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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1900.

FREEMASONRY.

Rabbi L. Weiss, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, writing in the Jewish Times, extols Free Masonry and Free Masons until the article is actually nauseating. He puts forth, as usual, the claim that the society was founded upon a solid basis by Solomon. It is a pity to lose his actual words for they are worthy of being placed in the archives of the British Museum as a sample of American nerve and impudence. He says, in the course of his article: "The Mason is made first in the heart—first his sentiments, his inclinations, his very impulses, his every conduct in life must be pure before he can conceive the principles of Masonry. Thus passed ages and times, with here and there an individual having sparks of Masonry smouldering in his breast, till at last Solomon fanned the spark into burning flame, and Freemasonry from the light and warmth budded out. This was the first of the sublime institution that ever since marched onward as the civilizer of man and the equalizer of creeds and classes. It had received a dangerous blow at its start that threatened its progress with total interruption, when one of the first three Grand Masters was assassinated, as tradition informs us; but the fortitude and prudence of Solomon made him fit for the emergency. He found other means to perpetuate the work already begun, which since then has become the prime factor and noble promoter of Temperance and Justice. It has become the handmaid of civilization, and was ever actively at work in uplifting the human race. It took long, yes, very long, ere its unremitting influence became universally felt. At what time exactly Freemasonry robbed itself in the garb of modern progress cannot be precisely stated, but sure it is that it must have been since the era of reformation, since Catholicism could no longer put its restraining finger upon the institution. If it had any of the progressive marks before that—the Christians being then all Catholics—it was a heroic work of keeping safe from the clutches of the owners (priests)."

This is but a sample of the twaddle that the good Rabbi would have an enlightened people swallow without a quiver. He would have us believe that Free Masonry arose in individual cases, as a sort of intuition very shortly after the creation of the world. He does not tell us that Adam and Eve were members of the society, but he lays claim to something equivalent to about the same thing. Speaking of the time when light was created, the Rabbi, who is evidently lost in the clouds of misgivings, cannot say for certain whether Free Masonry came with it or not. It is very difficult to find any sense in his ridiculous claim, if there be enough sanity evident in his language to give a string on what he means. He says: "Although light was not the origin of Masonry, it was the foundation of it; for when the secular world was veiled in superstitious darkness, Free Masonry shed

the lights of the divine light of Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance and Justice upon the conduct of its constituents. The method of inculcating these attributes was rather crude and somewhat unmethodical, as the human mind was not yet ripe for brighter culture; yet it was many, very many degrees better than the instructions that could be had from those possessed of superstition and idolatry. Scripture relates that the Israelites, preparatory to their deliverance, had light when the Egyptians were in darkness, as also the Jews in Persia, at the time of Mordecai and Esther, when Haman plotted their destruction, had light in their habitations when others were in darkness—which is a physical impossibility. One cannot have all the light to illuminate his eyes, when another at his side is in total darkness. It must then apply to a spiritual condition—to a light that brightens the mind and conscience of man. The Israelites in Egypt and the Jews in Persia were more enlightened than their neighbors—they had divine light, they had God in their hearts, their neighbors had black superstition. And just so stood Free Masonry in contradiction to the frivolities practiced by the ancient tribes."

The Rabbi is quite modest in his ideas surely, and if one could but fasten upon anything he says and find anything like common sense in it, he might learn what the whole thing means. If enlightenment means Free Masonry, and vice versa that the rest of us are very badly off, and Christian Europe has been a stygian darkness for many a day. It had been more modest and infinitely more truthful in the Rabbi to tell us that Free Masonry arose in the Middle Ages with Jews as its founders; that it arose in Europe rather than in Palestine; that it was gotten up as an Anti-Christian society; that Jews still retain the balance of power in the Order and control it in its actions; that it is today Anti-Christian, and as such a menace to society; that it is a religion of itself, and is not a Christian one either. But the good Rabbi prefers to say nothing much but to puff out, to pad with ethereal language, a nothing. He does come down to ordinary, every-day language in closing his article, when he declares openly, if not with a very strict adherence to truth, that "one progress worthy of our best consideration cannot escape our attention, and that is our intrepidity. We do no longer fear the exposure of Free Masonry. We neither dread nor care if the world knows what Free Masonry is. Nay, we would be glad if all intelligent people could see and understand the material we work on. What we want to keep from the knowledge of the uninitiated is that part of our work that pertains to the protection against imposture. When borne in mind that Freemasons have rights and privileges, accorded to them all over the universe where a lodge exists or Masons live—and where do they not live?—must we not guard these rights and privileges so that everybody, those not entitled to them, could come and claim them? Those are the secrets we guard, the sum and substance of Freemasonry we fear not if others should be acquainted with them."

