

RELICS OF THE PAST.

Evidences of the Catholicity of Other Days.

It is sometimes difficult to realize that England once was for centuries Catholic to the core. So skilfully did the iniquitous "Reformers" of that dreadful sixteenth century carry out their design of utterly rooting out the old religion that in this nineteenth century many doubtless imagine that the ancient cathedrals and churches are the only relics of the Catholic past: even of these several of the largest and most magnificent fabrics have absolutely disappeared, save for a fragment or two—for example, the Benedictine Cathedral of Coventry and their Abbey Minsters at Bury St. Edmund's, Evesham, Reading and Colchester; the avareous iconoclasts made much money out of their materials, and—dreadful to relate—the shells were used as quarries.

But there are other remnants of the glorious past, and I wish to produce some which Protestant John Bull is obliged to use in his conversation and daily life, such as verbal expressions and the names of places.

Few Englishmen fast, but most Englishmen do breakfast! As a national custom this meal is quite famous; as a rule, on the Continent and in warmer climes the enormous English breakfast is unknown, save for "Messieurs les Anglais" when they require it: but what does the word breakfast mean? Nothing less than the Catholic allowance of breaking the fast on a fasting day by that very different "meal" which all Catholics, who do or are able to, know well enough—dry toast and coffee or tea.

Another "punchant" of John Bull (Catholic or Protestant) is his beer! Again, quite a national characteristic, but what are often the names of the "pubs"—surely the imbibing Protestant is not to be haunted by Catholic relics there! Yes, indeed he is, Who has not heard of (or tasted) the liquor of "The Cross Keys" (viz. St. Peter's, or the Papal Keys), "The Angel" (viz. St. Gabriel at the Annunciation), "The George," "The Dragon," "The Mitre," and many more of similar nomenclature, still holding the names of our pious ancestors gave to their hosteleries!

Then John Bull has got to pay for both breakfast or beer! But what do those two letters "D. E." after Her Majesty's name mean? "Defensor Fidei" (Defender of the Faith). Yes! the one Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Faith. And so a title given by Pope Leo X. in A. D. 1521 to then orthodox Henry VIII. for his writings against Luther in defence of the Faith of the "sacrosanct Roman Church," in a Bull signed by himself and twenty-seven Cardinals, has been retained by every successive Sovereign of England, whether Calvinist, Lutheran, or Anglican! and by an excess of sad anachronism this Catholic remnant is stamped upon every single coin of the realm or of the colonies.

Then every now and then come certain days named from the Church's Calendar—Christmas, viz. the Mass of Christ's Birth; Shrove Tuesday, when Englishmen used to be "shriven" or confessed and absolved; Ash Wednesday, when they were signed in the form of a cross on the head with the blessed ashes in the beautiful symbolism of Holy Church; Lady Day, now chiefly noted for the reception of rents or for their payment, and in the latter case (and often in the former case also) by no means a festival for them, but this was, and to Catholics still is, Our Lady Day, viz. the Feast of the Annunciation, when the "Ave Maria," now daily recited millions of times by the faithful of every tongue and every clime all over the world, was first heard: Michaelmas, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter and Whit Sunday of course are Catholic terms, while All Hallowe'en, All Hallows, Candlemas, Martinmas and other Catholic festivals still linger in country districts.

And there are the ancient country customs which are the relics of Catholic sacramentals or ceremonies, such as those at funerals in Wales and elsewhere, the beating of the bounds by civic authorities on rogation days (at Oxford for instance), local fairs on great feasts such as the Assumption of Our Lady (to them only August 15 now), holy wells, distribution of parochial doles, gathering palm for Palm Sunday, the names of flowers so often called after Our Lady, or month of May customs, and many other examples might be given.

And now, if we turn to the names of places, there is the same touching evidence. For instance, in London, Black Friars, Austin Friars, Grey Friars, refer to the Friars which once stood there; but both churches and convents have entirely disappeared—the Charterhouse, with its glorious memories of the Carthusian Martyrs; Charing Cross, where once stood the beautiful cross erected by Edward I., which was totally destroyed by the Anglicans of those days, whose Prime, the Calvinist Dr. Abbott, suggested the erection of an Egyptian pyramid in its place! Paternoster Row, near St. Paul's and many other relics of Catholic nomenclature remain the great Metropolis of the world. Westminster Abbey has retained its name, though alas! the Benedictine abbots and monks are no longer in possession, and the splendid old building is not really an abbey now.

Those superb foundations of the Catholic Church, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, are full of remnants of the past. At each there is a Corpus Christi College, while at Oxford that of All Souls was founded by an Archbishop of Canterbury in the fifteenth century to ensure Masses and prayers for the souls of those slain at Agincourt. Jesus, St. Mary's, St. Mary Magdalen's, St. John's Peterhouse, and other names of the colleges remain as monuments of Catholic piety—often forgotten now as one hears for instance, on the river at the races, "Well rowed, Maudlid," or "Jaggers," or "Corpus"—indeed it is a pity for many reasons that the names are not now altered.

