117 Yonge St.

### FATHER LADDEN'S XMAS DINNER

Father Ladden had been two months at St. Bernardine of Sienna. The first week had been one perpetual nightmare to him. And sudden-ly some light came to him. His good fortune was unfolded to him, and he remembered what he had learned long since, but forgotten for a while that the poor are the cream of any nd this parish being co posed of poor, the very poor and nothing but the poor, God was showing special favor to him.

had prayed for this parish. He had wanted, but God gave it to him not in his, but in God's time, and his soul was not prepared for its crudities. For, after Our Lady of the Snows, where Father Ladden knew he was accomplishing much in infus ing a new spiritual life into the parish, it was a shock indeed to embrace the sordidness that St. Bernardine of Sienna held out to

The dingy little light in the dingy little room threw its quota of glad-ness over Father Ladden's breviary. He was not reading but thinking. was hardly safe to go to bed down here in the district. No sooner was he tangled up in the ragged blanket Father Ewing had used than a call came for him. And now he waited. The memories of the few years he had spent in the priesthood came back to him. Above all the remem brance of his first acquaintance with

"the district" and Father Ewing.
"Pray for me, Father," he had urged the older priest, "pray for me, that I may be appointed your assist-

And Father Ewing's answer came back to him: "Let us pray, instead, that the will of God be done."

Father Ladden put the breviary on the table, and he buried his face in his hands. "Insufferable snob that I he murmured. "Why, I be lieve I looked down on everyone who owned a nickel, while now -Father Ladden started.

Now ?" he repeated questioningly. No, it could not be that he liked money nor preferred people who had Earnestly he questioned himself. But money gave opportunities for culture, he told himself, and then answered that the most cultured ong the sons of men despised it; He Whom in his soul he had alweys loved had placed it as a burrier toward union with Himself.

The young priest sat bolt upright in his chair in tense consideration. Then, yielding to babit, he rose and walked into the church. As usual at that hour, the church was dark save

for the ruby light that does not fail.

Father Ladden went to the altar to deliver it to you. and knelt down on the steps. few moments he spoke no word, even his soul was still. Then he went up money. Father Ladden drew out a his soul was still. Then he went up until his hand touched the bas relief of the Cross. It reminded him of that night in St. John Baptist's when he had asked for suffering. Now he felt that his prayer was being answered, and still it was answered, for the soul of Robert Ladden had accepted the cross of sacrifice, and with the acceptance the suffering had gone. And he

Lord," he cried, "I am here! And You know well I rebelled against memento at being sent here. Your poor were not the dinner. good enough for me. But Your grace has changed all now. Jesus, I have a promise to make You and it is this: dinner." From now on, I shall not direct You where to send me. Do as You will with me. Keep me here or send me the end of the world. Do as You see best. But this one thing I promise You, that in every man, in every woman and in every child. I will look You I will work for, You I will comfort-You, Jesus, You alone will do my best to feed the flock You have entrusted to my care. In return I ask that You bless me, in whatever way You please—in poverty, in failure, in success or in happiness. As You please, Jesus-Your Will be done."

It was three weeks before Christmas, and Father Ladden, who had just come in from a sick call, was paving the way for chilblains by toasting his feet over the register. Michael, whom Pather Ewing had bequeathed to him as a housekeeper, was chasing the cat out of doors. Properly speaking, "bequeathed" not the word to use in regard to

'You've wished him on me. Father Ladden laughingly protested, when Father Ewing had brought him with the suggestion that he be used in the capacity of a housekeeper. Michael had a hard luck story to tell him, which, strange though it may seem, had a solid foundation of truth.

Father Ewing had protested. "You need a housekeeper. Of course I never had one—couldn't get one reckless enough to stay-but

with you it is different. Father Ladden smiled Peculiarities were not part of the spiritual program he had written out for himself, and so he said nothing about things being different with

And if he doesn't please me? What then?" he insisted. But Father Ewing waved aside such a possibility.

