

The Charlotteville Herald.

NEW SERIES.

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A Letter to the Public

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AULD BROS.

April 2, 1902.

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Poems of Pope Leo XIII.

"The Poems, Ostrades and Incriptions of Pope Leo XIII.," including the revised compositions of his early life in chronological order, with English translation and notes, by the Rev. Hugh T. Henry, of St. Charles Seminary, Overbrook, Pa., have been brought out in beautiful style by the Dolphin Press, of New York and Philadelphia.

Those who know the Pope, statesman and scholar, as he is reflected in his marvellous Encyclicals, should know the poet, too, if they would truly gauge the great man whom God has given to His Church in these days of storm and stress.

The years of man's life are three-score and ten, says the Psalmist; but in the strong they be four-score years; and what is more of them is labor and sorrow.

When Joseph Pecci was twenty years of age he was a frail and sickly youth. In the book before us we find a poem in anticipation of that early grave to which he seemed foredoomed.

Haggard and wan my face, and laboring is my breath;
Languid I walk the way to dusty death.

Why shall I cheat my heart and years plenty crave
When Atropos compels the dreaded grave?

Rather my soul will speak: O Death, where is thy sting?
With gladness I await thy tripping!

Happy the exile's feet to press the Fatherland;
Happy the storm-tossed bark to gain the strand.

This was in 1830, and more than three-score years and ten of man's allotment have since gone over his head. Moreover, it has been in the years of "labor and sorrow"—for he was nearly seventy when he came to the Chair of Peter—that he has done his greatest intellectual work.

His Encyclicals, on the chief religious, moral and social questions that concern the human race are of a virile majesty, and show forth beyond all else the strength and comprehensiveness of his genius. But his poems give the tender, pathetic and sometimes playful aspect of his many-sided nature.

It is beyond us to comment on the beauty of the poems in their original Latin and Italian. Every one knows that the Pope is a rare classical scholar and a lover of the great Italian poets, especially of Dante. The Right Rev. Bishop McQuaid, of Rochester, N. Y., in Rome some years ago, with the late Charles A. Dana, obtained for the latter a special audience with Pope Leo XIII. The conversation turned on Dante, and suddenly this white, frail, shadowy old man took up the word and recited page after page of his beloved poet with resonant voice and glowing eyes.

As Father Henry says in his brief foreword: "To the educated man who still retains some interest in the classic rhythms of his collegiate study, such a volume should appeal with special force, as it furnishes a pleasing illustration of modern themes dressed out in the diction of Virgil and Horace."

The poems have been fortunate in their translator, himself a true poet, who has Englished them with a singular fidelity to the spirit and manner of the originals.

The first poem in the book was composed by its illustrious author when he was a child of twelve in the Jesuit college at Viterbo. It is in honor of the Provincial Vincenzo Pavani. The character, written in his early twenties, are ingenious and musical.

When the illustrious author was Bishop of Preugia, he took pleasure in writing poems, in honor of those among his priests, or the religious under his care, who were distinguished for the virtues of their state. Here is his fatherly praise of a most worthy subject, Santo Petrazzini, parish priest of Ramazzano, who died in 1865, noted for his piety and his charity to the poor:

"For twenty years his flock he gently led
And generously fed.
"Wondrous it to help his needy flock,
He poured
Wealth from the scantiest board!"

The Pope's poem on the Art of Photography is too well known to quote here. This may almost be said of his "Epistle to Fabricius Rufus. On Frugality" and "Long Life," written in 1897, and which, in Andrew Lang's translation, first told the world of letters that Leo XIII. was a true poet; also of the Ode at the Opening of the Twentieth Century, done into English by several non-Catholic authors, among them Andrew Lang and Dr. Will-

iam Hayes Ward, editor of the Independent, and by Catholics not a few. Francis Thompson, in England, the Very Rev. William Byrne, D. D., V. G., of Boston, and the Rev. J. F. Quirk, S. J.; the Rev. Thomas J. Campbell, S. J., and the Rev. P. J. Cormican, S. J., among the rest.

It is interesting, however, to note Father Henry's translations. They do not suffer in comparison with the best we have named. Take this dainty bit from the Epistle to Fabricius Rufus:

Seek neatness first; although the board be spare,
Be every dish and napkin bright and fair.

And be thy vintage purest of the pure,
To warm the heart and prove a pleasant lure

That shall both friends and wholesome mirth ensue,
Be frugal, here, however, nor decline

To put a frequent water to your wine.
O crystal drops that heaven from ocean lifts

To shower on earth the best of nature's gifts!
Select for home-made bread the choicest wheat,

And have in plenty all the goodly meat
Of fowl, and lamb, and ox (but first be sure

They're tender!) now with plenteous garniture
Of spice and pickle play the epicure!

