

either trace back their steps as they did after the great Revolution, if the new state of things proves a disappointment, or take up another idea to occupy their activity. Such has been the case in the past, and such will it be in the future as long as the French retain their racial characteristics."

Father Vabre concludes from these principles that, with a cause which appeals strongly to them, easily dazzled as they are by a strong personality, they will follow to the death a leader who holds them spell-bound. Thus they will willingly follow a Clovis, a Charlemagne, a St. Bernard, a Joan of Arc as champions of a great cause, and with similar leaders they would again become staunch champions of the Papacy, brave knights of the Cross, or heroic defenders of the fatherland; but with a Robespierre, a Gambetta, a Combes at their head, they will as easily be ruthless murderers of a king, rabid republicans, or uncompromising Socialists.

He points out that so far back as February, 1871, the first elections under the newly formed Republic of France resulted in a decided preponderance of Conservative deputies. The country needed men of "sterling character, unquestionable honesty, and peaceful disposition." The Republicans at first elected were but a weak minority, but the majority were a heterogeneous assembly of Orleansists, Legitimists and Royalists of other dynastic predilections. The Bonapartists were, however, in a hopeless minority.

It was because the workmen of Paris suspected that this majority had reactionary designs, that they rose up in arms against the Government on March 18th, 1871, and formed what is known as the Commune, which ruled in Paris till May 21st of the same year, which was suppressed by Marshal McMahon.

The Commune rivalled in atrocity the Reign of Terror of 1792, murdering without mercy all who were suspected of not favoring the cause, the Archbishop of Paris being one of the victims. It fell short of the Reign of Terror only in the fact that it did not last so long.

It was owing to the intention manifested by the monarchists to bring the Count de Chambord to the throne under the title of Henry V. that the Republican wave now carried the French people with it, yet this turn might not have been given to public opinion only that the Count de Chambord insisted as a condition of his ascending the throne that the Bourbon white flag should be substituted for the tricolor which had been so long the flag of the French people. The French are sentimental to an extreme, and the proposal to adopt the Bourbon flag angered them as a sign of reaction toward absolutism and bureaucracy.

Most of the Catholic clergy took the side of the monarchists on this occasion, but at the polls in June, 1877, a decided Republican majority of deputies was elected, and Marshal McMahon had to resign the presidency soon after, whereupon Jules Grevy was elected as his successor.

The anti-Catholic measures passed by the Parliament during the succeeding years, and especially during the presidency of Jules Ferry, caused great dissatisfaction throughout the country, and at the elections of 1885 the first ballot resulted in the election of 204 Conservatives and only 130 Republicans. Two hundred and fifty seats remained undecided; and, according to Father Vabre's view of the case, these would have resulted much as did the other 334 elections, were it not that the over-enthusiastic Paul de Cassagnac hereupon, in his newspaper, and by placards posted up throughout Paris, proclaimed that the Republic had received its death-blow, and that monarchy must now be restored to save the country.

The Republican orators took up the cry that the people were to be crushed by a monarchical regime if the Conservatives gained the day, and this view of the case was so persistently urged that of the 250 seats still in the balance, 247 were gained by the Republicans and only three by the Conservatives.

At this critical moment, General Boulanger appeared upon the scene with his panacea for the evils which afflicted France, namely, a revision of the constitution, and many of the Catholic party adhered to him as their leader.

Pope Leo XIII. at this juncture advised Catholics to accept the Republic honestly and seriously as the form of government most acceptable to the French people, and, in fact, many did so, and a new party called "the Rallies" was formed, which had some strength. But the great majority of the clergy, angry at the vicious spirit manifested by the leading Republicans, clung to their monarchical preferences, and continued to oppose the new order of things. The Republicans and Socialists were greatly strengthened by this disorganized condition of affairs on the side of the Conservatives and

Moderates, and thus matters have gone from bad to worse for religion and the Church, till at last the tie which bound Church and State together has been severed.

During all this period the most noisy politicians have addressed discourses to the people representing the church as the friend of reaction and monarchy, and have thus, with the backing of a powerful and malicious press, represented the clergy as the foe of freedom, and have succeeded in increasing the Socialistic party at every election.

The majority of the people stand by the Republic, and will continue so to do unless they greatly change their minds.

