

Just then the dry cough of the father was heard. He had just come into the room.

"The baby?" he said in a husky voice, "is he alive?"

"He is alive and will pull through," said the nurse gently.

"She has worked miracles with them; they are all better," said his wife.

"God bless you, nurse," said the man, deeply moved. The nurse grasped her opportunity.

"Mr. Stanton, these children must be baptized. You must send for a priest this morning. You don't want to lose all your darlings at once. Get them baptized for they are of your wife's religion and mine. I am a Catholic, and I cannot stand by and see those sweet children separated from heaven. They must be baptized, and I will stay with them till they are prattling around your knees once more."

The wife did not dare raise her eyes; the man looked at the nurse with a frown. She met his gaze firmly. He looked at her for a minute and then held out his hand.

"I admire a woman that stands up for her convictions," he said. "If you want the children baptized you send for whoever you wish to do it, I'll not hinder you. If you pull them through and let them be around me for the short time I have to live, you'll be the best friend we have, and your wish shall go every time."

"Thank you, Mr. Stanton. I knew I would not be disappointed in you. I'll do so to-day. And now I'll prescribe a little for you. You don't look as if you slept last night. Let me look at your medicine." And as the man, after looking at the three children who seemed quiet and peaceful turned down stairs, the nurse followed. She straightened the bed, shook up the pillows, ordered him to lie down from her own astetohel gave him a stimulant and a sedative, drew the blinds and commanded him to sleep till she called him. Then closing the door gently she went up stairs.

The mother was weeping quietly.

"Oh nurse, you have been sent from heaven! How easily you got that promise from my husband!"

"Your husband is all right. Perhaps you have been too pliant, too easily subdued."

"Perhaps I was. I must do better," said Mrs. Stanton. "How can I ever thank you?"

"Don't thank me," said the nurse, "but if you feel rested, put on your hat and go to the 6:30 Mass this beautiful morning and afterwards tell the priest what has happened, and ask him to come this morning and baptize the children, and pray with all your soul before the altar that God may give you strength to return to your duty."

"You talk like the nuns who instructed me at school," said Mrs. Stanton.

"I'll go."

"I have just graduated from the 'Nun's Training School for Nurses,' said Laura, "and I am trying to do what they taught me—save both soul and body."

The mother departed and nurse Laura watched her charge. The man slept soundly down stairs, while the children fretted from time to time. When the wife returned refreshed by her walk and the good night's sleep, she told the nurse the priest would be there that morning. After breakfast Mr. Stanton was so much better from the effects of his restful sleep and the bright cheerful influence of the nurse, the improvement in the children and the general sunshine of encouragement that was diffused over the little cottage that he forgot to be ungracious to the priest who came as he promised, and even invited him to sit down and talk to him.

The children were baptized and Nurse Laura breathed freely, for they were by no means out of danger, but the "miracles" had begun. When the Doctor arrived laden with messages from Bob and a basket of fruit and other dainties it was a different household he met the first day!

"Why, the miracles have started, sure enough!" said he as he noted the improvement in each little patient.

"This baby isn't going to die after all. They are all on their way out of the woods. Miss Laura you are a wonder-worker. But mind you're to take a rest now. Mrs. Stanton will look to things for a while. I'll be back to-morrow," and so he left muttering to himself: "God will never be outdone in generosity, sure enough."

The days passed on wearily days, with many a hope and fear storming. Every day, however, the Doctor, the nurse and the happy mother felt that the improvement was increasing. In two weeks the children were sitting up. But now their father was visibly failing. He would sit in the children's room for hours watching Nurse Laura minister to them. He recalled to his wife and when she told him she had returned to the Churoh, had been to confession and Holy Communion, he only kissed her and said "she should never have left her religion."

