

important contributions to the literary wealth of the age came forth from his treasure-house of knowledge.

In 1880 he is again Prime Minister; during five years he held power—still gradually and perceptibly becoming more and more inclined to the grand cause which he took up, with all his power, eloquence and statesmanship, toward the close of his life. In 1885 he resigned, only to again become Prime Minister in 1886. It was during this period, and prior to the Salisbury success, that he brought in the Home Rule measure, and forever allied himself with the cause of Ireland. In 1892 he again became Prime Minister—for a fourth time in his life—and in 1893 he had the triumph of carrying Home Rule through the Commons. The measure was defeated by the Lords; but Gladstone had succeeded in the Lower and Popular House. The story of his resignation on account of failing eye-sight and ill-health is too fresh to need recalling. To-day he is as ready for work as he was fifty years ago. No wonder they call him the Grand Old Man!

THE MONTH OF MAY.

At this season, when May in all her beauty, sunlight and balmy breezes, approaches, we recall those memorable lines of that sweet singer, Denis Florence McCarthy:

"Ah! my heart is weary waiting,  
Waiting for the May—  
Waiting for the pleasant rambles,  
Where the fragrant hawthorn brambles,  
With the woodbine alternating,  
Scent the dewy way.  
Ah! my heart is weary waiting,  
Waiting for the May!"

All through the long nights and cold winter are we watching for the glorious spring. The lengthening days, the flushing dawns, the golden sunsets, the budding trees, the opening flowers, the bubbling streams, the sweeping rivers, the singing breezes, the returning birds, and all the rejuvenating signs that accompany the revival of nature, have charms for man that painter can never trace nor poet describe. May comes like the message of freedom to the prisoners of winter, like a promise of new life to the dejected and despairing, like a beam of glory shooting through clouds of mourning. It is the month of exultation, because it is the forerunner of the beautiful season when earth rejoices in the all the attractiveness that the Almighty bestows upon nature.

But even with the advent of beautiful May there is a gloomy thought in the experience that the month of verdure must pass and that we yet must return to the autumn's bleakness and the winter's dreariness, and again find ourselves "longing," and "sighing" for the May. This second thought brings back the last stanza of the poem just quoted:

"Waiting sad, dejected, weary,  
Waiting for the May,  
Spring goes by with wasted warnings,  
Moonlit evenings, sunbright mornings;  
Summer comes, yet dark and dreary,  
Life still ebbs away;  
Man is ever weary, weary,  
Waiting for the May!"

But while sweet May is with us let us enjoy all the gifts that she brings. Let us drink in fresh vigor from the pure air; revel in the fragrance that the flowers shed, rise with the morning bird to salute the sun, and put on a smiling countenance in imitation of nature. When the days grow longer, and more lightsome, when the sky is purest and bluest, when the choristers in the aisles of the forest temple sing their liveliest hymns, let us thank God—the Bountiful Giver—for all these blessings, and kneel in gratitude for the glories of the May.

If May is a month of rejoicing for all the children of men, particularly for the Roman Catholics, for the true child of the Church, is there reason for exultation and happiness, holy thought and

sweet reflections. It is the month, consecrated, in a special manner, to the honor of Mary, the Blessed Mother of God. It is her month and most appropriately is it so. The most loveable creature that ever came from the Hand of the Creator should be remembered by her children during the most lovely season of the year. From time immemorial both young and old have taken delight in decorating the altars of Mary. No wonder that the flowers should spring up and bloom in all their variegated attractiveness, for even nature must pay tribute to the Queen of Heaven.

The chill winter of centuries had come upon the world; the snows of misfortune had fallen upon humanity, grim death, fruit of man's sad disobedience, had gone forth amidst the human race; but there was a promise of a future summer-time of happiness and redemption. Throughout that long, dreary, miserable periods of expectancy,

"Man was ever ready waiting,  
Waiting for the May"

waiting for the fulfilment of the prophetic messages, the accomplishment of the Eternal sublime promise of the sunlight of moral emancipation, the golden season of salvation.

At last the time came, the streams of spiritual life that had been frozen during the four thousand years, burst their icy barriers and leaped forth exultantly; the flowers and fruits of merit and reward, that had been covered by the snows, ever since the gems were sown, sprouted into life, bloom and beauty; the cold winds of misery that careered across that desolate expanse gave place to the sweet zephyrs of hope—breezes that were the precursors of the Messiah. But before the fulness of time, before the June of Redemption, came the vision of May. Between the departing winter of suffering and the approaching summer of emancipation was the May season of consolation, promise, brilliancy and delight, Mary—the Mother of the Christ—was the creature appointed to herald in the lengthening days of the warmest love. May should, therefore, be her own month—the month of her predilection.

Let the heartless infidel or the cold souled bigot rave against the Blessed Virgin and her claims upon our gratitude and affection; her altars will be strewn with flowers, her shrines will be adorned with lights, her name will be honored and "called blessed" the world over, and millions of her faithful children will chant her praises and go to her with their petitions during the sweet month of May.

There are men and women who purposely refuse to pay homage to Mary. They have so been taught and they cling to the cold, hollow, heartless, unlovely, and unloveable faith that can pretend to be Christian and yet ignore the one who brought the Divine Founder of Christianity into the world. They claim to love, to obey, to follow and to please Jesus. Yet they despise the Mother that bore Him, the being He most loved, obeyed, and cherished. They imagine that they please the Son by insulting the Mother. Let them carry that principle into private life and take the same attitude towards their neighbors, refuse his mother the honor she deserves, ridicule, laugh at and belittle her, and then claim friendship with that neighbor. That men should be so unmanly does not always surprise us; but that women—who are mothers, wives and daughters—could blindly follow their male teachers in a life-crusade against the most perfect model of motherhood, of conjugal perfection and filial devotion. Ah! "they know not what they do."

