Bocial Topics.

A couple of weeks ago the annual

conference of the Catholic Young

Men's Societies was held in Liver-

pool, England, It was the golden

jubilee of the foundation of the or-

ganization. It can be readily under-

stood that such a meeting was the

occasion of some very timely and

stirring addresses. The Bishop of

Liverpool, the Marquis of Ripon, and

several prominent clergymen and lay-

men read papers that would well de-

serve being reproduced and comment-

ed upon. One paper, submitted by the

Rev. John Barry, on the subject, "Liverpool After Fifty Years," seems

to us of such importance, on account

of the general applicability of its

congested centres, that we will give

our readers a synopsis of its most

and

contents to all large districts

striking passages.

THE DECAY OF REVERENCE.

Paper Read at the Conference of the Catholic Young Men's Society, Liverpool, by Very Rev John Norris.

+++++++++++++

er virtues. The greatest feature of lato the mind and becomes part of our modern life is publicity: the vir- ourselves; and when we lose our true tues or qualities that flourish in the ideals and find all our thoughts and sure of life, are valued and thought | will hold its place in our esteem or much of. We think highly of indus- have any influence on our practice. try, pluck, and perseverance, and 1 am afraid we think equally highly of another quality, which no stretch of reverence amongst us is to be found imagination will allow me to call a virtue—we call it "push." Some call in many of our schools. There is too it "self-assertion," "self-advertises much eagerness to impart knowledge ment"; some even call it by the and too little care to cultivate char-"cheek." When even little children are encouraged to write down their passing thoughts and send them to the expense of the understanding and be published in the magazines; when women, in ever-increasing numbers. imitate the ways and manners of too soon. A little knowledge puneth men, and sometimes even their dress, up and breeds pride and self-consciwhen notoriety is much sought after. and all kinds of means are employed to gain it, there is not much room for the silent, noiseless, stay-athome virtues. "Home" is no longer the word it was to us; home and all little ones' minds with many bits of that home means is by degrees becoming branches of knowledge and coming less and less known to us, when in fact they know very little, Our own fireside is less attractive; teach them the fatal mistake domesticity and its delights do not appeal to us; meckness, patience, self-sacrifice, even the good old-fashioned politeness, are all gradually vanishing from our midst, and with them the virtue of "reverence," the those above them, and this all the virtue without which the character, more because we have not only filled can attain a supreme degree of excel- them with knowledge that is for the lence," for "of all the forms of more most part mere lumber, but we have al goodness it is that to which the neglected to cultivate their charactepithet 'beautiful' may be most emperate and the weather that we have been so busy getting phatically applied" (Leeky, "Mortham ready to pass examinations als," i., 141). Beautiful, delicate that we have forgot to prepare them flowers do not grow in thickets ov-ergrown with briars, and neither do the "independence" which nowadays we look for them in the high-road characterises life, which is for the amid the tramping of many feet and most part a consequence of the conthe scrunch of wheels: they are to be ditions under which so many must found in favored and sheletered spots live in our day; the early age at where they can be cared for and pro- which children have to leave home teeted. So it is with the gentler vir- to gain their livelihood; the public tues; they cannot bloom amidst our lives led by an ever-increasing number rushing public life; they are to be of women; the loosening of family found only in congenial surroundings, ties, the lessening of parental responwhere they are cared for and watch- sibilities, the decay of family and doed over and protected against the mestic virtues, the gradual weakening whirl of modern existence.

