

## POVERTY.

"Nature, too partial, to thy lot assigns  
Health, freedom, innocence, and downy peace,  
Her real goods."

Fenton.

What says the Catholic Church to those who would free themselves from all material obstacles by voluntary poverty, like that of Jesus Christ?

Love is of such a nature that it is not at rest until it has established a kind of equality between the lovers. Can one love Jesus Christ and not desire to express in his life the life of Jesus?

Who can read the words that fell from the lips of the God-man, "*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head,*" and not be touched with sympathy and feel an impulse to be like Him.

What says the Catholic Church to this? Her reply is that of a true spouse of the poor and lowly Jesus: "My child, imitate that divine model, embrace holy poverty; become poor for His sake who was rich, and became poor for love of you; do as He did, depend on that Providence that clothes the lilies of the valley, and feeds the birds of the air; you have my approbation, the confirmation of my authority, and the protection of my love and affection." Such is the language of the true spouse of Christ. Hence there have been at all times, in her bosom, some of the Faithful who have practised the most sublime and heroic poverty, this being one of the three vows of all *religious*, both men and women. A type of these was St. Francis of Assisi, who, after hearing the priest read the Gospel, "*Go sell whatsoever thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow me;*" immediately gave away all the money he had, whereupon his father being displeased with him, brought him to the Bishop's palace, and St. Francis in the presence of the Bishop, stripped himself of his dress, and gave that also to his father, and the Bishop having thrown a garment about him, he exclaimed in ecstasy of joy: "Listen and understand: until now I have called Peter Bernardone my father; henceforth, I can say boldly, Our Father, who art in Heaven, in whom I have placed my treasure my hope, and my faith. So enraptured was he with poverty, that he never ventured to mention it, except by the title of "holy" poverty, or his "Lady"

his "noble" or his "dearest Lady." He always wore a coarse peasant's garb, lived upon common fare, and would accept nothing for his own. In a short period he had a multitude of disciples, and in a chapter, called ten years after the order was established, there were present more than five thousand who had embraced St. Francis' holy rule of poverty.

And later, St. Cajetan established an order of religious men who literally trusted in divine Providence like the birds of the air; for not only were they forbidden to hold any property, either in private or in common, like the Franciscans, but they were not even allowed to beg, and had to depend entirely upon the voluntary contributions of the faithful; neither were they allowed to keep, in their convent, provisions for the next day. Thus have these men followed Jesus in Poverty, and thus thousands of religious men and women still persevere in following Him and will do so to the end of time.

In spite of all this, there are men who profess to be true followers of Jesus, the preachers of that Gospel which teaches poverty, who would have us believe that the practice of this virtue, as Jesus practiced it, is absurd, visionary, impossible. What does this prove? It proves either that Jesus Christ was a fanatic and visionary, or that they are false teachers of the Gospel, blind leaders of the blind. What does it prove? It proves that when movements are made among them to realize this sublime virtue, in spite of their influence and their opposition, men will soon see that "Popery," after all is Christianity, that they have been grossly imposed upon, and be led to say:

"And now within thy calm and holy grove  
I fain would hasten on the road of Heaven;  
Guide me to the haunts of lonely penury,  
That I may cast aside my worldly wealth,  
And gird my loins for holier hope."

Baptistry.

## CHASTITY.

What says the Catholic Church to the most sublime and angelic virtue of chastity?

Her answer is clear and implicate: "Virginity is the queen of all virtues, and most pleasing to Him who lived and died a virgin—Jesus Christ."

"O that the young soul took  
Its virgin passion from the glorious face  
Of fair religion, and addressed its strife  
To win the riches of eternal life."

Hood.