

men who crowded around her seeking for her favor. The height of her popularity had been reached when she met John Hammerstein, and he had eagerly added himself to the train of her admirers. Any girl in the crowd would have given her right hand for his attentions. Caroline Luscombe said, and he had eyes for no one but her. She had music and gaiety—dances and parties—flattery and adulation—and it was all as husks—dust and ashes in her mouth. Always there was a dull pain in her heart, and an unsatisfied longing in her breast!

Her mother's birthday! She laid down the calendar, and, taking a key from her desk, softly crossed the hall to the door of her mother's sitting room. Since her death, the room had not been disturbed. It was a fancy of Mary's to keep it as it was, a shrine to her mother's memory. Opening the door, she crossed the room and drew up the shade. Then she turned and looked about her. Everywhere there were signs of the dear familiar presence—the wicker chair with its chintz-covered cushions, where she had always sat—the footstool beside it—the bit of half-finished darning in the basket, her gold-bowed spectacles lying there—and the table with her favorite books, well thumbed and worn: the New Testament, the Imitation of Christ, the Lives of the Saints, her favorite prayer book, Fabiola, and a few other works of fiction, and some books of poems. Everything in the room spoke of her. The sunlight, sifting through the rose-colored curtains, fell across the back of the wicker chair, brightening the faded pink rosebuds in the chintz cover—Mary remembered how it had been her wont to linger on her mother's silvering hair in the days so long past, when she, a little girl, coming home from school, had come running up the stairs to her mother's sanctum, and sinking on the stool at her feet, and gazing up into the sweet face, narrate all the happenings of the day to her ready listener.

One volume lay open on the table; bending nearer, she saw that it was her mother's favorite, Francis Thompson. The words caught her eye:

"Lo, naught contents thee, who content'st not Me!"

She sighed—how like to her own state of mind! "Lo naught contents thee—?" How long had it been since she had known content! Feverish unrest filled her young life.

"Lo, naught contents thee, who content'st not Me, I shook the pillaring hours And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears, I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years— My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap."

She laid her hot head upon the book and tears welled from her burning eyelids. Ah, indeed, was not this what she had done! Who content'st not Me?—she had so resolutely tried to shut God out of her life—and He was her mother's God—her mother had lived by Him and for Him—her books were mute testimony of her life devotion. Mary brushed her tears away, and read on and on:

"Designer infinite! Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?"

He had not answered her prayers—He had taken her mother from her—was it perhaps for the best? Her mother would have said so, she knew: her faith had been ingrained and unwavering.

"All which I took from Thee, I did but take, Nor for thy harms, But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms."

All which thy child's mistake Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home."

She was sobbing now—great heart-rending sobs that shook her frail form. Down on her knees she slid, her head on her mother's chair.

"Mother, dear, is it indeed so?" she sobbed. "Oh, am I not an ungrateful child? How foolish I have been—how needlessly bitter! Were you indeed taken not for my harm, but just that I might seek you in His arms? And I have turned my back on Him—and you, I have had my trial by fire, and I have been found waiting. Oh, my heart is sore and weary. My pleasure seeking has brought me naught—no bit of happiness. Oh, mother, dear, little saintly mother of mine, pray for me—pray for your little girl—pray that I may go back—that I may again feel His hand outstretched caressingly."

For hours she knelt there, alone in the silent house, and prayed and wept in an agony of remorse and abasement. At last she had spent herself in weeping, but she still remained kneeling, absorbed in prayer. A sweet peace had stolen over her, and it seemed that her mother's spirit was nearer her than it had been since her death.

Comforted and chastened in spirit, she finally arose, and going out, left the door ajar and passed down stairs. She called a number on the phone and when central had made the connection, she spoke bravely: "Jack, this is Mary. About that week-end at the Carruthers, and the dance—I've been thinking it over, and I won't be able to go. I want to go to Confession Thursday evening, and Friday is the First Friday; you don't know what that is, of

course, but it is a day on which I feel that I ought to go to church. I'm sorry, but you will have to get someone to take my place."

Hammerstein protested, half angrily, but she was firm.

A few weeks later Caroline Luscombe was talking to another girl of Mary's old "crowd."

"Isn't Mary Maloney the oddest girl?" she was saying. "We never see her any more. Why under the sun did she ever let Jack Hammerstein slip through her fingers? He was crazy about her, and he's fairly wallowing in money. She surely did flatter her opportunities."

