

## EVANGELISM—THE NEW AND THE OLD

(Continued from page 5.)

Of course missions to the heathen come under this general head. But this is a large subject and one with which you are probably fairly well acquainted. Also, it is evident that in a private or individual way every good or fervent Catholic must be making some effort to convert to our faith the non-Catholics with whom he is best acquainted. The principal obstacle which has generally been encountered in such efforts is, I may frankly say, the unwillingness of those whom we usually meet to discuss religious matters with us, which may come either from indifference or from a prejudice which makes it seem impossible to them that truth can be on our side. I acknowledge that in my own youth I would as readily have listened to arguments in favor of the old Ptolemaic system of astronomy. Added to this, on the part of our laity is a natural and on the whole commendable prudence, as they feel that though their implicit faith (as I have explained it) is full and complete, their explicit faith is not so; they are afraid of ignorance on their own part of the very complete and scientific system of Catholic doctrine; they fear that they may misstate it in some way, or at any rate not be able to answer objections to it. And it cannot be denied that this work, as well as the one I have previously treated, is specially incumbent on the clergy. But we have always had to contend with an apparently unusual and excessive indisposition to listen to us, or I may perhaps go so far as to say to be caught listening to us. So we have been obliged hitherto to confine our efforts principally to the press. But even here our impediments have been great. How many good expositions of Catholic doctrine have been printed, which I may say hardly a Protestant has read! And perhaps this is very natural. I remember well that when I, an Episcopalian young man in good standing, undertook to read some Catholic books I looked as carefully as possible up and down the street in Boston to make sure that no acquaintance of mine saw me going into or out of Donahoe's Catholic book store. The "into" was fairly easy to secure; the "out of" was more difficult. Practically I had to take my chances.

But of late this prejudice seems to be passing away, as is shown quite plainly by occasions like this. Indeed, the willingness of others to hear seems sometimes to exceed ours to speak; that disposition to read to surpass ours to write. This has encouraged us to go beyond writing as a means of getting at the public and to start what are somewhat ambiguously called "non-Catholic" missions beside our regular or "Catholic" ones, and sometimes in connection with the latter.

These missions, or at least attempts in that direction, have, it is true, been ventured on, sporadically we may say, for a century perhaps. Father Hecker, who may be called the founder of our community, always had this idea in mind as being indeed the principal reason for its existence; and he, while his health lasted, gave lectures occasionally in explanation of the Catholic religion to mixed audiences. But it is only within the last few years that the work has been regularly organized, principally by the efforts of Father Elliott, of our community, who was originally attracted to the community, I think, by one of Father Hecker's lectures. The work was begun by him substantially on Father Hecker's plan, by lecturing in public halls, and that still seems in some places the best, if not the only possible way. But where circumstances allow it we usually now give our lectures or discourses in our own churches and prefer to connect them with our regular missions, such as those just described. We find that many non-Catholics are ready and willing to come to our churches and listen to us.

The order of exercises in these non-Catholic missions is much simpler than that in the regular ones. We do not, in the first place, expect our Protestant friends to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning to hear us. They are not so anxious as all that, and furthermore are not accustomed to get up so early. Indeed, we do not ask them to come at all till the evening, when the work of the day is over. Then at 7.30 or 8, as the case may be, we give them a sermon or lecture on some point of Catholic faith, prefaced by answering of questions which may have been proposed.

## The Question Box.

These questions come to us by means of what we call the "Question Box". A box is placed thus marked near the door of the church, and all are invited to put written questions in it to be answered the next evening. Some put questions in really for information; others with the hope of staggering the lecturer. They feel quite sure their questions cannot be answered satisfactorily. Sometimes, but rarely, foolish or insulting questions are asked. Often questions are asked not specially aimed against Catholicity, but against Christianity in general, or even against the existence of God. Of course it is impossible to thoroughly consider every question, especially these more fundamental ones; much less is it possible to answer all that may be put in for lack of time. But we try to do our best. These missions at least set people thinking, and they bring in a fair proportion of inquirers, who can be instructed more thoroughly in a special inquiry class. And usually from twenty to sixty actual converts are the ultimate tangible results of one of these missions in any fair sized place. They are given by other communities or religious orders besides our own; also by bands of secular priests which have been organized in various dioceses, and for the training of whom for their work the Apostolic Mission House at Washington has lately been established.