We need not seriously fear the destruction of the Catholic faith in France. Indeed, many of the clergy believe it will flourish better than ever since being freed, in name at least, from governmental oppression. The alienation of the people from religion will be only temporary, and the church will regain what it has lost soon after a resolute and earnest leader shall be found to advocate the political rights of the Catholic people and church, while the clergy attend to the spiritual needs of the nation.

THE LAST DAYS OF THE APOSTLE OF TEMPERANCE.

Father Theobald Mathew—to readers of Irish history there is no more interesting personage than Father Mathew, the Apostle of Temperance. From the first his mission was a success, and the fame of his doings at home induced Bishops, priests and philanthropists to urge him to visit England, Scotland, and America. In the former country he administered the pledge to 600,000 persons. In Scotland his mission was as successful, and then came his visit to the United States.

Father Mathew's embarrassments were set at rest for a time by the results of a public subscription, but from this time the amazing success which had attended the cause from its inauguration began to flag. Father Mathew, unwilling to run the risk of renewed debt, felt constrained to curtail grants to bands, temperance halls, and before very long the terrible famine of 45 laid Ireland waste, and his energies were drawn away from his immediate mission, and absorbed in helping the people in the awful struggle with starvation and fever, in which thousands, nay, even millions, were worsted.

These dark and terrible days when "the hunger" was rampant over the land and famished human creatures perished for food all over Ireland, are heart-rending even to read about, and shall not be touched upon here except in relation to how they affected Father Mathew's mission. With his unbounded love and sympathy for the people, it can readily be imagined how with even more than his wonted energy he gave himself up to the task of alleviating the awful misery around him. He was foremost in every organization for helping his stricken fellow countrymen, and by his foresight, public mind, address, and power of working harmoniously for the common good with men of different politics and creeds, was able, not, alas! to arrest the famine, but to save thousands from the terrible fate which menaced them.

And now began the high tide of emigration, which has since flowed from Ireland to America. Queenstown was the usual point of departure, and to see these heart-broken emigrants off, administer to them the pledge, comfort them with such cheerful words as his heart prompted even in those cheerless days, became a recognized duty of Father Mathew, whom trouble and toil had now turned into a broken old man, gray-haired and feeble, though counting by years, he was still in the prime of life.

Father Mathew's name being so well known at home and abroad caused him to be chosen as agent for dispensing the charity of many Americans and others who sent food to alleviate the horrors of the famine, and it is said that more than any man in Ireland overcame the prejudice of the starving people against the "yellow male," which appeared so unpalatable to them. Even in the midst of the desolation of the famine Father Mathew's loving heart found consolation in contemplating the wonderful generosity of those starving poor, ever ready as long as anything lasted to share their scantiest allowance of food with each other.

In 1847 Father Mathew, in consideration of his great public services, was granted a pension of £300 a year out of the Queen's Civil List, which money went the same road as all other which found its way into his hands, for he was but the almoner of the government, as he had been all his life of whatever funds he had in his keeping. And now, in 1848, he paid the inevitable penalty of the overwork and anxiety of the long years he had given to the temperance cause, for he was struck down with paralysis. Although he made a rally from the serious attack, and lived for eight years afterwards, he was never again the vigorous, sanguine man of the early days of the cause. The blight of the famine was on the great work, and on all that had been hopeful and happy in Ireland, and the Apostle of Temperance had the heavy grief of seeing his ranks thinned by death and desertion.

In 1849, while still suffering from the stroke of paralysis of the year before, he determined (very much against the advice of his friends) to pay his long promised visit to America. His reception here was most cordial and enthusiastic; but though he strove manfully to repay the cordiality of his new friends with his wonted geniality, the effort of seeing and talking to countless numbers of people was no longer easy to him, and the contrast of the joy and prosperity of the New World with the gloom and misery of the dear old land, where he had recently witnessed such

heart-rending scenes of misery, saddened him. His greatest pleasure was in seeing among the well-to-do citizens of the cities he visited—men and women, to whom he had administered the pledge, in Ireland, years before, and whose faithful observance of it had secured them good positions in the New World. To many of them he was able to bring tidings of their kindred, for he never forgot a face he had known.

In spite of his shattered health he toiled in America, as he had toiled at home, and with the like happy results. The United States Senate gave him a place within the Bar—a privilege which had before only been conferred on Lafayette, and the President entertained him at a banquet to meet a number of the foremost men, all eager to know the Apostle. His stay in America lasted two years and a half; he visited twenty-five States of the Union, and administered the pledge to half a million of people. For a short time of repose he dwelt in the solitude of the forests of Arkansas, where he said Mass in the open air under the canopy of heaven, with a congregation of only four persons.

