

Optimism.

BY REV. ALBERT REINHART, O. P.

'Twas at the birth of a December day I walked abroad, alone, and took my way

High up a shaggy hill, That stood enveloped still In darkness hues And frozen dews Of night. Of waning night.

I turned me eastward. Ah! there, in a sea Of palest green, ablaze with morning glee,

A floating cloud of fleece, With messages of peace, Bespoke with cheer The advent near Of day— Of waking day.

I turned me westward. Lo! behind the first The big, round moon still beams. The way is hers;

The night is on, still on— Though in the East the sun— Her shadows fall And spread the pall Of night, Of pulses night.

And so in life, our mood doth wear such phase Just as to East or West we bend our gaze.

Why seek the darkling West? The East with radiance blest Doth joy unfold, Look there—behold The shining East!

—S. H. Review.

The Catacombs of St. Callixtus.

A NOTABLE DISCOVERY—THE PONTIFF DAMASUS—INTERESSING INSCRIPTIONS.

Rome, March 19.—One of the most interesting discoveries which the scientific exploration of the Roman Catacombs has brought to light for years past, is that which has recently occurred in the Catacombs of St. Callixtus, says the Rome correspondent of the Dublin Freeman's Journal writing on that date. That early Christian subterranean cemetery has been the chief scene of the marvellous discoveries of De Rossi, and it might well be supposed that this great master of Christian Archaeology had probed its most recondite secrets. Yet all was not revealed. The pupils and followers of that great master have still something to seek, and their researches have recently discovered the sepulchre of Pope Damasus, on the Ardeatine Way, and the members of the family to which he belonged.

Commendatore Orazio Marucchi, one of the most active of the pupils of De Rossi has just related the story of this noble discovery, and from his detailed account the following summary is drawn:

The Pontiff Damasus, as is well known, one of the most celebrated Popes of the 4th century of the Christian era, which he lived through almost from its beginning to its end, dying an octogenarian in the year 384, after a Pontificate of 18 years (366-384). It was he who prepared the definite triumph of Christianity, which took place shortly after his death, by means of the edict of Theodosius, which abolished idolatrous worship. But his name is more known as that of the enthusiastic poet of the martyrs, whose glories he celebrated in elegant versified epigrams inscribed on marble and placed near sepulchres in the Roman Catacombs.

These Damascene inscriptions are inscribed in a letter or character which is special to them, and which is readily recognized by any one who has even a slight familiarity with them. They are very valuable, as they throw considerable light on the history and the topography of the ancient Christian cemeteries of Rome. They are also precious, as they refer to the dogma of the Christian Church in the 4th century. The greater number of these inscriptions are, unfortunately, lost; but as the pilgrims of the 7th and 8th centuries who came to Rome had a habit of copying these laudatory inscriptions, and as many of those copies still exist, a very fair collection of Damascene epitaphs in the Catacombs has been made.

The "Liber Pontificalis" relates that Pope Damasus had prepared a sepulchre for himself in the Ardeatine Way, near the Ancient Appian Way, and that there his remains were placed in 384, beside those of his mother and his sister, who had been buried there by his pious care. His body remained there until the 8th century, when it was transferred to the church in the city which bears the name of St. Peter in Damasus, which he himself had built near the Theatre of Pompey, where he had passed his youth in the ecclesiastical archives. When the remains of this Pontiff were removed, the crypt on the Ardeatine Way was abandoned, and soon forgotten and hidden beneath the ruins.

Monsignor Joseph Wilpert, considering that the historic crypts of Damasus and Marcellinus should be sought for at the left of St. Callixtus, obtained from the Commission of Sacred Archaeology permission to make an excavation there, in which

