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WORKS OF CHARITY.

(From the Dublin Review.)

In "Hospitals and Sisterhoods," we find an account of Anglican sisterhoods, and their history is a striking development of that wonderful movement of the present age on which Catholics have ever gazed with a strong interest, and in which so many now numbered within the one fold have borne their part.

How many hundreds have passed in, how many foundations have been sent forth from their central institutions? We find that both Dr. Pusey's and Miss Sellon's institutions together have numbered but thirty professed Sisters, and many of these have gone away, some to become Catholics, others to return to social life.

The Sisterhood of Holy Cross has literally dissolved into fragments, its members scattered, its convent and property made over to Miss Sellon; a few of the Sisters also entered her Sisterhood. And the Plymouth Sisterhood with its Bishop's sanction and its fruitful deeds of love? The Bishop has vanished from the scene, withdrawn his sanction, and gone so far as to deny all knowledge for years past of its proceedings; and Miss Sellon, poor lady left without a Bishop, saw no other resource than becoming one in her own person, and has actually assumed the title of Lady Abbess, and her ascent to such a pedestal has fairly turned her head.

absurdities as we have described, are as abhorrent to her as to us; but why then, may we ask, does she so strongly condemn an extract from a late work of Mr. Paget's upon this subject, calling it the verdict of a person who is "accustomed to see things only on one side, and from one side?" Mr. Paget's remarks appear to us extremely just. "Look out," he says, "a clever enthusiastic woman, with a strong will of her own, and no stronger will to control it; make her the Lady Superior of a Sisterhood without any man to come with a weight of years, authority and holiness, to say to her, this must not be, that would be very silly or unreasonable, or improper, and I positively forbid it; do this, and you will do the devil's work in frustrating a means of good as effectually as himself could do. You will get Sisterhoods in all the slavish misery of nuns, and with none of the protection of convents, a pack of unhappy women, forbidden to exercise common sense, and rendered morbid, sensitive, and undevout, by the system which the uncontrolled power of the Lady Superior exercises over them; and not rarely you will have the Lady Superior go crazy, because of the unlimited indulgence of her talent for governing."

Earnestly do we implore Mrs. Jameson not to lend her powerful advocacy to evil as well as good. She had pondered on well, and searched deeply, before she praised and defended Catholic orders.—Let her equally weigh Protestant Institutions in the balance; and, in urging her countrywomen on in the path of charity and benevolence, let her warn them against the pitfalls into which so many who set out on that road with good intentions have fallen. We are not ignorant that the spirit of charity among the Tractarian body has been by no means confined to the Sisterhoods upon which we have commented, although they were undoubtedly the principal. Many are the excellent and self-denying women in different parts of our land who are bravely doing their part to stem the torrent of vice and misery which rushes so rapidly upon us, and are emulating the deeds of those in the Catholic Church whom they have lately learnt to love and honor.

We can honor those who have, within the last few years, endeavored to imitate the labors which for near two centuries, have been practised by the nuns of the Good Shepherd, and devote themselves to the task of reclaiming fallen women; or those again, whom the history of Louise le Gras, or Jeanne Jugan, have stirred up to take home destitute orphans, to tend the aged with a daughter's care, to smooth the sick pillow of the forsaken, and for the performance of these tasks to bid farewell to the things the world holds dear. We doubt not those efforts are very acceptable in God's sight, and these noble individual acts will have reward from Him; but individual acts they are and will remain.—They will not cast their seed and multiply, they are sown in stony ground where they have not much earth.

One feature in their constitution, strikes a Catholic forcibly; they are all separate foundations, they have not sprung one from another. Their Superiors go through no training, but commence the work of guiding others with all their own prejudices unsoftened, their own defects unsubdued. How can they rule wisely who have never learned to obey? Striking, also, is the gloom which invariably hangs over them, and which contrasts strangely with their oft repeated assertion of happiness in their work. Visit them, and you will meet them with a singular constraint of manners cold and uncourteous, and an anxious sorrowful look, very unlike the bright faces and the graceful courtesy, and the warm sympathy universal in Catholic Convents; and no wonder; for they possess not the inestimable treasure which brings to every convent the joys of Bethlehem, the dwelling of our Lord in the Tabernacle. He sheds around Him a sunshine before which the light of earth grows dim; and they

