



## A BEAUTIFUL SPRING THOUGHT

A friend from the Northwest writes: "Some three weeks ago I was much struck with this beautiful thought expressed by your bright correspondent at Ste. Rose du Lac: 'No flowers and our snow wreaths gone. But if we wait, the flowers will come again, for the world is as sweet as ever to each new soul that comes into it, although it has lasted so many thousand years. The seasons keep it perennially young, each spring renews its youth and it is never more than a year old. How differently time deals with us! The clock which ticks so noisily in still and solitary places is like the beating of a heart, the palpitating heart of Time, ah! all too soon we spend our little share of it.'

This passage has suggested to me the following sonnet, which you are at liberty to print, if you like it." We like it so much that we give it plenty of room.

### IMMORTAL YOUTH.

How youthful every year is Mother Earth!  
No wrinkled brow, no ashes in her hair;  
At spring's return she blossoms young and fair  
As when the angels hymned her primal birth.  
Why are we not like her? Why does the dearth  
Of youth renewed make each spring say: "Beware!  
This vernal joy is harbinger of care;  
Thy frame is aging; sorrow waits on mirth?"

Mayhap it is because poor Earth knows not  
That all of her must die at last. Our flesh  
May die, our soul we know shall live for aye;  
Of age we can endure the saddening lot.  
Let earth each passing year bloom green and fresh;  
She has no soul, she lives but for a day.

W. E. L.

## "The Sign of the Cross."

Western Watchman.

This is a play now running in one of our local theatres. It is written by Wilson Barret; and he tells us that his motive in writing the play was to re-ignite in the footlights of our theatres the Christian faith, almost extinguished by the lectures of Robert Ingersoll. He gives us an ocular demonstration to offset the metaphysical argument. The play is as Christian as any Protestant could write; and as realistic as a Protestant audience could understand or appreciate. What is most striking in a play intended for the great hoi polloi of theatre-goers is its scrupulous cleanliness and even the modesty of its rendition. The play represents the best and worst side of Roman life in the first century; yet it would be difficult to decide which were the more modest in their garb and attitudes, the Christian or the Pagan maidens. The motive of the play is Christian rather than Catholic; and late, rather than early Christian. Peter and Paul are philanthropic teachers rather than divine sentimentalists; and the enthusiasm of the early Church is choked in the measured and calculated rectitude of the golden rule. The religion of the "Sign of the Cross" is a conviction, not an all devouring passion. But what a revelation to people entirely unacquainted with the history of the persecutions must be the four acts of this piece! Martyrs! Virgins! Heroes and Heroines of faith! What manner of people were these? Is their God our God; is their religion our religion?

The play is rather Christian than Catholic. If it were entirely Catholic the martyred heroine would have been able to give a better answer to the question: "why dost thou love God?" She says it is natural. The birds sing; the roses bloom. That is not true. Divine charity is not natural, but supernatural. We love God because He loves us;

and we love Him passionately because He is so good, so true, so beautiful a Lover. She is a virgin and spurns matrimony. Why? She could tell a Catholic audience, but a Protestant one would not understand her. Virginity is Sisterhood with divinity. "The clean of heart see God," and having seen him, never close eye contemplating His loveliness. Protestants regard matrimony as superior to virginity.

The play is late Christian, rather than early Christian. The early Christians knew what it was to leave all and follow Christ. They understood mortification of the flesh and despised worldly riches and honors. We do not believe in martyrdom, and deem it prudence to look out for the future in this world as well as the next. The neglect of worldly interests characteristic of the early Christians would strike a modern churchgoer as improvidence, if not downright thriftlessness.

Then that "Sign of the Cross" has no dead Christ on it; it is two pieces of wood crossed. It is not liked by Protestants, and would be much more appreciated by Catholics in the form of the crucifix.

Then the assemblies of the early Christians in the play are not attended by the "Breaking of the Bread" which was the inevitable concomitant in real life. That would have brought in the priest and the Mass; and that would not do. Peter and Paul make addresses; but they must have both forgotten how to preach; and the singing of the Christians in the Catecombs is in four voices. This is certainly an anachronism. For these and other reasons the play is not what Catholics could expect; yet we doubt if it could be altered advantageously. It is a splendid portrayal of diluted early Christianity; but as strong perhaps as the delicate character of our modern stomach could stand.

Rev. Father Blais, O. M. I., returned from the east at the end of last week to act as a colonizing missionary.

## THE ETERNAL CITY

Influence of the Holy See Among the Nations

### THE VATICAN AND THE QUIRINAL

Italy's Present Condition is an Artificial One and its Dilemma is Formidable.

That well-known European correspondent of the daily press, Arthur Warren, contributes to the latest issue of the English Illustrated Magazine a somewhat remarkable article, wherein he contrasts the influence of the Holy See in Rome with that at present enjoyed there by the Italian government. At the outset of his paper Mr. Warren briefly reviews the more striking events that have had place in Rome since the usurpation of the control of that city by the Piedmontese government, which occurred in 1870. He quotes anew the memorable and seemingly prophetic utterance then made by Victor Emmanuel, who declared, when he entered it, "This means the downfall of the house of Savoy," a prediction whose fulfillment is now regarded as nearing, day by day, by observers of Italian affairs by no means prejudiced in favor of the Holy See.

