

A VICTIM TO THE SEAL OF CONFESSION.

A TRUE STORY BY THE REV. JOSEPH SPILLMAN, S. J. CHAPTER XVII. IN COURT.

The eventful day came at last. Long before the doors were opened, an eager crowd thronged the square before the Court of Justice and filled the adjacent streets. The mob swayed impatiently, each individual being anxious to get in first and secure a good place in the gallery. "It is no use pushing," the doorkeeper said to them. "The doors will not be opened until 8 o'clock, and then only persons who have tickets will be admitted. Two hundred tickets have been issued, and that is about as many as the gallery holds."

"Tickets!" ejaculated one of the crowd, "what have we got a republic for? Is there not Liberty, equality, fraternity over the door? We are all equal in the eyes of the law, I shall complain to the Chief Judge."

"You are welcome to do that, my good fellow. But we have none but sober folk in Court, and you are already the worse for drink."

"See how these insolent officials trample on the rights of the people," angrily retorted the tipsy man. "You be quiet," said a neighbor, "or the police will run you in again for being disorderly. There is no equality now in France; do you think if you or I had put a knife into an old woman people would have wanted tickets to witness the trial? Come, there is no chance to get let in here, we will go round to the other door, where the judges and witnesses go in, and tell them a bit of our mind about the reverend prisoner."

So saying, the friends went round to the principal entrance, where already witnesses, members of the jury, or officials of the court were beginning to arrive. When the mayor of Ste. Victoire was recognized he met with quite an ovation for his sagacity in laying his hand on the door of the bloody deed. After him came a party of clergymen, Father Roguet and the old white-haired priest of La Grange, with some of the seminary professors and other ecclesiastics. The mob received them very differently; hisses and groans and even words of abuse were heard, for the accusation under which one of their number lay emboldened the irreligious and ungodly to manifest openly their hatred of the servants of God. Indignant at their reception, the aged pastor of La Grange stopped, and turning round on the topmost step of the flight that led to the door, said: "Is it usual to insult the clergy in this manner in Aix?"

Almost at the same moment the presiding judge drove up in his carriage. The people cheered him, but one voice called out to him not to let the priest off with a whooshkin. The judge looked coldly at the rabble, and said: "Silence! It is not for French citizens to anticipate the decisions of justice and abuse either witnesses or the representatives of the law. I shall have a military cordon placed round the court, if I hear any more of these disturbances."

This speech had a quieting effect on the crowd; but it was whispered by some that the judge had gone over to the party of the clericals. Others said, no, he only spoke as he did to show that he favored no party. Then the public prosecutor made his appearance; he too, was received with cheers. Not so Mr. Meunier, the counsel for the defence; he carried a large portfolio under his arm, and was hissed by the bystanders, one of whom bade him beware how with his tricks and his hair-splitting he got the priest off in the pulchritude of La Grange. But when the old gentleman calmly went up to the speaker, and taking out his pocket-book asked his name and address, the crowd fell back, saying: "Take care, or we shall get locked up."

"Yes," replied the solicitor, "any one who fears the consequences of insulting a gentleman in public, had better mind his manners. In consequence of this procedure on Mr. Meunier's part the rest of the witnesses and jurymen were allowed to pass without remark. But when the prison-van with the prisoner came in sight, the uproar was tremendous. Father Montmoulin, in the narrow, closely-shut compartment where he sat, heard above the rattling of the wheels upon the stone-paved street, the furious cries of the people, desiring to see him delivered over to the executioner. The van drove through the gates into an inner courtyard, the gates being in slantly shut, so that the priest was not seen when he alighted, and was conducted into the building between two constables; otherwise there were doubtless many amongst the on-lookers who would have felt deep sympathy with him, as with words of prayer on his lips, he went to meet his fate.

