

SEPTEMBER 21, 1904

AWAITING THE POSTMAN'S KNOCK.

An Idyll in Clerical Life.

It was Monday morning. On the Saturday previous a letter—a begging letter, of course—in his most fascinating manner appeared in the Catholic newspaper. He was on the tip toe of expectation, for it was the postman's knock. Presently the bell rang. "Ah! here they come," smiled he, for there was a school of money orders in his expectant mind, and his smile accordingly was in the plural. "Please, at the door Bridget entered. "See you, Father, a gentleman wants to see you. "Ah! was the musty reply, "not the postman, but evidently somebody quite as good." Then suddenly, and with an effort to look unconcerned, "Show him into the waiting-room, and I'll be down directly."

After a diplomatic wait of a few seconds his reverence stepped down to the waiting-room. "Good morning, reverend Father; glad to make your acquaintance," was the free and easy greeting of the stranger in the blandest manner possible. He was baggy at the knees and limp in the shirt front. Indeed, he looked quite the shady side of respectable. "Not the likeliest person for a five-pound note," thought Father Joseph (Joseph was the name he had taken in confirmation, though few knew it). But being a man with strong faith in his own begging letter, he added: "But these moneyed people are sometimes so odd, you know." So he returned the stranger's greeting quite cordially.

"Very fine weather we're having," said the stranger. "Yes, indeed," said the priest. "Large parish?" asked the stranger. "Very large," said the priest. "You don't work it all yourself?" said the stranger. "Not quite," modestly replied the priest. "Very hard work all the same?" opined the stranger. Father Joseph began to grow restive and looked at his watch. "Excellent schools, too, I understand," pursued the stranger. "Ah! now he is coming to business," thought the priest, whose mind was fixed upon the school children's excursion, about which the begging letter was concerned. So he replied in his most engaging way: "Exceedingly excellent, I assure you."

"Very glad indeed to hear it," replied the stranger. There now ensued a hiatus, and Father Joseph's heart was throbbing violently. He felt so embarrassed by the pause that he began opening his watch to look at the works when the stranger said: "Well, Father, I often see your name in the papers, and being a paper man myself—a paperhanger, to wit—and out of work, and a bill hard up, I thought that, prompted by a fellow-feeling, you know—"

Bridget cannot be got to tell what happened at this point. All that is known for certain is that Father Joseph was in his chair again a few minutes afterwards awaiting the postman's knock. ENTER MRS. JONES—AND OTHERS. After an hour Bridget entered again. "Mrs. Jones wants to see you, Father."

He had not heard of Mrs. Jones in his own parish, so she must be somebody. He saw her, and she hoped he was quite well. He thanked her. She saw his appeal, she said (his heart thumped), and she meant to help him (his heart thumped louder); indeed, a nice appeal she never read (his heart nearly choked him). Her annuity was due next month (he begins to get his breath again), when she would be sure to call upon him again (the beats grow calmer). In the meantime could he let her have a trifle—say £5—as she had not fetched her purse and was due at Father Robinson's bazaar at 2 (his breath is again normal).

Father Joseph offered to give her a letter explaining her embarrassing position to Father Robinson, but when you ask him if he gave the £5 he looks enigmatical. Anyhow, he was in his chair again very soon after with his ear upon the knocker. Before the postman actually came Father Joseph got through a sample of his ordinary daily experience. Several tramps, some of them decent-looking hungry men, called for the price of a dinner or night's lodging. Hennessy came to say his wife was making a holy show of herself (his making is Hennessy's own), and for language is Hennessy's own, and for the children's sake would the priest come down and pacify her. Mrs. Delaney, with her compliments, and the parish priest, who she knew had a "sail of influence," recommended her a couple of daunt young men for lodgers. Madame de Stingue wanted a nice, steady girl for a servant, and thought C— was a likely place to find one. Jim Smith was smashing the furniture, and his young wife—pretty Mary O'Shea that was a short year ago—was in tears waiting for such consolation as Father Joseph could afford her. She was paying the penalty now, poor girl, of having married against his advice and the wishes of her parents; but her over-trustfulness in her worthless lover had been her only sin, if sin it was, and she was none the less to be pitied now for having deserved a better fate. Then the Doyle girls—lately over-good looking, large, innocent, plump, intelligent and awkward, would like nice situations, and would Father Joseph, whom they read so much about in the papers, tell them where to find them.

A wise and high principled person avoids if possible the office of confidant to husband and wife, to kindred or friends of long standing during the time of their slight estrangement.

NOW THE POSTMAN!

