

A TIMELY EDITORIAL.

The Month of November—Praying for the Souls in Purgatory.

In assigning different special devotions to each month of the year, the month of November has been selected by the Church for specially praying for the holy souls in purgatory, and she exhorts her faithful children to specially remember them in their devotions during the month of November, and to pray for their speedy deliverance from purgatorial pains, and that they may rest in peace.

No practice of Catholics has been more ridiculed and denuded than this. Yet there is none more consonant with the natural promptings of the human heart, with the custom of all nations of antiquity, with the practice of the Jews under the Old Law (and never rebuked or forbidden by our Saviour) with the unbroken tradition of the Church from the earliest ages, and with the whole analogy of Christian faith. There is thus a fivefold support for the practice; and the only question that, with any consistency, can be asked respecting it, is not, why prayers for the dead should be offered, but why they should not be offered, and why any person who prays at all should not pray for the souls in purgatory. To the question asked in this latter form reason is dumb and unable to make any intelligent reply. Were human beings nothing more than organized lumps of clay, whose existence perished with their bodies, then there might become shadow of an excuse for feeling no further concern about them. But as the natural suggestions of human consciousness revolt from this, and prompt us to follow in thought our friends beyond the grave, so, too, do these suggestions impel us to love and pray that those we love may attain rest and peace.

Therefore, to omit to pray for the dead is unnatural, inhuman. It is not heathenism; it is worse than heathenism. For the heathens did universally pray for the dead; at least they universally had funeral rites or services which embodied this idea more or less clearly. They did it under the suggestions of human consciousness to which we have already referred; they did it also in accordance with the promptings of the primitive revelation of God to man, which was handed down and diffused by tradition among all nations and which, though broken up into fragments and distorted and perverted by those nations as they fell into idolatry, yet never entirely lost its power, but continued to exist even underneath their false notions of religion and abominable practices.

Then, too, as we have already said, the Jews practised it under the Old Law, and at the time of our Saviour, and were not rebuked by Him for so doing. That His Apostles prayed for the suffering souls in purgatory there is ample reason to believe, for their immediate disciples and followers prayed for the dead, and tradition and the writings of the Church Fathers of the first ages of the Church show that the early Christians practised the same devotions as handed down and taught to them by their predecessors.

Then, too, as we have already said, the whole analogy of the Christian faith requires the doctrine of purgatory and of prayers for the dead. Christianity teaches, if it teaches anything at all, that God cannot look with a molacency upon, nor permit entrance into heaven, into His immediate presence, to anyone who is in the slightest degree defiled by sin. And in like manner it forbids the thought that the millions of His sincere, devout, believing children, who yet die with the stains of a thousand weaknesses and sins clinging to them, are consigned to hell. There must be, if Christianity be true, an intermediate state, a porch, as it were, to heaven, where those who have been forgiven, yet not perfectly sanctified, may be purged from every stain and defilement before they join the company of "the spirits of just made perfect," and enter into the presence of Him into whose presence nothing that is imperfect or defiled can enter and live.

It is because Protestants deny purgatory and reject the practice of praying for the dead, with all its consoling, strengthening, edifying truths, that disbelief in the eternal punishment of reprobates, and in the final judgment, is so rife among them.

We turn from them to Catholics. "It is . . . a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be released from their sins." How many of us are

negligent of this duty. Charity requires its performance. Every one of the souls in purgatory is saying to us: "Have mercy on me, at least you, my friends and set up the prayers, I can no longer offer myself." Can we steel our hearts to their need? Every act of charity we perform secures to us a rich recompense, and none more so than when we remember to pray for the souls in purgatory. And these holy souls, when freed from their purgation and admitted into heaven, will remember their benefactors, and set up effectual prayers for those who have prayed for them, when they could not pray for themselves. Pray, then, for the souls of your departed friends; and regard all as your friends who are in purgatory.—*Catholic Standard of Philadelphia.*

A TRAPPIST REFECTORY.

Cold and Gloomy Surroundings and a Scanty Bill of Fare.

We reached the Trappist refectory. A great cold room, with whitewashed walls and five long, narrow tables, with benches on each side, stretching from end to end, was the place where the monks took their very frugal meals. The tables were laid for the first meal. There were no cloths, and it is almost needless to add that there were no napkins, although these are considered so essential in France that even in the most wretched auberge one is usually laid before the guest. Trappists, however, have little need of them.

At each place were wooden spoon and fork, a plate, a jug of water, and another jug—a smaller one—of beer, and a porringer for soup, which is the chief diet of the Trappists. Very thin soup it is, the ingredients being water, chopped vegetables, bread and a little oil or butter.

