour contracts and labour agreements. Affiliation to the syndicate is optional for everyone; but in this sense only can the syndical organisation be said to be free, since the contribution to the union and other special taxes are obligatory for all who belong to a given branch, whether working-men or employers, and the labour-contracts drawn up by the legal syndicate are likewise obligatory. It is true that it has been authori-

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tatively declared that the legal syndicate does not exclude the existence of unrecognised trade associations.

'The corporations are composed of representatives of the unions of working-men and employers of the same trade or profession, and, as true and genuine organs and institutions of the State they direct and co-ordinate the activities of the unions in all matters of common interest.

' Strikes and lock-outs are forbidden. If the contending parties cannot come to an agreement, public authority intervenes.

' Little reflection is required to perceive the advantage of the institution thus summarily described: peaceful collaboration of the classes, repression of Socialist organisations and efforts, the moderating influence of a special ministry.'

We only touch on this subject to show that in the mind of the Holy Father the security upon which the home-life of the nation depends is considered possible *in the urban environment*, and if 'possible' it is the duty of 'men of technical, commercial and social consequence' to endeavour to provide ways and means according to Catholic principles.

In other words, although the foundation of Christian Society must undoubtedly be laid on the land, the problem of town-leakage which is intimately connected with the economic security of the home can be solved *in the town*.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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