Nurse Laura like a good angel, however, hovered round the family, keeping up an atmosphere of sunshine and hope. One by one the children were led down stairs to their father's room, and once down stairs their convalescence progressed until their merry laughter in the little garden of the cottage made the mother and father glad. But Mr. Stanton grew weaker each day. Nurse Laura had gone back to the hotel under Bob's protection, but came frequently and cheered the patient. One morning they were alone and the Nurse said: "Mr. Stanton, you are not getting better. You have seen what the Catholic Church has done for your wife and children, why do you hesitate to look into her claims? You would certainly join us."

"I don't need to look into her claims" was the surprising answer. "I have watched you, nurse, and I have read a bit, and I have only waited for you to ask me if I wanted to be a Catholic, for I do."

The nurse took his thin white hand feebly.

"That's God, Mr. Stanton. I have prayed for this ever since the children were baptized. May I send for that good priest once more?"

"Any time you wish," was the reply.

And when the nurse with joy told Mrs. Stanton, who had suspected this was coming, and was full of gratitude to

the devoted girl who had brought this happiness to her home.

The priest came. Mr. Stanton was instructed and baptized, and as the days passed by made his First Communion. Still the nurse tarried, for her practiced eye saw that he was not long for earth.

One evening about the Angelus-hour Mrs. Stanton was sitting by his bed when the dread messenger came.

Quietly she called the wife and children and telephoned for the priest. He came, and as the night shadows fell the agony ceased and the purified spirit of Mr. Stanton, with the words of the last Benediction still on his ear passed without a struggle to the Lord who had created him.

Nurse Laura closed his eyes, comforted his wife, soothed the children, and when she knelt in the little chapel at the funeral Mass, she could not help looking back in wonder on the month just passed, and she thanked God for the blessings that came and the reward that followed the taking of her "First Case."

She still lives, reader, a noble and graceful woman. Blessings have followed her everywhere. A happy marriage, a beautiful home, and lovely children, and most of all, a deep consciousness that "God will never be outdone in generosity."

CHARLES DICKENS—1812-1912

One great service Charles Dickens has done the general public is to make the early English novelists superficial, Smollett, Fielding and Sterne he read at an age too young for them to do him harm, and the English-speaking world has followed his example. Dickens was popular during his lifetime in a sense now obsolete. We speak of popular writers to-day, but it is in quite another meaning. We read their works as a relief from reality; but we long for the end. With Dickens' books, we wish they would go forever.

As Mr. Gissing has pointed out, most of the readers of to-day think and speak of Dickens from their boyish memories. This, he says, is an obvious source of much injustice. Let them read him again, and, despite bad plots, exaggeration of horrors, violations of taste, an occasional narrowness and religious bias—remember Dickens was self-made man—a forcing of the pathetic note, despite all these—one will discover in him a keenness of observation, a wealth of humor, or richness of creation, a power of vivid characterization, a sprightliness of narrative which, in the opinion of many of the latest critics, place him as the greatest novelist of the nineteenth century.

FRANCIS J. FINN, S. J.

So numerous have become the schemes for social reform, and so frequent are they urged by men who apparently ought to be better informed, that even Catholics are at times at "the parting of the ways"—in a mental sense where it is exceedingly difficult for them to step with certainty to the right or to the left. In order to avoid the dangers of modern schemes for the improvement of the world, the uplift of the capitalist and the laborer, the uprooting of vice and the permanent establishment of its opposite—virtue, the person to-day must needs have some sound rule by which to measure what he meets.

In this matter the Catholic has an authority that he can wholeheartedly trust and confide in, but when one is constantly confronted with new views, mistaken messages, and so on, one's trust is often weakened—the result is uncertainty.

Many there are who attempt or who would like to attempt the solution by man's hand, by various methods. These same persons seem to have given a great deal of study and contemplation to the hatching of their plans, but in general all these solutions and their proposers disregard one thing. In the outlining of all the "isms" for the improvement of man's condition there is always one thing lacking, and the absence of that one ingredient makes them absolutely worthless. The ingredient which is missing is the teaching of the Saviour, and any scheme that proposes to ameliorate our present state of life without a grateful and goodly leave of "the teaching of the Saviour" to give it substance—is naught but a husk, and but poor fare for starting man to feed upon.