The excitement had not yet subsided when Mr. Lenoir with his wife and the two children, and the girl Joly made their way up to the court. The baker, Charles and Julia, and the barmaid joined the other witnesses, while Mrs. Lenoir, thanks to a ticket Mr. Meunier had given her, was admitted to the gallery. There she deftly elbowed her way to the front, so as to obtain a good view of the court, apologising as she did so to a gentleman on the plea of her short stature, and the fact that her husband and foster-children had to give evidence. With a smile the gentleman allowed himself to be dislodged from his place by the bustling little woman. The high, spacious court was lighted by a dome. At the far end, on a raised platform were the table and chairs of the judges; that of the presiding judge being somewhat higher than the others. Above his seat a large crucifix hung on the wall. Along the wall on the right were the seats appropriated to the jury; on the left was the prisoner's dock, slightly raised above the level of the floor. In front of this the counsel for the defence had his seat, that of the prosecutor being opposite.

The ushers of the court were still engaged in arranging the benches, and

laying books and papers on the judges' table when Meunier entered in gown and wig, and going up to his desk, opened his portfolio to see that his papers were in order; every sheet was in its place. He glanced at the clock; five minutes more, just time to collect his thoughts. He seated himself, and directed a few words of prayer. But almost immediately some of his fellow jurists came in, and began to talk to him. Then the Public Prosecutor appeared, and passed to his place, bowing distantly to Mr. Meunier. The latter crossed over and held out his hand; the other, a much younger man, just gave him the tips of his fingers, with a formal acknowledgment to his friendly advances. "If I may be permitted to make one request," he added, "I must beg that you will not spin out this vexatious case to an unnecessary length. I see you have a whole list of witnesses who apparently are called for no other purpose than to testify to the irreproachable antecedents of the accused. This is quite superfluous; I am prepared myself to call special attention to the fact that the reverend gentleman has hitherto enjoyed a blameless reputation. You can strike off half the names on your list."

"I shall certainly do my utmost to avoid lengthening out this vexatious case, as you very justly designate the one on which we are engaged, and I shall perhaps be able to dispense with one or two witnesses. May I on my part proffer a request? It is that you will not allow the charge brought against an individual priest to be regarded in any wise as an aspersion on the priesthood in general, for that would give me much pain."

"Ah, you are thinking of the old saying: ab uno disce omnes, by one you may judge of all. If you do not provoke me—but the clock is striking and here come the judges."

Mr. Meunier regained his seat in all haste while the judges in their robes of office entered by the great folding doors and solemnly took their places. The jurymen did the same and the chatting in the gallery ceased. Every eye was turned to the door on the left, through which the prisoner was to be brought in. At a sign from the judge it was opened, and Father Montmoulin appeared, conducted by two warders. Pale and downcast, yet placid and composed in his bearing, he walked across to the middle of the room, then he stopped, and raising his eyes, he bowed to the judges. At the same moment he caught sight of the crucifix, and a melancholy smile passed over his countenance. There was the consoler whom he needed, to whom in his affliction he must continually look. He seemed to hear the Man of Sorrows say to him: Take up thy cross and follow Me; and involuntarily he laid his hand on his heart and answered: Give me grace, Lord, that I may follow Thee.

The upward glance and the gesture were not unnoticed either by judge or jury. The judge asked himself: "Is it possible that the man is such a hypocrite?" And the prosecutor muttered under his breath, loud enough to be heard by the jury: "What an actor the fellow is!" But the general impression made by the unhappy priest on those present was anything but unfavorable.

Meanwhile the prisoner took his stand in the dock, with the warders on either side of him, the jury being opposite. He evidently felt that all eyes were upon him, and a slight flash tinged his cheek. The presiding judge then opened the proceedings with a few appropriate sentences. A frightful crime had been committed, the murder with robbery of a lady highly esteemed for her charity and good works, and the priest of the parish, her confessor, and the perpetrator of the deed. It was the duty of the administrators of justice to decide, without regard of person, whether the accused was guilty or not guilty. Nothing must be allowed to bias the mind of the jury; it was much to be regretted that this unhappy occurrence had been discussed by the press from the standpoint of politics, and even employed to the furtherance of political aims before the guilt of the prisoner had been judicially proved. The interests of justice demanded a total exclusion of anything like party spirit from the law courts; no consideration of person or calling, but only well substantiated facts must have weight. He had been sorry to hear remarks from the people in the streets which could only be justified by abhorrence of the crime and the false, pre-conceived idea that the prisoner was proved to be guilty. He warned all persons present against any expression of feeling, either of approval or disapproval, as if the least disturbance was made, he would instantly order the gallery to be cleared.