But far more important than these words and names of places is the Catholic origin of England's greatness, as exemplified in the foundation of her national institutions. It is quite certain that the union of the several British kingdoms into one state arose from their previous unity as members of the One Church of Christ—that the Anglo-Saxon Wittenam Gemot, the ancestor of the present House of Lords, sprang from the example of the Church's synods—that the representative system, the House of Commons, originated in and was copied from the election of preceptors to represent the clergy in these synods.

Catholics discovered the New World and most of our colonies, the use of coal, and invented printing. Public libraries, hospitals, hotels, dispensaries, homes for the poor and orphans, were all copied from monasticism, but the workhouse is a purely Anglican institution. The Union Jack, Great Britain's flag, is of Catholic origin, with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew, the patron saints of England and Scotland.

At the coronation of a sovereign many Catholic ceremonies are still in use, and on Maundy Thursday the Queen's Maundy gifts are solemnly distributed; in Catholic times the sovereign used to wash the feet of the poor and personally distribute these gifts to them.

As for the national religion and the multitude of sects, Protestants would not have had the Bible or have known which Scriptures were inspired if it had not been for the Catholic Church; while we may indeed question where the national Church of England would have been by this time if it had not been from the first supported by the Crown and State, and by the spoils of the old English Church, viz. the ancient cathedrals and churches, endowments and tithes, with their titular and material continuity. And the two leading dignitaries of that very establishment, "The Protestant reformed religion established by law," which rose upon the plunder and the denial of nearly everything Catholic, bear about with them the insignia of the real Archbishops of Canterbury and of York, for they still use the arms of the old Sees, that of Canterbury being the pallium and the metropolitan cross, while that of York is the Papal keys with a Royal crown (formerly the Papal tiara until the "Reformation"). What a significant anachronism it is that the pallium should be engraved upon the carriages, official documents, and other property of every titular Archbishop of Canterbury, for thereby indeed hangs a tale.

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The wonderful High Church movement is, of course, largely a copy of portions of the Catholic past and also of the Catholic present. It is a hopeful sign that it is not the post-Reformation but the pre-Reformation period in England which is now prized by the majority of Anglicans; and from all over the world the prayers of thousands, led by the "Apostolic" Leo XIII., daily ascend that they may, by the grace of God, see where that spiritual continuity, for which they so sadly grope in the dark, really lies.

And so we have seen how English religious, educational and judicial systems, one government and trade, all have more or less a Catholic origin; how John Bull, even in his conversation and life, cannot quite escape recalling the Ages of Faith; and how this Protestant little island of ours, *nolens volens*, greatly owes its national institutions and the foundations of its proud Empire, upon which the sun never sets, to the Catholic Church, and, of course, primarily to the Mother and Mistress of all the Churches (especially so of all the first and second English Churches)—the Holy Roman Church.—Liverpool Catholic Times.

THE COMMUNICATION OF SPIRITUAL GOODS.

Catholic Progress.

The doctrine of Indulgences is inseparably connected with the most fundamental and blessed truths of the Gospel: namely, the perfect holiness of God, and the solidarity of the faithful as members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.

While salvation depends upon the separate co-operation of each individual, will with the saving grace of God, it is nevertheless a sublime truth that we are not saved as individuals, but as members of Christ. If it is true in the natural order that "no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself," it is particularly true, in an altogether unique sense, in the supernatural order.

The Body of Christ is "fily joined together and nourished by that which every joint supplieth." The streams of grace which pour from the riven side and wounded members of the World's Redeemer are distributed from one member to another throughout His Mystical Body. The grace which is the free gift of God blossoms out in supernatural virtues which are pleasing in God's sight and which draw down new showers of grace from the same inexhaustible fountains of the Precious Blood. Thus each word, thought or act inspired by a supernatural love of God is a new channel opened between the hearts of the faithful and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Thus it is that every grace we receive comes to us not only from the condign merits of Jesus Christ but also from the congruous merits of the saints.

Just as in the human body the life-blood circulates in certain definite channels, here in greater quantities and there in less, so in the Church the mystical Blood of Jesus—His sanctifying-grace—has its special channels of varying nature and dignity. These are chiefly prayer and the sacraments. But as in the individual human body the life-blood is sent in greater force and quantity to any given part by the influence of the will, or the reflex action of the nerves, so in the Mystical Body the spiritual life-blood—Divine grace—may be more abundantly directed to this part or that, according to the intention of its members.