Next have the beakers foaming to the brim
With milk no thrifty maid hath dared to skim;

No draught than this more wholesome shall assuage
The thirst of childhood or declining age,

Let golden honey be thy daintier fare;
Of Hybla's nectar take a scantier share.

Be thy fresh eggs the talk of all the town—
Hard-boiled or soft, or fried to a savory brown,

Or poached, or dropped, or sipped raw from the shell,
Or done in ways too numerous to tell.

Add herbs and salads to the feast—
Whatso
May in suburban gardens freely grow.

Bring forth the clustered fruitage of the vine,
Plucked where the clambering tendrils intertwine.

Have plums and pears—the bursting panners crown
With red-checked apples laughing gaily down,

And, last, delicious fragrance of the East!
With cups of steaming Mocha crown the feast,

But taste the amber with a lingering lip—
No hasty draught! 'twas made for gods to sip!

Here are a few stanzas from Father Henry's spirited translation of the "Ode":

O Godless laws, count up your gains;
What truth remains?
A shrineless justice, lo! it stands
On shifting sands!

Hark ye the new hierophant
Of science, chant
His song to Nature's soulless clod
As to a god!

And yet man's birthright from on high
He will deny,
And search to find a single root
For Man and Brute

There are poetical paraphrases of certain Psalms, poems in honor of Leo's sainted predecessors in the See of Perugia, hymns to the Blessed Virgin, including a group of poems of rare beauty on the Rosary; graceful poetic compliment to favored friends, poems inspired by the incidents of his own life, or by family bereavements. His poem on the death of his brother Joseph Cardinal Pecci takes the form of a greeting to the departed to himself, exhorting him to new labors for the faith and sorrow for his sins. His response is touching in its humility:

Yes, while the spirit rules these weary limbs,
Shall I, with sighs heaved from my inmost heart,
And bitter tears, strive to undo my guilt;

But thou, secure and blest with heavenly light,
Look on me bowed with years, broken on with cares;
And from thy sky behold thy brother here,

So long oppressed with tempest, all so long
Waried with storm and stress and battling waves!

The strength of his family affection is reflected also in his special devotion to the Holy Father and to

Jesus as the Child of Nazareth: Whose childhood crowned domestic love
With glories caught from heaven.

The sweet sympathy with youth and love—reminding one of the same trait in St. Francis de Sales—appears in the "Epithalamium," written for Alphonse Sterbini and Julia Pizzirani on their nuptials in 1897. We give entire:

Two hearts—twin altars—claim
A single love-lit flame:
You ask me whence it came?
Kindred in heart and soul—
Love silent on them stole
And gazed complete control!

Sweeter its victory,
When virtue's laws decree
Inviolate loyalty!

At Mary's shrine they bow,
A mutual truth to vow
In love made holier now.

What more? I end my lay,
Heaven's choicest gifts to pray
On this, their wedding day!

Another revelation of human sympathy is in the Pope's poem to his old-time comrades of the A. C. Society, on the occasion of its bicentenary. It is the greeting of "Neander Heraclius"—the name given young Pecci on his admittance to the Academy in 1832. The Society, founded in 1800, was an echo of the Renaissance, and lovers of the classics will find the spirit of that great movement in the poem.

Of the inscriptions written by the Holy Father, the first is for the tomb of his mother, Anne Prospera, Countess Pecci, whom he eulogizes as "a mother to the poor, most devoted to her children, a martyr of the olden piety, a model of domestic virtue, provident and generous."

The last, written in 1883, is on the life he shall lead in his pontificate:

For the rest of my mortal life I at firmly resolved by offering daily the Victim of propitiation, to cleave more closely to God; and with watchful and ever-growing zeal, to labor for the salvation of the souls of men. Forward, then, Leo, strive, strive to surmount with courage whatsoever obstacle; to endure with patience whatsoever trials; fear not; your life is nearly run; renounce and spurn all that is perishable, aspire to the heights; press forward with constant longing towards thy heavenly Fatherland.

Father Henry's "Notes" contain personal information and criticism which add greatly to the interest of the poems; and fittingly round out the ingenious and pathetic self-disclosure of the humble, generous and tender heart which companions the great brain of Leo XIII.

Real Happiness.

"What Constitutes Real Happiness," is the subject which Mr. Bourke Cookran, with a good deal of wisdom and insight, expounds in a New York paper.

"What is Happiness?" he asks. "Is it fame?"

"Some wise men hold that fame is posthumous and notoriety contemporaneous. * * * To be gazed at in a street car or in a public conveyance soon palls upon the mind; from being a source of satisfaction it becomes a source of embarrassment. The prominence which has cost a life-time of industry and self-denial can be forfeited in a moment by an ill-considered act or a maladroit expression.

