

## "Habitual Confession For The Young."

(Continued)

By "CRUX"

It will be remembered that last week I closed my comments upon Ambrose J. Wilson's article in the June "Contemporary Review," with that part in which he passes to the consideration of the objections that he finds to Confession for the young. Before proceeding, however, with his objections, it is necessary to recall the fact—pointed out in my article of last issue, that he is dealing with Confession as it is understood and practised in the Anglican Church, and not as we know it in the Catholic Church. To him Confession is the entire practice; with us it is only one of the necessary parts of the Sacrament of Penance. Our Church demands four things in order to constitute the sacrament. There must be contrition, confession, absolution and reparation. And the absence of any one of these four mars the Sacrament of Penance. Not so with the Anglican Church. There Confession is a mere form, and whether followed by absolution or not does not much matter, since the power to absolve is denied the priest or minister. But we are not now discussing these differences. We have to do with Mr. Wilson's article. Coming, then, to the objections he has to Confession, the first he raises is to the effect that it destroys the will-power of the young person who frequents the confessional.

Our author thus enters upon the controversial part of his theme: "First, then, it is believed that habitual 'Confession' tends to impair independence of character and to weaken the sense of right and wrong." This is decidedly a Protestant argument, the very text tells it on its face; it, therefore, applied to Confession such as practised by them. No Catholic would ever commence a statement regarding a doctrine or a practice of the Church with the self-protecting and doubt-suggesting words, "it is believed that." Imagine a Catholic writer saying "it is believed that a sacrament carried with it, when worthily received, the necessary grace, etc." We say, "we are taught," or "it is a doctrine of the Church," or simply "it is a fact that." There is no doubt with us in regard to such matters; we have an infallible guide, others have not, that is the difference.

Since, then, "it is believed" that Confession impairs independence of character, it may be well to learn in what the writer considers it produces this result, or rather how it does so.

"But the tendency of 'Confession,' on the other hand, is to form and develop and perpetuate the habit of surrendering the will and leaning on the arm of flesh."

Again we have here the Anglican idea. But in the Catholic Church there is absolutely no surrender of the will to that of the priest, and no leaning on the arm of flesh; quite the contrary. The will is simply taught to be submissive to the will of God as made manifest in His laws, and this is the perfection of liberty. The will receives strength, through the confessional, by advice, encouragement, guidance, and above all the promptings of grace. Mortal man may have the desire to practise virtue or to avoid habitual vice, but his will is too weak, and when simply self-reliant is sure to fail, to quail before the whirlwind of passion or the onset of temptation. It is then that the will needs strength, and it is in the confessional, with God and in the presence of God's representative, the words of consolation, of guidance, of admonition, and of encouragement fortify the will, and the man comes forth determined to battle again; and even should he be overturned in contest, he returns to that source of strength, drinks at that fountain of consolation, and reinvigorated renews the struggle, this time perhaps to conquer.

Nor is it on the "Arm of flesh" that he leans. There is no arm of the flesh there. The hand that is extended is an absolutely spiritual one; the very absolution that he receives has naught of mortal or fleshy connected with it. The priest is simply an instrument; he is the bugle, but the sound of sweet musical consolation and assurance is no part of himself; it is produced by

the breath of God blowing into the instrument. This our writer of the "Review" does not understand, for he lacks the experience. But as far as the Confession in his Church goes he may be right, or at least amongst some "it is believed" that the effects he describes are real.

Pass we on to something else. From the writings of Hooker, and Neale's "History of the Holy Eastern Church" he establishes that in Russia the civil law prescribes Confession once a year, and it is prescribed in the Anglican Church "if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter;" from all of which we are told that:—

"It is plain, then, that private confession is one of those 'rites ordained only by man's authority,' which 'every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish,' so that all things be done to edifying; and the edifice that Confession has to build up is that of character and independent vigor of righteousness, and by its power to do this it stands or falls."