Thus every Christian or body of Christians can admit any other individual or group to a share in his merits, that is, in the spiritual value of the graces which he receives from Jesus Christ. The chief among the extraordinary and special means by which the treasures of grace are thus distributed among the members of Christ are Indulgences. In these the Church herself directly applies to the soul who fulfils the prescribed conditions the merits of the Redeemer and of the saints—that is, the operating and co-operating grace which, if fully used, is able to make the soul perfect in the love of God.

Some people imagine that, since Indulgences can only be gained by a person already in the state of grace, and only avail to remit the temporal penalty of sin, it is only a selfish cowardice—a desire to be "let off easy," and as it were by the Divine Justice—that would prompt one to use them. This is a great mistake.

The temporal "debt to Divine Justice" is only exacted so long as our charity towards God is deficient. We must pay that debt because we are not wholly united to the Saviour, Who has "borne all our sins in His own body on the tree." So far as our temporal punishment is really a punishment it is a remedial one. The very name of Purgatory means "a place of purification." A perfect act of contrition wipes out all the "temporal debt to Divine Justice"; because when the soul attains the fullness of the love of God she becomes fully united to Christ.

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The love of God, therefore, requires us to strive to gain as many Indulgences as possible. The more one loves Him the more one wishes to love Him, and in order to reach the perfection of Divine love it is necessary to seek it from God Himself and in the fellowship of His faithful ones. Charity, or supernatural love, is identical with sanctifying grace, and is nothing other than the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

So long as the slightest defect remains in the soul, so long as it has not attained to angelic sanctity, it needs, not only the ordinary aids of prayer and the sacraments, but also the extraordinary aids of Indulgences, by which it is enabled to share in the charity of all the saints.

Moreover, the love of our neighbor requires the same zeal for the salvation and spiritual perfection of our neighbor as for our own. The graces which we draw from the common treasure-house by Indulgences can be distributed at our will, though subject to the Divinely-prescribed conditions and the action of spiritual laws which we do not fully understand, any more than we do the laws of corporal nature. No cause appeals more strongly to Christian charity than the spiritual warfare of souls that have passed into the other world alive in God and yet so slothful and so encumbered by worldly attachments that the Divine grace has been prevented from realizing in them its full effects. Such souls, suffering the pangs of hope deferred and passing through the purifying fires which Divine justice demands and Divine mercy provides, and yet unable to help themselves in their disembodied and isolated state, should receive the daily assistance of every devout wayfarer. We should, by our prayers, and by the offering of the fruits of our own supernatural acts and especially of Indulgences, always in union with the Holy Sacrifice consummated on Calvary and perpetuated in the Mass, endeavor to be the means of drawing down upon the members of the Church suffering a constant stream of graces, which will hasten their individual and collective deliverance.

One of the most beautiful truths of religion is this communion of spiritual goods between the perfected saints in Heaven, the imperfect saints in Purgatory and the servants of God, in various stages of perfection, who are still wayfarers here below. Indulgences are the most glorious seal and instrument of this communion. By them the merits of all the saints, whether in grace or in glory,—these merits constituting, be it remembered, the aggregate effect and product of the merits of Jesus Christ, so far as actually effective, up to the present moment, in the redemption of mankind—are imparted to the most spiritually needy among the faithful, so as to draw down upon them, from the infinite wellspring of the Precious Blood of Jesus, the new graces that are requisite for their spiritual perfection, and for the consummation, in the Beatific Vision, of that union with God which began with the first dawnings of the life of grace.

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If it be asked, What is the ideal family? we reply, simply, it is a family constructed upon and governed by Christian principle, and pervaded by a true Christian spirit. That is the whole matter in a nutshell. It is a very simple statement and no doubt it sounds commonplace, but it embraces a world of meaning. It contains the secret of true happiness in this world and furnishes the best security for happiness in the world to come. The details are as simple and commonplace as the general proposition; but it may be well for us to consider them for a moment.

In the first place, it goes without saying, that the heads of the ideal family are practical Catholics—which, of course, is the same as saying that they are practical Christians. They live not for this world—its riches, its honors or its pleasures, but for the world to come. They do not, indeed, neglect the business or the simple, rational pleasures of this life, but their whole spirit and conduct show that their hearts are not supremely in this world, but they strive always to seek first the kingdom of God and His justice with a firm faith, that all other things necessary for their happiness and well being will be added unto them. Consequently, their household is a Christian household. God is constantly recognized in all their daily life.

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The parents have not entered upon the interesting relation of husband and wife from fancy, or impulse, or from motives of selfish interest or passion, but with a serious sense of importance, the sacredness and the responsibility of the relation. They have solemnly pledged their troth before the altar of God, and they have resolved, with the help of divine grace, to keep their vows and fulfill their promises. They have realized that the true secret of domestic happiness lies in mutual concession and mutual forbearance. There is no clashing—no selfish bickering between them. They are specially careful not to set before their children the example of strife and contention. They know well that example is catching, and if they wish to have peace and harmony reign among the children it must originate with the parents and flow down gently and silently from the fountain head of the family.

