6 FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

OUR NEIGHBORS. And who is my neighbor." (St. Luke x. 29.) There are two opposite faults to both

There are two opposite faults to both of which almost everybody are more or less inclined. The first of these is meddling with other people's business; the second is shirking one's own. It is rather the second of these than the first which is rebuked in the Gospel of to-day in the persons of the priest and the Levite who went by without helping the near wounded man.

the poor wounded man. the poor wounded man. Now, in the first place, let me explain what I mean by shirking one's own business or duties. It is not simply leaving them undone and expecting that they will remain so; but it is putting off what one ought to do one's self on to somebody else, and expecting somebody else to do it for you. So it is, you see, just the opposite of meddling, which is trying to do somebody else's duty for him when he would prefer to duty for him when he would prefer to do it himself. bread.

Now, this shirking was just what the riest and Levite were guilty of. I do not suppose that our Lord meant to describe them as really hard-hearted men, willing to let the poor man die rather than help him; but they said to themselves: "Ôh! this is not my busi-ness particularly; there are plenty of other people passing along this road all the time, and I am a little hurried now. I have got a deal to attend to, and there will be somebody coming this way before long. Five minutes or so will not make much difference ; and perhaps there is not so much the matter with the man after all. It may be his own fault, Very likely he has been drinking. At any rate, he has got no special claim on

This is a very natural state of mind for a person to get into, and how common it is, in such a case as this, we common it is, in such a case as this, we can see from the common proverb that "everybody's business is nobody's busi-

There are very many good works that really are everybody's business, that everybody ought to do something towards at least, but which are in great danger of not being done at all on ac-count of this habit of shirking which is so common. And the ones which are most in this danger are those of the kind of which this Gospel gives us an example ; that is, works of charity to-ward our neighbor. People say to themselves, just as the priest and Le-vite did : "Oh ! there are plenty of other people that can attend to this matter a great deal better and easier than I can. I am sure it will be done somehow or other. Such things always are attended to. I don't feel specially called on to help in it."

Well, this might be all very good if those people did really help in some things generously, and the case before them was one of no very urgent need. Of course we cannot contribute to every-thing. But the difficulty is, that too often we find them shirking, not occa-sionally but all the time. If a poor man comes to the door, or a collection is taken for the poor in the church, they say to themselves : "The St. Vincent de Paul themselves: "The St. Vincent de Paul Society can look out for those things ; I am sure they must have money enough. I shall do my duty if I put a few pennies in the poor-box now and then." If con-If contributions are called for in times famine or pestilence they say : There ing to speak of without getting a re-turn for it. They will go to picnics. fairs, or amusements for a charitable object ; but when it comes to doing any thing simply for the love of their neigh bor, that is left for somebody else

CHARITY, PRE-CHRISTIAN AND CHRISTIAN.

TOPIC OF PAPER READ BY REV. M. M. HASSETT, D. D., RECTOR OF HARRIS-BURG CATHEDRAL AT THE MEETING OF THE PARTICULAR COUNCIL OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, AT YORK, PENN.

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

for theory, which is quite a different thing from practice. Passing over some fifteen centuries from the date of the Exodus, during which the condition of the rank and file

of the human race in every land, save, in a certain degree, the land occupied by the Chosen People, become essentially what it was in Egypt, we approach the time when the union of the civilized world under the rule of Rome prepared the way for a new and better era. But by what a commutation of ession and the second what an accumulation of crime and human misery this union was accomp-lished! It is quite true, indeed, that many of the peoples forcibly brought under the sway of Rome eventually came to esteem the security and the privileges of Roman citizenship. But before this consummation was reached hundreds of thousands had fallen in war,

in defense of their liberties, and a still greater number had been degraded from the condition of freedom to that of slavery. Even the people of proud Rome herself had bartered their once prized privileges of citizenship for games and

