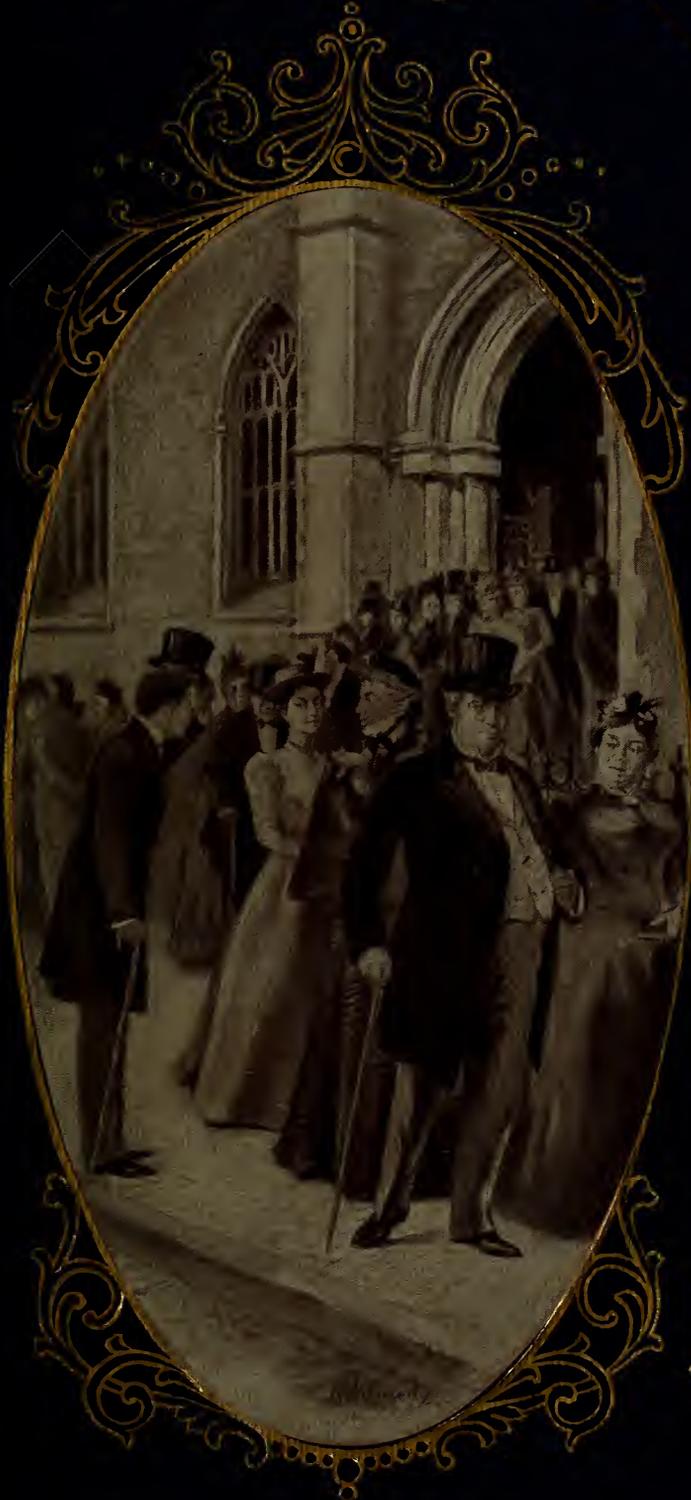


*The People of our
Parish*



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The People of Our Parish

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*Being Chronicle and Comment of
Katharine Fitzgerald, Pew-Holder in the
Church of St. Paul the Apostle*

EDITED BY ✓

LELIA HARDIN BUGG

AUTHOR OF "THE CORRECT THING FOR CATHOLICS,"
"ORCHIDS: A NOVEL," "THE PRODIGAL'S
DAUGHTER," ETC.



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The People of Our Parish

I

SUNDAY AT NOON

THE hands of the clock in the steeple point to twelve, — it may be a little before, or a few minutes after, — and the angelus rings sonorously in the familiar tones of the great bell.

High Mass is just over; there is a stir about the ponderous doors of the stately edifice of Saint Paul the Apostle, and the people pour out in irregular procession.

First, of course, in their best Sunday-clothes, come the young men who have been kneeling near the door, either because they are too poor or else too penurious to rent a seat, like self-respecting gentlemen, in their parish church. Some of these slipped into their places after the priest was on the altar, and were out in the vestibule before the last gospel, so that their estimate of their own souls evidently is not high.

Some girls, tawdrily over-dressed, and whispering vulgarly as they descend the aisles, regardless of the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, hurry after the young men.

Mr. and Mrs. Stiles are among those who appear anxious to make their escape as soon as possible.

Mr. Stiles rises from one knee, folds away the handkerchief on which he has been kneeling, brushes the dust from his trousers, makes a little bobbing genuflection in the direction of the altar, and with his arms swinging at his sides, elbows his way down the aisle. He has not been well brought up, else he would know what to do with his hands.

Mr. Stiles is said to be a level-headed business man, but he seems incapable of realizing the fact that, since his pew is near the front, he might just as well possess his soul in peace and prayer, and let those below him get out of the way before attempting to make his exit. He would arrive at the door just as soon in the end, and avoid the wear and tear on his patience and nerve tissues.

Mrs. Stiles is a little butter-ball sort of woman, with large diamond ear-rings, which she persists in wearing to church and everywhere else, in apparent ignorance of the fact that they are distinctly "bad form." She trots along at her husband's side, talking incessantly to one or another of her acquaintances corralled in the crush of the middle aisle.

Mrs. Jones hurries, or tries to hurry, only the crowd keeps her back; for she has an infidel husband at home, and the Sunday dinner must be set before him with that nicety of detail which only the housemother, on a limited income, can secure.

Mrs. Bayless also hurries; her sister-in-law is coming to dinner, and during Mass her thoughts have been divided between the august Sacrifice of the Altar and the probable outcome of a new sauce, which she has intrusted to the vagaries of the cook.

But then Mrs. Bayless never does hear Mass, as she will tell you herself. "I was at school for four years where the chapel was so badly lighted that it was impossible to read the prayers in my prayer-book, or follow the priest at the altar, and I got into the habit of just sitting there with my thoughts on any and every thing — my lessons, boxes from home, letters; and now I simply cannot pray at Mass."

She says this airily, and without in the least realizing the deplorable state into which she has plunged her poor soul. She has been physically present in the church for the hour of the Holy Sacrifice, but she has not assisted at it, and when she rises from her knees and leaves the church she will not enter it again until the next Sunday, when the same empty form will be repeated. Twice a year she goes to the Sacraments, and it would be interesting to know whether in these semiannual confessions she tells the priest that she has not once heard Mass during the six months since she told him a similar tale. She does not seem to understand that Mass and the Sacraments are channels of grace, the precious and indispensable strength of the soul; rather she seems to look upon them as outward acts to be performed in a perfunctory way and then forgotten.

One shudders to think of such a spiritual condition!

It is to be hoped that at the next mission in our church there will be a good old-fashioned sermon on "The right Way to assist at Mass."

The old crone who reads the seven penitential

psalms, or the prayers for confession, during Mass, might profit by this sermon as well as Mrs. Bayless.

Miss Wiggins may be counted upon to be just on the border of the crush, attired in bizarre raiment which makes the judicious grieve and the malicious ones derisive; for the good lady is a spinster of forty who dresses after the fashion of her young niece, of half that age. The middle aisle of her parish church is a favorite place in which to display her toilets.

Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. Madden whisper in friendly confidence as they go down the aisle, their husbands just in front of them.

When about two-thirds of the congregation are bunched together in the aisles, the organist, having finished a march, breaks out into some tonal combinations of his own, with a vigorous manipulation of the pedals; the soprano leans over the railing and smiles down upon a young man, who bows to her impressively, the tenor whispers something to the alto, and the bass stands like a Buddha in a frock coat, surrounded by the chorus.

Of course Father Ryan has thundered forth anathemas against those who show so little reverence for the Divine Presence in the Tabernacle as to chatter in the aisles, and even in the choir. A placard at the head of the stairway leading to the choir commands SILENCE in big capitals, but no one seems to pay much attention to it, except when the whisper goes round, "Father Ryan is looking."

And Father O'Neil, in his sweetly imploring way, has again and again spoken about this abuse. "Can

you not give our Blessed Lord one little hour?" he cries. "You come here on Sunday for Mass, and many of you, in fact the most of you, never come again for even a five minutes' visit before the Blessed Sacrament during all the seven days of the week. And when you come you show less reverence for your God than you would for an earthly king if you were admitted to his presence. You would not whisper and chatter with your friends if you were leaving the audience-chamber of the Queen of England,—you would not dare; but no such respect restrains you before Jesus in the Tabernacle.

"And how many in this congregation are always punctual at Mass? You can be in time for your business, promptly on time for a train; you can be at the theatre before the curtain goes up, because you do not wish to miss one fraction of an evening's pleasure; but you cannot be in time for Mass. You come straggling in after the priest is on the altar, and sometimes even after the Holy Sacrifice has begun; you show yourselves not only un-Christian, but also under-bred, for no well-bred person would wantonly disturb a whole congregation at their devotions by coming late.

"And it is not the hard-working mechanic who is guilty of this breach, nor the poor, ignorant domestic from the rich man's kitchen, nor the fragile little woman who stands on her feet ten hours a day in one of our big shops; no, it is the banker, the lawyer, the merchant, who has been out late 'on pleasure bent' on Saturday night, and who

wants to sleep late on Sunday morning; it is the lukewarm Catholic who dawdles over the Sunday papers until the second bell rings, or the woman who has tired herself out rushing around to card parties and receptions during the week, and who takes the 'rest cure' on Sunday morning, when she should be getting her husband and children off to church. You come late, and then you push and crowd one another in your efforts to be among the first to leave. Shame on such Catholics! One little fraction of God's own day given grudgingly to His service, and some of you would not give that were it not a strict command of the Church you discredit."

Then for a few Sundays there is a noticeable falling-off of the delinquents, and if any one does arrive late he steals in quietly, and drops into the first vacant seat he finds. And at the end everybody waits devoutly until the priest has descended the altar, said the prayers, and left the sanctuary. There is a reverential silence as the throng files slowly down the aisles. The change is so edifying, and the good example so inspiring, that one almost wishes that the people of St. James' parish could be present and profit by our beautiful conduct; but it soon wears away, the stragglers reappear, the whispers begin again, and the people again surge towards the door in their haste to leave the presence of their Saviour.

But there are always some faithful souls, just as there were the loving Marys to stand at the foot of the cross.

That saintly old aristocrat, Mrs. Chatrand, breathes forth the spirit of real piety in every act; if she has ever been late for Mass no member of the parish can recall the fact; always quietly yet elegantly gowned, as befits the temple of God and her own station, she moves gently with stately dignity up the middle aisle to her pew, and kneels like a beautiful white-haired saint, prayer-book and rosary in hand, her two blooming daughters at her side, equally attentive if not quite so devout, and her handsome son, six feet tall, an "honor man" from Georgetown College, kneels at the end of the pew, and cons devoutly the little prayer-book which he has used since he was a boy. The whole family are a source of edification to the parish. They remain kneeling for a few moments after Mass, perhaps to say some prayers for the dear ones in Calvary cemetery, or for the special intentions of the living; and they generally pass Mrs. Stiles, who resides near them, on their way home.

And Mr. Creighton, the millionaire banker, is another one who acts in the house of God as if he loved to be there, and was in no haste to leave it. And far down near the rear of the side aisle can usually be found a little old woman who walks with a crutch, and who has worked since she was fifteen in a factory. Sunday is a holy day as well as a holiday with her. Near her, in blooming contrast, is Miss Hammersly, a handsome young woman who has charge of a department in a shop under Mr. Stiles; she, too, is given to lingering for a little visit before the Tabernacle after the crowd has gone. Several

youths would like to walk home with her, but she prefers the society of "Granny" Byrnes, and the heartfelt "God bless you, my child," at parting. And she knows that in the afternoon the young men will find their way to her mother's flat.

And among others who are seen to leave the church last are the devout Sodality girls, with a tiny pin of the Sacred Heart somewhere visible about their persons; Mrs. McMahan, the happy mother of a priest and two nuns; and Mrs. Burke, a widow, who tries to imitate the virtues of her patron, Saint Petronilla. And gently on his way goes a serene old man, once given up for dead on the battle-field, who breathes his gratitude in Holy Communion every Sunday morning for many favors. Close behind these come Mrs. McGrath and her cousin, a clever woman who teaches, earnestly discussing the sermon.

In the crowd ahead of them is the young man who never listens to the sermon, and who could not even give a synopsis of the gospel of the day ten minutes after he has left the church; and the old man who reads his prayer-book when the priest is preaching; and the woman who studies the fashions during that precious harvest-time.

"Father Ryan is so prosy, and he says the same things over and over again,—things that I have known since I was a child," said a young woman to a beautiful elderly one; and she ought to have been crushed by the quiet answer: "I have been hearing sermons on nearly every Sunday of my life for fifty years, and never yet have I heard one that did not

contain something edifying, something that I had not known, or some point worthy of serious thought. I always try to fancy that it is one of the Apostles standing before me — and is not every priest a successor of the inspired twelve? Whatever may be the manner of a priest, or his oratory or diction, the matter is sure to be the teaching of our Saviour; he preaches the gospel, or some truth of religion, not as he himself might look at it, but as the great theologians and doctors of the Church have elucidated and made plain the meaning. Father Ryan to-day preaches the same gospel that Saint Ambrose thundered forth in Milan so many centuries ago, and which touched the stubborn soul of the worldly, impious Augustine, and started him on the road to being a saint himself. In conversation one may sometimes find reason to dissent from a priest, but when he ascends the pulpit he is there as the authorized teacher. I have never yet found one who could not teach me.”

The provocation excused this rather stinging reproof.

Whilst on the subject of sermons it might be well to remember that psychologists claim there is nothing so pernicious to the mind as to hear, without heeding, a sermon or lecture. They declare that if the habit of letting the mind wander away from the discourse, coming back fitfully, taking in a word or sentence here and there, if persisted in, will in time weaken the intellect and impair the memory. Far better, they declare, not to be present at all, if one cannot compel the mind to follow the chain of

argument. Hence, if regard for one's own soul is not strong enough to secure close attention to the sermon, consideration for one's mind and memory may have more weight.

Mrs. Millison objects to her pastor's denunciations of dancing, as being old-fashioned and uncalled-for, and Miss Millison shudders at his flat *a's*, and his accent, and Mr. Millison dislikes the sermons because they are too long, and thinks that the bishop ought to forbid his priests to preach longer than fifteen minutes on any subject; for the Millisons are a contentious race.

But there is little Miss Armstrong, who drinks in every word, and goes home to enter the most striking points of the discourse in her note-book; and she can give you a *résumé* of the sermons she heard ten years ago. Her practice is the dear delight of psychologists who claim that it is the infallible way to be mentally strong; but she does not do it for that purpose. And the heart that has had its Calvary finds something inexpressibly sweet in the words of the priest; the man of the world wakes to a bitter sense of the nothingness of the aims that have ruled his life; and his wife, who has struggled up the social ladder, wonders if the game after all has been quite "worth the candle."

It is the old story, as old as the gospel, and as true to-day of the people who go to St. Paul's as it was of the multitude assembled to listen to the greatest Teacher of all: "When a great crowd was gathered together, and they hastened to Him out of the cities, He spake by a similitude; The sower

went out to sow his seed. As he sowed some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the birds of the air ate it up. And some fell on the rock, and as soon as it had sprung up, it withered away because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns, growing up with it, choked it. And some fell on good ground and sprang up, and yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things He cried out: He who hath ears to hear let him hear. And His disciples asked Him what this parable might be? And He said to them: To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing, they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And those by the wayside are they who hear; then the devil cometh and taketh the word out of their hearts, lest believing they should be saved. Now those upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root: for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away. And that which fell among the thorns are they who, when they have heard go forth and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But that on the good ground are they who in good and excellent heart, hearing the word of God, retain it, and bring forth fruit in patience."

Oh, yes, there are many pious souls in our parish; else where would be the consolation of the zealous priests who are in charge?

The crowds melt away, some going swiftly in luxurious carriages, for the admirable English custom of walking to church, no matter how many carriages at one's command, does not obtain here; the dwellers in Mayfair Park walk leisurely in the direction of that aristocratic thoroughfare, and the dwellers in Strawberry Lane go the opposite way. The rich, the moderately well-off, the comfortably poor, the hard-working poor, the abjectly poor, are grouped together in the vestibule of the edifice, but part at the corner.

For our parish is in a transition stage, and the transit has lasted for a quarter of a century. When the church was dedicated it was in the aristocratic suburb of the city, and Maple Place was the faubourg of fashion. Ten years later the mansions were boarding-houses, and now trade has invaded them, and one can buy salt herring in the very room in which Mrs. Chatrand was married. The limits of the parish held no poor people then; they hold any number of them now. We have all classes in our parish, and in that it is typical of the Church itself.

II

THE SOCIAL SIDE

“**S**NAKES in Ireland!” promptly interrupts the Old Member of the parish. “Catholics seem to delight in holding aloof from one another in social matters as a sort of variety from holding together in matters of faith.”

“Aren’t you a little severe?” answered Mrs. Driscoll, gently taking the cudgels from less able hands. “I have known instances of very delightful social circles made up almost exclusively of Catholics.”

“Not in this parish,” was the ready and peppery answer.

“The question is rather too big to be kept in parish limits; besides, there is nothing to cavil at in social exclusiveness if it is founded on the right principles. The Church is the great ship in which we get to heaven, — prince and peasant, millionaire and pauper alike; it is not a social organization intended for the furtherance of pink teas and afternoon receptions. The Church is universal, and being so you cannot amalgamate its members into one social body — using ‘social’ in its society sense, and not as a writer on political economy would use it — unless you do away with the different grades of society. And to argue this point is get-

ting into an entirely different field. Marie Antoinette and the maid who brushed her hair were both Catholics, but that was hardly a reason why the queen should ask the maid to dine with her."

"Oh, that is going to the extreme, the *reductio ad absurdum*, as the Latinists would say. All that I contend for is a little kindly recognition from Catholics of other Catholics in their own neighborhood. A Catholic family might move into this parish, take a pew, and live here five years, the woman a nice, pious, refined little body, and never get to know the woman whose pew is immediately in front of hers. But let that same woman, or one just like her, join Dr. Harvey's church, for instance, and in less than six months she has made a very pleasant circle of acquaintances; the minister's wife has been to call on her, and the wives of some of the prominent members; she has been invited to afternoon receptions, where she gets to know other women, and before six months are over she is probably giving receptions of her own."

"I grant all that. Dr. Harvey himself gave the key to the social side in his church. He boasted, if one may use that swelling term in speaking of a minister, — asserted with self-satisfied complacency, — that he had only the best people in his church. 'We don't cater to any other class.' I heard him use those very words. 'It hampers the work of the church to mix classes.' Now what do you think of that on the lips of a man who claims to be the disciple of the dear Saviour who was born in a stable, and who cast His lot among the poor

and the lowly? Fancy Father Ryan's saying: 'We don't want any but the best people in St. Paul's. Let the working classes and the very poor go down to the Bethel Mission! They ruin our carpets with their dirty shoes, and their personal habits are offensive to delicately bred senses.'"

"That is hardly fair. You are getting beyond anything that I meant," answered the Old Member. "No Catholic wants that sort of exclusiveness, and no one expects the Bank president's wife to ask to her home the wife of her butcher, her baker, or her candlestick-maker, simply because they kneel at the same altar. But why should Mrs. President hold aloof from Mrs. Cashier, and Mrs. Cashier look askance at Mrs. Teller, waiting for some other woman to give the *cachet* to the stranger? A cultured, educated woman can hardly be expected to take up socially a woman who is neither, but where the two are apparently on the same plane what is the object in waiting?"

"I concede that there is a lack of the kindly social spirit among Catholics," said Mrs. Driscoll. "There are many causes which go to produce this effect. In the United States we are in a sad minority —"

"That depends on how you look at it," responded the Old Member. "If you divide the population according to religions, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Jews, we are in a tremendous majority."

"For social purposes the division is between Catholic and non-Catholic, everything being fish that goes into the other net. Starting with the

numerical minority, we are in even a more pronounced social minority. There never has been a time nor a community where there were not prominent Catholics, but the preponderance of culture in the United States has been on the side of non-Catholics. Protestant churches as a rule, like Dr. Harvey's, do not number the poor among their fold. This being so, it follows that the highest society has a Protestant tone, and Catholics with social ambitions are not slow to recognize this fact. In a few cities Catholics lead, — Baltimore, St. Louis, New Orleans, for example; but in the many they only follow. Again, the Catholic matron, with social aspirations, wishes to be considered 'broad-minded,' and 'liberal,' and she makes a show of her 'liberality' by cutting adrift from Catholic surroundings. 'Really, I hardly know any Catholics. I see them at church, of course, but our friends are mostly among Protestants,' she says, as if the fact were to her credit."

"I don't see why a question of religion should be taken into consideration in society," said young Mrs. Shoreham. "We go into society to enjoy ourselves, to mingle with those congenial to us. If a man can dance well my pleasure in dancing with him would not be increased by the knowledge that he had been to Mass on Sunday. If a woman has a beautiful home and gives charming entertainments, I shall not question what her creed may be if she is gracious enough to ask me to her parties. Her religion is her affair, just as mine is no concern of hers."

“Up to a certain point, I grant your argument is sound,” admitted Mrs. Driscoll. “But there is another side; if Catholic young people have no chance to meet other Catholics they will inevitably marry non-Catholics, and that is a very positive evil, as even the most frivolous-minded will admit; again, a constant non-Catholic, and often irreligious atmosphere will, in time, take off the fine edge of faith, chill the ardor of devotion, cast a pall over its most beautiful practices.

“We have been in the minority so long that we have become accustomed to taking a subordinate place, relegating everything Catholic to obscurity, and we do not assert ourselves where we could do so with credit. Catholic writers, painters, musicians, receive no recognition from Catholics until their genius has been heralded by the outside world. Catholic periodicals are not adequately supported. A Methodist or a Presbyterian subscribes for his denominational paper, and is not slow to quote from its columns, but the lukewarm Catholic is contented to get the distorted and meagre news of his church as given in the daily press.”

“The truth is that we Catholics here in the United States are a body of snobs,” put in Adele Norrison, a young lady of much independence of character, and a pronounced independence of tongue. “The majority are descended from immigrants of too recent importation to have become the aristocrats. There are exceptions, of course, everywhere, of the well-born, the well-bred, the

hereditarily wealthy; but the mass of our rich men are self-made, or the sons of self-made fathers. We are human just like the rest of the world, and snobbishness is a very human trait."

"Oh, as for that, the American aristocracy generally is very new," murmured Mrs. Driscoll, herself the great-great-granddaughter of a Catholic officer in the Revolution, whose father was a younger son of a Domesday-book family which had kept the old faith amidst centuries of persecution. She can afford to be humble.

"The social minority of Catholics here is an accident of geography. In Europe the aristocracy is Catholic," said Mrs. Shoreham.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Driscoll, "the poor, the hard-working, the ignorant, are the majority the world over, without regard to religion. It is our glory, and not our shame, that these find spiritual haven in the Universal Church.

"In the United States, Catholics are ten millions in a population of seventy millions, or one in seven, let us say. Granting that progress has been equal among Catholics and non-Catholics, there would be in the dominant circle of a community but one Catholic magnate to seven of other creeds or no creed, — not quite sixty in the glorious Four Hundred; and sixty are hardly a match in power for the remaining three hundred and forty."

"For my part, I think that the most reasonable plan is the one we have adopted, — to bury the question of religion when it comes to society," chirped Mrs. Shoreham.

“But that does not dispose of my original plea that Catholics of position might be a little kinder to other Catholics, following in this respect the example of their fellow-Protestants,” answered the Old Member.

“Now, there is Mrs. Armand Dale.” Everybody looked interested at the mention of this name, for Mrs. Dale is the Jersey cream of aristocracy. “Some few years ago Father Dugan suggested to her to call on Mrs. Richard Marsden with a view to enlisting the Marsden aid in a charity just then the fad among fashionable Catholics. ‘She is rich and generous, and could do a great deal for you if so disposed,’ explained the priest. But the great Mrs. Dale, who could afford to be frank, said, ‘Father, you know I can’t call on her, or recognize her socially. She may be a very worthy person, but nobody knows her, and one cannot force people like that on one’s friends.’ She did not call, and St. Leo’s hospital was a thousand dollars the worse off. But the Marsdens had money, and they were constantly getting more money at an enormous rate; they also had children, and these children went East to school, and to Europe, and they were speedily developing into the fine flower of American aristocracy. Before long Mrs. Luther Torrington, whose husband had business dealings with Mr. Marsden, and who is quite as big a magnate as Mrs. Dale, invited Mrs. Marsden to head the list of the ladies assisting her at a large reception. Mr. and Mrs. Marsden were met at other exclusive houses, and it was not long until Mrs. Dale was very glad to know

them. But the golden opportunity had been lost. The Marsdens had come into their kingdom through Protestant influence, when the old Catholic circle would have none of them, and Protestant their circle remained. To-day they are, socially, far ahead of Mrs. Dale, but their friends are principally among the great ones beyond the pale of their own faith."

"It is never well to be too quick to take up new people," said Mrs. Shoreham.

"No, nor is it ever well to be too slow about taking them up," answered Miss Norrison.

"It is a mistake to expect a woman just on the border-land of good society to help another woman just outside the border. She would let the stars fall first. It is a good plan to ask no social favors of any one, but if you must, always go to the woman who is so well-placed that she can do as she pleases without stopping to think how any other woman might regard her act. An example in point: At Newport a few seasons ago, there was a young girl, a Catholic, with a glorious voice and great personal beauty. She was desirous of gaining a footing as a concert singer, and her pastor, who knew many of the cottage set, tried to enlist a prominent Catholic matron in behalf of his protégée. 'I can't take up a girl like that,' she said rather impatiently. But Mrs. Mortimore, an Episcopalian, thought that she could 'take up' whom she pleased; and all society, including the exclusive Catholic, came together in her drawing-room to hear the young singer. Not only that, but so charmed was she with the girl that a great manager was summoned to her house in New

York to try the voice of the candidate, — with the result that the girl is now earning something like ten thousand dollars a year; and rumor has it that she has only to say the word to become a very great personage on her own account as the wife of one of the *jeunesse dorée* of Gotham.”

“That reminds me of a rather amusing experience of a friend of mine,” said Mrs. Shoreham. “My heroine is a writer who is fast gaining an honorable place in literature, — a girl who belongs to a nice family, and who received a convent education. She was asked by the editor of a Catholic magazine to send him something for his periodical. Happening soon after to go to a city where a reading circle had just been established under the wing of a prominent convent, and being an enthusiastic believer in the work of reading-circles, it occurred to her that an article on the one just started would be timely and interesting. She called on the superior of the convent, known to a relative of hers, and explained her idea. She received a cordial invitation to be present at the next meeting of the circle, and to be introduced to the leader, and get some further information. The girl happened to be late, and was escorted by the superior to the door of the assembly room after the exercises had begun. She met the reception of the uninvited intruder, not one woman present so much as speaking to her, and the leader, whom she was prepared to herald to the world as a great intellectual force in the city, hurried away without even a nod. The article was not written.”

"It is the little things like those that cool one's ardor in a good cause," commented the Old Member.

"Now, of course every woman has the right to be as exclusive as she wishes, or as exclusive as she can, — not always the same thing; it is her privilege to select her friends where she likes, and among those most congenial to her tastes. No sensible person expects the well-born, well-bred, well-placed woman to make a friend of one who is none of these things.

"But the problem I should really like to see solved is this: how is a woman who possesses these qualities in a greater or a less degree, who comes a stranger into a city, to get to know other women of the same kind?

"She rents a pew in her parish church, but her sister Catholics do not trouble themselves to call until she has established herself socially; then they are glad enough to recognize her as belonging to them. If she joins any of the parish societies she does not meet the people of her own class, and she does not care for social intercourse with the wives of saloon-keepers or policemen."

"You are too severe again. You forget that Mrs. Dale is the president of our altar society."

"The altar society is an exception, I admit. The social leaders do belong to it, but that is only because there is no social intercourse among its members. You might belong to the St. Paul's altar society ninety-nine years, and never be asked to Mrs. Dale's receptions. She will use your fingers,

and your brains if you have any, but you must look to Heaven and not to Mrs. Dale to reward you."

"If a woman joins because she wants any reward from Mrs. Dale her low motive deserves to be punished."

"That is not the question. We are getting at facts. In the various sodalities do you find any of the 'upper classes' of the parish represented? In the Married Women's, the Young Ladies', the Young Men's? Do you?"

"So much the worse, then, for the married women, the girls and their brothers. I can't see why it is beneath their budding importance to belong to the societies of their parish, any more than to go to Mass with the people of their parish. If they want to be consistent they should build and endow a little marble chapel with gilt trimmings and Russian-leather missals for their private use, with a priest who has the Oxford brogue to celebrate Mass for them."

"Mrs. Dale says, 'You can't expect me to belong to a sodality with my own cook as a member, and who might be elected my superior officer;' and young Robert Dale says, 'I can't be expected to join the society, you know, with the sons of my father's workmen for companions.'"

"What about the Reading Circle?" queried the voice of the Old Member.

"That is of too recent origin to have taken a definite place. Naturally the people belonging to that must have some little culture, or they could not keep up with the work. But I venture to say that

Helen Dale's name is not on the list of membership, nor Mrs. Dale's, nor Robert Dale's."

"Oh, hang the Dales!" interrupted Mrs. Driscoll's young nephew, who had just come in from St. Xavier's College.

"We have indulged in a lot of talk, but what have we proved, or what have we tried to prove?" asked Mrs. Shoreham. "We admit that the majority of the people belonging to the Church are socially not desirable, because the great body of humanity are not so. A hundred years from now, it is safe to say, the ruling class will be Catholic, but we still have that intervening hundred years before us."

"Candor," answered Mrs. Driscoll, "compels one to admit that many of the Catholics we meet casually at watering-places and at church festivals, when we condescend to go to festivals, are people we should not care especially to know. They have vulgar manners, are ignorant, ill-bred, just as others are who have come up from the ranks, and have not succeeded in coming very far. It is not a matter of their religion, but of themselves personally."

"But I do not admit," interrupted Miss Norrison, "that Catholic society is one whit inferior to Protestant society, taken in numerical proportion. If you want to put the question of society on a religious basis, where distinctly it does not belong, Catholic society is, and has always been, the best in the world. For a thousand years there was no other kind in Europe. And to-day you find Catholic representatives in all circles; the aristocracy of Austria, France, Italy, and Spain, of Brazil, Chili,

Mexico, and the rest of the Spanish-American countries, about which we knew so little until Mr. Richard Harding Davis taught us a great deal, is exclusively Catholic.

“In Germany a Catholic is prime minister, and a number of the old noble families are Catholic; in England Catholics are found in all ranks, from dukes down, and they are not among British royalty only because the British Constitution forbids it. In New York you find Catholics among the leaders of that magical (or mythical) Four Hundred; the same is true of Washington, and even of Quaker Philadelphia. You cannot show a single city of importance in the United States where there are not Catholics of wealth, position, and culture.

“And every day we are receiving additions from the flower of Protestant aristocracy; people of the highest intelligence and culture join the Catholic Church, often at a sacrifice of all earthly prospects. Thirty thousand converts were officially reported last year. And England is keeping pace with us. Two weeks ago the ‘London Tablet’ gave the names of three noblemen who ‘went over to Rome’ in a single week, and were among those confirmed by the English Cardinal. And yet people talk about the lack of culture among Catholics! Just look at the prominent and historic American families that have given converts to the Church. Among the number are immediate members or near connections of the families of Presidents Madison, Monroe, Van Buren, Tyler, Grant; of

Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, General Winfield Scott, Edward Everett, Nathaniel Hawthorne, General Newton, Admiral Dahlgren, Jefferson Davis — why, there was a list of converts covering eight pages in the 'Catholic Quarterly Review,' compiled by the Honorable Richard H. Clark, and it did not pretend to be exhaustive; it included bishops, rectors of rich parishes, representative names of the army, navy, law, literature, medicine, science, society, finance.

“When people of that stamp become Catholic, and usually, if not always, at a great personal sacrifice, it ought to make intelligent non-Catholics gravely thoughtful. And the more so since they cannot recall a parallel among Catholics who have become Protestant. Their converts from us are women who gave up their faith to marry men that do not care enough for them to take them without this sacrifice; unfortunate priests who have been degraded and removed from their parishes; and poorly instructed, nominal Catholics who see a chance for worldly prosperity in embracing a popular creed.”

“It is not necessary to be so complacent about it,” said the Old Member.

“It is the grace of God and not the exertions of individual Catholics that brings about this result. We do little enough to make converts, and we treat them shamefully after their conversion. Their old friends turn against them, and Catholics pay them little attention, unless for some special reason, so they usually have rather a sad time. I knew a

prominent minister who became a Catholic, relinquishing a fine position, and his own wife and children deserted him. Another young clergyman was disinherited by his father — but it is a pathetic tale to the end.

“ However Catholics may treat one another in the way of a ‘ letting alone,’ surely common decency and honor, to say nothing of charity, ought to make them extend a helping hand to converts.

“ Brotherly Love is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost received in Confirmation; it seems to be the one we part with the most readily.

“ A Catholic woman will spend the entire day in relieving the wants of a poverty-stricken family in a tenement, and in the evening at a party freeze another woman with a Klondike stare. If she had real kindness in her heart she would not begrudge the pleasant word, the bright smile, that might be gratefully received by the lonely stranger; and if she were sure of her own title to recognition she would have no need to dole out courtesy as if it were South African diamonds.”

The Old Member was evidently reminiscent. The stabs had left little scars. We have much to learn. In the meanwhile we are but sixty to three hundred and forty.

III

WEDDING CARDS

PHIL CARLETON was married this morning. The wedding itself, in dear old St. Paul's, was at ten o'clock, or not much after that, but the festivities extended so far into the afternoon that one feels it is not worth while to begin anything of importance in the small piece of the day that is left. Besides, weddings are rather fatiguing, and this was no exception.

It might be courtesy to state that he married Annie Powers, but that is a mere detail; the thing of real importance is that Phil himself is at last married. It is like the morning of a lottery — at least, there is to be no more anxious expectancy; the fortunate prize-winner, happy with the prize, is known, and the losers, relieved of all uncertainty, can put their minds to other matters. One feels rather sorry for the half-dozen — the exact number does not matter — sweet, pretty girls any one of whom Phil might have married. In his own secret soul he must have realized this fact and have been egregiously conceited. There is no denying that there are many reasons why a nice girl would be very glad to marry Phil, granting that she consciously or unconsciously wanted to marry anybody. He is upright and honorable, really, and not merely as a flattering

phrase which journalists, in the rôle of biographers, are wont to apply indiscriminately. He is college-bred, cultured, good-looking, frank, amiable, witty, and, not the least quality to be considered in a material world, rich. Indeed, not a few mothers, in casting their longing eyes on Phil in behalf of a daughter, have put this qualification first. Phil is the junior member of a large shoe-factory, his father being the senior member, and Phil is an only son. Besides their money the Carletons are socially quite as important as the best of the city. Family portraits of dead and gone ancestors line the walls of their beautiful mansion in Warwick Place, and every student of human nature knows that one does not care to be daily reminded of an ancestor unless he is quite worth remembering.

