

been sunk in various abortive efforts to keep such journals afloat. The same paper attributes the singular success of the *Churchman* at present to preference of Churchmen as such for anything "dainty and brilliant," many-sided, literary and artistic. That means a lot of money!

HUBON LAY WORKERS have set a good example by banding themselves together into an "association." We gather from their first report just issued that they number, so far, 1,852 workers—including 144 Sunday school superintendents, 427 class teachers, 108 lay readers, etc. The Report, signed by A. H. Dymond, as Chairman of Management, also contains the valuable papers read by Rural Dean Mackenzie and Charles Jenkins.

"THE ROMAN NOSE IS A VERY PLIABLE MEMBER," says the *Church Times* in answering a correspondent, apropos of the easy way in which the boasted "*Semper Eadem*" alters and amends her creeds and catechisms from time to time, as in the case of Keenan's R. C. Catechism, which fiercely repudiated the charge of teaching Papal infallibility as a "Protestant lie"—until the dogma was foisted into the creed by Pius IX. a few years ago.

EMPTY NONCONFORMIST PULPITS.—The recent death of Mr. Spurgeon has drawn attention to the difficulty of finding men of equally heavy calibre with those who are passing away. The fact is that the *raison d'être* of Nonconformity—if there ever was anything more than a shadow of such a thing as "reason" for it—has been vanishing. The Church is now more active, lively, spiritual, vigorous, "abreast of the times," than any Christian body in England.

"THE BEST THEOLOGIAN IN ENGLAND," was a character given to Mr. Gladstone by no less a judge of Theology than the late Dr. Dollinger. Mr. Gladstone's faith in the Church of his fathers is indicated by his testimony to her condition—"love grows larger, zeal warmer, truth firmer among us"; and so, from the point of view of a great Christian statesman, philosopher, and litterateur, he has always considered the Church of England as the rallying point for divided Christendom.

"SMOKING TO THE GLORY OF GOD."—The death of the great Baptist preacher has reminded people of the stern and trenchant rebuke he administered to a bumptious speaker who inveighed in his presence against the use of tobacco as irreligious. "When I found intense pain relieved, a weary brain soothed, and calm refreshing sleep obtained by a cigar, I have felt grateful to God and blessed His Name." It was by such fearless common sense in him that people were struck.

THE CANTERBURY PATRIARCHATE.—This controversy in the columns of the *Guardian* has drawn out at length such very formidable opponents of Canterbury centralization as Canon Bright and Father Puller. The issue will depend—as we note from the drift and trend of thought—upon more practical elements than mere ancient prescription and traditional right and custom. The Augustinian and Roman origin of the Canterbury throne are of little consequence, as compared with modern convenience.

FASTING AND LA GRIPPE.—The action reported on the part of the authorities of the Roman Communion in dispensing with the rigour of the Lenten Fast, and even that of Fridays, has an air of liberality and kindly consideration—at least for those who like meat and think themselves the better

for it. It seems however to be questionable whether persons of high vital force are not the very ones who are most liable to this inflammatory attack; so that certain kinds of fasting may be the best prophylactic after all.

REFLEX INFLUENCE OF THE COLONIAL CHURCHES.—At a recent meeting in support of the Bloemfontein Mission, Lord Halifax took occasion to say: "The day may come when the safety and well-being of the Church of England, and its preservation from danger and the accomplishments of all those objects which, when we think of her needs, are so very near our hearts, may be due to that Colonial Episcopate and those daughter Churches which shall exemplify in its reflex action upon the Mother Church at home and the English Episcopate that saying of the sacred writer—'Cast thy bread, etc.'"

#### LENT

comes again with its wholesome warnings and restraints—its firm yet gentle check upon the whirring career of life's business or pleasure, as the case may be. In a vague, yet very real way, all the world—as well as the Church—is ready to acknowledge a *rationale* for regular periodical fasting and abstinence. The question of when and how are the points at which variation naturally and necessarily takes place. The approving and endorsing prophecy of our Lord Himself—"then shall they fast in those days"—puts all serious opposition to fasting quite out of the question with all earnest followers of Christ. From the first—Irenæus, Tertullian and Origen being witnesses—one of the annual periods recognized as proper for Christian fasting occurred before Easter Day, lasting with various degrees of rigour from forty hours to forty days, and even omitting such bright days as Sundays, Thursdays and Saturdays—stretching away back as much as seventy days—our modern "Septuagesima" Sunday. Every week has its Friday fast throughout the year, but it has also its Sunday, at least, as a feast-day. Upon this basis the Anglican Lenten Season has been fixed.

