

kissing the tips of its fingers in compliment to me, stretched out its hand to receive it. As far as may be, persons keep their minds undisturbed till church begins, as the morning service is our most solemn worship, and we wish to assist at it with the deepest devotion. I will explain it at length very soon. It is too sacred to be hurried past now. This over, those who have leisure sufficient remain in the church for private devotion; the clergyman is obliged by the church to remain, he may not hurry out of church immediately, he must remain to pray. On returning home, before beginning any work, a Roman Catholic offers that work to God to be blessed and sanctified. And every time he changes his employment he offers the fresh occupation to God. Every time the clock strikes he offers the new hour to God. Even while the clergyman is preaching, I observe this is done: every head is bowed for a few seconds in ejaculatory prayer. All this is most quietly and simply done, seeming as if it had grown up with them, and that it would be very strange to them not to do it: they have so many other pious customs, that I should tire you with telling them. Indeed, I do not think I know them half yet; I am always learning something new of these dear holy people. Well, at noon the church bell rings again: this is to call us to a few minutes' examination of conscience, as to how we have passed the morning, and to make fresh resolutions for the rest of the day yet to come; then it strikes the three times for the Incarnation prayer, in which we offer up Christ as the Man God. At three o'clock, especially on Fridays, most persons offer a Lord's Prayer or a Litany for a happy death, in memory of Christ's precious death at that hour. At four or five o'clock in all towns there is a benediction service, but every day in the country we have this beautiful little service only occasionally. It is performed sooner or later according to the season, always after working hours, in order that servants and farm people may have time to attend. It is very short, but persons of leisure frequently go an hour before it begins for private devotion. And in the summer the poor people come in numbers to pray in the church-yard. When they cannot do this, they never omit praying at home. I find there is no prayer more punctually performed than the family evening prayer. The father of the family acts as priest, and the devotion is never shorter than half an hour, generally it lasts three quarters; and if any member of the family is fatigued and wishes to go to bed before the family is assembled, he or she kneels down in the common room, and spends as much time as this in devotion. Each child says its prayers at its mother's knee before going to bed, till they are old enough to be trusted to pray alone. A mother's evening is well taken up with such holy duties. I went in at five o'clock one summer afternoon to our farm, and found the little ones already saying their prayers—'You are going to bed early,' I said—'No, ma'am,' the mother replied; but I begin early when I can, for it

takes a good time to get through six of them, and I am always afraid lest any thing may happen to hinder me, if I put it off too long.' The church bell rings again late in the evening to call to examination of conscience, and again to offer to God the Incarnation of Christ, and ourselves to his protecting care for the night, together with our fellow-parishioners, the pastor, the sick, and especially the dying if there be any.

You must not suppose that every body does every thing just as I have described it. Many things interrupt these stated devotions, but every one performs them more or less; and those who cannot pass every day in a regularly devout manner, have numerous opportunities of keeping a devout spirit alive within them at the great festivals and other holy days, appointed by the church, when the fervour of devotion which is excited rests in the mind, and renders prayer an easy daily exercise.

LETTER III.

Belgium, ———, 1842.

I must now tell you something about our clergymen. I dare say you know that the Head of the Roman Catholic Church is the Pope. Every clergyman all over the world is under his spiritual government. Whether in America, or in India, or in New South Wales, or in England, or in Ireland, or in France, every Roman Catholic clergyman, whether bishop, or rector, or tutor in a college, or doctor in a university, is governed by the Pope, and takes upon himself the vow of submission to him at his ordination. To assist him in so great a work, he has many very learned men called cardinals, living in Rome with him; and in every country certain powers belong to bishops, for the government of the clergy in their own diocese. In countries where the bishops are free to exercise all the powers the church gives to them, and to govern according to her laws, the wise management, are beautiful, very beautiful. In Belgium, since Leopold has reigned, they have this liberty: and it is delightful to watch from year to year the progress which each diocese is making in spiritual improvement. The bishops of Belgium meet every year to consult upon the best measures to be adopted in each diocese; some of these measures are adopted in every diocese, and some are found useful only for such and such a diocese. Each bishop has a college near his palace, where the young men who offer themselves for the church are educated; and no others are admitted. It is one of the bishop's duties to become acquainted with the character, talents, and general disposition of these ecclesiastical students, and to keep notes of every such person's general inclinations, &c. These young men are trained most carefully to the exercise of prayer, and their conduct guarded by the gentlest but most exact vigilance. Their stu-