who are so blessed as to dwell in His house, cannot do aught but praise Him with a glad and thankful heart; and beside, this gloom and constraint must always be found where freedom of thought and speech are forbidden; and this is most prevalent in Anglican Sisterhoods. On the subject of the Catholic Church, silence is strictly enjoined. We have heard that the very mention of the name of an eminent convert, once cherished in the Church of England, has been proscribed; a rupture with close and dear friends, who have entered the true Church, is an invariable rule; the visits and letters of such are avoided as if they brought infection; and the free perusal of Catholic books is disapproved of; and this practice is pursued with those whose very study of Catholic works, whose very admiration of Catholic saints has led to their adopting their present mode of life; whose very rules and observances are imitations of Catholic orders.

No wonder, then, that this fear of friendly intercourse with Catholics, so plain a proof of the weakness of their cause, paralyses the mental powers, and casts a gloomy aspect over their life. In what Catholic convent are the presence or works of a Protestant feared? Rather it is to the convent the Protestant goes for instruction and encouragement. Freedom of thought is the atmosphere in which they whose faith is built upon a rock, live and move. The total misconception which exists among Protestants of the real source of the religious life, in which Mrs. Jameson so fully shares, is, that they constantly mistake the effects for the cause. It is common to hear among Protestants a qualifying admission that, under certain circumstances with certain regulations, conventual establishments might be useful; they must not interfere with social ties; that for those who have no homes, the solitary, melancholy, and crotchety ladies who are not likely to settle in life, and who "really want an object"—for these such asylums would indeed be excellent; and yet it is precisely this class who are totally unfitted for the cloister life, and who will scarcely ever be found there. By far the greater number of nuns have entered in the freshness of their youth, while the world lay before them with its bright illusions undispelled; and those to whom the vocation has come in maturer years, are certainly the very women fitted to adorn society, and shed sunshine around their homes; and this because celibacy has ever been held by the Church as the highest and most perfect state. She who has raised Holy Matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament, pouring thereby riches of grace on those whom God wills to serve Him thus, has yet in the harmony of her wise counsels taught her children to esteem it a gift when called to relinquish its joys. Therefore they seek not the cloister because they are tired of an idle life, or sick of the world and its cares, or afraid of becoming solitary and useless members of society, or because they want a comfortable home, or to gain a respectable livelihood; none of these motives could sustain a soul through the rigors of a religious life. But a divine whisper is heard within their hearts. The charities of home, of parents, and brethren, the bliss of wife and mother, are less dear to them than to sit at the feet of their Lord; therefore, talented, accomplished, and refined, if they move in higher rank, or gentle, industrious and intelligent, if from a lower grade, all they possess is joyfully offered to their God. Nor the farewell spoken, the convent entered, is the work completed. Patiently they try their hearts to be certain it is neither enthusiasm, nor excitement, nor any lower motive that has impelled them to the step. Humbly do they submit to the decision of others, and carefully prepare themselves for the life they trust is before them; and the novitiate of Catholic convents consists comparatively little in the training for works of mercy in which their future years are to be spent; it is more passed in acquiring the spirit of detachment from the world, in a vivid realization of the nearness of eternity, in contempt of earthly praise and honor, in subduing the proud will to the childlike meekness of Christ, in the forgetfulness of self, in the crucifying of the flesh till austerities and hardships become sweet to them. These are the lessons those long years of preparation are spent in; and long do they seem to those who part for the moment of their heavenly espousals, for the embrace of Him whose love can wither not, nor change, and from Whom death has no power to part them; and the time arrived, and the vows spoken and accepted, the sacrifice is complete; but now ended, day by day do they offer themselves afresh, body and soul; each day's toil, each new call upon their strength and energy is hailed by them as a new gem to be won and worn for all eternity. Ask a professed nun whether she would change with the queen on her throne, or the bride in the quiet fulness of her joy, and she will tell you that she esteems her lot far happier, far more glorious. Now it is easy to imagine that deeds of love to their fellow creatures, would be rare amongst those whom God has so richly endowed