After the usual preliminary questions had been put to the prisoner, the ordinary exhortations addressed to the Counsel, and the customary oaths administered to the jury, each one responding to his name, the president admonished the accused to listen to the accusation which was then read aloud by the clerk of the court. It was to the purport that Francis Montmoulin, clerk in holy Orders, parish priest of Ste. Victoire there present, did on the 20th February of the current year, wilfully, designedly and of set purpose, murder the widow Marie Blanchard, aged sixty five years, and rob her of the sum of £480.

Although this charge had long since been made known through the public papers, yet the formal reading of it produced a great impression. Some of present looked with compassion, others with abhorrence, at the accused, who listened with closed eyes, an involuntary shudder running over him at the word murder. At the close a glance at the crucifix enabled him to regain composure, and to answer the question whether he pleaded guilty or not guilty in a calm clear voice: not guilty.

Then the Public Prosecutor rose to open the case against the prisoner. He began by expressing his regret that the duties of his official position laid him under the obligation of proceeding against the member of a profession

which had the strongest claim to respect and veneration. And if the sensibilities of the faithful were deeply wounded, he must beg them to cherish no ill will against the individual whose business it was to conduct the prosecution, but let the odium rest upon the criminal who, oblivious of his sacred calling, had caused so crying a scandal. Not only he himself, but the Mayor of Ste. Victoire, and the magistrate on whom devolved the duty of instituting the first judicial inquiry, had with the greatest reluctance admitted the possibility that a member of the priesthood had perpetrated so foul a crime. Only when facts so glaring as to leave no doubt on the matter came to light, was the conviction forced upon them and upon all the public functionaries who took part in the examination, that the Reverend Mr. Montmoulin was one of the number of priests—no very small number either—who disgraced their cloth and the class they belonged to. He entertained no doubt that the result of the trial would be to convince all unprejudiced persons, even those who had the highest opinion of the clergy, of the prisoner's guilt, so weighty was the evidence against him.

"The mere reading of the report of the judicial examination and the facts of the case is in itself sufficient to show that no one else could have done the deed," he continued. He then proceeded to relate the conversation which took place between the Mayor and the prisoner; how the old lady was missing; how he immediately went to the prisoner, imagining that some accident had occurred; how he found in him a state of unaccountable agitation, which first led the Mayor to suspect the existence of some crime, and how reluctantly the priest agreed to the house being searched. And no wonder, for he knew as the event proved—that the discovery of the murder sooner than he had anticipated.

The report of the judicial inquiry was then read slowly and distinctly. Three times the Prosecutor interrupted the reader, to direct the attention of the jury to the extraordinary behaviour of the priest in his first interview with the Mayor, on the discovery of the corpse of the murdered lady, and the sight of the blood-stained knife. The friends of the accused felt their hearts sink when they heard this overwhelming evidence.

The President then asked the prisoner whether he acknowledged the report to be correct; he answered: "As regards the facts, yes; as regards the explanation of those facts, no." Thereupon the Mayor and the gentlemen who accompanied him found you pacing restlessly up and down your room at a late hour. How do you explain that, as you professed to be unwell?"

"I had been in bed all the afternoon, and had to say my breviary."

"Those gentlemen all agree in stating that the impression caused on them was that you were not in the least surprised to hear of Mrs. Blanchard's disappearance, and your manner led them to conclude that you were already acquainted with the fact that had befallen her."

"How was that possible, unless you suppose that the criminal acquainted me with it?"

"You evade my question. Did you or did you not know that this crime had been committed?"

