

how to explain it to Aunt Ann."

She was quieter than usual during breakfast, but the others were so much excited over the projected motor trip to Great Caves, that they did not notice her silence.

"Allowing for anything that could possibly happen, we'll reach the hotel in time for supper," Irma announced. "And early in the morning we'll get our guide and start through the caves, having all the time we will need to see everything. They say the trip up there is great—such picturesque scenery all along the way. Listen to some of the funny names of the little towns along the road."

Suddenly Ruth sat erect. Irma had rattled off the queer postmark on Aunt Ann's letter.

"Do you really go through Joppa?" she asked. "That is Aunt Ann's postoffice address, and her farm lies just beyond the little village. I remember going there once with father. I thought that it was across the world from home then. I can't get used to the way our car annihilates distance."

A little later she caused consternation by announcing calmly, "Girls, I'm going to stay with Aunt Ann while you go on to Great Caves." No amount of expostulation or argument seemed to affect her decision, and Irma rushed to her mother for help.

"Make her give up this foolish plan," she said. "She's been wild to go, and I can't understand her. She acts so different. Come and talk to me, and make her see that it is all foolishness."

"Let her alone," said Mrs. Graydon gently. "I think that Ruth knows best."

If Ruth's high courage waned a bit when she stepped from the big car to the roadside where the gate opened into a lane, and where the mail box bore the grim name "Ann Vincent," she did not let the others know; she waved gayly to them as the car rolled away. Walking toward the big, square white house with its green shutters, she remembered that far away day when she had trotted up the lane by her father's side, holding tight to his strong hand. Something like a sob caught in her throat as she thought of the many times that his dear feet must have passed this way.

There was no sign of life at the front of the house, but, hearing voices, Ruth followed the walk to the rear. A man in working clothes was starting from the pump toward the back gate, where a horse and plough were waiting, and a woman called after him. "And if you've finished that south patch, you will have time to work the garden over before supper!"

She was a tall, straight woman with snow-white hair, but when she turned toward the girl the two pairs of dark eyes that met were very much alike.

"Aunt Ann, I have come to stay over-night with you," Ruth said in her quick, direct way.

The woman started at the sound of her voice, looked at her keenly, and then held out her hand and said, "You are John's girl."

There were no demonstrations; they shook hands like two women. Then they went into the cool sitting room, and Ruth in her straightforward manner began at once to tell how she had happened to come as an unexpected guest. When she had explained, she added, "I came to tell you about the three birthday gifts."

Aunt Ann's firm mouth twitched slightly at the corners.

"I didn't send them," Ruth went on and told the story. "And while I'm here," she said, "I might just as well tell you, Aunt Ann, that I never have remembered your birthday—though I didn't realize it until this morning; but I know now that it was always mother or Aunt Helen or Aunt Grace who reminded me in time. The part of me that was intended for the purpose of remembering birthdays either doesn't work well, or it was left out entirely. I've a notion that you would have survived without the hug-me-tights and caps and bedroom slippers—but I'm sorry I couldn't remember to send a friendly greeting anyway."

Aunt Ann's lips had parted in a broad grin now, and, beckoning, she led the way into her bedroom, opened a drawer of the old-fashioned cherry bureau and pointed to the orderly rows and stacks of unused articles, each labeled, "From your loving niece Ruth."

"Do you mean to tell me that you did not make all these—things?" she said.

"I'm sorry to say that I did not," Ruth admitted. "It seems that the part of a person that is used to contrive fancy things was left out of my make-up, too. For the life of me, I can't see the use of things like those."

With a low chuckle Aunt Ann pushed the drawer in—and their visit began.

Ruth forgot her fear of the great-aunt whose favor she had been taught to strive for, and each of them started in on a new basis of friendship. Before nightfall they had explored every field, brook and woodland of the old farm, and Aunt Ann had answered all of Ruth's eager questions about her father, and she was enjoying the girl's frank comradship more than she had ever hoped to enjoy anything in life again.

Ruth felt no regrets over the trip that she was missing. She slept that night in the room that had been her father's, and was standing the next morning by the window, looking

out across the fields and woods, thinking of him, when Aunt Ann came in.

"You look just like your father, child," she said, putting one hand almost timidly on the girl's shoulder, "and—I am glad, since yesterday I've made a decision. I am going to rent the farm and move to the state university town, and I want you to stay with me during school terms for the next four years, and attend the university."