But let the world go on in its irrever-

ence and negligence of the most consoling of all practices; the Catholic has not only his own poor, feeble, sinful self to rely upon, he has an avenue to the Heart of Jesus through the medium of the Blessed Virgin that nursed the Divine Child. And we are told that it never was known that any one appealed in vain to Mary. During this glorious month of May let us hasten to her shrine and there make reparation for all the insults that so grieve the most tender of mothers, the most exalted of Queens. Nature furnishes the flowers, and the Church opens the doors of her temples. Every evening the devotions of the month of Mary take place, and around her altars, brilliant with the feeble lights that poor human hands can place there, rich with the perfumes of earth's off-spring of May, richer still with the odors of piety and heavenly love, the faithful will meet and celebrate her glories while fulfilling the prophetic words of the Gospel that "all generations shall call her Blessed."

Behold the sunrise of May; like Mary appearing on the hill-tops of the East after the night of sin's bondage to the race! Behold the pure sky, the unmeasured dome of glory that canopies the earth in May; beyond its uttermost confines, in the unending splendors of her reign, Mary sits upon a throne prepared for her by the One she called Son, and from out the throng of pure spirits that wait upon her, smiles down her recompense upon earth's children. The smiles of May are the sweetest of the year; the smiles of Mary are the purest and most beautiful, the sweetest and most lovely of all created beings. Hail Mary, Queen of May!

TWO MARVELS.

We copy the following from the London Tablet of April 13th, last:

"Mr. Alfred Webb, M. P., who went over to India to preside at the 'National Congress' is publishing his 'Impressions regarding India' in the papers. Though he was able to spend but three months in our great dependency he came back with one very distinct impression. "I more fully realize than ever," he tells us, "that the British Empire and the Catholic Church are the greatest marvels in history." Mr. A. Webb is an Irish Nationalist member and a Protestant, so that his testimony is the more emphatic. He further says; "The missionaries are doing a great work, mainly among children and outcasts. It does not appear to me that they are making much impression upon the educated intelligence of the country. The Catholics are having most influence. This is doubtless partly owing to the absolute singleness of purpose—the undivided interest—with which their celibate clergy and men and women of the religious orders are able to work."

That Mr. Webb should consider the British Empire and the Catholic Church to be the greatest marvels of the age is in no way surprising. As far as the great Empire is concerned every British subject of Mr. Webb's standing is of the same opinion—whether rightly or wrongly. In the same sense as an American believes that the United States is the most wonderful land on earth, the Britisher has the idea that not only the sun never sets upon England's Dominions, but even that there are no other dominions in the world worth being illuminated by the heavenly orb. This is natural and it is creditable, for it is an evidence of patriotism.

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,  
Who never, to himself, has said—"

this is my native land, the greatest, most glorious country on earth, the marvel of

the century? But whether or not the British Empire is one of the greatest marvels of the age, it is certain that the Catholic Church is the greatest wonder, not only of this age, but of all the centuries since the day of creative miracles.

Its history alone is the history of nineteen centuries; its triumphant career amidst obstacles, the slight of which would suffice to overthrow any other institution that ever existed; its vitality and perpetual youth; its very sameness amidst all the mutations of time—all go to stamp it as a marvel of construction, solidity, perfection. There is no explanation for the existence of the Catholic Church as she is to day, except in the fact of the Divinity of her Founder and that other fact of His perpetual presence with her.

But what we deem the most important statement of Mr. Webb is that in which he attributes the influence of the Catholic missionaries to "the absolute singleness of purpose—the undivided interest—with which their celibate clergy, and men and women of the religious orders are able to work." Here is an evidence of the wisdom of the Church and of the greatness of the institution. The celibacy of the clergy—so much belittled by those who are interested in its abolition—is the most perfect index of a missionary vocation and the most auxiliary in the fulfilment of the sacred duties of that exceptional calling.

Leaving aside all controversial arguments—from the Sacred Scriptures or elsewhere—it is obvious to even the least reflecting that the person who divests himself of all earthly attachments, is unburdened with the cares that are necessarily incident to domestic life, must be the better equipped and prepared for the service of Christ in the ministry. We have evidence of this truth in the multitude of cases that, in times of plague, of war, of epidemic, and in crusades of missionary work into barbaric lands, present themselves. The Catholic priest has no ties binding him to the family hearth, no obligations to fulfil toward wife or children, no fears of depriving others of their bread-winner or of carrying disease into the home he has to build up. He goes forth free and unshackled. When he takes the vow of celibacy he leaves all behind, like the ancient conqueror he burns the ships that might carry him back to a refuge from the stern duty ahead. It is thus that he can devote his life, his energies, his talents and all the gifts that God gave him to the holy cause in which he has embarked.

And as it is with the priest, so is it, in another sphere, with the nun. "She barter for Heaven the glory of earth." Her's is a life of joy, happiness, hope, even though the world may think it one of great privation any misery. She has had one great battle in life to fight, one great sacrifice to make, and if her religious vocation be her true one, she comes out not only victorious, but for all time to come a contented person. That battle takes place before making her final vows; it is there she has to weigh all the pros and cons, to study the future, to fathom the depths of her course, to decide between the world and all its attractions and the life of retirement with all its labors and only eternal rewards. Then is it that she makes the one great sacrifice of her being to God.

Once that step taken the battle is over, the victory is here; the past life, with its glitter, becomes a dim memory, and the consolations of the future are all hidden beneath the thorns of duty.

No wonder that Mr. Webb detected the secret of the Catholic Church's missionary success. The fireside missionary cannot understand it,—it is too divine a life for the comprehension of

"The lazy philosophers, self-seeking men,  
The fire-side philanthropists, great with the pen."