work he was assisted by the Trapi-pist Fathers, who are the guardians of the Catacomb. In the course of the excavations a grand crypt adorned with marbles and with the remains of important frescoes, was brought to light. It should undoubtedly have contained a historical monument. Close at hand a cubiculum was found, and within it a fosse filled with earth and fragments of stone transported from the vicinity. Amongst the many fragments of broken sculpture hidden here was a block of marble which had been adopted near by as a stone for blocking up still more a tomb which had already an inscription on it. On the mortar which covered this marble block there was the impression made by the incised inscription on the marble slab closing the tomb. Of that same slab two very tiny fragments have been found, but the text of nearly the whole of the inscription has, as Marucchi remarks, been providentially preserved by the impression or imprint on the mortar, in such manner that can be read, reversed, of course, and in relief, the letters which were hollowed in the surface of the original slab. The text is that of four hexameters of Damascene style, and commences with the words: "Hic damasus, mater, vocavit, lauren (as membra.)" The brief epitaph continues to say that the person mentioned in it reposed the age of 89 years, and lived during 60 years a life consecrated to God, that she had had four children, and that she survived her husband.

This, then, as Marucchi points out, was the place where the mother of the celebrated Damasus was buried; and as the great Pope was buried beside his mother and his sister, we have indirectly become acquainted with the place where his tomb was situated. This tomb, then, was not on the right of the Ardeatine Way, as was supposed heretofore even by De Rossi, but on the left and almost opposite the Domitilla, where researches had formerly been made in the hope of finding it there. In the vicinity of this tomb should likewise be sought the tomb of the martyrs, Marus and Marcellanus, which is indicated in the ancient itineraries of the pilgrims as not far from the sepulchre of Damasus. And in the catalogue of the cemeteries or catacombs of the 6th century the "Coemeterium Damasii" is indicated as near the basilica where Marus and Marcellanus were buried.

This is all that can be said at the present moment with absolute certainty; but in respect to the establishing, with mathematical precision, the places of the individual tombs of that group, it is more prudent to wait until that region is entirely excavated, for a great number of ruins are yet accumulated there. Under all circumstances, that which can be deduced from the "Liber Pontificalis" and from documents, is that the crypt of Damasus should be of a certain grandeur and adorned with marbles, as it bore the title of "Basilica." And here also there must have been placed the very beautiful "carmen," which Damasus composed for himself, and which the copies have preserved, which attested his profound faith that Christ, who called Lazarus to life, would also resuscitate him—"Post cineres Damasum faciet quia surgere ordo."

And it is natural, as Marucchi suggests, that a Pontiff whose work in the Catacombs was so splendid, would construct a noble tomb for his mother and his sister. The minute analysis that will follow excavation will determine much that is now uncertain. That Mgr. Wilpert's discovery is one of the most interesting and important in recent years is quite evident. A few days ago the discoverer gave an account of it before the members who attend the Christian Archaeological Conference, under the presidency of Monsignor Duchesne at the Cancelleria, and to-morrow he will treat of the same theme at the Imperial German Archaeological Institute at the Caffarelli Palace on the Capitol Hill. Marucchi will lecture on this discovery at the Catacombs itself, and just in this very crypt, for the British and American Archaeological

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Society of Rome early in April. The matter will also be treated in detail, and with all that restraint which distinguishes him by the discoverer, Monsignor Wilpert, in the new Bulletin of Christian Archaeology, so that, by one means or another, this notable discovery will soon be made known to the world of scholars and of students in and out of Rome.

Archbishop Gauthier on Attendance at Theatres.

On a Sunday during Lent at High Mass in St. Mary's Cathedral, Kingston, Archbishop Gauthier preached an eloquent and practical sermon on the sanctification of the holy season of Lent. Before beginning his remarks on the works proper to this holy season, His Grace spoke briefly upon vocations to the priesthood. He referred to the necessity under which his predecessors, and he himself have been, to look abroad for priests owing to the seeming scarcity of vocations at home. His Grace acknowledged the very deep obligation he and his people were under to the very excellent priests who with a true missionary spirit left their native lands and labored faithfully and zealously for the honor and glory of God and the sanctification of souls in this diocese. While he would regret very much to see this influx of priests from abroad entirely cease, nevertheless he thought the time would come when we should be able to provide for our own spiritual wants by filling the ranks of our own priesthood with a native clergy. The scarcity of native vocations was, His Grace said, only seeming, and he felt sure there are many of our young men who have aspirations for the priesthood, which owing to lack of means they are unable to realize. He was certain, also, that there was not a parent in the congregation who would put any obstacle in the way of his son's becoming a priest, or who would not assist him in every possible way to respond to a divine vocation. His Grace urged the members of the congregation to remember this condition of things when regulating their business affairs, and assured his hearers that any superfluous means they might possess could not be applied to a nobler or more worthy purpose than that of assisting him to enable those who had a vocation to the priesthood to realize their holy aspirations.