"As it is not presumable that the perpetrator of the deed acquainted me with it, I could only know of it if I had done it myself; and again I repeat I am entirely innocent of it."

Here the Prosecutor interposed to bid the jury observe that the accused did not attempt to deny that the tidings brought by the Mayor caused him to be surprised. That in conjunction with other evidence, confirmed the statement that he was himself the murderer.

The counsel for the defence answered that the circumstance of his client evincing no confusion should rather be taken as a proof of his innocence. But if, as his visitors imagined, though they might easily be mistaken on this point, the news did in reality cause him no appearance of surprise, "I shall be able," he said, "when the right time comes to clear up this difficulty in the most satisfactory manner. The explanation would take too long now."

The Prosecutor declared that he was most anxious to hear this explanation. Perhaps Mr. Meunier's pety led him to believe that an angel from heaven, or the spirit of the murdered woman, had appeared to the reverend gentleman.

A laugh ran round the gallery, and even the jurymen smiled. The remark of the defence, that this reply was not pertinent, passed unheeded. It was generally thought that the answer made by the accused was anything but satisfactory.

The Judge then questioned the accused in respect to his behaviour when the proposal to search the house was made, and the "frightened glance" which the mayor alleged he cast upon the door of the room where the body lay, and again his answer was somewhat evasive. He was then asked how it was that he before anyone else saw what was hidden beneath the pall?"

"I saw the feet of the murdered lady projecting from it."

"You also took the initiative in protesting your innocence before anyone accused you of the crime?"

"I did so because the mayor treated me as if I was a convicted criminal, though he did not say so in so many words."

An explanation of the spots of blood upon the priest's cassock was then required. The prisoner repeated what he had already said, and on the argument in question being produced in court for examination, an expert pronounced several of the spots to be congealed blood, others being doubtful.

The counsel for the defence drew attention to the fact that the stains were all from the knee downwards, which corroborated the statement of his client, whereas had they been occasioned by

the blow he was said to have inflicted, they would have been upon the upper part of the cassock and the sleeves. This argued in favor of the prisoner, show that he might have thrown his victim down first, and afterwards stabbed her. But any favorable impression made upon the jury was effaced by the answers the prisoner made regarding the knife and other blood-stained articles found in his kitchen, and now produced in court.

The knife, which he acknowledged to be his, was said exactly to fit the wound that proved fatal to the deceased lady. The marks upon it were human blood, and there was no room for doubt that it was the instrument wherewith the murder was committed. The prisoner could only put forward the supposition that the murderer made use of his knife, and replaced it in the kitchen after the deed, with the object of causing him to be suspected.

He was then asked if he alluded to any individual in particular? and replied that he was not aware that he had any personal enemies. The Judge then reproved him for endeavoring to elude his question. "I did not ask you," he said, "whether you had any personal enemies, but whether there was any individual whom you had reason to suspect."

"Without the plainest proof I have no right to accuse anyone of such a deed," Father Montmoulin replied. "Granted that the murderer took your knife with the view of diverting suspicion from himself, it would have been enough if he had only made use of it, and left it; is it probable that he would carry it up to the kitchen, together with the basket and the cloth, exposing himself to the risk of being seen, and hide them there?"

"His motive must have been to strengthen the evidence against me." The counsel for the defence here begged the gentlemen of the jury to observe that had his client been guilty, he would surely have concealed the blood-stained articles, and not left them in the sight of all.

The Prosecutor replied that he might have forgotten to conceal them in his agitation, or left them in sight purposely, in order that the folly of doing so might argue the presence of a third person which he would presently show to have been impossible. The counsel for the defence asserted himself prepared to show the contrary; and after the production of the candlestick, found as the reader will remember, under the body of the murdered woman, the cross examination of the prisoner was closed, and the Judge ordered the witnesses to be called.

During a short pause in the proceedings whispered comments were freely exchanged in the gallery. The calm, placid demeanor and gentle responses of the priest prepossessed all the women at least in his favour, and few of those present could believe him guilty, although the circumstantial evidence, and still more his inability to account for the presence of the blood stained articles in the kitchen, told strongly against him in the minds of all who were present.