And Mrs. Carleton herself must feel relieved. She may have reservations as to the entire worthiness of Annie Powers to be the wife of her son; but she has the comforting assurance that, taking all things into consideration, Annie has no superiors and few equals among the maidens of her set. No one, except her guardian angel, will ever know just how many girls Madame Mère kept out of the honor which was conferred by a Bishop, and three assistants in gorgeous vestments, on blushing Annie.

The engagement was something of a surprise to the gay world, for little Miss Powers of all the girls in society seemed to care the least about handsome Phil. Perhaps that was the very reason why she won him; her indifference may have whetted his desire of possession. This is not a new theory, and

in some cases I should be inclined to doubt its entire trustworthiness. Some men are repelled by indifference, it hurts their vanity; and vanity is the strongest weak point in the masculine armor. That is intended neither as a paradox nor a pun.

Marion Chase was at the wedding, looking very beautiful in a Reilly gown of blue cloth trimmed in sable. When one is near her it is easy to detect the network of fine wrinkles which are doing their deadly work to her marvellous complexion, and there is a weary droop about the mouth when she thinks no one is looking. I confess to a curious desire to know her feelings when Phil slipped the wedding-ring on another woman's finger. She must have known that two-thirds of the people present were wondering as to her sentiments. She certainly tried hard enough to win Phil; that sounds brutal, for truth is not always courteous; but it is hard to say whether her heart or only her ambition was engaged in the pursuit. Maud Carleton, without meaning it, gave the key to the failure. She said, in my hearing, at the races, that Marion always made her think of a woman without a soul. "That girl would die a willing martyr to appearances," she exclaimed, not maliciously, but thoughtlessly. I am afraid that we all agreed that her judgment was not unjust.

Three summers ago all the gossips at Narragansett Pier were sure that Phil and Lucy Morris would announce their engagement before the season was over. And I think that the young man really was attracted in that quarter; but a fond mother had

used her eyes and her ears, and a word dropped now and then, without any apparent object over and above mere gossip, in the privacy of the family, made Phil pause and consider. There was nothing absolutely reprehensible in Lucy's conduct, but she was what is described as "larky." For instance, she went to Point Judith one moonlight night on a hay-ride, and Maud Carleton, who was along without her mother's consent, declared that a Mr. Bertrand from Providence had put his arm around Lucy's waist during the ride home. Then she was not in the least particular about the young men who were introduced to her. Almost any man, if he could dance well, and had decent manners and a dress-coat, could get to know Lucy. Her bathing-suits were always the most conspicuous on the beach, and they showed rather more of arms and neck than a modest girl would like to expose to gaping crowds watching from Sherry's pavilion. And she was rather given to tête-à-têtes in secluded corners, with the various young men sojourning at the big hotel which sheltered the Morrises; and she went driving alone with these same young men, in the very faces of matrons who believed in the chaperon as firmly as they believed in the Ten Commandments. In a foolish moment she admitted, rather boastingly some thought, that she had been engaged once and had refused four men. A girl of really fine feeling will not let a man come to the proposing point if she does not mean to accept what he offers. And there were other things in the air about Lucy; and no man likes a peach with the bloom off, no

matter how beautiful and luscious the peach. Phil Carleton suddenly left the Pier and went fishing off Block Island.

Minnie Jones fell violently in love with Phil, but I rather think he was disgusted at the start. Minnie is of the gushingly sentimental order, and no healthy-minded young man can be blamed for running away from a girl like that. She is thoroughly selfish without knowing it, as people of that type are apt to be; she could not bear anything that was painful, because of her delicate sensibilities, and as pain must be met and grappled with in an imperfect world, Miss Minnie was given to throwing her share on braver shoulders. And she read novels of the tawdry sentimental kind, and called them literature, and fancied herself of the type of the mushy heroines depicted. The girl had not been fortunate in choosing her mother, for Mrs. Jones was almost as big a fool as her daughter, — the kind one sees with bleached hair and very low gown, sitting on a red divan at a party, and talking violent scandal to her neighbor. To add to her silly birthright, the girl was sent to a school under the supervision of another fool, the mercenary fool, who inculcated in her girls that the first duty of woman is to marry money and position, the whole duty of a schoolgirl to dress well, dance, and speak French, and pay her tuition fees promptly.

Minnie showed what a simpleton she really was by fancying for a moment that she could catch such a man as Phil Carleton. She tried it, however, in a very business-like way, and so did her mother.

When Phil began to sit out dances with Kathryn Blair, and to be seen in Linden Avenue, where dwells the Juno-like maiden, the gossips were once more busy with his name, and really hoped that the couple would go to the altar together. In this instance I think it was brains that intervened. Kathryn is quite the most brilliant young woman in her set to-day, and I think her superior knowledge rather hurt her suitor's vanity. She was too young, and too candid by nature to cultivate the tact that would openly defer to masculine judgment, whilst secretly adhering to her own.

I have always been very fond of Kathryn; she is a type of that which is fine and high in what the thoughtless are apt to speak of as the "new woman." In that senseless phrase some imply a compliment, and some a reproach; but no one could know Kathryn without being struck by something noble which was reflected from her soul to her expressive face. She has been carefully educated, first under a thorough gentlewoman at home, whom misfortune had forced into the workaday world as a governess, and later at Manhattanville. After her graduation she went abroad for a year, and on her return home took up a course of alarmingly solid reading, under a professor from the University.

She is somewhat lacking in what are called the womanly accomplishments; that is, she cannot work sprawling roses on a bit of linen, nor make over a gown to be as good as new with ten cents' worth of ruby dyes, like the thrifty women in the advertisements, and she has few ideas about cooking, and

the relation of food to the soul; indeed, she startled us all by reading a paper before the Monday Club, an organization to which some twenty favored feminines belong, in which she proved triumphantly that in all the branches which are popularly conceded to be the domain of women, men have won the highest place. It left us in "rather a hole" as one put it, inelegantly, because she did not prove that women have ever excelled in anything; but then, that was not in her subject.

Kathryn is pretty, too, almost beautiful, and a superb dresser — quite the equal of Marion in that respect. I cannot see why a man would look twice at Annie Powers when he might have looked for a lifetime at Kathryn Blair. Not that Annie is not a charming little thing, really a dear, sweet girl. If one had to classify her, although classifications are never quite satisfactory nor quite just, one would put her among the domestic, homelike women. Annie can do all the things that Kathryn cannot do; she is dainty and pretty, and sweet-tempered, well-bred, naturally refined; and not a fool, by any means, in the line of books and the doings of the world. She has a sympathetic little voice, and it is easy to fancy Phil, lazy Phil, after dinner, with a cigar, an easy-chair, and the evening paper, listening to Annie sing his favorite songs.

In the mating of our friends we are never disposed to allow sufficiently for difference in tastes. The ideal spouse for one would be a sort of lifelong purgatory for another. Sometimes we get sorrowful glimpses of a mismating. Five years ago, when

Mary Burke married the ex-alderman, Richard Nolan, known as "Dick" to his intimates, before the altar in St. Paul's, but without the grandeur attending the nuptials of Miss Annie Powers, everybody thought it was more than a glimpse. The Honorable Dick is what is known as a self-made man, and he had performed the work of making himself rather badly. It was the old melodramatic situation which, unfortunately, exists in life as well, — an ambitious mother, poverty, a beautiful young girl, refined and innocent and just out of a convent, on one side; and an elderish man, commonplace, rather coarse, but with a fortune and in want of a wife, on the other.

A girl does not always object to a man merely because he is old, provided he is not too old, nor to a fortune either. A man may be rather well along in life and very rich, and yet charming, fascinating, brilliant, heroic. It would not be hard to find love matches, that proved ideally happy, when the bridegroom was almost old enough to be the father of his wife; but, after all, these cases are only exceptions. The general rule, and it is usually safe to follow this, declares in favor of a similarity of age. Beautiful Mildred Hays married General Hearne, who was just twenty-two years her senior, and a happier or more devoted couple it would be hard to find. But the general was a handsome, well-preserved man of the great world; a courtier in manner, a diplomat, a true gentleman, and a brave soldier. When an old man is conscious of uniting in himself all these attributes he may safely woo a

romantic young girl; but for an ordinary old gentleman this usually ends in domestic disaster.

There is a consensus of opinion, born of thousands of years of experience, that a man should be older than his wife. From three to fifteen years, say some, but hide-bound limits are not easy to define. A woman is supposed to love, respect, and obey her husband, and sometimes his superior age is about the only claim he can put forth to wifely submission. Adam was older than Eve, — to give an example weighty by reason of antiquity, — and Abraham was very much the senior of the beautiful, dark-eyed Princess Sara, whom we do not sufficiently honor as the mother of the Chosen People.

In marriage the one absolutely essential thing is mutual love. This is not saying that love should be the only thing, but nothing else, esteem, respect, family ties, station, learning, piety, upright character, no other thing in the world, should be allowed to take its place. The history of the human race conclusively proves that the love between man and woman is the strongest passion that exists. Like any other great force, it can be as powerful for destruction as for good. Mark Antony threw away an empire for a woman who had loved many men; Helen of Troy made the most memorable epoch in Grecian history; Clotilde, through her husband's love, was able to bring Christianity into Gaul.

And in the realms of art, — poetry, painting, sculpture, — a woman loved, if not always loving, has been the most fruitful inspiration, next to religion, of the undying masterpieces.

Who can reckon the debt of the ages to Beatrice, beloved of Dante, Petrarch's beautiful Laura, or the Highland lass who won the heart of Burns?

Love, when not cemented by sacramental grace, is apt to be as fleeting as it is uncontrolled. Henry VIII. put aside his faithful wife, the proud daughter of the proudest house in Europe, overthrew religion, and turned his kingdom into a seething volcano for the sake of the soulless, beautiful Anne Boleyn. A love so lawless and so shameless lasted three brief years, when the woman paid for it with her head. Indeed, the history of Henry the Bluebeard's matrimonial experiences has been used by more than one cynic to cast discredit on love. One might with as much reason point to a conflagration to show the evils of fire.

When a man comes wooing with nothing but his love to recommend him, a maid's only safeguard from a life of unhappiness and neglect is flight, or strength of character to say no. If the lover is unscrupulous, or irreligious, or selfish, scheming, cruel, or given to drink, or all these things combined, it is madness to expect the husband to be very different. There have been many cases where the love and prayers and heroic patience of a noble woman have reclaimed a brute and made a man; but the woman herself sacrificed all chance of earthly happiness in her work, and suffered tortures at which the world can only dimly guess.

Despite what some novelists say, and novelists seem to be the world's teachers in matters of love, a woman who marries without love is degrading her

own womanhood. Crawford the Brilliant is given to sacrificing very charming women at the altar, and he invariably makes a merit of the sacrifice. We find some palliation in our hearts for the peerless Corona, because she was a young girl, as ignorant of life as a baby, when she married the worn-out old roué D'Astradente, and had an interesting career in the four volumes of the Saracinesca series of novels; but when the unfortunate Maria d'Aragona deliberately perjures herself at the altar, loving with all her heart another man, we instinctively recoil as from a species of suttee.

There is no accounting for tastes, in a man's choice of a wife as in his choice in less important matters. If both young men and young women do not yet know how to choose wisely in the question of marriage, it is not because benevolent ones have not sufficiently instructed them, at so much a column, in the teeming pages of scores of periodicals.

Perhaps it is one of those questions where theory counts for little, and experience for everything; which seems unfortunate, considering that it is irremediable, and being so, the experience, when it happens to be of the wrong sort, can serve no personal good.

Divorce, the shameful canker that is eating at the heart of our country, its family honor, and domestic peace, can have no meaning for a Catholic. Death alone dissolves the marriage bond.

IV

AN OLD QUESTION

AT what age should a young man marry? This is one of the stock questions that are asked of the omniscient persons who conduct the correspondents' columns of the family weeklies. The suitable age for a young woman to assume the responsibilities of matrimony is not often discussed, there being a natural delicacy around a subject in which the lady must remain quiescent. It is generally understood that she will be married when a suitable chance presents itself. One would imagine that this is a point which every young man would decide for himself, did not the "anxious inquirers" give a hint of the efforts made to get wise guidance. It is a question that can never be answered, because it depends on so many things which make a prudent act on the part of one young man the wildest folly on the part of another. Position, money, temperament, object in life, strength of character, — so many things go to turn the scale one way or the other. And when one looks about at one's friends and acquaintances the question is still as unsettled as ever.

Some ten years ago two unknown young men came to this city. They filled similar positions, and their services received equal compensation. Chance threw them together in a boarding-house, and they

became friends. Their social opportunities were meagre, and neither one at that time possessed such shining personal qualities that nice people would go out of their way to pay them any attention. They had received an ordinary commercial training, and knew enough of social usages to eat peas with a fork, but neither had ever worn an evening coat or led a cotillon.

At a church festival they met a young lady, in charge of one of the tables, and fell instantaneous victims to her charms. These charms were just the usual ones of youth, a beautiful complexion, bright eyes, a natty figure, and an amiable manner. It was not hard to procure an invitation to call on the maiden, and it was soon evident that the two were genuinely in earnest in their attentions. The girl had the small accomplishments of her class: she could play a little on the piano, and paint a little, and if her knowledge of literature and science, of art and all the things that go to form what is meant by "culture," was indefinite and hazy, her piety, and good-nature and domestic attainments formed an acceptable substitute. Besides, the imagination of a young and ardent lover can be depended upon to invest the most prosaic of maidens with idyllic qualities. At the end of the year she accepted George Calkin; and poor Frederick Gaston, bearing his defeat manfully, sent her a salad fork, with his best wishes, as a wedding present.

The history of the Calkins in the ten years which have flown over their heads is not greatly different from the histories of the hundreds and thousands of

young couples of their means and attainments. The young man, being conscientious and faithful, has had his salary increased several times, but his family has increased as well, and he has no ambitions above a life of prodding industry, content if the necessaries and a few minor luxuries can be procured for his wife and children. They live in Downs Street, in one of the houses built on an economical scale to rent to young husbands with small salaries. The children's wants and ills, the extortions of the coal dealer, the butcher's bills, the antics of the gas metre, enliven the hours at home; and the evening paper affords apparently all the intellectual diet that is needed or desired. Mrs. Calkin devours the society items, subscribes for a fashion magazine, and obtains numberless novels in endless succession from the circulating library. She had not cared for books of a higher class when she was pretty May Loring, with time for many things now quite beyond the reach of the wife and mother. Occasionally they go to the theatre, and Mrs. Calkin, sadly faded, with peevish lines about the eyes and the base of the nose, belongs to an afternoon card club made up of other commonplace souls. On Sunday, the one free day in a grinding week, George, with his wife and two elder children, may be seen at the eight o'clock Mass; hurrying home he spends the forenoon over the voluminous Sunday papers, and Mrs. Calkin busies herself with the usual Sunday feast, the one slovenly maid-of-all-work not being adequate to its success; a nap, a stroll along the boulevards, a cold supper, and perhaps a friendly chat with a neighbor,

and the precious day is over. No one has ever heard George Calkin discuss the question whether marriage is a failure, because he is not given greatly to discussion, except about the tariff; but Frederick Gaston looks upon him as an awful warning.

As for young Gaston himself, he flew to literature and modern languages as a balm for his bruised affections. At the end of a year, when he encountered the Calkins at an informal dinner, and was forced to listen to his old sweetheart's commonplaces, he suddenly realized with a rush of thankfulness that the last tiny abrasion of his affections was quite healed. The star of ambition which had always glimmered over his meridian suddenly flamed into a beckoning glow. He would make a man of himself. He had acquired the taste and the priceless habit of regular study, and whatever extravagances he permitted himself were in the nature of opera tickets, or for the best plays, photographs of famous pictures, art exhibits, and books. To books, his landlady wrathfully thought there was to be no end, when they overflowed from the case and filled the corners of Gaston's small, third-story bedroom. About this time the young man, who had caught glimpses of an existence quite removed from that of a second-rate boarding-house, fitted up an apartment of his own.

At the end of ten years he had become, from an unformed, good-looking youth of the provinces, a cultured, travelled, brainy, popular man of the great world. He had been abroad twice, once in summer, to the haunts beloved by the American

tourist, and a winter had been given to Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Turkey, and southern Italy. And every place of note in his own land had been visited. Prosperity had marked him for her own, and he could well afford to get married. One of the sweetest and prettiest girls in the parish became his bride. The wedding was celebrated in St. Paul's, with almost as much state as attended the nuptials of Annie Powers.

The Gastons revolve in an orbit far removed from the modest periphery of the Calkins. And when Frederick Gaston glances across the well-appointed table at the beautiful cultured girl, capable of being a helpmate in its noblest sense to her husband, if he does not breathe a prayer of thankfulness for his escape from May Loring it is because she has passed so completely out of his mind that she never comes into it for even a reminiscent moment.

But there are other young men belonging to St. Paul's who have not been so fortunate; and if Frederick Gaston is a shining illustration of the good of waiting, Matt Dyer is an awful example of the young man who has not married at all. Matt started in the race of life unusually well equipped; for he had family, influence, and a good position. He speedily took to the pace that kills, and his money has been spent in ways that would not bear narrating. Perhaps if he had married a pious, nice girl in the beginning, she might have been just the balance-wheel that has been lacking in his short but disastrous career. Again, she might have been dragged down to untold depths of degradation and

want. Matt belongs nominally to St. Paul's, and he made his first communion in the beautiful old church, but it is seldom now that his form casts a shadow over its threshold.

The rule might be laid down that for a man who lacks stability of character an early marriage is best; for others it is good or bad according to circumstances.

There is an old saying that a young man married is a young man marred.

This cynical epigram, to say the least, has many notable exceptions.

V

A GRAVE QUESTION

“**I** HAVE known many instances of mixed marriages,” said a silvery-haired old gentlewoman, with a wistful look in her still fine eyes, “and of all the number I can recall but three that turned out well.”

It is not difficult to see that in so intimate a relation as marriage a oneness in religion, that highest of all concerns, is absolutely indispensable to the perfect union.

“Theoretically we all object to mixed marriages,” answered Mrs. Gibson, a matron whose three daughters had married out of the Church; “but practically we realize that circumstances make them necessary. The Church itself understands this, else she would not grant dispensations so readily. And when the husband makes the required promises I can’t see where the wrong comes in.”

Of course it would have been rude to say, “Look at your own daughters, and you might see plainly enough.”

When Louise Gibson became engaged to Fendall Cates her friends thought her a very lucky girl, and her mother’s enemies said that she was a cleverer woman than they had imagined, to have

landed that nice young Cates for her daughter. Then there came a time when the hum of busy tongues indicated an ugly hitch in the preparations. It was said that the young man objected very emphatically to making the promises. He was willing enough for his wife to practise her religion, since she had been brought up that way, but most emphatically the children should be reared Presbyterians, like all the Cates since the time of the first Presbyterian, or else they should be left to choose for themselves. Mrs. Gibson bemoaned the indelicacy of the question, and the want of fine feeling on the part of her pastor which compelled an innocent young girl to face such a discussion; as if the couple were two babes in the woods chasing a rainbow. Louise was pluckily firm, and Fendall, who really was very much in love with her, saw that he must either give up the girl or yield, and finally consented to marry a Catholic on the only terms a Catholic could marry him.

Louise is perhaps doing the best she can for herself and her children, but it is very evident that she has abandoned many of the ideas and practices she brought home with her from the convent. She slips into St. Paul's to the eight o'clock Mass, usually after the priest is on the altar, and sometimes just at the gospel; but she never goes to High Mass, because her husband is at home on Sundays, and he objects to having his wife absent on the only day that he can be with her. If he happens to feel like going to his church at eleven o'clock, and returning at one, that is a different thing; she never hears a

sermon, nor assists at Vespers or Benediction, for the same reason, her husband cannot spare her, and the hour for evening service interferes with the household arrangements. Such a thing as "grace at meals" is unheard-of, and one of her friends sadly doubts whether Louise even says her morning prayers. On Fridays there must be meat on the table, and at every meal during Lent. She cannot attend the Lenten services, because Fendall objects to being left at home alone.

There are three children, and the eldest, a boy of nine, who is clever and naughty, goes to the public school, because the children who attend the parochial school are so "vulgar and low" that Fendall insists that they would spoil Fendall Junior's English and his manners; and St. Xavier's College, which has a Minim Department, is too far away for one so young to attend by himself. He has promised, however, that the boy shall be sent to St. Xavier's to make his first communion.

In the meanwhile there are some lively differences of opinion in the Cates household. Mrs. Gibson repeats some of Fendall Junior's remarks, as if they were evidences of budding genius to make a doting grandmother proud, instead of indicators of a condition to be wept over. His mother insists on his going to church with her. One cold Sunday morning the lad, instead of responding to her gentle tap by getting up and making ready to accompany her, turned over in his little bed and went to sleep. When his mamma came to his room to put the last touches to his toilet and to help him into overcoat

and cap, after the fashion of mothers, she was horrified to see his curly head peeping out from under the covers.

“Well, I don’t see why I should have to go to church; papa does n’t go!” said the boy, in excuse.

Another time he asked his mamma if he might go with his chum, who lived in the same block, to the Methodist Sunday-school. Of course he was met by a refusal, but with the Cates trait of determination early manifesting itself, he passed on into the library where his father was reading, and made the same petition. His father said yes, so Fendall ran away gleefully. On holy days of obligation the child does not go to church, because his father will not have his school work interfered with. Early in life the lad is imbibing the doctrine that religion is all very well for women and children, like his mamma and his little sister Dorothy, but not for *men* like his papa and himself.

And what weight will the mother’s teaching have when the example of the father is an ever present contradiction? A child naturally respects, obeys, and looks up to the father quite as much as to the mother. How is little Fendall Cates, for instance, to be made to understand that it is a mortal sin for him to miss Mass on Sunday, to eat meat on Friday, when his father never goes to Mass and eats meat every Friday? How is he to be taught to go to confession, to say his night and morning prayers, when his father omits both these practices? How is he to realize that his faith is his most precious possession, and not a mere matter of choice or

expediency, like being a Democrat or a Republican, or a member of a club, when his father and his Grandmamma Cates, who gives him ten times more than Grandmamma Gibson, and his Uncle Jack, and two beautiful young aunts, do not believe in it at all?

Mildred Gibson, who married a widower with two children, has not fared so well in the matter of religion as her sister. Mildred was always rather delicate, and was kept at home and sent to a day school; so she did not get as thorough a training in her faith as Louise. She has two babies of her own, and is still delicate, so that she seldom goes to church at all; and when she happens to be in the mood to be well she not infrequently accompanies her husband and her step-children to the Episcopal Church.

"I can't see where the harm comes in," she declares belligerently. "How am I to expect my husband to be liberal towards my belief if I act as if I thought his church were a den of thieves? I go with him sometimes, and then he goes with me sometimes. And I just wish Father Horan, with his horrid brogue, and his droning way of preaching, could take a few lessons in pulpit oratory from Dr. Gracelands. His sermons are really beautiful, and so edifying! Indeed, I only wish that Catholics would live up to half his teaching, and there would n't be so much scandal given in our parish. Of course I believe my own church just as firmly as you do, and hearing a sermon from another minister now and then is not going to change me. It is not

the church and the sermon that count — it is the people themselves and the lives they lead. Some of the most perfect Christians I know belong to the Episcopal Church!”

Naturally, when a woman has such sentiments, it would be absurd to expect her to be very particular about the “minor” practices of her faith.

Bad as it is for a girl to marry a man not of her faith, the consequences are usually deplorable when it is the man who “marries mixed.” Everybody was surprised when Tom McFall married Cora Bates some ten years ago; the rector of the Second Presbyterian Church is her uncle, and the whole family have the reputation of having strong and bitter prejudice against Catholics.

“I don’t object to my coachman or my cook being a Romanist, but most emphatically I do object to my daughter’s husband belonging to that faith,” said Mrs. Bates, when rumors of young McFall’s attentions to pretty Cora began to gain currency.

“It will never be a match,” said Tom’s friends, “because Mrs. Bates would rather see her daughter dead than have her make the required promises.”

Nevertheless, in due time cards were out for the wedding; a gorgeous wedding it was, too, with the house turned into a fairyland of flowers and lights, six bridesmaids and a page of honor, Sherry’s orchestra, and champagne enough to float a raft, and “everybody who is anybody” among the guests. Mrs. McFall and the Misses McFall looked triumphant, so malicious ones declared, for

they were getting their first glimpse of real society. The Archbishop himself performed the ceremony, because old Tom McFall, who made a fortune in mines, had given five thousand dollars towards the new Cathedral.

The first child lived only three hours, and Mrs. McFall herself baptized it. It was several years before the second one came, and Mrs. McFall and her daughter-in-law were not on the best of terms. Mrs. McFall undeniably did consider the McFall dollars a more desirable possession than the Bates blue blood, and she was not slow to express this opinion. And many things had happened to Cora; among others, she had joined her uncle's church.

She most emphatically declared that a priest should not baptize her baby, and as it was born at her mother's house poor Tom could not very well insist upon it. "There will be time enough," he thought. "And when Cora is back in her own home, away from the hourly influence of her mother, she will abide by her promise." But Cora did nothing of the sort. She put aside her promise as lightly as if it had been a bit of thistle.

"My children are my own, and they are going to be brought up in my faith," she declared without any circumlocution.

"Promise! What does a young girl know about a mother's love, or a mother's duty? You were very glad to get a Protestant wife; I don't see why you should object to Protestant children."

After six months of wrangling Tom slipped off with the child and had it baptized; but Cora dis-

covered what she was pleased to call her husband's treachery, went into hysterics, and threatened to go home to her mother.

Only a few weeks after the Bates-McFall nuptials society assembled for another mixed marriage, and Adele Devereux became Mrs. Charles Warren Henderson. If the other was a great social function, this was an Event, for the Bates blueblood is very pale azure when compared with the current of royal purple coursing in the veins of the Devereux. It was said at the time that every name of social prominence in the city could have been found on the cards with the bridal presents, hardly one of which did not represent a relation, or at least a connection by marriage. And, like Cora Bates, the high-born Adele married a man of no particular family. Young Henderson came to the city as a partner in a large factory, and was introduced at a good club, and into society, by the junior member of the company. A disreputable little weekly, which ought to have been named "The Wasp," announced that the latest addition to Swelldom, Mr. C. W. H——, was the grandson of a man who began life at a dollar a day in a tannery. The young man said that the item was true, except that he believed the wage had been only ninety-five cents. Mr. Henderson himself was rated at half a million dollars, and he was personally most charming.

The question might have presented itself to a looker-on, Why could not Adele have married Tom McFall, a young man of her own faith, and every whit the equal of Henderson?

Old Tom might not know the difference between the Parthenon and a barn, but young Tom is college-bred, travelled, cultured, good-looking, manly, and the only son of his father, with but two sisters to divide the prospective inheritance. It is possible that the Devereux had never laid eyes on the McFalls, although they had lived neighbors for years, until the McFalls built their palace opposite the park.

Would you have Mrs. Devereux, born De Clouet, and descended from the Marquis Villeneuve, call on, and recognize socially, Mary McFall, whose own mother had landed at Castle Garden from the steerage? Perhaps not, but then would *you* have Mrs. Devereux's daughter marrying the non-Catholic grandson of a poor tanner?

If the Hendersons have had any ripples in their domestic life they have not published the fact to the world; but it is easy to understand that Adele, a devout, vivacious little beauty, would be happier if she and her husband were one in the most vital concern of her life, if she could share with him her devotions and her ideals.

"But we should like to hear about the three cases that turned out well," chirps a young girl, whose heart flutters dangerously in the presence of a youth who has no religion at all, and rather makes a merit of the fact.

"Ah, it is easy to lose sight of them, when the other kinds are before one's eyes and memory all the time!" responded the white-haired saint.

"There was poor Blanche Caruthers, that died

and left three beautiful children, now being reared strict little Unitarians, by the Boston spinster who promptly became Mrs. Caruthers the second. And there is Miss Sue Bedford, a leader in the Ethical Culture movement, and the author of that horrible article in the "Blank Review" denouncing the Christian system of marriage; she will tell you that her father was a Catholic, but that the children were left, by mutual agreement, to be free to choose their own religion.

"The happiest example that I have ever known was that of the Ewings. Her friends were surprised when Clara Champion's engagement to Robert Ewing was announced, because Clara was known to be so pious, and so faithful in the practice of her religion; one would have thought of her as the last person in the world to marry a man of an alien belief. But Robert was personally charming, and with the one exception he had everything to recommend him. The girl went back to the convent to make a retreat shortly before she was married, and her old teacher, who had once been a woman of the world herself, gave some sterling counsel which was never forgotten.

"'My dear, in marrying a man not of your faith,' she said, 'you will have to be not only as good and pious as the average Catholic woman, but better, far, far better. The beauty of your own life must teach your husband the beauty of your church. The little faults that other women might be guilty of without serious consequences must never touch your life.'

“And from the very first the girl tried to act upon this advice. Scrupulously exact in the performance of every religious duty, she left nothing undone that could add to the charm of her home, or to her husband’s comfort. Robert himself bore testimony to her uniform sweetness of disposition.

“‘After four years of married life,’ he declared, ‘never once have I seen Clara angry; not even when a new parlor-maid sent our most beautiful art treasure to an untimely grave did she lose control of her temper.’

“When they first went to housekeeping Clara regularly served meat to Robert, but after a few months he said: ‘Oh, never mind about getting meat for me on Friday. A fish dinner once a week is good for the constitution. The hygienists all declare that this barbarous American habit of gorging on meat at all meals, and at all seasons, is ruining our national digestion.’

“Clara never ‘preached,’ — a thing no man will stand, — nor sought controversy, but sometimes she would say: ‘Don’t you want to go to church with me, Robert? They are going to sing Mozart’s Twelfth Mass;’ or: ‘Father Paxton will preach to-day, wouldn’t you like to hear him? We think that he is an unusually fine preacher.’ At Christmas and Easter he was attracted by the grandeur of the ceremonial.

“At such times Clara always supplied him with a prayer-book, and explained the meaning of the services in advance. Sometimes he would voluntarily ask an explanation of some dogma or prac-

tice. On one occasion the subject was so intricate that Clara said frankly, 'I am afraid, Robert, that I am not quite prepared, off-hand, to explain that satisfactorily, but you will find it treated at length in "The Faith of our Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons;' and this estimable book was put into his hands. It was a happiness to the devoted wife to see that he read every page of it, for she had unlimited confidence in our great Cardinal's power to instruct the ignorant. In concord and happiness five years went swiftly by, and poor Robert was stricken with pneumonia. It was soon evident that his life was near its end. He asked for a priest, and on his deathbed was baptized into the church which the example of his wife had made him love.

"Oh, there is no question but that here and there a mixed marriage proves fortunate and happy. But these are exceptions to the general rule."

It takes a girl with a strong, noble character, a well-poised brain, to steer successfully through the shoals of a mixed marriage; and, unfortunately, it is just girls of this type who hesitate longest about marrying a man not of their faith. It is the weak, frivolous, worldly, half-instructed girls who rush into these alliances, and see no danger in them. It is not so easy to be good, and a woman should not wilfully throw away the safeguard and help of a husband whose piety might be firm where hers was weak, whose sturdy faith would be as the north star to their common lives — the obstacles so hard for one proving trifles to their united strength.

And if it is hazardous for a girl to marry one not

of her own faith, what can be said of the woman who takes for her husband a man who is of no religion at all, or of a very negative sort, — the infidel, agnostic, deist, or whatever name and form his want of religion may assume?

The girl is bound by her faith, guiding her conscience, to be true to her husband until death parts them, to be his loving, loyal, devoted wife through poverty, illness, disgrace, misfortune, in whatever guise it may come; the man is bound by nothing but his fancy. If he tires of his wife there is nothing to prevent his seeking a divorce, and getting another; if illness and loss of beauty and charm rob her of his affection, he does not hesitate to bestow it elsewhere; if he has no conscience and no love for his wife, there is nothing in the world to keep him from abusing her; and, as a matter of fact, if the secret history of many a household could be known, the world would be amazed at the amount of neglect and abuse that are endured in proud silence by unhappy wives.

Where there is the bond of a common faith, a common ideal, each bears with the failings of the other from a supernatural motive.

Said a poor invalid who has hardly left her couch for years, except when borne in her husband's arms to a carriage for a little outing, "I am sure my husband will be one of the great saints in heaven, he is so patient and so kind to me. I have been nothing but an expense and a drag to him all these years, but he makes me think that I am the greatest blessing his life could have known."

A mother of girls says: "What are you going to do? A nice Catholic girl must either marry a non-Catholic or else she must be an old maid, for there are no Catholic young men of her own class for her to marry." And not long ago from the four quarters of our country there came a wail from the young men: "We marry Protestant girls because we don't meet in society Catholic girls of our own class, and a cultured young man cannot mate with an ignorant woman." The two wails together make a sort of comic-opera situation. It is undeniable that one knows many more nice Catholic girls than nice Catholic young men, letting that word *nice* do duty for well-bred, cultured, refined. Whether it is that whooping-cough and other infantile complaints carry off the little boys, leaving their sisters to grow to marriageable womanhood, or whether the parents give superior training to the daughters, statistics have not finally settled. There was still another "wail" from a good old priest, whose sober Teutonic mind has small use for the "advanced woman," inveighing against the "pernicious" (I am not sure that he did not say damnable) custom of educating the girls above the boys, and, as a consequence, unfitting them to be the practical, sensible wives of other girls' brothers.

In the smaller cities and towns, unquestionably, there is often the alternative of marrying a non-Catholic or of not marrying at all. Sometimes it resolves itself into a syllogism: It is my vocation to be married; I am fitted by disposition, training, and inclination to be a good wife; one can save one's

soul in that state of life to which one is called more easily than in any other; there are no Catholic men to marry, therefore it is wiser and better to marry a non-Catholic than not to marry at all.

The problem is not an easy one for the marriageable young person to solve.

VI

EXCEPTIONS TO GENERAL RULES

THE little company assembled in Mrs. Driscoll's drawing-room one Sunday evening had been talking about young Fred Weber's marriage, and the opposition of the bride's parents on account of the religious differences of the couple.

"There is one thing about your church that I don't understand," said Captain Claiborne, "and that is, why you don't stick to your own rules."

Claiborne, recently of the Volunteers, was baptized a Catholic, brought up a Methodist, and caught in a mild agnosticism through choice and force of circumstances.

"I was at Weber's marriage," he went on; "a brilliant affair it was, too, and it gives point to my question. I happen to know that there is a rule in this diocese forbidding evening weddings, and another rule requiring a 'mixed couple,' as Carl would say, a Catholic and a Protestant, to go to the priest's residence to be married. Still another rule provides that the banns be announced for the three preceding Sundays in the parish church of the Catholic.

"Each and all of these regulations were violated in the present instance. They were married in the gorgeous Louis Seize drawing-room of the Dayton

home; they were married by electric light, before an assemblage in evening dress; the hands of an onyx clock showed the hour to be ten minutes of seven; and Miss Norrison is my authority for saying that the banns had been published but once. Still another violation of rule, they were not married by the parish priest, as is ordinarily required, but by a clergyman from another city.