#### SELF-DENIAL, THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT,

must never be lost sight of by the sincere and earnest Churchman. One owes it to his soul's health to take stock at such a time, and lay on one side all those things which can be done without in a greater or less degree. The differences of individual fancies and idiosyncrasies make it impossible to lay down any cast-iron rule to suit all persons. General lines may be indicated, as more or less applicable to most people, but the actual application must be left to the individual conscience to a very large extent. All things which are purely and solely of the nature of luxuries and delicacies may be safely cut off at once. Even here, however, difference of taste and opinion is sure to arise. The mistake of the Church of Rome—which has brought ridicule upon the whole subject of Christian fasting!—consists in arbitrary and fanciful rules about different kinds of fish and flesh, &c., &c. No wonder that pleasure-loving people have been tempted to neutralize such rules by systematic evasion—so that "French fasting" has become a synonym for *Spring feasting*, as distinguished from the sort of feasting which goes on at other seasons of the year.

#### HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

must enter largely into all proper religious fasting. Practically, one should, either directly or indirectly, have his physician's endorsement for any proposed method of self-denial. We can-

not even draw the line here between mind and body, these two parts of our being have so much reflex influence upon one another. In the first place, each one of us has certain specific duties to perform as a necessary part of life for him—he must do nothing in the way of abstinence from mental and corporeal pleasure to prevent him from rightly performing those necessary duties. Only let him see that they are *really* necessary. St. Paul expressly absolves husbands and wives from their mutual rights and duties for the time being—as not being always necessary—"that they may give themselves to fasting and prayer." So the high behests of the soul's necessities can overrule "for a time" the importunate calls of natural duties, sanctioned and even sanctified as they are at other times by vows of religious obligation. Even in this, mutual consent is imperative. Thus we are furnished with an instance and illustration embodying the principles of highest wisdom in the exercise of Lenten self-denial.

#### INFLUENZA, ETC.

This year a special feature in the matter is added by the presence of a decided foe of health which in some places amounts to a scourge or plague. In view of this element—affecting health and duty—we need to be especially careful, and to consult very conscientiously those who are held responsible for the maintenance of the bodily health of the community in which we live. The Church of Rome has thought proper to suspend their usual rules—about abstinence from flesh meats on Fast days—on account of the epidemic. Such action must, or should, be founded on the medical dictum that such a species of food is necessary to sustain health under the circumstances. It is possible that other medical authorities may—at least in individual cases or districts—take the opposite view, and consider that *low vitality* (as we have heard it said) secures comparative exemption from this disease and many similar inflammatory diseases. In that case, fasting from meat, and all other stimulating food, would be good for health of body, as well as, in many cases, a wholesome species of self-denial—"keeping under the body"—for the soul. The main point is conscientiously to use such light as we have on this difficult subject.

#### MARCH.

BY A. BISSET THOM, GALT.

March, or Martius, was the first month in the year in the Roman Calendar, as may be seen from the names of the last four months of our own day. Romulus, the founder of Rome, pretended that he was the son of Mars, the god of war, and named the first month after his reputed father. After the time of Numa Pompilius, who added the two months of January and February, March became the third in the year. No change took place until the Christian Fathers reckoned Easter as the beginning of the year, and March again became the first month. The change in England is of comparatively recent date; for until 1752 in England the legal or civil year began at the day of Annunciation, *i.e.*, 25th March. In France, until 1564, March was generally reckoned the first month in the year, and in Scotland, by a proclamation of James VI. in 1599, January was decreed to be the first month in the year.

Our Saxon ancestors called this month Rhede-Monat, a word derived from their divinity Rheda; while others derive it from Raed, the Saxon for council, March being the month in which wars or expeditions were usually undertaken by the Saxon tribes. Others again called it Hydmonat,

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