

FRENCH PRIZE POEM

THE Editor of THE FORUM offers a prize of one hundred dollars for the best translation into English of the following poem by M. Paul Claudel, the new French Ambassador to the United States. The poem was personally selected by M. Claudel. For further particulars consult the Toasts. All manuscripts must be addressed to the Editor of THE FORUM and submitted before September first.

L'ENFANT JÉSUS DE PRAGUE

L neige. Le grand monde est mort sans doute. C'est décembre.

Mais qu'il fait bon, mon Dieu, dans la petite chambre!
La cheminée emplie de charbons rougeoyants
Colore le plafond d'un reflet somnolent,
Et l'on n'entend que l'eau qui bout à petit bruit.
Là-haut sur l'étagère, au-dessus des deux lits,
Sous son globe de verre, couronne en tête,
L'une des mains tenant le monde, l'autre prête
À couvrir ces petits qui se confient à elle,
Tout aimable dans sa grande robe solennelle
Et magnifique sous cet énorme chapeau jaune,
L'Enfant Jésus de Prague règne et trône.
Il est tout seul devant le foyer qui l'éclaire
Comme l'hostie cachée au fond du sanctuaire,
L'Enfant-Dieu jusqu'au jour garde ses petits frères.
Inentendue comme le souffle qui s'exhale,
L'existence éternelle emplit la chambre, égale
À toutes ces pauvres choses innocentes et naïves!
Quand il est avec nous, nul mal ne nous arrive.
On peut dormir, Jésus, notre frère, est ici.
Il est à nous, et toutes ces bonnes choses aussi:
La poupée merveilleuse, et le cheval de bois,
Et le mouton, sont là, dans ce coin tous les trois.
Et nous dormons, mais toutes ces bonnes choses sont à nous!
Les rideaux sont tirés . . . Là-bas, on ne sait où,
Dans la neige et la nuit sonne une espèce d'heure.
L'enfant dans son lit chaud comprend avec bonheur
Qu'il dort et que quelqu'un qui l'aime bien est là,
S'agite un peu, murmure vaguement, sort le bras,
Essaye de se réveiller et ne peut pas.

Paul Claudel

Courtesy of the Librairie Gallimard, Paris.

FOOTPATH AND HIGHWAY

BY THE PEDESTRIAN

PROTESTANTISM — DEAD OR ASLEEP?

CANON HANNAY, in the April FORUM, presents a vivid picture of the breakdown of English Protestantism, at least in the Anglican Church. He assumes the rôle of reporter, moreover; not of propagandist. He observes recent Church history and writes down the facts and the explanation of the facts as he sees them. He's "not argufyin"; he's "just a-tell-in'" us.

That's all to the good. Mr. Chesterton, "argufyin'," had almost persuaded us to thank God we were Protestants. Now Canon Hannay, if his picture is a true one, if this be Protestantism, or even one important phase of it, fairly persuades us to thank God for its demise. The only trouble is, the corpse isn't Protestantism. It is a large part of external Protestantism, to be sure; and many Protestants themselves mistake it for the real thing, — just as a good many Americans mistake a complexity of laws plus a total disregard of laws for Democracy.

Not that I question Canon Hannay's statement of fact, nor yet his inferences from the facts he selects. My contention is merely that he omits the really important facts. He appears to assume that the choice must be between old priest and new evangelist, just as a good many people of Milton's day supposed it must be between "old priest" and "New Presbyterian"; but it is difficult to see just where Dean Inge, or any genuine Protestants, fit into that picture.

The breakdown pictured by Canon Hannay has come, he says, in three steps: first, a theological debacle; then, a ritualistic; finally, a devotional. Well, you don't have to go to England to find plenty of evidence for his statement. Witness the frantic propaganda among the churches; there is evidently so little virtue in make-believe Protestantism that its adherents must "sell" it with advertising campaigns. Or observe the wholly un-Protestant attempts of various sects to establish temporal power, either as sects or through political organizations devilishly or-