

TOMBSTONES: Edifying and Curious.

A tomb is supposed to be a mark of honor to the dead. But it may—indeed, it should—also instruct and edify the living. It can teach us something useful concerning the life of the deceased. It can, furthermore, arouse us to the realization of those vivifying truths which we are most ready to accept amid the associations of grief and death. At the brink of the grave these truths, enlivened by noble aspirations, come to us, so to speak, from the lips of the deceased; and their silent exhortation does not irritate by a patronizing or testy manner, nor confuse us by its authority.

And when we remember not only death, but the blessedness of dying in the faith of Christ, after the struggle of life—do we not actually benefit the dead also? Does not the fact that their mute example incites us to virtue by reminding us of the end of things, speak in behalf of the departed who are instrumental in teaching us this lesson? I cannot but believe that the impressions which bring home to the living who pass the tombs of the dead, the thought of eternity, will in some measure redound to the credit of those who, thus preaching to us from their graves, may still be detained in the chastening flames of purgatory.

The child, led by its parent through the sombre paths of the graveyard, receives the first solemn lessons of the eternal truths, and of the charity that makes the realization of these truths a blessing to it for after-life. The virtues recorded on the monuments of the dead, in the spirit of parental or filial love, receive a higher sanction than can be given them in the school or in the books, or even in the pulpit.

The old masters of epigraphy have left us numerous beautiful examples of this sentiment in the inscriptions which grace the tombs in many of the old Catholic cemeteries of Europe. These God's acres speak to us in a thousand attractive ways through art and literary form. They keep the vanity of earthly pomp and show before our minds in the very beauty of expression with which they point to the glory of heaven, and call forth the noblest sentiments of disinterested sympathy. The very gates and the pathways are eloquent with the appeal to the instincts of charity and supernatural views of life. As an example of this fact I select a number of Latin inscriptions with English translation. The sentiments are in every case so beautiful, and the Latin forms so graceful, as surely to edify and please the attentive reader.

One of the most interesting cemeteries in the world, in this respect, is perhaps the Campo Santo of Bologna. Over the entrance you read, as you approach the artistic gateway, the following in Latin:

"Devoutly dedicated to the Christian souls whom the chastening fires of Purgatory are preparing for a place among the lights of heaven. Enter friend and offer a devout prayer by which thou wilt lessen our debt of penance, in earthly measure, a hundred days. Grant in thy charity this gift, for we are in torment."

It has been said, and it is sometimes true, that epitaphs lie. But they give, even when their form is exaggerated, an indication of what we esteem, and of what we would wish to have as the record of a life that may in some respects have failed. "De mortuis nil nisi bene." "Of the dead say naught but what is good," is a testimony to man's original nobility of soul, and hence we find the sentiment among the pagans as their accepted standard of wisdom. If we justly praise the living in order to encourage them, as Samuel Parr says, why should we not equally praise the dead, since there exists the very same reason of arousing the living to imitation of such virtues as we remember to have been the best part of our deceased friends.

In truth it would not be just or in harmony with our very instincts of right if we were to apply the same standard of judgment to the dead which we have for the living. The mother chides her child, the brother quarrels with brother, the friend suspects friend; but when a child or brother or friend are being carried to their graves, we forget the words and acts that wounded our sensitive self-love during their lifetime, and we recall only the love and the kindly deeds they did, and the neglected opportunities of our showing them love and kindness in return.

Serious truth may be taught, however, in other than serious fashion. In the days of Abraham, a Santa Clara, humor and drastic irony were the writers of pious books, to shame men into the contemplation of eter-

nal truths and of their own shortcomings.

The art of preaching through the silent appeal of legends upon tombstones did not wholly escape the effects of this tendency. Hence we have numerous inscriptions upon old graves, and some recorded in books whence, we imagine, they were never transferred to stone, which causes a smile though they are not without instructive and salutary force for the living.

Here lies my wife, 'tis well
For now in peace both dwell.

In a little church dedicated to St. Gregory at Sudbury, there is an epitaph on the tomb of one Campbell, a prominent citizen and benefactor of the town who died in 1706. The inscription in Latin verse reads:

"This Camel (Campbell) of Sudbury, managed to pass through the eye of a needle. Go now and if thou be rich, do likewise. Farewell."

Among the sepulchral inscriptions noted for laconic brevity and force is that which commemorates the heroic death of the soldiers who fell at the battle of Nordlingen (1643) between the Swedes and the German Imperialists.