SO WITH REVERENCE .- There is

no place for it in our work-a-day world; and yet it cannot be denied that the world is the poorer for the want of it. One of the best sides of human nature is left uncultivated. and the character of the age is ceprived of one of the most beautiful and winning qualities that can grace that wins its sure way to bear a of the, we must find out his ideals. the most unfeeling men. Out, says Mr. Lecky, "we look in vain for that . WHAT ARE THE IDEALS of the almost unconscious of the beautiful are those depicting scenes from the stigmatu, is also seen. most becutiful character of the just, generation? There are people wine valley, totally absorbed in the life of the great patriarch. It is, in so distrustful of self, so trustful of fought, that they are to be thought, that he will kneel at the this Church we kneel and say a farevont, which made . . . Its very (doubt they are there; but few sec. A long ratiway journey has to be Quite close to his grave we see the illusions the source of some of the their ideals there. The ideals of the made from the reliway station to Monastery of St. Francis, Its massing that reverence has so completely give, the doubtful movel, in illustration the valley below spreads our magnificatory. Italy possesses, perhaps, more think that if he had a herier re- decemy as may be, the music-hall Nature has covered with a very for- and solemn cloisters than the one that quaintance with the Catholic three song, the commoner theatres and the tile earth, and studded with a forest overlooks the Umbrian Valley. Alast opinion very considerably; but still I say, but they are not such as are branches of which the vine adheres have been relegated to the most infear there can be little dools | 12.1 | likely to lead to the cultivation of and extends from tree to tree over significant and smallest part of it. there is less reverence than there modesty, respect, or reverence for the entire valley. Afar to the West and the rest has been given to seculwas that its decay and decime have others. Even the better side of all this the Apennines raise their peaks alof; ar teachers, where they have estabset in and threaten to bring it to a so-called literature does not lend and in shading one side of the val- lished a college under the control of speedy end and send it back to Retv- itself to the propagation of these vir- ley from the rays of the slowly seten, whence it came. And the reason tues, with its braggart patriotism, ting sun, they seem to add special Cross of the Savoyard House and the is not far to seek. Mr. Lecky gives its everlasting praise of the Angio- justice and brightness to the eastern busts of Humbert and Marg crite the following as the reasons for the Saxon, and contempt for every other slope, gilding the steeples and bel- disfigure one portion of the ancient decay of reverence, "the self-assertion | nation under the sun; its excessive fries of the many churches in Assisi, refectory, whilst the other part has of liberty, the levelling of democracy, respect for prosperity and success, the dissecting-knife of criticism, the and its materialistic views of life the pilgrim's first thought is center-corridors and interior cloister, once economical revolutions that reduce in general Self-sacrifice, gentleness, ed on the Church of St. Francis, and hallowed by the presence of so many the relations of classes to simple con- meckness, reverence have no place in the monastery which adjoins it. The saints, are covered now with marble tracts, the agglomeration of popula- our modern British life; our ideals church is composed of three buildings slabs commemorating a visit of the tion, and facilities of locomotion, are strength, success, prosperity, and superposed. The lowest building or King and Queen of Italy, or a Minthat sever so many aucient ties." Toere is much to criticise in these reasons; they say too much and too need scarcely say it to you --- and yet they are not so much. the causes of the decay of reverence acteristic of our modern life is the as its companions. For these causes gradual decay of religion, Christianwe must go deeper, and I think we ty is becoming little more than a shall find them in the following:

FIRST.—In the utilitarian philosophy which is too widely spread and means. They have no sense of sin, no ongst us, the philosophy of self-in- idea of the supernatural, no thought terest, according to which we are of God and His claims upon them. governed exclusively by our self-in- Christianity is for the most part beterest. Vice is whatever is injurious coming a mere veneer, thinly spreadand virtue whatever is beneficial to ing over a civilization that is in its society; moral good and moral evil essence pagan, in its principles matmean nothing more than our volun-tary conformity to a law that will "Let us eat and drink, for to-mortary conformity to a law that will "Let us eat and drink, for to-morbring pleasure to us. Our very affections are all forms of self-love; all the world can give you; that is charity springs partly from our design to obtain the esteem of others."

"Let us eat and drink, for to-morbring to a law that will "Let us eat and drink, for to-morbring to the did as incalculable good to the relic of the venerated bouse. St. Church of God, in a moment of great peril. In the beginning of the 12th baptized in the neighboring cathedral century, the religious orders had of St. Rufinus. The baptismal fount sire to obtain the esteem of others, none the less real-of all this intenpartly from the expectation that the sity, this restless energy, this abfavours we have bestowed will be sorbing activity of modern life. reciprocated; it is impossible to love what is good simply as good; virtue | THE REMEDY .-- Utilitarianism is is a branch of prudence, vice is no- strangling the life out of Christianithing more than imprudence; rever- ty and we are gradually dropping the ence is the conviction that one who virtues of Christianity-all those at I dave say, hold these principles ity, gentleness, self-restraint, obedi- mortified and poor preachers were ness of penance and the vanity of that they act on them or are ruled from amongst us; they are very well by them; but we act on many mac- for nations of a lesser mettle. but knowledged principles, and shape our they do not fit the royal imperial lives on reasons which, put in black race that now rules so large a part and white, would shock us; and of the world. The remedy for this is. laws, our customs are saturated with ion I mean nothing else but the Cathem, we need to be very watchful tholic religion, the Catholic Church,