"Flatter her opportunities?" answered the other girl, musingly. She was thinking of Mary's face, as she had seen it that morning, flushed and eager and happy; she had been going to the library for her mother and had met Mary coming from early Mass, with a laughing group of young people around her. Big Pat Dederich was walking by her side, and his little sister, Maureen, was clinging to her other hand; there was something in the words he had been saying to her that had brought a bright flush to her cheeks and set a happy light in her eyes.

"Flatter her opportunities," the girl repeated. "Maybe. And, then again—" she repeated cryptically, "she may be merely making the most of them."—Church Progress.

MORAL LEPROSY

Recent events have lifted the veil from most disgraceful doings that are going on in certain circles that cultivate an attitude of aloofness from their fellow-men and affect an air of superiority over ordinary mortals. In our social life there are certain colonies or sets which erect about themselves effective barriers against contact with the rest of mankind, thus establishing for themselves an exclusiveness that is more rigid than that secured by the Oriental caste system. The basis of the superiority is the possession of great wealth and the lavish expenditure of money. For these exclusive sets the ordinary rules of morality do not hold good; they have a moral code of their own which is very indulgent to human weakness and passion. From time to time indications leak out that moral corruption of the worst kind exists among the members of these sets. The social or smart set has always been notorious in that respect; but of late, the movie colony is winning the palm for scandalous conduct and the utter disregard of the rules of decency. Corruption cannot be kept hidden.

Both of these sets regard themselves as privileged, as superior to the rank and file of society. They consider themselves entitled to certain immunities which it would not be good to extend to the masses. Consequently, when they see their own actions and manners imitated by rank outsiders they are horrified and highly indignant. As a matter of fact, nothing is more undemocratic than vice, especially gilded vice. The privileged few would look upon vice as their own exclusive prerogative with the exercise of which no one should have a right to interfere. They flatter themselves that vice, as they practice it, is not ugly and repulsive, but possesses an artistic touch which redeems it from grossness and vulgarity. Herein they are sadly deceived; for, vice, however much it may be surrounded by refinement, of necessity becomes evil and loathsome, and sensual pleasure, when ardently pursued, leads to the coarsest transgressions. The disclosures made give evidence of just such moral degeneration of the lowest and most revolting type.

There is moral leprosy right in the midst of our society. Need we be surprised that it spreads in every direction? The smart set is casting aside what it calls silly conventions and is setting a pace that will soon bring us back to the low standards of morality that prevailed under paganism. From its trips abroad, it imports the lax customs and the frivolous manners that are tolerated in the fashionable resorts of Europe. Thus American life is being poisoned and polluted.

From the centres of the film industry we see the trail of the serpent go forth. By the movie hero false standards are created. He is idolized and worshipped by the public, especially by the young. His moral shortcomings are readily condoned and even glorified. A glamor surrounds him, which even transfigures his ethical defects. London is at present going wild over Charlie Chaplin, whose comedy rarely, if ever, rises above the level of the farce and whose art consists in low buffoonery. The unsavory details of his divorce do not detract from his popularity. In this way, the standards of morality are perverted and much harm is done to the young generation that learns to look up to men and women who show but scant respect for virtue and defy the law of God and man.

The atmosphere of the movie colony appears to be thoroughly unwholesome. The Ten Commandments seem to be unknown or entirely forgotten in those quarters. Men live as if they had no responsibilities. The main reason for this condition is the total commercialization of the film industry. Mammon has stamped upon it his degrading seal. So it has happened that fabulous fortunes have come

into the hands of men and women that were devoid of moral discipline and to whom the sudden acquisition of wealth could not but be disastrous.

If things are so, it stands to reason that no elevating influences can come from the movies. A commercially-exploited enterprise never has a beneficial effect. Invidious and evil influences will reach out from the screen as long as moral corruption holds sway behind the camera. Good and evil influences are personal irradiations and can never be dissociated from the person itself.

In neither of the classes mentioned does religion play an absorbing part. Their preoccupations do not lie that way. They worship at the altars of mundane deities. And that is the deepest reason for the moral leprosy with which they are tainted. There is nothing that can keep humanity from putrefaction and moral decay except the salt of religion. Those who are unostentatiously planting religion in the heart of the child are making the coming generation immune against moral leprosy and loathsome corruption.—Catholic Standard and Times.

DIVORCE

Statistics on divorce in this country are beginning at last to give serious concern to the writers in the current magazines. Frequently of late we have heard stout voices raised against the alarming increase of divorce for weaker and weaker reasons. The rigid position of the Church on the indissolubility of the marriage bond is recommending itself more and more strongly to enlightened minds without her fold.