Here again we are in presence of Protestant confession. For in the Catholic Church not only Confession is not based upon human authority, but it is not changeable nor adaptable to the whims or peculiarities of peoples or nations. If Confession were the sacrament such might be argued, but as it is only one of the essential requisites of the sacrament, it is the Penance, the Sacrament of Penance that we must consider. And this has been established by Our Lord in plain terms that none can misunderstand.

Now to summarize the other objects to Confession for youth, he says that it engenders shame, at the "idea of laying bare the soul's nakedness to the scrutiny of strange eyes;" it makes children, who have been trained by their parents "on confessional lines," "wholly devoid of will power, and of moral sense, and of shame;" it creates for young people, especially in young girls "a dangerous risk lest systematic confession should lead the young heart into systematic deception, a thing immeasurably worse than carelessness in religious concerns, inasmuch as it may grow up into the lie in the soul."

Having thus taken from the text of the article the passages that most clearly indicate the ground work of this writer's objection to Confession, we may again summarize them thus: Confession makes the youth ashamed of his sin, causes him to lose all moral sense of its gravity, tempts him to lie about it—that is to hide it, or to tell it in such a manner as to deceive the confessor. To illustrate these dangers he cites some examples, and of these I will select one:—

"A typical case of this sort of ethical evolution once came under the observation of the writer. It was that of a lad who, after long continued yielding to the same kind of very serious wrong-doing, was detected in one such act by secular authority, which made all possible efforts to save him from himself and to strengthen his will-power against a failing which would go near, if continued and known, to compass his social ostracism. Because in this case he had been detected he told the one act to his priest in Confession and received absolution. His object was that he might be able to go to his Sunday Communion. And yet it transpired that he had confessed none of his previous similar downfalls, though he had continued to take his minor failings regularly to Confession, had received Absolution, and had found courage to go to Holy Communion on the strength of that stolen forgiveness. This was a lad of fifteen summers. It is not in evidence how long the habit of 'Confession' had been a determinant in his moral evolution. Yet it had been long enough to render the typical development complete. The leaning on the arm of flesh had apparently become absolute. It was sufficient to him, for quieting of conscience and for spiritual peace to have had absolution from the human judge, however undesired it might be."

This then is the sole ground work of Mr. Wilson's objection to Confession for the youth of the Church. Decidedly he has in view his own Church; and we can very easily comprehend that such reasoning may have weight in regard to the institution of Confession therein. But, as he frequently tries to mix up Catholic Penance and Anglican Confession, we will take his statements as if they were made concerning our Church:

When he gives an example such as that now produced, he does not take into account the idea of a sacrament, and the other idea of sacrilege which is the result of an unworthy reception of that sacrament. He cites a case; there may be scores of them in the Anglican experience of Confession, for aught we know; but

in the Catholic practice this would be a rare, a very rare exception. So much so that we can, from our long and varied experience, scarcely credit it. The very first idea impressed upon the youthful mind is that of the sacredness of the sacrament and the terrible consequences of an unworthy reception of it. The Catholic boy or girl would be more afraid of the retribution of the crime of sacrilege than of the Confession of the most terrible crime. That a boy should hide a sin through shame and go on repeating the same crime week after week, or month after month, simply for the purpose of being allowed to go to Communion, is just as possible as that a man should be guilty of murder, repeat the crime over and over, and go on thus unrepentant until discovery. But either case would be considered as a freak of human depravity and could never be accepted as a rule.

It is not by examples of this class that one can establish that deception, lying, and hardening in sin result from habitual Confession. On the contrary, the more frequent the Confession the less loaded is the conscience, and the easier is the task, the stronger the will-power grows, the greater amount of resistance can be offered to temptation, and the more perfect the life. And yet we say all this simply referring to the human effect of the habitual Confession. But away beyond these results, in a sublimer atmosphere, there is something that the non-Catholic mind cannot understand. The more frequent the Confession the more abundant the floods of grace that pour into the soul through the channel of the great Sacrament of Penance. And the abundance of grace imparts strength to the will, and courage to the heart, fits the soul for every combat in life and ensures an ultimate triumph. Rising on the wings of grace into the glorious region of peace with God, the mind of the true Catholic cannot sink, without repugnance, to the contemplation of the subject from the standpoint of Ambrose J. Wilson.