MODERN LIFE is not very favor- influence. What the eye sees every able for the cultivation of the gentl- day and the ear hears gradually sinks midst of publicity, that enable a man aims have their centre in self, there to hold his own in the rush and pres- is not much likelihood that reverence

ANOTHER CAUSE of the decat of in the kind of education that is given but expressive name of acter; and in the imparting of knowledge the effect of the system has been to cultivate the memory only at judgment. Not a few are waking up to the errors in this system, and nor ousness. A mere smatterer thinks he everything; the thorough scholar knows and recognizes how ignorant he is. But we do not make scholars in our schools, but fill our thinking they know a great deal, Their heads are turned, they lose their balance, and in their conceit, which we in our folly have fostered, they lose all respect and regard for them ready to pass examinations? of home influences, we at once see the growth of reverence. When menand women, when children even who, forth from an unsightly ravine and is a circular choir wherein the dis- Sanctuary with reverent care. are scarcely in their teens, have to speeds along through the luxuriant ciples of St. Francis still chant the children have faithfully obeyed fight and pash their way into the valley of Umbria. All those towns, praises of the Almighty with much world amidst a crowd of others who like Assisi, are built on a very high harmony and picty. The main Altar day the Franciscans Fathers of Strict nothing to elicit it; the pressure is steeple rises "recalling, as Ozanam the Franciscan Order: poverty, chas- infirmary in which St. Francis died too great, the conditions too hard, says, to the passing tourist in the tity and obedience. The upper church on the 4th of October, 1226, lies our human nature-a quality hale- to allow the development of any valley below, the thought of heaven, strikes the visitor with its charming quite close to the Portinocula Chapel, pendent alike of learning or trines, such gentle virtue. Men and women a thought which the tourist is too simplicity. Built in the form of a In this tiny cell, stretched upon ashthat can flourish in the back shart are formed and fashioned by their apt to neglect. But a pilgrim who Latin Cross, its tall sheader walls of es the Seraphic Saint breathed his of our streets as easily no to be 1435. The latin cross are said white color are unmarred save pure soul into the hands of God. Over aces of kings, and can give a brights fore them; and if we wish to get at less treasurer as the relies of St. by a line of frescoes below the beam. The altar is a magnificent statue of mess and sweetness to all about at the root, the foundations of a man's Francis and St. there, the thurch of full stained windows. For the pile the saint, from a cast taken off his the Portiumenta and the cradic of grim to Assisi, the most attractive face after his death, St. Francis'

others, so simple, so modest, so destiound in the higher faterature. No grave of the great saint, purest virtues of our nature." I do imultitude are to be found in the the town of Assisi. As the coach ive walls cover the western flank and not agree with Mr. Lecky in think- popular newspaper, the cheap maga- gradually ascends the serpentine path, growns the summit of a hold promondisappeared from amongst us; and I tions that go as mear the wind of icent panoramas. It is an easis which becutiful, but not more impressive! and her children he would modify his like. What these ideals are I need not; of short, stubby once trees to the to-day the children of St. Francis we sweep aside or ruthlessly represswhatever interferes with them. I Francis. In 1818 these saintly relies condescended to spend an hour withit must not be omitted-thegreatchargradual decay of religion. Christianname; great masses of our population have no religious training, are under no religious influence, have lost all knowledge of what religion

has power to do us both good and any rate, that do not lend themselves tract its attention it required men ents. "While yet a child," says Anaharm will only do us good, and so to the jacrease of our material proson to any length (see Lecky). Few. perity and greatness. Humility, pur- ties feigned to be. This class of mely tractiveness of sacrifice. the sweetknowingly; few would acknowledge ence, and reverence are disappearing Francis founded. A writer has said, day to St. Francis her desire to give and it cannot be too often repeated herself up entirely to God. The saint that "among the illustrious tombs soon changed Chare's desires into an before which mankind bows its head unflinching resolution, and the Order there are few as worthy as St. Fran- of the Poor Clares came into existwhen principles are sown broadcast of course, the revival of religion, and cis' grave of the respect of Cathover the land, and our literature, our it is the only remedy; and by relib-olics. and wakeful if we would escape their with her great principles of (1) Au- A short staircase leads the visitor