with His peace, and whose hearts are burning with such pure emotion. Therefore, the religious life does not spring from the desire of doing good works, as Mrs. Jameson imagines, but from that very life arise the desire and the ability to do them. "What," exclaims Mrs. Jameson, "cannot we have sisters of charity without accepting also an infallible pope, transubstantiation, the immaculate conception, and heaven knows what, the terror and abomination of our evangelicals?" Assuredly you cannot, because in union there is strength; and where is the union to support the Protestant sister? She may be an Evangelical, her next sister a Tractarian, her superior a Broad churchwoman, and half-a-dozen other shades might be found in the community. Would such teaching or ministrations be very beneficial, or would peace dwell in such homes? If, on the other hand, to avoid this, each party should form a community for itself, and agreement of religious views should exist at least within their walls, then their efforts would be small and isolated, having no centre and no power of extension. We repeat then, that out of the Catholic Church religious orders will never flourish; here and there you may have a hot-house plant, but it will last for a little while, and then fade away.—Catholic orders grow luxuriantly in the open air, flowers of every hue the heart of man can desire, no frost can blight, no storm overthrow them; crush them for awhile, they will spring up again the sweeter—let human sin and laxity creep in for a time, and some fervent spirit shall be raised up among them, and the reformed order surpass even the foundation; their root is deep, their soil fruitful—that root is unity, that soil is faith.

The knowledge that the want of active works of charity is beginning to be felt deeply by Protestants; should urge on English Catholics in the good path. The crushing effect of the penal laws, the pressure of our poverty, unable to meet, as we would, the innumerable claims upon our sympathy, have sorely pressed down our spirit; but the necessity of the time calls on us to lay aside fear, and do the little we can with good courage. Since England in her blindness shuts the door of our public charities against our religious, let not our seculars neglect the additional labor that for this cause falls to them; let them still break up the ground that it may be ready for the good seed in future days. Paris, fruitful as she is in religious orders, yet abounds also in deeds of mercy done by seculars. In the Society of St. Vincent de Paul the ladies alone number seven hundred. We do not overlook the difficulties of working in a Protestant country, but they are not insurmountable; here and there, and but little known, men and women inspired with the love of Christ, pursue their arduous and anxious task, yet one which brings with it a reward even on earth, in enlarging the power of sympathy, in warming the heart, in giving consolation to their own griefs while affording it to others.

Many of the apparent difficulties in our way have been proved to be visionary; it has been proved that by working in a spirit of love and forbearance, prejudices have been dispelled, and a cordial spirit between ourselves and Protestants awakened. Great care must be taken to guard our steps that we give not up one iota of principle for the sake of peace; but with the class of intelligent Protestants, of whom Mrs. Jameson forms a specimen, we could work with good will and comfort. We must not forget that patience is peculiarly our lot in these evil times; but let us not be discouraged.

The cry that souls are perishing rings in our ears; our little children fill the streets, growing up in ignorance, which will become infidelity if we do not succor them; our poor lie unconsolated in our hospitals and workhouses. In their hour of suffering and distress the soul can easily be reached; how many are there who have been strangers to God, being without the sacraments, having their faith indeed, but having it only to condemn them, who, by the encouraging words of those who sought them out have been brought back to the Good Shepherd, and their souls saved, and the dishonor they had done to God wiped away? Can we, upon whose souls the tide of holy sacraments is ever flowing in their gracious fulness, refrain from extending to others the wondrous gift? Only contemplate for one moment with the Catholic eye the workhouses which Mrs. Jameson so truly pictures. We think not of the bodily suffering, or even of the contact with evil. That is not ours to remedy; but we think of that spiritual desert in which they are, where the Holy Sacrifice is never offered, where (except on rare occasions), the priest of God is proscribed, and then has to enter, as if it were some great favor; and surely every heart will burn to do its little towards strengthening the faith that is in those poor exiles, and to comfort them as well as we are able. A field of work indeed lies before us in regaining only our bad Catholics. Let us show our Protestant brethren who are now bestirring themselves, that we will be foremost in the work for God's glory; for commu-

nion of labor is no new thing to us, who live in the blessed atmosphere of the Communion of Saints.