### CHOLERA INFANTUM.

Cholera infantum is one of the most dreaded diseases of infancy. It is prevalent during the heat of summer in spite of all the care mothers may take to guard against it, and it sometimes progresses so quickly that death occurs in a few hours no matter what care is given the child. The first thing to do is to stop feeding the child and give him plenty of fresh air and pure water to drink. Give Baby's Own Tablets to carry off the poison in the system. Do not under any circumstance give a medicine to check the diarrhoea, except under the advice of a doctor. By using Baby's Own Tablets the cause of the diarrhoea will be removed, and the disease will thus be removed, and the disease will thus be checked in a natural manner. Proof that the Tablets cure this too often fatal trouble is given by Mrs. Herbert Burnham, Smith's Falls, Ont., who says: "When my eldest child was six weeks old he had an attack of cholera infantum and was at death's door. My doctor advised me to try Baby's Own Tablets and in twenty-four hours baby was better; the vomiting and purging ceased and he regained strength rapidly."

Keep the Tablets in the house—their prompt use may save your little one's life. Sold by medicine dealers or sent postpaid at 25 cents a box by writing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

The importance of organizing Catholic parochial educational establishments in every centre and equipping them with every modern auxiliary is a question which is not appreciated by Catholic men of financial resources as it should be. This matter was made the subject of a pastoral letter of Coadjutor Archbishop Moeller, of Cincinnati, recently, in which he urges the establishment of parish schools in every parish where this is practicable throughout the diocese; and that these schools should be raised to the highest possible standard, so that they may be not only equal but superior to the public schools. He has appointed a school board and instructed them to thoroughly organize and perfect the Catholic school system of the diocese.

### SYMINGTON'S COFFEE ESSENCE

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## Old Letters.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

An item of news, of a sad character, has brought to my memory a letter that has been long hid away in a bundle that I had no intention of opening for use. I will refer firstly to the item. It is dated from Winnipeg, July 23rd, and reads:—"The death is announced from Edmonton of Bishop Clut, of the Catholic diocese of Arthabasca, at Lesser Slave Lake, two weeks ago. He was ninety-one years of age, and retired from active work some years ago. The Right Rev. Isador Clut, O.M.I., was born at St. Rambert, Valence, France, on February 2nd, 1812. Joining the Oblat Order he came to Canada and was ordained priest in 1837. He was soon afterwards sent as a missionary to the Mackenzie River district, and did noble work in spreading Christianity among the Indians and half-breeds. He was appointed Bishop of Arindel, "in partibus," in 1867, and has since been coadjutor to the late Bishop Grouard."

Now this is the simple announcement, given by telegraphic despatch, of the death of a great, good and remarkable prelate. Many of the readers of the "True Witness" will remember Mgr. Clut. His was a familiar figure in Montreal. In former years he paid frequent visits to this province, principally in the interests of his diocese and his Indian missions. He was of almost giant form, tall, possibly over six feet, and stout in proportion. He had the bearing of a military officer of the old school, a noble of the reign of the "Grand Monarch." His long, flowing, white beard, white as the driven snow and waving as that of a patriarch gave him a wonderfully imposing and even inspiring appearance. His eyes were bright as jewels of jet set in a frame of ivory. His voice was most delightfully modulated, and his smile was perfectly irresistible. Sixty years of missionary life in the wilds of the great North-West, in the land of the buffalo and the Indian, had not robbed him of one iota of his stately bearing, and he moved about with the grace that would be observed in the salons of royalty, just as if he had never spent the greater portion of his life between ranch and wigwam.

The last time, to my recollection, that he was in Montreal was in 1896 or 1897, I disremember exactly the year. But, at that time, he was undergoing a treatment at the Hotel Dieu Hospital here. I then had occasion to call upon him concerning certain information that I wanted about the Mackenzie River district. In the course of our conversation, Bishop Clut told me that he had just received a beautiful letter from an Indian girl, of about sixteen years of age, written in the native language of her tribe, in which she informs him of what has taken place since his departure. He asked me to have the letter published for him. I promised to see some of my friends in the journalistic sphere and to have his wishes gratified. He thereon translated the letter into French for me, and I translated it from that language into English. For reasons that I have not been able to ascertain the letter was not published, and my translation went the way of many another document—to some basket under an editor's desk.

