

"I'm sorry he don't feel well," the woman said. "He's an awfully nice man. He was in the ring, you know."

"I know it."

"You'd never know it except from the way his face is," the woman said. They stood talking just inside the street door. "He's just as gentle."

"Well, good night, Mrs. Hirsch," Nick said.

"I'm not Mrs. Hirsch," the woman said. "She owns the place. I just look after it for her. I'm Mrs. Bell."

"Well, good night, Mrs. Bell," Nick said.

"Good night," the woman said.

Nick walked up the dark street to the corner under the arc-light, and then along the car-tracks to Henry's eating-house. George was inside, back of the counter.

"Did you see Ole?"

"Yes," said Nick. "He's in his room and he won't go out."

The cook opened the door from the kitchen when he heard Nick's voice.

"I don't even listen to it," he said, and shut the door.

"Did you tell him about it?" George asked.

"Sure. I told him but he knows what it's all about."

"What's he going to do?"

"Nothing."

"They'll kill him."

"I guess they will."

"He must have got mixed up in something in Chicago."

"I guess so," said Nick.

"It's a hell of a thing,"

"It's an awful thing," Nick said.

They did not say anything. George reached down for a towel and wiped the counter.

"I wonder what he did?" Nick said.

"Double-crossed somebody. That's what they kill them for."

"I'm going to get out of this town," Nick said.

"Yes," said George. "That's a good thing to do."

"I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful."

"Well," said George, "you better not think about it."

## The Catholic Laywoman's View-Point

BY GRACE HAUSMANN SHERWOOD



AT a time like this when our foremost magazines carry almost invariably with each issue one article about religion and sometimes more than one; when even the *American*

*Mercury*, edited by that famous scoffer, Henry Mencken, falls into line with the publication not so long ago of an article with the significant title: "A New God for America," it seems not improbable to me that the view-point of the Catholic laywoman might interest the general reader.

For among the many voices which have been heard in this modern pulpit of the printed page, among the modernist, the fundamentalist, the layman who has just

discovered the things of the spirit for the first time and the minister who is about to give them up because he has lost his faith in them, the man who thinks that Christ's example is the only religion needed anywhere and the woman who would offer us Buddha as a substitute for Christ, the missionary's note-book from some outpost of civilization and the gropings after spirituality of the man in the street—among all these the Catholic woman has been silent. What she thinks of her religion, how she feels about its practices as they relate to her and to her children, how full her share in spiritual things can be in a church governed entirely by men, and by men, at that, without wives, has not been told—if I have kept track of the argument and affirma-

VOL. LXXXI.—18

tion, the glimpses of mysticism, the discovery of prayer as a personal necessity, the hunger for spiritual insight, the longing for a definite way to enter upon the spiritual life which has surged like a tide through the pages of our better magazines for months or, rather, years.

I say laywoman advisedly. The view-point of the nuns and of the teaching sisterhood and others engaged in charitable work in our church must be patent to all. These women, totalling nearly one hundred thousand in America alone, averaging one out of every one hundred girls baptized into the Catholic faith, having renounced everything that mankind holds as most worth while in life, home, marriage, children, wealth, name, and fame, have staked their lives on the belief that spiritual values are the only ones worth considering. They look at life from the angle, one might say, of heaven.

But the laywoman's view-point is taken from the angle of the world and, of necessity, from a different angle from that of women of other denominations. Because in the things which concern women most, marriage and children, the Catholic woman must recognize as binding on her conscience two laws which other women, friends and neighbors, as good and often much better Christians than herself, have, for the most part, discarded long ago, *i. e.* the indissolubility of marriage and the sacredness of the family. I might state it briefly thus: We live in America where divorce is so prevalent that one out of two hundred and seventy-seven marriages is dissolved by it annually. Yet, in contemplating matrimony for ourselves or for our children these statistics can have no concern for us. By faith and by practice we are committed to one mate, if we marry, for as long as he lives. And again: in the midst of an everywhere growing tendency to limit the family for all sorts of reasons, we have but two alternatives, continence, or all the children the Lord chooses to send! Surely two good and sufficient reasons for calling the Catholic laywoman's view-point slightly different from that of the great majority of American women.