"Housekeepers are not supposed to

well, offer it up." Father Ladden had small chance for "offering it up" with Michael, for as a housekeeper he proved a jewel.
In the matter of religion he was hardly a masculine "beata." His favorite devotion seemed to be open-

ing and closing windows during Mass. But Father Ladden suffered it in silence, concluding to wait until a protest against too much fresh air came in from the congregation at

Michael had chased out the cat and pulled down the shades, and yet he stood, half questioningly, in the doorway that separated the dingy living room that might serve as dining room if it were ever furnished

for that purpose.

Father Ladden looked up at him. "Why so pensive. Michael? You look as if the weight of a country

was on your shoulders."
"Well, Fayther, it's this. Ye know those Prodestants are doing a fine turn for ye?"

Yes?" questioned Father Ladden "Sure," grunted Michael. "They're going to have a Christmas dinner for your parishioners. They hain't anny of their own kind down here, and so they feel called on to do some mis sionary work among your own people. And, Fayther, what I was ondering was this. Couldn't you and I get up a dinner fer-well-fer. the District at large ?"

Father Ladden gasped: "Say, do' I remind you of Rothschild?" 'You don't that, but-'twas only

last Sunday ye told us that where there's a will there's a way—and I'm willin'. Are ye?" Father Ladden put down his breviary.

"I'm willing, Michael, but, truth to tell, if the whole district would consume no more dinner than what would go on my own table Christmas Day, I don't see how we could manage it, for I'm not looking forward to turkey, myself."

Well, I am then," said Michael. Fayther Ewing told me that before ye came here ye belonged to a swell parish, and I was thinking that per haps some of the ladies or the other priests or something like that could help ye, if ye asked.' A smile passed over Father Ladden's

That's a suggestion, Michael, and I'll see Father Henderson-yes, I'll see what can be done."

And he meant to keep his word, but the next morning after his Mass was said and his meditation made, and after he had come back from pacifying the agent about the rent of old Mrs. Flynn with a promise to see that he got every cent of it, the door bell rang.

A messenger boy was there. "Father Ladden?' asked the boy, "the Reverend Robert Ladden?" Father Ladden stepped into the

"Yes. I am he." he answered. "Here's a letter for you sir. I am signed for it, and tore it open. In note and two fifty dollar bills.

Dear Father Ladden," he read. "Flease accept this donation that a friend desires to make. It is for the Christmas dinner. Go ahead and make arrangements. More will

Father Ladden went out into the living room. It seemed like a chapter from the life of the Curé of Ars. knelt there, silent, listening. At last It was like a miraculous answer to prayer-and then Father Ladden remembered that he had made a memento at Mass for the success of

"Thank God," he murmured heart-"Michael gets the District

like every other parish, St. Bernardine's boasted souls who are living proofs that cooking is victorious where eloquence fails: Father Henderson and Father Ewing were there. each with a corps of willing workers to wait on the table. After it was all over, Benediction followed, and the clergy went to Father Ladden's little sitting room, where they blew some of their host's Christmas pres-

ents up in smoke.
"Who it was who sent the money, what gets me," said Father Ladden.

"How do you know it wasn't the Curé of Ars?" questioned Father

"How do I know but it wasn't the rector of Our Lady of the Snow?' Father Ladden flung back at him. 'I've known of stranger things he did.

But Father Henderson protested, and Father Ewing smiled.
"I do believe he'd a finger in it," he said. "Well, it's a happier Christ-

mas than I expected to spend," he went on. "For there's little pleasure-real soul pleasure-outside of the District." They stayed until rather late, and

when they were gone Michael came "The cat's out," he announced

briefly, "and I got your present Fayther. It's just what I'm after needing this long time. Thanks!"

