

THE CONFESSIONAL AND ITS ADVANTAGES.

A well-known Jesuit scholar, Rev. R. F. Clarke, S.J., comes to the defence of the confessional in the North American Review. He contends that it has manifold advantages to the individual and to society and has its source in a fundamental need. He says:

The natural origin and fountain head of confession is to be found in an instinct of human nature, which leads us to communicate to others any strong emotion present to the soul, any powerful influence engendering in us joy or sorrow, hope or fear, self-approbation or self-reproach. If some counter motive render concealment necessary, the suppression will be painful to us and will aggravate our suffering, where the influence present to the soul is one unfavorable to its happiness. Now a sense of guilt is, of all emotions which affect the soul, the one which causes the most deeply rooted misery, and is the most destructive of all true peace. Shame, self-reproach, fear, remorse, disgust at the thought of the past and despondency at the prospect of the future all combine to make life almost intolerable. The desire to exterminate that which is the source of our mental suffering sometimes becomes irresistible.

The story of Eugene Aram is an instance in point, as is that of the murderer who approached the cradle of his victim's infant in order that he might whisper to a human ear the crime that he could no longer bear in silence. Probably most of our readers have, in the course of their lives, listened to the confidence of some friend or acquaintance who poured forth in the gloaming or by the dull firelight, the honest and self-accusing story of his past misdeeds. I am not concerned with the source of this curious instinct of self-revelation, but the fact of the relief that it affords to the heavily-burdened soul is undeniable. It certainly is much stronger among Christians than among those who belong to other religions; and the reason of this is that the sense of the evil of sin is far more keen in those who believe in the incarnation and death of the Son of God. Almost every revival of religion, outside the Catholic Church, has been accompanied with

some form or other of public or private confession. The early Wesleyans related in public their religious "experiences," and the leaders of the evangelical movement at the beginning of the present century received from their disciples a "manifestation of conscience" that was little else than a confession of their sins. The rapid growth of the practice of confession among the ritualists is not a mere imitation of Rome, but is the natural outcome of their religious earnestness and sincerity.

Aside from its purely religious significance, says Father Clarke, the confessional furnishes practical benefits of a high order in the counsel it provides to all who are in any intellectual or moral perplexity, or distress. In all such cases, he continues, the confessional furnishes a counselor who is perfectly unprejudiced, whose one and only desire is to promote the happiness and well-being of his penitent, who speaks with the authority belonging to his office, whose long experience gives weight to his words, and who, above all, knows the severe account that Almighty God will exact of him, and the awful responsibility of the task entrusted to him. He knows that if he swerves one hair's breadth from the law of God in the advice given, out of any human respect, or desire to please, or any other inferior motive, he will be guilty of a great sin before God. What better means than this could possibly be devised for giving peace to troubled souls, or for settling doubts and difficulties that, to those who are entangled in them, often seem insoluble? I do not mean to say that the confessor is infallible or may not judge the case wrongly. But there is every possible chance that his judgment will be the right one, and that he will be able to give such advice as may release the perplexed conscience from its difficulties and dangers. My own experience is that seldom have I encountered any problem as to future action, however apparently hopeless, which did not admit of a solution that was not only practically possible, but that could be carried out without any very serious difficulty by the person asking advice.

dance. Each one has a special function to perform, and no small detail of tears, incense, or gloriously colored silk garments are ever neglected or misplaced.