“I call that a pretty stiff array of exceptions.”

“I was at the wedding, also,” said Dr. Mordant. “In fact, if it had not been for me there would have been no wedding, for I saved the life of the bride when she was three years old, who even at that early age began to show her disregard of accepted rules by swallowing a cherry-stone.

“You understand, of course, that dispensations are given in matters of discipline, and never in matters of faith or morals. You are not such a donkey as to imagine anything else.

“It is a principle of good government that the power that makes a rule can also dispense with the observance of the rule. The Church can, for satisfactory reasons, dispense from the laws that she makes herself. A law is always made for a good purpose, and only a grave reason can secure its abrogation.

“Now, of course, I don’t know, in this particular case, why the dispensations were granted; but I know something of dispensations in general. In the first place, it is the wish of the Church that her children marry Catholics, that they get married in the morning at a nuptial Mass in their parish

church, that they receive the nuptial blessing from the parish priest, and that the banns shall have been proclaimed for three Sundays.

“Her wisdom and experience have shown that these regulations are conducive to the welfare, spiritual and temporal, of her children. Nevertheless, like a good mother, she is indulgent and divinely tender, and her regulations are meant to be salutary and upholding supports, not galling yokes.

“For good reasons dispensations are given, and, in many instances, given reluctantly, to prevent greater evils.”

“Those regulations may be very well when two Catholics marry each other,” said Claiborne; “but I fail to see what purpose they serve when a Catholic marries a Protestant, since the Church won’t let them be married at Mass, and withholds her benediction, no matter what they do. I certainly should n’t want my sister, if she married a Catholic, to go to the clergyman’s house for the ceremony, just like a runaway couple to Gretna Green, or friendless nomads from a boarding-house.”

“Rules are for everybody; exceptions are for individuals. In the first place, you must bear in mind that, to a Catholic, marriage is a solemn sacrament, one that must be received in a state of grace under pain of sacrilege. It is not a mere civil contract, still less a social function. When the daughter of John Doe is married at home, this fact is remembered; the priest is received with respect, the company is decorous, and the ceremony is as solemn as the circumstances will permit.

Shortly afterwards the priest is called to the home of Richard Roe for a similar function; the time is set for half-past five, but when the clergyman arrives a few minutes before the hour, nobody is ready; the bride is still engaged with her toilet or her bridesmaids, the musicians have not come, the lamps are not yet lighted in the drawing-room, and the priest is kept waiting for fifteen minutes, or an hour, for the ceremony. Dr. Saxon, the pastor of the bride, arrives, and eyes him coldly, and the friends of the family chatter together in isolated groups, leaving the priest to his own devices. Finally, after the ceremony, without any time for thought of the sacredness or solemnity of the sacrament, the occasion becomes merely an ordinary reception. The priest, who has had nothing to eat since an early luncheon, being human, is getting hungry. At last some one asks him to go to the dining-room, where he takes his place along with a crowd of strangers, and is served, standing, to a croquette and some ice-cream, washed down with champagne or California wine, — this part depending on the finances of Papa Roe. Some time after nine o'clock he reaches home, with an envelope in his pocket containing anything from five dollars to a hundred. He has been absent four hours, instead of one or two, as he intended, and he finds that he has missed several people of importance to see, and also a sick call from an old and devoted penitent.

“ He is behind with his office, and he goes to bed feeling not quite his usual self, but forgetful that he

has had no dinner. In the morning he has a dull headache, and when he tries to write out his Sunday's sermon the ideas are all in a haze."

"My dear Doctor, I think you are letting your imagination carry you too far in regard to the imaginary nuptials of an imaginary Miss Roe," said Mrs. Driscoll; "but one can readily see how a home wedding, say in the Blank Flats, might cause disedification to the company and annoyance to the priest. A marriage in a stifling, ill-ventilated room, crowded with the hilarious and uncouth friends of the couple, might easily be shorn of every vestige of solemnity and decorum. The festivities are apt to be kept up far into the night, and the beverage will be neither champagne nor wine, but democratic beer, flowing in generous quantities.

"How much more in keeping with the sacrament would be a quiet ceremony in the rectory parlor, either in the morning or afternoon, with only the witnesses present!"

"Ah! then the home wedding depends largely upon the sort of home it is?" answered Claiborne.

"Well, yes, and the sort of people in the home," admitted the Doctor.

"Granting that, why should the hour make any difference?" pursued Claiborne. "Nobody wants to be married in the afternoon —"

"Get married in the forenoon; that is the proper time," retorted Dr. Mordant. "As Adele here would say, evening weddings are 'bad form,' and whilst our Bishop is not an especially fashionable old gentleman, he favors this point in the social code."

“That hardly applies to this country,” protested Claiborne. “It would be easy to recall any number of fashionable evening weddings.”

“In Europe everybody is married in the morning,” interpolated Adele. “That rule is coming into favor, here too. A morning home wedding can be made as well as you please —”

“Horrid little word, ‘swell,’” whispered Mrs. Griggs.

“When Annie Cresus married Count Coquin,” went on Adele, “and all the coroneted Coquins came over to the wedding, the ceremony was at nine o’clock, and a wedding breakfast was served immediately afterwards to the hundred guests, with the Archbishop who had officiated seated at the right of the bride’s mother.”

“To come down — or up, rather — to church weddings,” went on Claiborne, “why is it allowable for a couple to be married at five o’clock, and forbidden for them to be married at seven?”

“Why does the elevator in your office building run until twelve o’clock, and not a minute after? Why do you work nine hours a day, and not eleven? Why does the city council demand a pavement of eight feet, and not permit one of seven? Why do law and order demand any concessions from human caprice?”

“That is not an answer; it is merely pyrotechnics in words,” retorted Claiborne.

“Evening weddings in the church are forbidden in the interests of law and order, and also out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament. All the hood-

lums in the neighborhood, or from neighborhoods remote, congregate around a church when a wedding is taking place, and rend the air with their noise; and, worse still, if the ushers are not on the alert and draconian in their scrutiny of cards, people who have not been bidden to the ceremony scramble in, crowding those who have a right to be there, standing in the pews to catch a glimpse of the bride and of the assemblage, — and a daring urchin once perched himself on top of the confessional! Chatter and laughter are going on constantly, and the occasion is robbed of its solemnity. Then, to come to the material point of view, on investigation the following day the pews are found scratched, the cushions torn, the floor inexpressibly dirty, an arabesque of tobacco-stains on the carpet.”

“But, pardon me, my dear Mrs. Driscoll, surely those features are evils that proper care could easily obviate. A few policemen on duty near the entrance would speedily disperse the crowds, and no one can complain when the ushers resolutely demand the cards of admission; in no other way can intruders be kept out.”

“Perhaps for the weddings among nice people these evils could be avoided, but if a pastor opens his church for one he must do it for all; and when Tim Sharky and Nettie Toole are married, their friends would have the right to crowd the church, in noisy, malodorous numbers.

“And there is one form of disrespect not confined to ‘the lower classes.’ I have seen in our

own church at evening weddings — they do take place occasionally — women in evening dress — I am speaking of the days of the extreme décolleté — that would have shamed a Roman festival. Uncovered shoulders are out of place in a church.”

“But suppose a man must work all day; would you debar him from matrimony on that account?” continued the young officer, banteringlly.

“A man that cannot afford a holiday for his wedding is not prepared for matrimony. However, there is no rule without an exception, and I know of at least one instance where a couple were married at night for the very reason you give. The bridegroom was compelled to work because of the illness of the man who was to have taken his place in the shop, and the pastor married them at night; but there were conditions; the church was not open, and only two witnesses were allowed to be present, the little party following the clergyman from the rectory through the sacristy to the altar.

“You see the powers that be are not unreasonable in their demands.”

“You insist that in order to have a dispensation one must show a reason why it should be granted,” continued Claiborne. “You say that for the reason of illness, old age, or hard work, one is dispensed from the Lenten fast; necessity permits one to work on Sundays or holidays; you give cases where the regulations in regard to the time and place of marriage are abrogated; now I should like to know the reasons that allow a Catholic to marry a Protestant.”

“I should like to know that, too,” put in Adele. “Not that I have any ‘serious intintions,’ as our cook would say, but simply as a seeker after information.”

“Is it not merely a matter of form?” asked Travis. “I have known scores of instances where the only reason that any one could see was the very good one that the couple fell in love with each other. And if that be a sufficient reason, why require a dispensation, since that is an understood condition, at least theoretically, to all American alliances.”

“That is a question that takes us into rather deep waters,” said the old Doctor. “I fancy the Church rather favors keeping the laity in the dark in regard to the causes for dispensations in this matter, since if people were familiar with them they might easily bring about the conditions for themselves. You have all heard the story of the mother who warned her children not to put beans in their noses, and who returned from her outing to find each baby nostril filled with a bean?”

“There is much more to be considered than the mere matter of falling in love. In fact, some crusty old priests, to whom sentiment is absolutely an unknown quantity, might refuse to consider that altogether.

“There are reasons, known in the schools as canonical reasons, for dispensations; you will find them treated at length, in the Latin tongue, in various moral theologies. Now, when a couple applies for a dispensation they must show one or more of these

reasons before the priest will apply for the dispensation. If the reason does not seem sufficiently strong the Bishop may, and often does, refuse. Of course the pastor makes the application, and he naturally puts it in the correct form, but he must have a bona fide reason; it is a matter of conscience with him, and might be made a matter of ecclesiastical discipline as well, if he were not careful to keep within the law.

“ In the first place, the prohibition of the Church acts as a deterring influence with the majority of Catholics; no one can look with indifference on taking what cynics call a plunge into the dark — entering the holy state of matrimony—without the blessing of the Church. Then there are certain conditions to be complied with by the couple asking the dispensation. The non-Catholic must promise, and I believe the promise is now required in writing, not to interfere with the practice of the religion of the Catholic spouse, that all the children are to be brought up in the Catholic faith, and that this promise will be kept even in case of the death of the Catholic. More than one marriage has been broken off when this promise comes up for consideration, and sometimes a weak Catholic, especially anxious to get married, and fearing that another chance will not present itself, yields, and is married by a judge or justice, or even by a preacher. Sometimes you hear a couple say that they had agreed that all the girls were to be of the mother’s religion, and all the boys to go with the father; but this is nonsense, — a palpable falsehood to those who

know anything about the regulations of the Catholic Church. No priest would dare to ask for a dispensation if this preliminary promise had been withheld. Oftentimes it is not kept, but where it is not you may know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that a solemn pledge is being violated.

“Another condition is, that the ceremony must be performed by the priest, and no other ceremony, before or after, can take place. Sometimes a couple are married by a priest, and then a public ceremony at the home of the bride, with her pastor officiating, follows; but where this happens it is positive that the priest has been deceived; furthermore the Catholic is lending himself to a sacrilege, and incurs excommunication *ipso facto*, becomes a ‘reserved case’ — something very dreadful, indeed.”

“Don’t you think your Church is just a little severe?” inquired Claiborne.

“No, I don’t think anything of the kind,” retorted Dr. Mordant, promptly. “The Church objects to mixed marriages, and she wishes them to be made as difficult as possible; and besides, if you understood what the Church really is, the teacher and conserver of a divinely committed truth, you would see that she could not be less exacting. One’s faith should be dearer than any earthly possession possible, and if one so regards it, it naturally follows that one would wish to transmit this priceless heritage to one’s offspring.

“To come back to the reasons for dispensations — age and ugliness are accepted; Adele, you could n’t creep in under either head. Suppose a spinster

of thirty-five gets an offer of marriage from a Methodist, and the chances are that she will not get another, her pastor cannot be so hard-hearted as to refuse to consider her application for a dispensation; or suppose a girl lives in a community where there are few Catholic young men of her own rank in life, or that she has been receiving attentions from the gentleman until her neighbors are of the opinion that wedding cards should follow, or that there are family reasons, the healing of a feud, the uniting of desirable estates. In Europe this condition occurs more frequently than with us. Oftentimes the peace of nations depends upon a certain alliance between royal families."

"Speaking of Europe," said Claiborne, "reminds me of another point in the discussion, and that is the shameful unions among near relatives. The Church theoretically forbids them within the fourth degree; but despite the prohibition we are constantly seeing marriages among first cousins. I don't mind that so much, although strong reasons, not of sentiment but of sense, can be adduced against them; but when it comes to an uncle marrying his niece, I call it nothing less than shameful."

"That happens very rarely," answered the Doctor, "and only for extraordinary reasons is a dispensation granted. Among royalties the welfare of nations is generally involved; among private folk, often the good name of the girl."

"You might tell us who She is, Captain Claiborne," interposed Mrs. Driscoll. "Such a thirst

for detailed information naturally makes us all suspicious. I shall be very glad to tell Father Ryan what a nice boy you are, or to say a good word for you to the girl; but then of course that part would be entirely superfluous."

VII

A FOOTNOTE TO AN OLD DISCUSSION

MRS. HICKS confided to me this afternoon that her son George is going to be married to Kate Mahan, the engagement to be announced very soon, and the wedding to follow shortly afterwards. Seldom in my life have the restraints imposed by civilization on a truth-loving tongue seemed so exasperatingly hampering. Assuming the deprecating attitude of the beneficent parent, she assured me that, whilst Kate was not quite the wife she would have chosen for George, neither she nor Mr. Hicks objected to the girl personally! I suppose I was expected to infer that the Mahan escutcheon is not quite up to the lofty Hicks standard.

I felt like telling her that any respectable girl in this parish is much too good for her son. George Hicks has been sowing his wild oats in so public a manner for a half-dozen years that it is no violation of the law of charity to comment on the abundant crop he has harvested.

Now, forsooth, he is a little tired, and ready to "reform," and his mother regards it quite as a matter of course for some sweet, innocent girl to step forth to be the willing prop of this shaky reformation!

If it were poor little Kitty Mahan — it seems only yesterday that the child was in short frocks — who had “reformed,” and was aspiring to the hand of Prince George (of the house of Hicks), all the mothers in the country would hold up their arms in righteous amazement at her presumption.

The press and the various talking clubs have treated the subject “ad nauseam” of what is dubbed “the double standard,” not of sound money, but of unsound morals. One side, representing the solid, conservative element, the British *pater familias* and the American mother of sons, insists that it is all “rot” to judge men and women by the same laws, and the wildest Utopian dream to imagine that the standard will ever be the same for both.

They show very clearly that the foundations of society rest upon the virtue of women. They fail to show how something higher than society — Christianity — can rest on anything less than the virtue of mankind. A very large class of thinkers, whose prime apostle is Mr. Ruskin, insists with tireless persistence that woman is the weaker vessel, that her mission in life is to be a helpmate for man, and that just as she is subordinate in physical strength, so she is in intellectual vigor.

If this be the case, and Scriptural texts, hurled like Parthian arrows, are made to support it, then it logically follows that man, far more than woman, should set the example of all beautiful traits.

The cleverest of American essayists, Agnes Repplier, has conceded without argument that in the higher walks of human activities man has un-

questionably excelled, and it were a bootless task to thresh over old straw. But mounting from the intellectual to the spiritual, we find woman in immemorial possession.

Woman makes the sanctity of home, without which law and order would speedily be turned to chaos; she fills our churches, crowds the altar railings, attends to the poor, keeps alive the higher culture, and does far more than her half of the world's work.

The demon drink has possession of myriads of men, but of few women; the millions of dollars that annually swell the coffers of the saloon keepers have been spent in selfish disregard of hungry little children, ill-clad, sorrowful wives, the needs of the poor, the just demands of the Church, and spent by men; men fill the penitentiaries, the jails, the workhouses; they fall away from the practice of religion by countless thousands; and from the earliest times they seem to have followed their own caprices in the breaking of parts of the Decalogue, in absolute impunity, so far as the world's censure is concerned.

This is not saying that men have not been heroically good, that any community is without men who lead cleanly, noble lives. Men are found in the calendar of saints, in the vanguard of all high endeavor; one can bear grateful testimony to all this, and yet stand appalled at the array of vices which are perpetrated and perpetuated by men.

It is certain, as certain as anything human can be, that there are far more good women in the world than there are good men.

If in the divine order man is intended to be the

head of woman, her wise ruler, and loving protector, why does he fail so egregiously in the first duty of a superior, the setting of a good example?

It is absurdly paradoxical for women to fold their white robes about them and shut the door relentlessly against a woman whose robe is not quite white, or has not always been so, and open it wide to men whose moral habiliment is smirched to sooty blackness.

Individual women say: "Society is so constituted, and we must bow down to its usages; we are powerless to effect a change."

The individual can do very little, but a collection of individuals make up society, and society forms public sentiment, and public sentiment, which let down the bars of morality a score of centuries before Christianity had birth, could easily put them up again, and show a consistency between the theories of civilization and its practice.

Among the nine ways in which, as the little catechism tells us, we can be accessory to another's sin, is connivance in the evil done.

How is it that the fathomless mother-love, which has sweetened the world since Eve crooned lullabies to little Abel, has not sprung to the rescue of boyish souls?

The apparent callousness of good Christian mothers on this point is appalling; the innocence of their daughters is guarded as infinitely more precious than apples of the Hesperides, but the loss of the innocence of their sons seems to trouble them never at all!

They make temptation easy by doing away with all earthly penalties for a fall. They seem to forget, or to ignore, that awful reckoning in another world. Poor boys! when even their own mothers and sisters are leagued against them.

A fatal fallacy running through much of the discussions is, that woman should be allowed the same personal liberty in the matter of morals as man; in a word, that all women should have the privilege of being as bad as some men. If society is far from ideal with its feminine half held to a strict account, what would it be if both women and men were free to choose either virtue or vice!

Virtue that is a matter of compulsion is not of a very admirable order; but one must admit that it is far better for the individual as well as for society, of which the individual is a part, for a person to be good through compulsion than not to be good at all.

And the effect of the example is just the same.

Three men stand out in history as representative and forever great: Julius Cæsar, conqueror, lawgiver, pagan; Napoleon, conqueror, lawgiver, Christian; Louis XIV., hereditary monarch, lawgiver, Christian, — three men as noted for their private vices as for their public virtues, but three men held up to the admiration of boyish hearts. To many minds the pagan was the noblest of them all; thus a bad example, reaching out from the grave where kingly ashes have mouldered for centuries, puts a weapon in the hands of the enemies of religion.

Boys are taught their catechism, and taken in their childish innocence to make their first communion;

and then the world steps in and says, "Leave religion to women and children."

And so we have the paradox of Freemasons and infidels ruling, or misruling, Catholic countries. In France, Italy, Mexico, Cuba, South America, women fill the churches and lay siege to heaven with their prayers; but their husbands and fathers enter the portals only to be baptized, married, and buried.

Women bewail this condition of things, and ignore the fact that they themselves have helped to bring it about. When society demands that purity, honor, and sobriety shall be the passports to recognition and favor, regardless of sex, — for the Decalogue knows no exception, — then indeed will come the dawning of a happier era for humanity.

Not a lower standard for woman, but a higher standard for man should be the slogan in this modern crusade.

In that happy time young girls will not be expected to say, "Thank you, sir," for the shop-worn affections of any man.

In the mean time, Kitty Mahan has probably been schooled by her mother not to be over-nice in her choice of a husband, so long as a carriage and pair, and all that they represent, are to reward her magnanimity.

VIII

SOME DOMESTIC INTERIORS

PERHAPS the greatest charm in novels is that we are transported into beautiful, or interesting, or curious homes without the trouble of going forth to seek them. In this way we can have a much larger circle of friends and acquaintances than would be possible in any other, and without the disquieting consciousness that some of them are most ineligible for friendship, or the humiliating suspicion that we are intruding unasked into the society of "our betters."

We can go to the Queen's drawing-room without the permission of the American ambassador, and make the thirteenth at a Midas banquet given to a favored twelve.

St. Paul's is not an unusually large parish; indeed, since the Grosvenor Park people insisted upon having a church of their own, and cut themselves off from us to add wealth and prestige to St. Pius's, we are of very moderate dimensions; yet it is safe to say that within the parish limits are to be found such diversity of homes, and of people, as would supply material to all the novelists in the State.

At the corner of Carroll Place there stands a beautiful old stone homestead, set well back in a

flowering lawn; for the house dates from the era when lawns and flowers belonged as naturally as the doors and walls to the rich man's town-house.

One goes up the gray stone steps with richly carved newels, and finds a modern electric door-bell, which has but recently taken the place of the brass knocker; a heavy door, fit to be the portal of a seventeenth-century château on the Loire, swings slowly open, and admits the visitor into a lofty, broad hall, with a marble floor left almost bare of rugs; a massive bronze lamp depends from a beautiful frescoed ceiling, no longer in its pristine freshness.

To the left is the spacious drawing-room, with heavy curtains draping the long French windows, massive, old-fashioned mahogany furniture, and dim old paintings on the walls. As the eye becomes accustomed to the half-light one distinguishes a copy of Raphael's Sistine Madonna, and a soft-eyed gentle St. Elizabeth. In a far corner is a white marble statue of Our Lady. Instantly one has a key to the faith of the household, the old faith so rich in inspiration to the artist, so unerring in its use of art. After this glimpse, one is quite prepared to find in the chatelaine of the mansion the dear old gentlewoman who came to the house a bride forty years ago, and who has, under its hospitable roof, reared a charming family of womanly daughters and brave sons. If you get to know the family well enough you will hear of Robert, the eldest, who now represents his country at a European court, and is the pride of his father and mother, — not so much

because of his fame, but, as they will tell you, "because Robert has been nothing but a pleasure to us all his life; he was always so good."

Of Elizabeth, now a sweet young matron, married into another of our old Catholic families; of Armand, a talented, *spirituel* youth, who died in the Jesuit Scholasticate in Belgium; of Constance, a gay young belle, who dances from All Saints' to Shrove Tuesday, inclusive, and prays like a little nun, and goes demurely on her way of charity and good works during Lent. "Oh, yes, Constance loves society, sometimes I fear, too much," says the mother; "but she is such a devoted child, and so sweet and gracious, who could help loving her, and spoiling her too, almost as much as her father does?"

Across the hall is the library, and in the rows of blackened cases one finds many a well-thumbed volume bearing names that the cramming average young American has barely heard of: Montalembert, de Sévigné, de Guérin, John England, Martin L. Spalding, — these hold up their honored heads along with the best of the old aristocracy of literature.

On the mantel above the grate there stands, for everybody to see, a tall, yellowing, ivory crucifix. As one goes over the house, one finds emblems of religion and the world's Redeemer in all its big, cheery rooms. Here, evidently, is the robust, logical faith that recognizes and utilizes the tremendous power for good or evil in environment.

It has never occurred to this gentle dame that

the best way to teach purity and modesty and womanly virtue to a young girl is to surround her, from her earliest years, with pictures and statues of Venuses and dancing Bacchantes; or that these, however good from the artistic point of view, would incite to prayer and noble living, rather than copies of Millet's *Angelus*, and Murillo's *Immaculate Conception*; or that a bronze Hermes, or a beautiful head of the young Tiberius, would prove more effective in quickening the boyish pulse with heroic resolve and manly honor than the bust of the great Leo, or the scholarly profile of the saintly Newman.

The matron next door thinks differently, and pagan treasures are to be found in her house in profusion, and in the most unimpeachably artistic verity. As she would tell you, with a shrug of her bared, white shoulders, "it is all a matter of taste." But our chatelaine is an old-fashioned mother who would prefer to see her children innocent and chivalrous, rather than artistic and world-wise.

And what beautiful memories cluster around this old home! — memories of the gay frolics of children, of splendid parties for the children grown-up, of christenings, and first-communion breakfasts, and wedding feasts, of birthdays, and anniversaries, and Christmas dinners.

Now the house is more quiet, but never for long, and grandchildren lend their piping trebles to the echoes of the vaulted hall.

Over in Seneca Street, the houses are on a very different scale, built in a row, and whole blocks of them just alike. One hears the story of the young

man who went into the wrong door, and did not discover his mistake until confronted by the angry occupant of the third-story front.

These houses were built before architects awoke to the possibilities lying dormant in their imaginations. There is one block which is known as "The Dovecote," because so many young couples have set up their Lares and Penates behind its narrow stone fronts.

The Carletons live there, and Mrs. Carleton, who as Eleanor Byrne was the prettiest little minx in the Raphael Sketch Club, has accomplished the impossible, and wrought artistic beauty out of the little box rooms, and the long, narrow hall with its abrupt toy stairs. She had the house freshly papered, choosing each shade and pattern with reference to the light, or more frequently the absence of light, in the particular room; and with the new furniture, the wedding presents, some growing plants at the windows, candles with pink shades in the dining-room, and Eleanor herself in her trousseau finery, the home is a delightful spot, and worthy of place in one's mental picture-gallery.

Young George, the happy benedict, thinks so, and being a generous youth he is always asking his friends to dinner, "quite informally, you know;" and the bride, who is as delighted with the shiny new things in her kitchen and the motherly Bridget who presides there as she was with her dolls and cardboard mansion not so very long ago, is developing surprising genius in the way of salads and soups. Sometimes, when there is a larger number of guests

than the architect had planned for crowded into the pretty drawing-room, a gilt chair gets knocked over ; and when Arthur Bonner, the noted bass, sings for their delectation, his big voice so fills the house that one expects to find a tiny crack in the wall. But the coterie evidently enjoy themselves, for they come back again as soon as asked, and the lord of the domicile chants insistent pæans of matrimony to bachelors.

The neighbors opposite are not artistic. "The lady of the house," in the suave words of the book agent, is not a bride, and whilst her devotion to her husband and little family is beyond question, its manifestation is somewhat erratic. She does not spare herself, and equally of course she does not spare them. Everything about her house is cheerless and untidy. She cannot get along with the various Phyllises who have come and gone from her kitchen ; when her husband returns home at night he expects, and is not often disappointed, to hear a tale of woe ; Phyllis has given warning, or she is so impudent or wasteful ; the gas pipe leaks ; little Phil has been having trouble at school, his teacher does not understand the child's sensitive temperament ; Katie shows symptoms of whooping-cough. And there is the bill from Fraser's — how the things do count up is a mystery, for she knows that no woman in town is as saving as she. The tale is interrupted by sounds of a lively scrimmage among the children, and vigorous wails from the youngest.

It has been a long time since a guest, not a relative, sat at their board, and naturally the couple

have been dropped from the lists of dinner-givers. There are too many little mouths to feed, and little feet to keep shod to permit of squandering dollars on the theatre, and papa does not care for cards. He would like to read, but by the time the domestic atmosphere is cleared it is too late to do more than glance at the evening paper.

Small wonder that, when the young man who has the desk next to his in the great commercial beehive asks for congratulations on his approaching nuptials, he stammers absently, "You poor dev— oh, ah,— of course—I congratulate you, wish you every joy, old fellow. When is the—the happy day to be?"

As for the wife, she is not artistic, or literary, or social, or religious. It would be hard to say in a word just what she is,—a faded, peevish, dowdy little woman, her skirts in chronic need of new binding.

As a rule, the keynote of a home is given by the being who presides as its queen. On her depends the comfort or the discomfort, the cheerfulness or the gloom, that pervades its interior. Rules, however, have exceptions. For instance, a man with a decided literary bent will naturally have a good library, and there will be the literary flavor, so to speak, in the surroundings, the conversation, the point of view. If he is artistic there will be the atmosphere of art. In the ideal home there is the blending of tastes.

People impress their individualities on their surroundings, or they do when they are not hampered

for means until every natural taste has been smothered. Sometimes the poor woman who loves music and books and company and laughter is condemned to a dreary, cheerless, silent home ; and the woman who craves flowers and birds and the murmur of running brooks may dim her eyes gazing out over the chalky stretch of a barren Western plain. The man who would find his element with gun or wheel is forced by circumstances to the saloon or club for recreation.

Whilst it is true that the woman makes the happiness of the home, she cannot always prevent its unhappiness. There are men in the world whom no woman without a halo could ever hope to please, and even a saint would find her task harder work than the winning of the halo.

There is Perry Bryson, for one. When Carrie Turner married him her friends, and especially his, thought that she was doing unusually well for herself ; for the Brysons are a good old family, at one time rich, whilst the Turners were, in a sense, parvenus. Mrs. Turner was a widow with two daughters to take care of, and a very limited income. Louise, the elder, shocked her mother and sister by going to work.

“I hate old gloves and threadbare flannels,” she said, “and a diet of stewed prunes and toast ; and I am going to use the brains the good Lord gave me to obtain beefsteak and decent clothes.”

But then Louise was not pretty like Carrie, and was of a different temperament.

Perry Bryson was the youngest son, much in-

dulged by his mother, who naturally expected his wife to continue the indulgence.

At first life was pleasant enough. Carrie soon discovered that her husband drank more than was good for him, and that his club dues and tailor's bills and incidental expenses — whatever that might mean — ate up his salary at an appalling rate. However, she did not complain. But after a brood of little Brysons appeared on the scene, to be fed and clothed and taken care of in the thousand ways which the modern child has invented to use up an income, the pinch of real poverty made itself felt. Carrie had long since dropped out of society; either the children needed her presence, or else she had no clothes suitable in which to appear in the drawing-rooms frequented by her husband. She never thought of asking him to stay at home with her when an invitation came which she could not accept. Soon their friends came to look upon Mrs. Bryson as a chronic invalid, and rather pitied Perry. There was nothing the matter with the poor woman except loneliness and neglect, and the torturing problem of trying, from week to week and from year to year, to live on a pittance woefully inadequate to the demands made upon it.

With one inefficient domestic, six children, and a husband who made things unpleasant if his dinner was not well cooked and properly served, it can be divined that life for the wife and mother meant merely a round of never-ending toil.

With no leisure, no opportunity for pleasure, or fresh air, or pretty clothes, or books, or great plays,

or new pictures, and far too much exercise of the wrong sort, it is not surprising that "Mrs. Perry Bryson looks so much older than her husband, and oh, such a fright! She never has on a decent gown, or appears to know anything of what you are talking about; and her husband is so nice and so good-looking. One does see the queerest matings, or mismatings —"

And handsome Perry Bryson, as he doles out money to Carrie, and wonders in April what she could have done with the check he gave her at Christmas, feels unfairly treated when stewed prunes, or their equivalent, appear on his table.

Miss Louise Turner, a prosperous spinster of thirty-six, who keeps house with another spinster in a cozy flat, and has an income from property almost enough to support her did she choose to give up her place as the head of a bureau of stenography, pays her sister Carrie an occasional visit. Although five years the senior, she looks younger and fresher than Mrs. Bryson. She has been to Europe, and every summer is spent in travel and rest. With work, society, friends, books, fads, charities, and her sister's children, she has no time for regrets for what her brother-in-law says that she has missed. (She is devoutly thankful that she has missed a Perry Bryson!)

"Poor Louise! What a pity she never married!" says Perry; "she would have made some man a good wife. She never was as pretty as you, Carrie, but she is rather stunning now. Some women are like that, you know — never seem to amount to any-

thing in the way of looks until they get up in years; and others are just—" but he had the grace to stop short.

The Bryson children are uproariously delighted when Aunt Louise is expected; for her coming means more *matinées*, and candy, and nice times generally, than their father would give them in a year.

And "poor Louise" secretly pities "poor Carrie," and crushes down the impulse to give that "selfish, unfeeling incarnation of stinginess," her brother Perry, a piece of her indignant mind!

Down near the lower boundary of the parish one comes upon the dwellings of the poor, sometimes the very poor, and, in at least one block, of the "submerged" poor.

Mrs. George Carleton, who is an active member of the St. Paul's Aid Society, says that there is no excuse for the "submerging;" that when you find a family who cannot by their united efforts earn enough to eat and to wear, you will usually find the beer mug and laziness behind their distress. "Of course, where sickness is a factor the case is different."

Even a tenement can afford striking contrasts.

There are the Dingers, who live in the Kensington flats; the house is so called, although it is really only a tenement of the better sort. They have four rooms, but they also have a home. Too many of their neighbors have only four rooms; they have not succeeded in making a home.

The Dinger children go to school, all except

Tom, the first-born, who is sixteen, and has a position in a shoe store. The father is a mechanic, earning fairly good wages. What first impresses one in their abode is the neatness and brightness of everything. Flowers are in the windows, and the whitest of muslin curtains are looped back from them; there are pictures on the walls. Mrs. Carleton says that she has to wear smoked glasses when she calls to leave magazines from the book club, the pictures are so highly colored; but they suit the Dingers.

In the evening the little family gather around the dinner-table; the mother in her calico frock and white apron, fresh and crisp, listens with maternal pride to the children's bulletins of their school, and Master Tom's boasting of what "our firm" is going to do; and the husband says that he "guesses" Kittie can have a guitar if she gets over ninety in her examinations, has visions of Tom's glorious future, and is altogether sure that there is not a finer family in the parish than his.

If you listen to their conversation, or use your eyes, you will soon find out that they know something about books, and the happenings in the big world; and Tom, at least, can tell you the names and strong points of all the great histrionic stars who have come to town during the season.

Presently, before the dishes are all washed, some of the neighbors drop in, and there are games and much chatter and laughter, and a pan of hot popcorn and — who can blame them? — perhaps a pitcher of beer.

In the rooms next to theirs you will find dirt and disorder, ragged, hollow-eyed children, the father sleeping off a drunken debauch.

On the floor above is pandemonium.

And little children are born into that atmosphere, and live in it, when a merciful Providence does not let them die. And when this class become very numerous in a city, the police are vigilantly alert in the neighborhood, and thoughtful people who have read history look grave, and wonder what the end will be. But within earshot of the profanity and the drunken revels is a sweet-faced little sewing-woman, in her tiny room; she has had only bread and tea and a bit of cheese for her supper, but she says grace as devoutly after the repast as if it had been a feast. And after stitching away until her eyes and back ache wearily, she puts out her candle, and kneels before a little altar to say her prayers. The Litany of Our Lady does not come from a purer heart in all the parish than from that of the ill-paid, half-starving sewing-woman.

Perhaps you have seen her in the church, or noticed her saintly expression as she passed up the aisle, in the long line of Sodality girls, to the communion railing.

And it is the sewing-woman and her kind that bring hope to the social economist.

In the thousands of homes within the parish limits, happy homes, sorrowful homes, among the rich and among the poor, the spirit of good and the spirit of evil often dwell side by side, with only a brick wall separating peace from despair.

IX

A PLEA FOR THE CHILDREN

SO much sound advice has been given in recent years to parents that one would naturally expect the present generation of little ones to be prodigies of goodness and charm,—a little lower, perhaps, than the angels, but certainly far superior to the infant phenomenon of earlier and less instructed days.

Yet one's acquaintance with children does not have to be very extensive to demonstrate that this is not the case. Parents are either very stupid, or else very heedless of the profuse counsels given to them.

When one rubs against some of the commonplace, little-souled women who have been intrusted, through some strange oversight of nature, with the high and holy office of motherhood, it is a matter of pleasant surprise that their children are not worse than they really are.

Mother-instinct, perhaps, comes to the rescue when common-sense fails. There is no lack of care bestowed by these women on the physical well-being of their offspring,—the merits of various patent foods, the right temperature of baths, the best remedies for croup, are not unknown to them;

but they seem to overlook the little soul, fresh from the hands of its Creator, a jewel so rare, so precious, so beautiful that the angel guardian is never weary of watching over the treasure.

