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The Catholic Record.

"Christianus mihi nomen est Catholicus vero Cognomen."—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname)—St. Paul, 4th Century.

VOLUME XXXII.

The Catholic Record

LONDON, SATURDAY JANUARY 22, 1910

FOR THE OVER-WORKED

Unstring your bow;
You ought to know
That if kept bent
Its strength is spent;
Just drop your work
And take some play,
Then life's too rare,
You'll longer stay.
A sadly warped and stiffened thing
Your entire being soon will be;
And swap: will go the o'er stretched
string.
Devoid of elasticity.
Relax and rest
A little while.
Put off your town,
Put on smile,
Let up the everlasting strain:
You'll be made new
And free from pain
With every fibre strong again
It more of life you'd live
And from the wreck of nerves be free.
Ambitious friend: be wise in time
Unstring your strenuousness.

A SCHOLARLY PRELATE

The B. C. Orphans' Friend, for December, bears witness to the zeal and learning of Right Rev. Dr. A. MacDonald. Ere this he has given us of the garnered wisdom of years; and his keen insight, his sure grip of principle and gift of luminous exposition have made his name honored in the domain of the intellect. The Catholics of Victoria will learn, if they do not know it already, that their spiritual leader is one who walks hand in hand with sanctity and scholarship.

SHOULD FORGET IT

King Leopold, of Belgium, was for years a target for all sorts of scribes. When news was scarce and the imaginative foreign correspondent in a state of quiescence, Leopold, garnished bountifully, was served to the public. Now that he is in his tomb the scribes examine his remains and point to them, describing more or less veraciously the various scenes in which they figured. We are entitled to a rest in this matter, and if the scribes must be busy with handing out certificates of non-character they should not forget themselves. And their soul-harrowing description of Belgian atrocities in the Congo fail to make the desired sensation. As specimens of imaginative work they may pass, but the average reader seeks, on a question of this kind, not fiction but facts. If so badly affrighted at alleged facts we fear that a reading of real facts of misrule in Africa by other nations would be dangerous to their sanity. The history of the work of the Protestant missionary in Uganda and the South Seas should induce them to not take at face value the reports of Protestant missionaries in the Congo. We are not averse to denouncing cruelty when it exists outside of the imagination of scribes and missionaries who write at the behest of either the trader or of prejudice.

CHARITY

Catholic charity goes her ceaseless rounds of mercy and love quietly. She shuns the press and the public meeting. She does not blow trumpets when she binds up the wounds of the weary with the fingers of faith and not of sentiment. She loves the poor because she loves God. But she neither labels them, nor makes speeches over them, nor scuffles forth like another kind of "charity" with a brass band and a crowd of loud-voiced followers.

BRACING UP AND LOOKING
AHEAD

There are no crueler words than "It might have been," and we doubt the wisdom of harping on them. Every day should be a fresh beginning, and the new page is always to be written as we will or the best we can under the force of circumstances. Let us not forget the greatness of little things, and if at this time of the New Year we feel that our past experience teaches us to be chary of reserves, there are many little things—silent appeals to which there can be only one answer; momentary surveys of conscience, snatches of pious reading, quick and keen cuts of mortification, and even insignificant fits and starts of mercy and zeal; little works sanctified by a pure intention, little as well as great sufferings of mind and body—all these are potent beyond all reckoning to win graces for needy souls who depend for so much on the efforts of the faithful few. If we can neither follow the rough and rugged road to Calvary we can be prayerful and kindly and grateful and self-sacrificing at Nazareth and prove that our devotion to the Christ-Child is not spectacular and insincere but substantial, solid and true.

There are little things that leave no

small regrets, and often, indeed, we would be more merciful in our judgments, more careful of the feelings of others, more delicate in our thoughtfulness if we grasped, as we should, all that can be done, both good and evil, by even the most trivial actions and most seemingly harmless words.

We are all prone to fall short of high standards, but we should not for that reason lose heart or chance to get nearer to the lesson taught us by Christ long after the faintest echo of its bells have ceased. Here at the outset of the New Year it should be our resolution to be gentle, endeavoring by every attention and watchfulness to render to all those little kindnesses that in their turn leave no small delights, to make allowances for the trials and temper of others, to remove the little thorns that vex the timid and pain the fretful. Let us have a more unselfish and abiding desire than ever before to do for others in the very fullness of self and thereby prove that Christ our Lord has found a home in our hearts.