God; all who hold authority, whether in Church or State, whether in privpersonal reasons-those may come Blessed Lady. in or not-but because of their of-

of us, the blind, the lame, the poor, ness or respect or reverence for specially-and learn of Him, cause I am meek and humble of heart." From Him we learn not to push our way, to get on, to thrust might dwell on, but I should in short, lives the

the principle that is dinued into our ears in the to learn.

chivalrous respect for woman has the practice of his Catholic principles small, measuring only 21 feet gone, partly owing to the conditions will preserve for him, ever fresh and of modern life, partly owing to the blooming, an ornament through life.

When, at last, the town is reached,

were re-discovered and placed in a in the walls."

ed on the Church of St. Francis, and hallowed by the presence of so many

basement contains the remains of St. ister of Public Instruction, "who

precious urn in this crypt. To-day as Passing through the steep streets

one descends into this sacred spot to the city, one imagines that not a

he is hardly able to catch a view of change has come over the place since

the precious marble and altar that Francis was on earth. The change, if

lamps that flicker day and aight can-square or street in konor of Victor not dispel the darkness that holds Emmanuel or the Prince of Naples.

full sway. Nevertheless a ray of A small church has been built on the heavenly light seems to illumine the spot where St. Francis was born. The

shrine, or rather the soul of whoever dungeon into which his father cast

visits the tomb. For at our feet, the him for the space of two months, and

earthly remains of St. Francis await the door through which he passed as

their glorious resurrection. Those re- he left his home forever, are still to

received the impress of the Saviour's wire screen to prevent the pilgrims

five wounds. We are close to Francis from taking away with them some

somewhat relaxed their former life is still in that church. The main

of austerity. With this decadence Altar is adorned with two magnific-

there arose a sect of heretics who, ent marble statues of St. Francis

to instil their deadly doctrine all the and St. Clare. A narrow winding

more insidiously into the minds of street leads down to St. Dumian's

the faithful, were, exteriorly at least Church, where St. Clare's relics are

Very mortified and poor, Such was venerated. This illustrious virgin was

the state of the people that to at- born in Assisi of rich and noble par-

as mortified and holy as those here- to,e de Segur, she understood the at-

found amongst the Order which St. transient things." She exposed one

er of Assisi as their foundress.

lies which, on a neighboring hillock, be seen, Both are covered with

surround the tomb. The twenty there he any, consists in naming

ASSISI, THE BIRTHPLACE of St. to the second or lower church. This

Nothing, save the Franciscan Monar- and the recutatiin of the Divine Of-

distinguishes. Assisi from the other immediately over the tomb of St.

thority: that all authority is from decay of religion. I don't go into the Agnes to follow her example and finthere is no need to do so. But whatate life or in public, exercise that ever is the reason, there is no doubt God. Obedience is not merely a duty, ety the place she used to hold, her but a privilege. The soldier is proud influence is no longer the same- to to obey his officer; in doing so he the great loss of much that is most reverence and respect them, not for her cultivation of devotion to Our

(4). The practice of prayer, laity the clergy, the clergy their his-knees before God is not likely to be hops-each of us in his grade sub- reverential to his fellow-man; he who ject to the high powers, because we has never confessed that he has sinare taught that all power is of God, ned, has never beaten his breast in (2). The principle of humility. The sorrow and contrition, has never askchildren of the Church sit at the feet cd for help from his Father in Heavof Him Who invited us to Him- all on, is not likely to cultivate gentlehis "be- brother here on earth.