"But—I thought—you didn't approve—"

"Of the higher education for girls?" Aunt Ann finished. "I don't for all girls. Maybe I've been bitter over that subject. You see, I had wanted to go away to school, and finally father had given his consent and I was going in September; but mother died in August. I couldn't go away and leave father and brother right then, so I decided to wait a while. Just after Thanksgiving Brother John got married and brought his wife home. She was like a dear old sister to me, and helped me plan my clothes and get ready to go the next fall. When I was ready to start, she died—leaving her baby boy in my care. Late that fall John took typhoid and never seemed to want to get well, and then father had a stroke, and went, too."

"I was all that I could do for him, and I did the best I could by him. I managed the farm, and raised him, and I had managed to lay by enough for his education. Then he married, and I was left alone, too old to try to make myself anything except a plain farm woman. All these years I've been watching how easily education comes to most girls, and how little most of them appreciate it; but I hadn't any right to say that none of them deserved it. I got the notion that you were one of the kind that didn't. Since I've seen you, I'm willing to risk it on you."

The morning was filled with their planning for the future, and Ruth heard the distant call of the auto horn with genuine regret.

At the door she hesitated, then said firmly: "Aunt Ann, they will be so glad at home—those three dear little women. One by one they will take me aside and tell me about remembering your birthday for me. They will be sure that they helped me in that way to a college education—and Aunt Ann, I don't want to be deceitful, but I can't tell them that they didn't."

Aunt Ann cleared her throat and her shrewd dark eyes suddenly grew moist. "That isn't deceit," she said very decidedly. "That is only some of the tact and grace they've been all these years trying to drill into your matter-of-fact Vincent nature and I'm glad to see it's taking hold—in the right places."

The horn sounded insistently now from the end of the lane. They started to shake hands as they had done the day before; then Ruth suddenly threw both arms about Aunt Ann, and gave her a hug that nearly lifted the older woman from the floor.

"Oh, I love you so! I may forget your birthdays to the end of time—but I'll always love you!"

And she was away, down the lane as fast as her feet could carry her.

Aunt Ann stood quite still until Ruth had vanished from sight, then she wiped her eyes and said to herself:

"I used to think it was just palaver and put on, when John's wife was always trying to be nice to everyone, but I guess it came from her kind heart. Seems like Ruth's got her father's straight, honest way and strong brain and her mother's gentle heart, and—after all it isn't a bad combination.—Lulu Linton in the Youth's Companion.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN

In these trying days when the very foundations of our civilization seemed threatened, it is good to know that amidst the din of arms and the strife of nations some men are thinking calmly of those things which touch the life of the soul, and affect the deeper currents of man's being. It was for this reason that I was surprised the other day to be asked by one who felt the burden of sin of our awful world, by what authority the Catholic Church claimed the power to forgive sin, the "power of the keys," and was there evidence of the use of the power in the early days of Church history? I told him it would be long to go in detail then, but I promised to make clear our warrant, and it is in fulfillment of such promise that I give the position of the Catholic Church, and the reasons for such positions.

The doctrine of the Church is put clearly by the Council of Trent (Sess. xiv, Chap. I.) "But the Lord then principally instituted the sacrament of penance, when being raised from the dead He breathed upon His disciples saying, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained.' By which action so signal and words so clear, the consent of all the Fathers has ever understood that the power of forgiving sins was communicated to the Apostles and to their lawful successors for the reconciling of the faithful who have fallen after baptism." It is then a part of Catholic belief that the power to forgive sins committed after baptism has been communicated to the apostles, and to their successors, the Bishops and the priests of the Church. Proof of this divinely granted power we find in Holy Scripture itself. The text quoted through-

the tradition of the ages are found in Matthew xvi, 19; Matthew xviii, 18, and John xx, 21-23.

To the Prince of the Apostles are given the "Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." From that kingdom sin is excluded, and over sin Peter has indelible power—"Whosoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." To Peter and to all the Apostles is given the power "to bind and to loose;" this power is granted without limitation, and of a consequence implies a jurisdiction at once legislative and judicial—power to forgive, power to set men free from the penalties that come of sin. This meaning which is clear from the context, becomes clearer in the light of the literature of the time, in which the phrase "to bind and to loose" was in very common use.

The Gospel of St. John puts this power with clearness so unmistakable that one wonders how any interpretation save that of the Catholic Church is possible. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." At the time of the Reformation there were some among the Reformers who saw in this text only the right to announce the Gospel of Christ, while others again contended that no power was given here save the power already granted in baptism. But surely these words cannot in any way mean only the right to interpret, nor can they be restricted to baptism alone, for the words of St. John imply a strictly judicial act, and the power to retain sin suggests so clearly an action of discretionary judgment, the power to retain sin is granted so universally, that it becomes impossible to limit it to baptism.