That statement is quite clear, in fact, it is the only lucid thing in the lot, but its clarity is its undoing. There is no comment necessary upon it—it speaks for itself, and we who are familiar with the ways of Masonry are not at all likely to take the Rabbi's word for what actual experience has taught us to be grossly false. Another dream on the part of the good man might produce some other chimeras that would be worth setting up in type for the edification of the public at large. Opium will not produce such gorgeous phantasms.

THE CHURCH IN IRELAND.

We take great pleasure in giving a lengthy synopsis of an important pastoral by the Bishops of Ireland bearing upon the progress of the Church during the last twenty-five years, and the questions now urging a solution from the sons of Erin. The first subject of congratulation is the satisfactory state of religion both as regards the outward forms and also the interior activity of religion. It is no exaggeration to claim that in church-building and the erection of religious houses and institutions of charity the Irish have made noble sacrifices be-

yond their means. These magnificent structures are not so much evidences of the material prosperity of the country as of the spirit of faith which still animates our people. "It is this same spirit of faith that makes the singular harmony which exists in Ireland between the Church's growth in outward form and grandeur and her progress in the sanctity of her children." Amongst the important questions touched upon none occupies more the attention of the prelates than that of education. This has filled the Bishops with thankfulness to God "for the steadfastness with which the people have stood by their pastors in vindicating their rights as Catholics." The pastoral looks upon the educational light as the conflict of the century throughout the Christian world. "Everywhere," it says, "two systems of education, resting on principles fundamentally opposed to one another, have striven for the mastery, and whether there has been a question of founding a university or a village school the same vital issues have been at stake." It is the fight of the Church against Secularism—the opposition between Christ and the world. There is bitter experience in Ireland of this hostility—shown by the attacks upon religious education. The triumph of denominational principles and the consequent growth of Catholic schools has intensified the urgency and importance of a Catholic university. "The system of education that exists is leading them (the students) by hundreds, nay, by thousands, to the very threshold of the university only to find the door shut in their faces, while the comparatively few Protestants or Agnostics who joined in the same competition enter into the possession of all the advantages that a university career can give." This is not merely a grievance, but an insult. The opposition does not spring from statesmen, for not a single public man of the first rank has taken sides against the Catholic University. The representative men of the great Protestant Universities in England and Ireland have pleaded for it. Whence comes the opposition? Its source lies in a limited body of English and Irish Protestants who are mainly actuated by bigotry against the Church. To find statesmen yield to such prejudices merely for electoral expediency, and take their policy from the least enlightened sections of their followers is a fatal condemnation of the Government. The Pastoral urges that this should be made a test question. While the Bishops have striven to find a solution which would be as conciliatory as possible, they claim freedom from all blame, for seeking, if these methods fail, relief from a grievance which they regard as intolerable. "If we may not have a university for ourselves," they plead, "then let us have equality between Irishmen of all religious bodies in another way—let one National University preside over all our higher studies, and administer a common fund, and let each college or institution receive a share of it according to the extent and quality of the work." Parents are warned to take great care and not send their boys for the sake of temporal advantages to colleges in which their religious interests may suffer. The Queen's College and Trinity College, Dublin, are named as dangerous to faith and morals.

While the present condition of Ireland with confidence the Pastoral expresses fear for the future. New conditions of life are forming about the people, will the people be as faithful then as now? The mercies of God who has led the Irish thus far, makes the Bishops lest the flock may prove unworthy of their continuance. The danger is "that in the intense, though perfectly legitimate, preoccupation of the people with the purely human questions that are now in issue, with the spread of education, the diffusion of literature, the unrestrained circulation of every current, however bad or irreligious, of modern thought, the mind of the Irish people may lose the edge of its faith, and it may be, on the path that has led other nations to their spiritual ruin." Against such dangers the laity are warned, that there is no greater security than fidelity to religious duty. As a means towards extending the practices of religion in union with the Holy Father, Leo XIII., the Bishop commend most earnestly the St. Vincent de Paul Society. "We would," they continue, "particularly recommend it to

young men, many of whom are disposed to yield themselves up to the pleasures and frivolities of life, and pass their best years without realizing its earnestness and its solemnity." Besides the ordinary prescriptions of a Christian life, special exerts must be taken against irreligious and immoral literature. Nothing can be more deplorable than the flippant, frivolous manner in which the most solemn truths and mysteries are discussed like trivial topics in the pages of magazines. It is increasingly rash for ordinary men in the world to expose themselves to be unsettled in their belief by the impressions which these perverse writings make upon them. Worse perhaps, and more fatal to souls, is the flood of immoral literature which is poured all over the country. Even Catholics who deem themselves loyal members of the Church allow themselves the utmost liberty in such things. Let a book be extensively spoken of, no matter how impure or suggestive of evil it may be, no matter how gross may be the phase of life with which it deals, as long as it is fashionable, people seem to think themselves perfectly free to read it. Even Catholic women take this license, and spend hour after hour poring over a book which they would not for anything read aloud to any one. The people are also warned against the indecent pictures used as advertisements. To correct this crying evil all encouragement should be given to a healthy and interesting literature. The Catholic Truth Society is strongly recommended to the support of the clergy and people.

