

A BISHOP AND HIS MOTHER

The "Messenger" reviewing the Life of Bishop Bradley, of Manchester, N.H., says:

There is one figure in this life which has an unusual beauty and attractiveness and even grandeur. It is that of the bishop's mother. Imagine a young Irish wife of twenty-six standing at the bedside of her husband, who has been taken suddenly ill. "He must have the priest," she exclaimed, "he is going to die." "Nonsense," they told her, "It is only a passing ailment." In spite of their pleadings and even of the wishes of the sick man himself, she persisted in hurrying off ten miles away, though a short time before she had been a mother, to seek the priest, and she brought him back with her. Like the others, he was incredulous; but, on account of the distance and her alarm, he annointed the sick man. That night she was a widow, standing desolate and poverty stricken, with her little brood around her.

She came to Manchester, struggled for a time at keeping a humble boarding house, but failed, for times were hard; the Civil War was then going on. She became a factory hand in the mills of Manchester, where her son was afterwards to be a bishop, and saving some little money, again took up her first attempt to have a home and keep her family around her. Denis was a mill hand, toiling faithfully during the day and at night and on Sundays helping his mother, whom he tenderly loved, to care for the younger ones of the family by devoting himself to their pleasures and instruction.

"I would like to be a brother," he said to her one day. "Why not a priest?" she asked. "That is impossible, I need an education for that." "God will take care of it," was her reply. A few days after saw her in the house of the venerable Father McDonald. "Denis would like to be a priest," she said. "Impossible," he answered, "the times are too hard and we cannot get money." "Father McDonald," she said in a way that was characteristically Irish, "I did not come here to ask for money, but for advice." She had saved up three hundred dollars in gold, which in those days amounted to nearly a thousand in currency. That settled it, and it is not to be wondered at that the son's previous affection grew into such beautiful, unwavering tenderness till the end. When she died he was never the same man after. She had always been with him. Even as a bishop he never left the house without telling her where he was going, and when absent wrote to her every day. Though the bishop's mother, she kept herself in absolute seclusion. She had made herself a hermit in his house to pray for him in his labor for God and man. Through it all, however, her loyal devotion to the dead husband of so long ago stood by her. "Yes, he is a good man," she used to say, "but he is no better than his father."

HER SKIN WAS YELLOW

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ABOUT CONFESSION

If it be an Incentive to Sin, How is it that the Best Catholics are seen Most Frequently at the Sacred Tribunal?

Does not confession weaken character?

Is not confession an incentive to sin by making forgiveness too easy?

Do not Catholics go to confession and then commit the same sin over again?

On the contrary we have already seen that certain conditions are absolutely required before God will ratify the absolution of the confessor. Pardon is not granted, for instance, to the drunkard who has a mere natural sorrow because of his degradation and the poverty and shame of his wife and children; to the thief who has no intention of giving back the money he has stolen; to the impure man who will not avoid the proximate occasion of his sin; to the bitter, angry soul, who refuses to forgive the offending brother, etc.



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We know perfectly well that human nature is weak and human passions strong; that the world of wicked men and women is full of temptations; that the flesh rebels against the spirit (Rom. vii., 23), and the devil does his best to tempt us (I. Pet. v., 8). But if a Catholic yield to these temptations, it is not in virtue of the sacrament he has received, but because he is false to the sacramental promise he made to God to sin no more.

We are willing also to grant that there have been abuses; that some Catholics go to their confession in a mechanical, perfunctory sort of way, and do not realize the dignity and sacredness of this divine sacrament. But there is any good thing in the world that sinful man has not sometimes abused? The Sacrament of Matrimony, intended to sanctify and bless the pure union of man and woman, has often been made a mere tool for worldly advantage or a mere instrument of lust, as divorce statistics show. The Sacrament of Baptism, established to initiate the Christian into the Church of God, has been used to serve an unbeliever's worldly aims. The Bible has been abused by every false prophet from the beginning, in imitation of Satan (Matt. iv., 6). The press, the pulpit, the theatre, the stock exchange, the arts, —all these have been abused. Would you, then, abolish them altogether.

The history of the Sacrament of Penance is proof positive of its being one of the greatest incentives to virtue the world knows of. Could it have survived during these nineteen hundred years if it were indeed an incentive to sin? Would millions of the most intelligent men and women still bend their knee? It is impossible to think so. The corruption of morals that everywhere followed the abolition of confession in the sixteenth century made many of the reformers wish for its re-establishment. Voltaire wrote in the eighteenth century: "The enemies of the Roman Church, who have opposed so beneficial an institution, have taken from man the greatest restraint that can be put upon crimes" (Diet. Phil., art. Cathec. du Cure)."

If confessions were an incentive to sin, how is it that the most hardened sinners never go and the best Catholics are seen frequently at the sacred tribunal? If it weakened character, how,

then, do you account for its reformation of the habitual drunkard, its recall of the penitent Magdalen and the comfort and peace it gives the condemned criminal? If it encouraged crime, why should Catholic fathers and mothers rejoice in seeing their boys and girls go frequently to confession, and be sad in heart when they begin to neglect this duty? If it made Catholics worse how, then, do you explain the fact that Protestants often desire for their servants and employees Catholics who go regularly to confession?

The fact is evident. The Sacrament, of Penance is a guide to the doubting, a comfort to the afflicted, an encouragement to the weak, a warning to the young, a strong arm to the wavering, an adviser to the ignorant, a menace to the hardened sinner, a joy to the truly penitent; it is Jesus speaking to the world: "Come to Me, all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi., 28).

Why, sometimes non-Catholics, tormented by the anguish of unconfessed sins, have desired to receive the sacrament; and finding this impossible, have craved the privilege of unburdening their conscience to the trusted Catholic priest.—Monitor.

WEAK TIRED WOMEN

How many women there are that get no refreshment from sleep. They wake in the morning and feel tired than when they went to bed. They have a dizzy sensation in the head, the heart palpitates; they are irritable and nervous, weak and worn out, and the lightest household duties during the day seem to be a drag and a burden.

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"Woman," said the dejected young man, "is a disappointment and a fraud."

"Indeed?" spoke one listener.

"Yes. I saved up all my tobacco money and lived on porridge two weeks to treat Miss Truelove to the opera and a supper. Then I asked her to marry me, and she said she was afraid I was too extravagant to make a good husband."

"I say, I'd give anything to be as strong and healthy as you are," remarked the lazy man. "What do you live on?"

"Nothing but fruit," answered the other.

"What kind of fruit?"

"The fruit of industry," was the brief, but significant reply.

Small sorrows are most voluble.