The power, then, to forgive sin has been in the Church from the beginning, nor is there lacking evidence that the Church made use of this power from the dawn of Christianity. In the first days of Christian history, the new birth of baptism was judged inconsistent with return to sin, and the use of the power of the keys was indeed less frequent than in after years. But the clearest evidence is found in the Pastor of Jerms, III, Sim. VIII, II.—Sim. VIII, 6, 5, ibid IX, 19, where the author basing his contention on the received tradition takes to task the men who would exclude from penance those who fell after baptism.

St. Ignatius Martyr, in his letter to the Philadelphians, asserts that the Bishop must preside over penance, clearly asserting, of a consequence, the practice of forgiving sin in the days closest to the Apostles. The "Constitutions Apostolicæ" embodying almost the earliest of Roman documents (P. G. O. 1073), direct the consecrating Prelate to pray this over the Bishop. "Grant him, O Lord, by Thy Christ, the fulness of Thy spirit that he may have the power to pardon sin in accordance with Thy command, that he may loose every bond which binds the sinner, by reason of that power which Thou hast granted Thy Apostles."

FORGIVENESS OF SINS ALWAYS PRACTICED BY CHURCH True, some early writers restricted this power and refused to allow pardon for certain sins. This may have been for disciplinary reasons, but grant for a moment that men such as Origen and Tertullian erred in the matter, the Apostolic See speaking by the mouth of Calixtus (218-222) asserted with great clearness the power of the Church to forgive even the heinous crimes to which Tertullian and others made exception. After the days of Calixtus the tradition is so clear and so abundant that no one may deny it, and the universal practice of public penance after the middle of the fourth century precludes the possibility of denying the constant exercise of the power of the keys. "Verily," so the words of St. Chrysostom in his work "De Sacerdote," "Migne P. G. LXVII, 643, 'The Father has given all judgment into the hands of His Son, and the Son in turn has given all judgment into the hands of His Son, and the Son in turn has granted the power to His priests,' and again, 'He has given to His priests a power he has not granted even to the Angels for He has said to them, 'Whosoever you shall loose, shall be loosed.'"

The sacrament of Penance has been through the Christian centuries given to theologians many difficult and delicate questions, but the constant tradition from the beginning has made it impossible to deny either the granting of the power, or its exercise even from the first days of Christian faith. It was for this reason that Pius X., of holy memory, in his decree "Lamentabili Sane," condemns severely all those who would assert that "in the primitive Church there was no concept of the reconciliation of the Christian sinner by the authority of the Church, but the Church by very slow degrees only grew accustomed to this concept."

The position of the Catholic Church has through the centuries stood the attacks of many, but has ever endured, not only because it is divine, but also because it appeals so powerfully to the best instincts of men who see in the tribunal of Penance a work worthy of the "Divine Wisdom," a work of great usefulness to society.—Providence Visitor.

In former days public scolds and gossips were dipped until they were cooled off and their teeth chattered. Would that this cooling argument still prevailed!

Men who become ascetics to win a silver mug, will not practice self-restraint to win heaven.

WEAKENING MARRIAGE BONDS

One of the commandments of God which has been continuously assailed by the perversity of man is the injunction: "What God has joined together let no man put asunder." Established for the highest and holiest purpose in the order of nature and of the divine plan, marriage has ever been attacked by those who would pervert the laws of the Most High. The sacred bond which unites man and woman, be they Christians or pagans, bears upon it the impress of Nature's approval as well as the sanction of God Himself. Springing from a common stock, our first parents, the human race was destined by God to extend its ramifications in countless directions.

Marriage has both a subjective as well as an objective purpose. It is intended to promote the moral and spiritual well-being of those who enter its sacred precincts. For the few, this welfare is attainable in the single state; for the majority, it follows naturally from the conditions of wedded life. This welfare is promoted when certain rules and requirements are observed. Disregard the underlying principles of this state, tamper with the sacred bonds which unite two persons, refuse compliance with the obligations which this state entails, and the subjective nature of marriage both as a contract and as a sacrament will quickly be impaired.

The well-being of the human race as a whole depends upon the successful attainment of the objective nature of marriage. This objective nature includes the perpetuation, both numerical and moral, of the race. One of the conditions necessary for its successful achievement is the permanency of the marriage tie. Nowhere else, perhaps, in the realm of Nature is the violation of her laws so effectively and a thoroughly punished as in the case where the sacred nature of marriage is disregarded. Recently, a movement was inaugurated in England which proposed to make "marriage a three-year contract." Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the novelist, is credited with being one of the leaders of this neo-paganism. If it be true that Sir Arthur has allowed himself to be allied with such a cause, it is but one more proof that highly specialized talent in one line frequently expose their owner to ridicule and compassion when he applies these gifts in a foreign field.