Finally, reference is made to the widespread and pernicious evil of intemperance. "It is still," say the Bishops, "working havoc in town and country—it is still blighting many a life and bringing sorrow into many a home—it is a blot upon the fair fame of our Irish Church, and a mystery in the franchise with which it baffles all the efforts of religion to extirpate it." There is a strong hope in the fact that decided progress in the way of temperance has already been made. The extent to which drunkenness prevailed has diminished. And what gives greater hope is that a sounder and truer tone of public opinion has made itself heard concerning the subject. The clergy are exhorted to form temperance and especially total abstinence societies in the schools. Parents also are entreated to encourage their children to take the pledge against drink at the time of Confirmation. The Pastoral would earnestly wish to see the number of public houses decrease—which number is out of all proportion to the needs of the people. The hours also on Saturday nights and Sundays need a radical change to prevent such opportunities of drinking as exist at present. "But while," concludes this historical document, "legislation may do a good deal of lessening the occasions of sin, the radical and permanent cure can be brought about only by God's grace working through His Holy Word by the Sacrament and prayer, on the hearts and consciences of the people."

BUDDHISM.

The enemies of Christianity have been as many and varied as the centuries of its existence and the locality of its establishment. Heathendom has multiplied itself to raise its weak arm against Christ's Church. Roman Caesarism, Greek philosophy, Northern barbarism have, in turn or together, entered the arena, but have withdrawn or have bit the dust in the defeat of death. Heresy in one form or another, rationalism and scepticism have done or are still doing battle with the unvanquished champion of Truth and Grace. As the Nineteenth Century closes, we see the heresies of the Sixteenth Century seething in the logical sequence of their first principle of private judgment. One is led to wonder what will be the foe of the Church during the next century. We are inclined to think that it will be one or all of theisms of the East. From the political movements going on we may expect that a considerable upheaval will take place in China. Either an actual partition or a partial breaking down of the great wall is well nigh accomplished. This brings about the meeting of the religion of the West with that of China. The zeal of the church cannot remain inactive with a door opening into China. If commerce can enter by this open

door so can religion. There is entered by "real power of darkness" centuries in the Far East for untold centuries. It is Buddhism. This is a harder foe to vanquish than Confucianism. Confucianism is Eastern materialism, but Buddhism is Eastern spiritualism. It is the learning of the East. The greater study of Buddhism, the education of native Indians, and, still more, its similarity to the philosophy of Hegel, have all tended to bring this strange, mystic system to the front. The final capital idea of Buddhism is the absorption of the individual by the great Divinity. Herein is the similarity between it and the German Hegel's theory, who maintained that the world, and man as part of the world, was but one evolution of the great unconscious Deity, and that the next evolution would be to annihilate this world and to cause it and man also to return to Him, lose his individual existence and be absorbed. Atheism was another fundamental character of Buddhism.

Buddhism lays down the following problem:—Human existence is a suffering, and human happiness consists in being free from this existence, which is only one of the many existences through which man has passed. This freedom from transmigration and suffering is obtained by the extinction or annihilation of individual existence. The only way to make evil and suffering disappear is to diminish, annihilate as far as possible individual existence. Hence follows the idea which forms the basis of Buddhist morality; the extinction of activity, even to the most absolute impassibility. The primitive morals of Buddhism contained the following five negative precepts:—1. Not to kill any living being; 2. Not to steal; 3. Not to commit impurity; 4. Not to lie; 5. Not to drink any intoxicant. These were afterwards supplemented by positive precepts indicating the means of attaining moral perfection, and also its chief characteristics of contemplation and wisdom. The great helps to acquire perfection are aims, virtue or the observance of the law, patience or insensibility, and application to develop the germs of good in man. Wisdom is exemption from all error, ignorance, fault or moral imperfection. It is the highest state which man can attain by his own efforts. It serves as the proper disposition and immediate preparation to enter Nirvana, the final term of existence. These precepts and moral maxims received in time more or less important additions and modifications, which show the inherent weakness in every purely human religious work. Besides commands having reference to idolatry and the obscene worship of Oiva, the morality of Buddha was further disfigured by precepts which merely incurred ridicule; e.g., not to take milk after dinner, not to keep salt in the house more than 2 days. This religion when first promulgated spread with incredible force. Admiration for the teacher, as well as for his theories, inspired zeal amongst his missionaries, who preached his doctrine west to the Onas, north to Mongolia, east to China and south to Java and the other islands of the Southeastern Archipelago. The decline came as quickly. Inherent weakness and increasing power of opposing conditions served to check the growth of Buddhism and to transform its primitive character. Oats distinctions were built up into a completely organized system. And a flood of popular superstitions swept away Buddhism and Brahminism, and replaced them by modern Hinduism.