THE OLD JINGLES AND THEIR
LESSONS

There is a great deal about thievery in the old jingles. Tom, the piper's son, runs off with a stolen pig: Taffy, the Welshman, breaks into his neighbor's house and steals something. Jack-a-dandy pilfers plum cake and the knave of hearts robs her Gracious Majesty of the tarts made by her own royal hands. Even of "good King Arthur," who was a "goodly king," it is recorded that "he stole two pecks of barley to make a bag pudding." But nowhere do we find these faults reproved or punished except in the case of Tom the piper's son. He was "beast" it appears, but the pig was "eat" by partakers who were worse than the thief. More yet: there is the boy with the broom, threatening to sweep us to our grave if we don't give him money.

All these suggestions are morally pestiferous, and the mother who imprints them on the mind of her little lad may soon find herself obliged to try the curative power of prayers and punishment when he makes a raid on her pantry or fleches a nickel from her pocket-book. People who avoid this mistake sometimes err by needlessly exciting childish sympathy. Many little eyes have moistened over the death of poor Cook Robin, and many a tender little heart has ached over the lost babe, sheltering themselves to death in the womb. Those gory heads of Bluebeard's wives—is it not time they were taken down and given decent burial? And the ogres of the fairy tales who devour little children—should they not be exterminated. And can we not banish forever the ghosts and goblins, "night-riding incubi," troubling the fantasy. Some rhymes and stories ought to be suppressed by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

GOOD AND NEEDED WORDS

The editor of the English Messenger, in the course of a brief article explanatory of the month's general intention, makes some pointed observations. They have been often enlarged upon in this paper, but they are always as opportune as they are needed. He says that the casual Catholic is before all things a worldling. He will make no sacrifices for his religion; if he can do so he will evade what is of obligation. He will send his children to non-Catholic schools without a blush. To enquire if there is Sunday Mass at the place he selects for a summer holiday is the last thing he thinks of. Whatever his nationality may be he is a politician first and a Catholic afterwards—a very long way afterwards—and as it were by accident. He is a man wholly lacking the Christian sense or instinct. What is it that destroys this Christian sense in men and women brought up in the Catholic faith? Many circumstances contribute to this destructive influence, the first and most deplorable being a thoroughly worldly environment from childhood upward. A boy or girl soon perceives when religion is thrust into a corner; when parents easily and lightly dispense themselves from sacred duties; when holy persons and things are spoken with scant respect; when at theatres and places of amusement mortal sin becomes a mere matter of jest; when papers and periodicals, dangerous to both faith and morals, lie about the house and are commonly and openly read by father and mother. It is idle to look for the Christian instinct in such environment as this. Nothing so quickly destroys the Christian sense as the persistent reading of bad books and the seeing of unclean plays. We cannot read such books without being defiled. Touch not, taste not, handle not these vile things. "Oh, but they are so

wonderfully clever," says the man who has lost his perception of things divine. So much the worse for those who read them and for those who write them. The latter are inspired by a very clever personage indeed—one who, through the instrumentality of the obscene book and the leathose play, is clever enough to capture many souls. And some Catholics ask us ridiculous questions about plays and books which are dangerous. With a well-regulated conscience they would have no questions to ask.

THE FAMILY LIBRARY

Parents are exhorted time and again to procure good literature for their children. Yet how many households can boast of a library? Even in families of means the reading material consists of a few flashy magazines, the daily newspapers, and these Sunday prints that leave a trail of dirt from New York to Canada. We need not expect to breed intelligent Catholics in this包围. It is not true that these things that can be read with one eye shut and the other not half open conduct to indifference and irredeemable—the children of ignorance. How many people can give an intelligent exposition of their belief and how many can separate the good from the bad in the numerous articles that are scattered broadcast over the country? And how much good might be effected by men who know their faith? The opportunities are numerous. A layman should nail a lie wherever he sees it. His loyalty should make him resent any calumny against the Church. His weapons can be had in the inexpensive publication of our Catholic Truth Societies.