"Is power happiness? * * * Ask the possessor of it, and he will tell you that it is an obstacle to all contentment. * * * Is knowledge happiness? The utmost that a life devoted to study can hope to accomplish is to discover the fountain of knowledge; not one of us can ever hope to lake his thirst at it.

"Is wealth happiness? Look at those who possess it and tell me if you think they are a happy race. * * * I have heard of jolly beggars, but no one has ever heard of jolly millionaires. * * * The cripple sometimes smiles on the bed to which he is chained. . . . It is natural for a workman to sing while the object of his labor assumes a form in which it will be at once the monument of his industry and the source of his wages, as it is for a mother to sing over the cradle of the child she has borne. . . . But who ever heard of a millionaire singing a comic song or whistling a merry tune as he clips coupons in a subterranean cell? From a somewhat extensive observation of life I can say with perfect sincerity that exists nowhere except among the idle rich. . . . Happiness consists, not in our possession, but in ourselves, not in what we have but what we are. . . ."

"Whether it be drink which causes poverty or poverty which causes drink, it is terribly clear how close the bond is between the fell evils," says the Pittsburg Catholic, "and how together they work themselves out in disease and crime, insanity and death."

The Review of St. Louis, commenting on the saying "that religion is good enough for women," remarks: "The assertion that religion is good for women only, is very uncomplimentary either for the ladies or for the gentlemen. For the ladies, if you hold religion to be false and thereby imply that falsehood is enough for women; for the gentlemen, if you consider religion to be true; for then the declaration means, Let the men go to hell!"

This view of the coal strike situation, from the new century, is worthy of note: "The strike in the anthracite coal fields has been of immense advantage to the public. This appears to be an absurd paradox. It is not. The coal strike has had an educational value of immeasurable importance, because it has made all men, even the most apathetic, think on economic questions. The vital movements growing out of this widely popular agitation and unrest must be guided and illumined by the Church."

"When looking for a surgeon to operate upon his crippled child," says the Michigan Catholic, "millionaire Armour could find him only in Austria, one of the most Catholic countries in Europe. Mr. Armour had spent a fortune in the treatment of his little daughter, and spared no expense in securing the best medical talent. He found it at the University of Vienna in the person of Dr. Lorenz, who came over the sea to effect the cure of the crippled child. Strange, how behind the times these Catholic countries are!"

The Benedictine Abbey of Montecassino, situated on an almost inaccessible hill overlooking the road from Rome to Naples, is one of the most important and historically interesting religious houses in Italy. As it possesses a priceless collection of medieval manuscripts and one of the finest libraries in the world, the Abbot of Montecassino is invariably chosen from among the most learned members of the order. Very Rev. Father Bonazzi, who filled the post for several years, having recently been appointed to the archiepiscopal See of Benevento, left vacant by the death of Cardinal Dall'Olio, a worthy successor has just been elected in the person of the Very Rev. Father Sylvius De Stefano, who will be installed as Lord Abbot of Montecassino with the usual impressive ceremonial.

An interesting and instructive item of information appeared in the newspapers last week, says the London Catholic Times, which shows how different is the attitude adopted by the Emperor William towards Catholicism from that adopted by the head of the French Republic. His Majesty, whilst staying at Cudion, his estate in West Prussia, paid a visit to the Bishop of Ermland at Fraunberg. The Emperor wore the Pilgrim's Cross of the Holy Sepulchre and the medal of St. Benedict. He lunched with the Bishop and talked admiringly of the wonderful health and strength of the Pope and promised to send the Bishop a new portrait of himself in place of the one he possessed. He also inspected a plaster relief of Our Lady and the Divine Child which he has recently presented to the Bishop. It is thus by acts of courtesy and kindness to all orders in his dominion that the Emperor has endeavored himself to his subjects of all persuasions. One might imagine that his Majesty was himself a Catholic, or that the majority of his subjects were. Turn now to France. In that country the overwhelming numbers of the population are, nominally at least, Catholic, yet the State is infidel, the President dare not mention the name of God in a public speech, the army and navy are deprived of religious consolation, the monks and nuns persecuted and driven abroad, the Bishops strangled, the clergy clubbed and the little children deprived of a Christian education. What must German Catholics think of France?

Get the Most Out of Your Food

You don't want to eat your food as it is. A weak stomach does not digest all that is ordinarily taken into it. It gets tired easily, and what fails to digest is wasted.

Among the signs of a weak stomach are uneasiness after eating, fits of nervous headache, and disagreeable belching.

"I have been troubled with dyspepsia for years, and tried every remedy I heard of, but never got anything that gave me relief until I took Hood's Sarsaparilla. I cannot praise this medicine too highly for the good it has done me. I always take it after the spring and fall and would not be without it." W. A. STONER, Belleville, Ont.

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