

TALKS TO THE LAITY

In these days there can be no subject more worthy of our attention, or of greater importance, than for us to consider in what manner laymen can best promote the interests of the Church. In a certain sense this may be the case in every age, but the recent legislation regarding elementary education in this country, and the present religious revolution in France, have brought the subject to our minds with a force and directness we had not hitherto experienced. Though at all times the Church counts upon the loyalty of her children to her government, and their devotion to her cause, yet it would appear there are occasions when she seems specially to need the intelligent and active co-operation of the laity. For nineteen long centuries her position has been a militant one; it is so to-day, and so it will continue to the end of time. Her enemies, powerful, wealthy, well organized, often banded together in secret societies, though the method of their attacks may vary, are never idle. Yesterday she may have had to defend some dogmatic truth—of which she is the sole depository; to-day she may have to suffer the cruel persecution of her religious—of whom she is the protector; and to-morrow she may have to fight for Christian education in her schools, in order that her little ones may not be robbed of the faith of which she is the custodian.

QUEBEC

(Correspondent)

What is the position in which thousands of young men find themselves when leaving our schools and colleges to take their places in the busy centres of trade, commerce, or the professions? What hurry, what bustle, what keen competition, what ceaseless activity do they not witness on all sides! Life seems carried on at a sort of high pressure, race horse speed, in which only the smart, up-to-date business man has a chance of success, and where the drones are crowded out of existence. The Catholic youth, too, has his position also to make, and he finds himself, as it were, carried along in the rapid stream—he must perforce go with the current. He has scarcely time for a moment's rest, still less for serious thought. Yet even such a one can do some little to further those interests we are speaking of. There is a place for him, there is work he can undertake. Every Catholic young man can do an immense amount of good in furthering the interests of the Church, but better results may be obtained when they are united together in a properly organized association, governed by rules—whose experience has proved to be wise, and which the Sovereign Pontiffs have not only sanctioned, but enriched with many indulgences. It is rather a matter for regret than surprise that, so few of our young men join our ranks. If in a general way they take but a languid interest in Church matters, and keep clear of works established for the amelioration of the poor, it is not so much on account of their indifference to the one, or callousness concerning the other, but rather it is to be attributed to their social surroundings, their daily intercourse with others who are not in sympathy with their religious aims and aspirations, all of which have a tendency to weaken that Catholic spirit which should be the mainspring of their lives.

For instance, the Press is a great force in forming public opinion and not infrequently it deals with matters concerning the Church with such apparent fairness that one may be easily deceived and be led to form anti-Catholic ideas by the specious arguments of the writers. Some papers, indeed, make no secret of their bitter hatred, and no falsehood is too absurd, or calumny too vile to level against her. At any rate when it is not actually hostile to religion, young men never find in its columns anything which will encourage them to promote the interests of their Church. The newspaper is a necessity of our daily life, and we cannot help being more or less influenced by it. The weekly Catholic papers are, comparatively speaking, very little read, and it is thought we shall probably have to wait a very long time for a Catholic daily paper in England—any attempt at present to start one may mean financial ruin to the promoters. Again, no nation surpasses England in material wealth, nor does any country spend more money for benevolent purposes. It lavishes its riches freely—perhaps not prudently at all times—and a deaf ear is never turned to the cry of distress from whatever part of the world it may reach our shores.

What we are glad to know that this is so, at the same time it must be admitted that the supernatural Christian virtue of charity is practically unknown outside the Church. Worldly people have a natural dislike for, and an instinctive horror of poverty. They look upon a poor man as a sort of social ulcer, an eyesore that ought to be removed for the sake of decency, and so they shrink from the presence of the poor, and bring forward as an excuse that poor people are apt to be troublesome, and in fact are rather an unpleasant and objectionable class of fellow beings to deal with. Besides, it is so hard to discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving, the petitions of the genuine mendicants and those who are fraudulent—hence the risk of being imposed upon. They tell us that in the majority of cases the want and wretchedness we see on all sides are the outcome of the folly or improvidence or depravity of the poor themselves, and that their proper refuge is the workhouse. Respectable people, we are told, ought not to be bothered with such concerns. Let the State deal with them as they do with criminals. In short the poor are looked upon as a nuisance, and it is felt that the world would be all the brighter if it could get rid of them.