Such were the conditions when the Word was made Flesh. A few lived in boundless luxury, while all the rest, in chains, ministered to that luxury. At chains, ministered to that luxury. At the head was an absolute, irresponsible monarch, whose lightest frown meant death, without the shadow of a hope of escape. And, on the other hand, the life of the monarch himself was never secure. The conditions under which he exercised his limitless authority made himself the slave of a handful of soldiers; the pretorian guards, who, when popular the pretorian guards, who, when popular exasperation would stand no the Emperor dared refuse their when demands, however unreasonable, hore apart on their swords the body of the Emperor, whether a tyrant or the most enevolent of desnots

One can readily understand that the term charity, love of God and love of one's fellowman, no matter what his con-dition socially, had no meaning in a society such as this. A German writer of the highest scientific attainments, Pro-fessor Ernest von Dobschutz, gives, in a work published a few years ago, an ac-count of the conditions existing in the Roman empire in the first century, which those whose ideal is a country without religion would do well to study carefully. Though an age of the high-est culture, it was also, according to this est culture, it was also, according to this writer, an age of moral enervation and decadence. The high moral ideal of the Romans of the Republic, which demanded the sacrifice of individual interest for the common weal, had now become obsolete. Freedman and slaves chosen for their servility rather than their ability, were the favorite instruments employed by the Emperors for the Government of the State. The Roman Senate, which itself had so long ruled as a heartless oligar-chy, had lost all but the shadow of its ancient authority, as well as all public respect, including its own. Servility was the only means of advancement an ndependent/views were likely to prove fatal to the one rash enough to entertain them. The wealthy classes squan dered the proceeds of their estates in luxury such as the world had not yet seen—luxury fatal in its consequences to every best interest of civilized society, The poor citizen of Rome had long since bartered his freedom for bread, which he did not have to earn, and retained nothing of those qualities which had transformed Rome from a village by the Tiber into the capital of the world, if we except pride in a title of which he was no longer worthy. Yet Rome at least was fed, but what of those whose labors maintained its millions in idle Their condition was truly deolorable. Stringent laws were enacted to prevent the exploitation of the unfor-tunate provincials, but who was to enforce them ? The best of Emperors, and many of them were admirable, were de-pendent on subordinates, whose doings in remote provinces they could not con-trol. Wealth was power then as now, and therefore this indispensable thing had to be obtained by fair means or foul. Hard heartedness was the ordin-

ary characteristic of the official and wealthy classes. What redress, then, remained for the downtrodden millions? Making all due allowance for excep-tions, unparalleled depravity was the order of the day. One of the reproaches

made against the Christians was that

they were kill-joys, because they re-frained from participating in the licen-

tions and the cruel amusements in which all but they constantly indulged. Divor-

ces were so easily and so frequently ob-tained that marital unions could scarce

y be dignified a name once so sacred in

Rome. The education of children was

in the hands of slaves, whose very posi-tion rendered them the most degraded

element of a corrupt society. Human life was of little value; suicide, volun-

are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest; and their men keep them-selves from every unlawful union, and from all uncleanness, in the hope of a recompense to come in another world. recompense to come in another world. Further, if one or other of them have bondmen, or bondwomen, or children, through love of them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so they call them brethren without distinction. Falsehood is not found among them; and they love one another, and from widows they turn not away their esteen; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he who has gives to him who has And he who has gives to him who theats in harshiy. And he who has gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger they take him into their homes and rejoice over him as a brother." Such was the transformation/which the

great doctrines of charity, brotherly love founded on the love of God, had begun to effect in the corrupt society of imper-ial Rome. In a later age when misfor-tune of every form poured like an aval-anche on the great empire the sphere of action for this doction. action for this doctrine became still

broader, until there was no form of human misery with which Christian ity did not cope, and cope successfully. In the dark days of the fourth and several of the following centuries, the Bishops, the lower elergy and the Christian laity achieved such wonders of charity as to leave one lost in astonishment at their superhuman energy and superhuman self-sacrifice. The deeds of those days have ever since been an inspiration to all who have shared the divine faith which alone made them possible. This may be said to be true in an especial manner of the society of St. Vincent de her of the society of St. Vincent de Paul, for no one was more familiar than its founder, Frederick Ozanam, with the history of the great achievements of the early and medieval Church.