On his return to Ireland Father Mathew, now grown too infirm to be allowed to continue his mission, was induced to take up his residence with his brother Charles at Lehench House near Cork. There, surrounded by the loving care and ministrations of his family, who did all that was possible to comfort his last sad years, he awaited the coming of Death like a man whose life's work was done, and who pined for rest. But though he could no longer seek out the drunkard, the sick, and the suffering, they still knew where to find him, and to the very end those who sought him were not sent away unsatisfied. Nay, even after the final stroke of paralysis had stillied the voice which had pleaded so lovingly and so long, his dying hand guided to bless and sign with the cross the very last of the millions to whom he had given the pledge.

He died on December 8, 1856, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and the forty-second of his ministry, and it is surely too much to say of him that he was mourned by the entire people. Clad in his Franciscan habit, and with the beauty and peace of earlier days came back to his dead face, the Apostle lay in state in his own church in Cork, where those among whom he had labored so long could take a last farewell of their beloved father and friend. The name and fame of the apostolic Theobald Mathew, so justly dear to his own generation, still sends a thrill to Irish hearts, and is revered and cherished by thousands of his countrymen and women who never heard his persuasive voice, nor felt the clasp of his helpful and beneficent hand.

A LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS.

On the slopes of that Monte Magliore which is a continuation of Subasio, half hidden among the oak woods which, as in the days of St. Francis, still cover these lower slopes, stands the church of St. Pietro di Bovara. It is lofty, well proportioned, and in that it has been rebuilt since the time of the Saint of Poverty; for we learn from "The Mirror of Perfection" that when he was wont to seek retirement there, as he did in many other secluded places, it was ruined and deserted. It was a tale as might be expected, that it was near a leper hospital; for St. Francis never lost an opportunity of visiting and performing the most tender ministrations toward those unfortunate outcasts, abandoned by their own kind.

Now, there was among the Brothers a certain Pacifico, of great sanctity, and likewise a man of great sanctity. St. Francis, having summoned Brother Pacifico to attend him on one occasion, repaired to the seclusion of St. Pietro di Bovara to pass the night in prayer, bidding his companion to come for him early in the morning.

"And so, when morning had come," says the chronicler, "Brother Pacifico returned. Brother Francis was standing in prayer before the altar, and Brother Pacifico waited for him on the side of the choir, praying likewise before a crucifix. And no sooner had he begun to pray than he was caught up into heaven and saw many seats therein, among which was one more exalted than all, and more glorious shining and adorned with many precious stones. And these were the seats of the saints of God, below the Eternal Throne. And, amazed at its beauty, he began to ponder within himself whose seat it might be. And straightway he heard a voice saying unto him: 'This was the seat of Francis, and in his place humble Francis shall sit in it.'"

"Just as he had come to himself, Brother Francis went out to him from the sanctuary where he had been praying. And Brother Pacifico at once fell at his feet, with his arms outspread in the form of a cross; and, gazing upon him as if he were already in heaven sitting on that seat, he said to him: 'Father, hear my prayer; I do pray the Lord that he may have pity on me, and forgive me my sins, and pardon me!' And, stretching out his hand, blessed Francis raised him; and straightway he knew that he had seen something in a vision."

"And later, because he did not like to tell St. Francis his vision, Brother Pacifico began to speak to him as if at a distance and among other things he said to him: 'What is your opinion of yourself, Brother?' Blessed Francis answered and said to him: 'It seems to me that I am a greater sinner than any in the whole world.' And straightway it was spoken to the soul of Brother Pacifico: 'Hereby you may know that the vision you saw was true; for whereas Lucifer was thrown from his seat through pride so Francis shall merit through his humility to be raised to it, and to sit in it.'"

And that is the legend still told of the blessed Francis, where, above the source of the river, a stream, deep, swift and clear, flows silently among the tall rushes through green and peaceful meadows.—Ave Maria.

THE CHURCH HAS NO FEAR.

SHE HAS WEATHERED THE STORMS OF CENTURIES—SHE CHERISHES TRUE SCIENCE—SHE ENJOYS THE BENEFIT OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL GIBBONS.

