

The Homes of Our Religious Congregations.

(By "CRUX.")

It is evident that the series of contributions which I have furnished on the question of the Religious Orders, their reputed wealth, and their status in France, attracted some attention. I say "contributions which I have furnished," because in reality they are not mine at all. They are the exclusive work of Rev. Father Belanger, S.J., in the "Messenger of the Sacred Heart," and all I have done was to mutilate them, by cutting out what I considered to be the paragraphs of lesser importance, in order to meet the requirements of the limited space at my disposal. As it is, however, these different articles have been read by a great number, and quite critically by a few. It has been pointed out to me that I skipped the very important question of "Mortmain," as explained by Father Belanger, and that I have missed some of the very essence of his work by leaving aside the notes of reference and the quotations from authorities given by him at the foot of the page. I quite agree with the persons who drew my attention to these omissions; but if I had attempted to include in these brief reviews all the notes, references, quotations, and explanations used to substantiate the text of the original articles, I might as well at once have asked the "True Witness" to publish the whole work. Under the present circumstances, however, I feel that it is due to the readers who have become deeply interested in this subject, to reproduce Father Belanger's remarks, and to furnish them with one or two of his foot notes, which are of special historical value. To do so, however, will necessitate the absence of any further comment from my pen.

What, then, is this famous mortmain? It is thus explained and illustrated by the author:— "It is simply the fiscal administration of property which cannot be transmitted by bequest. Such is that of departments, communes, asylums, parishes, seminaries, consistories, authorized congregations, certain societies, etc., etc. Now, of all these numerous properties, what is the share of authorized congregations? In extent one-half of one per cent.; that is to say, that in suppressing these possessions of religious, 99.50 per cent. of the total mortmain would be allowed to exist. In value about 5 per cent. at the most; that is to say, that in confiscating them 95 per cent. of the actual mortmain would be preserved. It is, therefore, plain that a dread of it is ridiculously groundless, for if mortmain be the terrible danger that it is said to be, why fight it only in connection with the congregations who hold but one-half of 1 per cent. in extent and 5 per cent. in value of these formidable estates? Besides, mortmain is merely a fiction — it does not exist."

The mere fetitious existence of this nightmare phantom is thus clearly explained:— "It is true that all property subject to this law is protected from being transmitted by bequest. Therefore, there is no change of ownership on account of death. And practically it is but very rarely sold; therefore in little danger of changing hands at all. Such would undoubtedly be an advantage, but the law of Jan. 1, 1840, intervened to annul it. This law imposed upon all such real estate a special tax of 62 1/2 centimes (12 1/2 cents) additional to every franc of the principal of the contribution fonciere (land tax), a tax later on raised to 87 1/2 centimes (17 1/2 cents), so that on a recognized congregation would be levied a land tax of 187 francs and 50 centimes (\$37.50 for an estate which, were it in the hands of a private individual, would be assessed for only 100 francs (\$20). This tax was never refused by congregations. To be sure, their enemies maintain that it has become insufficient and is unequal to what is deposited (in way of transfers) by ordinary taxpayers. If this were the true reason for introducing the laws on increment (lois d'accroissement), these would be applied to all properties subject to mortmain. Instead, they are applied to religious possessions only, which are absolutely the smallest portion of the total mortmain, and consecrated for the most part to the service of the poor. Is this not an irrefragable proof of inequality? We therefore have occasion to conclude that, reduced to its just value, the celebrated principle of mortmain amounts to nothing — or thereabouts. Consequently, religious estates are not more favored than others, and there is no reason whatever why fevered imaginations should invest them with all the terrors of an invading army."

The last and not least, important paragraph touching upon this phase of the subject is the following:— "And, no doubt at all, it is in this way that we may account for the existence in the minds of many of a foolish dread of the increase of the wealth of monks. It is pictured as an ever swelling tide, gradually but surely gaining upon the country's territory, driving mercilessly ahead of it everything of value, and heaping the same into the coffers of these ostensible religious who will

away and mounted to the third story of the house in order to inspect the Brothers' living apartments, and he says: "The rooms are small, each of them containing a light bedstead, a cupboard, a wooden table and an earthen toilet pitcher and basin. The wall is ornamented with a pious picture, perhaps a family souvenir or the token of some particular devotion. The evidences of the vow of poverty are indeed striking." (Charité Privée, p. 144.)