Herein is the weakness of the modern "isms" which, through their garish promises win over those who have fared ill in the conflict of the day. Why do these fraileid philosophers not turn to the words of the God-man? Where can they find more certainly delineated the evils of the world, whose cure they find clearly outlined the true solution of these evils, where can they find total destruction more plainly predicted for those who refuse to put into practice these solutions? And yet, although this truth cannot readily be denied, why do so many of those who seem to have the welfare of mankind at heart, pay little attention to the teachings of Christ? There are many reasons. One is that so many of our overeducated problem-solvers have rejected Christ as a divine teacher, and look upon Him as a Man—and as nothing more. They have with their keen intellects argued away evidence that would be overpowering in a court of law, and after the destruction of this evidence they coolly assert: "Christ was a very perfect Man—but He was not God." The thought is horrible, but the reality of such a thing is even more terrifying. The most reasonable question that suggests itself is: How could these people ever solve the problem of humanity, when they can set aside testimony to the fact of Christ's divinity? So, through their rejection of Christ, these same people injure their case when they present it before the man who thinks.

But here the difficulty arises. Those who do not think for themselves, and with the proper guidance are taken in by these "isms" in the form of socialism or of any other like error. What are they to do? They are to turn to the doctrine of Christ. But where is the doctrine of Christ? In the repository of the Catholic Church into whose keeping Christ gave it personally with the charge that she conserve it down the ages, and promise that she should never lack strength to so care for it. The Catholic Church has this doctrine, and in her doctrine is to be found—and there alone found—the solution of modern difficulties. To the Catholic this is a great source of joy and satisfaction, and he is so happy in the enjoyment of his security that he wishes the

same temporal blessing for others who are not of his fold.

Let us apply this wonderful doctrine to several deep and noisome sores of modern society, and see if it does not purge the corruption. Socialism offers a solution of the disparity between the rich and the poor by promising to place all on the same level in amount of physical goods. This is a cunningly planned materialistic scheme to exaggerate in the minds of those who have little, the value of possessing a competency or a surplus. It directs man to his body and makes, at least in concept, "a heaven of earth." This is shortly what socialism is. How does the Catholic Church stand on this point? She tells her children with the voice and identical words of Christ that the kingdom for which He wrought is "not of this world, that even the lowest mentally may in eternity pass those who are above him in natural endowments, that this earth will never be a heaven and it is but a delusion of man's to try to make it so, that if "we bear wrong patiently," and "forgive injuries," we will be preparing a higher place for ourselves in that kingdom. With these thoughts to guide him, the Catholic is inclined to look upon the evils of this world not as venial but as opportunities to be turned to advantage for a higher world to come. That this is not a quixotic utopian or foolish wish of the difficulty is shown by the millions who have attained success, some even in temporal life, through their practice of it.

On such questions as divorce the Catholic Church also speaks with a voice that, were it listened to would cure with pleasing speed a gaping wound and a filthy wound in modern society. Her solution of the marriage question is the true and only solution and is so acknowledged by those who argue against it. Its very success is so compelling that it must strike the very brain and consciousness of everyone—save possibly those whose consciousness has been rendered impenetrable by a defect of nature. Even the sensual man in all his lowness must, I am sure, admit with-out reasoning it out, so strikingly true it is, that on this matter the Catholic Church proposes the only sensible doctrine.

And so I could go on and on and on to the doctrine of the Church to modern errors and in each instance will be seen such a surprising corrective influence that none but a Divine Originator could have conceived it. But if we say, "forget the body, or if it must be before your mind, use it as a means to a higher place in the land of promise." Man's very nature tells him that these words, these doctrines fit and fit perfectly, but he is, at times, inclined to hearken to other voices that charm for the moment. Our lower nature is constantly intruding itself upon our attention in oftentimes the most disagreeable manner, and when the lower nature has the upper hand—it is then that we turn to the false solution.

