

Let us speak not in a spirit of defiance, but in a spirit of love, let us eschew all needless expressions which may give offence: above all let us remember that the grand object which we have in view is the discovery of the wisest methods of work, the strengthening of peace, the firmer cohesion of the members of the Body. By this course our very differences will serve to bring out more clearly the unity of our faith, and our diversities of thought will be at once a safeguard and protest against any narrowing of the limits which define the membership of our branch of the Catholic Church.—BISHOP MACLAGAN.

SISTERHOODS.

THERE are a number of aspects from which the institution known by the far from appropriate title of "Sisterhood" may be viewed. There are also a variety of aspects the institution itself presents. Any judgment thereof must be open to criticism, if not to modification or reversal, which is based upon some partial view, arising from the inappropriate stand-point of the onlooker, or his selection of a point for observation which does not give a fair or full view of the object his eye is regarding. The most charming landscape may be revealed or hidden from view by moving a few steps. The noblest triumphs of architecture may appear clumsy in design if looked at from some point which huddles into confusion or disproportion those features which are arranged to be beautiful in design and harmony when regarded from some other point of view. The Sisterhood work and aims happily have two aspects both for being looked at and for showing forth their claims and attractions. But they have also aspects not wholly pleasant or commendatory.

The two aspects in which this institution may fairly asked to be viewed are, REVELATION and NATURE, or we may say that we can look with the eye of God or humanity. Now, anything which bears the scrutiny of the Divine Spirit or is gracious to the human heart, needs no apology for existing and working. That the work of a Sisterhood stands these searching tests is as obvious from experience as it is from reasoning based upon Scripture. The Bishop of DURHAM recently said, "As I read my New Testament, the female diaconate is as definite an institution in the Apostolic Church as the male diaconate. PHEBE is as much a deacon as STEPHEN or PHILIP is a deacon, and until this female ministry is restored the Church of England will remain one-handed." The will of God is thus manifest that there shall be in His Church "a consecrated order of women"—as Dr. MOCKRIDGE put it in the sermon we quoted last week—and a Sisterhood is or should be neither more nor less than an organized body of women consecrated to such offices as they are peculiarly adapted for by the order of Providence. "In the philanthropic and charitable work of the Church which is her proper sphere, her capabilities are inexhaustible; to utilize this great resource, to include within the organization and to endow with the blessing of the Church the latent potentialities of self denying sympathy and love with which woman is so richly endowed"—this is the aim of a Sisterhood. "No witness of men will plead so eloquently for CHRIST as this silence of woman's unobtrusive but boundless charity." The Revelation standpoint thus shows us the "consecrated order of women" not merely as an ornament of the Church, like a "storied window richly dight," but as an integral section of the main structure, beautiful essentially, beautiful the more because of supreme utility.

But if the Divine aspect has this charm of authority, how much greater is the attractiveness