St. Brendan was Christ's brother, and that Brigid was His mother. He was rather summarily treated for his Father Ladden smiled benignly. 'Don't mention it, Michael, it's a

great day it's been—a great day, a happy day and a holy Christmas. I wonder who gave the money. That's the only thing that's |worrying me." Michael looked at him with a know please them. And if he doesn't- ing look, as he went to the door. 'Sure Fayther, ye don't mean to say

ye can't guess.' 'Yes, indeed I can," the young priest answered him, "I lay the blame on good Father Henderson. I've lived with him long enough to know he's generosity itself.'

Father Henderson's all right, and Father This and Father That's all right, but sure there ain't wan of them that can hold a candle to Father Ewing. Twas his doings through and through. He thought of the dinner, and of sending the money. Sure he wanted to be down in the District on Christmas Day. And sure wasn't he here?"

Father Ladden half gasped. "And I never thought of him! That plot was too plain for me to see through, but never mind, I'll get even with

him yet, Michael."

But Michael had retired for the night. His mission was finished.— Louise M. Whelan in the Magnificat.

## CHRISTMAS IN GAELIC LORE

Shane Leslie in America

Christmas is such a familiar word that we forget, and Irishmen most of all, that Ireland had her own name for the Feast of the Nativity, as indeed she had for almost every event in the "Holy Year." Nodlaig is the Irish for Christmas and Nodlaig mait agat is the Irish way of wishing a Merry Christmas. It is only of ecent years that the Irish terms have crept onto the Christmas cards Between Nodlaig and the French Noel there seems to be affinity. of the numerous links between Celtic

Ireland and Celtic France.

Brittany, by the way, though the nly part of France which speaks a Celtic dialect, is not nearer Gaelic Ireland than many parts of Gallo-Roman France. Brittany was colonized by the British, not by the Gaelic Celts, fleeing from the Saxon. A great many modern French words nodern Irish parallels. For instance the Irish word for Dublin means "the town of the ford of the hurdle" cliath) which suggests the French word for hedge (claie.) The French old tree, is like the French (tree-trunk) But best of all we have the same word for Christmas. that the whole world had the same word and the same service for Christmas! Universal peace and under-standing are far more likely to issue from a Roman Congregation of Rites these reflections form a digression quite unwarranted.

kept? What makes the Gaelic Nodlaig? Well, to tell the truth, Christmas is not the supreme feste it is with Teutonic peoples. To the even the Assumption are more popular feasts. But the Teutonic peoples have concentrated their The English sacraments are self-esteem?" three, the Bible, Sunday and Christmas. These follow the Flag. Anglo-Saxons without the vaguest idea of preserved more of the old pagan cus- wholly and utterly out of place. oms than of the Christian interpretation. The red holly is the bush of symbol of the Druids.

And the dinner was a wonderful with the expectation of some material They have, in many respects, made event. The district accepted en present arriving in the night, while masse. Although none wrote a the Gaelic child lights a candle which and comfortable place to live in, even invades the household, degrades formal acceptance, Father Ladden with pride that not one man, woman dow for any travel worn mother and minds increasingly upon the interests or child was missing. Even the child that may be out on the roads; most careless souls were there, for, for the Holy Mother herself may be ly temporal and therefore scarcely passing through the country. At one time the door of each Irish house was always left open a little, on the eve of Christmas, for the same reason. But these customs are passing away or are being forgotten in rather vulgar joviality popular. ized by the press. Another custom was that all fish caught on Christmas day was reserved for the widows and orphans of the parish under the name of Peter's alms." The Feast of Stephen following Christmas, known as "Boxing Day" in England, used to be celebrated in Ireland by the "wrenboys" who hunted the unhappy wren from morn to night on the supposition that it was the bird of the