Mr. Warren points out that, notwithstanding this utterance of the Italian ruler, the men who had urged him to seize the Papal city, flushed by the easy success of the Italian arms at Porta Pia, imagined that they had put an end forevermore to the Roman question by depriving the Church of its temporal possessions. Blinded by their triumphs, he remarks, they failed to recognize that the ease and facility wherewith constitutions are written and treaties prepared do not establish nations or create a united people, and they are now painfully awakening to a realization of the fact that the question which they foolishly considered settled is far removed from having found a satisfactory or enduring solution, and that something more than parchment and political zeal are required to hold together in national unity thirty millions of people. That there is a certain element in Rome which is fanatically attached to the government and consequently bitterly opposed to the Holy See and all proposals looking to the restoration of its former temporal authority, Mr. Warren admits, but that element, he adds, is far less numerous than some folks imagine, and it is more anti-Christian, he says, than anti-Catholic. Nor does he find it strange that such an element, indifferent or hostile to Christianity, should be discovered in the shadow, so to speak, of St. Peter's; for, continues he, in the shadow of St. Paul's in London men prate of infidelity, and within half a mile of the Bank of England no long search is necessary to discover the deepest poverty and destitution.

Mr. Warren declares that, all contrary assertions notwithstanding, he found Rome a thoroughly Catholic city. The real Rome, says he, is neither anticlerical nor religiously indifferent. He visited several of the churches when services were being held in them and he invariably found them filled with

ardent and devout worshippers. He attended a notable Papal celebration—the commemoration of an important anniversary in the long life of Leo XIII.—in St. Peter's and he witnessed the observance of the king's birthday. On the latter occasion he was struck with the total lack of enthusiasm shown by the Roman people, whose demeanor towards the occupant of the Quirinal Palace stood out in strong contrast to their behavior in St. Peter's where, when the prisoner of the Vatican was being borne through the church in the sedan chair, the air resounded with their shouts of "Long live the Pope-King!" The impressiveness of this Papal ceremony was not lost on Mr. Warren, neither was its significance, for Protestant though he be, he says of it: "The fact remains that this kindly old man on the great white throne of the Sistine chapel is, after all, the most important personage on earth; that he wields a power wider than that of any King or President or Parliament, and that his word is capable of exerting a greater influence than the word of any other human being."

A close study of the situation convinces Mr. Warren that Italy's present position is an artificial one, and, therefore, an unstable one.

Let her disarm, he says, and she is certain to become the prey of her national neighbors, some of which powers, he adds, would not be sorry to see the Pope again ruler of Rome. If she keeps up her present costly armament, bankruptcy awaits her close ahead, and it is because she took and retains Rome, the Papal city, that Italy finds herself now placed in this unfortunate predicament. Without saying so explicitly, Mr. Warren seems to intimate that the only satisfactory solution of Italy's dilemma is to be found in the restoration of Rome to the Holy See and he truthfully remarks that the Roman question is one that has an interest far beyond the borders of Italy, for if King Humbert, he adds, reigns over thirty millions of people, the Pope reigns over two hundred and fifty millions of souls throughout the world.—Sacred Heart Review.

### The Difficulties of the Pulpit.

No one who has not had practical experience of the work can estimate the burden of the task of finding fresh subjects, Sunday after Sunday, and perhaps twice every Sunday, for the sermons which a priest is supposed to deliver to his people. With the week filled with sick-call duties, visitings among the parishioners, financial worries, school attendances, etc., a parish priest has often very little time to give to the preparation of his Sunday's discourse. And when, as often as not, he has to say two Masses and preach at the second, it is no wonder that the work and the want of food tell on the brain and render the preacher unable to speak with the freshness and brightness of the orators who on grand occasions come into the pulpit, carefully prepared, and fortified by breakfast. We commend these considerations to Catholics who sometimes lend themselves to criticism on the sermons which are delivered to them in church. We have no wish to depreciate the claims to admiration of the great pulpit

orators who from time to time receive the admiration of enraptured listeners, but we have always considered that the greatest preachers in the church are the humble and unreported country clergy who Sunday after Sunday mount the pulpit, fasting, and at a terrible cost of health and strength break the plain bread of God's Word to their simple people. And more than probably bread is as good a food as honey for the soul which hungers for the Word of God and the strengthening consolation of His Gospel.—CATHOLIC TIMES

### AN OPEN TREASURY.

Granted that you have made a good confession at Easter and received forgiveness, what about the temporal punishment still due? Conscience still persists in whispering "Pay what thou owest;" and how, pray? By good works? alms-giving? or is there another easy method? There is. Holy Church in the plenitude of her power, like an indulgent mother, opens her treasury and invites us to come and receive the Papal Benediction with the accompanying Plenary Indulgence. All can receive it but only on condition that we are in the state of grace and are determined to avoid the least sin in the future. What a great boon! but alas! how many of us are ready to take advantage of it? On Easter Tuesday by a privilege granted by the Holy See the Papal Benediction is given in all churches in charge of the Carmelite Fathers.—CARMELITE REVIEW.

## Preaching.

It is not amiss for us sometimes to note the opinions of men widely differing from ourselves in matters of theological and religious thought. And there is food for reflection in the observations which fell from the lips of a distinguished Nonconformist minister at a meeting in Coventry last week. He said in the present age the taste for preaching was not dying out, and there were fewer excuses than ever for poor and inefficient preaching, which killed the truth and sometimes killed the hearer. Eloquence was not essential, but a man must be interesting and instructive. The force of the preaching of the present day was being endangered by the ceaseless multiplication of other duties upon the minister, who had not opportunity to prepare himself and his sermons, and the churches would do well to note that they were robbing themselves and the Kingdom of God by eternally worrying the "speaker for God" about things that could just as well be done by the ordinary member of the church. There is a great deal of truth in these remarks.—CATHOLIC TIMES.

### Diplomacy in the Home Circle.

"Papa," said the young mother, "I've decided on a name, for baby. We will call her Imogene." Papa was lost in thought for a few minutes; he did not like the name, but if he opposed it his wife would have her own way. "That's nice," said he, presently. "My first sweetheart was named Imogene, and she will take it as a compliment." "We will call her Mary, after my mother," was the stern reply.