I have now before me the French translation of the original letter, on that small, round, almost microscopic writing of the venerable prelate. It is in purple ink, and seems so familiar that it recalls the hour that I spent in that room at the Hotel Dieu with him. I can again see the aged and stately man, with his white beard sweeping his aged breast and almost hiding the gold crucifix hanging from the heavy episcopal chain around his neck. I can see him bending over the little table, and dipping his pen in the purple ink-stand, and then biting the end of it while his eyes glanced over the Indian manuscript as he mentally translated the phrases before consigning them to paper in French. And as I look at that signature, so tiny—just "F. Clut, O.M.I.," in little characters below, I feel how great a heart was within that large frame and what a wealth of virtues, talents, and wonderful faculties that small signature represented. The letter is not long, and bears no date; it may have a date in the original, but he did not translate it for me. However, it was either in 1896 or 1897. The letter ran thus:

"Our Dear White Father," (They called him "White Father" since his beard had become like the snow). "We mourn your departure, as we would the bright sunshine that the cloud hides from us. But we know the cloud will pass and the sunshine come again, so do we know your absence will be a thing of the past soon, and you will come home to your children. Since you have gone away to the far distant land of your first love, we have not omitted to pray to Our Lord for your protection. We recited the Rosary each night, praying to the good Mother to protect you—the word is 'cover you in a blanket,' which means to shelter, or protect. We have had one candle burning all the day in the chapel, and it is for you."

There are wise medicine men in the great city, and they will give you back your health, for God always hears the prayer of the Indian child, and God will teach them how to make you well. Inkka has been hunting since you have left us, and the Prose whom you called Anna has been ill with a cold of a severe kind that makes her as mute as river that is always murmuring but does not speak. It is so lonesome without you that we feel the days will have no ending and the nights are much longer" (when he wrote this the good Bishop smiled to himself, and with a merry, roughish twinkle in his eye, turned to me and said, that there must be a strain of Irish in his young protegee, if we are to judge by this blunder—I would call it a bull). The letter goes on:—

"When you are not occupied with your health, and all your interests in the great city of your people, you will write us, that is me for us, a nice letter, full of good news all about yourself. You will pray for us especially when you say Mass and take Holy Communion; and we will do likewise for you. Bring us no presents except yourself. They would lose their value in the light of your presence with us; that would be so much joy that we would have no place in our poor Indian hearts for any other pleasure. Come quick, keep us not waiting, wipe away our sorrow at your absence, and bless us from afar awaiting your return to bless us, your children, near to you."

I must say that while mine is an exact translation of Bishop Clut's writing, his version was couched in more literary form than the original. He seemed to have clung more to the rendering of the idea than the exact words. In any case this letter has its value for me in that it is from the pen of Bishop Clut, that it was written for myself, that I sat beside him as he wrote it, and that when I took it from his hand and said adieu to him, I looked for a last time in life upon the venerable and imposing form and face of the good Bishop.

May his soul rest in peace.

## The Cause of Temperance.

From a recent sermon by the Very Rev. Father Nicholas, O.S.F.C., published in the "Universe," London, Eng., we take the following extracts:

With the alarming words, "Nor drunkards shall possess the Kingdom of God," did St. Paul warn the Corinthians against the use of intoxicating drink; and as we all know that nowadays the vast majority of those, nay, practically all, who become drunkards are people who had intended in the beginning to drink only in moderation; it, therefore, follows that the most prudent and best way of avoiding this great and eminent danger is to give up intoxicating drink altogether. This is counsel for all, but of strict obligation for those who know from experience that for themselves there is no such thing as moderation. There are, unfortunately, a great many who, if they once tasted intoxicating drink, could not stop until they go to lamentable and sinful excess.