A final word would, then, seem to be somewhat in this order: Let us keep our vision clear, let us repeatedly clarify it at the fact of our Creator, and let us be guided by that same Saviour, and the closer to Him we are, the more clearly we see Him, just that much quicker will our solution be at hand.—Francis Mohler, M. A., in Catholic Columbian.

WALKING DOWN THE WRONG ROAD

So numerous have become the schemes for social reform, and so frequent are they urged by men who apparently ought to be better informed, that even Catholics are at times at "the parting of the ways"—in a mental sense where it is exceedingly difficult for them to step with certainty to the right or to the left. In order to avoid the dangers of modern schemes for the improvement of the world, the uplift of the capitalist and the laborer, the uprooting of vice and the permanent establishment of its opposite—virtue, the person to-day must needs have some sound rule by which to measure what he meets.

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ABOUT THE MEDAL-SCAPULAR

A correspondent of the Irish Ecclesiastical Record asks a number of pertinent questions concerning the medal-scapular, and the Rev. Thomas O'Doherty, of Maynooth College, answers these questions in a recent issue of the Record.

Rev. Dear Sir: Will you kindly answer the questions regarding medal-scapulars. They are no speculative doubts, but have arisen from actual experience.

1. Must the medal-scapular be blessed for one particular person, or may it be blessed for any one who has been properly invested with the scapular?

2. When a priest blesses medal-scapulars publicly in the church, may any person hold several in his hands for the blessing with the intention of giving them to persons already invested, and must he have these persons in mind at the time of blessing?

3. May a person have a dozen or more of medal-scapulars blessed for himself, and use them indiscriminately, so that in changing his clothes he may always be sure to have one about his person?

4. May a person wear a medal-scapular in the day time and the scapular at night, or vice versa?

5. May a person change at any time from wearing the medal to the scapular or vice versa?

6. May a person wear a medal-scapular blessed for somebody else, or is the blessing personal?

These queries are very pertinent and practical. Our opinion on the points involved will be based on the motive which prompted the issue of the Decree on the terms of the Decree itself, and on such commentaries on it as we have been able to consult.

It is the express wish of the Holy Father that scapulars should still continue to be worn in the same way as formerly. In honor, and in conformity with a request frequently conveyed to him, he grants the "privilege" of wearing a medal-scapular instead. Now, it seems reasonable to suppose that a person may or may not avail of this privilege just as he pleases. When and as often as he wears the scapular itself he is setting more conformity with the desire of the Holy Father; but he "may" use the medal-scapular if at anytime he

finds it more convenient. The answer, therefore, to two of our correspondent's queries (4 and 5) is satisfactorily evident. A person may wear a scapular during the day time and a medal scapular at night, or vice versa. He may also change at libitum from wearing the medal to the scapular, or the reverse.

As a guide to the solution of the other questions raised, it will be useful to set forth the following points in the Decree regarding the blessing of the medal. 1. The priest who blesses the medal must have the power to enroll in the scapular, or scapulars the wearing of which it is intended to replace. 2. The person who wishes to use it must have been actually enrolled at the time the medal was blessed. These are the only restrictions imposed by the Decree. Father Hilgers, whose opinion from his position as Consultant on Indulgences is of the highest value, distinctly lays down that the medal need not be blessed in the presence of the person who is to wear it. All that seems to be necessary, therefore, in order to gain the indulgences, is that a person wear a medal which de facto has been blessed under the conditions stated. It may be observed, however, that it would be a dangerous practice to bless a number of medals to be afterwards distributed even to persons who were enrolled at the time of the blessing. For a mistake might easily be made either about the time of the blessing or the time of the enrolment, and so people would be exposed to the danger of losing their indulgences.