Aside from the Christian aspect of marriage as a sacrament, the very nature of this institution makes it imperative that permanency be one of its salient features. Human beings, the units of the race, have a right not only to be born but also to be reared and nurtured, to be guided, educated and protected. This three-year absurdity, if allowed to become effective, would be one step more toward the present prevalence of divorce. The automatic release, after a three years' trial, would not only wreck the prospect of population increase, but would also tend to hold the marriage state but a trifle above those depths which we warned should never even be mentioned.

The lack of stability in the home, the ease with which divorce or such a trial farce can shatter the marriage bonds, are known to all students of history as the underlying cause of ancient Roman decadence. Looking around us at home, writers and thinkers continually point to the fact that the old so-called American stock in the East is fast dying out, while the humbler and more vigorous blood imported from foreign shores is fast taking its place. The result of such a state of things, even from the natural and the economic standpoint, is everywhere showing itself. In many sections of the country the so-called native stock has been so cut up and dwarfed by the entanglements of divorce and other allied evils, that foreign elements in their midst now possess the reins of power. This is but the inevitable result of tampering with the marriage bond. From the Christian and the Catholic viewpoint, the evils of divorce and of trial marriage are among those sins which are constantly crying to heaven for vengeance. Is it too much to hazard the conjecture that this evil may be one of the causes which have determined an all-wise Providence to purify the world by the present conflagration which is striking down millions of human beings, by branding countless numbers with suffering, and chastening the spirit of others?—St. Paul Bulletin.

CATHOLICISM AND SOLDIERS

(Rev. G. C. Martindale, S. J., in The Tablet.)

It is often asked whether the War makes a man worse or better. In this shape the question is, we believe, misleading and should not be asked at all. To our mind, the War does not, immediately, do either the one or the other; but it breaks up the crust of convention, habit, and average thought and behavior which forms itself round each man's soul, and reveals what is latent in him of unsuspected good or bad. At the same time it leaves the sensitive and emotional part of the soul unsheltered and susceptible of all manner of new and elementary influences. And the tendency to religion is at least as elementary as the tendency to kill or steal. If, therefore, a congenial religious fact meets a man in this receptive and responsive condition, it will affect him in that very inmost of his soul, where associations of

ideas and originating emotions are found, and where religious influences at ordinary times so rarely penetrate. And in those depths it may, for many years, remain a secret even to himself.

On the Western Front at least, the Catholic habits of France and Belgium have in thousands of cases impressed our men almost beyond their due importance. Among these we number especially the constant presence of those roadside Calvaries, or even Crucifixes within churches (like the famous one at Messines.) Not only the urgent message of the Crucifix itself has been for the first time guessed; but man after man, as I myself answer for, has been impressed even to conversion-point by the amazing immunity from shot or shell which so many of the Crucifixes have enjoyed. It is not our business to interpret the fact; but the fact is there, and has thrilled hundreds of our men so much so that it is barely possible that the Crucifix should be any more misunderstood among us, and the Crucifixes of France and Belgium are reproducing themselves in England in village after village, where war-shrines are set up recommending to the parish the souls of those who had left for the front, and have fallen.

Masses and prayers for the dead, again, have become familiar to our men, and the doctrine of Purgatory has suddenly revealed itself as an obvious truth, in view of the splendid deaths of men who yet were assuredly not saints. It is felt that neither instant heaven nor, certainly, hell were for these, and, again, that utter cessation of communion with beloved comrades was intolerable. This latter intuition has driven many, alas! though especially non-combatants, to spiritualism; but others, as I know, have returned to the Catholic Church for the sheer glory of her creed and practice, which teach the existence of a Purgatory, and that much may still be done, by the survivor, to assist and even "communicate" with the dead.

PRIEST AND PARSON

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM ON THE BATTLEFIELD

An Ohio attorney preached from a Protestant pulpit, recently, on "Efficiency and Culture," giving expression to words now threadbare from repetition. "This War is the greatest opportunity the Church has ever had, etc." However, what interests us is his statement that, "not only one man in ten in England believes in the future life. Countless numbers of English soldiers, who in reality are atheists, have joined the Catholic Church because of its simplicity."