Three sharp, piercing blasts came from the whistle of the shaft-house and reverberated through the silent, snow-covered valley. The miners, who were huddled together in a biting keenness, and few of the miners had left their cabins and their comparatively comfortable firesides. But even while the whistle was still sounding its hoarse warning lights glimmered in the neighborhood of the black building, that covered the shaft, excited men with lanterns moved here and there shouting to each other, and out in the village the light from many an open door made ruddy patches on the snow. A few minutes later, and black groups of people, some bearing blazing mine lamps on their heads, swarmed up the steep hill towards the scene of the disturbance. In a little while after the warning had sounded a crowd of several hundred men and women had gathered outside of the shaft-house, curious, excited, all asking questions, and no one being able to reply.

The one man who knew the cause of the warning was Jifkins, the mine foreman. He stood in the little office building near the fan-house, with his ear glued to the telephone receiver, and his black eyes gleaming with suppressed excitement. "Give me J. C. Coughlan, of the Coughlan Coal Company. For God's sake, hurry! Hello! Is that Mr. Coughlan? This is Jifkins. There has been an accident at the mine. Fans were running only half speed on account of strike. Harry, your son, came over this afternoon and went down this evening without my knowledge. Some of the chambers had gas in them, and—well, there was an explosion and the inside of the shaft is on fire. Hello! Yes, sir! We will do our best; have courage! Good-bye!" He almost threw the receiver into its receptacle and dashed from the room. There was work for him to do. Meanwhile the crowd outside had grown to a mob of several hundred people. At intervals vast volumes of pungent smoke shot up from the mouth of the pit, acrid and irritating, with the odor of oil-soaked wood. Willing hands manned the huge hose which was brought out to flash the shaft, and a dozen sturdy arms pointed it down the black cavity. There was a babel of shouted suggestions as to what should be done; the crowd packed closer and closer around the shaft building, and all seemed confusion. Suddenly out of the tumult rose a clear, shrill voice: "Men, we must have order here! Push the crowd back, you in front; we must have room to work, and we must have silence. Let me give the orders. Now, everybody; bring around that other hose! There, that's it! Now down with it! Good!"

It was Jifkins, the superintendent. His pale, steadfast face and commanding voice seemed to exercise a remarkable influence over the crowd. The

men worked with a new energy; out of confusion came order. Gradually the smoke became less dense, and Jifkins, noting every change, at last gave the signal to have the water shut off. The fire had been extinguished. At almost the same moment a commotion arose in the rear of the crowd. A carriage drawn by a pair of steaming horses drove up, and a man and a woman alighted. Instinctively the people pressed back and made way for them.

"It's Coughlan and his wife!" was whispered from mouth to mouth. For merely they had been accustomed to mention Coughlan's name only with execration—Coughlan the man who had forced them time and again to remain idle in order that coal prices might not fall from over-production; Coughlan, the man whose satrap bosses had practically made slaves of them. His wife—she gave little concerning her; that she was Coughlan's wife was sufficient.

Jifkins met the mine owner and his wife in front of the shaft-house; a hurried colloquy ensued. "There is hope," said the superintendent; "but some one must go down the shaft immediately. The smoke renders the attempt very dangerous, but we may get volunteers. My lungs need a strong man and a true man."

"The flabby face of the mine owner was crimson with excitement and nervous tension. His wife was softly weeping on his shoulder, and looked up at the superintendent ceased speaking. "Thank you, Jifkins," she said. "We need—O God, how we need a friend now—strong and true. James, can we ask these people to make such a sacrifice for us?"

