

Old Letters.

Only a pile of old letters. Written by long dead hands. Letters from near ones and dear ones. Letters from foreign lands:

Full of affection long withheld. Bright with sweet hopes long delayed. Teeming with old recollections. In peaceful oblivion long laid.

These ghosts of the past, as I read them, Before me seem sadly to rise With a message of sorrowful meaning In the depths of their shadowy eyes.

"We have passed," they say, "solemn and slowly. We have crumbled away into dust. With our sparkle and beauty and brightness. Consumed by the moth and the rust.

"And other bright hopes and sweet visions Are hovering around you to day? But be warned, even as we have departed So, too, will they vanish away!"

-M. A. C.

TRUE FREEDOM ONLY THROUGH CHRIST.

MODERN PAGANISM: A SLAVERY-SERMON BY DR. SULLIVAN.

The Very Rev. Dr. William Sullivan, who is now delivering a course of sermons at the Church of Corpus Christi, Brixton Rise, on Sunday evening took for his text the words of St. Paul to the Galatians, 'The freedom wherewith Christ hath made you free.' There were many places, he said, in the Apostolic writings where the new dispensation was spoken of as one of liberty. It was a favorite expression of St. Paul, and there was a very striking assertion of the fact in the Epistle read that day at High Mass, in which St. James spoke of the Gospel as the perfect law of liberty. If they considered that expression—the law of liberty—it would strike them at first sight as being strange, because the word law implied restraint, whereas liberty implied the absence of restraint. How, then, could a man talk of the law of liberty, which was surely a contradiction in terms? The explanation of that seeming contradiction was that the Gospel of our Lord was of such transcendent perfection that, while it allowed man the utmost liberty, it imposed at the same time all necessary and salutary restraint. No one had known how to strike the balance between liberty and restraint like our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That was the great difficulty of legislation in the present day. Parliaments sitting in London and Paris and Vienna and the whole world over found their great difficulty to be to strike that balance, and every father and mother experienced the same difficulty in their own homes. But our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by His Divine Instinct, was able to lay down a code of morality which should free the world, and at the same time impose all necessary restraint, so that St. Paul, who surveyed its working with the eye of a cultivated man, said, "Here is teaching which does impose restraint upon my liberty, but which at the same time gives me liberty that I never experienced before."

St. Paul was a man who could appreciate his freedom given by Christ because his whole previous life had been a servile bondage to rites and ceremonies. But while St. Paul was a Jew he never felt these chains, nor did he recognize them as chains until he became a Catholic. It was with him as with

PROTESTANTS WHO WERE CONVERTED. In our day, who felt that they had escaped from bondage into liberty. Their hearts went out to God for having brought them out of error and bondage into the full life of liberty and truth. He would give them one striking example of that feeling on the part of converts from Protestantism. In the year 1860 a communication appeared in the Globe newspaper, which announced that Cardinal Newman was about to become a Protestant again. He wrote a letter in answer to that communication, in which he said, "I should be a consummate fool if, in my old age, I were to leave the mother of saints for the house of bondage and

THE CITY OF CONFUSION." He felt exactly as St. Paul did, that he had been delivered from error and bondage, and given a liberty of which he had never dreamed or conceived before he became a Catholic. He felt that the most wonderful thing must be that Gospel of Jesus Christ, and far more wonderful still He who in three years was able to lay down a system of law so perfect that after nineteen hundred years no one was able to suggest one more perfect. It was impossible, with all the accumulated intellect of nineteen centuries, to suggest a moral theory or code of laws more perfect than that given in the pages of the Evangelists. He pointed that night to point out the truth of what he had said as to that freedom which was brought into the world by Christ. In the first place there was no doubt that the whole world was in bondage, and that from time to time various attempts were made to free the world from that bondage. There were men that tried to strike the fetters from the old world by force, and thought that the force of arms would be sufficient to free the world for men. The effect of those attempts, however, was only to rivet their chains more closely upon mankind, and the five great empires of which they read in prophecy—and whose fate history showed us fell out exactly as the prophets had foretold—did not free the world, but only envenomed it in an armed girth, and, having begun by enslaving the nations of the earth, ended by enslaving themselves. Not liberty but despotism was the result of those attempts to free the world by force. The old Roman empire was despotism incarnate. Force could never give liberty any more than force could drive a man into culture or intellectual progress. Liberty was a flower of gentle growth, and must be tended as carefully as the most delicate bud in our gardens. That was why our Blessed Lord, though He might have used force, never did so. Never was an age