Dub them old-fashioned, antiquated, if you will, these laws of our church about marriage, we Catholic women hold our

heads high about them. We think that although the few may and undoubtedly do suffer by them they protect and honor the many. The thoughtless marriage decided upon on the spur of the moment, and entered into before a justice of the peace or some wayside marrying parson is impossible to a Catholic who obeys the laws of his church. Catholics must be married by a priest, and no Catholic priest will marry a couple of whom he knows nothing. He must have their baptismal certificates, have a letter from the pastor of one of them, have time to make inquiries, be assured in some way that it is proper for the marriage to take place. You see, getting married is such a serious thing, becomes so permanent, carries such heavy responsibilities with it that every safeguard possible is thrown about it at the beginning.

We believe that marriage is more than just a reaching after human happiness. We believe it to be a sacred contract entered into before God in which, in return for the joys and privileges that it brings, we are bound to accept the children who may be a fruit of it; we believe that whatever sacrifices the prohibitions against remarriage after separation and against birth control may entail (and they are often heavy where women are concerned), they are so far offset by spiritual growth through the performance of duty that in the end, in the complete scheme of Christian living, they become an advantage.

And if sorrow and disillusionment become our portion in marriage instead of happiness we are bound to accept that also. Only the death of one can give the other, man or woman, the right to marry again. These are stupendous things for weak human nature to undertake to promise, but we go into marriage with our eyes open. All of us, as boys and girls, are thoroughly instructed in what our church enjoins in our Catholic schools, and when we are prepared for First Communion and for Confirmation. We are also taught that if we promise these things before God, with trust in His help, we will get the strength to live up to our promises. To borrow Catholic phraseology, we believe that marriage is a sacrament and that in receiving it we receive, with it, its

particular grace also, the grace to keep the marriage vow no matter how many sacrifices the keeping of it may entail.

But then we believe in sacrifice. Our religion is built upon it as a central idea. Call it mediævalism, if you will, there were some good things in mediævalism which the world has lost sight of somewhat . . . a sense of spiritual values, for one thing. We believe that sacrifice, renunciation, is the price one has to pay for things of spiritual value.

We are not alone in that belief, by any means. I have a friend who, before her marriage, was a Presbyterian missionary in India. Whenever she speaks of that time her eyes shine and a note of exaltation comes into her voice.

"What I did then was a *sacrifice*!" she exclaims, ardently. "I was really giving up things for Christ. Now? Well, we give a tenth of our income, but what is that? We have a car, I get all the clothes I want, we go about and amuse ourselves, I keep help. When I think of *those* days when I wore cheap cotton dresses and gave my whole *life* to God!" . . . Instinctively, at such times, I invest my friend with a habit. I tell myself that she has felt what we Catholics name "the call to perfection"—the desire to renounce everything for Our Lord, the longing to obey utterly the words of Jesus to the rich young man. . . . "If thou wilt be *perfect* . . . sell all thou hast . . . and come follow Me."

To steal a word from one of the opposing factions in the battle which rages about us without affecting us, I suppose we are all fundamentalists, from the Pope down, if fundamentalism means believing all the old fundamental things in Christianity without exception. The most complete Fundamentalists left, in a sense!

All the knotty questions which tear at synod and presbytery, at convention and conference we accept without question. Without them our religion would crumble to pieces. For the principal act of worship in our church is the mass, and the mass itself, in its various prayers and ceremonies, predicates a confession of faith in all of the things the modernist denies.

In it, by the longer doxology, as well as by the Introit and other prayers, we rever-

ence the Trinity; we attest our faith in the Scriptures by listening to extracts from both the Old and New Testaments, standing, always, when the Gospel is read; by the Nicene creed we reiterate our faith, daily, in the Divine origin of the world, in the Incarnation, in the Virgin birth, the Redemption, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the inspiration of the Scriptures, Baptism, the Last Judgment, and a future life. In the various prayers which follow the creed we declare our practical belief in the communion of saints by asking their intercession as well as the help of the angels; at the consecration of the bread and wine we endeavor to call before the mind clearly Our Lord's death on the cross for us, accepting literally His words at the Last Supper as they have come down to us through Matthew, Mark, and Luke's narrative. This is the heart and centre of the mass without which all the rest would be meaningless. Without the belief in Christ's atonement for sin by the shedding of His blood the mass would become a mockery, a mere symbolism, unworthy of the attention of serious-minded Christians. And later, after prayers for the living and the dead, Communion is given which means that, believing as we do about the Eucharist, a belief too widely known to need restatement here, we declare our faith unservedly in miracles.