There are many more points others aside, to trample on others in you too long. I will only ask you to the brow and the face, hands and feet order that we may gain a high place, bear in mind the glorious mission of uncovered. The face had become very But we learn that failure is not net the Catholic Church, of which you brown. cessarily want of success; that suc- are proud to be (the) children. That cess is often the greatest failure of mission is the same now as it was all, that self-assertion and self-con- in the days of the Apostles; and as fleaving Assisi and the Umbrian Valfidence are often mere cloaks of emp- she then purified the pagan world of ley, pilgrims pay a visit to the tiness and weakness, that true manifits uncleanness, and taught the Church of St. Mary of the Angels hood is seen in him who is respect- proud and haughty the sweetness of which is, perhaps, better known as ful, yielding, and humble, who can humility and obedience, and showed the church of the Portiuncula. This see and look up to the excellencies of to all the true greatness of the re- magnificent temple owes its origin others, who is not afraid to own verence and respect which should be to the great Dominican that he may be wrong, and who resishown to all God's creatures, especis Pope St. Pius V. in 1831-1832 an cognizes that, however able or clev- ally to those who are made in His carthquake destroyed it in part, but er he may himself be, there are many image and likeness, she can work the in eight years it was re-constructed. and are more capable than he is- children are true and loyal in our tering is the sight of the tweaty-one is Here, as everywhere else, we are ly paintings and mosaics. Whilst the be "the salt of the earth." A Catholic nave and two aisles are discouragingpresent day, that every man is as household should be the abode of relly bare. But the generosity of the good and perhaps better than every verence; a Catholic Society like this Catholic world will, in due time, enother, but on this, that there is no (of which we are all so justly proud) able the children of St. Francis to man in whom every other man can-should spread the perfume of this vir- decorate the nave as it has already from whom he cannot find something man can wear no flowers more be- es in the venerated sanctuary. A litcoming than the beautiful flower of the chapel stands in the large nave. (3). In the sultivation of purity reverence, which his Catholic Faith beneath the high cupola. This is the and respect for woman. Reverence, will put him in possession of and chapel of the Port Incula. It is very

been perverted into a theatre. The

question of woman and public life; ally the other sister Beatrix and their widowed mother. St. Francis established St. Clare and her disciples in authority in the name and place of that woman no longer holds in soci- a house adjoining St. Damian's Church, This church was the seene of many of St. Francis' ardent and loving visits to the Most Blessed Sacraobeys the Queen. We, too, are proud winning in human life. The Catholic ment. In one of those visits, a voice to obey those above us, because they Church alone has in her possession from a crucifix said to St. Francis, are to us in the place of God. We the means of reviving reverence in still seeking his vocation: "Go, from a crucifix said to St. Francis, Francis, and restore My House which I see falling into ruins." The humble youth interpreted these words in a fice, Children reverence their parents, which I will only say one word. He material sense, and in favor of St. servants reverence their masters, the who never humbles himself on his Damian's Church, which was at that time, in a state of dilapidation. "He was too humble,"says abiographer. "tobelieve that God called him (Francis) to restore the spiritual ruin of the church. St. Clare's body reposes in the crypt of this modest church. For some 500 years, all trace of the saint's relics was lost until in the year 1850 the body was found in a state of wonderful preservation. It is dressone ed in the costume of the Poor Clares, keep a wreath of white flowers encircling

length, 13 feet in width and about 20 feet in height. But what great diminutive walls. There the noble coming the mother of St. Francis of Assisi. There Francis received the grace of his vocation, and founded the Franciscan Order. There, at the dead of night, Ste. Clare repaired and, in the presence of Francis and his first disciples, vowed her virginity to Jesus Christ, her only spouse Francis, is a small city built on a church, though resembling a base- and only love. Finally in this little peak in the Appenine Mountains and and the revitation of the Divine Of- chapel St. Francis decided on foundalmost in the very heart of Italy, is used the more frequently for Mass ing his Third Order, and obtained of Our Flessed Lord, through the intertery and a little more extensive area. Hice, Between the two transepts and cession of Mary Immaculate, the Indulgence of the Portiuncula, which little cities, perched on the mountain Francis rises the main Altar, which can be gained every day of the year that modern life is not favorable to beights, which greet the tourist or has been raised to the dignity of a in this chapel. St. Francis often told pilgrim's eye as the train issues Papal Altar. Behind this Altar there his religious to guard and keep dying patriauch's commands and tohave also to fight and push for elevation, are composed of houses in is surmonated by a small dome con- Observance are very kind in conductthemselves, there is no room for re-, a very primitive style of architecture taining the famous frescoes of Giotto, ing visitors to other holy and interverence, there is nothing to evoke it, and over every town the church These frescoes illustrate the vows of esting shrines in the west church. The