If difference of opinion arises—and differences will sometimes arise in the best of families—they are discussed not with heat, or passion, or with a selfish desire of victory on either side, but calmly, candidly, with a simple desire to know the truth, and with a disposition on both sides to yield the point at issue rather than give rise to the least misunderstanding or bad feeling.

Alas! how many unhappy families are deprived of peace and harmony and rendered wretched by the thoughtless, selfish bickering and contention of the parents! If the parents quarrel the children will, of course, quarrel also, and bedlam will then reign supreme. The children will quarrel among themselves and with their parents. They will be disobedient and refractory, and they will, in all probability, be punished hastily and in anger, and this will add to their disobedient and ugly spirit.

Not such is the ideal family. There the unflinching devotion and delicate and affectionate consideration of the parents communicate themselves to the children. They love their parents, and they love each other, and they instinctively show the same affectionate, unselfish consideration towards each other that they witness in their parents. If at any time the children need correction it is administered not hastily, inconsiderately, and in a passion, but calmly, conscientiously and in love for the child, and with a wise and thoughtful adaptation of the reproof or punishment to the varying temperaments and dispositions of the children.

Above all, the controlling motive and all-pervading spirit of the ideal family is a religious one. Conscience rules in all questions of duty, and a spirit of love prompted by divine graces, in the habitual use of the sacraments of Holy Church, pervades all hearts and binds them all in indissoluble and delightful bonds of fraternal affection.

These people do not wear long faces they do not exclude themselves from society and retire from the world. They are in the world but not of it. They discharge the duties of the society in which they move, but their hearts are not in its ambitions and its frivolities. The children are gay and light-hearted, fond of innocent pleasures, but have been taught to avoid such as are attended with special temptations. They have not to go abroad for recreation and diversion. Their greatest attraction is the home circle, where with books, pictures, works of art, music and social converse, with various games and home amusements, their rational aspirations are satisfied, and they are happy in themselves. If you take up your abode, even for a short time in that family circle, you will be led to exclaim, with pleased surprise, "Surely this is an ideal family, this is a little heaven upon earth." Is not such a family worth striving for?

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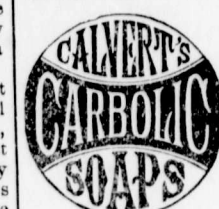
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THE IDEAL CATHOLIC FAMILY

It is a consoling fact that there are such families.

If it be asked, What is the ideal family? we reply, simply, it is a family constructed upon and governed by Christian principle, and pervaded by a true Christian spirit. That is the whole matter in a nutshell. It is a very simple statement and no doubt it sounds commonplace, but it embraces a world of meaning. It contains the secret of true happiness in this world and furnishes the best security for happiness in the world to come. The details are as simple and commonplace as the general proposition; but it may be well for us to consider them for a moment.

In the first place, it goes without saying, that the heads of the ideal family are practical Catholics—which, of course, is the same as saying that they are practical Christians. They live not for this world—its riches, its honors or its pleasures, but for the world to come. They do not, indeed, neglect the business or the simple, rational pleasures of this life, but their whole spirit and conduct show that their hearts are not supremely in this world, but they strive always to seek first the kingdom of God and His justice with a firm faith, that all other things necessary for their happiness and well being will be added unto them. Consequently, their household is a Christian household. God is constantly recognized in all their daily life.

The parents have not entered upon the interesting relation of husband and wife from fancy, or impulse, or from motives of selfish interest or passion, but with a serious sense of importance, the sacredness and the responsibility of the relation. They have solemnly pledged their troth before the altar of God, and they have resolved, with the help of divine grace, to keep their vows and fulfill their promises. They have realized that the true secret of domestic happiness lies in mutual concession and mutual forbearance. There is no clashing—no selfish bickering between them. They are specially careful not to set before their children the example of strife and contention. They know well that example is catching, and if they wish to have peace and harmony reign among the children it must originate with the parents and flow down gently and silently from the fountain head of the family.

If difference of opinion arises—and differences will sometimes arise in the best of families—they are discussed not with heat, or passion, or with a selfish desire of victory on either side, but calmly, candidly, with a simple desire to know the truth, and with a disposition on both sides to yield the point at issue rather than give rise to the least misunderstanding or bad feeling.

Alas! how many unhappy families are deprived of peace and harmony and rendered wretched by the thoughtless, selfish bickering and contention of the parents! If the parents quarrel the children will, of course, quarrel also, and bedlam will then reign supreme. The children will quarrel among themselves and with their parents. They will be disobedient and refractory, and they will, in all probability, be punished hastily and in anger, and this will add to their disobedient and ugly spirit.

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