

## NOVEMBER THOUGHTS.

## THE LIFE BEYOND THE TOMB.

Sin and Suffering Associated in Time and Eternity.

Strange it is how little we try to realize the continued life which our friends are living beyond the tomb. It would seem as if we had only a sort of half belief in the unbroken current of that vigorous life which was born of God, passed through an earthly phase and sank again into the mystic womb of eternity. That every intelligent being lives on forever, and retains all the essential faculties of its nature unimpaired by the change of death is a dogma of our Holy Faith which can be questioned as little as the existence of God Himself. Yet, we find it hard to think that the countless millions who have come and gone since Abel closed his eyes outside the gates of Eden, are now living a life as real as the human beings around us. It concerns us much to know what are the joys or sorrows which they, who were once as we, do now experience. They lived their little day and passed, as we shall pass, to meet the awful Judge who weighs the merits and demerits of human life—to Him "who considers the ways of men."

In whatever state the cold grasp of Death may have seized those mortal men, in that same condition shall they continue forever. Their last chance of moral change has gone, their final favor from on high is given, the supreme term of earthly probation shall they ever know. For thousands, perhaps, the mortal span was brief; but it was none the less a test of love and righteousness. To all alike, whether young or old in years, justice has been done, help sufficient to reach the Life of Glory has been given, and if they failed, to themselves alone must be attributed the fault. Never will the Creator condemn to final and unending misery the creature who has died looking earnestly for the love and light of mercy. But the reign of mercy ends at death, and where, all through life, the Father's face was seen, there now appear but the rigid lineaments of the stern, exacting Judge. What, then, has been the fate of the thronging millions who have entered

## THE UNSEEN LAND

of judgment divine? Thousands who have gone the broad way that leads down to death, caring little for divine commands and with their last breath contemning God's appeal, are now, beyond a doubt, suffering the awful pain of final separation from the God who made them for Himself, and moreover, endure the fearful torments which the deeds done in the body so justly deserved. They are, therefore, plunged in that outer darkness where God's beautiful face is not, and where the smoke of their torments ascends forever. This dogma of eternal hell is so repugnant to our senses and so repellant to our reason that only God's revealed word, as interpreted by His infallible Church, could force us to believe it. But since He has spoken we must be silent, and adore with trembling reverence the ineffable sanctity of Him who thus safeguards the sanction of His holy will. The least doubt about this awful dogma is for us Catholics beyond the pale of possibility.

But what of those who having erred and sought for pardon did not succeed in fully satisfying the demands of justice, which to every sin committed has appointed expiation?

They may not enter Heaven since they still are laden with the debt of satisfaction unaccomplished; for to every sin forgiven is attached a penalty of reparation. Where then shall they go but to a place of expiation where rigorous compensation shall be made for majesty offended. God's eternal justice can allow not the smallest sin to go unpunished; His great mercy has forgiven the fault repented, but His equally great attribute of justice will not permit Him to forget the injury. If, indeed, it could be otherwise our concept of right and justice would be destroyed and, having no sanction for divine law, we should soon learn to despise the Lawgiver. Reason, then, demands

## A PLACE OF EXPIATION

in an after life, and so strong is its assurance that in default of such purgation, it will take the dread alternative of rejecting a Supreme Being. There is no escape from this conclusion.

The Catholic doctrine of Purgatory no less satisfies the heart than it consoles

the heart. If, as Protestantism so illogically asserts, after death there be only heaven or hell, how shall we dare to hope for the safety of our dear ones gone before, while still burdened with unexpiated sins; and who shall say that, when the just man falls seven times, all have been free from faults? This cold and despairing doctrine which was born of that atheistic movement misnamed the Reformation, paralyzes the hopes and aspirations of every human heart that mourns the dead. It is, in its last analysis, a contemptuous denial of the divine attribute of justice, and hence the destruction of the very concept of an All Just.

