

The Domain of Woman.

TALKS BY "TERPSA."

The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes reminds me of the famous Oratory at Brompton. And I found myself wondering one Sunday morning, while the Archbishop was preaching, whether the little church had been built to resemble the beautiful edifice in London.

I could not help wishing there was a pulpit, though I do not see where it could be placed under present circumstances. Speaking about the smallness of this beautiful church to a friend a short time ago, I was met with the rejoinder: "Oh, the church is large enough for the congregation."

It is often an exceedingly difficult matter to accommodate the large number of visitors, mostly Protestants, who attend the musical Vespers and other functions. I have stood in the midst of a large crowd in the vestibule, during the entire service, on several occasions, when it was literally impossible to move, and late comers were obliged to go away.

The addition of a transept and side aisles would make Our Lady's church the handsomest in the city and the best adapted for the magnificent ceremonies of the various festivals.

The congregation is one of the richest in the city, and it is quite within the means of the Catholics composing it to enlarge their church, and encourage the expansion of its membership.

"Man is the only laughing animal," says someone, and so we have been in the habit of thinking, until recently, when it was demonstrated indubitably by someone else, that dogs not only can, but do laugh.

That is to say, they grin; but whether a grin can be called a laugh in the proper sense, may be disputed. Certainly no dog has ever been known to indulge in the loud and hearty "ha-ha-ha" of jovial imbecility, or the softer and more delicate "he-he-he" of winking. "Arro's laugh, so do ravenous, notably, the immortal "Grip," in "Barnaby Rudge." "Grip's" character was drawn from life, he was, in fact, Dickens' own raven, and, possibly his risibility was occasioned by the funny stories he was constantly hearing.

More likely, however, it was traceable to the imitative faculty, since he could hardly be accounted capable of seeing a joke, even by the most enthusiastic believers in his sagacity. That parrots can see a joke, however, and appreciate it, too, is well known to everyone who has ever possessed an exceptionally intelligent bird.

I remember one parrot, the property of a great aunt of mine, that would systematically call the cat, "Tib tib tib," and break into convulsions of laughter when the animal came running in. Polly sometimes varied this performance by calling the dog or one of her servants, which she did in a voice so exactly like that of the master or mistress of the house, that it was absolutely impossible to say who was calling, till the worried domestic entered the room when she was immediately greeted by a burst of vulgar laughter in the voice of Polly herself, who was climbing all over her cage in an ecstasy of delight over the success of her practical joke.

But I really think man is the only animal who has very little if any control over his risible faculties. This is more especially noticeable under circumstances where laughter is a positive impropriety. Who has not experienced the difficulty of controlling one's sense of the ridiculous in church for instance. Sometimes the smallest circumstance will set half a dozen people, principally women, giggling for a quarter of an hour. They have no intention of giving way to one second levity, but they are almost impossible to stop themselves, on the principle, probably, that it is so much easier to do anything forbidden, than to abstain from doing it.

In the case of women, it is due most likely, to a hysterical tendency, for which they are not in any way to blame and if it be true, as I heard once, that laughter is a disease, it is more particularly so in this case than in any other. If one finds oneself thinking of ridiculous things in church, or tempted to say something to another to make them laugh, as sometimes occurs with young people, the tendency must be sternly repressed because in the circumstances, it is yielding to temptation, and consequently a sin, and a very grave one.

Of course, things will occur sometimes, at which one cannot resist an involuntary smile. I remember on one occasion I was attending Vespers at the Cathedral. I was sitting right in front, the sermon had just commenced, when a cat, perhaps the one belonging to the Palace, stalked sedately right down the centre aisle, turned off to the left and presently reappeared, walking solemnly straight across the bottom step of the altar, in full view of the choir and congregation!

Various unseasonably giggles emanated from the unfortunate little boys in the sanctuary and also from two or three little girls in the front pews, some of the congregation smiled, and one of the brethren placed his hand over his mouth. Now, under ordinary circumstances, the luckless cat would have attracted scarcely any attention, but just because we were in church, we felt as though we wanted to laugh, such is the con-

trariety of human nature, which is always prone to do those things that are forbidden.

On another occasion during a musical Vespers at a church which shall be nameless, the two acolytes whose duty it was to hold the candles for the priest, had just raised them and were advancing together when, with a sharp report one of the candles, or rather the end of candle that had been inserted in the holder, flew several feet into the air, and alighted just in front of the officiating priest.

What could possibly have caused such a catastrophe I cannot say, but slight as it was, it was sufficient to set the whole congregation laughing. The face of the unlucky candle bearer was enough to upset the equanimity of the most devoutly inclined person present, and it took nearly ten minutes for the witnesses of the occurrence to regain their composure.

There are some people so constituted that they seem to find it exceedingly difficult to look to much less to laugh outright. Whether or not they can see a joke, or a funny side to any thing, they never seem to give the least indication of it. Perhaps they are descendants of the old Puritans who held that laughter was sinful and who labored to efface from their imaginations the memory of their descendants, even the slightest approach to unseasonable merriment.

On the other hand there are people who always greet one with a merry laugh, and who seem incapable of being serious even for a moment. Jolly people to know when one is well, and happy and contented, and fortius smiles upon one. But how inexpressibly wearisome their incessant laughter becomes, when one is tired, and cross, and in sorrow or affliction.

One tells them one's woes with a long face, and they pull another with infinite difficulty and tell-tale twinges about the mouth and eyes, and say they are sorry, and show it by bursting out laughing the next moment, and telling you a funny story, which so no one to tell them a little while ago, and you rage inwardly, and wish, most uncharitably, that something would happen to make them cry by way of variety.