Baltimore, Md., Jan. 8.—Cardinal Gibbons' sermon at High Mass at the Cathedral yesterday was on the text: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." (Hebrews i, 8.) The sermon was delivered in his usual clear and forcible style and was listened to attentively by a large congregation.

He said in part: "The unceasing duration of the church of Christ is frequently foretold in sacred Scripture. The angel Gabriel announces to Mary that Christ 'shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' Our Saviour said to Peter: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Our blessed Lord clearly intimates here that the church is destined to be as sated always, but to be overcome, never."

"In the last words recorded of our Redeemer in the Gospel of St. Matthew, the same prediction is strongly repeated and the reason of the Church's indestructibility is fully expressed: 'Go ye, teach all nations * * * and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.' This sentence contains three important declarations: First the presence of Christ with His church, 'Behold I am with you'; second, His constant presence, without an interval of one day's absence, 'I am with you all days'; third, His perpetual presence to the end of the world, and consequently the perpetual duration of the Church, even to the consummation of the world.' Hence it follows that the true Church must have existed from the beginning; it must have had not one day's interval of suspended animation or separation from Christ, and must live to the end of time."

The indestructibility of the Catholic church is truly marvelous and well calculated to excite the admiration of every reflecting mind when we consider the number and variety and the formidable power of the enemies with whom she has to contend from her very birth to the present time. This fact alone stamps divinity on her brow.

DEADLY PORES WITHIN THE FOLD. "The church has been constantly engaged in a double warfare—one foreign, the other domestic. In foreign war against paganism and infidelity; in civil strife against heresy and schism, fomented by her own rebellious children. From the Day of Pentecost till the victory of Constantine the Great over Maxentius, embracing a period of about two hundred and eighty years, the church underwent a series of ten persecutions unparalleled for severity in the annals of history. Every torture that malice could invent was resorted to that every vestige of Christianity might be eradicated. 'Christians ad leones!'—'The Christians to the lions!' was the popular war cry. They were clothed in the skins of wild beasts and thus exposed to be devoured by dogs. They were covered with pitch and set on fire, to serve as lamp posts to the streets of Rome. To justify such atrocities and smother all sentiments of compassion these persecutors accused their innocent victims of the most appalling crimes."

"Let us now calmly survey the field after the din and smoke of battle have passed away. Let us examine the condition of the old church after having passed through those deadly conflicts. We see her unmercifully stronger to-day than at any previous period of her history. The losses she sustained in the Old World are more than compensated by her acquisitions in the New. She has already recovered a good portion of the ground wrested from her in the sixteenth century. She numbers now about 225,000,000 adherents. She exists to-day, not an effete institution, but in all the integrity and fullness of life, with her organism unimpaired, more united, more compact and more vigorous than ever she was before."

THE GREATEST OF MIRACLES. "You ask for a miracle as the Jews asked our Saviour for a sign. You ask the church to prove her divine mission by a miracle. Is not her very survival the greatest of miracles? If you saw some fair creature, with all the weakness of humanity upon her, cast into prison and starved and trampled upon, and hacked and tortured, her blood sprinkled on her dungeon walls, and if you saw her emerging from her prison in all the bloom and freshness of youth and in the ordinary span of human life, continuing to be the joyful mother of children, would you not call that a miracle?"

"And is this not a picture of our mother, the church? Has she not passed through all these vicissitudes? Has she not tasted the bitterness of prison in every age? Has not her blood been shed in every clime? And yet, in her latter days, she is as fair as ever, and the nursing mother of children. Is this not a miracle, I know not what a miracle is."

"God forbid that we should ascribe to any human cause this marvelous survival of the church. Her indestructibility is not due, as some suppose, to her wonderful organization, or to the far-reaching policy of her pontiffs, or to the learning and wisdom of her teachers. If she has survived it is not because of human wisdom, but often in spite of human folly. Her permanence is due to the arm of the firm, but to the finger of God. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory! God forbid that we should glory in anything save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

"I would now ask this question of all that are hostile to the Catholic church and who are plotting her destruction: How can you hope to overturn an institution which for more than nineteen centuries has successfully resisted all the combined assaults of the world, of men, and of the powers of darkness? What means will you employ to compass her ruin? Is it the power of kings and emperors and prime ministers?

They have tried in vain to crush her, from the days of the Roman Caesars to those of the present government of France."