Now, we are not going to waste time in dealing with worldly-minded people who talk in this way. What we want to insist upon is that such views are not those held by the Church. As a matter of fact she has always taught, and what is better, she has always practised, the very opposite. In this she stands supremely alone, for what other denomination in the world can be found which boldly proclaims the doctrine that poverty is a virtue, that the condition of the poor is one of honor and dignity, and that, though they are in no ways dependent upon the rich, yet the very salvation of the latter is dependent upon the discharge of their duties towards those who are friendless, in want, and in distress? And this doctrine, so opposed to the teaching and practice of the world is not of to-day or yesterday, but is written large in the pages of her history during the 1900 years of her existence. What a vast number of Orders and Communities, both men and women, has she not established, whose proud title is "Servants of the poor"; and into these she has gathered the best, the holiest of her children, to each of whom she has assigned some particular work, so that it is not too much to say that in no part of the world can you find special distress or special affliction which the Church by means of her religious does not take special measures to alleviate.

Thus we see the aged and infirm, carefully tended by the Little Sisters; penitent girls find a safe asylum in the homes of the Good Shepherd nuns; the sick in our hospitals, under the loving watchfulness of the Sisters of Mercy. In Mandalay and other settlements, at the bedside of those afflicted with that most dreadful scourge, leprosy, notwithstanding the repulsive surroundings necessary connected with it, we see the Franciscan nuns and other religious lovingly nursing the poor sufferers, who would be forsaken by all were it not for these heroic women. It is consoling for us to call these things to mind, to feel that the Church is indeed the home of Christian charity. Even those without her pale, those who refuse to accept her teaching, or bow to her authority, often speak with admiration of the splendid services she renders to suffering humanity. And if they are not attracted towards the Church through it, if it does not win their hearts, at least it softens their prejudices, and perhaps, in some instances, it exercises a more powerful influence in leading to conversions, doing more good in this direction than heated controversy and acrimonious disputations. Not only is this true, but even wicked men have been known to fall under its spell. You remember what Ozanam said in his address to the Brothers of the Leghorn Conference "In France, in the dark and terrible days of 1793, when the churches and altars were being despoiled, the perpetrators of these deeds proposed, without hesitation, to raise a statue in honor of St. Vincent de Paul, the benefactor of mankind, and (Ozanam goes on to say,) if, in a sense I may use their rash and sacrilegious words, those impious men forgave St. Vincent de Paul for having loved God in return for the good he had done to men."