more ripe for insurrection than the age in which He lived. He had but to utter one syllable and the men of that country would have risen in arms and proclaimed Him their King. Indeed, Judea in the age of Christ was in a condition very much like that of France in the present day—sensitive to the last degree. What had the Boulanger agitation shown but that the whole nation was sensitive to the arms of any adventurer simply because he represented something different from that which they suffered

under, and of which they were so weary? Judea was in a state like that of France, and our Lord might have delivered it and the world by force, but He chose a more perfect way. Then legislation had been tried by others who thought that by the passing of laws the liberty of individuals and of nations might be secured, but it was found that legislation left men exactly as they were before, and that no man was MADE MORAL BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT, because no enactments of men could get into the sanctuary of the immortal spirit, and unless the inward spirit of man was prepared for liberty the gift of it was worse than useless to him. Let them think what would be the effect upon society of opening all the doors of the prisons in the land that night, and letting loose upon the men and women there confined. No good would be done to those prisoners, and to let them loose upon society would be only to send them back to a state worse than that they were in before. Therefore they could see that legislation could not free us. Again, others had tried civilization, and said let us free men by civilizing them. Unquestionably, civilization had an immense effect upon man, but that effect was chiefly in bringing the intellect into prominence, and in producing what was distinctly an aristocracy of the intellect. But civilization alone was not only not an emancipator of mankind but it was an engine of the greatest cruelty and most utter slavery that it was possible to conceive. Indeed, a novelist of the day had in one instance spoken only the absolute truth when she stated that

VICE WAS THE NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE OF CIVILIZATION. He might point out instances to justify that assertion in the history of the ancient world. The civilization of our own times was not nearly so cultured as that of old Athens or of pagan Rome, and yet there were men in the present day whose object was to restore that old civilization of the heathens, one side of which was too repulsive and too horrible for words. Because of their civilization and their culture those ancient peoples were sunk in vice to a degree not to be told in decent language. St. Paul had attempted to describe their state in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. There could be seen the results of

CIVILIZATION WITHOUT GOD, and assuredly the principles of pagan Greece and Rome would, if adopted in our day, produce the same crop of immorality that they did before. Civilization could not free the world. Not in those ways did Christ try to free the world. He rose superior to all emancipators when He told them that they should be made free by the truth. "You shall know the truth as it is in Christ, and the truth shall make you free." There was the emancipation of the individual man, and therefore the emancipation of human society. If only men got to know the truth then they would be slaves no more, but only servants of the God of truth. The one thing which had emancipated the Christian nations and made them what they are was the truth revealed by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He would prove that to them by calling their attention to the intellectual and moral condition of the old world.

IGNORANCE WAS THE SOURCE OF EVERY MISFORTUNE under which man labored, and his first necessity was truth. What was wanted by the man haunted by those goblin terrors that fear had no foundation? All that men wanted for all their woes was truth, and if ignorance was fatal to our happiness in every department of human life surely the ignorance of God was most fatal of all. No man could live his life to any advantage without the knowledge of God. Solomon was a wise man, and had a wide experience of human affairs, and St. Paul had travelled the whole world over, and like Ulysses, had seen the ways and manners of many nations, and each of those men recorded his conviction that the woes of his age were owing to men not knowing God. In that old world in which they knew not that they bent their knees before sticks and stones and worshipped the elements, and the sun and moon and stars. They were as degraded in intellect as they were in morals, and, notwithstanding a few enlightened pagans here and there, the great mass of the people were sunk in the most absolute idolatry.

WHAT A PITIFUL PICTURE was that drawn by Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" of the state of religion in that old pagan world. Of the prevailing religious systems at Rome, he said, the philosophers thought them all equally false, the people thought them all equally true, and the magistrates thought them all equally useful. There were, he believed, about a hundred of those different systems of pagan worship. That ignorance would have continued to the bitter end but for the revelation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In that age in Rome the men who knew God could be counted upon a man's fingers, yet as soon as our Lord came He struck off the fetter of ignorance, and in a short time God in that old world became

THE ADORATION OF TREMbling MILLIONS. In England to-day we had an attempted resurrection of that old paganism, and men were trying to take us back, not to the twilight of Judaism, but to the murky darkness of the pagan world. Those men would persuade us that there was no God, no soul, and no future life, and would reduce us to a condition compared with which the fetishism of the South Sea Islands was beautiful. He would put before them some of those portentous follies of the nineteenth century. One of those philosophers of the present day would substitute for God and Christianity what he called