Three days before the interment, which may not take place for a year or more, the delegates of the Emperor announce it to heaven and earth and the goni and ancestors. On the eve of the transporting of the body offerings of nine sheep, fifteen bottles of wine, and 150,000 pieces of paper money are brought, a prayer is read, and a libation made. On the day itself five rolls of the tambour announce the ceremony. The funeral cortege is formed, and the bier is carried to the mortuary hall. The Emperor comes weeping, makes three libations of wine, and the Dowager Empress does the same. The coffin is brought out, placed on the bier, while the Emperor stands to the left. An officer pours out the wine, and the coffin is carried forward, followed by the Emperor, Empresses, etc., with their eyes fixed on the bier. The coffin is borne through all of the palace gates, the Emperor mounts his chariot and the mandarins mount their horses. At a station

on the road, offerings of fruit and wine are again made. Arrived at the cemetery, the Emperor hastens to make his prostrations before the tombs of his ancestors. When the funeral train reaches the bridge over the stream around the cemetery the coffin is carried through the south gate and placed in the large hall, where the Emperor makes the usual offerings. Delegates are sent to all the tombs to announce the new arrival. On the next day seven sheep, fifteen bottles of wine, and 90,000 pieces of paper money are offered. Then are brought sacrifices of appeasement and repose to calm the spirit of the deceased, till then wandering about restless, not knowing where to go for cessation of tears; for association of the deceased with his dead ancestors. On the day of the first of these the Emperor kneels down outside of the cemetery, while the coffin is carried in by officers, preceded by torch-bearers. The wangs and other dignitaries follow. It is placed on a bed of precious stones; the tablet and seal are placed to right and left. The body is lowered into the tomb and the stone door closed and sealed. The funeral is over.

If there is to be any harvest time after the early years of active training, and providing for a young family, it must come through a regard to such matter of fact, radical matters as those. If a man is to come up out of the ranks with his honors fresh upon him and his vitality unimpaired, it lies much in the power of his wife and children to bring it about.

If our emotional, excitable nation, so prone to exaggeration both of opinion and action, is ever to have the benefit of the counsel and influence of men of experience, mature intellect, and free from morbidities of the sort begotten by unsettled nerves, we must make refuges for them in middle life beside their own firesides, and let the air of home be to their exhausted brains as revivifying as an oxygenator in a sick-room. The ambitions so rampant among us for travel and social prominence and the attainment of the utmost luxury must be quenched in the higher one of being the well beloved rest of him who is dearest to us in the world, and pride of place must yield to the triumph of enriching and satisfying a heart that trusts its peace to our protection. She has served her country and her generation who has kept one good man's energies from flagging and helped to keep him at his post.—New York Post.

the scar that remained. There was no inequality from callousness or loss of substance of the skin. He was sound of limb and walked without limping, there being no difference in the length of his limbs, nor any deformity in them. I cannot flatter myself every one is going to accept this fact as a miracle, or believe it supernatural, or be induced by it to acknowledge the efficacy of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, or finally to enter the fold of the Church. Faith is a gift of God, and the Spirit breatheth whereover He will.—Cleveland Universe.

THE YOUTH AND THE CIGARETTE.

The ordinance passed by the Aldermen making it a misdemeanor to sell cigarettes to persons under 18 years of age is a movement in the right direction. Whatever may be the difficulties in the way of its strict enforcement, there is no question that this form of the tobacco habit, now so prevalent with the youth of our country, is in the highest degree deleterious to their health and is oftentimes the indirect cause of an irretrievably damaged constitution and a premature death.

The young boy needs all his vital energies for his rapidly progressive growth, and no force should be wasted in overcoming the depressing effects of a subtle and cumulative poison. He is particularly receptive to the latter, which explains the difference in the action of the nicotine upon him as compared with an older person. The bad influences of cigarette smoking are manifest in many ways which do not obtain in other forms of tobacco using. Their cheapness is always a direct invitation for excess of consumption. The smokers are always short ones, but are repeated so often as to be practically continuous. The habit is confirmed before the danger is realized. The pernicious habit of inhaling the smoke is one to which the youthful habitue is particularly addicted. The irritating products of rapid combustion are thus brought directly in contact with the throat and air passages, inducing a persistent irritation of delicate membranes.—New York Herald.

FASHIONABLE TOQUES.