The conclusion from this brief com-parison between paganism in its natural state and Christianity is, I think, obvious. In the days before the estab-lishment of the Church cruelty in its worst forms everywhere ruled in human society. The majority of the human family, reduced to a state of slavery were regarded as mere chattels, to be disposed of like beats of the field. Even among the Chosen People, who ought to have known better, the various ills that flesh is heir to were looked on as the punishment of sin, the conse-quence being that little sympathy was bestowed on the afflicted. Our Lord, by His teaching and example, changed all this, and the best of His followers in after ages nobly followed in His footsteps. In our times compassion for those who suffer, even through their own fault, is the unfailing characteristic of a Christian worthy of the name, and this compassion is manifested in the astonishing sacrifices, personal and finan-cial, that are constantly being made for the alleviation of distress. Even among a large class of those who are indifferent to the dogmatic teaching of the Church, iove of their neighbor is a dominant not of their lives. The one mistake these persons make, however, is in the expressed or tacit assumpt that altruism, as their form of charity called, can become universal while the altruist remains to God. If there is anything that the experience of the past teaches with an emphasis which there is no mistaking it is this : That the unfailing characteristic of general unbelief is unrelieved selfishness. The necessary consequence of a general in-difference to God is at best indifference to our neighbor

STRANGE CATHOLIC PAPERS.

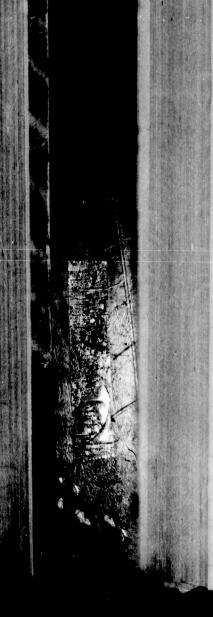
On several occasions The Church ogress has felt itself called upon to criticise some of its contemporaries for the character of the matter which they admit to their columns. That these criticisms were not unjust nor inopportune was evidenced by the favorable comment which followed. At the risk of appearing in the roll of a censor, we must again return to the subject.

Heretofore the criticism was directed at the objectionable advertising carried by some Catholic journals. Now, howthey will succeed, in part at least, if Catholic papers continue to lend such fruitful aid as those complained of are ever, the protest is entered against the reading matter and its authors. The seriousness of the situation will appear to characterize the structure of the stru at a glance.





AUGUST 29, 1908.



Probably few of us advert to the fact that the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves is really a law of nature, which was enacted into a positive law a Mount Sinai for the best of reasons namely, that it was universally ignored. The Israelites to whom it was given as a positive law had just come forth from Egypt, then the most highly civilized land in the world. During their long sojourn in Egypt some among the des cendants of Jacob, as for instance Mose centants of Jacob, as for instance Mosce himself, who had acquired the knowledge current in the great Egyptian universi-ties, had often heard proclaimed theories of brotherly love which are almost per-fort in their conformity with the start fect in their conformity with the natural law. No nation of antiquity approached