> the Gaelic peasants to decorate their cottages. The eve of St. Brigid's day is still a universal time for twisting and putting up the curious triangular crosses, called "St. Brigid's crosses," of straw or rushes, over the beds, windows and doors of houses. well known, St. Brigid and Our Lady are often confused in Gaelic legend. That Christ was born in the Isles and that Brigid was His fostermother was a rumor in the medieval age. Even in late medieval times we find a delightful story of an Irish monk in Germany, who insisted that was rather summarily treated for his naïveté. But most Irish children will tell you today that St. Brigid was beside the Crib at Bethlehem and that "Brigid of the Candles" carried the light before the Virgin going to her Purification. Is not St. Brigid's feast the day before the

Christmas was not the season for

Purification in the Calendar today? name of an old Irish goddess who

Michael smiled half contemptuthe Gaelic litany took up the allusion in calling the Blessed Virgin "Jesse's tree of Knowledge in the beauteous

Likewise the salmon was regarded the old Irish as the symbol of fairy or supernatural wisdom. not meaningless in the ears of the Gael was a fifteenth century allusion to the Blessed Virgin as "the Salmon of Knowledge," Our Lady and St. Brigid coincided, until, in the famous phrase, St. Brigid is described as "the Virgin Mary of the Gael." At any rate this accounts for the esence of Brigid at the Crib in all Gaelic thought.

Indeed there is evidence to show that, in legend, she was with Our Lord from the Crib to the Cross. The dandelion was said to be one of the healing herbs laid on the Body of the healing herbs laid on the body of the healing herbs laid on the body of the laid of th begins to sing. In Ireland, as the story goes, all the birds begin to nest

on St. Brigid's day.

It was this instinctive feeling of Brigid's relation to bird and youth that led Gaelic tradition to place her beside the holiest nest of straw The Irish Christmas is not Christmas without Brigid.

# CHRISTIANITY VS. PAGANISM

By Sir J. Godfrey Raupert, K. C. S. Observant readers of the better class of the current literature on the

War must be struck by the frequency with which thoughtful and promindescended from French Celtic have ent writers are speaking of the European War as an altogether abnormal real conflict between Christ and the powers of Satan. Granted that in view of the pecu-

word broder recalls the Irish for a needle (brot) and bile the Irish for ment of the respective European ment of the respective European nations, conflicting interests of even a grave and far reaching character could not fail to assert themselves from time to time, creating feelings of deep distrust and even pronounced animosity, how came it to pass that an age of advanced culture and civilization the rulers and statesmen than from a Hague Convention. But of those nations found it quite impossible to settle those except by letting loose upon the How is the modern Irish Christmas world the wholly irrational and ept? What makes the Gaelic barbaric forces of destruction and

War? To what end," writes Professor of jollification among the Celts that L. P. Jacks of Oxford, Atlantic Monthly, "has mind been marching Celts, as to the Latins, Easter and if at this advanced stage of its progress it has nothing better to show for itself than this? Could anything be conceived better calculated to let powers of religious revelry on Christ- civilization down in its intellectual

It seems to me that, in view of the appalling catastrophe which is sweeping over Europe and for the adequate the meaning of Communion regard description of which human language the eating of plum pudding as a is beginning to fail us, vague phrases sacred duty. Teutonic peoples have and conventional platitudes are

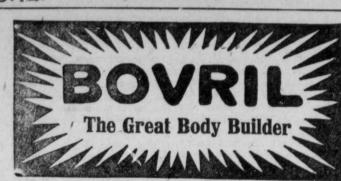
On the intellectual side it is, of out the following: course, true that marvellous things Thor and the mistletoe is the sacred have in recent years been achieved the intellect of modern Europe. The Irish Christmas is not the And it is equally true that a great English Christmas, except so far as many of these achievements have the country has been Anglicized. I been applied for the good of man and have always thought it typical that for the betterment of the conditions of lawlessness, while they talk of the Saxon child hangs up a stocking of his individual and social life. of the life that now is and upon pure-

satisfying ideals. But in how infinitely greater a degree have they been utterly misused in that they have been applied dulges in an orgy of formless uglifor vile and destructive and therefore wholly unworthy purposes! In how infinitely greater a degree have they proved a curse rather than a