There is nothing in practical millinery this season that is more stylish unobtrusive, and ladylike, than the toques and the English walking hats, particularly in black, with their fashionable decoration of sable plumes. Another satisfactory and becoming choice is the medium-sized round hat with all lace, buckle, and floral garniture eliminated, and nothing used but velvet loops and full, handsome ostrich feathers. Those shown in the shops for conservative wearers are notably attractive, as they present no erratic details or startling outlines, neither do they swoop low on one side of the face, and curve to the top of the head on the other after the style of some of the astonishing but very fashionable shapes now worn. Why not wholly straight and flat brim, the hats arch gracefully on each side, above the temples, and this slight lifting allows for some artistic bits of decoration under the brim just above the waves of hair—a becoming touch of color always relieving the dull, somewhat heavy appearance of a black hat, particularly with a woman of pale or dark complexion. Exception, however, can very often be made in ordering a black velvet hat.

Hope is a pleasing acquaintance, but one you can seldom depend upon.

AMERICAN MEN OF AFFAIRS.

As compared with their "English cousins" the men of our country lay down their official and commercial supremacy at a surprisingly early age. The head of the firm, the senior partner, the rector, pass each into semi-retirement when on the other side of the water their ripening years and large experience would be held as the bulwark of the power lodged in each of these connections. "Young blood," that peculiar phrase, which is as frequent on the lips of enterprising men as its opposite, "dry rot." Both are the product of our feverish time and nation. Stability, building on firm foundations, the gradual unfolding of old ideas into modern forms, are not to be counted in the race for power and wealth. New projects, new methods, youthful daring, these are the things which are sought and prized.

are of our men of keen intellect and amazing powers of invention, the great are few in comparison with the mass of men moving on the ordinary plane of usual merit and responsibility; every-day men, toiling in the ranks of the professions or in the centres of trade. But in this great throng each gray head ought to be sure of a refuge under his own roof and find in his home a place of rest. Wall street has been called the nursery of paralysis. Doubtless many a keen brain and strong arm have been ruined in its battles, but it is not without convictions, based on long years of sad observation, that the subject of these thoughts was chosen. Too often these stricken men have had no antidote to the day's excitement held to their lips, which the fever of the day was past. How seldom do American sons enter the business offices of their fathers! How rarely do we see the agents of a firm upheld by two generations! What an astonishment it is to hear that a name has stood over the same door for fifty years, and that a traveller returning from far lands could find the places unchanged which he had known when he left home!

To compass an end by some novel procedure, to catch the public eye and ear by a great "coup" hitherto untried, these are the things which make sudden fortunes and enlist the ardor and approval of the community. The advancing years do not cloud the brain or dull the perceptions of a healthful man who perhaps at sixty years of age feels that he has just reached the thorough knowledge of the profession, to the steady mastery of which he has given all his intellectual activity. His mind, his judgment, his power of analysis are in perfect training, and mentally he is like the physical athlete who, with thews and sinews strengthened to absolute perfection lifts and casts away a hindering weight which other men find an insuperable barrier. The calm authority of him who, having braced man and many a high wave, fears no incoming "comber," let it rush and foam and threaten and thunder as it may, is of splendid efficacy in the struggles of the world's combats. Men try to find in material nature things to which they may liken him; the strength of the hills, the protection of the great trees, the resistance of the rocks. But they find no true parallel; the restful strength of such a one is unlike anything merely passively strong.

Daily we see men with shaking or useless limbs aided in the necessary effort to breathe the outer air and feel God's sunshine upon their benumbed bodies, leaning on the arms of their attendants and rolled in wheeled chairs from place to place. As I write the picture of a feeble, terribly emaciated man leaning on the arm of his delicate devoted daughter comes before me; a beautiful though pathetic group they make. I never knew them or their story, but he is so easily seen to be prematurely deprived of his strength that the question came quickly, what worried and harried it away from him? The semi-comprehension of his loving look at his child is wonderfully touching. It is a hard thing to say, it is a heart-breaking thing to believe, but were the facts lying behind the disabilities of a majority of men traced to their sources, there can be little doubt that the worries found at home where heart as well as mind enter into the influences, have had a great share in the result. Nor is this the product of the loveless marriages or wilfully selfish women. The kind of wretchedness this combination brings about has its own malignant power to undo a man, but the most potent means of sapping the vitality of a fond husband and father is to be deprived of the chance of finding rest or peace in the companionship of his loved ones.