The harmful consequences following in the trail of divorce have vindicated in their minds the truth and wisdom of the Church's stand against this evil. Men are beginning at last to see that the temporary happiness of two persons joined together in an unhappy marriage is of less consequence than the best interests of society as a whole.

The law of the Church against divorce is founded on Divine wisdom, and confirmed by the accumulated experience of the centuries. God Who knows human nature, foresaw that nothing would secure the stability of marriage but absolute indissolubility. Before the twentieth century Christendom had but one law about marriage, that it was indissoluble. The Church stood firm to her principles. Prospective candidates for matrimony were therefore obliged to be careful about their marriages.

This rigidity of the Church is based on Divine law, but it is also founded on true psychology, as the subsequent history of divorce shows. To prevent a certain number of unhappy marriages, the modern legislator invented the divorce law. At first grounds for divorce were few and serious. Then incompatibility of temperament and other indefinite reasons were added. It needed then only sufficient ingenuity for unhappy partners to secure the sufficient grounds for dissolution.

Then marriage became from a permanent lifelong union a temporary experiment that could be dissolved on failure. At first divorce was rare, and was looked upon as something discreditable. People read about it with horror and divorced people were looked at askance and barred from respectable society. Then grown familiar with its face men came to regard divorce as something tolerable and almost inevitable. The number of divorces grew with such amazing rapidity that today what began as a remedy for unhappy marriages has become the destroyer of the stability of marriage. Today it is not only our national scandal, but a national menace, a cancer feeding on the vitals of the individual, the family, and the nation. Instead of curing a small number of unhappy marriages divorce has multiplied hosts of unhappy marriages by affording the constant temptation to separation.

Father Hull discussing the Morals of today in the Bombay Examiner sums up the modern experience with trifling with the marriage bond. "The modern world," he says, "has tried to solve the marriage problem and failed, increasing and complicating the evil which it set out to remove. The Church comes forward and offers to the world its message—which has been forgotten. If the world will not accept the message as coming from the Divine Lawgiver and reflecting the Divine Wisdom, let it at least accept it as a message of antiquity reflecting centuries of experience. The Church if asked beforehand could have prophesied with unerring foresight the failure of the modern experiment. It is now late to go back, but the more the going back is delayed the more difficult it will become. Legislators, at least stay your hand now! Do not increase the evil! Do not open wider the door, already too wide to the dissolution of marriage! Adopt rather the policy of retrenchment. Instead of relaxing tighten up. Instead of adding new grounds for divorce, curtail them. Instead of making divorce easier, make it harder. Aim by degrees at reducing it to the rarest and most difficult thing to obtain, requiring long standing and well proved causes incapable of human remedy. Do that much at least now, and perhaps a generation hence, we may see a return to the inexorable law of indissolubility with which Christ began, and which

His Church alone has kept up."—The Pilot.

OUR PROTESTANT BRETHREN

The ill-repute into which Protestantism has fallen the world over is a most significant phase of the religious history of these extraordinary times. That Protestantism has lost its hold upon the thinking world and its grip upon the rising generation can hardly be questioned. In the land of its origin it has been officially disowned and is with astonishing rapidity being repudiated even by those who, through life-long association, have always identified its claims with the claims of conscience. In our own land its sponsors are uttering their lamentations from almost every pulpit, and feverishly discussing proposed remedies against death in almost every ministerial conference.

There are no remedies against death. Every human thing must die, and Protestantism is a human thing. The agony of death may be prolonged, but the end is inevitable. Few of us thought to live long enough to see what we have already seen in these days. Empires that gave promise of centuries of life have fallen, and new nations have arisen. Old wrongs have been righted and justice, in some quarters at least, has been able to demand attention. And we dare to hope even for the end of war. The intrinsic power of truth and justice is always the more apparent when in the confusion of radical transformations men must turn back to first principles. Protestantism which was born of expediency, as well as of pride and avarice and lust, cannot endure times like these.

The Christian fragments, which Protestantism has retained in various degrees of preservation, have held its better spirits together thus far, and still cause the righteous to hesitate in forsaking a ship which carries such precious elements. If these righteous souls did but know that the precious elements they vout soul takes up his heritage and leaves the ship, Protestantism would long since have hastened to its inevitable ruin. The Lord, Who can, if needs be, raise up from the very stones, sons of Abraham, does not require the sustaining arms of His creatures for the preservation of His Kingdom. He accords the privilege of cooperation to those He deigns to call His friends, but He depends upon none of us. It behooves each of us, therefore, to do what conscience demands and leave the rest to the Lord our God.

