

CATHOLIC PRACTICES

There has, of late, been observed a certain tendency in non-Catholic literature to depreciate the value of Catholic practices by an effort to trace their origin to pagan observances.

One thing is noticeable in these efforts of non-Catholic critics, namely, that in striving to show a conformity between the Catholic religion and that of the pagans, they invariably give the preference to the latter; yet in drawing the parallel they ingeniously dismember all the grosser superstitions of the pagans, while, on the other hand, the most substantial parts of the Catholic religion, they seem to forget that the Catholic believes in the Scriptures, in the one, and the Gospel left for mankind.

One cannot help smiling as he reads the accounts of travelers in Catholic lands who seem to have a theory ready to fit any and every occasion and event. They wander out into the country, where they see visible characters of paganism on every side—the little chapels on the wayside where travelers often kneel to say a prayer, and the crosses erected at the turning of the roads.

Processions in honor of the blessed Virgin and the saints are again made subject to this sort of criticism. One "learned" critic supposes them to be the sacrifices, pomps and dances mentioned by Plutarch in Numa, and concludes that these processions must be heathenish, all the more because he finds in Apuleius an account of something like a procession performed by the heathens in honor of their gods.

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most authentic monuments, and by the dispositions of innumerable eye-witnesses examined upon oath. One may examine the whole list of cheap criticism thus added to render Catholic practices odious. It is but a weapon in the general attack upon the Church, cleverly manipulated it is true, but wanting only a little study to betray its worthlessness and the evil design of those who make use of it.

QUEEN ELIZABETH, PRISONER

Among the many traditions concerning Queen Elizabeth there is this, that she wrote on a shutter with a piece of charcoal: "So God send to my foes all that they have wrought. Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner."

It was written at Woodstock, a place around which clings forever the memory of much romance. We are reminded of her youth and adventures by the history of the "Girdle of Queen Elizabeth," by Mr. Frank Munby. It consists mainly of a republication of official documents, some hitherto unpublished, that have been scattered in the pages of many publications, and culled from the collections of diplomatic documents in many of the courts of Europe.

The characteristics of Elizabeth, as students have come to know them, are striking. She was incurably coarse; she was desperately voracious; she was passionately devoted to conspiracies—a crooked course always was preferred by her; she had not even an ordinary regard for truthfulness; she only cared for religion so far as it was useful for personal or political purposes, and she had no confidence in humanity so far as she knew it.

Elizabeth was not welcome when she came into the world. Henry wanted a heir, not an heiress, and the official announcements, prepared beforehand, calculated upon a son, who had been promised by soothsayers. She was called the Princess of England, and the popular freedom of tongue in a coarse age called by quite another name, and the Princess Mary, legitimate daughter of Henry and Catharine, repudiated the claim on Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was fifteen years old when Henry died. She was becoming an object of political ambition. The Lord Admiral Thomas Seymour offered to marry her in 1547. She refused. Then Seymour married the Queen Dowager, Catharine Parr. Elizabeth lived with them for a time, and in their house she became, merrily enough the "victim" of Seymour, and lost all hold on the feminine virtues almost before she knew what they were. She never cared

for them again, and the true story of her life would be intolerable. In 1553 the hitherto somewhat ill-treated Mary became queen, and for the next five years (till 1558) Elizabeth lived during a large part of the time a suspected prisoner. During these years she cultivated her mind industriously. She was compelled by circumstances and by her partisans to dip deep, but not too deep, in every conspiracy against Mary. She made extended concessions to Mary's religious convictions. She became greedy of money for her political purposes. She learned to distrust all men and women. She saw through the rival games of continental powers. She learned how to play off the pretenders for her hand. And when she became Queen of England she was as fully equipped for cynical as for the policy of her ministers as any woman or man who ever ascended a throne. She was not an able woman; that theory has to be given up; but she was an intelligently submissive master, and she was one of the greatest men in the history of England.