One knows not the authority for all this, but surmise may not be far off when one might suggest this man had recently read Michael Macdonagh's "The Irish on the Somme," in which he describes how the English soldiers in great numbers beg for Rosaries, Sacred Heart badges and other Catholic emblems, although not Catholics, and many show the highest respect for everything Catholic; hence, to say that they are at heart atheists is rather far-fetched and uncalled for. The truth of the matter is they note what the Catholic chaplains do for the wounded and dying, hence they yearn for something similar.

Here is a case as stated by an Irish Catholic soldier: "These non-Catholic soldiers see the chaplain hurry to the side of the wounded and dying, raise their hands over them in absolute adoration, and say the prayers for the dying, leave them holding the little crucifix and patient to the last. As one of my English cronies said after witnessing such a scene a hundred times and more: 'You see, there is an awful blooming difference between your priest and our parson. Your priest does things, our parson asks us if he can do anything for us.' No wonder the soldier is impressed and this bears out the above quoted remark of Dr. Brown, of Yale, that the Protestant church "has never been brave enough to deal with this human life of ours in its entirety." The Catholic Church has her Sacraments for the living and the dying and from the cradle to the grave, meets humanity in all its needs and even after death reaches over the borderland and whispers to God. Eternal rest grant unto them. Thoughtful minds outside the fold are wondering and surmising what is to become of Christianity after this great upheaval of society. God's Church marches on serene and calm, confident as in the days of old of God's promise "to the consummation of the world."—The Tablet.

CONVERTED BY GENUFLECTION

NON-CATHOLIC WATCHED PRIEST AT PRIVATE DEVOTIONS

When the saintly Tertiary Bishop Mermillod of Geneva was a curate in that city he delivered a series of sermons on the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. One evening, after all the faithful had left the church and the doors had been locked, the pious priest trimmed the sanctuary lamps, as was his daily custom, and then knelt for some moments in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He then rose and made devout genuflection. Just then he heard a slight noise in the church and turning about he saw a well-dressed lady emerging from the confessional. "What do you wish here, madame, at this time of the night?"

asked Bishop Mermillod, much surprised. "Your Reverence will please excuse me," replied the lady, "for, although I am a Protestant, I have regularly attended your Lenten sermons on the Eucharist, and I must confess that your words have convinced me of the truth of this great mystery. I had but one doubt—for which I humbly crave your pardon—namely, whether you yourself really believe what you preach. Hence, I sought an opportunity for observing your actions in secret before the Blessed Sacrament whether they are in accord with your professed belief. I am now satisfied that they are; for you would never have made so devout a genuflection as you did just now if you did not really believe in the Real Presence, and I humbly beg to be received into the Catholic Church."—The Monitor.

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Maiden Up-To-Date A.; by Genevieve Walsh. Martin Edward, by Mrs. J. Sadler. The story of a haughty society girl, selfish and arrogant, who awakes to the shallowness of her existence through the appreciation of the noble character and religious example of a young man whom she afterwards marries.

May Brooke, by Mrs. Anna H. Dorsey. The story of two cousins who are left in the care of their very wealthy but unfeeling uncle, who, through their religion and its at odds with all the world. It follows them through their many trials and experiences, and contrasts the effect on the two distinct characters.

Mary's Heart and Trust, by Mary C. Crowley. A collection of stories for Catholic children, including "Little Beginnings," "Blind Apple Woman," "Polly's Five Dollars," "Marie's Tramp," and "A Family's Folly."

Old House By The Bay, by Mrs. J. Sadler. Picturing scenes from the life of the Irish people.

Orphan Sisters, The; by Mary L. Hoffman. This is an exceedingly interesting story, in which some of the doctrines of the Catholic Church are clearly depicted.

Pearl O'Antich by Abbe Bayle. A charming and powerfully written story of the early ages of the Church.

Rose Le Blanc, by Lady Georgiana Fullerton. A thoroughly entertaining story for young people by one of the best known Catholic authors.

Rosemary, by J. Vincent Huntington. Though written many years ago, its place among the best stories we have to-day.

Sister of Charity, The; by Mrs. Anna H. Dorsey. The story of a Sister of Charity who, as a nurse, attends a non-Catholic family, and after a shipwreck and rescue from almost a hopeless position, brings the family into the Church of God. It is especially interesting in its descriptions.

Solitary Island, The; by Rev. John Talbot Smith. As mysterious and fascinating in its plot as either of the sensational novels of the Archdeacon, including Gunther, and it contains portraits which would not shame the brush of a Thackeray or Dickens. Strawcut's Laughing, The; by Lady Georgiana Fullerton.