The soul of a child is like some wonderful alabaster clay, which can be moulded into shapes of exquisite beauty, or deformed and scarred and soiled. It is like a garden in which rarest flowers are planted.

The saints and great doctors of the Church are never tired of trying to depict what the soul of a little child really is in the sight of God; they have not spared the finest imagery, the most glowing terms. And yet it is treated in a way to make angels veil their faces.

People touch lightly upon the spoiling of children, as if that were their normal fate. They are more grave when the spoiling of a horse is involved. The human spoiling begins before the little thing can even give articulate speech to its baby wants. The infant screams for the clock at the top of its vigorous young lungs, and to save herself trouble the mother yields; the child has learned its first lesson in strategy. As it grows older the tactics which won the clock are constantly employed to win other things. The little one cries for candy, and gets it, toddles into forbidden closets, and cries to avert reproof and punishment; the boy wants to play with naughty boys across the street, and teases and whines until the mother's "no" becomes an impatient "yes."

Yet that parent has probably heard a score of times that the primary law for the management of

children is, to say "yes" with discretion, and "no" with firmness.

Miss Norrison dropped in for a cup of tea the other day, and, as no stranger was present, gave utterance to her candid opinions on the subject of children.

"I have just been to call at the Glovers'," she said, "and a brood of more ill-mannered little cubs it would be hard to find in a day's ride. Kitty Glover was my chum at school, but if I'd thought that a friend of mine could develop into such an idiot mother, I should n't have attended her wedding.

"The nurse had gone to the dentist's, and Kitty was walking the floor with the baby; Pauline was hammering with her fists on the piano, and Charles and Reggy were pummelling each other in the hall. Of course I felt decidedly out of place, and wanted to go away immediately, but Kitty would n't let me. Pauline left the piano and came over to see me, and I soon discovered that she had been eating candy, for her dirty, sticky fingers have ruined the front of my best Redfern frock. Reggy kicked the dog and set it to howling, the baby yelled in sympathy, and Charles proceeded to give his brother another thrashing."

The senseless theories of some women as to the management of children are almost worse than no theories at all. One writer gravely puts forth the dictum that one should reason with a child, and make it see the wisdom of obedience, but never under any circumstances use force. If this principle were put into practice, all the Sunday-school

books, as Miss Repplier points out, and the pleasing little anecdotes in the Readers, illustrative of the benefits to childhood of the virtue of obedience, would have to be destroyed, and a new set constructed on radically different lines.

Well brought-up children, in old-fashioned days, never dreamed that reasons were their due. It was the privilege of youth to lean on the wisdom of age, and to pursue the even tenor of its ways in the comforting conviction that the course decided by parental authority was best—or, at least irrevocable.

Parents sometimes permit their children many hurtful privileges, and withhold some of their natural rights.

They act as if they considered their children to be a set of little fools. They teach them that it is wrong to tell falsehoods, and fib to them and before them without scruple.

“There is that tiresome bill collector from Herford’s! Run to the door, Georgie, and tell him that papa is out of town.”

And if Georgie comes in a few days later and says that he had been kept in at school for spelling, when, as a matter of fact, he had been playing with the grocer’s boy in the street, Georgie’s mamma is hardly logical if she punishes him for falsehood.

And if Georgie’s papa laughs at him to-day for tying the cat to the parlor curtains, and whips him to-morrow for the same act, because the curtain happens to be torn in the second venture, Georgie

is apt to lose that nice appreciation of the correlation of punishment and crime.

Happy is that child who can accept as a reason, satisfying beyond all doubt, the simple phrase, "Mamma says so," secure in the conviction that mamma cannot lead him astray.

Children are not always fortunate in the selection of their parents. Who has not known the mother who appealed unconsciously to the worst instincts in the little soul, developing the germs of evil planted in human nature at the Fall of Man. At dancing-school the little coquettes walk about in silks, casting admiring glances over their shoulders at their overdressed figures reflected in the mirrors, or looking disdainfully at those of their companions whose mothers have less money or more sense. At an early age they get their first lessons in snobbery.

Eleanor Standish came home the other day and said that the girls had asked if her mamma were in society, and if her papa were rich.

"Are you in society, mamma?" asked the child, innocently.

As if a healthy-minded child would care to know more about another child than whether she could play games, and be depended upon to bring caramels with some degree of regularity to school!

Class distinctions and the burden of clothes belong to a later and worldlier era of girl life.

No mother can be censured for keeping her young daughter away from undesirable playmates, but poverty and obscurity should not be given as reasons for the exclusion.

“Kathleen, you mustn't play with the little girls next door; they are not polite,” and Kathleen, to whom politeness is a cardinal virtue, acquiesces at once.

Small girls of ten have been heard to talk about their “sweethearts;” and their mothers, standing by, thought them clever!

How many have had the beautiful innocence of their child souls tarnished through hearing all sorts of subjects discussed in their presence by a vulgar, unthinking mother and her friends! Their perception of evil develops even more rapidly than their perception of the good and true.

A sensitive child may be frightened into serious nervous disorders by the gruesome tales of an ignorant nurse, who sees the wondering eyes close in shuddering terror whilst she peruses a “Beadle” novel.

That child is to be envied whose mother has time, or who takes the time from less important things, to tell it all the dear delightful nursery tales that are forever after a heritage of joy. How quickly the tots learn the thrilling points, and how promptly they tell you that you have forgotten, if you attempt to interpolate a bit of original fiction!

And mingled with these old tales the Christian mother does not forget the beautiful legends and stories of the Infant Jesus, and the saints.

As the child grows older it learns, in the guise of stories, and childhood is voracious for stories, the history of Jeanne d' Arc, St. Clotilde, St. Blanche, the knightly Crusaders, of Marquette preaching to

the Indians, of Columbus, Washington, Barry, Dewey.

There is such a wealth of material for stories which the mother will utilize if she is wise, even if a ruffle the less must go on her small daughter's frock, or a few extra dollars be paid out for a sewing-woman.

There is no more pernicious form of selfishness than that of the mother who neglects the hearts and minds of her children in order to minister to their bodily needs. A seamstress at a dollar a day can stitch aprons, but the wealth of the Klondike cannot procure a mother's teaching.

What child ever forgets the prayer learned at its mother's knee?—

“ Our Father ; ” “ Hail Mary ; ”

“ Angel of God, my guardian dear ; ”

“ Now I lay me down to sleep.”

The child that can sing a song and dance a skirt-dance, but cannot say its prayers, is an innocent witness to its mother's unworthiness.

Those who have had much to do with children say that it is surprising the lively interest they take in their guardian angels. The idea that a beautiful unseen Presence is watching day and night, putting in a big black book all the naughty deeds, and recording in a book of gold the good, appeals vividly to the child nature.

It is a common mistake to give children juvenile stories that have been “ written down ” to their supposed intellectual level. A clever woman has entered vigorous protest against these colorless productions. “ I was turned loose at twelve in a good

library," she said, "and I had 'Ivanhoe' and 'Quentin Durward' and 'David Copperfield,' and the great poets as my friends and guides to an enchanting realm."

A child can be thrilled by the ringing cadences of martial verse, and the telling episodes of a great story, before it in the least comprehends their darker meaning or their philosophy, — before, indeed, it knows anything about philosophy. A child reads "Robinson Crusoe," and "Don Quixote," for the story, and bothers its head very little about the moral which the elders find so apparent.

Scott never harmed a healthy-minded child of twelve or fourteen.

This question of what a child is to read is one of the gravest that confronts the anxious parent.

L. of C. Never before since the printing-press came into existence, to be the greatest blessing and the greatest bane of civilization, has the danger been so alarming as now; cheapness of production has inundated the land with a supply, and youth reads with avidity things that age would blush to touch.

One poor child, a beautiful girl of fifteen, regularly buys and reads the Sunday edition of a New York yellow journal. It is as much beyond the possible for that girl to be innocent-minded as it would be for a piece of paper buried in the mire to remain white. Her mother, when the fact was brought to her attention, said that "she did not believe in the muzzle system for American girls. They would have to know evil in order to know how to shun it, and the sooner the knowledge was acquired, the better."

Poor child! Unworthy mother!

If Herod slaughtered innocents, the daily papers slaughter innocence. The first crime is a trifle compared with the second.

There is an admirable little manual called "Five Hundred Best Books" by Professor George Hardy, and mothers cannot do better than to consult this list.

If so many dangers menace the child of opulence, what can be said of the poor little victims of the slums, children preternaturally old and unconsciously wicked?

The privileges of the child depend upon the means and the opinions of its parents; but every child has certain inalienable rights: it has the right to a wise control on the part of its parents; to protection from evil; to good books: to a Christian education; to a sound mind in a sound body; and a noble soul.

X

THE BREAD-WINNERS

NO woman goes out into the down-town business world simply because she wants to be there. The normal woman loves her home, and her social pleasures, and her clubs for intellectual improvement, too well to exchange them voluntarily for the industrial bondage of a salaried position.

But the sensible woman realizes that any sort of work is a thousand times better than an unhappy marriage, and the unselfish one often chooses to earn a living rather than to be a burden on an overtaxed father or brother.

Just now it is a fad for women who, for reasons of their own, do not wish to be married, to take up some line of work merely as a means of using their time profitably; but they do not select a field of labor where they must be at the beck and call of employers from eight in the morning until five or six in the evening.

Writers, artists, singers, follow the bent of their genius because they must,—the impulse is in their souls and it is bound to find its legitimate expression; but this is no more than saying that a person

must be herself, and a talent is an integral part of one's being.

But when a woman takes to raising mushrooms for the market, or lends her name to a millinery establishment, or paints dinner-cards, or vends chocolate creams, she is doing it for money.

And in this she is merely exercising her privilege as a sentient being, to which no one can object so long as she keeps within the bounds set by the laws of God and man and Mrs. Grundy.

The favored daughters of genius hardly count in the vast army of stenographers, cashiers, clerks, who go forth to battle for bread because they would have to do without it if they did not.

Our periodicals have given much space to the improvement, mental, moral, physical, of these bread-winners, but a casual glance around would go to show that those who need the advice do not take it; fortunately, the average wage-earner is quite capable of looking out for herself.

Her life, even under the most favorable conditions, is not an easy one, and if she sometimes fail in the struggle, a thrill of pity, rather than of reproach, should go out to her. Many a woman reared tenderly in a happy home, shielded and protected from babyhood, has been forced by reverses, bereavement, business failures, to enter the lists, when she is ill-prepared to do battle with the forces there arrayed against her. To-day among the served, to-morrow forced to be of the servers. For these the struggle is doubly hard.

The great body of the industrial army, however,

are bred up to it, and get their first taste of the little luxuries of life when their salaries become an assured monthly fact.

Those who have studied the question note with alarm a growing discontent in the ranks; these women look at other women whose lives are surrounded with wealth, who can have diamonds and sealskins, trips abroad, and days of refined pleasure, when they must be in the treadmill of work; they cannot see why others should have what is denied to them. The ideal of a spiritual and mental aristocracy does not appeal to them; they eat out their souls in a longing for wealth, ease, pleasure.

The bread-winners of this parish, however, do not look as if they were among the discontented ones. You see them once a month on the communion Sunday of the Young Ladies' Sodality, and as they march in line, over a hundred of them, so modest in demeanor, so innocent, so devout, they seem fairly to radiate piety around them.

There is Miss Crosby at their head as prefect, — a brilliant, cultured woman, assistant principal in a large public school. She goes to Mrs. Dale's Shakespeare Club, too, but that has not made her feel above the society of Our Lady's children. Pretty Katie Tynan, who clerks in a big retail shop, walks to the railing with Mary Nolan, the cashier at the Windsor Hotel; near them, bright and natty, is the maid who opens the door and receives your card at Mrs. Greene's. One might think that the only true democracy, after all, is found within the Catholic Church.

The good that this society has done is known only to God, and the guardian angels of the girls whose feet it has kept in the right path, whose wavering wills have been confirmed, their piety made strong, by the network of prayers and good deeds and wise counsel that it has put as a stay to weak souls. How many a one owes the preservation of her innocence to the influence which held her back from the first fatal step that counts so much!

A distinguished Unitarian minister has declared his belief that the confessional and the Sodalities of the Catholic Church have exerted a more widespread and beneficial influence than any other force in modern society.

The bread-winner who is a devout child of Mary is usually both good and successful, and her success, in a measure, follows from her goodness. She accepts her lot in life as coming from the hand of God, and endeavors to make the best of it from the higher motive of following a Saviour who was poor on earth, and of saving her own soul; she does her work in the very best way she can, and bears the hardships inseparable from it with a patient serenity which in time moves the hardest-hearted employer to increase her salary, or give her a promotion.

If the discontented worker said less about her want of luck and realized more fully her want of merit, and then set about remedying the defect, her life would be more satisfactory to herself and to her employers.

Among the failings which have been pointed out as pertaining to the working-girl, a love of tawdry finery,

and an absence of taste and suitableness in attire are prominent; the clerks in the best shops are always stylishly gowned, and it is a marvel to women, who know the cost of clothes, how this result is encompassed on their modest salaries. In some instances they have a mother who sews for them, and in others they take the time from more important things to sew for themselves. A woman who is engaged all day has no business to take a needle in her hand, except to mend a glove or to sew on a button. In this era of really good ready-made things the problem of clothes is wonderfully simplified for the worker.

This bit of conversation was overheard accidentally in a shop: "You look pale to-day, Mamie. What's the matter, — grippe?"

"Oh, no; I was up until two o'clock fixing over the sleeves in my black silk. I had to cut them down, — they were large and old-fashioned, — and it was a bigger job than I reckoned for."

And this girl had to rise at six o'clock, and stand on her feet until seven in the evening. No wonder she looked pale! And small wonder if the customers who fell to her ministrations were not waited upon with that patience and suavity the average customer has come to expect.

The fashion books give very sensible and full directions as to toilets for the busy working-woman.

A hat of nodding plumes that makes a fearful hole in the purse, and loses its pristine freshness on the first damp morning, is not in good form as a head-covering for the stenographer who wears it, and thinks it beautiful. The light-colored kid gloves,

the fluffy silk waist, the gay colors should be reserved for her home and the homes of her friends, and not displayed in the office of her employer.

Prudence as well as economy should counsel plainness in attire, for nothing sets waspish tongues agog more surely than a wage-earner dressed in the silks of the opulent daughter of wealth.

Employers do not like to see a striking toilet; they do like neatness and exquisite freshness; in truth a man does not pay any especial attention to his stenographer's clothes, provided she is neat and tidy.

A love of pretty clothes belongs to the eternal feminine, but, like some other loves, it should be held in bounds. Serge and not silk is for the shop and office.

Thrift — which is quite a different thing from penuriousness — should be the darling virtue of the bread-winner. One can but marvel at the radically different results obtained by two girls on a like salary. The one seems to know by a sort of sixth sense what to buy, and how and where; she always looks well dressed, and she always has money; the other, is perpetually in need of something, with never a cent ahead.

Another count against the worker is the low intellectual plane on which she is content to dwell; her opportunities for self-improvement are meagre, but such as she has she throws away. Books for her, as for the most of us, are the easiest path to knowledge and culture. It is disheartening to hear the testimony of librarians and book-sellers as to

the sort of literature she absorbs, — novels, novels, novels, of the vulgarest, most commonplace kind. No one objects to her reading novels which take her out of her own gray surroundings, into the enchanting realm where earls and duchesses move and have their gilded being; but let the novels be well written, and by an author who knows whereof he writes, novels which will cultivate the intellect as well as enthrall the imagination.

It is here that the parish reading-circle is getting in its splendid work. A girl who can be induced, for six months, to forsake the cheap, morbid fiction of her uncultivated, unformed days, and led to drink at the springs of pure literature, will never want to go back.

The worker should remember, too, that in adding to her culture — and culture includes much more than a knowledge of books — she is adding to her usefulness, and, ultimately, to her worth in dollars and cents.

The lady-like, gentle-voiced, well-read, neatly gowned young woman stands a better chance of promotion than the flashily dressed, slangy, boisterous one, although both may do their work equally well.

And, not least to be considered, she adds immeasurably to her chances of securing a good husband. The eligible young man may flirt with the larky, slangy girl, but he does not marry her.

Another critic of the wage-earner objects to her manners. This criticism, of course, has nothing to do with the gentlewomen who are found in such

numbers in the ranks. It does apply to the girl who giggles in street cars, talks loud, laughs boisterously, speaks of her "gentlemen friends," writes notes on pink scented paper, and with a lavish use of capitals, and originalities in the way of spelling, picks up the latest slang and uses it freely, goes out with a young man to luncheon at a restaurant, permits him liberties which would disgust a gentleman, wears a profusion of cheap lace on a soiled silk bodice, and is fool enough to think that her employer, if unmarried, is going to fall in love with her.

A serious charge, and one affecting her comfort and usefulness, is that she does not understand how to take care of her physical well-being. She does not take proper exercise, nor breathe enough fresh air; she eats indigestible pastry and munches caramels, when she should be eating Somebody's health food, and drinking rich milk; she wears her stays and her shoes too tight; she sweeps the streets with her gown; she puts so much money in a wrap for show that she has none left with which to buy underwear for comfort; she does not know how to walk, and compresses her chest, thus rushing into consumption; she does not understand the simplest remedies to be taken to ward off a cold or to avert an ache; she spends more money than she can afford on Madame Quack's lotions, and ruins her complexion in the attempt to make it beautiful; she bleaches her hair, if she be a blonde, until she looks like a ballet-dancer off duty.

And the remedy? What would be the use of

indicating the disease if one were not going to point out the cure. A reliable manual of etiquette will give the essentials of good usage, and a bright girl, using her eyes when with well-bred people, can learn very rapidly; in the matter of physical culture another manual, supplemented by the numberless articles in the magazines, and, better still, by a course in physical culture, will save her many ills.

To sum up the principal points: the bread-winner is urged to shun slang, trashy fiction, showy dress, bad manners, and bad grammar. She is urged to join without delay the parish Sodality, and the reading-circle, to take a ticket in the parish library and one in the public library, to set apart a sum of money for the purchase of books of her own, to take proper exercise, and to keep good company.

The last injunction is not always easy. The wage-earner, who has not already a little circle of friends, is not going to find it easy to form one. There is no use in denying the palpable fact that a woman who works in a shop, or sits at a cashier's desk, is not asked to homes that gladly welcome the young man in the same position.

She has the natural longing of youth for pleasure and social relaxation, and failing to get it where she has the right to expect it, she sometimes seeks it in company that is not very good.

It is claimed that by joining the bread-winners a woman seriously jeopardizes her chances of marrying advantageously, or of marrying at all. This is partly because her opportunities for meeting

young men are small, and also because the modern man is not averse to marrying a little money and a secure social position.

The most serious charge of all brought against women who work is, that by increasing competition so enormously, they have reduced salaries to a point where a man cannot marry, at least for years, on what he earns. A woman will work for less than will a man, so a woman gets the position, and a man goes begging for work. A strenuous opposer of woman's entering the industrial field says that, twenty years ago, a young man received as much as is now earned by both himself and his sister, and that if the girls would stay at home, devoting themselves to home duties, the old condition would return.

This does not apply to the woman who has no home, and no brother to work for her.

Employers say that, in many cases, the reason why a woman receives poorer pay is because she gives poorer service. A man goes into a business and expects to make a life vocation of it; a woman works merely until she can get a husband to save her the necessity. Consequently the one reaches a point of excellence not even striven for by the other.

Those who have studied the question claim that women behind the counter are not so courteous as men, and that, therefore, shoppers prefer to be waited upon by men.

A sensible little woman, who is now in charge of a department, said, in speaking of this: "I learned

early in my business life to practise a uniform courtesy. Some clerks act as if they considered a customer as a troublesome stranger to be got rid of as soon as possible, with no thought of ever seeing her again. I went on the principle that she was a native of the city in which I expected to earn my living, and that if I succeeded in pleasing her she might easily be made a regular customer, not only of my special department, but of my own. A woman may pull down and overhaul things mercilessly to-day, but if you are attentive and courteous, and do not intimate that she is doing anything unusual or troublesome, the chances are that to-morrow she will return and purchase; and the chances, too, are strong that she will hold off from the other clerks, and wait for you. I have found that women like to have time to make up their minds before purchasing, and if a clerk is the least impatient with a customer's vagaries she is apt to go to another shop to supply her needs. At least, this is the theory that I have acted upon, and to-day I am at the head of the department where I commenced on a very low salary."

At its best the life of the bread-winner is not easy. One cannot but admire the quiet dignity, the patient sweetness with which not a few of these workers, ladies born and bred, many of them, go about their daily tasks.

As a rule it is not the women of gentle birth who rail at fate for their reverses, and wring the hearts of their friends with longings for better days. In how many avenues of industry one finds the

daughters of the old South, working bravely, earning less than their grandmothers spent for gloves and bonbons!

We hear much of the overcrowding along certain lines of human industry. There are too many teachers, musicians, journalists, artists, stenographers, clerks; indeed, it would be puzzling to name a branch of work where there are not too many workers.

A woman cannot be blamed, any more than a man, for seeking the easiest work, and that which is best suited to her talents.

The curse of the times is the lack of quality in work.

Excellence succeeds where mediocrity fails. There are too many laborers, but the supply of skilled workers is not at all adequate to the demand.

Said an employer: "I can put an advertisement in the paper, and get a hundred applicants from stenographers willing to work for ten dollars a week, and not worth any more, where I would find a difficulty to get one worth twenty dollars. Yet it is the twenty-dollar kind I want."

Certain work is considered ladylike, and other occupations something else. For instance, the South worships intellect, or the old South worshipped it, and anything that calls out purely intellectual power is respected; the teacher, the musician, the writer, go into the best society, ride in the carriages of the social leaders, and are frequent and welcome guests in drawing-rooms where

the clerk, or the cashier, would not be received. As a consequence a Southern woman who must work thinks first of being a teacher, although she may not have the slightest aptitude for this honorable and difficult calling.

As woman advances in general culture, and masters her reserve forces, she will forge her way, by sheer ability and pluck, into wider and better-paid channels. Instead of being the employed, she will become the employer of labor. Already she is at the head, where a few years ago she would not have dreamed of any but a subordinate place.

She may hesitate before working at all, but if she must or will, she is going to work to the best advantage.

The day will soon be at end when a woman will accept fifty dollars where a man would demand one hundred; and the new era will mean an increase in prosperity for both the man and the woman.

Already she is learning to claim nothing on the score of sex; then why should she give anything? If she does not plead a woman's weakness to offset inferior work, but bravely gives the best, why should she not have the highest rate of wage?

"I had to let Miss Smith go, because she upset our office by working on the sympathies of everybody in it," said a commission merchant. "She was delicate, and looked it, and I had n't the heart to insist on promptness in getting out my mail. When she came late, with great hollows under the eyes, I had to act as if I had not noticed the hour.

But I required a strong, capable stenographer, who needed no sympathy; so Miss Smith lost a good position."

As yet it is sadly true that women are doing the world's drudgery. They fill the hard, subordinate, ill-paid places everywhere. They do far more work, for greatly less pay, than men. There are many who contend that she was created to be a subordinate. If that be true she has filled the end of her creation in a way that leaves nothing to be desired on the score of subordination.

Others insist that, given an equal field, with no handicap, she can compete with man in any sphere of intellectual activity. She has not done so in the past, whatever she may do in the future.

Not infrequently the woman bread-winner makes her life harder than it really needs to be. Where the man, outside of business hours, seeks relaxation and gives himself up to absolute leisure, the woman slaves over her needle, or in the kitchen, and hardly dreams of pleasure, except in the form of a paper novel, read in an ill-ventilated, sunless back room. No woman can do the work of one man and two women, and when she tries it she soon breaks down, and must pay out for medicine, and relief from excruciating pain, the money that ought to have gone to a seamstress or a cook, and to procure the legitimate pleasures of existence. The pain gets worse, the medicines more costly, until at last there is a quiet funeral, just when the woman ought to have been in her prime.

Happy is the wage-earner who has her own

home; if she have not this blessing the greatest care and prudence are necessary in the choice of a boarding-house. Here it is that the Catholic girl finds invaluable assistance in her pastor, who can usually recommend a safe and suitable place. The attractions of a fashionable street and a well-furnished parlor too often offset rather questionable fellow-boarders.

What the young girl needs on beginning a career in the working world is a wise, prudent counsellor; and what she absolutely must have, if she would not make shipwreck of her higher nature, is a strong, clear, luminous faith.

“A woman without religion is like a flower without perfume,” said a philosopher; and a bread-winner without religion is treading very near to a precipice.

The girl of eighteen does, through ignorance and thoughtlessness, the deeds that the woman of twenty-eight bewails with unavailing tears.

The wisdom of the serpent and the innocence of the dove should be hers, if she wish to steer clear of pitfalls; and what young girl can be expected to have these?

She can have religion, which is better than either, and which yet includes both; and an angel guardian was placed over her to give inspiration where wisdom fails.

XI

THE PASSING YEARS

THAT wise old worldling, Lord Chesterfield, has left his testimony as to the inestimable value of time, and the futile remorse with which old age looks back upon wasted years; and he was but repeating, in a different form, the wisdom of Solomon and the teaching of the gospel,—a truth which everybody sooner or later finds out for himself.

If precept could but take the place of experience what a golden era would be the heritage of the present generation!

Faber says: "Count all years wasted that are not lived for God."

What must have been the anguish of that saintly soul at the sight of the desolate ruins of wasted years, crumbling along the pathway to eternity!

And the frankly hedonistic views of life professed, or at least practised, by men and women "on whose heads have fallen the snow that never melts," fill rational beings with uneasy wonder.

"Old age without God," says a philosopher, "is the most profoundly sad spectacle in the world."

Some such thoughts as these had overflowed unconsciously into speech.

"You are thinking of Mrs. Perry, I know," interpolated Miss Norrison, who has the way of read-

ing your mind and interpreting it with surprising accuracy.

I *was* thinking of Mrs. Perry, and of some others just like her.

Mrs. Perry is a woman of sixty-five who has had everything that she wanted all her life — well, not quite that, for nobody ever has all she wants, but all that a reasonable being ought to want in the way of life's luxuries. Cradled in wealth, married to greater wealth, she has lived more like a princess than an American woman with duties to perform.

Her energies, so far as any one can see, have been used to encompass ease and pleasure, and banish trouble. Other rich women have founded asylums, looked after the poor, regulated their households, stood in the vanguard of intellectual and moral forces, — in a word, used their leisure and means for noble ends. But Mrs. Perry has been conspicuously absent in all these avenues of human endeavor. If her tombstone is truthful it will record the facts that she was noted for giving sumptuously extravagant entertainments, and for having introduced English liveries for the coachman and the footman into her native city. Of course she has given to charities, and sometimes her checks have been rather large, for nobody not a savage is entirely free from the virtue of charity; but she has never been known to give anything of herself, anything that might cost a personal effort. Her religious practices are limited to going to church on Sundays, and permitting her maid to attend five o'clock Mass and late vespers; she keeps Lent by hieing away to Florida, or

Bermuda, or Nice, playing cards in the evening, sleeping until ten o'clock in the morning, and in resigning herself into the hands of a complexion specialist during a good portion of the day, and in eating all the dainties that a complacent doctor recommends in the way of fruits and fresh meats. Those who know her well say that she is as supremely selfish in private life as she is in her social relations. She made brilliant marriages for her daughters, one of whom, by the way, is divorced and back on her hands; settled her sons in life, after they had sowed an unusually large crop of wild oats, and is now chasing around to parties with a numerous brood of granddaughters; if she has ever practised an act of self-denial, of pure kindness and consideration not imposed by the laws of society, no one knows anything of the deed.

It is amusing to hear another old woman, as selfish and worldly as Mrs. Perry, differing from her but in degree, merely because her circumstances are more circumscribed, berating the richer woman soundly for wasted opportunities.

Mrs. Scott is just as lax in keeping the fasts of the Church, just as absorbed in pleasure, as ease-loving, as callous to the cries of the poor as Mrs. Perry. She is scandalized at the richer woman because she does not endow a chair at the Catholic University at Washington, and herself gives fifty cents to the seminary collection; she rails at Mrs. Perry for spending her time at fashionable functions, and devotes her own days to the reading of the trashiest novels, her afternoons to running about among the

shops, her evenings to playing cards. She married her daughter to an atheist able to set up a carriage, and Mrs. Perry mated hers to a *roué* attached to a title.

And there is Mrs. Noonan, who lives in a flat, and occasionally assists her husband in his grocery store below, envying Mrs. Scott, and virtuously censuring her wanton luxury, the while spending her own scant leisure in fashioning a bonnet or gown, exhibiting herself in the streets, spending her dimes for the most sensational papers, neglecting her children, and dreaming of what she would do with Mrs. Scott's larger opportunities.

And as for the epicurean old men one sees or hears of — their numbers do not support the theory of superior masculine intelligence.

Only a block away from St. Paul's lives Robert Deering, the capitalist, — Robert the Great, the newspapers dub him, — the man who puts a price on wheat before it is harvested, dictates wages to ten thousand people, and helps to name the President of the United States. All his life he has had to do with large issues, and yet he has a soul so small that a million like it could sit on the little end of a brick. The world to him is a battle-field, not for the old battles waged by the saints against the world, the flesh, and the devil, but a battle-field for money, just money. Because money can do so much, he thinks that it can do all. He himself is a potent illustration of its power, and so it has come to be his god. Sometimes he pities, when he has the time for pity, the myriads of toilers who can never hope for wealth,

not even for a competence, and shudders at the thought that such might have been his own fate. Far better to die!

He regards the toilers about him as a seething mass of envy and discontent, of fierce longing and futile wrath, kept from the throats and the coffers of the rich by the strong arm of the law. He cannot conceive of any happiness that does not grow out of the possession of wealth.

From his office, in a towering beehive of a building, he can look out upon church steeples rising over the smoky city; and the great library, built and endowed by a rich man some years dead, is but a few rods distant; near his own beautiful home, in the flower-lined boulevard, a university stands as a reminder and a monument to man's intellectual side. But to Robert Deering these give not a tithe of the satisfaction and confidence inspired by the blue-coated policemen who patrol the beat below his office. He does not believe in the correlation of moral forces represented by education and the Church. A good police system is much better.

Men may go to church on Sunday, the poor devils have no other place to go, but on Monday see that your cash drawer is locked.

This is what life has done for Robert Deering — it has given him money and robbed him of an ideal!

Does that man ever realize his predominant passion?

If he should ever examine his conscience, which he never does, having all that he can do to examine his ledger, he would rise from his knees with a

pharisaical belief in his own virtue. He does not drink to excess — his physician long ago pointed out to him the danger in that line; he is not a glutton, — the pangs of indigestion speak in no uncertain tone; he has not broken any of the laws laid down by civil society for its preservation and welfare. He has used his brains and his opportunities to amass wealth, and has succeeded over the heads of the envious millions who have failed; he uses his money to obtain for himself the greatest amount of comfort and pleasure and adulation. He calls it happiness; but can any man know happiness who believes that there is not a man or woman living who cannot be bought? who lives amidst flowers and never sees them, surrounded with books that are sealed to his intellect? — a man near seventy who must recall with a shudder that the best part of his life is over, and that each day brings him nearer to his grave, either a grave of annihilation, in which he prefers to believe, or else to the portal of that unknown world to which he cannot carry a penny of all his millions, where he will have to stand among the throngs he has despised, no whit more powerful than they, and take his chances for eternity measured by the records of his past? Robert Deering does not look like a happy man.

There seems to be a widespread idea that when people grow old they will grow virtuous. Either no one ever acknowledges himself old, or else the habits of years cannot be broken in a day. Students of human nature find that the old man and the old woman are usually but a fulfilment of the promise of middle age.

The scandals in which old men figure ought to redden the printers' ink with shame.

An old man was heard to declare that he had but two objects in life: to eat a good dinner every day, and to avoid rheumatism.

Another, who has not been to church for thirty years, says that he has no time for religion, but after he gets a little more money he will retire and think of such things.

The picture would be terrible were it not for the examples of serene and beautiful old age that crowd the canvas, and hide the skulking faces of the wrinkled and gray-haired hedonists.

Only last year St. Paul's was called upon to mourn the demise of a saintly old gentlewoman, cut down in her prime at eighty-six, who left behind her ninety-seven descendants, not one of the number but who is a credit to her memory. Sons and grandsons are priests at the altar; she saw a great-granddaughter receive the veil as a Sister of Charity; one daughter died a nun, in harness, so to speak, as the superior of an Indian Mission School; another is a cloistered nun, whilst several granddaughters are making the world better in various convents. And in a score of happy Christian homes her own life and virtues are repeated in the persons of her descendants. One son was mayor of the city, and made a record by the honesty and civic prosperity of his administration; another is a banker; her daughters married into fine old families, and their husbands are worthy of them. As for her charities, even her good angel must have

been kept busy recording them, — sacrifices of little luxuries for the poor, bright boys educated for the ministry, orphanages and schools and homes for the aged, that never appealed in vain to her generous purse.

There is Mrs. Chatrand, in her youth the most beautiful woman of her city, sweet, pious, gentle, noble, responding fully to all the demands upon her, — a devoted mother, a leader in the great world, a ministering angel in the purlieus of poverty.

Some writer has said that if you wish to see the fine flower of piety blossoming in all its beauty in aristocratic soil, you must go to France, and to the old châteaux that have nursed it for centuries. One need only go to their descendants in America, to see how saintly can be the children of that fair land which is called “the Dowry of Our Lady.”

But piety knows no boundary lines, no distinction of blood; the Christian gentlewoman has certain inalienable characteristics, whether the blood in her veins be French or German, Irish or English, or a fusion of many kinds, as in the average American.

The procession of gray hairs is always before us, a potent sermon on the shortness of life and what must be its end; now and again a familiar form drops out, carrying either a precious treasury of golden deeds or the black record of a squandered life.

If history is “philosophy teaching by example,” it is also something more. It is a magic mirror which shows two pictures and says, “Choose.”

It shows us Washington, the great patriot, dying

the idol of the country he had saved; and it shows us another George, the narrow, egotistical, sensual, Hanoverian monarch, with the gray ashes of passion's volcanoes polluting the atmosphere of his death chamber, and choking the tendrils of every pure aspiration.

It shows us Caligula, bent and furrowed by the wickedness of nearly seventy years, resigning himself to debaucheries which made the very name of his island home a horror, and dying in his sins at the hands of a faithless prætorian. It shows us Charlemagne also expiring at seventy, happy in the consciousness that he was leaving the world better than he found it, a great monarch and a great man, his last hours consoled by the religion he had loved and championed so valiantly.

It shows us Louis IX. dying the death of a saint, and if it does not show us Louis XV. dying the death of a sinner, it is because of the heroic sacrifice of a loving daughter, who offered up her life amidst the austerities of a Carmelite convent for that father's conversion.

It shows us Elizabeth, the dissolute daughter of Henry the Monster, expiring on a pallet on the floor, despair written on her aged features, and the shameful deeds of her seventy years confronting her glassy eyes; it shows us Isabella the Great, the wise ruler of Castile, forever immortal as an instrument in the discovery of a new world, equally worthy of renown as the most learned woman, and the ablest monarch of her time, and as an example of the most beautiful qualities of her sex.

But we need not look to bygone centuries for parallels.