THE GREAT EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

At their annual meeting at the Catholic University of April 6th, the Archbishops of the United States expressed their heartfelt interest in the Eucharistic Congress which is to be held in the city of Montreal during the second week of next September. Realizing also the great importance of this event for Catholicism at large and especially for the Church in America, they requested me, in their name and in my own, to invite the attention of the Hierarchy and laity of our country to the scope of the Congress and to its characteristic feature as a public manifestation of our Catholic belief.

It is indeed a matter of rejoicing that the central purpose of this gathering is to offer our homage and thanksgiving to the Author and Finisher of our Faith, our Saviour Jesus Christ. For thereby we proclaim in the hearing of all men that He is the same divine reality for us as He was for those to whom He declared: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." This abiding presence, which each Catholic realizes at the foot of the altar, is likewise the chief source of our spiritual life, the bond of our unity, the unseen yet unailing cause of the countless activities whereby religion is spread, through sacrifice and organized effort, to the uttermost ends of our humanity.

It is, therefore, not surprising that each announcement of this Eucharistic Congress should meet with an enthusiastic response, and that this means of honoring our Lord should have spread so quickly from country to country. In the last few decades have been marked by trial and struggle for the Church of God, they have also been singularly fruitful in consolation and encouragement; and it is surely significant that our own age, so noteworthy for scientific advance and material progress, should have witnessed so general an increase in the interest in our holy religion.

The impulse of faith which has hitherto found its center in Europe, directs the great Catholic movement of this age. "Canada," the Congress will be held upon ground that is rich in memories of the early days when Christianity and civilization came together to these shores. The bond of our country, the sturdy faith of the people who erected the altar wherever they went, the entire continent of America is forever indelibly stamped in our hearts as the heralds of the Kingdom of God and as bearers of the Cross of Christ. It is fitting therefore that we should hold their memory sacred, and there is no worthier tribute we can pay them than that of our loyalty to the faith for which they died, and for which so many of them died.

That is our common heritage, and we may well be thankful that in Canada and in the United States it has not only been preserved, but has increased in vitality. Through it unnumbered blessings have been brought to our homes, our social relations and our public life. Of these benefits each of us, in his private life, and in his public life, is conscious and appreciative. But to estimate them at their full value it is needful that we should feel from time to time how thorough is the community of our religious interest, and how strong the ties which bind the Catholic people.

Accordingly regard the approaching Congress as a most favorable occasion both of quickening our own zeal, for the service of Christ and of giving new evidence of our faith, and of drawing from the Eucharistic Sacrament of all grace. Together with the Archbishops of the United States, I earnestly commend to our clergy and faithful the most Reverend Archbishop of Montreal who has spared no effort in the arduous task of organizing the Congress. In sympathy with his endeavors and in response to the cordial invitation which he has extended to the people, I would regard it as most gratifying and as truly characteristic of our common Catholicism if the Eucharistic Congress should count among its members the faithful adherents of Jesus Christ in every diocese of our country.

J. CARD GIBBONS, Archbishop of Baltimore.

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THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN ENGLISH HISTORY

Heraldry is thought to have originated in the necessity for distinguishing, by some outward sign, amidst the confusion of battle, the principal leaders during the expeditions for the recovery of the Holy Land, says The Southern Messenger. But nothing is absolutely known concerning it beyond the fact that it might indicate that the fortunes of the heraldic devices, properly so called, can be traced; and the commencement of the thirteenth century is the earliest period to which the bearing of the heraldic devices, properly so called, can be traced; and the commencement of the thirteenth century is the earliest period to which the bearing of the heraldic devices, properly so called, can be traced.

It was quaintly told of King Arthur, in language which we may term: "This noble and mighty prince, King Arthur, had great trust, so that he left his arms that he bore of dragons and over that another shield of crowns, and took to his arms a cross of silver in a field of vert and on the right side an image of our Blessed Lady, her Son in her arms."

At the battle of Agincourt, the English army carried five colors into action; one of them being the banner of our Blessed Lady, this having the place of honor next to the standard. Swords and breastplates were often adorned with our Lady's image; and the sword which was bestowed upon Richard the First when he became Duke of Normandy was first hallowed by being laid upon her altar.