This want of Christian strength—in plainer terms, the drink craze—is some is the result of habitual tipping, in others it is an unfortunate legacy transmitted to them by drunken parents. Hence the prudence for moderate drinkers to give up the drink, for many moderate drinkers become drunkards. It is prudent for the children of drunken parents to give up the drink lest they might rouse up and develop the weakness for drink that is in them. Again, it is prudent for parents to give up the drink lest they scandalize the little ones or transmit the drink craze to the children that are yet unborn. In the hope, therefore, of helping to create a sound public opinion on the temperance question, I will now try to show you that "intoxicating drink is the deadliest

enemy of man, both of soul and body, of home and the well-being of his family."

In the first place, behold what a cruel enemy it is of the soul. Intoxicating drink defiles it; it brutalises it; it stimulates in it the force of every low and animal passion, while it weakens the resisting influence of reason and conscience. Yes, it clouds the will, and abandons the soul to the power of the demon. No wonder, therefore, the terrifying words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, and through them to the Catholic world, "Nor drunkards shall possess the Kingdom of God." For drunkenness brings down its victim from the high ideal of God's image to the level of the beast. It is certain that thousands of deaths occur every year through drink, and many of them surrounded by circumstances that leave very little hope for the salvation of their souls. Some of those deaths are sudden and without a priest; others, still worse, when the priest is present and cannot administer the Sacraments to the dying drunkard.

Everyone will admit that, after man's life and salvation, there is nothing so dear to his heart as his home and the well-being of his family—the safety and happiness of father and mother, brothers and sisters, or wife and children, as the case may be. In a struggle to preserve his home a man has often nerved himself up to deeds of heroism—even to the shedding of his blood. At this we do not wonder, for what is the world to a man without the consolations and happiness of home? Will wealth and pleasure and power compensate for them? I say No! Better a thousand times the cot of the poor man, whom the world ignores, whom friends desert, whom poverty pinches and whom adversity tries, but who has one treasure—the blessing of a happy home. Hence, as I have said, no treasure, after man's life and salvation, is so dear to his heart as that of a happy home. No sacrifice, therefore, must be considered too great to secure that happiness for yourselves and for your families, and, of course, no effort should be spared to repress the enemy who would persist in tempting to undermine or shatter your happy home.

But, brethren, of all the enemies of home and happiness, of all the foes that ever brought sorrow and misery into a house, of all the evils that ever brought tears to a mother's eyes or gray hairs to a broken-hearted father, the evil of intoxicating drink is the worst. Ah! most assuredly intoxicating drink is the deadliest foe that ever persecuted or scourged our poor country.

## Patent Report.

Below will be found a list of patents recently granted by the Canadian and American Governments, through the agency of Messrs. Marion & Marion, patent attorneys, Montreal, Can., and Washington, D.C.

Information relating to the patents cited will be supplied by applying to the above-named firm.

### CANADA.

- Nos.  
81,969—Wm. Jas. D. Cummings, Dexter, Ont. Bag fastener.  
81,989—Emile Vegard dit Labonte, Montreal, Que. Painting and cleaning apparatus.  
81,017—Romuald Ed. Painchaud, Montreal, Que. Combination child's table and baby walker.  
82,022—Sydney Bolton Paterson, St. John, N.B. Card cornering machine.  
82,063—Ebenzer J. Moore, Windsor Mills, Que. Device for cutting saw-teeth.

### UNITED STATES.

- Nos.  
730,864—Damase Beaulieu, Matana, Que. Automatic fire alarm.  
731,179—Messrs. Harrison & Hinch, St. Mary's N.W.T. Disk plow.  
731,454—Harold W. Higgins, Montreal, Que. Coffee pot.  
731,575—H. Addison Johnston, Ingersoll, Ont. Hair supporter.

### CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES.

The following is an extract from a letter written by an Agnostic to a Catholic friend last month: "Catholic missionaries were the ones (in Japan I mean) that won everyone's respect. The worldly never had a sneer for them." The writer had spent some years in Japan.

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or something thereabout  
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"nor I indeed."

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out upon the square. Th  
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