We have our own great Leo, the Lion of the Vatican, unequalled among modern statesmen, unsurpassed among scholars, unmatched as an exemplar of every Christian and priestly virtue. A few rods away is Crispi, the plotting, self-seeking, conscienceless minister, discredited in his old age, his plots coming to nought, the shadow of a great scandal darkening his declining years. We have Gladstone, spared so long to the world that does him reverence, passing away near the ninetieth landmark, in the aroma of a glorious career; the end of the eighteenth century closed over the new-made grave of Voltaire, the scoffing cynic who gave his long life, and splendid talents, to the overthrow of the temple of religion in the souls of thousands of his fellow-men.

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw two nations in tears for Manning and Newman, and the centuries to come will be the richer because of the genius and heroic virtues of these princes of the Church, who devoted their lives, both reaching well into the eighties, to the good of souls and the betterment of the world. Cardinal Wiseman, the great Archbishop of Westminster, whose life had known care and sorrow, said, as he lay dying in his simple, bare room, "I feel like a schoolboy going home for the long vacation."

And if these great ones seem too remote for ordinary humanity's imitation, we have but to look around us to see genuine piety in every walk of life.

There is the great financier stealing in to St. Paul's on his way home, for a few moments' meditation before the Tabernacle; and close behind him is a crippled old apple-woman, who would not commit a deliberate sin for the whole wide, beautiful world.

Now and again one passes in the crowd a hag whose face bears the stamp of shameless vice, a matron with hard, cruel lines about the mouth and eyes, a furrowed *roué* whose soul has been caught in the matrix of his own evil deeds.

And when these pass, the sun for a moment seems to shine less brightly.

“The young may die, the old must.”

“As ye live, so shall ye die.”

XII

CHEERFUL GIVERS

MR. WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS, in his own inimitable way, has recorded some of the vicissitudes and experiences of "a cheerful giver."

A great deal of perverting socialism has been put forth under cover of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This rule binds no one to the caprices of generosity which selfish humanity would like to bring about, from those more favored than themselves in worldly goods. The tramp might wish with all his heart that the millionaire would divest himself of his millions and hand them over to him, but a refusal on the part of the millionaire could not be interpreted to mean a violation of the golden precept. As it is a poor rule that does not work both ways, a fair test is a reversal of positions; wish from another what you would give were he in your place, and you in his.

Explained by theologians, the precept binds one to that which justice, honor, and Christian brotherhood dictate. It forbids one to cheat, to oppress, to overreach, to take advantage of the ignorance or helplessness of another, to make unjust laws, to grind down the wage of labor, to demand long hours

from laborers. It goes further than strict justice, and commands charity. It does not mean that the worker, the provident, the clear-brained, are to strip themselves of the results of their work to give to the idle, or even to the unfortunate. If this were so, where would be the incentive to industry?

The laborer is worthy of his hire, and this is as true in one field of work as in another.

Yet, if this beautiful rule were practised only on its broad, legitimate lines, reserving charity for dependent little children, the aged, and the sick, the world would soon be transformed into something very like an anteroom to Paradise.

The virtue of charity and its contrary vice, oppression, are opposing forces that were strong in the beginning of time, and are growing stronger every day. No other virtue and no other vice are so universally found as these. They flourish side by side; and, strange and paradoxical as it may sound, they are sometimes practised by the same person.

A man will give millions to found a university or establish a library, and grind down the laborers under him to a wage that means but a degree above starvation. A woman will serve on a hospital board, and show no consideration to a poor little house-maid ready to drop with fatigue. Another will make an eloquent plea for a home for working-women, and force a dressmaker's apprentice to come to her house half a dozen times for the amount of her bill. She will give a quarter to a beggar, and hurry on her way to purchase garments put together in sweaters' shops. But avarice in petty things is

said to be the vice of women. Bill collectors will testify from the fulness of experience that it is also the vice of men.

If capital gives to labor its smallest moiety, labor pays back in kind, and seeks to render as little in return for the largest wage possible.

When one hears the recurring tales of incompetency and untrustworthiness, slovenly work and constant shirking, it is easy to see why capital grows a little hard.

Where the rule is, "An honest day's work for an honest day's pay," the wheels of society run in smoother grooves. And this obtains, not because supply and demand compel it, but simply because honor and justice, handmaidens of Christianity, are satisfied with nothing less. Anarchists rail at the luxuries of capitalists, but take care not to put into the common fund the luxuries that come to themselves.

Many of the saints have given the example of that heroic charity which sacrifices every possession for the poor, and casts its lot with the lowly, becoming as the least, in imitation of the divine Master of all; but this is a plenitude of good works not required of every one.

People are oftentimes much more kindly disposed towards the unfortunate than they are credited with being — heartsick in a sealskin jacket at sight of the beggar in rags.

Said one of these pure saints to her confessor: "Father, how can I save my soul surrounded with luxury and comfort, a carriage and servants, and

jewels and laces, and a round of pleasure, when people about me are starving and cold, and herded in hovels that even my dogs would disdain? I wake in the night sometimes and wonder, if I should die in the midst of the luxuries that have always been my portion, whether God would let me come into His Presence. I recall the text, 'What ye do to the least of these little ones ye have done unto Me.' Now of course if Our Lord were really on earth, it would be my greatest happiness, my most blessed privilege, to throw everything at His feet; but, to be honest with myself, I know that I do not want to give everything to the poor, except just the bare necessities. I should n't want to receive a starving tramp into my house, nor give up my carriage, and my summers abroad, and live in a tenement and work for my living; yet I am stronger, and more able to work than many who are working for me."

And the girl was deeply in earnest in her scruples.

The clergyman succeeded in bringing a ray of comfort into her troubled soul. She had inherited her fortune from her father, who had acquired it honestly, without cheating or oppressing any one. His fortune was rightfully his own, and therefore his to dispose of, within the limits set by the laws of God and of man, as he saw fit. He had left it to his children; through the providence of God it was theirs, theirs not to hoard, but to use wisely. The money they spent was not a waste; it was put into circulation, it stimulated trade; some was paid to the poor for service; it went for pictures and benefited art, for music and helped musicians; so long

as luxury did not degenerate into self-indulgence, nor pagan excess, nor oppression in the smallest farthing, so long it was innocent.

The girl went away comforted, but not long afterwards she followed the dictates of her heart, and, relinquishing everything of this world, gave herself and her fortune to the service of God's poor, and found peace and happiness as a Sister of Charity.

Unfortunately it is not often that a confessor has to deal with a conscience that is so scrupulous in its dictates of charity; the tendency is far more apt to be in the opposite direction; people spend recklessly for luxuries and dole out niggard sums for charity.

Yet there are always the army of devoted ones to shame the unfeeling. Brilliant young beauties, and dainty matrons, devote time and money and executive ability to the different charities, soothe the sick in hospitals, visit the poor in their hovels, labor indefatigably to give food and clothes to the little ones; one girl does without candy to save for the poor, another paints dinner-favors, another sews a day out of every week; one gives a tenth of her allowance to a hospital, another goes without a new ball-gown, and sends the price to the fresh-air fund. The rich do not advertise their charities, and never in this world will the vast extent of their good works be known, — the poor families supported, the hospitals and asylums maintained, the deserving helped to positions, the clever boys and girls educated and given a chance to become something, — in a word, of the millions of dollars that pass from the purses

of comfort to the pockets of distress. We read of a Queen Elizabeth of Hungary giving all to the poor, of a Lady Fullerton going without gloves and spending her days in the service of the poor, of a Frederick Ozanan's far-seeing charity to the poor of Paris, of a St. Martin dividing his cloak with a beggar, of a Madame de Maintenon founding and supporting a free school for girls, of the patrician St. Cecilia stealing through the streets of Rome on her missions to the poor, of the flower of the French nobility parishing in a bazaar for charity; but these devoted lives are duplicated every day around us, and we do not know of them, — we do not see the charity that conceals from the left hand the good deeds of the right.

And how much of the poverty in the world comes through vice, rather than misfortune — through drunkenness, laziness, improvidence, ignorance, incompetency, and general untrustworthiness! Skilled labor is always in demand. It is the man or woman who can do many things indifferently, and who does not care about doing anything, who is oftenest in want; not the people who can do one thing well.

Others, again, are selfishly, perhaps unconsciously, penurious. "I wish that we lived in another parish," said a censorious one, returning from Mass. "Here we hear nothing but money, money, money! It is give, give, from January to December. The orphans, the hospital, the missions, the seminary, the Holy Land, the school, the parish debt, the charity fund, until one never has a cent that one can call one's own!"

“My dear,” replied the Old Member, “you should consider it your dearest privilege to be allowed to contribute to any or to all of these beautiful objects. Have you ever considered that it is not through any merit of your own, but only the providence of God, that you are not in a condition to require charity rather than to be able to give — that you are not a friendless little orphan, or a cripple in a charity ward of a hospital, or a blind beggar, or a delicate girl seeking for work. Be thankful that you can give!”

The different ways of looking at charity, that virtue so dear to Our Lord, afford some curious and interesting bits of soul study.

Who has not seen the people, men and women well dressed, who Sunday after Sunday pay their pittance for a seat, rather than rent a pew in their parish church?

Said one of this brigade, “We can’t afford a pew in the middle aisle, and we wont go to the side aisle with the riff-raff!”

Just as if one could not hear Mass from the side aisle as well as from the centre! And the disdainful one was quite unconscious that “riff-raff” more adequately described the perambulating, shirking members, like herself, than the honest poor who were doing their duty towards the support of their church, and who had too much self-respect to come as unattached flotsam.

A beautiful, serene old gentlewoman said: “I am always glad to find, when travelling abroad, a box to receive the offerings of the faithful towards keep-

ing in repair those glorious old-world Cathedrals. It is very like being permitted to share in a perpetual act of adoration. And what is a Cathedral but a prayer in stone and an act of adoration? All that is beautiful in nature, all that is noblest in art are gathered and placed there in perpetual service of the Creator of all. When God sees the wickedness of the world and in His justice is tempted to send some retributive calamity on the nations, those beautiful churches, enshrining the Blessed Sacrament, lift up their spires as if pleading for mercy, pleading potently during all the long centuries. And those who contribute to them, if only a few cents saved from some little luxury denied, must feel a thrill of noble pride at the sight of the beautiful temple they have helped to erect or preserve. What a blessed privilege to contribute towards the splendor of the dwelling-place of the Most High!"

People ask, Americans especially, "What is the sense" — we are a nation of sense, it is one of our failings — "of the costly piles that dot Europe, and that are seldom if ever filled with people, glorious temples with their mass of exquisite carving, much of it not even visible?" It might perhaps be a hopeless task to explain to a thorough utilitarian that the beauty of the churches is for the eyes of the All-seeing God, that it is an act of adoration and gratitude on the part of creatures to the Giver of all good gifts. The utilitarians of apostolic times murmured at the waste of ointment, which Magdalen poured out on the head of our Saviour.

The matchless splendor of St. Peter's, the Cathedral of Milan, that poem in stone, the ideally beautiful gothic spires at Cologne, gorgeous St. Mark's, rising over the Venetian sea, the simple grandeur of the duomo at Florence which Dante loved, and Savonarola must have rejoiced to see, — all these serve for much more than mere creations of beauty for the eyes of men, although even this were no mean mission. They are the dwelling-place of the Most High.

Men may grow careless and forgetful, but the silent stone, the transfigured marble, the glowing canvas, the sculptured saint, the enduring mosaic, are a tribute from dead hands, and loving hearts that are stilled, to the Eternal, Living God.

In the long nights, when the world is asleep, a thousand stately cathedrals whisper "Adoremus Te," to the Unseen Presence in the tabernacles — whisper a ceaseless prayer for the wants of the living, as they pleaded for men centuries dead, and as they will plead for the generations yet unborn.

Another dear old lady said: "I think that it is a parish disgrace that our priests must talk as much as they do to get the funds to keep up the church. Certainly it is not for themselves that they beg, and it seems to me that if we had the proper parish pride, to say nothing of proper Christian charity, we should not have to be nagged — I know of no better word — into doing our plain duty. When one compares the meagre salaries received by even the most learned of our clergy with the princely

incomes of the rectors of rich Protestant congregations, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves that the word "money" must ever come to a pastor's lips. When we learn to look upon our contributions as a privilege, and not as a burden, we shall give with more spiritual profit to ourselves. I fancy our good angel forgets to place to our credit the contributions we cannot evade."

And, after all, our mites amount to but little for each individual during the year, — a small gift at Christmas to the clergy, an offering at Easter towards the education of young men for the priesthood, — and no one who appreciates the Holy Sacrifice, and the glorious mission of saving souls, could wish to be left out of this work, — something for the orphans, and few cavil at this — for the little children appeal in their very helplessness to the strong. The basket set before us on Good Friday for the offerings towards the preservation of the holy places in Jerusalem receives more dimes than dollars. Surely every Christian who venerates the spots hallowed by the footprints of the Saviour, is glad of the privilege of offering his mite.

As for the pew rents and the special parish collections, all who share in the benefit of a commodious, well-ventilated, well-heated edifice, with able and devout clergy to minister to their souls, attend their sick calls, be ready in the confessional, prompt on the altar, forceful in the pulpit, — surely the people ought to regard it as a matter of honor and Christian duty to pay for the benefits they receive.

A self-respecting man does not care to eat the

bread or wear the clothes of charity; why, then, should he desire to be a mendicant in the Church?

Charity is the last virtue the human heart relinquishes, and when that goes then indeed is there little hope of ever wakening the soul to life again. Yet, not long ago, a woman who goes to the sacraments regularly sent word to the Little Sisters of the Poor, on the rounds for their old people, that she was not at home. One would have thought that she would rather go hungry herself than refuse those dear saints. Down in the busy streets men who have lost every spark of religion take off their hats to them, and put their hands in their pocket-books without waiting to be asked.

Father O'Neil declares that it is the poor of the parish who are the generous ones, and not the rich.

The gift counts when you deny yourself something in order to give. The girl who walks home from shop or office to save car fare, and drops her mite into the poor-box, has given generously; the rich matron, who writes her check for the hospital and thinks no more about it, has not given nearly so much.

There are so many ways to give when one has the will. The records of noble lives whose memory is our heritage, reveal touching examples of generosity, — examples that poor worldlings admire but do not imitate.

Even in the eras of shameful license, when thrones totter, undermined by the corruption of those that should make their strength, there are always a few generous souls to save Gomorrah.

138 The People of Our Parish

Little children should learn the beauty of charity, but not the arrogance of philanthropy; this spirit, in a typical Irish home, has been given to us by the Jesuit brother of the great English Chief Justice, Lord Russell of Killowen: —

“The harsh word ‘beggar’ was under a ban
In that quaint old house by the sea;
And Little Blue-Frock’s announcement ran:
’T is a poor little girl, a poor blind man,
Poor woman with children three.”

Only the angels know the good that each day brings forth.

Providence intends that mutual helpfulness should be the law of the world. Society in its highest resolution is organized socialism, — not the socialism which can ever grow into anarchy, the socialism which would overturn law and order, and give something for nothing; rather, it is the action and reaction in society of supply and demand, where the perfection of the whole depends upon the capability of the component units. The millionaire does not escape this law, any more than does the laborer; he must depend on the farmer for bread, his cook for a dinner, on the doctor for health, the lawyer for wise counsel; in his pleasures he is dependent upon the army of workers who supply them, — the captain of the vessel that takes him across the ocean, the engineer who stands at the tireless throttle, the coachman who drives his horses, the printer who makes possible the morning paper, the actors, the artists, the sculptors, the musicians

who give charm to leisure, the teachers who have developed his mind and soul. Not a bit of coal nor a grain of wheat, not a need nor a pleasure could be supplied without the co-operation of the world's workers.

And if the workers are a necessity to the rich man, so equally is he indispensable to them; his money pays their wage, and is put in circulation by them in the procuring of the comforts or the little luxuries of life. The Church, the school, the State, the arts, science, and literature owe their temporal prosperity to the rich.

The poverty, almost the suffering, the monstrous wrong in the world, can be traced ultimately to the failure of some one to do his duty. Just as a loose screw may disarrange a whole system of machinery, so one failure in the line of duty may work measureless ill. And when the failures are repeated and multiplied by the million day after day, is it strange that the world itself seems but a gigantic honeycomb of evil, oppression, degradation?

To every one a different part is assigned. The world asks only that each do his best in the allotted sphere; it asks steady work from the mechanic, loyal service from the statesman, unquestioning valor from the soldier, a right use of money from the capitalist. Honest work for honest pay in return should be the foundation and the simplification of the Labor Question. If each gave his best, whether of skill or intellect, keeping a clean conscience before God and the world, the Millennium would not be far away.

XIII

A NATIONAL TRUTH SOCIETY

DR. MORDANT had just finished reading aloud, to the small company assembled around his own hearthstone, one of those contemptible little paragraphs, half truth and all lie, that make an intelligent Catholic red-hot.

“I don’t know why we stand this sort of thing,” began the Doctor.

“Because we can’t help ourselves,” answered Mrs. Driscoll.

“A body of twelve millions more or less sensible beings, with a hierarchy, clergy, schools, charitable institutions, thoroughly organized, and adequately equipped, and we can’t help a bigoted, shyster editor of a third-rate journal vomiting forth his venomous calumnies! Well, I think we can!” and the old gentleman glowered at us as if we, in our ignorant helplessness, were shyster editors ourselves.

“Forbearance under calumny is not virtue, but cowardly weakness. We Catholics do our duty as citizens and as individuals: we fight the battles of our country, pay taxes, obey the laws, do good in our several ways to our neighbor, educate our children, and attend to our own particular business; and all we ask in return is to be left in peace, and

protected in our just rights. We get tired of being lied about, — nothing but lies, lies, lies, from the time a man is born until he goes to his grave.”

“My dear, if we went around fighting people who lie about us, we should spend our lives between fighting and nursing our bruises, either of the body or of the spirit,” said Mrs. Mordant, softly.

“Not if we fought in a proper way, — guerilla warfare counts for little, but organized armies are very much to the front.

“The Reverend Zion Blunderbuss who edits the ‘Sabbath Star,’ fills his columns with atrocious libels on Catholics as a body, and no one takes the trouble to refute him, because no one considers it within his province.

“But suppose there were an incorporated Catholic Truth Society, with six millions of members, and with a branch in every city, town, and village in the country, on the watch for the Reverend Zion, and ready and able to hunt him down, and force a retraction of his lies! How long do you think it would be before the tone of the press would be pitched in a very different key?

“As it is, here and there a Catholic resents a calumny, — sometimes a man with more zeal than discretion rushes into the fray, and has to crawl out of it, and the jeering victor has an open field for the rest of his days. Now and then a Catholic priest writes to the editor of a big magazine, ordering his subscription discontinued, because of the unfair and anti-Catholic spirit manifested in its pages; but what counts one more or less? As units we have no

strength, but as an organized body we might move the mountains of lies, libel, and calumny."

"What about the Truth Society that we have already?" asked Horace Norrison.

"It never was much more than local, — at least its influence has counted for very little in the aggregate.

"I am an old man, but I hope to see a national organization before I die — one that will be a power wherever the English tongue is spoken — or, what is more to the point, written and printed.

"Fancy Editor Zion's receiving a letter indited on the official paper of my ideal society: 'National Catholic Truth Society, The Most Reverend Archbishop Erin, President;' then a lot of distinguished names, as directors, and in one corner, 'Membership, six million,' and in the other corner, 'General Office, Trinity Building, Washington,' and tucked modestly to one side, 'Legal adviser, Ex-President George Washington Blank,' — why, the letter-head alone of the society would make the creature weak at the knees. And the brief and pointed lines that would follow, calling his attention to the error of his ways, and signed by the secretary of the local branch, would bring out an ample apology in the next issue of the 'Star.'

"And imagine this process repeated and multiplied throughout the country, — a calumny exposed almost before the printer's ink is dry; it would not take long to place ourselves in a very different attitude from our present submissive meekness.

"And if we had a million or even a half-million

dollars as annual revenue, we might send out enough free literature, in the way of cheap books and pamphlets, to instruct even the ignorance of the Reverend Zions. Human endeavor could aspire no further.

“The average Protestant, when not blinded by bigotry and prejudice, loves truth and fair play, and would be the first to protest against the systematic vilification of Catholics and the Catholic Church, if the statements were once recognized as a vilification.

“The average Catholic gets the credit for being far more solicitous about the spiritual condition of his separated brethren than he really is; if he were half as intent on proselytism — on being ‘a secret agent of the Jesuits’ — as he is supposed to be, the converts would be in far greater numbers than they are.

“Too often he is derelict. Not that I advocate going about with a catechism, or explaining Indulgences to the pretty Protestant you take in to dinner, but I do like to see an intelligent Catholic absolutely fearless in presenting Catholic truth when asked, and morally courageous in openly professing every jot and tittle, when the occasion arises for so doing.

“The Catholic who goes to non-Catholic churches, attends little dances in Lent, joins an avowedly Protestant charity organization, never speaks of Catholic concerns, no matter how much the Protestant friend prates of his — all in the name of ‘liberality’ and ‘broad-mindedness’ — is my pet abomination.”

“Dr. Mordant, you must, at some period of your

life, have lived in Ovington; you describe the Ovington type of pinchbeck Catholic so accurately," laughed Margaret Oglesby, a delightful girl on a visit to Mrs. Driscoll. "If you were in the pulpit in our church I should expect to see heads bobbing all through the congregation, to escape the psychic stone you were going to throw.

"If we had that minority of one in seven that Mrs. Driscoll speaks of, we should consider ourselves rich beyond the dreams of avarice. We are little more than one in twenty, and the one is so often not equal to the part of a ragged little fraction! At least one of the Scriptural marks of Christianity is ours beyond all dispute — the poor we have with us, in the greatest abundance and most interesting variety; and they have the gospel preached to them, sometimes in English spiced with Teuton accents, and sometimes in the richest brogue. We have two saloon keepers and their families among us, and I have been told by some member or other of nearly every denomination in the city that *they* (the pronoun is not strictly grammatical, I know) do not admit saloon keepers to membership. And nearly all the cooks in the West End belong to us, too, and I am constantly hearing of some Bridget or Delia who is *such* a faithful soul in the households of my friends, told as if the news would be personally gratifying.

"Then we have half a dozen families who are of the local Four Hundred — Dr. Mordant's old friends, or their telepathic relatives. One lady, in particu-

lar, — she is a friend of mine, too, and we have the most beautiful fights on religion, — makes a pose of ‘liberality.’ She is always to the fore in society functions, Protestant charities, and the Chautauqua circle, with their horrid little shallow, bigoted textbooks, but she never condescends to any of the affairs of her own church. She pretends to be something of an invalid, — just enough to be excused from the Lenten fast, or going to High Mass, or to Vespers, or any of the evening services; but not enough to shut out receptions galore, evening parties, and all sorts of committee meetings. We can have the most eloquent preacher in the State, but Mrs. Desmond is not attracted — The name slipped out, — I hope I am not sinning very terribly against charity, since none of you know her.

“She thinks mamma is a relic of the dark ages — so she called her — because she would n’t let us join the ‘King’s Daughters,’ — a body of charming young girls and our intimate friends, who do a great deal of good, and are nobly consistent in saying their prayers and singing hymns according to the Protestant ritual, for they are an avowedly Protestant association.

“I admire them immensely, but I should scorn a Catholic who sacrificed her principles and joined them.

“Mrs. Desmond’s daughter is a member, but she is not a member of the parish sodality because the girls composing it are *so* common! First and last there are a good many things that Catholics of our city have to stand — not big ones, but just hateful

little nettles that sting before you quite realize their presence. All the best plays come in Lent, and there has never been an opera there at any other season. Now I do go to the opera and to a tragedy presented by a great actor, because I look upon them as elevating and uplifting; and we must see them in Lent or not see them at all. For instance, mamma took us to see 'Hamlet,' but when Mansfield came with 'The Parisian Romance,' we had to refuse two invitations to box parties, because by no stretch of conscience could 'The Romance,' be considered elevating; yet I simply dote on Mansfield as an actor.

"The Daughters of the Revolution, our very swellest organization, always give a reception and ball on Washington's birthday, and it generally falls in Lent — sometimes on Ash Wednesday. And Friday is a favorite day for fashionable luncheons and dinner parties; and if you go you satisfy your hunger with bread and potatoes, whilst your partner eats chicken salad and duck and turkey and sweetbreads.

"Then the Monday papers devote a page to 'news of the churches,' with transcripts of Methodist and Baptist and Presbyterian sermons, and mention of the choir — that Miss Dresden sang the 'Sanctus' from Gounod's Solennelle at the First Methodist Church, and Mr. Munich rendered with great feeling 'The Agnus Dei from Mozart's Twelfth Mass at the Unitarian Tabernacle. But never a word about the Catholic service.

"And the children of the public schools are marched in procession to hear a baccalaureate ser-

mon, preached by invitation, in one of the Protestant churches; and a local holiday is declared when the Masons in gorgeous paraphernalia lay the cornerstone of the new city building; and a committee of Protestant clergy select new books for the public library, and put in 'Gems from Beecher,' and 'Ten Years as a Methodist Missionary in Mexico;' and you are expected to pay your taxes that help to support all these institutions; and look pleasant the while.

"The Protestants are in the ascendancy and they simply make use of their privileges.

"It is only an esoteric sort of consolation to hug to your soul the thought of all the great and representative Catholics in New York and Washington, or Paris and Vienna.

"Of course, if Catholics believed what many good Protestants think that we believe, we should be fit for hanging, but not for anything else, unless it be solitary confinement on Devil's Island.

"Our dentist is an ardent Baptist, and whilst I am waiting in his reception-room, to be stretched on the red plush rack, I amuse myself with the file of the Baptist weekly kept on the centre table.

"I learned from its columns that the Jesuits are given to bacchanalian orgies, and that the Indians are taught in the confessional to lie and steal. I read of the horrors of the Inquisition (still harping on my daughter, you know), and of Popish plots, and the raffle of souls, and the current prices for sins, and the corrupting tendencies of Romanism, and the like delectable rot!"

“Go home instantly, and start a branch of my truth society,” interrupted Dr. Mordant.

“I am afraid my friends would politely decline the pamphlets,” retorted the visitor.

“Personally I am sure they would n’t lie and bear false witness against their neighbor — even a ‘Romanist,’ but as subscribers to their church papers they are forced to become the disseminators of the lies of others. And the editors themselves may not know any better, — but if they do not know, they are out of place in the editorial chair or the pulpit, and would better suit the street-cleaning department of a big city.

“I fear that we do not quite realize our responsibilities towards our Protestant friends,” began Mrs. Driscoll. “We love them and admire them for their virtues and charms of mind and heart, we see them doing good in their way, devoted to their form of religion, and we console ourselves with thinking that they belong to the soul of the Church, if not to its visible body. We forget that we have a sacred duty to show them the truth if we can. Life is not so easy that any one can afford to dispense with the means of grace which would help over the pitfalls. Mother Church offers to her children the priceless daily sacrifice of Mass, the grace of the Sacraments, holds aloft the flaming light of truth, marks unerringly the path through the wilderness, and sets unchangeable guide-posts at the cross-roads of right and wrong. We start out as travelers through a dark and unknown country, but with a sure leader to show the path, with spiritual Bread

to give strength and sustenance, and with a beacon that is never extinguished to light the way. We have all that, we know that we have it, and yet we see our friends, deprived of it through no fault of their own, struggling forward in the mist, stumbling over boulders or pitching into ravines; we see them thirsty, and drinking the water from poisoned wells; and yet, because they have rejected our counsel in the beginning, we say never a word that might make them pause. We are in possession of a priceless treasure that belongs to others as much as it does to us, since Christ died for all."

"Theoretically I agree with you," said Adele, "but in practice there are many obstacles. One would be voted a bore if one brought up religion, — it is one of the subjects to be tabooed in a mixed assemblage; besides, the mere telling counts for very little.

"Faith is a gift of God, the catechism tells us, and no amount of talking is going to bring it. In a bigoted community a convert has to suffer so much petty persecution that that knowledge alone often closes the mind to any consideration of Catholic claims."

"I fancy that the Missionary Union, recently established at the Paulist headquarters in New York, will do much in the way of making Catholic truth known to those outside the fold," said Mr. Travis.

"Yes," answered the Doctor, "if it is properly supported, and if its sphere is sufficiently extended, and if the Catholic people generally become interested in the work."

"It is unfortunate that nearly all admirable things

in this world depend on so many *if's*," said Horace, in an aside to the visitor.

"We Catholics here in the United States are in the condition of the young giant who has just grown up, and has not yet learned the extent of his power," went on the Doctor. "It is a singular example of the perversity of wilful blindness, that, whilst we are accused by our separated brethren of being the political tools of ecclesiastical power, we are the most thoroughly disunited body, in everything except our faith, in the world. In a recent presidential campaign, a Catholic was on the Republican committee, and another Catholic was on the Democratic; in the ranks of both parties Catholics are found fighting each other stubbornly at the polls. The Germans have their own organizations, and the Irish have theirs; there is no social unity, and no political unity. Yet we are accused — but why talk of accusations?"

"The wise might learn a lesson from the conditions as they now exist, and not force us by persecution to become a political unit. We might wield a power little dreamed of in their reckonings.

"The German Catholics taught Bismarck a lesson, and if necessary the American Catholics can repeat the lesson for corrupt politicians."

"So long as our Constitution is preserved in its integrity, there will be no need for the lesson," answered Horace, who is ardently patriotic.

"We have had a good deal to suffer in the past," answered the Doctor. "I pass over the double tax for schools, the withdrawal of appropriations from

our charitable institutions, where we take care of the sick, the helpless, or the bad, regardless of creed; and I still have a big score of wrongs: an army in which nearly one third of the soldiers are Catholics with four Catholic chaplains; the navy largely manned by Catholic seamen, and nearly all the chaplains Protestant; the atrocious injustice of the Indian bureau in breaking its contract with the Sisters, after letting them erect and equip suitable buildings, and leave their work in other places to devote themselves to the Indian, — and without the shadow of a complaint; and this too, when one fourth of the Indians in the country are Catholic, and desirous of Catholic schools for their children; when the highest Protestant testimony — senators, judges, commissioners — have declared the worth of the Catholic schools; when not a breath of scandal has ever tarnished the fame of one of them, and shameful excesses have been proven over and over again in the Government schools. Our enemies would prefer to have the Indians pagan rather than to have them Catholic.

“And yet we have nothing to complain of!

“At West Point the Episcopalians, one of the smallest of the leading denominations in the country, have had a chapel on the Government reservation for years, and with an Episcopal clergyman, paid by the Government, in charge; and yet Catholics had a long and bitter fight to obtain permission to build *at their own expense* a Catholic chapel on the grounds, for the benefit of the Catholic cadets, largely outnumbering the Episcopalians.

“ The infamous A.P.A. have made religion a political issue in spite of the Constitution, and applied the religious test in elections. No Catholic has ever been President, and no Catholic could be, at the present state of prejudice, be his gifts those of an archangel.

“ If Sheridan had been a Methodist like Grant, or if Sherman had not had a Catholic wife, we might have seen one or both of these distinguished Union generals in the White House.

“ In many communities a Catholic could not be elected to any office, however petty.

“ All these things will, in the providence of God, be remedied in time.

“ What I would wish the National Truth Society to secure — and unless it is national in reality as well as in name, found in every town throughout the land, it could do very little — would be, primarily, Justice for Catholics, and the Truth about them; to enable Catholics to say effectively to our non-Catholic fellows: You shall not lie about us, and you shall not deprive us of our rights. If you were honest in your professions you would not wish to do either, and if you are not honest, you should be forced to be just. For the rest, you are at liberty to dislike us as much as you please. Our clergy, successors of the Apostles, are divinely commissioned to teach the truth to every creature; we offer the means to enlighten your ignorance, — ignorance for which you are probably not to blame; we invite you to our churches to hear the truth explained; we will give you, free of charge, books ex-

plaining Catholic truth. We do this out of Christian charity for our brethren; personally your conversion is not of the slightest moment to us; it is for your own sakes we teach you, not for any benefit you can confer upon us.

“The average middle-class non-Catholic acts as if he imagined that the Pope secretly rewards his agents who bring converts into the Church.”

“As a general thing we do not manifest a sufficient concern for the souls of our brethren,” said Travis.

“We do not begin to support our foreign missions, in proportion to their number and extent, as Protestants support theirs. When I read their reports I am filled with admiration for their zeal, and with pity for their almost wasted efforts.

“The Catholic Church has more extensive missions and more converts among the heathen than all the sects put together.

“The Protestant missionary goes to China or Japan, or wherever his particular sect sends him; he takes his wife and children with him, and is provided with a house in some city, — he is seldom found in the country places, — with a servant or servants; and a salary, sufficient to support himself and family, is cheerfully paid.

“The Catholic missionary, usually a member of some religious order, asks only a coarse cloth habit and simple food, a hard bed or a pallet of straw; he goes everywhere, into jungles and deserts, to the bedside of the plague-stricken sinner, into the hovels of the poor, to the mansions of the rich and

powerful. Sisters, vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience, are there with their schools and hospitals and orphanages. The Catholic missionary, whether he wears the black robe of the Jesuit, the brown of the Franciscan, or the white of the Dominican, teaches one and the same doctrine, offers the same Sacraments. The heathen, who is not a fool, sees the sacrifices the Catholic priest and nun make for him, and he contrasts it with the comfort, and sometimes luxury, with which the Protestant missionary surrounds himself, and the sacrifice appeals to that which is highest in his nature; he sees the Catholic clergy teaching the same thing, so that whether his brethren have been baptized by a Jesuit or a Franciscan they go to the same church, and receive the same Sacraments, and are taught the same doctrine; and he sees the Presbyterian mission house, and the Methodist, and the Baptist, and the Anglican, all independent, and all differing; and this fact strikes home to his logical faculty, with but one conclusion.

“Let us fight for our rights, but fight manfully, openly, honorably, with the weapons of truth, justice, and personal integrity; let us spare no means to instruct our separated brethren as to what the Catholic Church really is, and then let the result be with themselves.”

“Oh, no,” said Mrs. Driscoll, gently. “Let the result be with God.”

XIV

THE PRIEST OF THE FAMILY

THREE lines in the evening "Star" announced to the world that Jack Carroll had gone to the seminary to study for the priesthood. Everybody in the parish knows and likes Jack, and his pious decision is regarded as a fitting climax to his years of service in the sanctuary and the choir. It seems but yesterday, although really quite ten years ago, since Jack, with his beautiful baby face, chubby cheeks shaded by long black lashes, big gray eyes and golden curls, a countenance dominated by dimples and smiles at his young importance, — in the glory of purple cassock and snowy surplice, — appeared in the train of a bishop, and sat as still, or bowed as gracefully, during the long service of a pontifical Mass, as any critically fond mother could expect of a boy only seven and a half years old.

"I knew about his going, yesterday," vouchsafed Adele Norrison. "He and Carl have been classmates and chums at St. Xavier's, and Carl imparted the momentous secret to me, in strictest confidence, of course, when he was getting ready to go to the train to see the last of his Damon. Mamma was afraid Carl might take a notion to go to the seminary, too."

“Afraid, Adele? That seems rather a strange word,” answered Mrs. Driscoll. “*Hoped* would sound better.”