Who can fail to realize this when he considers that it is the sciences chemistry and mechanics which are ultimately responsible for the fashioning of those infamous weapons of destruction which are being employed in the present War? With absolutely fiendish ingenuity have these weapons been conceived in order to destroy human life, maim human bodies, and reduce to dust-heaps what the skill and industry and art of man has, throughout many long years, laboriously built

Scarcely has man's ingenuity succeeded in mastering the problems of aeronautics when that mastery is already-and indeed exclusively-employed for the vilest and most sayof all purposes, and is made an additional factor in the working of misery and ruin and destruction in human life.

On the material side human calculation is manifestly wholly un-equal to the task of forming any approximately accurate estimate of the waste which, in the very nature of things, can never by any possible chance be made good.
Think of the untold millions of money which are being expended upon the construction of the fearful engines of destruction for use on sea and on land and in the air; upon their efficient maintenance and up-There is no doubt Brigid was the keep; upon the equipment of thousands upon thousands of soldiers presided over youth and poetic wis- and sailors. Think of the millions om, and many of her attributes which are daily blown into the air passed naturally enough to the Saint. or sunk into the deep—for the sole by union with God, the other abnor-



industry and art and science. Think created nature.' of the precious cargoes of foodstuffs wantonly destroyed while helpless women and children are clamoring for bread, of the permanent injury

When we view these things in the sight of the actual facts of life, of the circumstance that all this material waste represents the industry and laber and conquest of the toiling and struggling masses of mankind, must beside the holiest nest of straw and leaves, that was ever gathered to the world has gone utterly mad, and gether, the Manger of Bethlehem. that the devil has, in the truest sense of the word, become the master of the situation

Well may the human mind stand appalled and horror stricken before the ruin and desolation thus wrought and seek for a solution of the fearful problem which they present. Significant beyond words is the descrip tion of the havoc wrought at Termonde, which is given us in the book recently published by a British surgean (H. S. Souttar, F. R. C. S. Surgeon in Belgium "), who spent three months in supervising the English Field Hospital at Antwerp and Furnes. "One felt," he writes, one was in the presence of wickedness such as the world has rarely seen, that the powers of darkness were very near, and that behind those blackened walls there lurked evil forms. . One could almost hear the devil laughing at the handiwork of his children.'

With minds distracted and appalled we read of the fearful scenes of slaughter and devastation which the fairest lands of Europe are witnessing day by day; but it may well be questioned whether even this scientific slaughter is, in the end. the worst element in the terrible conflict-whether a more diabolical thing still is not the sentiment of bitter hate which is being sown amongst the nations, and the fruits of which will have to be reaped by our children and our children's children. This bitter hatred most assuredly will, as a writer in one of our weekly journals said the other day, "carry the horrors of warfare far ahead into generations as yet unborn, and long after the paper peace is signed will it retard the progress of the world.

From a weekly English publication which appeared some time in June 1914-two months therefore before the cutbreak of war, but upon which I cannot now lay my hands, I copied

We seem to see the disordered elements of human life being blindly driven by the powers of darkness into the vortex of a mighty on com ing story. . . Nations and sects and people are seized with a frenzy union and liberty and order. Law lessness takes up many names and letters, outrages art, violates liberty, subverts the fabric of society, and attacks religion in its most sacred aspects. It makes pretence of seek ing the larger liberty of creative in dependence in art and letters, in rebellion against conventions, ness which shakes even its votaries

with maniacal laughter. . . It is most certainly a truism from which none can dissent that all that is good and true and enduring in our modern civilization is due to those life-forces which were infused into the world by the coming of Christto the belief and conviction that they were divine in their nature and origin, since He Who brought them

was divine. Our entire modern civilization will be in danger of breaking down if it continues to lose touch with the lifeforces which gave it birth. There is in all modern nations a growing relapse into paganism.