Referring to the Little Sisters of the Poor, he says: "I pushed open the door of the Sisters' dormitory. The floor is paved with stone and there is no carpet, nor have they even straw mats beside the beds. On each bed is a mattress, hardly more than a bag filled with husks; the superior's bed is placed in front of a window, its position alone distinguishing it from the others." (Charité Privée, p. 71.)

In regard to the consumptives' home, he says: "If God is poorly housed" (alluding to the poverty of the chapel at that time) "the religious are even worse off. The sick have practically driven them from the house till at length, to make way for the consumptives, they have retired to little pigeonholes beneath the roof, where huge beams prevent one from standing upright, where the damp wall paper is falling off, and where the floor is not even paved but composed of a mixture of plaster and pise." (Charité Privée, p. 113.)

In regard to the Sœurs Aveugles de Saint Paul he says: "The community has kept the most uncomfortable quarters for itself." Then he adds: "I could not repress my surprise upon entering the communal refectory, which is a cellar lighted by air holes and has walls that are hardly plastered. Flags, sweating humidity, pave the floor, and emit a vague, moist odor. Such a place would be well suited to the storing away of casks or piling up of coal and wood; but it is inhabited by women who, for the most part, are short time allotted to meals, thereby exposing them to a chilly atmosphere which neither stove, nor open fireplace can temper. In all the cloisters into which I have peered, I have seen that the religious devoted to the consumption were, without exception, zealously rival one another in point of not sparing themselves." (Charité Privée, p. 867.)

CATHOLICS AND SOCIAL WORK.

The Rev. F. Cuthbert, O.S.F.C., read a paper on "Religious Aspects of Catholic Social Work," at the recent conference of the Catholic Truth Society, held in Newcastle, England. He said if the world today was influenced by the priest, it was just because he did not confine his spiritual activity within the walls of his sacristy, but, like Christ himself, went forth and moved amongst the seething crowd, giving a helping hand wherever he could. Again, if the Church in England were regarded with leanness or hostility, as it is treated with respect, nay, even protected—because of the immense services they render to society and the people. Even this year (1895), when Catholic France is endeavoring to ruin us by the imposition of a 100 centimes tax on the share of authorized congregations? In extent one-half of one per cent.; that is to say, that in suppressing these possessions of religious, 99.50 per cent. of the total mortmain would be allowed to exist. In value about 5 per cent. at the most; that is to say, that in confiscating them 95 per cent. of the actual mortmain would be preserved. It is, therefore, plain that a dread of it is ridiculously groundless, for if mortmain be the terrible danger that it is said to be, why fight it only in connection with the congregations who hold but one-half of 1 per cent. in extent and 5 per cent. in value of these formidable estates? Besides, mortmain is merely a fiction — it does not exist."

It seems to me that one of the most important of these foot notes is that in which the author quotes from M. Georges Michel, an economist, writing in "L'Economiste Francaise," who appreciates the attitude of those who govern in regard to congregations. M. Michel says:— "In neither England nor Germany would it ever enter the head of any one to persecute the members of a charitable association, because of their wearing a soutane or a corset. All good accepted, no matter whence it comes. But in France it is altogether different. The Municipal Council of Paris, which every year disposes of a budget of almost 400,000,000, refuses a credit of 1,500 francs to the Preres de Saint Jean de Dieu, who gratuitously educate many hundreds of orphans. It would not be so bad if they were satisfied to withhold the 1,500 unfortunate francs, but regularly they profit by the occasion to hurl a volley of abuse and insult at the charity of congregations."

Here is another example from the same work of Michel:— "If there is an institution eminently popular, in the best acceptance of the word, it is indeed that marvelous one of the Little Sisters of the Poor. These brave women ask nothing from the State, and we have never known them to conspire against the Republic. Nevertheless, they are obliged to submit to a pitiless war on the part of the powers. In yet, no one has dared to close their houses, but an effort has been made to starve them out by oppressing them with the monstrous droit d'accroissement, which at a given moment will compel them to abandon thousands of old people whom they will no longer be able to feed. But this is not all. The public treasury is not satisfied to deduct the lion's share from the budget of the poorest of the poor; it also deprives them of legacies and donations by loading these with exorbitant taxes."