“That depends on the point of view, I suppose. At any rate, it was fear and not hope in this instance, and with precious little room for either. Carl is a good boy, but nature never intended him for a cassock.”

“I wonder why it is,” put in Dr. Mordant, “that so few of our old American families have given a son to the priesthood! We seem to leave this highest of all vocations to the children of obscurity, or to foreigners. Whether this indicates a decadence of piety among our people, or carelessness on the part of pastors who might be supposed to be on the lookout for clerical raw material, so to speak, the effect is apparent. In Europe a priest in the family is counted a holy honor, and in an earlier day a son was set apart for the altar, almost as a matter of course.”

“And a pretty mess this ‘matter-of-course’ made of his vocation — save the mark! in too many cases on historic record. I am glad that the day of the family-convenience priest is of the past. May it never return!”

Travis spoke with some heat, for nothing gives him more delight than the opposite side of an argument.

“I was not thinking of him in the light of a family convenience. In fact, in America, where a lad grows up with the expectation of making his own living, of working for his cakes and ale and all that they represent, irrespective of his father’s possessions,

there could n't be any family convenience. A boy becomes a priest, and lives on his salary; his brother is a lawyer, and lives by his wits. Of course, where it is a question of an only son one can understand a father's natural desire to see him marry and perpetuate the family name, and whatever honor attaches to it; but Catholic families, as a rule, are not afflicted with only sons; that is a malady indigenous to New England — and 'the new mother.'"

"We live in such a din of materialism that the whisperings of a vocation are unheard," said Mrs. Driscoll. "Or perhaps parents expect an angel to warn them in a vision of the priestly halo on the brow of their son. They forget that one can reach the supernatural through natural means. A boy with good dispositions, fair talents for study, and a sound physical body, might be directed in this chosen path, and with proper safeguards and training reach the goal of holy orders. Father Morris told me that his mother first put the thought of being a priest into his head, and the idea had come to her from seeing him play at being one; he was given to singing High Mass, vested in a sheet and a red plush table-cover, with his small brother as a serving-boy.

"In fact, more vocations have been fostered by a pious mother's counsels and prayers than through all other means combined. The 'devout female sex,' when it happens to mean anything at all, means a great deal. The modern American woman does not seem to appreciate the honor that might be hers, — the honor of being a good priest's mother."

“Perhaps the mothers fear the terrible responsibility attached to the priestly office,” said Travis; “and a bad priest is something so awful that one might well pause to think of this possibility.”

“The bad priest in America practically does not exist. Once in a while one sees a child with six fingers, and once in a while a priest forgets his sacred character.”

“I fancy the difficulty is of a very different nature,” said Dr. Mordant. “Lack of money is the great stone in most careers, and the ministry is no exception. A father with a large family and a small salary might hesitate on the score of expense.”

“I thought the diocese paid for the education of its priests,” put in Adele. “I’m sure we are always having collections for the seminary.”

“Not always, my dear. Only once a year,” answered Mrs. Driscoll.

“The diocese pays after the candidate reaches theology, — the last three years of his course; but there must have been many years of study before this time, and whilst he is studying the classics, the sciences of an ordinary education, and the multiple branches of philosophy, — and in this age of critical culture he must go from cosmology to paleontology, — his father must pay.”

“How does it happen, then, that so many boys of the poor, or the merely well-to-do, become priests?”

“Either because their families are willing to make heroic sacrifices for them, or they are edu-

cated at the expense of the pious rich. Some families find this vicarious way of having a priest to their credit more to their liking than to devote one of their own sons to the altar.

“ Sometimes the pastor takes an interest in the young acolyte, and discovers a generous patron willing to pay his expenses during the preparatory years.

“ In some parishes the sanctuary is a sort of training-school for candidates, and the boys who show the most aptitude and piety when serving at the altar are singled out by the pastor, and encouraged to hope for the privilege of one day being priests themselves.”

“ Certainly this is not the case with us,” answered Adele. “ Jack Carroll is the first altar boy in my recollection who has gone to the seminary.”

“ I am very sure that none of the clergy ever spoke to the boys about being priests, during my time of service,” put in Horace Norrison.

“ Sometimes the Sisters at the school would ask one of the little chaps if he would n't like to be a priest, but none of the Fathers ever suggested the idea.”

“ We might take a lesson in fostering vocations from our German neighbors,” added Travis. “ The Bishop ordained eight young men last week, and of the eight six were Germans, one a Bohemian, and only one an American — and he was Irish.”

“ There is n't any nonsense about a German, and when he wants things to happen he makes them happen. A pastor sees German congregations who

want a German clergy, and he takes little German boys and develops them into German priests. Now and again it happens that there are not enough German congregations to go round, so the priests are lent to English parishes, and the parishioners, when the language of Shakespeare is served to them in the accents of Schiller, grumble in Bostonese American."

"Are the Germans really more pious than other people, that they give their sons so willingly to the Church?"

"They are more practical, — they understand better the relation between cause and effect; the cause is generally money. An American sits still, waiting for some one else's money to bring about certain desirable effects, and the German gives his own; not a great deal, because he is thrifty, but everybody's little makes the requisite much.

"Look at all the big, beautiful churches the Germans have built in this city, — and in other cities you see the same, — and the schools and the hospitals; and they are usually paid for by the time the last paint is dry on the walls. Perhaps if Father Ryan didn't have the parish debt he might find time to teach good little boys Latin.

"Father Winkelkamp, over at St. Mary's, picks out the clever boys in his school, informs their proud fathers that he has discovered signs of a vocation, and starts them at '*mensa, mensæ.*' If they are poor boys he takes up a collection, on his own responsibility, to defray the expenses of their education. As a result, the 'Catholic Planet'

is always announcing that Mr. Anthony This, or Mr. Jacob That, of St. Mary's parish, has been ordained priest.

“A very potent cause in making our boys themselves hesitate, is the undeserved stigma attached to the clerical student who finds he has no vocation and withdraws. ‘*Prêtre manqué*’ the French say, but they do not make him feel as if he had done something terrible, where in reality he has acted with the highest honor.

“Many an Irish mother would rather see her son dead than to see him return from the diocesan seminary. The disgrace would be when he was hypocrite enough to keep on, knowing that the priesthood was not his vocation.”

“Sometimes the priests have such dreadfully hard times, especially in the West, that their mothers seek to dissuade them, rather than to encourage the pious ambition.”

“Yes, that is very true, although as a rule our priests have an easier life than they would have had as laymen. This is looking at the matter as a profession, rather than as a vocation. Here is Father Ryan, to find an example at our door. His family are good, plain people; his brother works early and late in a grocery store, and his sisters are married to hard-working, plain men. Yet where would you find a more charming man, one more polished, more highly educated, or more welcome in the best houses, than this same Father Ryan? Given his tastes, the tastes of a scholar and gentleman, is he not a thousand times happier as he is

than he would be behind a grocery counter, dealing out salt mackerel?

“He has a comfortable home, a fine library, and a good horse; his cook knows how to get up a dinner, and when he asks a fellow-priest to dine with him there is no lack of silverware and china for the table. His friends are among a class of people he could never have known in the sphere in which he was born, and his responsibilities are not to be compared with the daily burden of providing for the wants of a family on an entirely inadequate income.

“The rich man’s son sacrifices a great deal in becoming a priest, but the poor man’s son is rather the gainer. This is taking a very material view, and a view that no good priest ever considers. He is trained to be ready to make any sacrifice, even of life itself, for the salvation of souls. And in the ministry, as in other callings, a man’s own gifts determine his position. The zealous priest, who is a scholar and an orator and a man of affairs, will be at the head of a large parish, where the equally good priest, whose talents are ordinary, will be left in a poor country mission. The priest, like the soldier, goes where he is sent, without question.”

“I wish that more boys of nice families would become priests,” said Adele. “All the priests I know are holy men, but some of them lack the refinements of a gentleman. I took a Protestant friend to hear Father Marsden preach, and in the pulpit he is magnificent; but she met him at a concert afterwards, and his manners were simply

uncouth! He wore his hat in the house, and had dirty finger-nails, and the influence of the sermon was instantly lost."

"You must have her meet Father Ryan," retorted Mrs. Driscoll.

"I do hope Jack Carroll will persevere. He will make a charming clergyman. He has the manners of a French marquis, and he sings so beautifully it would be a real treat to hear him sing the *Pater Noster*. Poor little Father Higgins has no more music in his voice than a parrot, and he *will* sing through his nose. He got catarrh when he was on a mission in the country, where he had to go on a handcar to attend sick calls. But one is apt to forget the handcar and the sick calls, when he gets off the key at *adveniat regnum*, and does not get on again until *debita nostra*."

"There seems to be a general demand among the bishops for a more thorough training in the seminaries," said Travis; "and this is a move in the right direction. If the arts of oratory and the learning of a scholar will widen the influence of a priest, then the arts and the learning should be required of the candidates for orders; in pioneer days, when the harvest was ripe and the reapers were few, the students had to be hurried through the course of studies, and ordained for the missions; nor could a bishop, with people falling away from their faith, because there was no one to administer the sacraments, or teach the children, be over particular as to the talents of his candidates; piety and zeal were seized upon with avidity, and

oratory and nice manners were not required. Now the conditions are different, at least in the older States, and the candidates are numerous enough to admit of a careful choice. In the West one may still occasionally find the curious accent, and the mourning finger-nails, in the pulpit, but the progress of piety and polish is making surely, if slowly, for better things."

XV

CATHOLIC LITERATURE

OUR little assembly of intimates had again gathered at Dr. Mordant's.

The Doctor is fond of asking his friends to come and take what he calls "pot-luck" with him, although there are usually five courses, and cut flowers, and dress-coats, features which did not belong to "pot-luck" twenty-five years ago.

Mrs. Mordant led the way to the library, because the gentlemen wanted to smoke, and the rest of us wanted to listen to their elevating conversation.

Horace Norrison, who is not afflicted with modesty, says that it is elevating.

There had been no preconceived plan to talk of literature, but it so chanced that the latest catalogues from two publishers, were lying on the library table, and they turned our thoughts into the channel which, in that house, is very wide. For the Doctor is a great reader.

"It is marvellous, the amount of deep learning, original research, and literary excellence represented by these two catalogues," began Travis, his nervous white fingers resting on the little books.

"There are volumes here that contain the garnered treasures of long, busy lives given up to one

branch of learning; works in every department of human thought — science, theology, philosophy, philology, social economics, as well as literature pure and simple. The books contained in these lists would make a fairly creditable library for a town or college. University professors, gray-haired ecclesiastics, statesmen, lawyers, noblemen, are here represented, by the essence, so to speak, of their life-work, the distillations of years of study and varied activities.

“Here are works, written not six months ago, in idiomatic, clear-cut Latin, supposed to be a dead language, but very much alive among Catholics; works in German, in French, in Italian, models of style, too, some of them. And yet there is the cry, ‘Catholics do not buy their own books!’”

“Those ponderous tomes are for the clergy, and the other professors, rather than for ordinary mortals like ourselves,” answered Mrs. Hartley. “The average woman is too busy to bother over biology, or the Arians in the fourth century. I read a lot of Catholic books when I was at school, — and wretched twaddle they were, too, — because I could n’t lay my hands on anything else,” concluded the little lady, with disarming candor.

“We received histories of the Church and ‘Treasures of Truth’ for premiums, gaudily bound, poorly printed, and as lifeless in style, and quite as absurd, as a wooden soldier who presents arms when properly wound.

“In Lent, for our sins, we had the lifeless lives of the Saints read to us in the refectory.

“Now I am not so hardened as not to care for the Saints, — some of them I love dearly; and it has been my good fortune to read at least two saintly biographies that are as fascinating as a good novel. I don’t see why some of you end-of-the-century writers, with common-sense and a style, do not turn your attention to this rich field.” The closing remark was directed to Marian Vere, a clever young woman who has published several books, and from whom her friends expect brilliant things.

“We use our sense — I suppose I may say ‘we’ since you said ‘you’ — in the fields that promise the greatest returns,” said Marian, spiritedly.

“The reading public does not discriminate between good work and bad. As apt as not the books of the sort that you call ‘twaddle,’ and I call ‘junk,’ have a greater sale than books of really high merit. The Catholic mother with a conscience buys Catholic juveniles, but it does not occur to her to add the Catholic novel to her library.”

“It is generally so stupid,” interrupted Adele.

“There, that proves just what I was saying. Many of them are stupid stuff, but if you would use your taste and judgment you would find not a few of genuine worth. The number is surprising when you consider that the Catholic novelist seldom gets either money or glory, but is supposed to work from some sublimely altruistic motive. Of course a few make some money, but the majority get nothing.

“The successful Catholic book is not in the line of fiction.

“This is accounted for in part by the fact that our best Catholic writers belong to the realm of general literature, without any restricting prefix.

“Crawford, and Johnson, and Repplier, and Lathrop, are names of Catholics, but not of Catholic writers. You see what I mean?

“As soon as a Catholic makes a reputation as a writer he passes to the secular publishers and the big magazines, and our literature knows him no more.

“The few capable ones who would remain in the ranks are either crowded out, or kept down by the army of mediocrities who throng to the front, and are willing, not to say anxious, to write volumes of trash, and to supply the magazines with insufferable commonplace, merely for the sake of seeing their names on title-pages.”

“I think our magazines are surprisingly good, considering the disadvantages under which they labor,” said the Doctor, briskly. “Now here is the Blank Monthly—I think it compares very favorably with the secular magazines.”

“All except the fiction, but deliver me from that,” said Mrs. Hartley. “I agree with Marian that the best known Catholic writers are not found in our magazines, or so seldom that they hardly leaven the array of commonplace served up to us month after month.”

“It would be a great gain,” conceded the Doctor, “if our editors could see their way to securing more first-class talent than they do, but until they receive a more generous support it is hardly possible.”

“Some of our Catholic periodicals are caught in a sort of vicious circle,” said Travis; “they are not supported because they are so dull, and they are so dull because they are not supported. I know of more than one Catholic institution where the three or four of the big secular magazines are taken, and not a single Catholic monthly, and only one Catholic paper.”

“One has to pay for what is worth having, and the Catholic editor is no exception,” said Marian. “The average editor has not learned this truth, and probably will not, so long as he can get tons of junk — some of it is very good junk, with bits of gold showing here and there — for what he chooses to pay.

“Now I received for my first article in the Blank Magazine, — if you will pardon the intrusion of the personal pronoun, — when I was absolutely unknown, a larger check than I received for my last one; and the first check was sent on acceptance of the manuscript, and the last one not until the article had been published. The latter check was so ridiculously small, for an article that had cost some trouble to write, that I was on the point of returning it to the editor, when Professor Goodheart — I happened to be in Washington at the time — coaxed me out of this bit of folly, and told me that he was paid at precisely the same rate for his best work in the magazine. This mollified my wounded vanity. The editor has the writer by the throat, so to speak, and if one does not care to accept his terms, there are hundreds of others who are glad to do so.

“But so long as he buys his fiction by the yard, you must not expect any great things of its quality.”

“Why don’t you Catholic writers do something for yourselves through the united efforts of the Society of Authors?” said Travis. “You might form a sort of labor union.”

“There are too many writers, so-called, who would not keep to the conditions. The itch of authorship, you know.”

“I think it is a mistake for a writer to attempt to remain in so limited a field as our Catholic literature is, and must be,” said Mrs. Driscoll. “I am always urging Marian to send her work to the big magazines. Success is much harder to win there, but it means so much more when it does come. Many Catholic writers, so-called, remain with us — and we could see them depart to pastures new with equanimity, not to say positive pleasure — because they cannot secure entrance anywhere else. Then they complain because their ‘junk,’ and it is nothing else, is not eagerly bought and read by their co-religionists!”

“At school I was assistant librarian during my senior year,” put in Mrs. Hartley, “and the girls used to come and say, ‘Give me a good novel; I don’t want any of those conversion stories!’”

Everybody laughed.

We had all been victims to the “conversion” story.

“The old-fashioned Catholic novel usually revolves about a few well-worn situations,” went on Mrs. Hartley. “Lovers who separate because of a difference of religion, only to come together after

years of suffering have brought to the unbeliever the gift of faith, stand easily first; the superhumanly good governess or saleswoman who inherits a fortune, forgives her rich and vulgar persecutors, and marries the heir to a great house, makes a good second. Saving a train from destruction by discovering a boulder across the track, and walking miles in the snow to warn somebody, is not an unpopular device.

“And the heroine is always so beautiful and so preternaturally good; and she has a way of drawing out a pearl rosary from a convenient pocket, even when fashion forbids pockets to ordinary women; then there is, as a matter of course, the scene over her tearful refusal to wear a low-cut gown, or to dance round dances; and the flinty-hearted aunt or stepmother brought to terms by the appearance of a noble lover, who confesses that this maidenly modesty first won his exacting affections.

“Sometimes a writer, composed of flesh and blood like the rest of mortals, ventures to put in a bit of genuine love-making, and a tiny fault or two in his ‘leading lady,’ and also a bit of virtue into the ‘first old woman,’ but a cautious publisher, with an eye to his ‘premium list’ insists upon the removal of these daring touches, and the restoration of the conventional formula.”

“At any rate, our fiction is infinitely superior to the Sunday-school books of our separated brethren,” said Adele. “At least we are spared the atrocious vulgarity of the ‘Elsie books,’ and the morbid emotionalism of some other writers almost as pop-

ular. A cousin of mine gets books from Dr. Harvey's Sunday-school, and if you could see the stuff the poor child reads, I suppose on the advice of her teacher, you would thank your stars for the 'conversion' story of your youth.

"It is quite as interesting as the history of the good little Protestant boy who does without butter in order to buy Bibles to send to the heathen, unable to read them, or of the distressing little girl who preaches long sermons to her parents, and quotes, in self-conscious priggishness, disquieting texts anent the dark condition of their souls."

"I am tired of the prefix 'Catholic' attached to a story," said Adele. "Suppose 'Saracinesca' had been thus labelled; readers would have been counted by tens, where now they are numbered by thousands. Give a book a good title, and let its religion speak for itself; it must be of a shadowy character to require a tag.

"Our books will never be received as literature by the general public and the reviews so long as they bear the label. This omission has nothing to do with the tone of the book; let that be as Catholic as truth itself."

"Why need we care how our books are received so long as we ourselves know that they are literature, and of the best?" said Mrs. Mordant.

"From pure altruism," answered the Doctor; "or, to speak like a Christian, from a charitable desire to see the greatest good done to the greatest number. So many people never read a book until it is

the fashion to read it, that one does a good work to give vogue to the best in literature.

“Too many Catholics are mentally starving, when not morally sick, with treasures of learning all about them.

“Let us omit the label and make our great authors the fashion!”

XVI

THE SCHOOL QUESTION

FROM the very beginning of his pastorate Father Ryan has taken a decided stand on the school question. In this, despite all opposing influence, he has been supported by the Bishop.

There was a parish school; that school the pastor was determined should be of the best. Regardless of the fact that his exchequer was not flourishing, he made extensive improvements in the buildings, and added to their equipment the best apparatus in the market.

Then he gave his attention to the teachers; some of them were very good, and some were not. The superior of the order was informed that she would have to send first-class teachers for every room, or else he would find another order to take charge; and failing in that, he would employ secular teachers.

Absolutely his school must be inferior to none in the city. He purchased the best works pertaining to teaching and the training of the young, and placed them in the school library for the use of his teachers; he organized a teachers' association, and once a month presided over the meetings. He did not rest until he was sure that his school was all that it ought to be, and then he informed the people

that the place for Catholic children was in Catholic schools, either in the parish school or in some one of the many good private academies and colleges in the city. Only for a very grave reason would any dispensation be given from this rule.

Those able to pay the nominal tuition fees were expected to do so; those who could not were to send their children entirely free of charge.

Then, in the terse phrase of Miss Norrison, "there was a howl."

Mr. Higgins said, in Tom McCarthy's saloon, as he gulped his beer and grew red in the face, that Father Ryan must remember that we are living in the free country of America; that the United States is not Ireland, and the nineteenth century not the middle ages. His boy was educated in the public school, and if he had a dozen children he would send them where he pleased. Mr. Dyer, who was also drinking beer, happened to know that young Gerald Higgins, baptized Jeremiah, went to church only when it suited his fancy, and that he had not been to the Sacraments for years. But Gerald was a handsome boy with a fine position, and he was making his way into very good society.

No wonder Jerry Higgins was proud of his boy. Still, Mr. Dyer, whose children were all girls, thought that, for his own part, he would be better pleased if a son of his had not disowned the old faith.

In Dr. Mordant's library, recently, this school question was vigorously discussed.

"I am not opposed to parochial schools," said Mr. Travis, the banker. "Far from it. I think

that they do an excellent work; however, I do think that Father Ryan has made a mistake in taking so decided a stand, at least at present. The public-school system is the great shibboleth of the American people, and any opposition to it at this stage of its development can but prove unfortunate."

"But, my dear Travis, who is opposing the public school system?" said Dr. Mordant, straightening himself so vigorously that the cigar ashes fell in a little gray trail down his shirt-bosom. "The public schools have their work to do, and we are not trying to hinder them in any way. We do not attempt to control them or to dictate as to their policy. What we do say is that they are not the place for Catholic children. If we admit, as certainly we do, that the spiritual is higher than the temporal, that all true education rests on a religious basis, it is self-evident that Catholic children have the inalienable right to a Catholic training."

"Nobody questions their right to a Catholic training," responded Travis.

"But will you tell me, my dear Doctor, what connection there is between mathematics, for instance, and religion? Religious instruction is necessary, but it is not the only kind necessary. If a boy knows nothing but his catechism he is going to stand a very poor show in this world, whatever may be his chances for the next. I cannot see why we should question the faith of the man or woman who teaches our children arithmetic, and geography, and grammar, any more than we question the faith of the

dancing-master who teaches them to dance, or the musician who teaches them to play the piano. It is the duty of the pastor and of the parents to instruct the children in religion. That is quite out of the sphere of the secular educator."

"Theory is one thing, practice is another," said the Doctor. "If you could separate the two kinds of learning, the religious and the secular, all very well. The child is composed of body and soul, and if you could separate the two and send the soul to one place for spiritual development, and the body with a vitalized brain to another, to acquire a knowledge of the things that belong to the world — But why talk nonsense?"

"Then, again, how can a pastor with one or two assistants, give the time for the proper instruction of the children? Catechism once or twice or three times a week is not sufficient, — and how many parents have the time or the ability to attend to this duty for their offspring? The father is away at his work or business, and at night he wants to rest, or to have a little recreation; and the overworked mother has no time, and in many cases no qualifications, to do this. And if the children are at the public school all day, where is the opportunity to give them their religious training?"

"However, this is but a minor point. Religion is not a thing apart, that can be learned and stored away in a brain cell for future use; rather it is an essence that must permeate the heart, the soul, the intellect; or, to be philosophical, it must be the vitalizing principle in the fourfold activities of the soul,

— the æsthetic, the intellectual, the moral, the spiritual.

“The child in a Catholic school breathes religion, so to speak; the garb of the teachers, that habit which has caused such spasms of indignation and horror in the breasts of good Puritans, is a constant reminder to the children of that higher life which our Lord has invited chosen souls to follow. The crucifix, telling ever of the infinite love of a Saviour who died on a cross to redeem mankind, the statue of the Blessed Virgin, the pictures of saints on the walls, all speak to the little child of its faith. There are the prayers at the opening and closing hours. When a child begins and ends each important act of the day with prayer during the impressionable years of youth, the man or woman is not apt to forget this duty. Then there is the regular Sunday for confession and Holy Communion for the school children; they get into the habit of approaching the Sacraments, and we all know the tremendous force there is in habit, good or bad.

“And now I come to another telling point: we know that such a thing as history impartially taught has so far been an impossibility in non-Catholic schools; the holiest practices of our religion, the most obvious truths of history, are perverted. What loyal Catholic wants his child taught that the Popes sold indulgences; authorized the burning and murdering of millions of good people because of their religious beliefs; that Catholics pay the priest for forgiving their sins; that learning arose with the Reformation; that people did not read the Bible

until Luther's time, and that enlightened, progressive countries are Protestant, and the illiterate, squalid ones are Catholic; to come under the insidious teaching for years that to be a Catholic is to be mentally stultified, to be behind the age, an object of pity as the victim of a strange perversion of intellect? Yet we all know that this is the spirit of the public schools. A hundred examples could be given from the schools here in our own city.

“Yes, I admit that there are Catholics teaching in the public schools; but the proportion of Catholic teachers is very small, and they cannot teach their religion even to Catholic children; they would quickly find themselves without a position if they made the attempt. Besides, they have no voice in the selection of the text-books. Even in the matter of mathematics, where Travis was so sure religion could not enter, as a matter of fact it has entered. In the text-book used in a public school where a friend of mine was educated, was an example something like this — I quote from memory: If there were two hundred thousand Protestants in Spain, and the pope put to death ninety-five thousand, and sold indulgences to eighteen thousand, and banished the rest from the country, how many Protestants had to leave Spain?”

“Oh, well, such a thing as that would be impossible in our public schools. The board would not tolerate it,” said Travis.

“I am not so sure about that. The board has tolerated things almost as offensive to Catholics. You

forget that Coffin's 'Story of Liberty,' a book violently anti-Catholic, is one of the reference books in the schools."

"I agree fully with Dr. Mordant," put in Mr. Vere. "The place for Catholic children is in Catholic schools. If we assert that the Catholic faith is the birthright of the Catholic child, we can admit nothing else. The impressions of youth can never be obliterated. If you take a child at its tenderest age and let him spend the greater part of his young life in a school where religion is banished, he is apt to grow up to think that religion is, after all, but a secondary consideration. He says a few hurried morning prayers and rushes off to school, where his books are often anti-Catholic, his associates non-Catholic, and his teachers Protestant, Jew, or infidel, where he hears nothing of God and religion, sees nothing to remind him of his faith. Can you expect him to grow up to be either very loyal or very devout?"

"On Sundays he is taken to Mass, where he squirms about, not having been taught how to assist at the Holy Sacrifice; in the afternoon he goes to catechism for a half-hour, or perhaps he does not. At the best, one little lesson a week in religion to five long days given up to secular knowledge.

"In the Catholic school the catechism is quite as important as mathematics, perhaps more so. The child studies Bible History when he is old enough, and these branches are continued for years. He is as familiar with the life and teaching of Our Lord, the heroes of the Old Testament, the history and

dogmas of the Church, as he is with the life of Washington or Cæsar, and the Constitution of his country. Religious truths are as an unknown tongue to the child of the public schools except as they are taught outside the school.

“Now as to your comparison, Travis, in regard to dancing and music. A child takes a music lesson twice a week, and dancing once or twice; these things are but incidents in his regular life; they do not take him away from a Catholic environment during the greater part of the day, and for every day during his school life. No one would object to a child’s having lessons in mathematics or French from a Jew or an infidel. There is no question but that a child’s daily training should be not only not anti-Catholic, but positively Catholic.

“Life is not so easy; temptations come soon enough, and parents owe it to their children to give them all the spiritual strength they can procure. Grant that religion is necessary to right living, and that the religious parent who brings up an irreligious child has failed grossly in his duty, and you grant the paramount necessity of the religious school. This is a free country, and we do not try to force those who think differently from us to act from our premise. But we demand the same liberty for ourselves that we grant to others.

“And now, even on their own grounds of material progress, we can meet the public schools. At least this is so in the St. Paul’s parish schools; there is no appliance of science or sanitation that has been neglected. We have model schools, and there is no

reason why our Catholic children should not be sent to them."

"You forget a very important reason," said Travis. "At the St. Paul's parish school you must pay, and at the public school you go free."

"You do not pay unless you are able to do so, and I for one should not want my children to get their education for nothing, any more than I should want them to get their shoes in the same way."

"The public schools are supported by the taxpayers, and we Catholics pay our taxes just the same as anybody else."

"Indeed we do," chimed in Mr. Vere. "And no one, even among the very poor, wants to admit that he cannot afford to pay his children's tuition fees, even where paying entails a great hardship; and he will not when he can send them to the public school, where everybody is free."

"We are handicapped there, I admit," replied the Doctor, "and we shall be until we get our rights."

"What are our rights?" asked Travis, rather quizzically.

"The right to our proportion per capita of the public school fund," answered Dr. Mordant, promptly.

"You will never get that right," said Travis.

"Don't be too sure of that. Why should we not get it? There are a million of Catholic children in the parochial schools in the United States; should we close these schools and turn the children out, the public schools would be compelled to make

room for them. They would have to build additional schools, increase the rate of taxation, — and the taxpayers would not like that, — and at an enormous increase of expense provide teachers for these children.”

“That would be a desperate remedy — ”

“For a desperate disease,” snapped the Doctor.

“Catholics pay their taxes, and taxation without representation is unconstitutional. We cannot from conscientious reasons avail ourselves of the public schools; therefore simple law and justice would seem to point out the solution of giving us our proportion of the school fund.”

“If that was conceded to Catholics, it would have to be conceded to Methodists and Presbyterians, or to any religious organization that demanded it,” said Travis.

“And why not? If the parents of forty Methodist or Presbyterian children in a community decided that they wished their children to have a religious training, to be taught the religion of their parents by teachers competent to impart it, and if they are willing to provide the building, and a teaching corps who would keep the standard of instruction in purely secular branches, which are the only concern of the state, up to the standard of the public schools, and demanded their proportion of the public money, the money that the state would have to pay for these children if left in the public schools, why should their right to this be denied?

“As a matter of fact, whilst the majority of Prot-

estants are contented to have their children in the non-religious public schools, there is a minority, and not a small minority either, who deplore the secular spirit of these schools, and would be very glad to have schools of their own. Many of them do have their own schools; you have only to look to the denominational schools, academies, and colleges scattered over the country to acknowledge this.

“If we made a determined stand we should have the support of this minority; for in helping us to our rights they would be coming into their own.

“In England the parish schools receive state aid, and are under the supervision of the state board, and the plan works satisfactorily to all concerned. Why not in this country?

“Another point in our favor: statistics prove that we can educate in our parish schools, and compare favorably with the public schools, for about one half the cost of the state schools. This is because our schools are taught by the religious orders devoted to the work of teaching, who require very small salaries, and also because we have no school-boards and no book trusts to be fattened out of the school fund; consequently we save all that. It is not an unheard-of thing for a member of a school-board, serving for no salary, to retire comfortably well-off.

Our school buildings are erected under the personal supervision of the pastor, who secures honest labor and pays an honest price for it; there is no jobbery, no cheating. No man makes a fortune when a new parish school is to be built. So, be-

tween our honesty and our teaching orders, we can educate our children at a very modest cost compared with the cost in the public schools. If we are willing to take these million children and educate them for a dollar a month per capita, say, or ten millions of dollars a year, building our own schools without state aid, and if it would cost the state twenty millions a year for these same children, it seems to me that it would be good business policy to save the ten millions, and let us educate our own."

"They know that they can do better than that," said Mr. Vere. "They are sure that we will never give up our schools, and so they save the entire twenty millions."

"There is such a thing as the public conscience," retorted Dr. Mordant, "and there is such a thing as the Catholic vote. With these two weapons we shall in time secure our rights."

"We have overlooked a very important point in regard to our schools—and that is, the association of our children. The objection has been made to parish schools that only the children of the lower classes attend them. My experience is that practically the same class of children are to be found in the parish and the public school. Wealthy parents as a rule, both Protestant and Catholic, prefer private schools for their children. But there can be no question that in a parish school where the children are from Catholic homes, with religious teaching in their lives at school, there is less danger from moral contamination than in the public school

where children from the slums, from the homes of the most degraded vice, can be found side by side with the children of the virtuous poor. The social character of the children in a given school depends on the neighborhood; in a wealthy neighborhood they will be of a higher class, socially speaking, than in a school near the slums. This is true of both parochial and public schools. But certainly I should take my chances in a parish school, with Catholic children as deskmates for my little ones, rather than in a public school in the same locality.

“No Catholic father worthy of his children is going to risk their spiritual welfare to save the paltry dollar a month he must pay for each at the parish school.”

XVII

BOARDING-SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

MR. TRAVIS had remarked with pardonable pride that his son John, expected home shortly for the holidays, had carried off the first honors in an oratorical contest at Notre Dame. Then Captain Claiborne, who is a distant relative of the Travises, and therefore privileged to be disagreeably frank, asked if Travis did not think a denominational school handicapped a boy in the race with modern life. Forthwith there was a Babel, — a nice sort of Babel, with the accompaniments of tea, cushions, easy-chairs, and an open fire in Mrs. Driscoll's pretty drawing-room.

The discussion once turned on schools kept upon them, for the Catholic school in all its ramifications, from parochial to post-graduate, is the especial hobby of old Dr. Mordant.

“Catholic colleges, and institutions calling themselves by that name, are, I fancy, pretty much like other things in this world, easily separated into good, bad, and indifferent,” put in Horace Norrison.

“One hears a great deal of adverse criticism of this and that college, and comparisons with Harvard and Yale, the carpers never seeming to see how illogical they are in thus comparing totally distinct classes.

“They take a struggling little school, purporting to give everything, from the classics down to preparatory branches, unendowed, unknown, the veriest makeshift in a wilderness, so to speak, and send a boy there simply because it is ridiculously cheap — two hundred dollars for ten months of board and tuition, and perhaps laundry.

“Then they complain because all the advantages of a great Eastern University, with its millions of endowment and its high charges, are not forthcoming.”

“It is not always easy to make a selection,” said Mrs. Hartley.

“We had catalogues from a score or more when Brother Fred was ready to go to college, and to judge from the official eulogies all were equal, because all were perfect. The only way to decide was to take the best known and the most expensive; I have found out that if you want a good thing you have to pay for it.”

“Some of our colleges — the title is given merely by courtesy — and very many of our convents should be suppressed as pious frauds,” said Horace; and a cry of horror went up from the company.

“Not that they mean to be so,” he hastened to add, “but they are so through limitations beyond their control. In our pioneer days there was an excuse, and a reason for being, for the poorly equipped and poorly manned college and boarding-school —”

“How could a convent be ‘manned’?” whispered Adele.

“— but that reason no longer exists.

“I heard the Bishop of Sensopolis say not a month ago that it would be a good thing for education and the Church if many of the boarding-schools could be closed, and others forced to keep to a higher standard. With railroads going in all directions, and travel safe and luxurious as it is, there is no need of all the half-baked institutions found everywhere.”

“They are quite as good as the ‘half-baked’ institutions of our non-Catholic brethren,” put in Mrs. Driscoll, “and in one way infinitely better, for they teach religion and morals, and purely secular institutions do not.”

“I think that the ‘half-baked’ do fill a very serious need,” said Dr. Mordant. “They give to poor boys a chance to get a Christian education, who otherwise would be forced to remain in ignorance, or to put up with cheap secular schools not a whit superior. No doubt it is a mistake, generally speaking, to crowd minims into the Third Reader, and sophomores in Greek all in one institution, but it is a necessary and temporary inconvenience.

“I happen to know something of the ‘half-baked’ institutions — I use Horace’s designation for the want of a better — of various Protestant sects, and of the state, and they labor under the same disadvantages as our own; I should even concede to ours the superiority, for the reason that the professors, being members of the religious order in charge of the college, require no salary, thus making possible lower terms, and also, because they usually do receive a very good training for their work.