> NERVOUSNESS. When a ous un-

broken

down. Nine
times in ten
it indicates that there is some special disease or weakness of herawoman. Nine times

plete mental and physical wreck.

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I trust I never may again. I was suffering from female weakness and very much from nervous prostration.

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Discouraged, broken-down women should

health to Dr. Pierce's medicines."

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The Rev. Father Barry said : "A man's environment is a mighty, force for his weal or his owe. The fruit of the churches and of the CHURCH OF ST. MARY .- Before schools has withered in the stifling atmosphere of over-crowded dwellings, which fill up every free inch of building space in court and alley. The beauty of God's worship is forgotten amidst the squalor or the slum. The civilizing influence of the school is undone by the brutalizing influence of the crowded house in the crowded court. When a whole family lives in one room the mysterothers who know more than he does same wondens again if only we her What first strikes the visitor on enrarely sacred, because they are hardnot practice as well as in our principles, side chapels all adorned with master- by held secret. Dwelling in slum, and means moral anaemia and physical atrophy. It is starvation of soul and body. Humanity, as I see it in crowded court and alley, is humanity in a chrysalis stage. Is it not what shall be, what should be, what must be, It, not see something to admire, and the everywhere; and a Catholic young aided to make some beautiful change is what ought not to be. It is what should not be allowed to be. It is what we Catholies should not allow "How can we better this state of things, which dwarfs the physical, moral, and religious life of our poory events have taken place within its It is not for me to say. Enough at lady, Pica, obtained the favor of be- and the urgent need for a remedy, present if I get the extent of the evil recognized by us all. Until we admir the existence of a want we are not

likely to take active steps to mee, Yet there is an evil, an overwhelming evil-none the less real because we have grown accustomed to it. All citizens are grateful to the Town Council and its energetic medical adviser, Dr. Hope, that the work of demolishing insanitary property is steadily being continued. But the Church has work to do. She has done her ordinary duties, but she has to do an extraordinary duty to-day. Modern industry in the last half century has rusked together in our great city thousands and thousands of toilers under unhealthy and unsocial conditions. These conditions must be relieved by the Church, She cannot escape the duty, however unusual it may seem to some of us. The Church which neglects social and civic duties in our day is doomed to see her labors comparatively unfruitful. Our love for our fellow-men must be shown especially to those of our fellows who are hardly men-whose manhood is debased by unhealthy toil and defective food; whose homes are styes; whose children are street, vagrants; whose women are the mothers of Edustrial slaves what are storied window, and pointed arch, and pealing organ, and marble altar? The soul which would have cherished and been elevated by these things has been crushed out. Such men have no hunger and thirst mind is for the better and higher things of this world or the next. Their hunger ly filled is for bread; their thirst is for beer with nerve which to so many of them is better and cheaper than bread; their whole thought is centered on carning the one and obtaining the other.

Thus it was half a century ago. that her Thus it is to-day. But it is not yet nervous too late for all attempts. If we cansystem is not for the moment bring our voices disorder- to bear with effect against to bear with effect against the ed and curse of overcrowded, unhealthy oken dwellings, we could at Fast, even now, band ourselves together in a general organization, of which each and every parish should form a unit, with the young men's societies as its pivot, and thus restrict the evils arising from one source of weakness, the migratory habits of our people. First make a man's life human, then you may hope to make it Christian. Here, in this city, within the line of shadow of beautiful churches, are thousands of men and women. Catholics nominally, practically nothing. And this after fifty years!

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the Franciscan Order, travels along of these somewhat decaying frescoes cord, stained with blood from well braver to the Secaphic Saint the Italian Government. The Red

the important and delicate organs which make in ten it means that some instant and radical measures must be taken to save her from com-

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