While on the subject I will now crave the indulgence of the management to reproduce here the following lengthy, but most interesting note, in which is conveyed a splendid idea of the spirit of self-sacrifice that permeates the religious orders, and the injustice done them when their lives are judged by the externa appearances of their institutions. This is a veritable treatise in itself. I give the note in full, and with it I will conclude this imperfect review of Father Belanger's work.

In the course of his investigation of the charitable works of Paris, Maxime du Camp has several times touchingly declared that religious reserved to themselves only the most inferior part of their institutions. During a fast held by the Preres de Saint Jean de Dieu, he slipped

He held me up, I threw the holy water and the other things against the wind, crying with the Apostles, 'Lord, save us, or we perish.' O Mary, star of the sea, save us from the awful clutch of the ocean!" With these prayers, joined in by all the Catholics on board, with deep and wonderful fervor, I promised the Blessed Virgin, that if I saved, I would be faithful through life in reciting the rosary, and work always for the honor and glory of God. While we prayed, many unbelievers on board tried to distract me, and entered at our devotion; but, soon, as if by a miracle, the ship turned so as to enable the carpenters to go to work repairing her, and then all began to cry: "A miracle, a miracle!" and every one without exception, united in prayers of thanksgiving. The captain said he had never seen the sea so calm, and had never seen such a hurricane. So, with thanks to God and the Queen of the Rosary, we arrived safely in New York on Saturday, November 6. As soon as we got ashore, I hired a porter to direct me to the nearest Catholic Church. What was my joy when I found the church to be named, "Mary, Star of the Sea." There I renewed the promises made on the ocean and returned grateful thanks for my safe arrival.

The next day, Sunday, I went to Mass, and for the sermon, the priest took his text from the 16th chapter of St. John, "If you ask the Father anything in My Name, it will be given you." It is forty-three years now since I made my promise to God and His Blessed Mother, and I hope He will give me grace to keep it while I remain on earth, as I have tried to do in the years that have passed.

FLANAGAN BEATS THE RECORD

The athletic games under the sanction of the A.A.U. at the Louisville, Ky., Inter-state Fair, last week, were made notable by the breaking of the world's record for hammer throw by Flanagan, of the Irish-American Athletic Club, New York. He threw the hammer 170 feet 4 inches. The previous record of 169 feet 4 inches was held by him. Flanagan also broke the world's record in the heaviest throw, which he made 119.6 feet. His previous record was 118 feet 3 inches, which was the record. All the events were hotly contested. Some of the best athletes in the country participated in the games.

THE BRITISH ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE.

The London correspondent of the New York "Post," says:— "The new re-organizing medical service in undergoing complete reorganization in consequence of the lessons of the war. The new scheme is designed to bring the service into closer association with civil practice, and weed out the idle and incompetent officers by frequent examination. The new re-organizing and sanitation Officers in the higher ranks are to be concerned mainly with sanitation and administration, and in time of war or epidemic the service is to be expanded by the employment of civilian practitioners."

TWO MILES A MINUTE.

An experiment in electric traction which cannot help but attract worldwide attention is about to be made on a short military railway extending south from Berlin. The feature of the project which has thus far received the most notice, and which from a popular point of view is probably the most interesting, is the speed which it is proposed to develop. This is at the rate of between 125 and 135 miles an hour, or between two and two and a quarter miles a minute. The road is only eighteen and one-half miles in length, and hence the trip should be made in eight or nine minutes. If, however, such a speed can be sustained for that interval, it can be kept up for an hour. All new questions of air resistance and road and car equipment ought to be disposed of in a tenth of that time.—Toronto World.

THE INDISPENSABLE MAN.

Some of the most successful business men in this country make it a rule to dispense with the services of any man in their employ, no matter how important his position may be, as soon as he comes to regard himself as "indispensable." This may seem harsh, and even unbusiness-like; but, if we look into it, we shall find that there is wisdom in the practice, says Success. Experience proves that the moment a man looks upon himself as absolutely necessary, he usually ceases to exercise to the fullest extent the facilities which have helped him to rise to that indispensable point. He becomes arrogant and dictatorial, and his influence in an organization is bound to be more or less demoralizing. Many concerns have been seriously embarrassed by the conduct of managers, superintendents, or heads of departments, after they had reached positions where they thought no one else would take their place. This true appreciation of one's own importance is a disastrous in its results as it is a matter of self-interest. It is really evidence of narrow vision and ignorance of general conditions for the man who is up to the time thoroughly posted in regard to the world-wide trend of the twentieth century, will realize that there are very few people in the world

A CATHOLIC OBSESSIONAL.