Speaking of the means to be employed for the sanctification of the holy season of Lent, His Grace dwelt upon the necessity and divine origin of fasting, and illustrated from Sacred Scripture the peculiar efficacy of this form of penitential works, in propitiating the justice of God for our sins. His Grace also exhorted his hearers to refrain during this holy season from all kinds of public amusements. He referred particularly to attendance at the theatre, which during Lent, a time of prayer and mortification, was altogether at variance with the traditions and spirit of Holy Church. His Grace would not say that the theatre was an evil in itself. On the contrary, it has been and could be used for noble and religious purposes. Yet as it is being conducted generally, it does not make for a high moral tone among our people, but was having rather the contrary effect. The Archbishop said that he believed that the managers of our local theatre exercised commendable vigilance in order to prevent the production here of objectionable representations. Whatever might be thought of attendance at respectable plays at other seasons of the year, it was certainly the duty of every Catholic to refrain from such form of amusement during the holy season.

Continuing, His Grace referred to the pictures which appear upon the walls of the city and which are very often of a most objectionable character. He thought that in the interests of morality a stricter censorship should be exercised in the matter of theatrical advertisements.

In conclusion, His Grace exhorted his hearers to practice works of mortification during the remaining days of the Lenten season to attend public exercises of the Church and to approach the Holy Sacrament of Penance as soon as possible in order that, being in the state of grace, their works of self-denial might be meritorious of eternal life.—Catholic Register.

High Pressure Days. Men and women alike have to work incessantly with brain and hand to hold their own nowadays. Never were the demands of business, the wants of the family, the requirements of society, more numerous. The first effect of the praiseworthy effort to keep up with all these things is commonly seen in a weakened or debilitated condition of the nervous system, which results in dyspepsia, defective nutrition of both body and brain, and in extreme cases in complete nervous prostration. It is clearly seen that what is needed is what will sustain the system, give vigor and tone to the nerves, and keep the digestive and assimilative functions healthy and active. From personal knowledge, we recommend Hood's Sarsaparilla for this purpose. It acts on all the vital organs, builds up the whole system, and fits men and women for these high-pressure days.

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Committeeman.—And do you love to come to school, little boy?

Little Boy.—Yes, sir.

Committeeman.—That's a good little boy. And why do you love to come to school?

Little Boy.—'Ooz I have such fun spit-balling the old noodles who come in here putting on airs, as if they knew it all.

For Cholera Morbus, Cholera Infantum, Summer Colic, Diarrhoea, Dysentery and Cramps Complaint, Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry is a prompt, safe and sure cure that has been a popular favorite for nearly 60 years.

Mamma.—Don't be selfish. Let your baby brother play with your marbles a little while.

Tommy.—But he means to keep them always.

Mamma.—Oh, I guess not.

Tommy.—I guess yes, 'cause he's swallowed 'em!

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"Sure," responded the smallest boy of the lot.

"Tell us how?" said the teacher.

"Step on her tail."

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Mrs. Bilkins (weeily).—D. have another piece of cake, Cousin John.

Cousin John.—Why, really, I've had two; but it's so good I believe I will have another.

Little Johnny (excitedly).—Ma's a winner! Ma's a winner! She said she'd bet you'd make a hog of yourself!

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MISCELLANEOUS.

A certain little girl came to her mother with a triumphant air, and said: "I've seen something I guess nobody else ever saw."

"What was it?" asked her mother.

"It was a Chinaman in the street. And he was wide awake, right in broad daylight."

"Well, why not?"

"Why, don't you know you told me that when we are awake all the Chinamen are asleep, and when we're asleep, they're wide awake?"

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