Our separated brethren know the value of printer's ink. If, however, parents took some pains in the matter of reading for the family, and exercised some supervision over the magazines and papers coming into the household we should not have so many empty-headed men and women.

NEW HABITS

Endless patience is needed if we would break off our bad habits. We are all familiar with Boyle O'Reilly's rhyme:

"How shall I a habit break?
As you did that habit make."

This is true, and we must be patient and persistent with ourselves and with all who are trying to undo the past. Build in your heart the fire of love, crowd your life full of warmth and good cheer and brightness and the bad habits will disappear as the frost melts under the warm sunshine. Patience is needed still, and lots of it. The sun may not shine. In any event we must work as hard to get rid of a habit as we did to get the habit. But work in the heart and not in the habit. Crowd out the evil with crowding in the good.

THE CHURCH AND THE
SCRIPTURES

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH THE SOLE CUSTO-
DIAN OF THE BIBLE FOR SIXTEEN
HUNDRED YEARS

Having clearly demonstrated that the Bible can not serve as a rule of faith, and that without a supreme unerring court to interpret its laws, it fails to accomplish its purpose, a Interim Catholic. It now remains to answer the objections against the alleged attitude of the Catholic Church towards the sacred Scriptures. These are confined to four sources, namely, first, she is opposed to the Bible, second, she will not allow her members to read it, third, she ignores it, commanding it to be read, fourth, she strives to make the inspired word difficult to be understood and mysterious.

Being the sole custodian of the Bible for sixteen centuries and preserving its sacred pages from the devastation of the northern barbarians who sacked and plundered cities, buried and destroyed them, it is not surprising to the Biblical scholars, principally heathen, who spent years in transcribing it, in order to preserve it for future generations. It was often buried in the earth to save it from the flames of burning cities. Instead of being opposed to the Bible the Church always jealously guarded that sacred volume. Hence Luther, in his statement of the articles of St. John, confesses that it was from the Papists they received the Word of God, and that without them they should have no knowledge of it at all.

The second charge, that she will not permit her members to read the Bible is not only groundless, but the very opposite of what is true. Hence the Pope, in his encyclical, addressed to the faithful few, "If we can neither follow the rough and rugged road to Calvary we can be prayerful and kindly and grateful and self-sacrificing at Nazareth and prove that our devotion to the Christ-Child is not spectacular and insincere but substantial, solid and true.

There are little things that leave no

unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well, that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the holy Scriptures; for those are the best teachers of virtue, which ought to be left open to everyone, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are widely disseminated in these corrupt times, etc." Here speaks the highest authority in the Church recommending that the Bible be read by Catholics.

The third objection, that she ignores texts of scriptures which commands all to read, is founded on three texts of the inspired writers. First, St. John, v. 39, addressing the Scribes and Pharisees said: "Search the scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of Me." If Christ in this text commanded that all should read the scriptures, He imposed an order which could not be fulfilled. But He could impose no such command. Therefore there was not a universal command. It could not be fulfilled during the first three centuries, because the Bible, as we now have it, was not collected together till the commencement of the fourth century. Till that time it was not known that books were inspired, and for those who lived during that time it was impossible to "search the scriptures."

Till the invention of printing, in the fifteenth century, 99 per cent. of the Christians could not receive a copy of the Bible which was very rare and proportionately dear. If the command to "search the scriptures" was general, how were these 99 per cent. to this may be added a large percentage who could neither write nor read. The text in question instead of being a command was intended as a reproof for the Scribes and Pharisees who denied that Christ was the Messiah. The context shows plainly that after He gave this command to them He claimed to be the Messiah. He referred to the prophecies of the old testament, all of which were verified in Him. Even if there was a command it could only apply to teachers of religion for our Lord was addressing the Scribes and Pharisees. But the Catholic church commands her ministers, under pain of mortal sin, to read certain parts of the Sacred Scriptures each day.

The fourth objection of note is that from St. Paul's second epistle to Timothy III, 15, where he says: "All scripture divinely inspired is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice; that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." Those two texts as may be learned from the preceding verse, refer to teachers of religion, not to the common people, who have been educated in the schools of the world. And drink again the sharp, sweet scent of the moss behind it.

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