But all this has nothing to do with the Catholic laywoman's view-point about religion. I have set it down merely to emphasize our complete orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is the groundwork of our church, the root of its tree of growth. But there is a flowering of beauty in the liturgy, in some of the customs and the services which have sprung up, some spontaneously, others as the result of a woman's devotion; prayers which have been incorporated into the ritual because of some man's reverence for the highest and the purest of women, all of which have a strong appeal to women.

We belong to a church which honors women—honors womanhood, I ought to say, rather. Although no woman in our church may minister at the altar, may even enter a church with her head uncovered, we have, as a sex, a unique honor. At the beginning of every day, at its noon-

time rest and again at its close the Angelus bell is rung to remind every Catholic to pause and consider what? That the angel of the Lord declared unto *Mary*. That the most stupendous message ever sent by God to man was sent to woman, a mere girl, a virgin, Luke tells us, "full of grace." When the Angelus bell rings every devout man from the Pope to the humblest laborer bows his head and recalls to mind that not to his sex was the magnificent secret first revealed but to ours. The Angelus bell has a peculiar appeal to women. What it does or, rather, what it seeks to do, is to bid everybody pause a moment three times in every day, and reflect upon the fact of our redemption and upon the part that a woman was chosen to play in it. This is but one example of what I mean by the flowering of the liturgy, the idealizing of our sex, the incorporation of women's words as well as men's into the services of the church. The words of Gabriel's salutation of *Mary*, and of her cousin Elizabeth's greeting of her when she went to visit her, have been, together with a petition to *Mary* to pray for sinners, made into the prayer known as the "Ave Maria," a prayer which has been set to music over and over again, the prayer which, with the Lord's Prayer and two others, strung on the cord of meditation, form the Catholic devotion known as "the rosary."

Probably no belief of ours has been so misunderstood as our reverence for the Blessed Virgin. We are accused of worshipping her, of robbing God of honor by honoring her, of adoring her graven image, of I know not what absurdity. And yet, the feeling we have about her is so reasonable, once it is understood.

To us she stands for perfect purity, attested to by an angel sent from God. For courageous motherhood when motherhood meant, for a while, the doubt even of her affianced husband. For faithfulness unto death, for it is on record in the Gospels that she was at the cross to the very last. Life was terribly hard for her from the day she was chosen to be the Redeemer's mother, and she shrank from none of its hardships. She wore, we believe, a double crown, the crown of both virginity and motherhood. To the rest of womanhood it is permitted to wear only

one of these. Choosing the one we must relinquish the other. But it was not so with *Mary*.

And because of this high privilege of hers she is the model woman to whom we bid our daughters raise their eyes. We tell our sons to look upon her as a beloved mother who by her prayers can help them to become high-souled and noble like herself. We ask her prayers for ourselves that in some measure we may grow to her stature of purity and faithfulness.

More than that, beside the high altar of every Catholic church whether it be a stately cathedral or some shabby mission chapel there is always another altar, an altar to *Mary*. Her statue is set upon it to remind us all of the height to which human nature has been raised in her. Merely human nature, not Divine. And on the other side is the altar to St. Joseph, her protector. These three altars symbolize, in a way, the Holy Family. The Holy Family, at Nazareth, is held up as the model for every Catholic home.

That is why we Catholic women do not regard the laws of our church about birth control as any especial hardship. Joseph practised continence; therefore continence is possible whenever necessary. *Mary* bore Our Lord when she and Joseph were so poor that His birthplace had to be a stable. Therefore, to a follower of Christ, poverty is no valid excuse for shirking parenthood. Marriage brings its sacrifices along with its compensations.

Do you ask me how we feel when one of our boys or girls leaves the home we have been at such pains to rear about them, not for a new home and human love, but for the lonely cell of the monk or the bare rectory of the parish priest, the silence of the Carmelite or the laborious life of the teaching orders, the incessant sacrifice of the missionary or of those who dedicate their lives to the care of the aged, the orphan, the sick, and the poor? I will try to give you the average Catholic mother's feeling about it. Of course, there are exceptions, but the greater number of us feel this way:

We feel that the attainment of success, of family joys, of fame, of all the good things of life is desirable, but that there is a higher way . . . the way of self-abnegation. Though we who are married have



not chosen it for ourselves, we know it is there to choose, we knew it even while we picked out the pleasanter way to serve God. But when a son or a daughter chooses the path of perfection for his or her way of life we feel blessed by the choosing, happy beyond any other happiness we have known before.