But there is a further truth which the modern world has so far failed adequately to recognize, but which is nevertheless increasingly forcing it self upon observant minds, and that is the fact that this progressive re lapse into paganism is resulting in and is attended by, the revival of distinctly pagan beliefs and practices.

This, and this alone, is the true explanation of that increasing dabbling in the occult which is beyond doubt one of the most striking charac teristics of our age. And the circum-stances that this dabbling is engineer ed by scientific men, and is paraded before the world under scientific terms, does not alter the fact in the very least. For "since man exists the tree of knowledge has never borne wholesome fruit except when it has been planted in divine soil. and been watched and pruned by

select gardeners." the ordinary desires and needs of "Man," as a deep student of the people about him is shocked occult (Brownson) has said "has a two fold development, the one normal in which he rises to spiritual freedom Pagan terms passed into the charmed circle of Christianity. For instance, in the shape of the works of human

It is an admitted and undeniable fact that behind many of these Pagan cults are real and intelligent forces. Materialistic science itself has been compelled to make this admission

2. Many of the modern occult practices, moreover, are the opening of doors by means of which these spirit-forces gain perilous access to the minds and souls of men.

I am personally persuaded that the greatest possible danger threatens the moral life of the modern world from this quarter, and I have not the least hesitation in saying that these unseen activities will have to be taken into account in any serious examination of the ultimate causes of the present disastrous war. -Providence Visitor.

#### CHRISTMAS

We have wandered through Advent shadows Up to the golden dawn And we wait at the gates of gladness The coming of Christmas morn.

We wait 'till a touch shall tremble And a tiny hand shall lay Its spell on the portals of darkness That prison the eager day

'Till the Infant's hand shall open The gates of gladness wide And our souls drink in the glories Of the holy Christmastide.

And list, His footsteps falleth On the fading of the night And unto death, the spirit Of darkness shall He smite.

All the graces and the grandeurs That guardian Christmas Day; And the herald, Peace, who cometh And waiteth on His way;

All the blessings ever prayed for, The sweetest, grandest, best, Fill our hearts, and lives, wide open To the welcome Christmas Guest. And He layeth a crown of gladness

On the earth's broad brow to-day; And His sceptre of Peace uplifted Hath the whole world 'neath its All the joys of years long perished,

All the joys of years to be, All the joys of the timeless season Of God's eternity, Meet in the holy midnight By Bethlehem's star-lit way Blend in one paen, rushing into

The rapture of Christmas Day.

THE DEAD ON CHRISTMAS EVE

-M. E. HENRY-RUFFIN, L. H. D.

You think of the dead on Christmas Wherever the dead are sleeping :

And we, from a land where we may not grieve. Look tenderly down on your weep-

ing. You think us far-we are very near To you and the earth, though parted.

We sing tonight to console and cheer The souls of the broken-hearted. The calm earth watches the lifeless

Of each of its countless sleepers And sleepers, whose spirits have passed away, Watch over the sad earth's weepers.

We shall meet again in a brighter Where farewell never is spoken; We shall clasp each other, hand in

hand, And the clasp shall not be broken. We shall meet again in a calm, bright

clime, Where never we'll know a sadness; Our lives shall be filled, like a Christmas chime, With rapture and peace and glad-

ness. The snows shall pass from our graves away, And the sun from the earth, remem-

And the snows of a bright eternal May Shall follow the earth's December. When you think of us-O, think not

of the tomb, Where you laid us down in sorrow But look up, look aloft, beyond earth's

And wait for the great tomorrow. And the pontiff, Night, with his star-

cat! Requiescat!" - FATHER RYAN He who is thoughtless concerning

when he learns, if he ever does, that

stole on, Whispereth soft and low—" Requies-

it is selfihness that makes him so. If you do not feel like singing along the path of life, at least you need not growl and spoil the song of the man behind.

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