The expressive words, "Stay, wanderer, thou treadest upon heroes," say far more in Latin than in English as they imply by the use of the singular noun "heroem" that every step taken in any direction on that field touches a hero—a sentiment which in good English style requires circumlocution.

Everybody is familiar with the inscription on the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren, in St. Paul's, London. The concluding words of the epitaph, summing up his activity as an architect, are very telling:

"Do you want an evidence of his genius? Then look around you!"

Which is as much as to say—see his greatness here described, for he built the edifice which you have come to admire.

An inscription of kindred character and equally remarkable for originality of expression, is that of John Jacques Sarger, architect of the Church of St. Peter, in the ancient city of Colmar (Alsace). The present edifice, which was built to replace the old priory church dating back to the thirteenth century, was completed in 1750. The builder died two years later, and was buried in the church where a marble sarcophagus stands with this legend:

"Here I rest, John Jacques Sarger, of Strasburg, architect of this temple, where before I never had rest. Grant rest, O Lord, in Thy (heavenly) temple to him to whom this my temple Thou didst give a temporary resting place, in the year 1752."

Among the quaint English epitaphs which call the reader to reflection may be mentioned, as an example of rare felicity in expression, that which was written to mark the earthly resting place of the printer, Benjamin Franklin:

"The body of Benjamin Franklin, like the cover of an old book, its contents torn, and stripped of its lettering and gilding, lies here, food for worms. Yet the work itself shall not be lost, for it will, as he believed, appear once more in a new and more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by the author."

Among the epitaphs from the pen of Ben Johnson we have some pretty poetic expressions, such as the following:

Underneath this stone doth lie
As much virtue as could die;
Which, when alive did harbor give
To as much beauty as could live.

These lines recall a similar strain from Tom Moore:

Though many a gifted mind we meet,
Though fairest forms we see,
To live with them is far less sweet
Than to remember thee!

There is something exceptionally pathetic in the form of those inscriptions which suggest the relation of loyalty of servants who pay their tribute to the dead master whom their affection follows beyond the grave. Caroline Southey, the wife of Robert Southey, whom a congenial poetic spirit attracted toward the author of "Solitary Hours," builds her charming story of the "Grave of the Broken Heart" upon an epitaph which belongs to this class. She describes it as located in the churchyard of one of the seaside hamlets on the western coast of England:

"To the memory of Millicent Abonye, daughter and only child of the brave Colonel Abonye, this tab-

let is inscribed by her faithful servant. She died August 10th, 18—, in the 30th year of her age, of a broken heart."

The good old servant, Nora Carthy, who tells the story, shows a singular sense of delicacy in this that she omits to mention her own name, although the ordinary style of inscription would call for such mention.

Modern critics have at times condemned what they term the sentimental and exaggerated form in which it was customary formerly to praise the departed. But, as has already been said, there is less logic in the assumption of insincerity than might appear to those who apply the cold reasoning of the head to all conditions of life. The heart has often good reasons, of which the head knows nothing; and this is the case here.

Samuel Parr himself was a master in the difficult art of lapidary inscription, and his letters on the subject, when requested to write Dr. Samuel Johnson's epitaph, are a matter of classical heritage. On that occasion Samuel Parr wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds:

"To the memory of Johnson, I as a scholar and a man, owe everything; and to the wishes of Sir Joshua Reynolds there is scarcely anything which I can with propriety refuse. Permit me, then to lay before you the reasons which dissuade, and even deter me from undertaking to do at all, what I despair of doing well."

"Johnson was a great writer, an accurate scholar, and a good man. Upon his correct and profound knowledge of the Latin language, I have always spoken with unusual zeal and unusual confidence, in opposition to the cavils of Monboddo and the insinuations of Joseph Warton. Whatever may have been the success of his efforts in Latin epitaphs, he has most just notions of the art itself; and my opinion is, that beyond all other men in the world, he has a right to such an inscription as perfectly corresponds with his ideas of the art, and his skill in Latinity."

"No the question is, from whom such an inscription is to be obtained."

"In regard to myself, I distrust my own abilities to perform what is excellent, in proportion as I understand in what excellence consists."

Eventually Parr did write the epitaph, which was much corrected to satisfy the critics to whom it was submitted. Finally, M. S. Routh told him that he did not like the last draft of it near as well as the first, and Samuel Parr sent him the inscription in its several stages with certain humorous allusions to the views of those who had objected to certain phrases like "probabili poetæ," among whom were Malone, Stevens, Sir W. Scott, Windham, and even Fox. "They (the Johnsonians) do not understand it, and I am a scholar, not a Belles-Lettres man; an epitaph writer, not a panegyrist; a critic, not a partisan."