(Concluded.)

REV. DR. CAHILL.

ON THE ANNUAL FARCE, PALPABLE LIES, AND GROWING INFIDELITY OF THE BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Cork, April 29th.

On last week no less than three Bible Societies held their annual meetings in the Rotundo; two of these assemblies were presided over by the Earl of Roden; and the Hon. and Rev. Wm. Wingfield was the chairman of the third. If the various speakers had confined their orations to the usual Christian combination of devotion and calumny: of exclamations of hollow charity and words of real malice: if they had indulged their hypocrisy in the old mock-twaddle about "righteousness and the spirit and the Lord," while expressing tangible feelings of hatred, the flesh, and the Devil, no one would have noticed this annual trick, to deceive the British public, and to prop up, by a pretended show of work, the rotten, tottering fabric of the Church Establishment. But when the movers and seconders of stereotyped resolutions go out of their way, tell sickening stories without names or places, talk of the Christian ignorance of foreign countries in connexion with Catholicity, it becomes a duty to follow these unprincipled revilers in their disgusting avocations, and to expose their fanatical lies, and their unholy traffic wherever the name of English Protestantism is known. The most singular feature in the character and conduct of the persons who patronize these societies is, that while in private or public life they are gentlemen of the most spotless honor, scholars of deep erudition, and men of winning social feeling, they are on the platform of their Biblical meetings transformed into unscrupulous defamers of our Catholic ancestors, into shameful misrepresenters of our faith and discipline, and into relentless inappreciable persecutors of our race and our name.

Inference to our doctrine, there is no mean stratagem too base for them, no lie too degraded for them: convents are ransacked, monasteries are watched to twist ordinary occurrences into tales of atrocious slander: and if on the face of the earth a branded, infamous priest can be procured, he is paraded from city to city: and his depraved heart and his sacrilegious lip are bribed with Biblical gold, to forge turpitudes, and to utter perjuries against our religious creed. Yet not this monstrous wretch, but his Protestant conspirators are to blame for this unfathomable infamy: he is hired, and bribed, and paid, as a public liar: and at the bidding of the Anglican High Priest, and in order to please the British Pontius Pilate, this consecrated assassin would plunge his spear into the heart of Christ himself.

The next most wonderful ingredient in the frame-work of these societies is the inconceivable fact, namely, how their audiences believe or listen to such palpable falsehoods, as form the principal matter of the speeches. Yet strange to say, that although our Bishops, our Priests, our writers, our historians, our books, our Synods, our Councils, have ten thousand times over and over again published contradictions to these opprobrious calumnies: although we have spoken, preached, wrote, and sown the contrary, yet such is the invincible instinct of a ferocious Biblical that he comes out with the old lie in the same unmoved effrontery as if they were never contradicted. Like the ice at North Pole encased in eternal cold, equally unchanged in light and darkness, the Irish Biblical, Orange Souper, is obdurate in bigotry, so impervious to demonstration, that he goes on from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, unaltered by time, unimproved by experience, and unsoftened by the very light which Heaven sheds on his heart. In fact, he is in a wrong position; he is too far from the sun: and although he occasionally sees the light, he has chosen his place at too great a distance from its practical influence. In the following extracts which I shall select, it will be seen by the readers that the same system of calumnious nameless stories, the same degrading misrepresentation, the same disgusting fabrication are practised which have been exposed, and hooted in public contempt, every hour since the days of "the Reformation" were first published in our Christian Irish soil. Ordinary attention to the speeches delivered at these meetings will prove the fatal results which have been long anticipated, namely, that the decision of each man's private judgment in the meaning of the Sacred Volume, would ultimately lead to the denial of its Inspiration, and end in open, avowed infidelity. Again the reader cannot fail to notice the coarse vein of ill-timed humor which pervades certain of these orations, in which the word of God, and funny allusion to "the girls," alternate in the beatific oratory and spiritual sallies of the Rotundo Bibleals. On the whole view of the entire proceedings, calumny, fabrication, misrepresentation, malice, indecency, gibes, and infidelity, seem all