Coughlan bowed his head. "Don't," he whispered. "Don't talk that way now! Be brave. I'll offer a reward; we'll find a way!" The woman began to sob aloud, and clung to him more closely. In the meantime somebody had lighted a bundle of oil-soaked cotton wads, and placed in the fork of a near-by tree. As it blazed up the red glare, reflected by the snow, threw into relief the eager faces of the crowd, pressing now in increased numbers around the shaft-house, and the anxious little group in the center of the circle. Behind showed the mountain, bleak and desolate, covered with blackened tree-stumps with here and there a scraggy pine standing in dismal misery all alone. Around the radius of the circle the powdery snow glittered like a shower of diamond dust.

Coughlan, as if nerved with a new determination, released his wife's hands from his neck, placed an arm around her waist, and facing the assemblage, raised his hand to command silence. "Men," he said in a voice trembling with emotion, "my son is down in that burning shaft, and some one must brave danger to find him and to rescue him. We hope that he is alive; but alive or dead, I am determined to help him. He is my only son, and he is dear to me. So listen now, I am an old man, and I call on you to do, not an act of justice but an act of heroism. I myself will go down the shaft to find my son! I ask only for one volunteer to accompany me. Who will be my companion? He will be rewarded!"

The crowd was silent for a moment. Then several men attempted to go forward. There were many brave hearts there; but their wives or their sweet hearts pulled them back. Why should they give their lives to this man? They were as dear to their kindred as his son was to him. They were sorry indeed, but they had given him every thing else; why should he now demand their lives?

"Is there no one to volunteer?" cried Jifkins, searching the faces of the crowd. Then men—He paused. A burly, bewiskered giant, wearing a red flannel shirt, open at the collar to display his brawny hairy chest, was pressing to the front. His slouch hat was pulled far over his forehead, and his eyes glared from under his bushy brows with a gleam like a mad bear's. He reached the center of the group, and for a moment confronted the mine-owner in silence.

"The anarchist!" the crowd exclaimed in wonder. During the past two weeks of idleness the man had been given the title, however unmerited, on account of his fiery speeches against capital. He was counted one of the most desperate men and the hardest drinker in town. Whether his nationality was German, Polish or Slavonic no one can tell—he spoke all these languages indifferently well; but that he was a fanatic, with all the fanatic's love of admiration was admitted by all. His burly frame towered over the stooped figure of the mine owner, and there was an exultant ring in his voice when he began to speak. "Hast Master Coughlan," he said, "you hat asked us to go to maybe death to save your son. One little week ago we come to you; we ask you for work. You say to us when we come that you cannot afford to let us work. You tell us that, remember—and you heard him, my people—you cannot afford to keep the starve away from us, Hah! There was biting sarcasm in the man's tones and the mine owner was infuriated. He glared at his accuser, and attempted to step forward, but the "anarchist" made a warning gesture with one hand, and with the other pointed toward the shaft. "You can talk later; now it is our time! Master Coughlan, you hat asked us to keep your son from death—you who would not risk the price of a loaf of bread to keep us alive! And what do we answer? Listen, then! I hat paused for a brief instant. "What do we say to you, the heartless man? We say 'Yes!' We say we will help you; not because you are rich, or because of money; but to show you that riches hat not the power to buy courage or friends. We say no man is rich or poor in the presence of death, and so we say: 'Here is Alex. Birchhoff—a poor man, an ignorant man—and he will go down in the mine and face death for you—alone—all alone! You shall not

go; you are too old. Have I spoken well, my people?"

There was a cheer from the crowd, and the orator's eyes glistened with pleasure. The mine owner, forgetful of all save that his son was to be rescued, tried to grasp Birchhoff's hand.

"I will pay you well!" he repeated over and over again.

Birchhoff seemed not to notice him. "Don't bother me now," he said. "We will talk if I come back. Good-bye, friends!" he cried, and he stepped on the carriage ready to be lowered five hundred feet into the earth. His clothes were wetted and a damp sponge was placed over his nose. Then the bell clanked, and the carriage sank down suddenly, and noiselessly, into the tomb like darkness.

Then ensued tense moments of waiting that seemed hours. Suddenly the bell again clanked the signal to hoist. The cable became taut, and there was a buzz of conversation, followed by a strange silence. Somewhere in the crowd a woman sobbed hysterically, and now all eyes were strained to see the uprising carriage.