"Many persons labor under the erroneous impression that the crowned heads of Europe have been the unwavering supporters of the church, and that if their protection were withdrawn she would collapse. So far from the church being sheltered behind earthly thrones, her worst enemies have been, with some honorable exceptions, so-called Christian princes, who were nominal children of the church. They chafed under her salutary discipline; they wished to be rid of her yoke, because she alone in times of oppression had the power and the courage to stand by the rights of the people and place her breast as a wall against the encroachments of their rulers. With calm confidence we can say with the Psalmist: 'Why have the gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ. Let us break their bonds asunder and let us cast away their yoke from us.'"

SCIENCE NO FOE OF THE CHURCH. "Is the Church unable to cope with modern inventions and the mechanical progress of the twentieth century? We are often told so, but, far from hiding our heads, like the ostrich in the sand, at the approach of these inventions, we hail them as messengers of God and will use them as providential instruments for the further propagation of the faith."

"If we succeeded so well before, when we had no ships but frail canoes, no compass but our eyes; when we had no roads but eternal snows, virgin forests and trackless deserts; when we had no guides save faith and hope and God; if even then we succeeded so well in carrying the Gospel to the confines of the earth, how much more can we do now by the aid of the telegraph, steamships and railroads?"

"Yes, oh men of genius, we bless your inventions; we bless you, ye modern discoverers, and we will improve upon the services of the church and say: 'Lightnings and clouds bless the Lord; fire and heat bless the Lord; all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all forever.' 'The utility of modern inventions to the church has been manifested in a conspicuous manner. In 1869 the Pope called a council of all the Bishops of the world. Without the aid of steam it would have been impossible for them to assemble. By its aid they were able to meet from the uttermost bounds of the earth.'"

"But may not the light of the church grow pale and be extinguished before the intellectual blaze of the twentieth century? Has she not much to fear from literature, the arts and sciences? She has always been the patroness of literature and the fostering mother of the arts and sciences. She founded and endowed nearly all the great universities of Europe. Not to mention those of the Continent, a bare catalogue of which would cover a large space. I may allude to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the two most famous seats of learning in England, which were established under Catholic auspices centuries before the Reformation. The church also founded three of the four universities now existing in Scotland—St. Andrew's in 1411; Glasgow, in 1450, and Aberdeen, in 1492."

LIBERTY HER FRIEND ALWAYS.

"Without her we should be deprived to-day of the precious treasures of ancient literature, for in preserving the languages of Greece and Rome from destruction she rescued the classical writers of those countries from oblivion. Hailan justly observes that were it not for the diligent labors of the monks in the Middle Ages our knowledge of the history of ancient Greece and Rome would be as vague to-day as our information regarding the Pyramids of Egypt."

Is it liberty that will destroy the church? The church breathes freely only where true liberty is found. She is always cramped in her operations wherever despotism casts its dark shadows. Nowhere does she enjoy more independence than here; nowhere is she more vigorous and prosperous."

"Children of the church fear nothing, happen what will to her. Christ is with her, and therefore she cannot sink. Caesar, in crossing the Adriatic, said to the troubled oarsman: 'Quid times, Cæsarem velis?'—'Fear not, for you carry Caesar and Caesar's fortune.' What Caesar said in presumption Jesus says with truth: 'What fearest thou? Christ is in the ship! Are we not positive that the sun will rise to-morrow and the next day, and so on to the end of the world? Why? Because God so ordained when He established it in the heavens and because it has never failed to run its course from the beginning. Has not Christ promised that the church should always enlighten the world? Has He not, so far, fulfilled His promise concerning His Church? Has she not gone steadily on her course midst storm and sunshine? The full millennium of the past is the best security for the future.'"

"Amid the continual changes in human institutions she is the one institution that never changes. Amid the universal ruins of earthly monuments she is the one monument that stands proudly pre-eminent. Not a stone in this building falls to the ground. Amid the general destruction of kingdoms her kingdom is never destroyed. Ever ancient and ever new, time writes no wrinkles on her divine brow."

"The Church has seen the birth of every government in Europe, and it is not at all improbable that she shall also witness the death of them all and chant their requiem. She was more than fourteen hundred years old when Columbus discovered this continent, and the foundation of our Republic is but as yesterday to her."

GREAT THINGS HAS SHE SEEN.