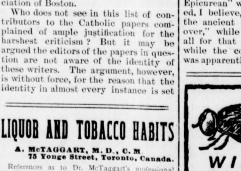
tary or by command, an everyday occur-rence. Such religion as existed had not the slightest moral force; the most heinous of human vices, or the contrary were defied. in any degree the Egyptian in this theory Such was the world into which Christianity slowly penetrated nineteen cen-turies ago. Everything seemed against of fraternal charity, but at the same tim no nation in its practice moré grossly violated this first of natural obligations Yet, no human being is ts success. More than three thousand years before the law was proclaimed from Sinai saw ever wholly depraved, and, therefore, relying on this truth, but still more on the erection of the great pyramid of Cheops at Ghizeh, near modern Cairo. An idea of this the most stupendous of God's grace, the Church of Christ began to lay the foundations of a new order. What success did they achieve? The Christian apologist, Aristides, informs us, a century after the death of Christ. Addressing the Emperor of the time this author gives the following picture of Christian society, which according to human constructions can perhaps best be obtained from the calculation that its mass of stone would suffice for a wall four feet high and one foot thick around France. Yet all of this was accomplished before a labor. France. Yet all of this was accomplished by forced labor. The wretched victims of war, enslaved by hundreds of thou-box war, enslaved by hundreds by the of Christian society, which account a the writer before alluded to, is in per-fact harmony with the facts. "Chrisfeet harmony with the facts. "Chri tians," says Aristides, "have the cor sands, or the scarce less wretched Egyp-tian peasants, erected this stupendous mandments of God engraven in their hearts, and observe them in expectamonument to the vanity of one under the lash of the slave driver. Ho ion of the future world. They do not many lives this and the thousand other commit adultery or fornication, nor beau great constructions of the Egyptian Pharaohs, erected in the course of four false witness, nor embezzle what is held in pledge, nor covet what is not theirs. They honor father and mother, and show kindness to those near them, and whenthousand years, cost will not be known till the Judgment Day, but assuredly they can be reckoned by millions. The ever they act as judges they judge up rightly. They do not worship ido Israelites themselves, who numbered from two to three millions of human rightly. They do not worship idols made in the image of man, and whatever from two to three millions of human beings at the time of the Exodus, had for centuries been the victims of intoler-able slavery in Egypt, and, numerous though they were, they formed only a part of the slave population who labored from day to day, hopelessly, for the glory of the king and his courtiers. So much

Of course, the offending papers are unfortunate enough to be compelled to use "patent insides." But we do not accept this as a justification. Their unfortunate financial condition is no excuse for their jeopardizing the faith of their readers. And this is pre-

cisely what they are doing. Week after week we find in the papers complained of articles from non-Catholic authors. The very name of some of these is a menace to Catholic doctrine. For instance, among the contributors in recent numbers we find Dr. Madison C Peters, Rev. J. F. Meyer, Rev. W. C.

Peters, Rev. J. F. Meyer, Rev. W. C. Bitting and Jacob De Haas. The first has received some very severe chastise-ment at the hands of Catholic journals for his utterances. The second, is a Unitarian minister of Milwaukee; the third, a Second Baptist Church minister of St. Louis and the fourth superinten. of St. Louis, and the fourth, superinten-dent of the Young Men's Hebrew Assoeiation of Boston.

ciation of Boston. Who does not see in this list of con-tributors to the Catholic papers com-plained of ample justification for the harshest criticism ? But it may be argued the editors of the papers in ques-tion are not aware of the identity of these writers. The argument, however, is without force for the reason that the s without force, for the reason that the



John Freeman, in the London Academy discussing the unique spirit-Actuating discussing the unique spirit-ual quality of the poetry of Coventry Patmore, says that Patmore's conver-sion to Catholicity was, from the poet's nature, an inevitable step. Yet Mr. Freeman would not have it imagined that Patware use descent in the poet of the that Patmore was drawn to the Church by the beauty of its symbolism or the splendor of its ceremonies. He writes : There is a common notion that a poet

COVENTRY PATMORE'S CONVERSION.

is likely to be wooed and won by the ritual of the Roman Church, but of any such influence there is no trace in Patmore's poetry. I am reminded in this connection of the names of two Section of the internation of the international of ed, I believe, by this noble feature of the ancient worship, but did not "go over," while Newman did, yet not at all for that persuasion. Nevertheless, while the commonly encoured incut while the commonly-supposed impulse was apparently imperative in Patmore's

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