Head and heart, then, proclaim a purgatory beyond the tomb, and the Church solemnly defines its existence. There in that prison drear lie myriads of our race and kind. Unspeakable are the torments which they feel while withheld from the God they so much desire. This dreadful harrowing of the soul, this most intimate and exquisite torture of a conscious being longing and thirsting after God with all the impetuous strength of a fettered spirit—this it is which constitutes the essential and most potent pain of purgatory, as it does likewise cause the endless torment of the damned. This is, doubtless, the reason which led to many theologians to say that the pains of purgatory differed from those of hell only in their limited duration. Now, this "pain of loss," as it is technically called, is common to every soul that is detained in this mysterious House of Expiation; and hence there seems no room for any really slight suffering where the writhing

## PAIN OF SEPARATION

is felt by all. Besides this pain of loss, the captive soul suffers, too, another torment such as we have spoken of in reference to the damned. What may be the peculiar nature of this element or force that is the instrument of suffering we know not. The Church is silent; but it is only fair to say that, we to judge of her mind from the constant and universal feeling of her children, we should unhesitatingly say that this element was a real material fire. This, however, is not an article of faith, although we fancy it would be rash to suppose another element where the overwhelming sense of the faithful, abetted by the ablest theologians, suppose it to be fire, differing but little from that of hell. Surely, it is enough to know that these poor captive creatures, however dear and closely united as they surely are to God, suffer agonies untold.

It may be asked what is the duration of purgatory? We only know that it will end at the final consummation of all things—whenever that may be. Only God can know what it is for each individual soul. Whether for years or for ages it is impossible to say with certainty, and, hence, though we may escape the fire of hell, we have good reason to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that "it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

It may be well just here to prevent a misconception in regard not only to purgatory but to every other purifying process which God ordains for his creatures. It is often asserted, and perhaps commonly believed, that God loves to torture the damned and to punish evil-doers; that He takes delight in seeing the wicked suffer, etc. Now, let it be remembered that God is a pure spirit subject to no form of passion, and, hence, anger, envy, jealousy or revenge find no place in the calm, unruffled flow of His wondrous, unspeakable Life. If He can be named or described in any way by tongue of man, the disciple "whom Jesus loved" will do it when he with characteristic simplicity and sublimity says: God is love.

## A UNIVERSAL LAW.

Hell and purgatory are as much a law as the existence of good and evil, of light and darkness, of cure and disease, of sin and sorrow. They are necessary parts of the plan of a rebellious world, and since we know scarcely anything of the smallest part of that divine plan, how shall we dare to find fault with the whole, and in our silly, stumbling pride and foolish arrogance suggest that the Great Creator might have done better had he but consulted his finite creature, man.

The best proof of the Creator's love for all is the Cross of Calvary. That saving Tree was planted there to shield us all from eternal fire and to give us every chance of escaping even the pains

of purgatory. No one looking upon Him whom they crucified can dare to doubt the sincerity of the divine universal will to save every child of Adam from sin and sorrow eternal. God's revealed love and mercy lead us, nay, compel us, to believe that could the lost souls in hell but utter even now one repentant cry, their pardon were issued. But with desperate, deliberate malice they have forever cast off the Creator's love, and with their own hands have set the final flow of the awful current of their eternal misery.

Finally, is there not this sublime proof and consolation untold that we who still survive may shorten the pains and tribulations of those who lie captive in the land of lonely exile? This means of consoling, comforting and relieving the dead shall be the subject of another paper on the Suffering Souls.—ROSARIUS, in the Providence Visitor.

## The Monument National.

Mr. David, City Clerk, and President of the St. Jean Baptiste Society, is actively engaged in raising funds for the payment of the debt on the Monument National, which is said to be a heavy one. Last week he attended a dramatic soiree at the Ecole Olier, on Roy street, when the Cercle Louis XIV gave a performance. Messrs. McGoun, Charles Labelle and Edouard Lebel took part. Mr. David was presented with a congratulatory address, to which he replied. Next morning he received a letter from Mr. G. N. Ducharme, of Ste. Cunegonde, stating that he and four of his friends subscribed \$1000 to the fund.