Why? The Bible again. We take a great many things in the Old and the New Testament literally. For one thing, the fourth verse of the fourteenth chapter of the Apocalypse of St. John.

These orders of women consecrated to the service of God by vow offer an outlet to the mysticism inherent in human nature whether the nature be man's or woman's. If a Catholic girl feels the urge to consecrate her talents to God's service the doors to a hundred orders lie open with a hundred different activities according to her preference. She can teach, she can nurse, she can tend the sick or the aged, she can go out to the heathen or into the homes of the poor in this country. She can spend her days in prayer as a contemplative nun or in cooking as a working sister. No talent is too high and no aptitude too lowly to be of use. And in taking the veil and the vows of evangelical perfection which go with it she is admitted, although a woman, to that mystical life of renunciation which has been the back-bone of the church for so many hundreds of years. You see, no Catholic woman ever feels left out because she cannot be a priest or even a deacon. There are so many vivid and engrossing things which she can do, things which touch the heart of Catholic life.

More, she plays a part which could not be dispensed with in the teaching of the young. It is to these nuns and sisters that the education of our children is intrusted, for the most part. For we make no bones of the fact that we like to educate our children in our own schools. It might be worth while to set down our reasons here although that is a much broader subject than how women feel about their church. We have no quarrel with the public schools but we say that no public school can, without infringing on the rights of those who are not Christians, set before children the beauty of Christ's life, the splendor of His purity,

the necessity of following His example. No public school can inculcate the habit of prayer, teach children to raise their hearts to God at the beginning of work or play, help them to grasp, if only dimly, that immense spiritual help lies to hand if only the heart be taught to use it. We feel that this sense of definite spiritual help to be had in definite ways, ways sanctioned by the usage of generations of holy men and women who have come and gone upon the earth, is the most priceless possession we have to leave our children. In an age when men deny His Divinity, when so many of the churches are shaken by disputes about His nature and His mission, when an increasing number are saying and believing that service to one's fellow men is the only religion necessary, we want them to keep fast hold of the intangible, the mystic, the supernatural, if you choose to call it that.

And indeed many thinking people outside our church agree in this. Harry Emerson Fosdick, writing in *Harper's* for last March, relates that he saw some children praying in a Catholic church, and comments on . . . "that deep virtue in Catholicism which Protestantism has so largely lost—prayer from the infancy up as an habitual discipline of the soul, the daily use of the churches for prayer where rich and poor, young and old may come one by one to renew their fellowship with the *surrounding, impinging, friendly*, unseen world of saints and angels." (The italics are mine.)

And in a pleasure-mad world we feel that it is of inestimable value to them to have before their eyes, daily, in the schoolroom the example of men and women who have renounced the world in order to teach the young how to use their minds and talents, and in teaching them strive to make them followers of Jesus who despised the world so that He would not even pray for it!

And again I find corroboration for this feeling in people who are not of our faith. Charles M. Sheldon, writing in *The Atlantic* last October under the title, "Can Religion Be Taught?" says: "Of course I do not need to explain my own position when I say that I think a teacher who is going to teach my children religion ought to be religious." And, further on . . .

"if we do not teach religion in the schools we deserve to suffer as a nation, and go the way of all those nations that have thought more of accumulating facts than of making life."

What more is left to say about our attitude toward our faith so complicated, seemingly, to an outsider, so simple to those within? That we have a strange rite, confession, which I have not even touched upon, a rite which seems almost an anachronism in this day and age of individualism. A hang-over, as it were, from the Middle Ages.

We find confession anything but an anachronism. It is one of the most useful things our church possesses. We know it, from experience, to be a wholesome discipline, a means of knowing ourselves and our secret failings, a definite means of correcting them, a ladder by which we can mount a step, a stumbling one, perhaps, but a step at least toward perfection. Therefore, having gone to confession hundreds of times ourselves, as soon as our children are old enough to know the difference between right and wrong we send them to confession. We want them to go, to acquire the habit of going often.