Parr has left some other notable English inscriptions. One of which, on James Drake (June 24, 1761), and Elizabeth, his wife (June 10, 1775), concludes with the following apology, after the writer had praised the domestic and social virtues of the deceased:

"Solid merit disdains the aid of flattery but if gratitude be permitted to commend the virtues of the living let not filial piety be condemned for paying this tribute of sincere veneration to the memory of the dead.—Fra Arminio, in The Dolphin."

He who never in his life was foolish, was never a wise man.

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CATHOLICITY IN PORTO RICO.

Without doubt the Faith, throughout the island of Porto Rico, is not in the most flourishing condition, owing to the scarcity of the laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. Its physical formation is not unlike a rectangle; the length of which East and West, is about 100 miles, and its breadth 16 and South about 40 miles.

The inhabitants, with comparatively few exceptions, are Catholics, amounting in round numbers to about 1,000,000 souls. The third part of them are negroes, the majority whites. The greater part of the negroes live scattered throughout the island, outside of cities and towns. However, not only they, but also the whites living in cities and towns, are sadly in need of spiritual care, and are miserably exposed to the loss of their immortal souls.

On the one hand, they are deprived of the necessary instruction in their Catholic faith, as well as of the means of salvation, the Bishop having scarcely a hundred priests at his disposal; and on the other hand, every effort is made by the opponents of our faith to draw as many as possible from the Church. Male and female Protestant missionaries, supplied and supported by wealthy foreign missionary associations, have settled on the island to buy and to coax, by money and other inducements, over to their belief, especially the ignorant and poorer classes.

This deplorable state of things on the island, moved the Apostolic Delegate, Mgr. Chapelle, and the Rt. Rev. Bishop Blenk to apply to the Very Rev. Father General of the Redemptorist Congregation in Rome to establish a foundation in Porto Rico.

At the instance of the General, the Very Rev. Father Licking, C. S. S. R., Provincial of the Baltimore, Md., province, in company with the Rev. Charles Sigl, rector of the Redemptorist house of studies, Ilchester, Md., set sail in the beginning of last September, to San Juan, to negotiate with Bishop Blenk about the important project.

The Bishop, full of zeal for his fished flock, so much exposed to seduction and perversion, received the fathers at their arrival most cordially. Thousands of people greeted the fathers most enthusiastically, when they landed, and the next morning the church was crowded at the Masses of the fathers by eager and hopeful worshippers.

After the necessary recruiting from their five days' sea voyage, the Bishop personally escorted the fathers to the place most suitable for a foundation. It is the city Mayaguez, situated on the west coast of the island, with a population of 29,000 souls. An omission of about 2,000 souls is attached to it, southward in the mountain district. The local missionary territory covers over five square miles, not a very large expanse, yet a good vantage center for expansive missionary work throughout the whole island. The exact number of souls entrusted to the care of the fathers within their radius of labor can be obtained only by a census, which will be one of their first occupations.

Naturally, many difficulties presented themselves at first sight of such an enterprise. The church at Mayaguez is a very old structure, in an impoverished and dilapidated state, and very much in need of repair and replenishing. There is especially a great want of necessities for church services, as vestments and sacred vessels, etc. Upon their arrival the fathers will not have a house and home of their own. There is no parochial residence. The pastor and curate lived apart, boarding in houses of their parishioners. Moreover, the people were never accustomed to contribute toward the support of church and pastor. From what source necessary support is to come to the fathers, time will tell. On what are they to depend? On what did their forerunners depend? Not on land-grabbing schemes and speculations, nor on rich missionary funds and large money bequests, much less on foreign missionary corporations. God grant that this emergency will kindly appeal to the generosity and zeal for the house of God, of some of our people!

In addition, the prevailing climate is anything but beneficial to health and life especially for foreigners, coupled with arduous and debilitating missionary labors. Last, but not least, ignorance of the language of the country and of the people in its local and dialectical form of expression. All this would naturally be taken into consideration. However, St. Deus pro nobis, quia contra nos?

Frequenting the sacraments a single time in each year saves one's total severance from communion with the Catholic Church. But those who do so are travelling a dangerous highway. It is doubtful if any individual, who has Satan for his companion three hundred and sixty-four days in the year, can entirely part company with him for the remaining one.