“There is the University of Boomopolis, for instance, absurd in its pretensions, and wholly incapable of any sort of real culture, — a field for a comic opera if it were not so serious in its consequences. The faculty are miserably paid, forced to do pedagogic drudgery, mercenary, and garbed in threadbare raiment. One man who was, according to the catalogue, professor of Latin and Greek and English, taught the elements of English grammar to the sons of neighboring farmers.

“If you compare schools of the same class, we have nothing to be ashamed of, or to regret.

“If a Catholic father wishes to give his son a college training with the surroundings of a gentleman and the appliances of science and art, he can easily find the college.

“A very serious drawback to our colleges,” said Horace, “is the restrictions which they impose. It is all very well to pen up small boys, put them to bed at nine o’clock, and confine their walks to the school campus, but young men at college will not submit to these regulations, — certainly our twentieth-century American young men will not, — and as a consequence we see them going to the great secular universities instead of to our own.”

“I call the restrictions a wise precaution,” answered the Doctor. “If you knew of all the immorality, drunkenness, gambling, and midnight carousals and debauches that go on at the secular universities you would thank God for the Catholic college and its restrictions.”

“If a young man is naturally vicious, college walls

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are not going to make him virtuous," returned Horace.

"In a way they may," asserted the Doctor. "If a youth is forced to be good for the four years of his college course,—four critical years in the development of his character,—he may decide to be good for all time. On the other hand, you take a boy on the threshold of manhood and turn him loose in a great university, practically his own master outside of recitation hours, with no home influence, far from his mother's eye, perhaps caught in the maelstrom of bad associates before he knows it, temptation in an alluring guise before him, nothing to fear from society, and nothing but a weak conscience, easily blinded, to stand between him and moral ruin, is it any wonder that so many of the young men come out *roués* and infidels?"

"You are rather severe, are n't you?" queried Horace.

"No, I am not; I wish I were! I speak of what I have seen. Not that all college men are bad, or the majority of them, but many are; and no Christian parent has a right to expose his son to needless temptation."

"If you muzzle your boy at college," returned Horace, "you have merely postponed an inevitable condition, for temptation is waiting for him at the gates of the college when he leaves. If he has not stamina enough to be a man, acting as a free agent, his virtue is hardly worth bothering about."

"A man can carry a burden easily where a child would break down under it," said the Doctor; "but

according to your reasoning one should expect the child, with its undeveloped muscles, to carry as much as the man, and just as easily."

"I think there is something to be said on both sides," hastily interposed Travis. "Too much liberty is given boys in our secular colleges, and not enough in our own. The English are wiser than we. No Oxford student has a tithe of the liberty afforded a Harvard man."

"Yet we read of very dreadful things laid to the door of the Oxford men," said Mrs. Driscoll.

"If that proves anything it proves that the restrictions should be even greater," answered Dr. Mordant.

"I still incline to the opinion that if a boy wants to be a ruffian he will be one in spite of your restrictions," put in Horace.

"I am not in favor of treating young men as one would treat small boys."

"This country is ready for a great Catholic university," said Travis, "the equal in every way, in intrinsic worth and general prestige, of Oxford and Harvard. We have not such an institution, admirable as many of ours are, and we gain nothing by pretending that we have."

"The Catholic University at Washington—" protested Mrs. Driscoll.

"So long as that confines itself to post-graduate work it counts for very little in the general scheme of collegiate education. If the Catholic University would open its doors to the undergraduate, and receive him without asking him to retire at nine

o'clock, and to obtain permission to go to the city to buy a necktie, then, indeed, a glorious era would begin for Catholic education."

"The powers that be are inflexibly opposed to that move," put in Dr. Mordant.

"Not all the powers, by any means," said Horace. "There is a growing sentiment in favor of the undergraduate work. Theoretically, the opposition is right, granting certain premises; but I do not grant them. The wealth, the buildings, the faculty of the university, all are commensurate with a large body of students, and the students are not there. It proves nothing to point to the Johns Hopkins in Baltimore as limiting itself to post-graduate work, for it is fed from countless sources closed to the Catholic University. Even if that were not so, if we had a great university for the undergraduate, one with the prestige of Oxford and Yale or Harvard,—I ring the changes on those names because they stand in popular estimation for what I mean,—we might leave the Washington University to its chosen sphere."

"I am afraid you will have to leave it there anyway," laughed Adele.

"Its sphere is surely an exalted one," said Travis, enthusiastically.

"It is destined to revolutionize the intellectual life of this country.

"Its chairs are filled with men of genius—the universities of the world have been canvassed for talent—and its possessions already are reckoned in millions. With schools of Divinity, Law, Medicine,

Science, Literature, waiting for the young man when he finishes his college course, its very existence is an incentive to him to round out his manhood by devoting himself, with his trained faculties, to the higher learning.

“It is appallingly true that liberal culture in our country has hitherto rested largely on Agnosticism, open or insidious.

“The University where St. Thomas sits in triumph, will solve the riddles of a questioning age by the keys of Thomist philosophy and Christian law.

“Then let us work for the University, give to it, speak for it, herald it proudly!”

“Bravo!” in chorus.

“And what the University is doing for men, Trinity College, in a lesser degree, will do for women. If it meets the expectations that it has aroused, Trinity will be a dominant intellectual power in that ever widening kingdom of woman. The higher education of woman is no longer a theory, it is a glorious fact. And the Church that has steadily exalted womanhood, now provides a training for American girls commensurate with the possibilities of her influence.”

“If the college were to be an integral part of the University I should feel much more elated over its foundation,” said Adele. “You know Professor Harry Thurston Peck’s dictum that women are not held up to the same standard of intellectual excellence as men. They do very well *considering* their sex. We don’t want any of this insufferable condescension in the world’s attitude towards Trinity

College. If the students could study for University degrees, with the University examinations ever before them, I should don cap and gown and enter myself as a candidate.

“Why should not Trinity College be a part of the Catholic University just as Balliol College is a part of the University of Oxford?”

“That would be something worth while!”

“And that may come,” said kindly Mrs. Driscoll. “Once upon a time a woman was professor in the Catholic University of Padua.”

“We have admirable institutions, but they lack prestige,” said the Doctor. “And if the number of the really good colleges were multiplied the poor ones would be forced to the wall. Let us fight unceasingly for at least one representative university, with as many of the merely excellent as we can get, and death from inanition to the poor ones; let us have preparatory schools distinct from the college; it is ridiculous for a boy in geography and grammar to be numbered on the rolls of a college. One might ask what’s in a name — but there is a good deal in a name, sometimes. Let each college have its preparatory school if it finds a need of it, but let it advertise it as a school, and not under the heading of ‘college.’ Dr. O’Malley, in his able articles on the Catholic college, insists upon this.”

“I thought that he insisted upon reclaiming the Catholic boy from the non-Catholic college,” murmured Adele.

“The fight for success is hard enough as it is,

without handicapping a youth by depriving him of the best education possible for him to obtain. And if Harvard and Yale give a training and prestige to their men unknown to the Catholic college, Harvard and Yale will get the student," declared Travis.

"I fancy that it is the man himself that counts, and not his college," answered the Doctor.

"The college will often help a man to a position impossible to him through any other means at his command," said Travis.

"I don't like to hear any of our schools spoken of as poor," put in peace-loving Mrs. Driscoll. "I feel towards them as the Kentuckian does about his whiskey, — some kinds of whiskey are better than others, but there is none bad."

"Some of them are mighty poor stuff," answered Horace, gloomily.

"Kinds of whiskey or schools?" returned his cousin.

"Both!"

"I had a youth in my office who had been graduated from one of the half-baked collegēs — mummified, I ought to say, because it has many years behind it — who actually could n't write the simplest letter. He did n't even know how to spell, and yet he had droned through Cæsar and geometry. And his language was appalling. 'Had n't ought' was one of his favorite expressions. And the poor chap had not even the most elementary conception of good breeding, — kept his hat on in the house, leaned his head against my freshly papered walls, and once I saw him at a restaurant with his napkin

tucked around his neck, and swallowing soup from the end of a pewter spoon."

"I should lay those things to his home training," put in Mrs. Hartley.

"Well, suppose you do! Why, do you think, did his poor father sacrifice his hard-earned dollars in sending him to college if he did not want his boy to get what he could not have at home? I consider the rector of that particular institution just as much of a thief as if he had helped himself to the lad's pocket-book —"

"Oh, Horace!"

"He had obtained money under false pretences. I saw the catalogue of the school, and it claimed to give a thorough training, classical and commercial, to attend to the morals, and to set a good table. The food was awful, and the training — well, a boy coming with a diploma from that college would have taken the surest means possible to be barred from my employment."

"Perhaps he was naturally stupid."

"No, he was not; on the contrary, he was very clever, and the fact that he taught himself the rudiments of our language, and something of the code of a gentleman, acting on a hint from your humble servant, proves it. And if he were, why in the name of common honesty should he have been given a diploma?"

"I wish to say a word in regard to the food of the average cheap school," put in Mrs. Driscoll. "What sort of table can one reasonably expect in institutions where the charges for board and tuition are

not more than two hundred dollars, often less, and with even this small sum not always paid? The wonder is that they can afford anything at all to eat! Suppose you allow fifty dollars for lodging, fuel, and light, and in some cases, laundry, and fifty dollars for tuition, — and the figures are ridiculously small, — you have left one hundred dollars for board, ten dollars a month. Why, the poorest, roughest boarding-house intended for roustabouts would charge more than that. A boy who complains of the food in a two-hundred-dollar college, even if he lives on bread and sauer-kraut, should be branded as a cad.”

“I don’t agree with you,” said Horace. The boy doesn’t set the charges, he pays the price asked. Why don’t the schools charge more, if they cannot fulfil the implied contract between school and parent at the old rate?”

“And if they did, many a poor boy would be barred out through poverty. No, the cheap school fills a need; let the well-to-do boy pay more and go to the school giving what he desires.”

“I know of some boarding-schools for girls where the charges are only a hundred and fifty dollars,” put in Mrs. Hartley.

“The poor girls must live on bread and cheese and slate-pencils,” answered Horace.

“They do nothing of the sort. And in at least one school of that class there is an excellent table. Minnie Glover goes there, and if you can please a Glover you can please anybody. The superior is a very holy woman, and I am inclined to think that

the miracle of the loaves and fishes is constantly repeated for her benefit."

"The trouble is that we have entirely too many boarding-schools for girls; consequently many of them are not adequately supported," said the Doctor.

"Wretched affairs some of them are, too," added Mrs. Hartley.

"The majority of them are excellent," said Mrs. Driscoll.

"They charge too little," said Travis.

"Poor girls cannot pay more," returned Mrs. Driscoll.

"Whether cheap or expensive, the schools should be forced to meet a certain standard," said Dr. Mordant. "If they undertake to train girls at all, and advertise themselves as capable of doing so, they should in common honesty be held to the implied contract.

"My greatest complaint against the poor schools is that they do not pay sufficient attention to the physical training of their pupils," continued the Doctor. "I have been called to schools where some of the girls were covered with pimples, some were sallow, some too fat, many too thin, some knock-kneed, others bowlegged, some with squinting eyes, bad teeth, half of them with gaping mouths, breathing, not through their noses as nature intended, but through their mouths, and in one school to which I go not one of the girls in it knows how to walk. They all go shambling along, heels down first, or pigeon-toed. Bah! It is enough to sicken one!"

“But surely, Doctor, you don’t hold the Sisters responsible for those things,” cried Mrs. Driscoll.

“Why, to be sure I do! Sisters take the place for the time of the mothers or guardians of those girls, and assuredly it is their place to look after their well-being, physically as well as intellectually and morally.

“You would n’t hold them blameless, would you, if diphtheria broke out in the school, and they left the means of preservation to the girls themselves? I insist that physical culture and health have just as much place in a boarding-school course as mathematics, and even more. What good is her mathematics going to be to a girl if she is ugly and deformed, or under-formed through lack of proper care in her school days? It is all very well to try to keep girls from being vain of beauty, but a well-formed body, a clear complexion and good teeth are not matters of vanity, but of common-sense. I think that every community of nuns should have a physician among their number, or at least a trained nurse, thoroughly familiar with the laws of health.

“Fresh air, exercise, and water can be had in the cheap school as well as in the expensive, and where girls suffer through lack of any of these I should hold the Sisters in charge to a very strict account.

“In this same school there is one bath-tub to sixty girls; and two baths *a year*, so I was told by one of the pupils, are the ordinary allowance. Worse still, the girls are forced to go to a wash-room and stand in rows at stationary washstands

to perform their daily ablutions. What sort of cleanliness can they have under such conditions?"

"That is a dreadful exception, Doctor. In all the schools that I know anything about, the girls sleep in curtained alcoves, and have their washstands by the bed, where they can have a sponge bath every night and morning if they so please, in absolute privacy.

"And each girl has a tub-bath with plenty of hot water at least once a week."

"There should n't be any exceptions.

"And I confess that I have a prejudice against dormitories," went on the Doctor. "How can a girl be perfectly healthy sleeping in a room with some twenty or thirty others, some sick and some snoring."

"Dormitories are the necessary corollary of the cheap school. Let a girl pay for it, and she can have a private room in scores of convents. Besides, the dormitories are always thoroughly ventilated, and an abundance of fresh air is secured. Thirty girls in a dormitory allowing eight feet of space to a girl, is less harmful than a twelve-foot room with one window given up to two girls," insisted Mrs. Driscoll.

"Yet in some of the nicest finishing-schools in New York two girls occupy a room no larger than this, and they pay five times as much as the girl in the dormitory. I do not defend the dormitory, mind, except as a necessary attendant of the cheap school. You hear parents complain of this feature of a school, with covert allusions to some secular

boarding-school, and you want to ask why, in the name of Whateley's logic, they do not send their daughters to a convent where private rooms are to be had for much less than the secular school would charge.

"It is grossly unfair to compare schools of one class—I mean in regard to the cost—with schools of an entirely different class. The cheap convent gives far more for the money than does the cheap secular school. I insist upon this as holding good in every locality and with every school. Name one secular boarding-school in the United States where for a hundred and fifty dollars a girl can get as good a training, and as comfortable living accommodations as she can get in a convent charging that rate. The fact that the Sisters have no salaries, and that there are members of the community who do the cooking and housework, easily explain how this can be.

"Some of the schools, I admit, could be better."

"My complaint against the less good is that they do not pay any attention, or very little, to the manners of the girls," said Mrs. Hartley.

"Their pupils are as ignorant in this line as Mr. Norrison's office-boy."

"In many of these schools the teachers are women of common family and very ordinary attainments when they embrace the religious life," said Mrs. Driscoll; "and after two short years in the novitiate, during which they must learn the rudiments of many things, they are turned out to teach. What can you expect of them?"

"I expect them to devote as much time as is

necessary, whether two years or ten, to fit them for a grave and responsible position; none is more so," answered Mrs. Hartley.

"In every community of nuns there are to be found ladies, — ladies by birth, breeding, and environment, — and these might enlighten their Sisters in religion."

"On the other hand, many of the pupils in these schools are from a rank in life where social usages and gentle manners are quite unknown," returned Mrs. Driscoll. "When Mary Brown, whose parents can just read and write, returns from boarding-school to a stuffy flat over her father's carpenter-shop, of what service would be her training in the arts of refined society? She was sent to school to get the rudiments of an education, and to be taught her religion, — how to be a good true woman in her own sphere, and not to be fitted for a society which she may not enter.

"Good manners belong to a woman's training, no matter what her sphere. And in this country a girl's sphere is just as exalted as she can attain, either through marriage, or through her father's success in business. There are women who now take a prominent place in the best society who were once very poor, and, it may be added parenthetically, very ignorant, girls.

"Then again you assume that only girls of humble station are found in the cheap school; as a matter of fact girls of the nicest families are found in them. A father may have a house full of girls, and a limited income, and yet be a gentleman, and desire for his

offspring the training of a gentleman's daughters. And very ill-bred, lowly born pupils are to be found in the fashionable and expensive schools. One of the most ridiculously snobbish creatures I ever knew came from a noted convent school, the daughter of a successful mechanic."

"My dear madam, you cannot cut one coat to fit a big man and a little one at the same time," said the Doctor. "Generally speaking, you will find in the cheap school girls of a lower class than you find in the expensive one, and this is not saying that nice girls do not go to the cheap school, nor *un-nice* girls to the expensive.

"In fact, when you come to judge of convent schools you are adopting a very unfair test when you take the money test; for some cheap schools are famous and deservedly so, with a roll of distinguished pupils. In selecting a school one has to use discretion, just as in selecting anything else. If you accept their own catalogues all schools are admirable; the better way is to be guided by the advice of some one who knows."

"Wait until the college for girls at Washington opens its door; then we shall have the perfection of a school system," said Adele.

"Heaven speed the day!" answered Mrs. Driscoll. "But there is yet another institution I should like to see materialize, and that is a Catholic finishing-school, — I know of no other term, — a school to which girls might go after completing the course at an ordinary convent, and undergo a supplementary training such as is offered by the fashionable New

York finishing-school, plus much more, and minus something; the woman's college does not offer anything to the merely average girl, more intent on having a nice time in society and finding a suitable husband than in acquiring the higher mathematics, or writing the great American novel.

“ Rich Catholic girls are found in the non-Catholic finishing-school, even in schools distinctly sectarian, and they usually come out the worse Catholics. Such a school — it might be advertised as a post-graduate school, with courses for special students and parlor boarders — would fill a very real want. And we have Catholic gentlewomen, cultured and beautifully educated, who could make it a brilliant success.

“ There are so many things that a girl in society must know, and which the average school does not touch. Social usages, to begin with, appreciation of art, music, the drama, current literature. Many girls go to the finishing-schools in our Eastern cities solely for these things, and not to study at all. The Catholic girl who is to become a social leader needs to be especially well grounded in her faith, its history as well as its dogmas, and she needs to be shown the things that tend for culture from the Catholic point of view. Art, for instance, may make you coarse, or it may make you like unto the angels; and current literature can easily give an agnostic turn to a weak mind.

“ I have known several Catholic girls from the fashionable finishing-schools, but I have never known one who could be called pious.”

“I am not sure that we have reached the point where a Catholic finishing-school would really fill a want; the fashionable convents give a very good finish, even if the girls are not taken to the theatre,” said Mrs. Hartley.

“What we really do need is an increased number of select day-schools, and a diminished number of poor boarding-schools.

“We cannot have too many day-schools, for the select day-school usually gets the cream of the Protestant girls of a town or city, where a boarding-school might get very poor milk. In fact, if I had not talked so much already I should enter a protest against the kind of girls some boarding-schools accept among their pupils. Not infrequently a girl who is unmanageable at home, or on the road to the bad, is shipped off to some unsuspecting convent.

“It is much easier to have a good day-school than boarding-school; food, baths, fresh air, physical culture, are thrown on the shoulders of the parent. The nuns need concern themselves with the curriculum alone. But in boarding or day schools, a high standard should prevail.

“Teachers of music who are but mediocre musicians, artists who daub atrocious landscapes, vocalists who ruin promising voices, scientists who cannot perform the simplest laboratory experiments, teachers of literature who give their pupils the wretched twaddle found in some school libraries simply because the heroine is impossibly good, superiors who let the girls under them stumble through a shallow course without physical culture,

— all these things belong to the dark age of American education, and should have no place in the triumphant era we have made for ourselves.”

“As the eldest woman present I am entitled to the last word,” said Mrs. Driscoll; “and that last must be a eulogy.

“When I think of all the sacrifices that have been made in the cause of Catholic schools, I find it hard to hear patiently the slightest word in their dispraise. They are not perfect; some of them could be much better, and perhaps a few might be dispensed with altogether. But the Catholic school in its ordinary integrity is the finest triumph of Catholic truth in our time.

“Its history is a history of heroic sacrifice, of the heavy burden of double taxation, of a fight against fearful odds, and of an unqualified victory at the end.

“The teachers may not always be as thoroughly fitted for their high office as one might wish; but they are the intellectual equals of teachers in the secular schools, and in personal character their superiors.

“The discipline of the convent, its very atmosphere, so to speak, gives something to the youthful soul coming under its formative influence that nothing else can even imitate.

“The silent example of the Sisters — tenderly nurtured daughters of happy and luxurious homes, many of them — who have given their lives to the glorious work of education; their patience, sweetness of temper, nobility of character, fidelity to the regular,

arduous life of the religious,— the real poverty, the unquestioning obedience, the beautiful purity, the fasts, silence, early rising, multiplied devotions, and unceasing toil,— are object lessons not easily forgotten.

“ Besides, there is a very real training of the characters of the pupils, be the material however unpromising.

“ The invaluable discipline of regularity of life, recurring hours for prayer, for study, for class, the ladylike courtesy exacted from the pupils among themselves and towards their teachers, the ideal constantly before them of a noble Christian womanhood,— cannot be measured by any extraneous gain of fashion or modern comforts.

“ And even though the girls are not Catholic, and are forbidden by their parents to become so, yet they live in an atmosphere of religion; it is the inspiring motive of the existence around them, it animates the text-books, is held before them as the conservator of morality, the essence of the fine flower of true womanhood.

“ If this were not recognized by the world at large we should not see our convents filled with the daughters of strict Protestant families.

“ The careful mother knows that in convent walls her daughter, no matter what the vivacity of her spirits, or faults of her temperament, is absolutely safe, and that there, if anywhere, her character can be moulded and corrected in the way a true mother instinctively desires.

“ No girl can pass through the ordinary course of a

convent and not learn that hardest of all lessons, self-control, without which other lessons are futile.

“ And in addition she gets all that other schools of the same class give, and in many instances much more; and when one remembers how little in the way of money she gives in return, the wonder is that the convents, numerous as they are, can contain the throngs of eager seekers at these Pierian springs.”

XVIII

A NOTE ON FUNERALS

IF the Chinese autocrat who went through our country asking questions had chanced to go to St. Paul's this morning, he would certainly have inquired what prominent man was dead.

A line of carriages stretched well into the second block, and the hearse, with waving plumes, stood near the entrance of the church. Inside the edifice a coffin with silver handles rested on the catafalque, and piled on the side altar and the communion railing were masses of beautiful flowers in the conventional funereal designs of crosses and anchors. In the pew reserved for the family were three women smothered in crape. The occasion was the funeral of poor Jerry Desmond, a calker in the Arlington shops.

One might well ask what was the good of all this panoply of grief. None to the bereft widow and little ones, and certainly none to the departed.

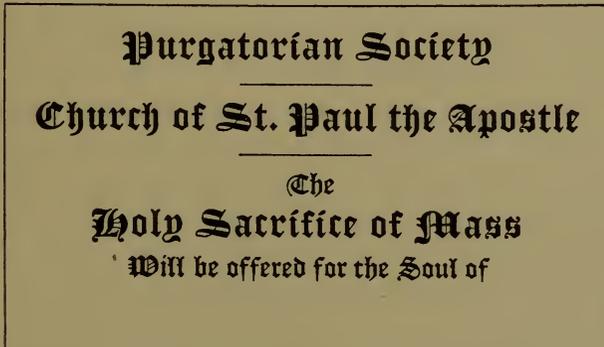
His friends who filled those carriages were taking a half-holiday which they could not afford, and were paying five dollars for each carriage, which they could not afford, either; a goodly number of them, with the best intentions in the world, had bought costly flowers, also beyond their means, and which served absolutely no purpose. The Church decries flowers at funerals, and will not

permit them around the bier; and merely to deck the grave with them seems rather a costly tribute from poverty to a poetic fancy.

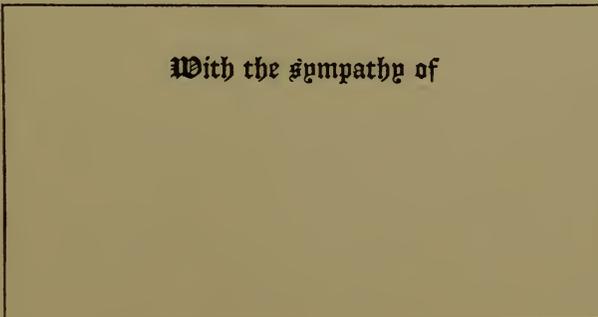
This question of flowers at funerals has been a matter of contention for a long time. It is the custom in America to send flowers, and if one fails to do so there is the fear that a lack of regard may be imputed to one. On the other hand, the clergy seek to do away with the custom as not in keeping with the spirit of mourning and the solemn office of the Church for her departed children.

Some one recently suggested the plan of having cards for masses sent to the family.

The form might be something like this: —



On the back of the card would be: —



Instead of sending flowers, a friend would procure one or more of these cards from the pastor, paying the usual honorarium, fill in the blank with the name of the departed, write his own name on the back of the card, and enclose it to the family. These cards would be presented to the pastor of the church named on the card, who would assign the dates for the Masses, and the priests to say them.

In this way several hundred Masses might be secured, where otherwise perhaps not ten would be offered.

To extend the good work, an arrangement might be made whereby a portion of the Masses would be assigned to priests in poor missions, thus enabling them to live and labor in regions too thinly populated to support a priest.

Flowers look out of place in a church decked in black, — black shrouding the altar and covering the candlesticks, a black pall over the bier, the vestments of the priest, black, the undertaker in black, the pallbearers in black, and the pews filled with sobbing women covered with black, their crape veils sweeping almost to the floor; they would seem hardly more so if worn in the corsage of a widow in deepest mourning.

The funeral of Jerry Desmond, who was glad to work for three dollars a day, probably cost something over four hundred dollars, and this included but a single requiem Mass.

It would be interesting to know how many of the senders of flowers had Masses offered up for the

repose of his soul, or gave alms for the same pious intention.

Friends show their love for the dear ones gone by attending the funeral services at the church, offering Masses for them, praying for them, and performing good works for them — forever beyond doing anything for themselves.

It is easy for a man to get excused from work for an hour to go to the church, but a half-day to go to the cemetery often means the loss of a half-day's pay.

The mourning of the poor seems peculiarly pitiful; the silver coffin-handles and the yards of crape are a tax to custom especially hard to be borne at the very time when other expenses are piled up at a fearful rate.

Why should not the undertaker supply veils to the mourners along with the gloves for the pall-bearers? Let the poor man's widow wear black for two years if she wishes, or for a lifetime, but in the name of sober sanity, why should she shroud herself in the costly weeds suited to purses much fuller than hers? The cheap variety of crape is an abomination, condemned by the doctors as deleterious to health, and forbidden by fashion for its hideousness.

Why should money troubles come as a crushing weight to trouble that is already heavy enough?

The debts incurred through a death in the family have caused ruin to many a humble household. Everything seems to combine to make them as heavy as possible: one cannot haggle over a coffin,

and the best seems none too good for the beloved form; the doctor's bill comes in, and the milliner's — ten dollars apiece for bonnets that probably cost three. On the one occasion when common humanity would suggest moderation, the profits must needs be the highest.

The expenses at the church must be paid, usually in advance.

This is reasonable, for whilst the rites of the church are free, the attendant expenses must be met; the choir for a requiem Mass must be paid, the candles cost something, the heating of the church much more, and, finally, it is only fair that the officiating clergy should be supported by those whom they serve.

In anticipation of this last act in life's drama, many of our people join burial associations, and the expenses are met through assessments on the members.

Funeral expenses are, admittedly, too high for the well-to-do as much as for the poor. Simply because a man leaves a competence to his family is no reason why a clique should unite in getting as much as possible for themselves.

There is scope for reform here, and work for the organized charities. Surely the burial associations might secure more reasonable terms.

It must strike one as a sort of anachronism that Jerry Desmond, living in a gaslit flat in a bustling American city, should have had a wake, — the very name calls up a thatched cottage on a desolate moor, the peat-bog or the furze and purpling

heather, with the salt mist in one's nostrils, the wild croon of a bowed, shawled form ringing hauntingly in one's ears, — but so he had, and a rousing one, too. One hesitates to write the word "disgraceful," considering the kind intentions of the assembly. Had it not been for the stilled form in the corner, one might have mistaken the occasion for a party. There was much eating and drinking (not of water or coffee only), many racy stories, and genial hilarity. Bridget, Miss Norrison's parlor maid, spent the night at the wake, and said she had a "perfectly splendid time." The house was crowded, but no one thought of saying the rosary and litanies, or devoting the long night-hours to a sober meditation on the final end of all things earthly.

And the people who filed out of the church, and into those forty or more waiting carriages, although supposed to be "mourners," and called such by courtesy, concealed their grief by a jovial exterior.

On the return journey from the cemetery there was a stop, somewhat prolonged, at Mart Norman's "Halfway House."

In Rome, in a different grade of society, one sees empty carriages, the blinds drawn, in a funeral procession, but their owners are enjoying themselves elsewhere. We are shocked at the Roman's heartlessness, but not at that of Desmond's friends.

Etiquette fights a battle with sincerity, even in the shadow of death. Sometimes a disregard of convention steps in, and then the spectacle develops into the unexpected.

A young widow attended a ball clad in sable

habiliments, and danced with the man who soon afterwards afforded her consolation. People were amazed, as they had a right to be. Well-bred people who can afford to do so usually go to Europe to display their indifference; bereaved ones who keep to the strictest seclusion in New York go to the opera or the horse-show, or even to réceptions, in Paris.

Ruth McEnery Stuart, in her own droll way, chronicles the proud satisfaction with which a bride in darkeydom showed herself in church, leaning on the arm of Number Two, clad in new and deepest mourning for Number One, the outfit being a wedding present from her devoted spouse.

Mourning is intended to be a shelter for aching hearts against the demands of society; when it is looked upon as a galling handicap to pleasure it is time to lay it aside.

And in our cemeteries, filled with costly monuments, one may be pardoned for conjecturing just what proportion denotes grief for the dead, and what merely the vanity of the living.

A widow left in very moderate circumstances spent two thousand dollars for a granite shaft, and kept the vault filled with costly flowers; but in two years she had another husband, and her fatherless children look neglected; or, perhaps, one merely imagines that they do.

Men are not a whit more consistent in their mourning; but then society, in portioning out the virtues, always assigns the lion's share to women, and holds them to corresponding account.

A few Sundays ago our new curate read out among the announcements that there was a promise of marriage between John O'Brien and Mary Muldoon, and, further on in the list, that there would be a Mass on Friday for the repose of the soul of Martha O'Brien, — the aforesaid Martha being the deceased wife of John. Of course everybody smiled. Possibly this was a bit of pious retaliation on the part of John's eldest daughter.

The living may forget, but the Church does not. The Purgatorian Society has long been established in our parish, and a trifling alms secures for the dear ones dead its inestimable benefits of prayers and good works.

XIX

INSTRUCTING THE PASTOR

WHEN Father Ryan had completed his theological studies, and was pronounced by his superiors ready for ordination, the Bishop was satisfied that the young man was capable of instructing the ignorant, and looking after the spiritual welfare of the learned. And when, after ten years of assistant work, and the pastoral charge of a small church in the country, he was assigned to the old and flourishing parish of St. Paul the Apostle, the thought did not once occur to his Lordship that there was grave doubt as to the clergyman's fitness for this arduous position.

That was because by some oversight the Bishop had not consulted Mrs. Higgins. If that zealous lady were only one of the diocesan council, a good many pastors who rest securely in the misplaced confidence of their Bishop and flocks would find themselves officially decapitated.

"Oh, and it was the good priest we had in Father O'Brien's time. He preached the gospel, and was not foreverlastingly after money, money, money!" said Mrs. Higgins to Mrs. Dyer, as she sat in the rocking-chair by Mrs. Dyer's front window, to rest after coming from High Mass,

“Whatever possessed the Bishop to remove him, when everybody liked him so well is what nobody knows. It seems that if you have a priest that just suits the people and the parish, and the Bishop finds it out — off the poor priest goes. I think, and so does Mr. Higgins, that since the people have to support the priests, the people ought to have the say so in their coming and their going.”

And the two good ladies discussed the shortcomings of their pastor, his love of money, his extravagant improvements in the school, and bemoaned the removal of Father O'Brien, who, dear man, would have been much surprised to hear in what esteem he was held by his former parishioners. They had succeeded in concealing their real sentiments during his incumbency at St. Paul's. Indeed, Mrs. Higgins had sat in that very chair and mourned over his recalcitrant stubbornness in riding a bicycle, when both she herself and Mr. Higgins had expressed their disapproval. Cycling was not a dignified pastime for a priest, and nobody could make her say that it was!

The truth of the matter is that Father O'Brien was a devoted, zealous priest, and a first-class botanist, but he was not a financier. Four times a year he succeeded in remembering that the interest on the parish debt was due, and reminded the congregation in the gentlest, most polite way in the world of this unpleasant fact. Having performed his duty, he went back to the classification of South American orchids.

And this is why the Bishop sent him to a pretty little church in the suburbs, which was entirely out of debt, and where he would have excellent opportunities for studying the pedigrees of plants.

When Father Ryan succeeded him he lost no time in calling on every one of his parishioners, taking them block by block, so that no one escaped, and asking, with note-book in hand, what each would subscribe a month towards the paying off of the parish debt. The parish debt — why, the church would feel most uncomfortable without its debt; it was as old as the steeple, and, by this time, almost as high.

And that was only a beginning. The people were soon made to feel that their debt was a regular Old Man of the Sea, and that there was no escape except through prompt and generous subscriptions.

Those who subscribed the least complained the most.

The habit of complaint passed on to other things after the debt had become an old story.

The Browns object to the pew rents. They have been to Europe, and they point out the superiority of the European custom to our own. Distinctions of money ought to have no place in the house of God, and pews — especially pews in the middle aisle — are un-Christian and disedifying. They fail to show how the revenues of the parish are to be kept up to the necessary amount if the pews are not rented; and that is the question which Father Ryan regards as hinging upon pew rents.

“Of course in the ideal parish, inhabited by quite ideal people,” admitted Mrs. Driscoll, “everybody would contribute according to his means to the support of the church and its pastors, and then the system of pew rents would be abolished. But so long as the average parishioner is selfish and vain, and bent upon getting a return for his money, the pews in the middle aisle will go to the highest bidder.”

Mrs. Corwin does not understand her pastor's harshness in regard to Catholics attending Protestant places of worship. “When one goes just for pastime, or to show regard for one's non-Catholic friends, I cannot see any harm,” she says. “I know my religion, and nothing can change me; but I must say, I hear as good sermons in other churches as I hear in my own.”

It seems almost a bootless task to try to explain to her that one goes to church to worship God, to obtain grace through the channels of the Sacraments and prayer, and not for “pastime,” nor to please one's friends; and that for a Catholic to go to a non-Catholic house of worship is an act of denial of her faith. No one questions the piety or sincerity of Protestants themselves, but their churches are not the place for Catholics. It is not a question of the goodness or the badness of the sermon, nor the piety or the want of piety of the people. As well might a man say, “I am a Democrat, but I sometimes vote the Republican ticket just to please my Republican friends. I can't see much difference, anyway. I know plenty of good,

patriotic people who are Republicans, and we all have the same object in view, — the prosperity of our common country.”

Mrs. Bertrand says that the reason she does not go to High Mass is because the sermon is so long and prosy, and the preacher uses such common metaphors, and preaches on such very trite subjects. “And then the choir is not at all what it should be; the soprano sings with that throaty method that is most annoying to sensitive ears.”

Mr. Bertrand protested vigorously against a paid choir; singers should use their voices for the glory of God, and not for mere hire. He is a lawyer who does not give his brains to the congregation for the love of God; but then, that is quite another story.