Rat-tat-tat. "Ah, there he is at last." And sure enough it was. In came Bridget with an armful. Father Joseph strove to compose himself. He conquered so far as the external went, but as to the internal he failed absolutely. All ashake within, he proceeded with apparent coolness to open the great haul. The first letter did not enhance his joyous expectancy. It was from Kandell, Wicks & Co., intimating that they would like a settlement of their account at his earliest convenience. The next intimated that tomorrow with samples of their delicacies. Sharp & Cote enclosed their price list. Better, Skill & Co., in a long communication, made many and sundry hits at Kandell & Wicks, with the object of enticing to themselves Father Joseph's custom. The remaining letters were of a suit with these. Father Joseph had a quick temper, but he conquered it on critical occasions. This was a critical occasion. "Of course," he soliloquized in Mark Tapley fashion, "this is always the creditor's post. The donor's post is always later." So he arose and went out among his people for a few hours. It diverted his mind from that iniquitous postman, and did him good.

HIS CONSOLATION.

When he returned the faithful Bridget announced that Mrs. Murray was waiting for him. The very name was a joy to him. Mrs. Murray had been his best friend during his seven years' struggle as parish priest. And yet she was but a poor woman, dependent upon the weekly earnings of the husband who loved her as his own soul, and was worthy of all the love she could return him. Nor was it the silver shilling always in the heel of her fist (as she herself would say) for the priest that captivated Father Joseph. It was, rather, the cheerful, sunny, hearty and withal modest manner in which she smuggled it into his. How she managed to be always so happy was a puzzle to Father Joseph, because she had a household of little ones, and her husband was none of the strongest. She looked a little scared now, however, and the reason was soon told. Her husband had taken to the bed four weeks ago, and she was a weak behind with the rent, "and you know, Father, you are the only one I have to come to."

There was a moistening in her eyes as she spoke, and Father Joseph's could moisten, too, at times, though few suspected it. It was his chance now, and greedily he took it. "There you are, my poor woman, and God bless you," was all he trusted himself to say as he thrust something into her hand. He left her abruptly, for his heart was full, but he knew she understood him. And when he had taken round a little later some few tickets for the excursion for Patsy and Billy and the mother he realized once again how much more blessed a thing it is to give than to receive. And, although no donations arrived by the donors' post, Father Joseph's meditation that night was on the consolation of the priest-hood—Rev. Andrew Dooley in the London Catholic Universe.

THOUGHTS ON THE SACRED HEART.

O Jesus, love of heaven and earth, detach me from myself, attach me to Thyself. I will bear the cross and the thorn, Thou dost sustain both me and the other.—Sibylla Holland.

Sorrows unknown to all but God are most precious to Him and are links binding us to the Heart of Jesus, thus uniting us closer to Him and giving us a power over His Heart which will enable us to enrich our brethren.

When sorrow, humiliation, and sadness weigh upon you, do not ask God to deliver you from them; it is a service that he cannot always render you, despite the pleading of His heart. Lovingly ask Him to come and share your suffering; that is the service of a friend which He will never refuse you; and your suffering, shared with Jesus, will indeed be light.—Golden Sands.

Make your life a continual act of love, reparation and admiration of the Sacred Heart. All our actions, affections and thoughts will be modeled on those of our Lord. Constant study of His heart makes us like Him. Our sufferings will be borne in a spirit of reparation. Our sorrows, as He tells His faithful servant, shall be cast into His wounded heart. Our deficiencies will be supplied by His merits, and all things we will be "clothed with the virtues of His Sacred Heart," and we shall draw from this "treasure house" whatever we need for our advancement in grace and happiness.

Love is most powerful. Love conquers all. The love of the Sacred Heart will melt the most obdurate heart, will convert the most hardened sinner, will bring confidence to the most despairing, will ease the misery of the suffering—in a word, will make one forget all the sorrows of this life and instill a new and better life into one. Why wait any longer for all this? At once, now, live henceforth in your love, and live henceforth with the Sacred Heart. It matters not how poor you are or with how many afflictions you are borne down—the Sacred Heart will be a most efficacious remedy for all.

MIRACLES AND THE TRUE CHURCH.

Some of our non-Catholic brethren are greatly distressed about the alleged miracles in the Catholic Church. They exclaim against the devout crowds, or, as they deem them, the credulous folk or bath in a fabled miraculous spring; they disclaim against the authorities of the Church for allowing such proceedings; they make "copy" out of instances where supposed cures seem to be failures, and explain away or deny the myriad instances where failure was not.