Among our prominent men of over fifty years, it is an exceptional case when we find one in really good health, with power to eat and sleep, and walk, and hew down a tree if he chooses. Suddenly fear cries a halt to the measureless activity, by which they have tried to make a prince's fortune in a decade, or build a city in a year, or have carried a railway across a continent, with the speed and defiance of obstacles that would attend the leveling of a country road. The man must rest; already his hand shakes, his head swims, his memory is at fault.

It takes courage, patience, endurance, ingenuity, unselfishness, and unflinching resolution to control the order of a household, and so adjust its environment that a working husband finds his evenings a joy and his nights soothed by the refreshment of perfect peace. Yet the reward is worth the struggle, and might, were it a universal effort, alter the records of man's healthful longevity and lengthen his power to work ten years at least.

A candle cannot be burned at both ends. Vibrating in every nerve under the magnitude of his own conceptions almost bewildered at his own audacity of attempt, the man immersed in affairs returns to his dwelling to find nine times out of ten, no place of rest for body or mind. He dines in state either at home or abroad, he sits in rooms over-heated and glaring with light, he partakes night after night of the most indigestible food and drinks freely of various wines, and not infrequently goes toward midnight to some gathering, where his pretty daughter waits his protection, and tries to forget the issuing of shares and the dividing of uncertain profits, as he watches her enjoyment and marks the admiration she attracts.

One chief promoter of such a great result, which counts for a very large percentage of its certain attainment, is the keeping out of debt and living strictly within, not even up to, the moderate limit of family expenses. If American wives could realize that to them, above all other women, freedom of control of their husband's means is allowed, they surely are at least as generous as their sisters of England and France, and would not abuse the trust put in their magnanimity. Yet few liberal men ever have opportunity left them for the pleasure of giving unlooked-for gifts to home and wife and child; the utmost possibility is more than availed of and in most cases overstepped by an uncertain and harassing margin. It would be an intensely interesting inquiry which would show us the proportions of our husbands and fathers, however prosperous, who could say: "My household expenses give me no anxiety. I do not spend any more than I can comfortably afford."

Even his summers have no calming influence. Social life is as complex and exacting in July as in January, and the enormous cost of living is a sharp spur to greater and greater endeavor. Of Mrs. Gladstone it is said that she counted it an honor to act as a senry over her tired husband's hours of rest and study; the urgent demand which could compel attention from a servant or even a Secretary found her unapproachable, and many a critical approach to a break-down was warded off by her tyrannous control of the closed doors. The rest before a debate, the uninterrupted days of preparation for the launching of some great measure, were secured by her tender inflexible watch. Among us there are few if any such great movers of the nation thus to save and guard; even proud as we

the government of children is another great factor; the woman who can imbue her children with a determined resolution to bring happiness to their father and to count his distress and disappointment a sinhas given a hostage to insure his lengthened life and conserve his brain powers. To forbid them absolutely to harass him for indulgences, or bring tales of discomfort or differences to annoy and disquiet him, to set up as the governing rule of the home the comfort and relief of the head of the family, is but a common act of justice toward him to whom they owe their lives and all that makes life happy and exalted.

IRISH AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION.