May we not then ask ourselves, the question: In what manner can the laity best promote the interests of the Church in this her work amongst the poor? We know our duties and responsibilities, but how may we discharge them? Here again we see the need of our society to laymen. To visit the poor in their own homes, to perform works of mercy to those in sorrow or distress, to be elder brothers to neglected boys who may be in danger of losing their faith, was the work proposed by Ozanam and his friends when they founded the society 70 years ago, and it is the identical work which is carried on to-day in every Conference established throughout the world. It must, however, be admitted that the work is not altogether free from difficulties, but what good work was ever known to be so? For instance, ours is a religious association of laymen founded by young men for young men. Occasionally we meet with very good people who are not fully acquainted with our rules, who are either ignorant or forgetful of the fact that it is for one's own spiritual sanctification, and for this end only, that one joins the society, and they may talk as if our work may be all very well for those of mature years, but as if it were hardly suitable for young men. These well meaning critics say that for such it can possess few attractions, for it is so very unpretentious, with nothing particularly heroic about it, and our youth of to-day are lacking that simplicity of life and habits which would fit them for this work amongst the poor. But here again these views are not shared by the Church. Spiritual writers of to-day say that luxury, affectation, and the general artificiality of social life pervading all classes, are the evils of this twentieth century, and if our society, with its 95,000 active and 100,000 honorary members, helps in some way to lessen such evil, the need for its existence amongst the laity becomes still more apparent. As for our young men being unfit to perform charitable works, such was not the opinion of the great Dominican Lacordaire, who in his panegyric of Ozanam, said, "charity is beautiful in anyone who practises it. It is beautiful in a man of mature years who spends an hour from his business to give it to the business of the poor and afflicted. It is beautiful in the woman who quits for the moment the circle of loving ones around her, in order to bring love to those who no longer know it but in name; and beautiful in the poor themselves, who can find a kind word and a penny for their fellow poor; but it is in the young man that this virtue appears in all its plenitude, such as God sees it in Himself in the spring of His eternity, just as Jesus saw it in the face of St. John during the time of his pilgrimage on earth."—W. J. Pike in London Universe.

TOPICS OF THE DAY

FUNERAL REFORM.

Of the many articles recently written upon the changes taking place in the manner of conducting funerals, one in a recent edition of a New York newspaper has attracted our attention. Not that we agree with all it contains do we take a few extracts from it; but rather because it is the expressions of a contrast with the usages and rites of the Catholic Church. We take the following paragraphs, which speak for themselves: "The manner of conducting funerals has in reality undergone absolute revision, and the tendency has been towards less crepe, fewer tears, shorter services, more impersonal sermons, greater privacy, and the adoption of little customs calculated to relieve the intense and painful solemnity of the occasion."

"Fifty years ago a funeral in a community called forth a public flood of tears, a pall of black, and a church service, the nature of which worked the mourners up to a state of the most intense and assertive grief, in which several hundred of their friends shared. "The chief mourners occupied the front pews if a public service were held, and sat clustered about the bier if the obsequies were in the home. They were in view of all and everybody wept with them. Crape hung from the door, fluttered from the arms of pall-bearers, and clung to the casket. The whole service was performed under an oppressive and grief-bearing pall of black. "A tendency towards brevity also has figured in the evolution of the commonly accepted version of funeral service. The ordinary obsequy of to-day does not consume more than 35 minutes, where 50 years ago it sometimes lasted an hour and a half. Ministers speak more briefly and seldom along personal lines. Except in cases where the deceased is well known in the community or has exerted some widespread influence, his life or the loss that has been sustained seldom is referred to. The clergyman's funeral oration is confined to scriptural consolation and he does not seek to play upon the already overtaxed emotions directly concerned in the death. "Private funerals, too, are more general now than in years gone by. The home is coming to be regarded as the fitting place in which to say the last rites for a member of the family, and the general desire seems to be to separate as far as possible from any public exterior show of grief. At home funerals the mourners usually occupy a room adjoining that in which the services are held, where they are not exposed to the view of those attending. Frequently in church services members of the family do not attend, but go directly from their homes to the place of burial."

CATHOLICS IN OUTSIDE DISTRICTS.

Mayo, Aug. 26, 1904.

THE DRAWING for the prizes in the ticket contest connected with the Gaelic field day was brought to a close on the 7th of August. The lucky ones were as follows: Gold watch, won by Emma Lavelle, Thurso, Que.; Fancy Clock, won by Martin Burke, Mayo, Que.; Gold watch, won by Mary Burke, Mayo, Que.; Gold watch, won by Annie Summers, Mayo, Que.; Fancy Clock, presented by Mr. Bileky, Ottawa, Ont., won by Mr. Peter Jammer, Washington, Ter., U.S.

That the drawing and social features connected therewith were successful, may be realized by the fact that the net proceeds amounted to \$174. This amount the Gaelic League with a spirit characteristic of the race donated to St. Malachy's Church to aid in reducing its debt.

