

BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated *The Catholic Review*.)

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EDITORIAL NOTES

IT is a thing to praise that the call of the Holy Father for Catholic action has produced in London and elsewhere a growing number of professional societies, such as the Thomas More Society (barristers), Guild of St. Luke (doctors), of St. Odilia (opticians), and other guilds for policemen, busmen, shop assistants, etc., which unite Catholics on the basis of their work. It is also important to unite Catholics on the basis of their amusements, particularly of their public amusements. Public amusements are of two kinds, either sport or through the senses and mind. Negatively, this relationship of amusement and the faith has been effected by the vigilance of organisations like the Westminster Federation; positively, however, Catholic action needs the production of Catholic entertainment in cinema, theatre, dance-hall, etc. We wish to call attention to the way in which this has been splendidly begun. The Liverpool Amateurs (Catholic University Society) have twice successfully produced Mgr. Gonne's Passion Play, this year at the Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool, devoting the proceeds to the Cathedral Building Fund. A London Company of Hikers, after a retreat at the Canacle Convent this Holy Week, again successfully produced the same play at the Everyman Theatre. The Catholic Stage Guild at intervals produces plays less religious in character but Catholic in tone and inspiration. This is the

third year of their efforts in this direction, and their first conspicuous success has just been announced: *Caesar's Friend*.

Caesar's Friend, written and launched by the Catholic Stage Guild, is the immediate issue of a serious attempt of Catholic stage-folk and theatre-goers to intensify and deepen their own spiritual life and to gather the public amusements of London into that life. There are many whom it is hoped in this way to bring into co-operation, non-Catholics as well as members of the Guild, who are agreed on the principles that the Faith demands. Thus in the authorship of the play a non-Catholic collaborated with a Catholic, non-Catholic actors also have shared in the production, a mixed Catholic and non-Catholic audience hailed the play with enthusiasm. That it deserved this enthusiasm is clear from the fact that the London *Times* judged it to be a better play than Maeterlink's or Masefield's attempts at the same Gospel subject.

The Catholic Stage Guild, enjoying the patronage of the hierarchy, is calling for united Catholic Action in theatrical work and amusement. It asks that

- (1) All theatre-artists and theatre-goers should unite in prayer in the guild, with its own devotional, instructional, and sacramental life.
- (2) They should abstain from participating in plays and films that threaten Christian civilization and should help to starve them out of existence in England.
- (3) They should work for the production of plays and films, secular and religious, consistent with Christian thought, morals, culture.
- (4) They should concentrate their support on such plays, films, etc.
- (5) All Catholic amateur players (from O.U.D.S. to parish players) should unite their scattered efforts in a Catholic Drama League and link up in Catholic rivalry with professionals of the Stage Guild.
- (6) All Catholic priests, nuns, press and professional guilds should link up their work with this united effort towards a Catholic reformation of public amusements.

In giving this space to one single example of the possibilities of Catholic Action we wish to show what can be

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done and what has been done by a single group properly led under the inspiration of the Pope's call to action on the part of the Catholic laity.

Our readers will be interested to know that our July number will be entirely devoted to Cardinal Newman. July will be the centenary of the formal beginning of the Oxford movement in which he took so large a share. We have been moved therefore by the occasion to treat at length the principles which drove him to find their expression in the Catholic Church. It is sometimes stated that had he lived to see the development of the Church of England as she is to-day, he would not have left her communion. There is enough superficial truth in this to make it plausible to those who are ill-acquainted with his ideas at the time that he found himself driven to Rome. But to enable our readers to judge truly this facile verdict we shall take him in his pre-Catholic days and show that his principles were such that they would have driven him to Rome at any time anywhere in the history of Christendom. To accomplish this we have naturally taken the advice of his brethren at the Oratory in Birmingham as to how best this could be done. Happily we have had not only their advice but their co-operation. We must mention here especially Fr. Francis J. Bacchus. He will deal with religious development of Newman's thought between the years 1814 and 1833. Fr. Henry Tristram, also of the Oratory, has undertaken for us the historical setting of the movement. We have been happy, too, in the help of Abbot Chapman, whose unrivalled patristic knowledge enables him to treat this side of Newman as yet it has not been done. The other articles will deal with the crucial point of the national Church (a still existing ideal contrary to the whole Catholic tradition), the Essay on Development, the Parochial sermons, the Oxford University sermons, the *Lyra Apostolica* (showing that he and Froude were determined to make a stir before Keble had preached his sermon), and a last article will give the theological approach of Newman to the Faith. In this way we hope to provide a valuable study on the pre-Catholic Newman, which shall show that the Oxford Movement as a movement up to the time that he

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left it was definitely committed to Rome. When he saw that this was its inevitable tendency, he followed it. But from that moment, its principles were gradually changed so that it came at last to stand for something less clear, less patristic, more protestant than it had at first. With Newman's secession its story was really over. A new story began. It seems possible that in a period of greater realism the unfinished masterpiece that he had helped to build to God in the Church of England may in days not too far distant, be recognised and completed.

EDITOR.