At every turn in English history, as well as in every movement of importance in political, social, national or religious affairs in that land we find the evidence of the Catholicity that was at the source of all the greatness achieved by Great Britain. Here is a very interesting reminder of the "Aztec of Faith":— "The coronation of the King of England will be strongly reminiscent of old Catholic practices and usage. The ring that will be placed upon the King's finger is of plain gold, set with a large ruby, on which is engraved the cross of St. George. The words that accompany the ceremony are significant and strike a discordant note with those that form the path. The Archbishop of Canterbury, while placing the ring on the third finger of the sovereign's right hand, says: 'Receive this ring, the sign of kindly dignity and of the defense of the Catholic faith that as you are this day consecrated head of the kingdom and people, so rich in faith, and abounding in good works, you may reign with Him who is King of Kings, to whom be glory and honor forever and ever. Amen.' As long as forms like this are preserved, the memory of England's Catholic past will not be blotted out."

HEALTHY BABIES.

Watchful Mothers Can Keep Their Babies Healthy, Rosy-cheeked and Happy. Nothing in the world is such a comfort and joy as a healthy, hearty, rosy-cheeked, happy baby. Babies can be kept in perfect health only by having at hand and administering when needed some purely vegetable, harmless remedy, and of all this class of medicines, Baby's Own Tablets are conceded to be the best. For constipation, colic, diarrhoea, simple fevers, sour stomachs, teething babies, indigestion and sleeplessness, these tablets are a really wonderful cure. You can give them to the smallest baby without the slightest fear. Dissolved in water, they will be taken readily. They contain absolutely not a particle of opiate or other injurious drugs. They are small, sweet lozenges that any baby will take without objection, and their action is prompt and pleasant. They will tone up the whole system and make the little one as hearty and free from infantile disorders as any mother could wish. Mrs. Walter Brown, Milby, Que., says: "I have never used any medicine for Baby that did him so much good as Baby's Own Tablets. I would not be without them. This is the verdict of all mothers who have used these tablets. They cost 25 cents a box. All druggists sell them or they may be secured by sending the price direct and all this class of medicines prepared by Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Dept. 7, Brookville, Ont."

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I see that... especially as regards... to enter into... matter in connection... question brought... mind in a very... day last week... should have a... Some people here... they take... you do not... them a reply... you have none... in the course of... tions—during the... I have found it... seriously matter... to be most... occasion I... one of this category.

A few days... with a prominent... city, and our... on the mayoral... with me that... to the Irish... were running... men from whom... selected the... third party... newcomer turned... me this question... Catholics... term?" To say I... unable, on the... to make a propo... sition seemed to... felt inclined to... and unanswered... came to the con... ed to make a re... be attributed to... son for this am... the Irish Cath... words, the per... question might... unable to give a... I am personally... answer that wou... not trouble me... my interrogator... was too ignoran... ply; but, there... consider, and I... fed in leaving... sufficient reason... their fair turn... taken up the qu... for this week.

Now that I ha... tion, I find it m... at first imagined... a satisfactory... answer that wou... I would not be... reader answer... tions? "Why... want customers... a professional m... "why does an e... tion?" I could... with all this... would be no... them all. The... tomes, the prof... clients, the em... creasing for a... securing a liv... think they sh... therefrom such... a man independ... I mean to be... privations that... who work, and... cannot find wor... domain of life... race with the... needs are the... former, with this... individual may... that the race, as... experience.

"Why do the Ir... a mayoralty term... in their right... they cling to a... say, a national... because they obj... could give a gre... but, for the... these will have... think that anyon... first reason. The... chief civic posit... their turn to... cause such is the... on account of the... influence, their... and their... obligations of... yearly fulfilment... villages which... fords. The inter... at stake in the ad... city's affairs dem...

A CATHOLIC... will be a matter... to learn that... France is a Cath... Bozer disturbance... did much to all... ment and prepar... civic settlement of... city, amount... morning in the... Church of St. Ro... regarded by the... time makes him... on the Boze...

IRISH PHILANT... degree of doctor... conduct, the obje... versus the obse... Shant...