Mrs. O'Tool has an objection, but it is not a very serious one. “I never did like to see a priest particular about his clothes. Father Ryan's coat fits as well as Mr. Robert Dale's, and I call that most unbecoming his sacred character; and his hat is as shiny, and his shoes, and his gloves are new, and he carries a cane, and you'd think he was a millionaire instead of a poor priest that ought to be giving his money to the poor, and not putting it all on his back.”

Mrs. Wheeler finds in him just the contrary fault; he does not dress well enough to suit her fastidious taste, and he is entirely too generous with his money. “He gives and gives, and half the time the people are able to work. They know where they can impose on one's good nature, and

where they would be sent about their business on short order. The beggars don't bother me very much, I can tell you!" The telling is quite superfluous to any one who enjoys the acquaintance of Mrs. Wheeler.

Mr. Bertrand is almost scandalized at the "worldliness" displayed by the pastor in building an addition to the parochial residence, and in having a piano in his sitting-room, and solid silver on his table; but Mr. Bertrand mistook his listener when he mentioned these things to Dr. Mordant.

"My dear sir," said the old Doctor, "I should not feel altogether comfortable in my own new home if the hard-working priests of the parish had not, at least, a few of the minor luxuries. The only pleasure they have is what they can get out of their home life. There are few places of amusement at which they can be seen without causing disagreeable comment; they have no family ties, no clubs, and very little social life of any sort. And if in their scant hours of leisure they can find pleasure in a good library, a piano, an easy-chair, and a decent cigar to offer a brother priest, I, for one, shall always be ready to contribute my mite to pay for these things.

"The laborer is worthy of his hire, and no body of men of equal attainments in the world are as poorly paid as our clergy. My assistant, who cast his first vote for a president at the last election, receives more in a year than does the gray-haired pastor of St. Paul's."

One old crone complains because the priests do not visit their people as much as they should; another, that they visit the rich too much.

A certain spinster dislikes to see a clergyman on a bicycle, and a widow objects to Father O'Neil because he is too old-fashioned and not sufficiently abreast of the times. Mrs. Morris declares that Father Ryan goes entirely too far in his stand against mixed marriages, and that it is absurd to expect people to get a dispensation to be married in their own home. It is useless for the poor priest to explain that he does not make the trouble, but that it is a law of the diocese which he must obey. "And the idea of charging for a dispensation! It is positively scandalous! Simony, I call it!"

Mrs. Morris has never vouchsafed to explain who is to bear the expenses of the Chancery office if not those who benefit by it. The rules of the Church are made for a good purpose, and one is dispensed from them only for a good reason. If no one wanted a dispensation there would be no need of a capable man to take charge of this branch of diocesan business, no salary to pay him, no rent for his office, no money for paper and postage; but so long as people do want dispensations it is only fair that they should bear the expense incurred, and not those who reap no benefit. It ought to be superfluous to explain to any one that an applicant does not pay for the dispensation, in the sense that one pays for a barrel of sugar, any more than a client pays a judge for his decision. He pays the fees, if he is able to pay, connected with the

granting of the dispensation, and if he is not able, he pays nothing.

Some of the parishioners object to Father Ryan's teetotalism, and declare that such a stand is pharisaical and puritanic, and that our Saviour Himself drank wine. Father O'Neil, his assistant, who was educated abroad, takes his glass of claret at dinner, and not a few of the good people are woefully scandalized, and wonder why Father Ryan permits strong drink in his house.

The Archangel Gabriel has never been the pastor of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, but if he were to assume charge there would not be lacking censorious ones to complain of his management, and to give him entirely superfluous advice.

It is only fair to say, however, that the fault-finders are a small minority. The great body of the people are loyal, obedient, and warmly appreciative of the noble work and the brave self-denial of their pastors. And even the critics themselves are strictly clannish in their criticism, and resent, fiercely, anything of the sort from the outside. Mrs. Jenkins from St. James's had the temerity to agree with Mrs. Deering when that good lady voiced a complaint, and was promptly told that Father Ryan was quite the ablest priest in the diocese. "The Bishop took especial care in making the appointment because of the importance of our parish."

XX

OUR PARISH SOCIETIES

“**T**HIS parish is being ‘clubbed’ into model behavior if not into premature translation to glory,” began Adele Norrison, as she came into a pleasant social group assembled at Mrs. Driscoll’s, and looked daringly at young Horace, her cousin, who is wont to dispute nearly everything she says.

“Just to hear himself talk,” declares that clever young woman.

Mrs. Driscoll had been explaining to her guest, Mrs. Bland, a high-church Episcopalian, the character and workings of the parish organizations of St. Paul’s.

“Father Ryan believes that in union there is strength,” continued Adele, “and he evidently wants all the kinds of strength that he can get. There is not a club or a society ever heard of on the top of the earth or the face of the waters that has not a branch or some sort of imitation in this parish.”

“This is a free country, and you don’t have to belong to them all,” put in her brother Carl. “Nobody is expected to eat all the dishes on the bill of fare in a café, or to read everything in a newspaper, or to look at the three rings in a circus at the same time.”

“Carl, you always were rather vulgar, but it strikes me that a college man — man! save the mark! — might find comparisons a little bit more dignified.”

“Oh, I did n't mean to compare Father Ryan and his societies to a circus. That was just your evil interpretation. I have studied the philosophy of style, even if you have not.”

“There are the sodalities, to begin with.”

“And an excellent beginning, my dear,” answered Mrs. Driscoll. “I own I feel proudly elated whenever our sodalities are in evidence.”

“The Young Ladies' Sodality, the Young Men's Sodality, St. Anne's Sodality for the Married Women, the Married Men's Sodality —”

“Yes, and every man of them goes to the Sacraments once a month, and they meet in the sodality hall to say prayers, and be lectured to, and read at, and cajoled into good behavior,” explained Carl.

“There is many a woman looks at the change wrought in her husband by this same sodality, and goes down on her knees and thanks God for it,” said Mrs. Driscoll.

“The Father Mathew Temperance Society has about killed the saloon business in this neighborhood — so Fritz Schmitz declares.”

“And the Boys' Blue Ribbon Society, which is merely a temperance society that has not yet grown up, for the boys take a pledge not to drink intoxicating liquors until they are twenty-one, is the safeguard of our youth.”

“Over at the parish school the youngsters have

organized, too, and are as proud as Punch, in consequence," said Adele. "Our Tommie came home last week all aglow, and running into the sitting-room burst upon us with, 'Oh, mamma, I've taken a pledge, and I can't never swear!' and his blue eyes were dancing with his new importance."

"Oh, that is the Holy Name Society; I belong to that," vouchsafed Carl. "The members are pledged never to use profane or bad language, and to make an act of reparation when they hear the Holy Name in blasphemy."

"To me there is something infinitely touching in that," said Mrs. Driscoll. "Those innocent little children trying to atone to our Lord for the insults offered to him by men, and, alas! women, too, to whom He has given intellects and tongues."

"Minna, not to be outdone, has her society, — the Society of the Angel Guardian; which consists in some special devotions to the guardian angels. And both the children belong to the St. Francis of Assisi Club, which has the welfare of birds and animals for its object. Minna has been harboring the most forlorn-looking cat you ever saw, in following her rules, much to the disgust of Sarah, the cook, who says unsayable things in her throat whenever that cat gets under her feet. And Tom — the little rascal is only ten — reported to the policeman a man who was beating his horse, and coolly informed that be-buttoned official that he belonged to 'St. Francis Sizerum,' and could n't let a horse be abused in that way."

"We grown-ups have the Altar Society, and the

Society of the Living Rosary, and the League of the Sacred Heart, which takes in pretty much the whole parish.”

“What a marvellous growth has the League!” said Mrs. Mordant. “Scarcely a century has gone by since the saintly Visitandine nun, Blessed Margaret Mary, received her heavenly commission to establish a society for the adoration and devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord. I suppose it will never be known until time is no more all the mercies and blessings that came to a sinful world through the prayers and good works of this glorious society.”

“Ah, glorious! There is no other word!” murmured Mrs. Driscoll.

“And there is the Purgatorian Society, — nobody who has a loved one in the great Beyond but finds consolation here, — this unique charity, that seems to bridge the gulf between the Here and the Whither by Masses, and prayers, and good works for the suffering souls in Purgatory.

“What consolation there is in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints!”

“You have omitted the Catholic Knights of America,” put in Adele, “and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, or the Order of Ancient Hibernians, I have forgotten which; and the Kenrick Guards, and the Wolfe Tone Cadets — I am sure I don’t know what they do. Mamma says if they do nothing except keep the young boys out of mischief and bad company, they have served a sensible purpose.”

"And the peer of them all is the St. Vincent de Paul society."

"Carl, I want you to read the life of Frederick Ozanam, by Kathleen O'Meara. I suppose you know he founded this society, and was a noble character, any way you look at him."

"The St. Vincent de Paul is the society of organized charity," explained Mrs. Driscoll to her guest.

"Last month our parish branch distributed ten tons of coal, over one thousand garments, and paid out three hundred dollars in rents for the sick or those out of work, and I've forgotten the number of loaves of bread and pounds of meat distributed."

"Why don't they have women in the society?" asked Adele Norrison.

"Because they are men of sense," retorted Horace, winking shamelessly at Mrs. Driscoll.

"Because they make it a point to investigate, personally, the cases reported to them as worthy of aid, and their duty calls them often into haunts where it would not be safe for ladies to go. Besides, women have so many channels for their benevolent activities that it is well to throw the responsibility of at least one on the men."

"A man naturally shirks if he can get a good woman to pick up his charities for him," said Horace.

"I must say," responded Mrs. Driscoll, "that when men do set out to be charitable they do it in a whole-hearted way that ought to put our niggardly

doles to shame. They give dollars where we give dimes.

“The Queen’s Daughters is an organization on much the same lines, only that it has a wider scope. This society aims to have cooking-schools, and sewing-classes, and classes for mothers, and for all sorts of necessary instruction. Mrs. Dale is at the head of this, and Miss Horton is secretary; and at the Saturday sewing-class the wealthiest and prettiest girls in the city are in attendance, working like little Trojans.”

“I wish they had another name,” said Adele. “‘Queen’s Daughters’ seems too much like an imitation of ‘King’s Daughters.’”

“So long as they feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and instruct the ignorant as successfully as they are doing, I think they might be allowed to choose their own title.

“The Catholic Foresters have recently been organized here, and Father Ryan has spoken of introducing the Women’s League, — that society that is doing so much good in its three divisions over in our neighboring parish of St. James.”

“These societies are spiritual and charitable,” explained Mrs. Driscoll. “They exist for the good of our souls, and the welfare of the bodies of our neighbor.

“The intellectual and social side has not been forgotten.

“First in this class is the Newman Reading Circle; this organization, new as it is, has worked wonders among our people. It has awakened and

stimulated an interest in the best books, induced the desultory reader to take a regular and systematic course of study, and it has drawn the people together in that most delightful bond of books; the weekly meetings sharpen the wits by the interchange of ideas and the general discussion of pertinent topics; and it has opened, too, a very pleasant social side.

“The Young Men’s Club is on the line of the Young Men’s Christian Association. Father Ryan says, take a good thing wherever you can honestly get it; besides, the Y. M. C. A. got their idea from the guilds and societies of the middle ages.

“The young men have charming club-rooms, a billiard-table, smoking-rooms, card-rooms, a reading-room with the papers and magazines on file. Any young man of good standing can belong, and the dues are very small. Robert Dale, the son of a millionaire, is the president, and John Henry Brown, an ambitious young mechanic, is the secretary.”

“Men are naturally so much more democratic than women!” murmured Mrs. Bland.

“Mrs. Dale would probably not be president of a society which numbered Mr. John Henry Brown’s wife among its members.”

“Not by a long shot!” said Carl.

“I detest slang, it is so hopelessly vulgar,” put in Adele.

“The club is a rallying-place for the young men; it gives them a pleasant retreat in which to spend

their evenings. Man is a social animal, and likes to be amused."

"Why is there not a club for young women?" asked Adele. "Are n't we social animals, too?"

"Oh, women can look out for themselves. As a matter of fact, there is a club for women; only, you have to work at something harder than paying calls or pouring tea at a reception, to be eligible for membership. It is called the St. Catherine's Industrial Club — why St. Catherine more than Saint Somebodyelse I don't know.

"All the saints were industrious enough, if their biographers are trustworthy.

"This society has its club-rooms, but they are not nearly so luxurious as the young men's, it must be confessed. There is an employment bureau connected with it, and upstairs there are bedrooms for women out of employment and without homes.

"There is a cooking-school attached — St. Paul's ought to be blessed with good cooks; we instruct them enough, goodness knows!"

"We show ourselves there to be a sensible people," said Mrs. Mordant. "Give a man a good dinner, and then preach to him, and he will listen to you; but if you preach first, and promise the dinner afterwards, you have wasted your ammunition."

"And then we have a University Extension Club, and a Shakespeare Class, and a Political Economy Club, and a Brownson Club for the study of philosophy; but these are all offshoots of the Reading Circle, and properly belong under

that head, although they have weekly meetings quite apart from the regular assemblies, and some of the members do not come to the circle evenings at all.

“And with all these societies, my dear Adele, can you name one that could be withdrawn without leaving the parish spiritually or intellectually the poorer?” queried Mrs. Driscoll.

“My dear Mrs. Driscoll,” retorted the girl, “I am not objecting to the number of societies. I am proud of them as a loyal St. Paul’s woman should be. I merely called attention to a glorious fact.

“Comment is not criticism.”

XXI

THE PARISH FAIR

THE parish fair is regarded by most people as a necessary evil.

Usually it is the corollary of the parish debt.

In the ideal parish, people would contribute according to their means towards the good works at hand; but ours is not quite ideal.

On the principle that makes one take quinine after exposure to the danger of catching cold, a fair ought to be followed by special devotions in the church.

No observant person can deny that the average fair appeals effectively to an ugly strain in human nature, — the desire to obtain that for which one has not given adequate value.

Quite true that the motive which induces one to take chances on the various articles offered are, primarily, the success of a worthy cause; but equally true, there is a strong secondary one, of a desire to win. If you have any doubt of this bit of cynicism, just observe the eagerness with which the chances on beautiful objects are bought, and the dragging, hesitating, palpably reluctant manner in which the monstrosities in satin banners and amateur water-colors are accepted.

As a rule, I do not concede the superiority of the St. James people over us, but in the matter of supplying the parish revenues they, in racing phraseology, out-class St. Paul's.

In the dark ages St. James's depended, like ourselves, upon the raffles at fairs for extra revenues. They have changed all that.

This season they have had a series of fortnightly entertainments in the school-hall — admission, fifty cents.

They started out with a progressive whist party, providing three handsome prizes for the winners — it is hard to give up old idols all at once.

Refreshments were served, after the games, to those who wished to wait, and pay extra.

Then the Honorable Timothy O'Rourke, the world-renowned orator and liberator, — Father Burke, the pastor, says he is world-renowned, — gave a lecture on "The Ruins of Ireland, and their Message to Humanity," at which "standing room only" was the gratifying notice on the billboard.

A musicale with amateur talent followed, and Miss Linda Curran, niece to our own Mrs. Robert Dale, and cousin to ever so many fashionable folk, lent her voice and her beautiful self to the entertainment.

Little Dorothy Cleary and her brother received an ovation for a cake walk; and Harry Masters sang coster songs almost as well as Chevallier. It is admitted that there were some strong differences of opinion as to the discrimination displayed in

the selection of stars. Father Burke certainly did go into the country for a few days after the affair, in serious danger of nervous prostration caused by sundry trying interviews with the mothers of infant wonders. He has been heard to say that professional talent is, on the whole, more satisfactory.

The parish school gave the next entertainment, and Mrs. Driscoll, who went with Mrs. Dale to the *matinée* performance on Saturday, says that it was refreshingly charming.

Of course all the mothers and mothers' friends were there.

Their entertainments are still going on, in the language of Macaulay, with undiminished vigor.

They have tried pretty much everything that the ingenuity of man, and especially woman, can devise.

They have even had a fair, — a real fair, I mean, and not a mere lottery.

That is, for a week the ladies had booths in the hall, for the sale of articles useful or ornamental. This sale was announced in June, and the young women of the parish were asked to spend some of their summer leisure in fashioning timely articles. The hall was attractively decorated; pretty girls dispensed refreshments, or coaxed dollars from the pockets of impressionable youths. The Married Ladies had a table, and carried off the honors, "distancing all competitors," since they had their husbands for buyers. The children conducted a flower booth on Saturday afternoon, but were not in evidence at any other time.

The articles were sold at their market value, but as everything was contributed, the proceeds were satisfying to legitimate expectations.

Of course the money by this mode of procedure comes in slowly, and in small sums; but the result in the end is about the same, and there is the immeasurable gain of having given something in exchange for the money. It is one of the few cases where one gives and yet has — many things: the reward of charity, for the good of the parish, is held up as the inciting motive; and pleasant and instructive evenings for the people, many, if not the majority of whom, are poor and hard-working, and who hail the diversion of these entertainments as red-letter occasions in their rather humdrum lives.

Besides this, it is much easier for the working-man to give fifty cents on each of ten evenings than to give five dollars at one time. And different members of the same family can select the occasions that best suit their tastes or other engagements.

In every way I think their method far superior to our own.

We have just had a fair, one of the regularly thorough-going sort.

We made six thousand dollars, and that is the only feature that gives one unmitigated pleasure to record.

Mrs. Driscoll, our sweet saint, put aside all nice social distinctions, and worked faithfully, side by side with Mrs. Diggs, taking orders and

suggestions from that lady in all meekness and humility.

For Mrs. Diggs was the bright, particular star of our fair, — a Vega in the milky way of neophytes, like Mrs. Driscoll.

Mrs. Dale sent her check for twenty dollars. (Mrs. Driscoll spent thirty dollars in chances, and always on the ugliest things imaginable, just to save the feelings of their makers and donors.)

All sorts of articles were raffled, from a marble Athene, clothed in laurel, to a hand-made stole. The sodality girls had raffle books, the school-children had them, the Married Ladies had them — everybody had them.

The first move in the game was to secure the articles to be raffled, or sold, or eaten, or smoked. (The smoking-room was Mrs. McCarthy's clever idea, and the men voted it a "find.")

I record Miss Norrison's experience in her own vigorous words: "Mrs. Stiles was our first solicitor. She appeared on behalf of the Married Ladies, and we 'pooled' our donations, in the phraseology of graceless Carl, and presented a cut-glass rose-bowl. She had scarcely gone when Mrs. Bayless appeared on behalf of the ladies of the Altar Society, and as she is a sort of connection by marriage of my brother's, we could n't refuse, and a lace-trimmed handkerchief was offered, and accepted with rather poor grace.

"Then, after dinner, poor little Mary Madden, who fits my gloves at Anderson's, and is always so patient about it, came to ask something for the

Sodality table. I parted with a favorite etching, because I could n't afford to buy anything more, and I simply could not refuse Mary, when I remembered that she had stood on her feet for ten hours that day, and was sacrificing needed rest to do something for her beloved parish.

"Altogether, we had seven callers in the interest of the fair.

"We refused one so awkwardly — she was underbred enough to be importunate — that we were 'not at home' to any of the remaining three.

"We had grapes at thirty cents a basket for dessert, alternating with tapioca pudding during the intervening week, and then, with our united savings, we went to the fair.

"It required only twenty-five minutes in which to spend our money, and then we watched the other victims.

"The visitor was met almost at the threshold of the hall by one or a dozen solicitors, with raffle-book in hand, and before he reached the flower booth, arranged seductively in the centre, he had parted with several dollars in chances. But that was just the beginning. At every table he was met with the same demand, and in going from one to another he was seized upon as the lawful prey of the free lances, girls attached to no particular table, or of the representatives from all.

"Charity is a beautiful thing, but it ought to be voluntary; a man surrounded and besieged by a lot of pretty girls, or babbling women, especially if he be lacking in moral courage, or addicted to vanity,

is really not a free agent. He spends far more than he can afford before he begins to realize that he is doing so. Of course I know that raffles and lotteries are not in themselves wrong; if they were kept within bounds, if the people were left to admire in peace, buying an article here, taking a chance there, as inclination dictated, raffles would serve very well in the absence of something better for the purpose intended.

“Not content with the raffles, we brought politics into the fair. Rival candidates were put up to be voted for at ten cents a vote, — a Morris chair, instead of an office, being the prize. Of course the candidates had to treat to cigárs every man and boy in the hall who presented himself for that offering. And the things they bought, of the kind that Mr. Howells calls Jamescracks, when he thinks jimcracks too familiar, must have filled their poor wives with dismay. Dennis Murphy, who wants to be an alderman, — only Heaven and the politicians know why, — paid ten dollars for a pincushion; and his poor little wife, wearing a cheap jacket and mended gloves, stood by, and said nothing.

“Over in one corner, for the benefit of those who found the raffles tame, and of young boys with a few nickels to spend, gambling, quite unmixed with a semblance of anything else, was in full swing. A man with numbered paddles sold them at ten cents apiece, the winner getting a dollar.

“This proved a popular device, especially with the children.

“The winner of the dollar generally invested a

part of it in candy, which he did not always share with the envious losers.

“On the stage, occupied by the orchestra, the politicians each told how much he loved the city and hated political corruption, and then offered a mild little bribe, in the way of cigars, to the voters present.

“Perhaps the most pleasing feature was the voting of a picture to the most popular teacher in the parish school. It was beautiful to see the children scramble with their pennies to the voting stand, and the eagerness with which they canvassed the crowd for votes for their beloved teacher. Fritz Anglin, whose father keeps the Palace Saloon, two blocks from the church, carried the election for his room. He handed in five dollars in one lump, and boasted, like the insufferable little cad he is, that his father was rich and would give him all the money he wanted.

“Poor little Tommie Blake, his red-stockinged toes peeping out of a torn shoe, replied loyally, ‘My mother would give me lots, too, if she had it, but she ain’t got it; she give me seven pennies, and my brother Dick give me five, and I voted ’em all for Sister Lucretia, you bet!’

“In former years we had a bar, and a bar-tender from Anglin’s, sent free of charge ‘with the compliments of the proprietor,’ to mix the drinks. And the genial pastor, who gave the total abstinence pledge to one portion of his flock, was supposed to be gratified to see another portion going in a steady phalanx towards the bar; and if faces

looked flushed, and the retreat seemed not quite so steady — it was for the good of the cause. Happily, the Bishop has put an end to this feature.

“At one time, too, there was dancing, and the young girls assisting at the fair sometimes danced with men who did not often have the privilege of speaking to that kind of girl. That, also, is of the past. Prudently so.”

Miss Norrison, evidently, is not in favor of the parish fair.

Yet, so long as the fair is held, all the members of the parish should make it a matter of honor and Christian duty to contribute, not only their money, but also their work and time.

A few do the work year after year, and hard work it is, none harder, and do it uncomplainingly. Mrs. Diggs likes it, but she is an exception.

The Sodality girls notably, many of whom are employed in various ways during the day, go into the work with untiring zeal. They solicit donations, and sell tickets, and take raffle-books; and many are the snubs and rebuffs they meet with, and from members of the parish.

Mrs. Dale annually sends a check; her daughters do nothing.

Mrs. Driscoll, who is quite as high up in the world, the worldly world of cotillions and Dante clubs, as is Mrs. Dale, gives money, and time, and sweet, wise counsel.

Mrs. Dale thinks the fairs are vulgar, but she does nothing to make them more refined.

It is whispered in ecclesiastical circles that the days of the parish fair are numbered. Pastors, as well as people, hope, ardently, that this is true.

An annual bazaar might be made to yield a large revenue, with all "Midway" features, so to speak, of multitudinous raffles, votes, and paddles eliminated.

Mrs. Bayless waxes enthusiastic over the methods of the Church of the Epiphany, "ritualistic and high," whose head is her gracious Majesty, Victoria.

The ladies of that select sheepfold give monthly teas that are most popular social functions. People wear their best gowns to them, and the neighborhood, for a block, is filled with irreproachable carriages and coachmen in English livery.

When Miss Norrison agreed with her that these affairs are much superior to our own, and suggested that Mrs. Bayless, who has a beautiful home and no small children, offer her house to Father Ryan for a carnation tea, with orchestral accompaniment, that worthy matron was horrified. "And have a lot of dirty old women tramping over my carpets, and fingering the curtains, and spilling their tea or breaking my china? No, thank you. My altruism is not of such heroic heights!"

And so the harassed pastor returns, perforce, to the parish fair.

XXII

NOTES FROM A MISSION

FATHER RUSSELL has just given the last sermon of the mission, and the two weeks of spiritual awakening are at an end. Still, in the glow of those burning words, one feels that being a saint would not be so very difficult after all. The charm of the preacher — magnetic gift would perhaps be a better term — is that he knows how to bring his sermons, his theories, in touch with practical, every-day life.

These are some of the things that he said, — the gist, if not always the exact words: —

“People act as if the Catechism which they learn as children is merely a little book to give exercise to the memory, or a storehouse of polite learning, to be acquired and put away in the mind, along with Cicero’s orations, or Plutarch’s ‘Lives.’

“Of course they know that a few little things are to be practised: they go to Mass on Sundays and holydays, and abstain from meat on Fridays; that much is binding, and not to be evaded; but as for fasting on ember days, giving up amusements in Lent, denying themselves for charity, contributing to the support of their pastors, mak-

ing mixed marriages, or marrying cousins, — that is a different story.

“They know that the Theological Virtues are Faith, Hope, and Charity, but it does not occur to them to make the sign of the cross when passing a church where dwells Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; or to stop inside for a little visit before the Tabernacle. That may be all very well for old women, and young girls, and nuns, but men and women of the world have other concerns.

“They will tell you that the Cardinal Virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. But they rush in where angels would fear to tread, — into all sorts of dangers, spiritual and temporal, — and then besiege Heaven and the Saints to extricate them from the toils of their own folly, — this is their prudence.

“Justice, as far as their lights go, they practise; that is, they do not cheat, nor injure their neighbor in his property or good name. Fortitude is not so common. Why is the cross laid upon them? they cry. Why come so many unmerited misfortunes? — always unmerited in their eyes, no matter what their sins. Why should they be punished for another’s transgressions? Job said, in the grandeur of his love and faith, ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!’

“But these weak ones, if they do not question the justice of God in so many words, in their hearts are rebellious against His decrees. And Temperance — they do not get intoxicated, as an

irrational brute might do if given all the liquor it could swallow, but do they ever think of denying themselves the palatable drink to save a few cents for the poor? Do they put aside a delicate tidbit at table as a little act of secret mortification of the appetite, as was the practice of the saints? Do they leave the comfortable seat, the soft divan, for the weak or the aged? Do they resolutely lay down the interesting story at the usual bedtime hour, so as not to encroach upon the time which belongs to prayer, to the examination of conscience, nor to steal the hours that the body requires for rest, in order to perform the day's duties well? Do they deny themselves an evening at the play, and give the dollar saved to have a Mass said for the suffering souls?

“One can be temperate in so many things besides eating and drinking; and self-denial comes easily in the footsteps of temperance.

“‘Avoid extremes,’ said an ancient philosopher. He said it in Latin, but it is just as true in English.

“And you, my friends, in what class are you?

“You believe in the Sacrament of Confirmation, — of course you believe in it, you say, — that in this Sacrament you receive the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost; but what is your practice?

“Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, the Fear of the Lord — how many of you even remember the names of these precious gifts a year after your Bishop has sealed your brow in Confirmation.

“How many of you seek after the wisdom which pertains to the things of heaven, — to the mysteries of religion, to the power and goodness and wisdom of God as displayed in His Creation, in His Church, even in the souls of His fallen creatures? How much do you value that divine understanding which would make you appreciate your faith as the only gift worth caring for in a transitory world of trouble and care? How ardently do you long for the knowledge, not of science and language, of government and money-getting, but a knowledge of the workings of God’s Providence, day by day, in a world that deserves it so little? How many of you pray for the counsel to direct your actions by the rules of Christian prudence and perfection, so that every act of your lives may be for the honor of God, the salvation of your own soul, and the edification of your neighbor? How many of you stop to think that these gifts are to perfect and guide the will as well as the understanding, — fortitude, with which to face the evils of the world, generously to bear your crosses as from the hand of God; piety, the yearning of the heart towards God, a love and appreciation of holy things; the fear of the Lord, which overcomes all fear of the world and the world’s rules, when it is a question of offending God or of offending the world?

“And this spiritual wealth that came to you in the days of your innocent youth — how earnestly have you labored to increase and preserve it?

“Let some one leave you a material fortune, and

how diligently, anxiously, perseveringly you seek to make it bear interest and multiply; but the heritage of the Holy Ghost — you are content to let that remain idle in your souls, or, perhaps, vanish for the want of any attention. Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Benignity, Goodness, Long-suffering, Mildness, Faith, Modesty, Continency, Chastity — if you had kept this legacy, what a bit of Eden on earth would be your soul!

“Some of you say, ‘Father, I should like to be better, to do something more than I am doing for God and my own soul, but I do not seem to have the opportunity; my life is restricted, hemmed in by a daily routine and petty cares.’

“There is no life too restricted for the practice of the virtues which make saints. God does not expect the impossible. He does not want from one what it would be a grave offence for another to withhold.

“You learned in your little Catechism the names of the works of mercy, Corporal and Spiritual, and you learned, too, something of the ways in which you are to practise them.

“To feed the hungry is the first of the corporal works, and this is the one which everybody, not a devil in human form, practises to some little extent; even the boasting infidel, the lowest libertine, does not keep back his pittance when the sad-eyed, starving woman, or the little child in rags makes its appeal.

“It is the bounden duty of every one to give in proportion to his means, and few of you do this.

The dollar from the workingman is a princely gift, where the hundred from the millionaire is a miser's dole.

“To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom captives, to harbor the harborless, to visit the sick, to bury the dead — how many occasions arise every day for the busiest of you to perform these. The poor woman who must prepare the meals with her own hands for her little family, yet can spare the time to take a bit of pudding or a plate of toast to an invalid neighbor; the elder sister can pause in her task to give a drink to clamoring little ones; the housewife can go over the family wardrobe, finding a garment here, another there, that can be spared for the poor; the maiden can give an afternoon from pleasure to sewing for the poor, either at home or at the parish sewing-society; the wealthy matron can take off the luxuries from her table during Lent, and devote the money to the purchase of material, and use her time in fashioning it into garments for the needy; all these are works of mercy. But let no one think that, when she gives away old garments which she cannot possibly wear herself, and which can be of little service to their recipients, she has been practising charity. She has merely rid herself of an incumbrance.

“‘At least there are no captives in our day to be ransomed,’ says one.

“No captives? There are captives to inhuman employers of labor, who grind down their work-

people to the lowest pittance; captives to stern necessity; captives to ignorance, to want, to prejudice; captives in distant lands to cruel laws and enslaving barbarism; captives, everywhere, to the devil. Your contribution to the foreign missions, to the Truth Society, your patronage of shops where honest labor is honestly paid, your strength pitted against injustice, even the cancelled stamps that you send to aid the foreign missions, — in all these ways you are ransoming captives.

“You harbor the harborless in every penny that you give to orphanages, to industrial schools, to hospitals; you cannot, unless in rare instances, take into your own homes the homeless stranger, but you can contribute out of the means God in His mercy has given to you and withheld from the other, to support the institutions where shelter can be found. And every one can visit the sick. Sickness comes, at some time or other, to every household; even the invalid in a comfortable home is cheered by the sight of a friendly face, a bunch of roses, or a book left as a remembrance; and to the sick poor, where doctors and medicines and nourishing food must be had, and there is no money to pay for them, the visit is a sacred duty; and a dollar slipped into the work-worn, wrinkled hand of the bereaved widow in the tenement, and you have helped to bury the dead.

“Spiritual Works of Mercy — that has a formidable sound to timorous ears, and yet they are not hard.

“What are they? To admonish the sinner.

The life of a consistent Christian is the best admonition a sinner can have; a gentle word of reproach, an indignant protest at a public wrong, these are your duty, and should be counted your privilege. To instruct the ignorant. How effectively, yet how quietly, how sweetly, this may be done on so many occasions. An intelligent explanation of points of doctrine or some part of the beautiful liturgy of the Church, never obtruded on any one, yet always at the behest of the inquirer; books of instruction and devotion, given or lent to non-Catholic friends, or to ignorant Catholics — the number of these last is appalling; a chance afforded a simple domestic to attend an instruction or to hear a sermon; the courteous invitation to a friend to go with you to hear a good preacher or to attend a mission, and the thoughtful provision of a prayer-book for the occasion; the dime or the dollar contributed with a willing heart to the Truth Society, or to help the mission work, or to pay the subscription to a Catholic paper sent to some one in a distant hamlet, or for books and papers left at hospitals, or prisons, or asylums.

“To counsel the doubtful. This is not so easy; but every intelligent Catholic knows, or ought to know, the refutation against the doubts of revealed truth; and if he is not sure of his own knowledge, he ought to be able to lay his hand on a book that would silence any honest scruple. To comfort the sorrowful. Every one is called upon, at some time, to perform this Christlike work, but not every one does it in the Christlike spirit, — a word

of sympathy, the tender little note of condolence, the card left at the door where death has come, loyal friendship to one on whom disgrace has fallen, a whisper of hope to the despairing; even to drive away the tears of a little child is not in vain.

“To bear wrongs patiently does not mean to suffer injustice where justice may be had, for that would be weakness; but to suffer without murmuring when evil comes through the perfidy of another, — a bank suspends payment, you are thrown out of work, you are blamed where blameless, reproached where you have done your best, put aside to see others in your rightful place.

“To forgive all injuries follows, naturally, from a patient endurance of wrong. There is not one of you to whom there has not come, or will not come sometime during life, a chance to revenge an injury. A pagan under Nero would glut his vengeance to the full, but a Catholic under the sweet sovereignty of a Saviour who forgave His enemies when in dying agony on the Cross, goes out of his way to serve his persecutor.

“You know the story of the French monarch, who said, regally, ‘The King of France does not avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orléans.’

“And Robert the Christian does not avenge the wrongs done to Robert the man. The wrongs may not be grave — happily, it is not often in any one’s power to do his neighbor a vital injury; but the cumulative, petty persecutions are almost as hard to bear. A woman’s tongue sets on foot a

slander about you; sooner or later a disgraceful story that is true about this very woman — for it is usually women with shady histories of their own who delight in slandering other women — will come to your ears. If you are a Christian it goes no further; if a pagan, then is your chance for revenge.

“And we come to the last of the seven — to pray for the living and the dead. Here, at least, the work depends entirely on yourselves; no waiting for opportunity. And our dear Lord Himself commanded you to pray, pray always; and what beautiful, what consoling promises He made to those who obey this sweet command! If your work requires the greater part of your time, your heart can be lifted up in prayer, even whilst your hands are busy at their appointed tasks. A messenger boy recited the entire rosary every day whilst going about his errands. And a whispered ejaculation of faith, hope, and charity, a short act of contrition, an invocation to our Lady, a *De Profundis* for the dead — how easy, yet how efficacious! And then you have our Lord dwelling day and night in your churches, at every turn, — how sweet to slip away from the cares and distractions of the world to spend a few moments before the Tabernacle!”

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