And yet, laughing people are the sunshines of the earth, their cheerfulness is contagious, it is impossible to be angry or disagreeable with them. They seem to make the petty ills of life disappear and set one wondering whether, after all, it is not better to put a bright face on things in general, than to try and get a little more cheerful enjoyment out of life than many of us are in the habit of doing.

The overbearing pomposity of some of the nouveau riches, the frantic attempts they make to secure titled acquaintances, the mistakes they fall into by judging people by their clothes, and the agony of mind they suffer in consequence, is aptly illustrated in the following anecdote. Just before the commencement of the service at a fashionable Anglican church in the west end of London, a lady, evidently a stranger to the edifice, entered, and, not seeing an usher, proceeded to an unoccupied pew about midway of the centre aisle. A few moments afterwards a rustling of silks and velvets, and creaking of boots announced the arrival of the owner of the pew, a pompous man whom I will call Sir Georgius Midas accompanied by a pompous middle aged lady, two equally pompous daughters, and a young gentleman of the exquisite variety. Sir Georgius surveys the rather plainly dressed intruder with an expression of speechless disgust, which is reflected upon the faces of his wife and daughters, and says something to Georgius Junior, who repairs in search of the usher.

"Jones, you know, you shouldn't put a person in our pew, you know," he remarks to that functionary. "I did not say anything to you, sir," protests Jones in an agitated whisper, "but, visious of a curtailed Christmas box floating before his mental horizon. "Well, whether you did or not, she's there now, you know, the governor's swift cross you better come and return her out of this better."

Jones repairs to the pew, and whispers something to the lady, who immediately rises and follows him, accompanied by a stony glare from three pair of feminine eyes. Almost directly afterwards, Jones returns in considerable perturbation, and whispers something to Sir Georgius. "Wha-at!" exclaims that gentleman, turning the color of beet-ee. "It's true, Sir Georgius," whispers Jones, "Mrs. So and So, who knows the lady, told me."

The unhappy snob leans over and whispers Jones' communication to his wife, who straightway faints, and is carried out. The lady was the Duchess of Blankshire! I should like to receive from any of my readers, some information about the various Catholic Benevolent Societies that admit ladies to membership. I have heard of several, but I do not know where or where they meet. I should be exceedingly glad of any information regarding them, and also the different societies and sodalities in the city. All communications addressed at THE REGISTER'S office are seen by no one but myself, and are always treated as strictly confidential.

TORONTO WORK GIRLS.

What do my readers think of the statement made by a contemporary last week about the sweating system in Toronto? I must confess it caused me no little surprise to hear that girls get five cents a dozen for making corset covers, and seven or eight cents (a dozen) for night-dresses and other underclothing. To see the work for fifteen cents per dozen, the work being all ready cut out. This was not one of the large departmental stores, but a small retail shop chiefly patronized by servants. Now, it seems utterly incredible that there should be such shocking

disproportion in the wages paid for different kinds of white work, since a dozen or more pieces could be made in the time necessary to make a quarter the number of night dresses. My contemporary says she obtained her information from a lady who employs a large number of work girls, and she says there are hundreds of girls waiting the streets to day, looking for work, and that she knows girls in this city whose earnings after a day's work amount to eight cents. How is anybody to keep body and soul together on eight cents a days? Where is the common sense and ability to see to it that they are not starved to death by the want of the necessities of domestic servants?

There is something radically wrong somewhere either our system of education and upbringing, woman's insatiable desire for "bargains," or the powerful and constantly increasing "departmental stores," are to blame, probably all three. As far as I am concerned I don't care for such "bargains," but I am a woman and I know that there are real possibilities for this terrible "sweating" as the fully overstrained competition among tradespeople themselves. One store brings the price of an article down to a certain point, another store "goes then half a cent lower," either by reducing the quality of the goods, by putting the loss on some other line, or by offering so much less to the unfortunate workpeople who make the things, and who must either submit or turn out and give place to others already clamoring for work.

The statement that "women in seal-skim who carries are waiting for them at the doors," are in the habit of buying corset covers at nine cents each, and sell for twenty-five cents, I consider to be a simple exaggeration. There might possibly be one such woman in twenty, but that the majority of well-to-do women purchase such common and shoddy articles simply because they are cheap is an absurd statement. The old adage, "cheap and nasty," was never more apparent than in the case of the "bargains" one is constantly meeting with, and really sensible women know this perfectly well, they know that "a fair price for a good article" is the unspoken law of trade in the world over. I shall have much to say on this subject next week. TRINIA.

Catholic Missionary Union.

At the first meeting of the Catholic Missionary Union last week, in the archiepiscopal residence in Madison avenue, the following officers were elected: President, Archbishop Corrigan; Vice-President, the Rev. Father John Ryan, Archbishop of Philadelphia; Secretary and Treasurer, the Rev. Alexander P. Doyle, C.S.P. Executive Committee—Archbishop Corrigan, the Rev. Alexander P. Doyle and the Rev. Matthew A. Taylor. The scope of the organization will be national, and, as far as possible, the work will be extended to every diocese in the land. The union is incorporated under the laws of the State of New York. According to its charter, the objects of the union are: "To procure the services of clergymen and laymen of the Roman Catholic Church to teach and preach as missionaries of their faith in the United States; to provide for the support and maintenance of such persons while engaged in such work; to lease, take, hold, and purchase places, buildings, and lands for such teaching and preaching; to publish and distribute books, pamphlets, and reading matter in connection with such work, and to aid and assist the Archbishops, Bishops, and other authorities of the Roman Catholic Church in establishing and carrying on home missions in their various jurisdictions." The union is at present paying the salaries of missionaries who are working under the direction of the Bishops of Wheeling and Richmond, and it is expected that other missionaries will be speedily sent to fields in Mississippi, Florida and Kansas.—New York Sun Jan. 25th.

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