Rationalists and other enemies of Christianity assert with great pertinacity that Buddhist morality is as pure and perfect as Christian ethics. They have gone so far as to assert that the religion of Christ owes its origin to Buddhism. Eager in this inconceivable hatred of Christianity, to exalt another religion or to claim for pure reason the capability of forming a system of morals, these enemies of the household have seen in Buddhism the star which rose in the east and set in the Stable of Bethlehem. In vain. Buddhist morality is the incomplete expression of the natural law. The love of God is eliminated from the Atheistic precepts of this far Eastern sect. What are the means for a Buddhist to observe his law, compared with the Secular mental system of Christ? Atheism can never be a or

ethical system. It excludes God—the highest good—from the law and its sanction. It thereby rejects the only principle of good. Again the absolute extinction of individual, conscious existence cannot compare with the untold reward with which the keeping of Christiana law is recompensed in eternity. There is also the experience which the world has had of both. Shall we appeal to the superiority of Christian civilization over Buddhist civilization? A tree is known by its fruits. The fruits of Buddhism can never compare with those of Christianity. If, on the other hand, we look upon Buddhism as a living force, we find it making its way felt in the thought of the West. It is not at all improbable that this movement of Eastern Buddhist ideas will have to be met and conquered by Christian Catholic philosophy in the approaching Twentieth Century.

TORONTO BOYS' RETURN.

Toronto gave the returning Canadian Contingent a right royal welcome on Monday. The town was bedecked with flags and bunting from end to end and the route of the procession was a mass of color in honor of the young men who left here a year ago to assist in the South African war. The gallant conduct of Canada's representatives during the war called forth eulogies of praise from all the commanding officers. The Canadians went among England's trained band of soldiers a despised lot of raw recruits, despised because unknown; but they came out recognized by everybody from Lord Roberts down to the most bigoted Cookney as the very best men that fought for England during the trouble. They shared the honors of the campaign with the Irish forces. Toronto was not slow to appreciate the magnificent bravery of her representatives and they received a welcome that will long be remembered in the history of this city as the most enthusiastic that has ever been tendered by her citizens to anybody. The men deserved all they received and conducted themselves throughout the day not only as soldiers but also as gentlemen. After their reception was over they retired peacefully and soberly to the bosoms of their families, to enjoy the quiet of home and a much needed rest or spent the evening at the theatre as a relaxation from their hard work.

CATHOLIC JEALOUSY.

It is a strange thing that Catholics, particularly Irish Catholics, should be the first to throw down their co-religionists. There seems to be an innate jealousy that will not allow some to rest until they have succeeded in keeping down any of their co-religionists who may show any tendency to rise above their own level. It is hard to tell where this feeling comes from; it must be a product of Canadian air, for the Irishman is noted for his characteristic open-heartedness. It is jealousy pure and simple—a feeling not of rivalry, but rather of a lack of good-fellowship. We often complain that an Irish Catholic must needs possess a far greater than ordinary talent to obtain precedence over his Protestant fellow in any and every field in the English-speaking world today, and our complaints are well-founded. We do have to show far greater capability to get along than do Protestants in this country; but, then, we can do it, we have the brains and the go, and with those as our stock-in-trade no amount of adverse criticism, no amount of prejudice can keep us down. We have grown to expect opposition because of our faith from those who are outside the pale of the Church, but we have not yet come to look for such a thing as that from our co-religionists. Yet the fact remains that in very many cases a Catholic is blocked from succeeding in this or that line through sole of his fellow-Catholics. Moved by a species of jealousy that cannot bear to see a co-religionist succeed; that cannot stand still and allow him to move up in the social, either social, intellectual or industrial; they use every means in their power to block him, and only too often do they succeed. It is a disgrace to Catholicity and to Irishmen that such a state of things should exist, as it undoubtedly does. It may be met every day in paltry matters, and in great ones