FIRST COMMUNION.—On the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, many children made their first Communion. The parish church was crowded by the friends and acquaintances of the young Communicants. An appropriate musical programme was given by the choir.

PERSONAL NOTES.—Mr. William Maloney, an old resident here and well known throughout this and adjoining parishes, is seriously ill.

Mrs. Monaghan, whose husband died a year ago, is now in a poor state of health and little hope is entertained for her recovery.

Mrs. John Doherty has recovered from her recent serious illness.

OBITUARY.—Miss Catherine Burke, daughter of Mrs. John E. Burke, who some time ago left here to go and reside in Ottawa, died recently. She had been an invalid for many long years. The funeral was held here and largely attended. R.I.P.

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We might go on quoting for a couple of columns, but it would be of no benefit. We have given enough to show the marked contrast between the methods of this species of "cutting short" Christianity, and the unchanged and unchangeable services for the dead in the old and imperishable Church. It matters little, after all, how long or how short the funeral services above mentioned may be, nor is it of any consequence whether they are performed at the home or elsewhere, because they are, after all, a mere matter of sentiment, of human sympathy for the bereaved. But when there is question of the soul of the departed, of the eternal and all-important sacrifice of the Mass, it is no longer a matter of option, of taste, of fashion; it ceases to be a mere consolation for the living; it is, in addition, something far more important—that is, the following of the departed soul to the very foot of God's throne, and the offering up for the eternal rest of the dead, the only real act of pure adoration that can be performed by man towards God. The decorations, the ritual, the ceremonials are not gauged by the whim of the hour; they are prescribed by the imperishable Church of Christ, and they are the same in all lands and in all times. Even in presence of the dead we find the infallible truth and force of the Church asserted, and small and insignificant appear all other sections of Christendom.

are liberal ideas, they are ideas that are in utter contradiction to the ideas that would allow Padre Nozalada to rule his diocese without let or hindrance from the mob, and would insure the peace, prosperity and tranquility of the kingdom. You cannot go by halves with a revolutionary movement; you must stifle it or be stifled by it. "When I ask respect for these ideas I do not ask it for my own poor reasoning, for my own weak will, for my own opinions, errors, caprices and passions. No, I ask esteem and defence for Catholic right and Catholic justice that, according to my faith, have come from heaven and, according to history, have been the right and the justice, the glory and the greatness of many generations of scholars, heroes and saints, of men that were honored, noble, and prosperous, that believed and adored as I believe and adore. You say, Senor Maura, that you and your party are not intolerant. I say you are tyrants. You wish the inviolability not of conscience, right and justice, but of your caprices and fancies—fancies and caprices that are not favored by history and are condemned by experience; that have been proven to have been of no use to us except to lose our colonies and Spain itself. "It is sad to say so, but the truth must be admitted—it has been said many times before—my father used to say it, and now I repeat it very low that no scandal be taken; it is sad to say so, but this Congress will go on in the same old way as an exchange for haggling over political barterings, but not as a body that will legislate for the regeneration of Spain. "By these fiery words of a noble and representative cleric, we may judge how far the clericals are from coming together with the liberal-conservatives on questions Catholic. There are signs of the reawakening of Catholicity, yet we are inclined to the sad thought of Nocedal, that there is not very great hope that the mechanism of the brain of the author of the magazine article.

feeling of unrest that exists in all European countries, an unrest that is ominous. In reading current Catholic magazines we note article after article dealing with the sad spectacle of lack of unity, public spirit, and fearless leaders in countries where Catholics constitute the majority of the population.