Father Finlay, in an address, at the convention of the Irish Agricultural Society, held recently in Dublin, dealt with some phases of the industrial question. He said in part:

It was not by devices of rhetoric they were to save the industrial Ireland of to-day. Was it enough to agitate or struggle for a modification of the relations between landlord and tenant? For his part he thought that nothing that could be secured at present through legislation, or otherwise, in that field of effort would appreciably affect the proposition of the Irish agriculturist. It was by carrying out their industry on co-operative lines that they would best secure the improvement of their method, and the consequent increase of the value and quantity of their agricultural produce. There was still much room for improvements in the manner in which their business was conducted. No one would question the capacity of the Irishman for business methods or for any system in which intelligence, keenness, intellectual insight, or quickness of perception were the required qualities. But what many of those who had watched the progress of the movement, and who had been brought into contact with the work of the various agricultural societies would be inclined to question was whether in many Irish districts there was a capacity for steady plodding attention to business details which was essential to success. They would find men ready to attend general meetings—all the more readily if there were a likelihood of a lively exchange of personal opinions—but when it came to a question of attending meetings week after week and month after month, and going steadily and energetically into lines of figures, and examining percentages and the various other details of management, he regretted to say that they did not always find the same eagerness and assiduity in attending these meetings. He thought they were making progress in this country in the idea that they were entitled to be the controllers and guides of their own industries. It had taken a good while to get that idea into the minds of a large number of people.

MIRACLES AT LOURDES.

In an interview the other day the Right Rev. Bishop Chatard, speaking of his recent visit to Lourdes, made some interesting statements with regard to a miracle that came under his personal observation some years ago.

"There are," he said, "modern miracles which cannot be gainsaid. I have personal knowledge of one that to me is a satisfactory answer to the peer that 'signs do not follow those who believe.' A man, by name Pierre de Rudder, of Jabbeke, near Brygus, in Belgium, had his leg broken by the fall of a tree. For seven years he suffered from this fracture in which both the bones of the lower leg, the tibia and fibula, were broken, which was complicated with an external wound, continually discharging. Seven different physicians visited the poor man; everything tried was of no avail. The limb shrivelled and dangled perfectly useless; and walking without crutches was impossible. Not only was this the case, but on April 7, 1875, he was obliged to put on the wound an oak bark plaster to destroy the worms in it. The foot could be bent from side to side so that the heel was in front.

"On that day Pierre de Rudder, who had been praying faithfully to Our Lady of Lourdes, visited our sanctuary at Postakker. The journey by rail and wagon caused him a great deal of suffering, but still he continued hopeful and praying. After a while he seems to have lost consciousness, for he found himself at the foot of the altar, not knowing how he came thither. He looked for his crutches. He had left them at his place on the bench. He rose up bewildered; found that he could stand; that he was cured completely.

"In the spring of 1878, returning from Italy to America, leaving my route I went into Belgium. At Jabbeke I saw and talked to Pierre de Rudder, with the cure Abbe Slock, with several of Rudder's neighbors and intimates, with the inn-keeper at Jabbeke, and with one of the doctors who had attended the case. All testified to the miraculous cure. The doctor said 'art could not accomplish such a cure as had taken place in De Rudder.' De Rudder showed me his leg and

GLASGOW IRISHMEN FOR UNITY.

An interesting discussion covering a wide political area, took place at the meeting of the Home Government Branch, I.N.L., in the Albion Hall, Glasgow, recently. Mr. J. Carroll occupied the chair, and there were also present—Messrs. J. Stafford, P. Colgan, T. Donnelly, J. Doherty, P. McNulty, B. McNulty, J. Kennedy, M. Dunbar, J. Mulligan, A. Murphy, R. C. Robertson, E. Baxter, J. Baxter, T. Colgan, J. Corran, etc.

Mr. Colgan referred to the circular issued by the National League Executive appealing for funds and calling attention to the near approach of the General Election, and the strong feeling in Ireland in favor of the United Irish League. He urged that something should be done in Glasgow to unite the local Nationalists. Every effort should be made to forget the bitterness of the past and to start anew in the struggle for their rights and liberties.