Moreover, the devotion to the saints troubles them greatly, and the Church Quarterly Review, (Anglican) comes to the same conclusion. The mention of some modern aspects of the Papacy, quotes Mr. E. C. Conybeare as giving very curious specimens of devotion to St. Joseph and St. Anthony of Padua, which, he says, are published in a periodical edited, according to its own statement, "by ecclesiastics with the authorization of their superiors," and which, this Quarterly says, has received papal approval. The instances given remind one of those which Cardinal Newman mentions in speaking of the native-born Italian Catholic's familiar treatment of holy things, so foreign to the English, and especially to the English Protestant, temperament. However, the Church Quarterly declares:

"These things are, we believe, as repellent to many Roman Catholics as they are to ourselves. But what is to be said about the authorities who allow and encourage such ideas? One of the claims constantly made for the papal system is that of the possession of authority. A contrast is always being pointed out by Roman Catholic controversialists, and sometimes by others, between the chaotic condition of the Church of England and the exercise of rule in the Church of Rome. If authority is not used to prevent evils such as those to which we have referred, we confess we do not know of what good it is."

In replying to an attack of this sort, we have always to bear in mind that we stand in a totally different position from our opponents. They do not even profess to have any power to work miracles; and while they say in the Creed that they give in the communion of saints, they give no practical proof of it by any plain trust in the holy prayers ceaselessly offered for us by saints men and women, whose prayers on this sinful earth they would have asked like any other tried and tempted Christians in this mortal life.

The power of working miracles is one of the signs of the true spouse of Christ, Who Himself said while on earth: "Amen, Amen I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do. Because I go to the Father, and whatsoever you shall ask Father, and whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (St. John xvi; 12, 13). This true Church gets on through every age, calmly claiming and constantly using this great gift of miraculous power. It is one of the signs whereby men know her; but little they know unless her fold what a component part it is of her ordinary life. Lourdes is a great place of healing, truly a city set on a hill that can not be hid; but Catholics are well aware of an ever present gift of healing, existing in our very midst; each parish has its own story of the cure this priest has wrought, the deed that priest has done, above and out of the usual order of physical healing or process, through the prayer and the power of faith. When the process of a saint's canonization is in progress, two well authenticated miracles wrought through his or her intercession must be proven. A cure has just been wrought on a nun of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis, and is being closely investigated, in the examination of the claims of the Venerable Mother Barat to the title of Saint. This may all sound like Greek to other people, but it is exact Catholic phrenology, and it serves to show how radically we differ.

A body of men who do not believe in miracles, or, if they wish to do so, can find no grand record of them ready to hand, can hardly be considered fair judges of the real Catholic Church where miracle and are a matter of frequent occurrence and of continuous record throughout all the ages. We insist therefore that there may be some instances, and even flagrant instances, of abuse among the zealous and not always perfect members of the Church that, nevertheless, as Christ promised, actually does such works as He did. We can quite as easily concede that people who do not believe in miracles, and do not claim them as a proof of the Christ's Church, will think it a very easy matter to find fault with our "authorities." But, when our people crowd round a relic in simple faith, is it then so impossible to recall the days when the common people heard Jesus gladly, and thronged and pressed about Him, as, later, they thronged about His great apostles? The work still goes on, and it will go on, and there is a divine authority in the Church which has its own ways of rebuilding and reforming, when necessary, but has too, a marked preference for the little ones, and the ignorant, and the publican, and the concerns with stern glance the Pharisee with his "Stand aside, for I am holier than thou." If the Church Quarterly Review would give as much time and study to the history of miracles in the true Church of Christ, from its inception to this day, as it gives to finding fault with the "authorities" of that

Church, it might discover one plain reason why we look with something akin to amusement, and closely allied to amazement, on the preposterous claim of others to the name of Catholic.—Sacred Heart Review.

THE NEW IMMORTALITY.

It would seem that there is to be no end to the freaks of theory. Though we had fancied that there was little of moment to startle us after President Jesse of the State University had promulgated his scheme of "undogmatic Christianity." Yet he has not held the pedestal long, for upon his enunciation of his ridiculous contradiction comes Dr. McConnell with "The Evolution of Immortality."

This is the name of the latest. It is an attempt to change the universal belief of the world, handed down through the ages, since the sixth day of creation, and to create the impression that he is wiser than all the sages that have preceded him, the doctor dashes into his theories with a boldness which he himself mistakes for certainty.

He asserts that the common view of immortality is wholly untenable. He has discovered that the soul is not a principle distinct from the body, but entirely which is the result of our own mental activity. By the doctor's road of reason it is not the free, spiritual and immortal principle which thinks, wills and acts. In fact, he does not define his idea of it but seems to be certain that this is it not.