Do you suppose that if it were not true that we had found confession good for us, an absolutely certain spiritual help, we would send our children so eagerly? We are no different from other women, and no worse than the majority. Like other women we love our children more than anything else on earth. And every Catholic mother, the world over, is happy and at peace when her sons and daugh-

ters go frequently to confession and communion and is disturbed in mind when, for any reason, they give up the practice. This, it seems to me, is the best answer to those who persist in believing that there is something mysterious, almost sinister, about confession; a practice which Catholics have been hoodwinked into believing in, somehow.

And then, we love our church for its beauty. No one can deny us that, whether he be among those who shudder past her doors believing them the doors to a hideous idolatry or among those who toy with her ritual, in spots. All women love beauty and in our church all beauty finds expression. Why not, since God is Beauty?

Since we believe that Christ Himself condescends to dwell with us in our temples, it follows that they cannot be too beautiful for Him. Architecture, painting, music, poetry, all the upward spiralings of men's minds toward the beauty which must be in its essence God Himself, each has its place in the temple which centres about Him, their inspirer.

To sum up, we Catholic women feel that in our church women walk as equals with men. There may be a diversity in office but there is no sex in sainthood. Mary Magdalene's name finds its place on the Calendar as well as St. John the Baptist's.

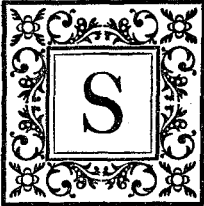
We feel that the ideal of purity which is held before our eyes from childhood, the ideal that points to the Virgin Mother as the supreme achievement of human virtue is the greatest tribute that any church could pay to woman.



# A Forgotten Art

BY GEORGE SPRAU

Author of "The Meaning of Literature"



URELY our popular notions of education and of teaching today and the quality of our much talking and writing about these subjects indicate that our definitions of

these terms are not quite the same as they were a generation or more ago. Then we and our immediate forebears were aware of an element in the concepts of education and teaching that we, for the most part, have forgotten. Then there was much discussion of the art of education and the art of teaching; now we seldom hear these phrases, and I am sure that the thought of education or of teaching as an art is very uncommon indeed.

I think we may understand the art of education to mean the calling into action of the higher and nobler faculties of man solely for the joy and delight that come with the consciousness of their full and proper functioning. There is pleasure in knowing, joy in thinking, delight and beauty in the free play of fancy and imagination; and ecstasy, the highest tension of experience, is defined as the obsession of powerful emotions. It is a red-letter day in the life of a young man or young woman when he comes to recognize in his own experience the rare quality of high-mindedness that distinguishes the great of all ages. He comes to feel at home in the regions of their thought, he catches glimpses of their ideals, and feels the thrill of their enthusiasm. He understands the value and pertinence of the problems of being that engaged their attention, and he dedicates his life and efforts to the same high purposes.

"Spirits are not finely touched, but to fine issues," says the Duke in "Measure for Measure." Brute creation is not endowed with the finer faculties of thought, with reason, imagination, emotion, and from it we do not expect the finer issues

of truth and beauty. We train the beast to a life of service and direction, but we say he has no soul. He has no power of creative imagination; he cannot make for himself new worlds and extend his being in range and intensity beyond the narrow limits of the now and here. On man alone is bestowed the gift of creative power, and in the exercise of this power human life may be said to have its true and final definition.

Visions of truth and beauty, a far call unto worlds not yet made actual, the joy and ecstasy that come with a clearer faith and a larger hope—such are the finer issues of life to which the spirits of men are finely touched, and to this end the art of education is always directed.

In other days much was said about this art of education, and students in our schools and colleges were frequently reminded of a larger, richer life that they might share and of a joy to be striven for and attained beyond the common pleasures of the beast. Once, at the end of an undergraduate course in philosophy, the professor, a worthy patriarch of the old school, asked us one after the other what we had gotten from the course. And we sophisticated young men answered him with many high-sounding phrases. He only smiled and said that he had hoped some one might say that through this course he had come to love philosophy. I often think of this in our own day when such hordes of young people throng our schools and colleges, and I cannot help wondering how many of those who teach think it their mission to bring to these young people the joyful experience of the finer issues of human life. How many of the would-be teachers live and are at ease in those far heights of thought, of imagination, of emotion, where they can see beyond the sunset of our little day and the bleak hills that skirt the horizon of our actual world? Are our classrooms and lecture-rooms high