## St. Patrick's T.A.B. Society.

The regular monthly meeting of the above society was held Sunday afternoon. The Rev. J. A. McCallen, S.S., opened the meeting by a short sermon on temperance and afterwards gave the pledge of total abstinence to twelve persons. Hon. Senator Murphy presided at the business meeting. Several new members were admitted. Considerable routine business was transacted and final arrangements were made for the concert in honor of the anniversary of Father Mathew which will take place on Tuesday, the 21st, in St. Patrick's hall, St. Alexander street. The programme for the occasion was submitted and approved, and consists of vocal and instrumental music and an address by Mr. E. J. Duggan, advocate. The annual religious festival of the Society will be held on the first Sunday of Advent. The members of the Society will attend Holy Communion in a body in the morning and there will be a grand religious service at St. Patrick's in the evening. The sister Societies will attend in a body.

## St. Bridget's en Fete.

The St. Vincent de Paul conference at St. Bridget's church Sunday evening celebrated the 25th anniversary of its foundation by a solemn service at the church. His Grace Archbishop Fabre officiated at the benediction of the Holy Sacrament, with Rev. F. Lefebvre, O.M.I., as deacon, and Rev. Abbe Adam, as sub-deacon. Among the other members of the clergy present were Rev. F. F. H. Perrault, O.M.I., E. Rottot, S.J., E. Schmidt, S.J., G. Douth, M. Proulx, P. O'Donnell, P. Shea and W. J. Caisley. The church was splendidly decorated. The sermon was delivered by Abbe Auclair, of St. Bridget's church. An address was presented by the officers of the conference to Mgr. Fabre, to which His Grace replied very briefly. The Independent Salaberry Guard acted as the guard of honor, and the choir rendered the salute to the Holy Host. Among the laymen present were Ald. Jeannotte, M.P., ex-Ald. Martineau, M.L.A., Ald. Dagenais and the officers of sister societies. Since its foundation St. Bridget's conference has distributed over thirteen thousand dollars among the poor of the parish.

## BURDOCK BLOOD BITTERS.

Burdock Blood Bitters is a medicine made from roots, bark and herbs, and is the best known remedy for dyspepsia, constipation and biliousness, and will cure all blood diseases from a common pimple to the worst scrofulous sore.

The Pope has commissioned a theologian to make special study establishing the exclusive right of the Vatican to name the Patriarch of Venice—a right which is contested by the Italian crown.

## ROMAN NEWS.

[From the London Universe.]

An entire parish in Galicia is said to have passed over to the Latin rite lately. This makes the fourth within a short period.

The Grand Duke of Baden has conferred the insignia and diploma of Commander of the Lion of Zahringen on Mgr. Tripepi, Prefect of the Archives of the Holy See.

The former "infant Mortara," now better known as Canon Mortara of the Regular Canons of St. John of Lateran, is at present at Vienna as visitor of the Order to which he belongs.

Mgr. Stogagnini, Domestic Prelate to the Pope, is dead near Verona after thirty days' illness. The deceased, who was a Canon of the local cathedral and Prefect of Studies in the local Seminary, was in his sixty-third year. R.I.P.

Mgr. the Prince Abbe Ferdinand de Croy celebrated his first Mass in the Church of Rœulx in Belgium on last Sunday. The priest had fulfilled a term of military service in Germany before he pursued his ecclesiastical studies at the College of Rome.

Mgr. di Calabiana, Archbishop of Milan, is dead. The deceased prelate was born in Saviliano in the archdiocese of Turin in 1808, appointed to the see of Casale in 1847, and promoted in 1867. He was an Italian senator and wore the collar of the Annunziata. R.I.P.

The exhibition of Rome, to be held in the year 1895, has, says the Tablet's correspondent, all gone to smoke. The president of the committee, and, in fact, the great promoter of it, Signor Baccelli, has suddenly declared, to the great astonishment of everybody, that he washes his hands of the whole affair. As an excuse he says that he is disgusted at the government for refusing any support, and consequently has gone over to the opposition, and intends to combat the government tooth and nail. Others say that he has been alarmed at the deficit shown by the World's Fair at Chicago, and so has thought it more prudent to withdraw. Great anger is felt by all the shopkeepers and by the different private persons who subscribed the sum of over one million of francs for the exhibition, and demand their money back. Whether they will get it remains to be seen.

## Irregularity.

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