All that is necessary to attend to, in our opinion, is the purpose for which, and not the purpose for whom, the medal-scapular is intended; and this will serve as a sufficient answer to the first and sixth questions proposed. It is only necessary to insist again on the danger involved in the practice which these questions suggest. The danger, as is manifest, is all the greater if the medal is intended to be worn as a substitute for several scapulars. Hence, in practice, it would be safer for each one to have his own medal blessed for himself. Save for this reason, there seems to be no reason why a person should not hold several scapulars in his hand, as suggested by the second question, while the priest is imparting the blessing or blessings, even though the persons for whom they are intended are not distinctly, or at all, before the mind of the holder. This is especially true when the medals are blessed for one particular person. But if several medals were imparted some of the individuals might continue, through ignorance, to wear the medal as a substitute for a scapular in which they were invested afterwards, and so lose the indulgences. Finally, in reply to the third query, we see no reason why a person might not wear several medals, or several scapulars, in the way indicated. Provided he wears a medal validly blessed, he gains the indulgence.

THOMAS O'DOHERTY.

A CARDINAL AND A HOTEL MAN

A long while ago, when Cardinal Cullen lived, there was a sick call for a priest in Dublin. The sick person was a Protestant. A stormy, wet, dark night it proved.

As soon as the messenger got there a priest started. Through mud and slush he made his way, and at last arrived at the hotel, saw the sick person and gave him the sacraments. Everything went off as usual, but far, but not the curious part began. The proprietor of the hotel, thinking to do a little private proselytizing, invited the priest to come into his own sitting room. After administering some welcome refreshments, this Protestant evangelist let himself out. "To think, Father," said he, addressing the priest, "of the pride and sloth of these Bishops and Cardinals? It is not monstrous? I warrant now, that while the Cardinal has sent you on this long tramp through the muddy snow, he is comfortably toasting his heels and drinking a good warm punch." "I think you wrong him," "Why? " "Because he is doing nothing of the kind." "You tell me that. But how do you know?" "I know by the beat of reasons. You have never asked my name." "Your name. What is it?" "Cullen—Cardinal Cullen." In a moment the hotel-keeper was on his feet, hat off. "Will your Eminence forgive me? I spoke in ignorance. Shall I order a carriage for the Cardinal?" "Oh, no, I can go back as I came. I am used to such journeys." The Cardinal departed. A few days afterwards the hotelkeeper went to a priest for instructions, and was finally received into the Church. This incident is strictly true.—Catholic Columbian.

APOSTOLIC ZEAL OF SISTERS

Sister Marie of the Missions, one of the community in charge of the hospital at Kumbakonam, East India, relates the following story of the conversion of an old lady, to show that souls as well as bodies are healed at this charitable institution:

"This old lady lived with her family in a village situated on the bank of the Kaveri. After a violent quarrel with her daughter-in-law, she left her children's home and walked along the bank of the sacred river. There, she implored the goddess of Kaveri for help and called her to witness that henceforth she would have nothing to do with her own people and that she belonged irrevocably to her. Then, sitting the fanatic jumped into the river. She seemed lost forever, but Divine Providence was watching over her with an incomprehensible love. Tossed by the waves for quite a distance, she was cast upon the sand not far from a street where some charitable Christians lived. These good people restored her to life and after a few days, brought her to the priest to whom she told her story. It was rather difficult to persuade her to be taken to the hospital at Kumbakonam, but she finally consented, and was received, as you may imagine, with open arms.

"At first, silent and sad, our poor old lady, for she was about sixty year of age, finally became more friendly. Touched by the nuns' kindness, she opened her

heart to them and came of her own accord to the catechism instructions. Soon by the grace of God she became ashamed of her vulgar superstition, renounced her gods, and after a few weeks asked to be baptized. Her zeal

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heart to them and came of her own accord to the catechism instructions. Soon by the grace of God she became ashamed of her vulgar superstition, renounced her gods, and after a few weeks asked to be baptized. Her zeal