"She calmly looked on while the Goth and the Visigoth, the Hun and the Saxon swept like a torrent over Europe, subverting dynasties. She has seen monarchies changed into republics and republics consolidated into empires—all this

she has witnessed, while her own divine constitution has remained unaltered. Of her we can truly say in the words of the Psalmist: 'They shall perish, but thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old as a garment. And as a vesture thou shalt change them and they will be changed. But thou art always the same, and thy years shall not fail. The children of thy servants shall continue and their seed shall be directed forever.'"

"In the brightest days of the republic of pagan Rome the Roman said with pride: 'I am a Roman citizen.' This was his noblest title. He was proud of the republic, because it was venerable in years, powerful in the number of its citizens and distinguished for the wisdom of its statesmen. What a subject of greater glory to be a citizen of the republic of the church, which has lasted for twenty centuries and will continue till time shall be no more which counts her millions of children in every clime; which numbers her heroes and her martyrs by the thousands; which has raised up in every age saints conspicuous for their supernatural wisdom, compared with which the wisdom of this world is but folly; which associates you with the Apostles and saints. You are no more strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. Though separated from earthly relatives and parents, you need never be separated from her. She is ever with us to comfort us. She said to us what her divine Spouse said to His Apostles: 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world!'"

THE OUGHT TO BE'S.

(Written for The Catholic Standard and Times by Rev. J. F. Roche, author of "The Obligation of Hearing Mass," "Our Lady of Guadalupe," "Mirth of St. Joseph," "Belief and Unbelief" etc.)

OVERDONE. The secret society business, in West on parlance, has run itself into the ground. There is hardly a grown person in the country to-day who does not belong to some one or other of the numerous lodges that have sprung up on all sides. To the credit of the small lodges, it may be said that they have administered a severe blow to the pretensions of Masonry. American Masonry is a sort of rich man's social club, and a poor man has no business in it. It claims to possess a superior brand of brotherly benevolence, but the fact remains that here, as elsewhere, its higher circles lay to day the rich and great in the social and political world. Its benefits are largely imaginary, and its influence a negative quantity in an age which demands, above all things, business ability and personal integrity. It is still, perhaps, within its power to make or unmake a politician, but the honor of such a proceeding is at best a very doubtful one.

The fraternal orders do a great deal of positive good, and were it not for their silly rituals and their apings of the secret forms of the condemned societies their members would never be called into question by the authorities of the church. The ritual is the chief obstacle, and it seems strange that more of those societies have not had sagacity enough to remove this bar to Catholic membership.

PROTECTION VS. PIETY.

Catholics want insurance, not religion; and they resent the presumption of those who attempt to supply them with both. How often have we heard it said by non-Catholics, "My lodge is religion enough for me." It is this attempt on the part of such organizations to supply a code of morals as well as protection for the heirs after death which the church resents, and will continue to resent.

The average Protestant is of the broad-gauge type, and anything in the line of a religious ritual or ceremony is preposterous. They wonder why it is that Catholic priests will not permit prayers and ceremonies originating in a committee of indifferent Christians to be tacked on to the regular Catholic burial service, or, in fact, to take the place of such services. Those rites and ceremonies may mean anything or nothing. They are performed over the pagan, Jew or Christian with equal readiness, and from the standpoint of spirituality, imply nothing but the universal belief of Americans that it is cool form to bury people with a religious ceremony of some kind.

There seems to be a general impression at the same time that cheap insurance has no attractions except when coupled with an opportunity to go through some childish form of initiation, and that degrees and high sounding titles must form an essential part of such initiation. The whole thing is nothing more nor less than a species of hazing, indulged in by fathers and mothers of families and by people who ought to know better. It is a compound of horseplay and buffoonery, with a few attenuated principles of worldly wisdom and Christian charity thrown in for effect.

BLIND OBEDIENCE.

I have not dwelt at any length upon the element of blind obedience which enters to a certain extent into the initiatory ceremonies of nearly all the secret orders. Few of them demand an obedience which conflicts with a member's conscience, and amongst those who still retain it in their ceremonial there is a disposition to regard it as an obsolete and unreasonable requirement and one which the intelligence and good sense of the world has outgrown.

No reasonable man to-day questions the value of life insurance, and its importance in the struggle for existence. It is the poor man's best means of providing for his family, and the Church recognizes this fact by giving its approval to fraternal orders which are distinctively Catholic. Those Catholic societies are doing everywhere to-day a vast amount of good, and there is no danger that at some future time their members will be compelled to leave them because of some implicit or explicit condemnation on the part of those who guard the spiritual welfare of the faithful.