COSMIC MOTION, and would ask his fellow-men to contemplate the eternities and immensities, and to bare their breasts to the sun and moon and stars. Let them just fancy a man full of warring passions being told by Carlyle to bare his breast to the sun and moon and stars. Was there ever any thing more contemptible and degraded in the paganism of ancient Rome? Then there were others who would have us worship the great aggregate of humanity, and fall down before our father man. He was quite at one with a modern scientist, who said of that strange object of adoration that he could as soon worship it as

he could the universalised conception of A MULTITUDE OF AGES. Those were some of the portentous follies preached by men who had not got the truth which made men free, and they proved that that would become more absolutely and entirely creatures of the earth than the very worst of the old pagans or the most degraded fetish worshipper that had ever lived—worse, because they had had the opportunity of knowing God and Christ. Well might Cardinal Newman express impatience at seeing theories so hollow and absurd put forward for our acceptance by reasonable men. If they left Christ and followed Spencer and Huxley and Carlyle they would find that science would no more help them against their bondage to evil than the force of legislation or civilization of the past. The one balm of the truth as it was in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—London Univers, May 17.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

KEEP IN THE MIDDLE.

Children, did you ever play that the street was poison and the sidewalk safe, and then try how long you could walk on the curbstone without stepping into the gutter? And did you ever see a boy or girl who did not step off it once in going home from school? Just then you feel sure of your footing and begin to run you lose your balance, and off goes one foot on the ground below. If the street really were poison you would think it very silly to walk on the edge of the sidewalk instead of safely in the middle; but we have seen children, and grown people too, walking just as near to a line as they could without touching it. How long do you think they can do so before they lose their balance and step over the boundary, staining the pure souls that God gave them? Why just about as long as the children could keep from slipping off the curbstone. It is only a question of time. Take care; do not walk too near the edge.

THE BOY TOOK A CHAIR.

A young teacher in an intermediate school wished to communicate with a teacher at one of the grammar schools about a mile away the other day. For this purpose she chose one of her bright scholars and dispatched him with a note directed to the young lady. When the messenger arrived at his destination the teacher chanced to be illustrating some lesson to her pupils at the blackboard. She therefore went to the boy to take a chair. When at leisure she summoned the boy, who was supposed to be seated in the corridor, but he had disappeared. The young lady was non-plussed, but the mystery was solved when, some time later, the boy returned, bearing with him the chair which had been given him to sit upon. He had accepted the invitation to take a chair, and had carried it upon his shoulders back to the school he came from. The teacher, after she had recovered from the shock of seeing him drag the strange chair up to her and deposit it by her side with a conscious air of duty well performed, had sent him back with it. He was pretty well tired out when he returned, and his only explanation was a sob, as "you told me to take it."—Providence Journal.

THE WEIGHT OF A PRAYER.

John Clark was the village butcher. On the marble counter of his shop stood huge rounds of beef, while from the stall hung tender legs of mutton, covered with fat as white as John's apron. He was not a bad man, but was fond of saying that "folk who wanted meat should pay for it." One day, as John was standing in his shop door, a poor woman came up and begged him for a small piece of meat. "Meat, eh?" said John, "and what have you to offer for it?" "Nothing," answered the woman; "nothing but my prayers that you and yours may never know what it is to want for food." "Prayers?" exclaimed John, "I am thinking that they will not go far towards paying my rent or buying cattle. But come, I'll write your prayers on a piece of paper, put it on the scale, and I promise you as much meat as will balance it." The poor woman's face grew sad, but John who thought it a good joke, cried: "Come tell me what I am to write: 'What will your prayers be if I give you the meat?'" Lifting her eyes to heaven the woman prayed: "May our dear Lord, who has promised a reward for a cup of water given in His name, send down His choicest blessings on you and yours in this life, and reward you eternally in the life to come."

John wrote as she spoke, and when she had done he had carried it upon one side of the scale, while on the other he placed a tiny piece of meat. Strange to say, the paper was the heavier! John examined the scale, but could not understand it; but as his joke had put him in great good humor, he cut off another and larger piece of meat, and added this to the little bit. This time, instead of being astonished, John began to be frightened. He saw the finger of God here, and plucking up a big round of beef, threw it on the scale. "Turning to the woman, he said: "May God forgive me, good woman, for my impious words. Good fortune has hardened my heart, and made me forget that it is to God that I owe all that I have. Take this meat, and when you need more come to me and be sure you shall have what you want. In the meantime, pray for me."

SANTA ROSA.

TRAINING STEPPERS BREAK HER PITCHER, BUT BY PRAYER SHE RESTORES IT. The mother of St. Rose died when she was a child, and her father married a woman who was not good to her. She was very small and delicate, they say, and her stepmother used to make her do work that was too hard for her; also the stepmother's children used to tease and torment her in many ways, because they were larger and stronger than she. Once her stepmother had sent her to the spring for water with a great earthen pitcher,

larger than she could easily carry; and one of the children knocked it out of her hands and broke it, for mischief, in the hope that the stepmother would beat her; but she put the pieces together, and made the sign of the Cross, and the pitcher was made whole again.