Taking therefore the glory of God and the salvation of souls into consideration, the General in Rome, with trust in God's help and support, as well as in the well known missionary zeal, and sacrificing spirit of his American subjects, gratefully acceded to the earnest and reiterated petitions of Rt. Rev. Bishop Blenk, and forthwith authorized the Provincial of the Baltimore Province to accept the foundation at Mayaguez.

Hereupon the Provincial appointed the Rev. Charles Sigl, C. S. S. R., a native of Rochester, N. Y., and in company with him, Rev. William Lindner, C. S. S. R., and Rev. Thomas Mullany, C. S. S. R., stationed at St. Alphonsus, N. Y., as the founders of the Redemptorist Congregation on the island of Porto Rico.

Rev. Father Sigl, who will act as the first rector, left New York with Rev. Father Mullany on Nov. 8th, on the steamer "Ponce" for San Juan, when the final settlement will take place.

Towards the end of the month, Rev. Father Lindner with two lay brothers—Bro. Ubaldo (Augustin Pietsch) of Rochester, N. Y., and Bro. Polycarp (Henry Wagner) of Ilchester, Md.—will follow.

Later on, other missionaries will be sent. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8th, will take place the formal acceptance of the parish and the inauguration of the missionary center.—Michigan Catholic.

KIDNEY TROUBLE. A DISEASE THAT OFTEN TERMINATES FATALLY.

Mr. L. Lussier, of Soré, Tells how He Overcame the Trouble After Repeated Failures.

There is no trouble more dangerous to life than disease of the kidneys, for the reason that before any special symptoms have made themselves manifest, the disease has usually assumed a formidable character. The symptoms that first manifest themselves are usually weakness in the small of the back, pains in the region of the loins. The urine is sometimes highly colored, while in other cases it is extremely pale, frequently depositing a sediment. As the trouble progresses these symptoms grow more severe, and frequently terminate in dropsy, Bright's disease or diabetes. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are a specific for all kidney troubles, and have cured many cases after all other medicines have failed. Mr. L. Lussier, a well known navigator of Soré, Que., gives his experience for the benefit of other sufferers. He says: "For several years I suffered very much from kidney trouble. The symptoms usually made themselves manifest by severe pains in the back and kidneys, and sometimes they would be so bad that I would be confined to my bed for several days at a time. I tried a number of different medicines, recommended for the trouble, but got no relief, and finally became so discouraged that I thought a cure was impossible, and stopped taking medicine. Shortly after this I read in our local paper of a case of kidney trouble cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and this induced me to try this medicine. I soon felt that these pills were not like the other medicines I had been taking, for in the course of a few weeks I began to experience great relief. I continued taking the pills for a couple of months, by which time all symptoms of the trouble had disappeared, and I have not since had the slightest return of the disease. These pills also strengthened me in other ways and I believe them to be the best of all medicines."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills enrich and nourish the blood and strengthen the nerves. It is thus that they cure such troubles as dyspepsia, kidney ailments, rheumatism, partial paralysis, heart troubles, St. Vitus' dance and the ailments that make the lives of so many women a source of misery. Do not take any pills without the full name, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," on the wrapper around the box. Sold by all medicine dealers or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

THE YEARLY COMMUNICANTS.

Frequenting the sacraments a single time in each year saves one's total severance from communion with the Catholic Church. But those who do so are travelling a dangerous highway. It is doubtful if any individual, who has Satan for his companion three hundred and sixty-four days in the year, can entirely part company with him for the remaining one.

Catholic Reverence For Relics.

The poet in the following verse touched the motive of Catholic reverence for relics and things that have been intimately associated with our Lord and his saints.

If Time had spared some edifice
By Nazareth's Carpenter reared,
Few relics of the ages gone
Would be by men so much revered.

The Protestant opposition to a proper reverence for things made sacred by association has always been a puzzle to the Catholic mind. It seems so very unnatural. In the natural order of life men respect, love and reverence heroes, images and relics. The places where the great and good have lived, the scenes of their noted actions, their relics, are held in profound respect. In this country Mt. Vernon, Plymouth Rock, Bunker Hill, are objects of national reverence. The portraits of our loved and revered ones, locks of hair, all souvenirs and relics, the heart clings to with a natural fondness.

If we thus honor, and rightly, loved ones, political heroes and benefactors of society, why should we fail to give a like or a greater honor to the heroes of the Christian faith whose lives are like lamps to us?