So far as the disintegration of Protestantism opens the way for a wider propagation of the complete gospel of Jesus Christ, all Catholics have a right to rejoice and be glad to share in the privilege of scattering widecast the seeds of truth where the seeds of error formerly flourished. But in so far as it opens the way for the dissemination of that neo-paganism, which is already rampant, it should make us pause in applauding all who are hurrying Protestantism to its end. Inherent weakness will end Protestantism and the hand of God is directing the process of its disintegration. The spirits of darkness are also gathering to destroy if they can the precious elements of the Gospel which she has retained. They hover about their victim that they may destroy the good, and, if possible, match with their success the triumph of the Spirit of Truth.

St. John tells us to scrutinize the spirits and judge if they be of God. The spirits which are aligned against Protestantism are not all of God. Many are of "the world, the flesh and the devil." Some of these are loud in their praise of the tolerance of the Church and the common-sense of her priesthood. This is all very flattering, but often suspiciously so. Those that flatter for some ulterior purpose will be the first to turn upon the Church their shafts of hatred when they come to know how intolerant of evil the Church of God has always been and now is. Their admiration for what they think the Church to be, reveals the spirit that prompts many of their attacks on Protestantism.

One who has dwelt for awhile at least in Catholic countries realizes that the spirits of evil are kindred everywhere. They hate every effort made by religion and are rebellious against everything that makes for their self-restraint. They are always uttering the cry of the wild, sometimes under fair words, but for the most part in savage attacks upon all order, civil as well as religious. In Catholic countries, where the issue between Christ and the world is clearly drawn, the Church must face all the scorn and hatred of these enemies of the Cross of Christ. Protestantism in America is hated by these same spirits of evil because many of its champions have been and are valiant warriors for sobriety and purity and honesty. So far as individual Protestants, therefore, are hated for justice's sake, they are of Christ and, as such, must not be scorned by any who count themselves as Christ's disciples.

Protestantism in the United States has had to meet many of the frontal attacks of the enemies of religion. It has warded off as many such attacks from the Church as it has inspired fanatical attacks from other quarters. In so far as its members have made common cause

with the Church in defending the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they should be accounted as brethren. Those that come back to the Sheepfold will come as individuals, and it will be our glorious privilege to play the Shepherd's part in welcoming them. Those that are not ready yet to come we shall pursue with our prayers. And in these days of confusion for our Protestant brethren, we shall prove that we are of Christ by no taunting words, but by a tender regard that can be born of Christ alone.—The Missionary.

FAITH IN ISRAEL

Father Finn, S. J., visited Ireland this summer and his written impressions are interesting. Speaking of Ireland's faith, he says, there are ice-cream sodas in Dublin. Well, the people there go to confession as blithely as we Americans call for our chocolate sodas. In the sacristy the little servers plump down on their knees before any Father not otherwise engaged and confess with out the least embarrassment. I had not, in fact, been in Dublin two hours before I felt convinced that if our Lord were to come to that city of geniuses—think of Swift, Burke and Sheridan, to name the best known borne there—He would not have been content to say, "Amen I say unto you, I have not found faith so great in Israel," but, as I judge, would have added, "nor such faith in all the world." At 11 o'clock on every day of the week the church of Gardiner street is filled with worshippers. I estimate there are from ten to twelve hundred in attendance at the Mass said at that late hour. One day, I remember, I gazed down upon the congregation from a small loft reserved for the Jesuit Fathers. The service had come to an end, and the worshippers were leaving slowly and, as it seemed to me, with a certain reluctance. Right below me, in one of the nooks in which this cozy church abounds, was mounted on a pedestal a beautiful statue of Christ which suggested to me touchingly the sweet line of the Dies Irae "Quarens me sedisti lassus." They call it The Agonizing Christ. One by one worshippers came and pleaded their cause before it. One by one, on completing their petitions, they would arise and tenderly kiss the sacred foot which projected. Finally a dear little girl approached in her unsullied faith and, no doubt, with her own agony. At the end she got upon her toes, reached forth her tiny hand, touched the foot, then kissed the part of the hand that had made the contact. Amen. Was there ever such faith in Israel? To come back to my first impression—it was the stupendous faith of the Irish people. And that impression was confirmed in a thousand ways

during my stay of one month and two days in the Isle of Saints.—Catholic Transcript.

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