Another time her stepmother, who had never taken the trouble to teach her to sew, gave her some linen, and told her to make a shirt, threatening her with I know not what if she failed. And she, being shut up in a room alone, dropped on her knees and prayed for help; at which a beautiful lady came in, who spoke very kindly to her, and, taking the linen from her hand, cut and sewed it as no linen was ever cut and sewed before. And when the little girl showed it and told the story, everyone knew that the kind lady could have been no other than the Madonna.

Grown to be a woman, Santa Rosa had a habit of speaking the truth, which did not much please people; and as she did not shrink from reproving wickedness in high places she was disliked and much persecuted by people in authority. But those who were in trouble, or who had any sin on their conscience, used to come to her for counsel and comfort. She had great wisdom, but cared so little for her own comfort, or for the world's opinion, that many thought her crazy; and the nuns in a Franciscan convent which she wished to enter refused to admit her. She told them the same story as when they would be glad to have her; as came to pass after she died, when they thought it the greatest honor to have her buried in their convent church.

GRATITUDE'S INTEREST.

A New York letter in the St. Louis Republic says: "Years ago, so runs the story, a New Yorker came penniless to a friend, borrowed \$2,000 without being able to give other security than his bare word, and started west to begin life anew. The lender remained behind for years without hearing from the borrower, and finally was reduced by misfortune to abject poverty. Not many days ago, when about to be evicted for non-payment of rent, he begged his way across the Canadian street ferry with the hope of finding employment with an acquaintance in Jersey City. As he left the ferry-boat a crowd from an incoming train was hastening on board, and one of the travellers stopped him and claimed acquaintance. It was the man to whom he had lent \$2,000. He had come back rich from fortune hunting. The two returned to New York, dined together, and exchanged experiences. The returned fortune-seeker, on finding his old-time benefactor penniless, drew a check and handed it to him. It was for \$100,000, and in a few days it was followed by \$200,000 more—\$1,000,000 in gratitude for that early favor."

WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

The London Star says that there are in William O'Brien many touches which to those who know Mr. O'Brien are evidently autobiographical. For instance, literature's first kiss—with its glowing and touching description of the youthful literature's feelings of rapture on seeing himself in print for a very similar event in the life of Mr. O'Brien himself. When he was casting about somewhat hopelessly for occupation, he happened to be in court when Captain Lonsome—one of the Fenian leaders—was being tried; the muse inspired him, and he wrote a description and sent it to the Cork Herald. It was accepted, and thus began Mr. O'Brien's connection with journalism—an event that has done much to shape the history not merely of the writer, but of his country.

Cardinal Manning has warmly congratulated Mr. O'Brien upon his approaching marriage to Mlle. Raffalovich, and has promised that he will personally administer to the young lady the rite of confirmation when she is formally received into the Church. The prospective bride is now receiving the religious instruction necessary to her acceptance of the faith of her betrothed husband. The Cardinal, in a letter to Mr. O'Brien, says his reading of the latter's novel has more deeply than ever impressed him with Ireland's inextinguishable sorrows. The Cardinal continues: "The Irish people, the most profoundly Christian on the face of the earth, have been afflicted with every kind of sorrow, barbarous and refined, for centuries. Race and religious hatred is their inheritance, but a day of restitution has nearly come. I hope to see the dawn, and I hope you will see the sunrise of the day when they are admitted to the possession of their own soil and administration, as far as possible, of their own local laws, while still sharing in the legislation which governs and consolidates the empire."

A box of Ayer's Pills has saved many a fit of sickness. When a remedy does not happen to be within reach, people are liable to neglect slight ailments and, of course, if serious illness follows they have to suffer the consequences. "A slight in time saves nine."

F. Burrows, of Wilkesport, writes: that he was cured of a very dangerous case of inflammation of the lungs, solely by the use of five bottles of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil. Feels great pleasure in recommending it to the public, as he had proved it for many of the diseases it mentions to cure through his friends, and in nearly every instance it was effectual.

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are invariably pleasant people. Popular remedies are also as invariably pleasant to use and certain in their results. Mr. John McConnell, of Chesley, Ont., says:—"Nasal Balm is a good medicine for cold in the head. It is a popular remedy."

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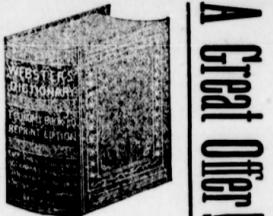
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