NEW FOURTH DEGREE REGULATIONS

Knights of Columbus throughout the country will be interested in the announcement that the fourth degree of the order will enter upon a thorough system of organization and government upon July 1 of this year, when entirely new rules and regulations for that degree will go into effect, providing for a National Assembly and District Assemblies in addition to the present local assemblies. Up to this time, the fourth degree has been in a rather inchoate condition, but an avowed reform of government has now been adopted, and under this form, there is no question but that great progress will be made.

The United States and Canada will be divided into six provinces, and the provinces will be divided into districts. The local assemblies in each district will hold district assemblies, corresponding to the state councils of the third degree. Each province will be presided over by a Vice Supreme Master, under a Supreme Master whose jurisdiction will correspond with that of the Supreme Council of the third degree of the order. Thus a thorough and effective system of government is provided, which will greatly stimulate interest in the higher degree.

Hitherto, the Master of the Fourth degree has been appointed by the board of directors upon the recommendation of the State Deputy. Under the new rules, the delegates of each assembly will meet in a district assembly, similar to the state council of third degree members, and select three names as the district assembly's recommendation for the office of Master of the fourth degree.

Our presence and co-operation will be a source of joy to the Catholics of Canada, to the Hierarchy and in particular to the Most Reverend Archbishop of Montreal who has spared no effort in the arduous task of organizing the Congress. In sympathy with his endeavors and in response to the cordial invitation which he has extended to the people, I would regard it as most gratifying and as truly characteristic of our common Catholicism if the Eucharistic Congress should count among its members the faithful adherents of Jesus Christ in every diocese of our country.

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These three names will be sent to the board of directors, which, at its next regular quarterly meeting, will appoint a Master of the fourth degree for each district.

Irish Factions

There were scrimmages in Cork last week between members of the All-Ireland faction and the supporters of the United Irish League, and the papers here speak of the affair as one between rival Irish factions. This is not a proper description. There is only one faction in the case. The United Irish party, led by Mr. John Redmond, is a body of seventy-one members; the factionists number six. Small as the number is, it is sufficient to give excuses for the cry by tiousness of the disorders of the faction. There is another "faction": the Brothers Healy are the chief members, and their programme, as announced by the secretary, is to smear at a Home Rule Parliament as a sham wherein bogus patriots would be found posturing. Ireland is not the only country which is troubled by factionists; but it is the only one which is habitually held up before the world, by the connivance of English cable managers and correspondents, as a place of general infamy for the responsibility of self-government because of the tendency of Irishmen to fight with one another—a tendency as marked in political life in the United States as in Ireland.

Corpus Christi in London

Last Sunday, in St. Peter's Cathedral, London, the feast of Corpus Christi was celebrated in a becoming manner by the Holy Mass. The celebrant was Rev. Father O'Neill, deacon and subdeacon, Rev. Fathers Lowry and Nagle. After Mass the usual procession took place on the grounds of the cathedral. The congregation was one of the largest ever assembled in the church.

The Blessed Sacrament was carried by Rev. Father O'Neill, assisted by Rev. Fathers Lowry and Nagle. Members of St. Vincent de Paul society acted as guards of honor. The procession consisted of the children, all very neatly attired and carrying flowers, the Children of Mary, the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Order of Foresters, the C. M. B. A., the Separate School Board, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. All the arrangements, under the superintendence of the Rector, Rev. J. T. Aylward, were carried out with the utmost decorum and order.

When he (Mr. Roosevelt) asked for an audience he was not only granted but granted with the utmost cordiality. At the same time and inevitably under all the circumstances, and as delicately as was consistent with perfect clearness, Mr. Roosevelt was acquainted informally, amiably, confidentially, through a private telegram, of the situation and of the Pope's wish for the avoidance of similar trouble. Mr. Roosevelt was not asked or expected to make any declaration. The audience had been granted; if he knew already of Mr. Fairbanks' unhappy mistake and had no intention of repeating it there was no more to be said, and everybody would have been pleased to see him in the Vatican.

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