Would not the Christian who believes not in relics, touch with reverence the hem of that garment that healed the sick woman in the Gospel, or the handkerchief that received the gift of healing from the touch of the Apostles, or the bones of the prophet that restored the dead man to life?

The existing generation absolutely cut off from the past generations would be like the branches of a tree severed from the roots. It is only by relics of one kind or another that we get into intellectual and sympathetic touch with our ancestors who once played their parts on this stage of existence and passed away, as we are playing ours and passing. All that they have left us in the intellectual moral or physical order are relics or reminders of their lives and activities. Man is a creature of imitation and must have patterns; he finds those patterns in the relics of the past. In them he finds the inspiration to high motives and noble deeds. The impulse to preserve the relics of the past, to love the lovable, to venerate the good and noble that they call to mind, is one of those elements that go to make up our human nature, one of those marks that distinguish man from the brute.—New York Freeman's Journal.

Gerat Arguments For Home Rule.

Opponents of Home Rule for Ireland might profitably take into consideration the following arguments in its favor uttered by two great Englishmen, one an illustrious statesman, and the other a renowned Oxford professor and writer on art. Writing to the "Pall Mall Gazette" fifteen or sixteen years ago, Ruskin said:

"Would it not be well to take account of the following ineradicable virtues of the Irish race in our schemes for their management?—First, they are an artistic people and can design beautiful things and execute them with indefatigable industry. Second, they are a witty people, and can by no means be governed by witless ones. Third, they are an affectionate people, and can by no means be governed on scientific principles by heartless persons."

Gladstone in one of his famous speeches on Home Rule used the following words:—"I ask that we apply to Ireland the happy experience we have gained in England and Scotland, where a course of generations has now taught us, not as a dream or a theory, but as a matter of practice and of life, that the best and surest foundation we can find to build on is the foundation afforded by the affections and the convictions and the will of man; and that it is thus, by the decree of the Almighty, that, far more than by any other method, we may be enabled to secure at once the social happiness, the power and the permanence of the Empire."

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"And a

"One day," said a pious covered a period of forty years, "I observed a little lamb among my came to hear the catechism not entirely unknown; ever; I recognized him a neighboring politician for his violent opinions, famous as a denouncer of priests. When I had finished went over to the child on one of the back benches politely with cap in hand looked sad, his cheeks clothes though of good well-made were put on were very much soiled see at once that it lacked a mother's care. "You go to school?" "Yes Father, I do." "But not to the Sisters?" "No Father. Papa the Sisters or the Brothers?" "You have come here to learn something of the child looked at not exactly understanding. "You wish to hear a God?"

He made a gesture. "Why then do you ask, 'if you are not learning something of holy Mother—the Blessed Virgin?' Suddenly his face beamed—the sad eyes sparkled. "Yes, Father," he said a whisper. "Some of the catechism children—the Holy Virgin. They had one at home made no difference, the one here. I was glad that, and so I came tears rolled down his added:

"Oh Father, I need very, very much." The cry of that sorrowful heart touched me deeply the other children have and then I will speak again," I said. When I returned to the little "Come," I said, "I take you to your mother at me again as though hending. 'To her,' 'who will take the place of mother.' I conducted chapel which the child had but that morning the feast of her Nativity boy raised his eyes to white marble statue eradiant of gold, and amidst of the loveliest of garden he exclaimed:

"Oh, how grand! Do you think she will for her little boy? She ready in her arms—a cry! Perhaps she does but oh, I have so long ther, and now that I am one more than ever."

"You are ill, then? I marked that your face pale."

"Oh yes, I am ill," I have something here which hurts me very in tor says I may not go more."

"How old are you?" "I am nearly nine," I said. "And you can read?" "Oh yes, I can read have gone to school since Papa thought it was better I should not be so lone. The cook told me that I only let me come here a kind mother. So I ran afternoon and came here."

"My child," I said, "not have done that, may be displeased."

"If you think so, I shall him. He might not be again."

"Oh no, you must not would not be right to Tell him that you have and before you go I will little catechism, and a study. If you wish the to be your mother who all about her and the Irish."

"Who is the Infant Jesus?"

"The child you see in the God."

"Oh well, give me the please, and I will learn I gave him the catechism back next day. His father from home he said been able to tell him three questions I had learned very well. The next gave him four, the next following afternoon he gave time I had seen peared paler, more exhausted had a perceptible difficulty. So a week passed no more. At the risk the displeasure of his father