SARAH D. LOWRIE'S SATURDAY EVENING TALK

Sensitive, Weakly Faces in Old Church Windows Fail to Show Real Heroic Qualities

I ONCE asked a young college boy whom I know rather well how he liked a sermon he and I had just heard from the rector of a great city church in this town. He looked dazed for a moment, and then said apologetically:

"I didn't hear like usually. I was counting."

"Counting?" I asked. "I don't see how you could see all the people in the pews back of you and in the gallery."

"It wasn't the people I was counting. It was the number of feet in the stained glass windows. I think you notice them sometimes more than the faces," he said meditatively, "maybe it's because they are kind of cool and bare."

THE next time I was in church I verified his count. There were forty-seven feet, all bare, and as one Lot said, rather soft looking feet in a way more interesting than the faces of the saints, apostles and martyrs above them, just as the faces of the men and women who followed Christ in real life are actually more interesting than the face of their Master. For in most of the stained glass windows the gentle, dreamy, not very strong face that is given to Him has little about it to suggest a strong man, let alone a God.

For nearly a century almost all sacred art—so called—that we have used to decorate our churches and our religious books and papers has been of the sentimental German sort, of which Hoffman was the most successful exponent. And Christ, according to Hoffman, was a pretty sensitive boy, and Judas was a gentle and uneducated and not at all pretty peasant who was doomed to an early grave because he lacked that virile robustness and manly vigor that all commanding mentality.

Yet modern painters know how to draw heroes of a wonderful sort.

THE boy who had been counting the feet of the stained glass saints and martyrs in church, now sniffing and speculating on their faces, had been brought up on Howard Pyle's and Edwin Abbey's and Maxfield Parrish's and N. C. Wyeth's half gods, half men, of the Greek and Arthurian and Norse and Indian and Mohammedan legends. He was a connoisseur in heroes. And the book, Mystic, who was knocking at a closed door; the mild person with children swarming about Him, and the wan, frail man pointing skyward with a meaning smile of triple mild, appeal either a hero or a god as even such a man to his thinking.

AND indeed most of the people that he had been told began with Christ being a peasant socially—and therefore, born in among us and because he was poor and his parents of humble count, later on working in a carpenter's shop, being without learning and always walking about the roads and being threatened by the rich and powerful. Finally, after wandering up and down the country for two years and losing most of the friends He had, He had died a very untimely death, and after that rose from the grave looking very much the same as before, quiet and mild and deliberate and possessing never masterful and aggressive nature or dominating, never suggesting mystery or genius, but just sensitive and serious to the very moment when He suddenly went up, up into the sky like a picture drawn on to an invisible cord, with every one looking at the ascent, a little surprised, for not in the least terrified nor overwhelmed.

OF COURSE if this and been the actual history of Christ, His followers would be found on occasion to teach it after that fashion, for naturally it was not His best or His wisest deeds, therefore, who those who took pictures of Him, either in words or in art, are at such pains to have one hide the facts about Him and keep others from a wrong impression of Him and say always they actually were. And one wonders, too, whether the reason He has been so interesting to the generation of boys and girls, who are brought up to be gentlefolk and to delight in prowess and to admire the heroic and the adventurous and the successful and the sane is not because through ignorance or thoughtlessness or plain wrong-headedness He has been made to appear none of these things, but generally quite the reverse.

I VENTURE to say a modern boy or girl or young man, even a college man or girl, would sit up and look surprised if the facts about Christ were told straight from history.

Suppose in Soviet Russia of today the last of the two families nearest to the inheritance of the throne of the Czars was somewhere in hiding within a day's journey of Moscow, and that at the moment by marriage of the two remaining heiresses on here was to be born.

Suppose it was necessary to register this birth in Moscow and have the child christened with all the ancient rites of royalty in the Kremlin. Suppose in order to save their lives and the life of the child that was coming his parents were living in obscurity and in a place they could not secure all of their possessions compelled to leave behind them, including many articles connected with the princely estate in which the child was born, such as the cradle in which he was rocked, the child's clothes that are customary, and that of a builder.

Suppose to escape arrest and not during even while the enabled the two to double their real only two yet retain to them for the child to be born within the shadow of the ancient towers of his forefathers. All would have been done and the secret well kept to the night of the birth and for one, three or even four days, but not less than all necessary to the birth certificate and there had not been secret processes with gifts and star of the coming boy to him as a long as Moscow was there to tell.

AND suppose the Soviet Government, having discovered the secret, and also the fact that the child was born in the line of David, as they claim, to reckon the time for Him to begin His legal place as King, were to bring up the child themselves and train Him to be a Communist leader, so that He would be sure to be on their side when He came to power, and that He was not enough to make Him a Communist leader, but that He should be trained in the principles of Communism, and that He should be taught to hate the Czar and all his family and all that they represented, and that He should be taught to hate the rich and the nobility and all that they represented, and that He should be taught to hate the Church and all that it represented, and that He should be taught to hate the Christian religion and all that it represented, and that He should be taught to hate the Christian religion and all that it represented, and that He should be taught to hate the Christian religion