

George at Windsor.¹

Miss Morgan makes it clear that although admittedly the administration of the English dependencies of Bec raised grave disciplinary issues, confiscation was the outcome neither of reforming zeal nor of royal cupidity, but of that intense anti-alien sentiment which was a by-product of the wars with France.² There is no parallel with the later Dissolution of the Monasteries. Bec, like other French houses, might be treated with scant consideration by the English crown, but ecclesiastical authority and the sanctity of Church property were acknowledged, and, in the main, respected, and as was the case with contemporary confiscation under the statutes of Mortemain, the amount of land that passed permanently into lay hands was negligible. If the suppression of the alien priories afforded any precedent for Tudor policy it was for the scheme, sponsored and partially applied by Wolsey between 1525 and 1529, for confiscating, with royal consent and papal authorisation, the property of certain of the smaller religious foundations, and applying it to the endowment of schools and colleges and of new episcopal sees. DR HELENA M. CHEW.

TOWARDS A BETTER FAMILY LIFE. (Published by the National Catholic Welfare Conference; Washington, D.C., U.S.A.)

Ten addresses, given at the fourteenth annual meeting of the National Catholic Conference on Family Life at the Catholic University of America, are contained in this booklet. The addresses selected are those which deal with the most serious attacks on the family in the U.S.A., together with certain counter-measures.

Divorce, so much more prevalent in America than this country, undoubtedly proves the greatest threat to the Christian ideal of the family. Statistics quoted by Mr Michael F. Walsh show that from 1937 to 1940 the number of marriages was 5,697,000 and the number of divorces 1,008,000; one divorce to every 5.5 marriages. Further figures reveal that 71 per cent. of the childless marriages end in divorce. A clear indication that the evils of contraception and divorce are closely linked.

Other problems discussed by well known American speakers include: Bad Housing Conditions; Economic Insecurity; Mixed Marriage; and 'Alcoholism'—this last being equivalent to drunkenness on this side of the Atlantic.

In the constructive sense there are addresses on Family Allowances; Church Clubs; and a scheme similar to our own Hospital Savings Association known as the 'Blue Cross Plan'.

The collection makes very interesting reading, whilst the importance and influence of the conference as a whole can be assessed from the encouraging personal letter from President Truman, which appears on the first page of the brochure. MAURICE MCLOUGHLIN.

¹ It may be of interest to readers of BLACKFRIARS to note that as early as 1352 the London Dominicans had profited by the financial embarrassments of the Prior of Ogbourne to purchase his town house in Castle Baynard ward for the enlargement of their priory.

² The author has treated generally of the suppression of the alien priories in *History*, December 1941. Historical Revision No. XCIX.