According to the new theory the common herd of humanity has no claim to immortality. Distinctions are made by the doctor and only those can be aspirants for immortality who have evolved to a higher kind of spiritual life. In other words, at the creation God marked certain souls with some sort of a Calvinistic stamp which made them elect. That is He did not, as the world believes, create man after His own image and man, as to his soul, a pure spirit. No, for the doctor says that man is not immortal but only "immortalable." And, strangest fact of all, the doctor insists that his theory is in perfect harmony with Christianity! About as much so as President Jesse's "undogmatic Christianity" is in accord with common sense.—Church Progress.

"CONFUSION TO CONFUCIANS."

Under the above not inappropriate heading the New York Tribune of Tuesday last gives an interesting account of the nineteenth annual picnic of the various Chinese Sunday schools in that city. A prospective midsummer picnic, says the Tribune, brings Chinese into the Sunday schools in much the same fashion as the approach of Christmas attracts the small boy. Four denominations were represented on the picnic—Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist. The only friction on the whole trip resulted from this mixture of faith and creed.

"You are no Christian," declared one John, whose store clothes fitted as only the product of a Baxter street tailor could fit. "I am as much one as you are," insisted the other Chinese, who was conspicuous by the big red fan which he carried. "You have never been immersed," said John, who was a Baptist. "But I've been sprinkled, which is just as good," replied the Presbyterian adherent.

It took one of the missionary women to explain that both would be saved if they followed the straight and narrow path. On the homeward trip the salvation of a Methodist Chinese was doubted by a High Church group because he had not learned the Episcopal catechism. This difference in creed was also explained. In Chinatown on the night of the picnic many a Chinese youth had tears in his slant eyes because he had not joined a Sunday school.

THAT REMINDS ME—

Senator Depew was at a dinner the other night with President Hadley of Yale University. He was toast-master and he had been twitting Hadley, but he gave the latter a chance to get back at him when he related this incident: "We have been having some new stories added to the Grand Central Station. One day as I sat in my office a brick fell from the sky above, and crashing through the glass window, fell almost at my feet. I summoned the contractor and demanded what he intended to do to repair the window. I won't repeat what I said to him."

When President Hadley arose to speak there was a twinkle in his eye. He then proceeded to twit Senator Depew in this wise: "In thinking of something to say to you tonight I have tried to devise some new story to tell you, but it had all seemed hopeless until the toast-master came to my rescue. You told me to force a new story upon the Grand Central Station, you rebuked a workman because he let fly a brick at you."

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

The Want of all Comfort.

Hence one said at the time when grace was with him, in my abundance of joy, I shall never be moved. (Ps. xlix, 7.) But when grace was withdrawn, he immediately telleth us what he experienced in himself, Thou turned away thy face from me, and I became troubled.

Yet in the meantime he despaireth not, but more earnestly prayeth to the Lord, saying, To thee, O Lord, I will cry, and I will pray to my God. At length he receiveth the fruit of his prayer, and witnesseth that he was heard, saying, The Lord hath heard me, and hath had mercy on me: the Lord hath been my helper.

But in what manner? Thou hast turned, saith he, my mourning into joy for me, and thou hast encompassed me with gladness. If it has been thus with great saints, we that are weak and poor must not be discouraged if we are sometimes fervent, sometimes cold; because the Spirit cometh and goeth according to His own good pleasure.

Wherefore holy Job says, Thou visitest him early in the morning, and thou provest him suddenly. (Job, vii, 18.) Wherefore then can I hope or in what manner I put my trust, but in God's great mercy alone, and in the hope of heavenly grace?

"The Catholic Witness."

The Episcopal Recorder, an organ of the Reformed Episcopal Church, says: "The San Francisco Examiner tells of the establishment of a new Protestant Episcopal paper in that city, to be called The Catholic Witness. It is to be backed by the parish of St. Mary the Virgin, the rector of which, Rev. Stephen Innes, described to a reporter one aim of the new journal, as follows: "One of the main objects of the paper will be to counteract—to kill—Protestantism in the Episcopal Church. We believe the church is overrun with a particular form of Protestantism that is antagonistic to the old Catholic doctrine, and we want to root it out. We hold that the advancement of the future church depends on the suppression of this Protestantism."

"And yet persons who regard themselves as Protestant and evangelical are satisfied to remain in the communion of a denomination, many of whose members hold such views as are expressed by Mr. Innes."

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