Until a few years ago no oily matter, whether vegetable or animal, was allowed in the soup, nor was it permissible, except in case of sickness, to have more than one meal a day, but the necessity of relaxing the rule a little was realized. Now, during the six summer months of the year there are two meals a day—namely, at 11 and 6, but in winter there is still only one that is called a meal, and this is at 4. There is, however, a gouter—just something to keep the stomach from collapsing—at 10 in the morning. No fish, nor flesh, nor animal product, except cheese and butter.

is eaten by these Trappists unless they fall ill, and then they have meat or anything else that they may need to make them well. There is, however, very little sickness among them.

The living of each Trappist probably costs no more than sixpence a day to the community. Assuming that the money brought into the common fund by those who have a private fortune—the fathers, as a rule, are men of some independent means—covers the establishment, expenses, and the taxation imposed by the state, there must remain a considerable profit on the work of each individual, whether he labors in the field or in the dairy and cheese-rooms, or concerns himself with the sales and the accounts, or, like the porter at the gate, begs with an instrument the richness of the milk that is brought in by the peasants, lest they who have been befriended by the monks in sickness and penury should steal from them in return.

To devote this surplus obtained by a life of sacrifice, compared to which the material misery of the beggars whom they relieve is a luxury, to the lessening of human suffering, to the encouragement of the family, offering the hand of charity to the worthy and the unworthy, expecting no honor from all this, and not even gratitude, is a life that makes that of the theoretical philanthropists and humanitarian philosophers look rather barren.—*Temple Bar.*

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GROWTH OF CATHOLICISM IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

The Government of Madras has passed the following Order on the Census of Madras, prepared by Mr. H. A. Stuart, C. S.:

The Government has read with interest Mr. H. A. Stuart's excellent Report on the Madras Census of 1891. A detailed review of the Report would serve no useful purpose, and the Government will therefore only touch briefly on the principal points calling for notice. The total population of the Madras Presidency in 1891, excluding feudatory States, was 85,630,440, having increased since the Census of 1881, by 4,803,327 or 15½ per cent.

According to the Census, Hindus, in the Madras Presidency, numbered 82,471,053; Mahomedans, 2,247,172; and Christians, 865,528. A comparison with the Census figures of 1881 shows that Mahomedans and Christians have increased more rapidly than Hindus. In the case of Mahomedans, the comparatively high rate of increase is ascribed by Mr. Stuart partly to conversions from Hinduism to Islamism and partly to a greater natural fertility amongst Mahomedans which is evidenced by the high proportion of Mahomedan children under five years of age. The high increase among Christians is attributed entirely to conversions. It is a curious fact that in the Tinnevely District, which is one of the chief centres of Protestant Mission work, the number of Protestant Christians has decreased since 1881 by 8 per cent. Mr. Stuart's explanation of the decrease is that large numbers of those converted during the famine have since returned to the Hindu faith. Another theory which suggests itself is that many of the famine converts have become Roman Catholics, and some color is lent to this by the fact that the Roman Catholic community in Tinnevely has increased since 1881 by 22 per cent.—*Illustrated Catholic Missions.*

OBITUARY.

We regret to announce the death of M^s. Margaret Reidel, wife of Mr. Martin Reidel, assistant manager of the Waterloo Woollen Co., Ltd., Waterloo, Ont., which took place at her home in Berlin, Ont., No. 294 King street west, on Sunday, October 29th last, in her 47th year.

The deceased was a good wife and mother and a kind and generous neighbor, and has been a resident of Berlin for about twenty years. Her death was caused through a general break up of the constitution, after having suffered for some months from inflammation of the interior of the eye.

Besides her husband she leaves two grown up children, a son and a daughter, to mourn her loss.

The funeral took place from her late residence, on Wednesday, the 1st inst., at 9.45 o'clock, to St. Mary's Church, Berlin, and thence to the Roman Catholic Cemetery for interment.—*Requiescat in pace.*

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The Ceylon Lepers.

The Catholic lepers of Hendella, like their more fortunate brethren of the outward world, have all the advantages of spiritual consolation afforded them and have also their own patron, St. Lazarus, whose feast is observed annually by them in grand style. On Sunday, September 3rd, High Mass was sung for them in their little chapel by their energetic chaplain, Fr. Boyer, O. M. I., who also preached for the occasion—the choir of St. Philip Neri's being as usual present and rendering their invaluable assistance. The material part of the feast was reserved for the evening, when cakes, sweetmeats, preserved fruits, cigars and tobacco were, under the direction of Mr. Wallis, distributed to the poor lepers, a band of stringed instruments playing the while.—*Illustrated Catholic Missions.*

UPS AND DOWNS.—"How am I to get down?" "Same way as you got up." "How's that?" "Come down and I'll show you."