Rev. Walter M. Drum, S.J., contributes an article to the current number of the Catholic World Magazine, from which we take the following extracts, sufficient to impart to our readers an idea of the state of affairs in Spain in regard to the division, weakness and instability that prevails. Father Drum says: "The disturbance effected in Spain by the republican and anti-clerical forces may be clearly followed during the past seven years. Since 1897 no Prime Minister has been able to hold the reins of government more than two years. To-day Maura is in danger of defeat. Spanish silver has taken a slump down to 40 per cent. of its face value. The republicans are overjoyed. El Imparcial at once concludes: The depreciation of our silver coinage is due to the nomination of Nozalada, the discourse in his defence by Maura, and the predominance of clericalism in Spain. The truth of it is that the republicans are doing their best to block the regeneration of Spain. One of their members, Senor Zulueta, introduced a measure to bring about closer commercial relations with the South American Republics. He was not supported by his fellows. They were honest enough to say: 'Don't talk like that! Why if we go on that way, the republic will never come!' 'The plan is a good one, but we must first put the clericals out of office.' While we consider these tactics of the anti-clericals of Spain, we wonder why it is that the Catholics do not unite against anti-clericalism. Yet the answer is simple. First, too, all Catholics are clericals. Then, too, the Catholics do not come together on this one issue because they are kept apart by so many other issues. There are four parties to which the clerical Catholics belong. The Carlists, who uphold the rights of Don Carlos to the throne; the Dinasticos, who stand for the present dynasty; the Integrists, a branch of the Carlists, and the Independientes. Besides a great number of Catholics, called in Spain liberal Catholics, are Conservatives. These conservatives are now in power. Senor Maura is their Prime Minister. Maura is a grand and noble Spaniard, yet by no means clerical; in fact his attitude in the Nozalada affair has been a surprise to many. He has fundamental notions that the clerical party cannot accept. He has just put through Congress an army bill that will force into military service priests and religious, who are freed from that imposition even in Protestant countries. In the Nozalada debate he shocked the clericals by saying that in his mind there was no such thing as a Catholic right or Protestant right; but right was right, and that was all. Nocedal took up Maura's policy in the following words

"Can a prelate govern a diocese in the midst of such hellish discord, in the heat of so many evil passions, wrapped around about with newspapers, theatres, and meetings whose whole and set purpose seems to be to insult, to blacken, and to revile? Are you going to put a stop to all this? Or are you going to inflict on Padre Nozalada the punishment of being shut up in his palace to suffer so many insults, injuries and defamations? Are you fully determined to prevent this? If not, mark my words! If you do not put an end to this violence at once and for all, and in every part of Spain—I repeat, if you do not put an end to this—things will become worse and worse. Padre Nozalada will not be able to rule his diocese in Valencia; nay, more, you will not stay long in your present office, the monarchy and its throne will not be secure. "There are two ways, Senor Maura and only two—you cannot steer the ship of state between them; your government must be traditional or liberal. A traditional government could with our laws insist on what I propose; you cannot do so—there is the fault, there is the weakness, there is the failure of your government. "Balme said of General Narvaez, a former prime minister of Spain: 'It is impossible for him to rule; he has not in his head a single fixed idea.' Senor Maura has ideas in his head, and fixed ones too; but they

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EDUCATIONAL.

COMMISSION OF MONTREAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

THE RE-OPENING OF THE Catholic Commercial Academy

And that of the other schools under the control of the Commission, will take place MONDAY, September 5th.

For fuller information, apply to the PRINCIPAL or to the DIRECTOR of each school.

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There is a Preparatory Department for junior boys and a Special English Course. Classes will be resumed THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1904, at 9 a.m. For further particulars apply to The Rev. A. D. Turgeon, S.J., 68 DRUMMOND ST., Montreal.

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A complete English Course. Commercial and Professional. Civil Service and Matriculation examinations a specialty. Boys from eight years of age admitted. Extensive grounds, every accommodation. School re-opens SEPTEMBER 5th. Night Classes for the September examinations now open. Apply, A. J. HALE SANDERS, M.A., Principal.

The Situation in Spain.

A venerable priest, who has passed the best years of the evening of his prime in active parochial work in this country, expressed his profound sorrow the other day at the