of the view from the stand-point of Humanity. It is not the lot nor the privilege, however, of many to view such a work as a Sisterhood in its most favourable aspect. We need go down into the squalid homes of the sick poor, to watch the bitter struggle of griping poverty with want, with suffering, with anxiety, with suspense, with death and bereavement,—death bringing hopeless, helpless widowhood; death bringing orphanage; death deepening poverty into starvation, and darkening wretchedness into blank despair. Then we should realize how tender, how cheering, how angelic, how Christ-like are the ministrations of women consecrated to the work of consolation. The service of humanity when pain and anguish wring the brow, when women's love alone shines amid the darkness, the music of her voice comforts the stricken heart, and her words of hope and deeds of help are a silver lining to the darkest sorrow cloud, is a service bearing the imprint, as it carries to others, the blessing of heaven. A work so noble in its authority, so lovely in its operations, is very sacred. They who organize it need wisdom indeed to guide them into such paths as will give God's grace free course in their undertaking, and save the Sisterhood they found from ever presenting an aspect not wholly pleasant or commendatory. It will, we submit, with all charity and humbleness, be a sad mistake to forget, in founding a Sisterhood, that this land is Canada. It will also be a very blunder of blunders to forget that our Church is not the Church of Rome, but a far nobler branch of the Church Catholic. One with English blood in his veins who bows his neck to Rome, dishonors his race and country. An English Churchman or Churchwoman who apes in any way, in any form, the usages of Rome has but a craven spirit. Such persons are like a poor fool whose mother is the most honourable of women, yet is disowned by him because he is fascinated by the flattery and the bombastic pretentiousness of some cunning creature to whom he owes neither duty nor respect. A Sisterhood such as we desire to see must evidence the deepest loyalty, the tenderest love for the Catholic Church of England. We do not wish to be driven into opposing it, we should deplore such a necessity, by seeing any attempt to ape the ways, the habits, the dress associated with any Romanist institution. Above all, we hope to be spared the shame, the revolt of feeling which stirs every manly or womanly mind at hearing the work of the Sisterhood exalted over Motherhood, the holiest service of all vocations, because beyond all others it demands the consecration of every gift and grace of womanhood, and brings out alone a Christ-like completeness of self-sacrifice on the cross of duty. The very showing forth of a desire or tendency to imitate Rome will be a confession that the sacredness of the work is not realized, that the motive of the work is an unsubstantial sentiment, that millinery and forms are set above Humanity and the Church. God forbid that any Canadian Sisterhood should be open to this reproach! We would not end with a note of warning, but rather close by striking the key-note of good will. The blessing of God, the blessings of His Church, the blessing—grateful, full-hearted, loving and precious—of the sorrowing and sick, will crown a Sisterhood organized with a single eye to the glory of God, the honour of His Church and the service of His children in time of need.

Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

A DISGRACEFUL LETTER.

IT has been the fashion to speak with bated breath of John Henry Newman, as of one who, though not yet canonised, was very much a saint. We have never quite fallen in with this fashion. Pitying a man whose reasoning powers, by his own showing in his *Apologia*, have never been strong enough to guide him straight, we did go as far as to think him honest. Probably he thinks himself honest still. There is hardly a limit to self-delusion; but a letter, published lately in *The Times*, may help to disillusionise some who read it. The letter was written by the Cardinal last July to a motherless school-girl of sixteen, who appears to have asked the advice of his Eminence as to whether it was her duty to deceive her father. He declined to give her a straightforward answer. He was too far gone to remind his correspondent that the Fifth Commandment was unrepealed. But some unconscious survival of his honor as an English gentleman may have made him shrink from doing Rome's dirtiest work entirely with his own hands. He directed the poor child to the "Father Jesuits, who were sure to be careful and experienced priests, and would, on talking to her, decide whether—young as she was, and dependent, his Eminence supposed, on her father—it would be advisable for her at once to undergo the great trial of breaking with him"! To these "careful and experienced priests" the misdirected and inexperienced girl repaired, considering no doubt that in a letter of the belauded Cardinal she had verily a message from God. One of their reverences decided that it was not advisable to break with her father but to go to Roman Catholic services without her father's knowledge.

There is still a law in existence under which any Jesuit can be expelled from England. The Jesuit who gave the advice just mentioned richly deserves to have the law enforced against him. He is a criminal; an instigator of treason at the sacred fountain-head of all human society; the father whom God has given is to be dishonored, in order that the father whom God has forbidden (Matt. xxiii.8-10) may be obeyed. And John Henry Newman, contemplating the possibility, nay, the probability, of this wicked instigation, must be held morally responsible for it and all its consequences.

Those consequences may not be altogether such as his Eminence expected. One such consequence has happened already—the appearance of the nefarious letter in a newspaper. Another may be that some will connect this recent production with Tract XC. The Tract showed how to be a Romanist at heart while an Anglican in office; the letter shows how to be a Romanist at heart while an Anglican in the home. Crookedness, crookedness, crookedness, all along. Would to God that another consequence might be the old man's speedy repentance! A clear case within a small compass may make an impression where greater matters fail. We know how much readier most of us are to be affected by the misfortunes of a single person than by battles in which thousands fall. May Newman see at last, in the course he has taken with this girl of sixteen, a miniature of his life, and even yet have grace to shake himself free from the lovers and makers of lies.

The exact degree of guilt attaching to individuals in these underhand proceedings is after all, beyond man's judgment. We will say, as the Master said, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." But we may reverently ask, How is it that the system which involves these proceedings is permitted to exist? There is no more difficulty in proving

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