Our plan in these missions is not controversial or polemical, though we do not shrink from discussion of this sort with individuals who may wish to argue matters with us. The general idea is rather to state exactly what we do believe and clear up misunderstandings. If our religion is well understood we are fairly confident that it can speak for itself.

I know that I have already trespassed quite far enough on your time and patience. I will only add, therefore, that at the close of our present mission in our own parish we shall give a non-Catholic one in our church for two weeks, beginning Sunday evening, February 5. Our rule is not to allow Catholics at these exercises unless they are accompanied by non-Catholic friends; for there are many of our good people whom it is extremely difficult to keep away from the church when anything is going on. Anything suffices to attract them; the poorest kind of a preacher or the simplest kind of a service. They would fill the church at these missions if we did not simply drive them away. But non-Catholics are always welcome, of course, and we shall be very much pleased if any of those here present, or any of your friends, can come, even for a night or two. I may add, to prevent possible misunderstanding, that the mission is not like the Catholic one, for women one week and for men the next, but for every one every time.

In conclusion let me say that I most cordially thank the club for the kindness shown in inviting me and for the patience you have all exercised in listening to this rather dry statement of what we are trying to do.

## MULCAHY ROUTS ROBBER.

A young man answering the description of the robber who held up Dr. Talbot and others in New York, appeared at the residence of Mortimer J. Mulcahy, at 515 West One Hundred and Forty-second street, Saturday afternoon. J. F. Mulcahy, a son answered the ring.

Young Mulcahy is athletic, a noted oarsman, and his appearance in an armless rowing shirt and boat trousers evidently discomfited the visitor. He looked confused when Mulcahy asked him what he wanted. He asked if there were any Catholic servants in the house.

"What do you want to know for?" asked Mulcahy.

"I'll show you", replied the visitor, placing his hand back to his hip pocket.

Quick as a flash Mulcahy sent out his right fist. It landed on the man's chin, and he fell down the three stone steps of the stoop, his hand still in his hip pocket. Then he got up and ran. Mulcahy was not dressed for the street, so the robber escaped.

A further investigation disclosed the startling fact that at least five women servants and been held up and robbed in this district within the last week.

## ALL THROUGH PLAIN CHANT.

Our oversea contemporary, the London Tablet, tells how one American was converted to the beauties of plain chant:

"An American Episcopal clergyman

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came over here a few months ago and attended the Summer School lectures upon plain chant at Appuldurcombe, in the Isle of Wight. He went back to Colorado with the chant ringing in his ears. Nothing would silence its clamor. The fable of Orpheus was enacted over again for, in obedience to that music, he recrossed the Atlantic with his wife and his mother and his children and all that is his, and has taken a house in the Isle of Wight, so that he may be near the Benedictine monks and music-makers for some two or three years to come, and learn from them all that they know about one or two other things!

And still some American Catholics are sceptical as to the adaptability of Gregorian chant to ears attuned to the heavenly harmonies of modern music. Fudge!—Catholic Citizen.

## HER FINGERS CAME IN TOO LATE

Oliver Wendell Holmes enjoyed nothing so much as a clever retort, even if it happened to be at his own expense. One day, at an entertainment, he was seated near the refreshment table, and observed a little girl looking with longing eyes at the good things. With his invariable fondness for children he said, kindly:

"Are you hungry, little girl?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Then why don't you take a sandwich?"

"Because I haven't any fork."

"Fingers were made before forks," said the doctor, smilingly.

The little girl looked up at him and replied, to his delight:

"Not my fingers."

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One of the pictures is called

## "Heart Broken"

We will not let the reader into the secret of what has happened, but one of the merry little companions of the woeful little maid who has broken her heart is laughing already, and the other hardly knows what has happened. Cut flowers nod reassuringly at them, and a bright bit of verdure covered wall stands in the background. There is something piquantly Watteauesque about one of the petite figures, suggesting just a touch of French influence on the artist.

The other picture presents another of the tremendous perplexities of childhood. It is called

## "Hard to Choose"

As in the other picture, we will not give away the point made by the artists before the recipients analyze it for themselves. Again there are three happy girls in the picture, caught in a moment of pause in the midst of limitless hours of play. One of the little maids still holds in her arms the toy horse with which she has been playing. Flowers and butterflies color the background of this, and an arbour and a quaint old table replace the wall.

The two pictures together will people any room with six happy little girls, so glad to be alive, so care-free, so content through the sunny hours amidst their flowers and butterflies, that they must brighten the house like the throwing open of shutters on a sunny morning.

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