The local correspondent of the Dublin gives the following report of the proceedings: Mr. A. Murphy, in opening the debate, said he wished to draw the attention of the branch to the state of affairs in Ireland. There was no denying the fact that the Irish people were uniting under the banner of the United Irish League. This new movement was cementing a bond of union among their brothers in Ireland, and he regretted that there was not some similar movement in Great Britain working to bring their countrymen back into the organization. He suggested that those who differed with them should be asked to come to their meetings and explain their reason for keeping outside the organization. Referring to the unity conference held in Dublin recently, Mr. Murphy expressed the opinion that it was too late in the day for unity conferences. Irish M. P.'s had had years in which to settle their differences, and there was little prospect of them being settled by conference now. He trusted an opportunity would be given to Irishmen throughout Glasgow to come to the branch with a view to mutual settlement of differences.

Mr. O'Malley agreed that some means should be adopted to bring about union among Glasgow Irishmen. In Govan, where he resided for some years, they had a fine organization a few years ago, but it had now almost disappeared. In order to restore unity the Irish people must have a powerful organization. It was a pity that at the last convention the name of the National League was not changed, as he believed the change would have brought to the ranks many Irishmen who now held aloof. Referring to Lord Enly, Mr. O'Malley said that no one who ever lived in Ireland and knew the position of the poor laborers would censure Lord Enly for the course he had taken in their behalf.

Mr. Stafford also spoke, after which Mr. R. C. Robertson addressed the meeting. With regard to the recent conference in Dublin, the speaker said that the lesson to be drawn from it was that Mr. Healy saw that his days were numbered, and he sought by some means to ingratiate himself into the hearts of the Irish people to ensure his return at the next election. Mr. Robertson concluded by giving notice that at next meeting he would propose the following resolution:—"That a meeting be convened in Glasgow for the purpose of considering the advisability of changing the name and constitution of the Irish National League of Great Britain, and also to devise means to try and bring about a reunion of Irishmen in the city of Glasgow."

PECULIAR CHINESE CUSTOMS.

Etiquette in the Chinese religion. The centre of ritualism is the Emperor, alive or dead. M. Ch. de Harlez, of the French Academy, one of the greatest authorities on China, from the hundreds of volumes filled with a description of Chinese rites, has lately prepared a full account of all the imperial ceremonies, developed and added to from 718 A.D., to the present time, dwelling at length upon the funeral of the Emperor. Immediately the Emperor dies his successor, with the other members of the Imperial family, removes caps head dresses, ornaments, and plumes, and begins to sob and leap for sorrow. In this interval the corpse is dressed and laid in state in the great hall of the palace. For 100 days the family live in a plain house outside the palace, wear coarse garments, and leave the hair uncombed. All of the sacrifices cease, save that to "Heaven and Earth." During the twenty-seven months following, mourning is worn; there is never a banquet nor any music. After various prostrations, lamenta-

tions, tea drinking, waving of banners, etc., the Emperor returns to his mourning-house, but etiquette compels him to visit the corpse again and again during the first day, each time presenting the dead man with choice viands and making libations of wine. Next morning, amid innumerable small ceremonies the will is brought in by the supreme counsellors laid upon a yellow table, whereupon the new sovereign assumes his robes of state, and orders the tambour to be struck five times as notification that sacrifices are in order. This is a prelude to the imperial cremation, or, rather burnt offering, for during those almost endless obsequies more than 1,000,000 pieces of paper money, with thousands of sheep, bottles of wine, and sacrificial meats, are offered, accompanied by libations of tea on the part of the new Emperor or the priests in attendance. Day after day the weeping, prostrations, and offerings, accompanied by now prayers, take place with the mandarins and princes in atten-

DR. PIERCE'S FAVORITE PRESCRIPTION MAKES MOTHER AND BABY STRONG AND HAPPY. IT DOES NOT CONTAIN ALCOHOL, WHISKY, OPIUM, COCAINE or other Intoxicant or Narcotic. A TRUE TEMPERANCE MEDICINE. NOTICE: It is hereby given that application will be made to the Legislature of the Province of Quebec, at its next session, by the Trustees of the Parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Montreal, for a continuation of the powers to them conferred by Chap. 45-46 Victoria. Montreal, Dec. 27th, 1897. N. FAVREAU, Secretary.