When at last it came to view a dozen volunteers rushed forward to help the returned man. Birchhoff, as erect as a soldier, stood on the platform supporting in his arms the unconscious form of Henry Coughlan. Those who would assist him he waved back with a stern brusqueness. Blackened and burnt with the subterranean flames, his hair and beard singed to a crisp, there was yet a certain nobility in his mien as he walked erect with his burden and laid it at Coughlan's feet.

Mrs. Coughlan took her son's head in her lap and kissed his pale and smoke-grimed face with rapture.

"Thank God! Thank God!" she exclaimed, "he is not dead! Heaven will bless you for this noble act!" And then bending over her son, she smoothed his hair, matted with the singeing blaze, and wept with mingled joy and sympathy.

"My man—" began the mine owner; but Birchhoff interrupted him with an imperious gesture.

"It is a blessing," he said—"a holiday present, to you and her—from the people. We hat given you the life of your son; we only ask that you give to us a little work—a little bread—a little—we ask—"

His swayed and fell like a log, his fingers clenching at the feathery snow, and he muttered weakly. "It is a blessing—a little work—for the people!"—Catholic World Magazine.

ST. JEROME.

St. Jerome died on September 30, A. D. 420. He was one of the great fathers of the Latin Church, belonging thus to the group of learned and holy men who are the teachers of the Church of every age. Uniting sanctity and learning with wonderful strength, their memory comes down to us from the first centuries of the Christian era, and we think of them almost with awe, marvelling at their power of intellect, at their inflexibility of character, at their predominant spirit of penance, which liberating them from things of sense, made their vision clearer to meditate upon mysteries divine.

St. Jerome is especially an example to this century in his devotion to the Sacred Scriptures. No doubt as to the questions which agitate the modern world, ever crossed his mind. To him they were the clear revelation of the word of God to man, in their pages he saw written, not alone the mere text but behind the inspiration which lights them from cover to cover. "Love Holy Scripture," says the saint, "and wisdom will love thee, love her and she will keep thee, honor her and she will embrace thee." To St. Jerome we owe the Latin Vulgate, translated partly from the original and partly by the revision of prior Latin versions. In fact it may be said with truth that to him we owe the Bible as we now know it, which he gave in a perfect state to the Western Church, that book of books, that house of gold which contains treasures beyond price and the precepts leading to life eternal. Studying, writing and as it has been said "delighting to discuss, and unfold the beauties of the Word of God," is a summary of his daily life at Bethlehem where he spent his last thirty years.

St. Jerome is a familiar figure to all lovers of art, as he has been portrayed in the wonderful canvas hung in the Vatican palace. In the distance can be seen nature's waning tree and moving cloud, but the focal point is a hand and this servant of God, and he is seen kneeling, pale and exhausted, supported by two disciples, while over him bends the priest bearing Holy Communion; and on the face of the dying saint comes a look as of great joy. Nunc dimittis serum tuum Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace.—Servier in Catholic Citizen.

AN HONEST VIEW.

"I would not lift my little finger to convert one Roman Catholic, as I do not believe it would be right." This is the judgment of an honest Protestant missionary, the Rev. Fredrick H. Wright, D. D., at present ministering in Buffalo, N. Y., after a six years' residence in Italy. He explained the Methodist church in Rome, of which he had charge. It existed, he said, for the Methodist tourists in that city. They were not proselytizing. He instructed the ministers not to attempt to gather Italians from other churches. He finds much to admire in the Italians and considers them most admirable immigrants. They are thrifty and sober, knowing absolutely nothing of the drink evil. "I saw more drunken men in New York in one day than I saw in the six years I resided in Italy," he called.

D. Wright felt no need to evangelize these decent Christians. "We commend his expression and example to those ministers who, blinking the work which one might suppose would fairly glare at them from among their own flock, are possessed to 'convert' the Italians, the French, the Poles and others who are rooted and grounded in Christianity.—The Pilot.