

THE BOOKLOVER'S CORNER

COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

Quae est enim gens, aut quod genus hominum, quod non habet sine doctrinae anticipationem quamdam Deorum? asks Cicero in his famous treatise De natura Deorum. From the beginning of time, the innate idea of a superintending being or beings has existed in the mind of man. The religions of the forefathers, taking the term as embracing all of whatever nationality who lived before the Christian revelation, show a gradual evolution in the adaptation and realization of that idea, commencing with the very crude primitive cults, and culminating in the higher philosophical views presented to us by Cicero in the above work. The relations between fore-Christian religions were necessarily indistinct and certainly not hostile, partly because the religion of the heathen consisted rather in rites and ceremonies than in any constant belief, as Bacon observes; partly, too, owing to forced exclusiveness. The Christian religions, on the contrary, are naturally interrelated and antagonistic. The Church founded by Christ had definite dogma and demanded assent thereto. In the course of centuries by heresy and schism, members revolted and refused assent and thus built up numerous sects of to-day. Lastly we come to the after-Christian stage, chiefly evidenced in France and with what ideals to be sadly indicated. The study of these phases of religion, their relativity, and the phenomena attached to them forms the subject of Comparative Religion.

This recent science has been all too little studied by Catholics, and it was with the view of satisfying a real need that the Catholic Text Society of England set about issuing a cheap series of booklets (price 1d. each) dealing with the history of Religions. We noticed some time ago in these columns the first three lectures, and since then another twelve have appeared. We propose this week to devote ourselves to the consideration of "The Study of Religions," by Rev. L. de Grandmaison, may be regarded as an introductory pamphlet explanatory of the subject-matter with which we are concerned, and defining terms of which an exact comprehension is necessary, such as religion, theism, animism, totemism (a most interesting paragraph on this ancestor-worship, magic, and natural and revealed religion. The section on the growth of the science of Comparative Religion is most successful reading, showing how the sporadic activity of a hundred years ago in this branch of learning has developed to its present dimensions, making it a subject of universal and growing interest. We further see its importance to Catholics when we learn that a great number of authorities considered "all religions to be but the progressive manifestations of a single religious sentiment, incarnate, from age to age, in these various manifestations according to the need and stage of culture of the several peoples among whom they appeared." The subject matter of the study of some religions is obscure and vague for obvious reasons, and consequently offers a field for the widest speculation. So the Catholic must needs beware. From similarity, identity is concluded, from a distant analogy, historical interdependence. Great writers have approached their matter with preconceived ideas and a predetermined philosophical attitude, making such their criteria, and adapting fact to theory rather than yielding theory to fact; "each scholar writes everywhere, as common ground-work, what he holds to be the fundamental religious elements. G. P. Tiele sees "spirits"; J. G. Frazer, "magic"; W. R. Smith, "totems" and "blood alliances"; Guyau and Burkheim detect the "social instinct"; and H. Hubert the idea of "sacredness."

But we can pardon the vagaries of an infant science. "He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth... that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him." (Acts xvii.) The peculiar note of the "Religion of Ancient Greece" (by Rev. J. Huby) was its anthropomorphising tendency, or disposition, due to the imaginative mind of the Greek, to personify and deify the productive forces of nature. Recent research has almost completely uprooted all Greek religion from ancestor worship or heathen-worship. His pre-Homeric tone, tree and animal worship, was not more fetishism; the Greek was keenly sensitive of the force behind the matter, and explaining all action in Nature by will and passion, transformed natural powers into persons. Father Huby concludes that "at the earliest period of which we have any knowledge the Gods adored are celestial and immortal beings." The Homeric epoch marks "the full bloom of anthropomorphism." The Gods of Homer are idealized men, possessed of all passions and desires, alike to mortals in countenance and limb, but immortal, though liable to pain and suffering. Olympus, the home of the Gods is an organized monarch-

chy with Zeus as sovereign lord. A power independent of these (at least so far as we can make out from vague indications) is Moira or Fate. Fr. Huby suggests, and the suggestion best meets the difficulties, that it was a providential dispensation fixed by Zeus once for all, and from which out of respect for established order, he is unwilling to make any departure." Another element in the Homeric religion was the belief in a future life: "some, 'tis whispered, down in hell Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel."

The next period is marked by the Theogony of Hesiod (between 800 and 900 B.C.) who attempted to synthesize and classify the legends of the Gods. "It had, for the Greeks at least, the merit of giving a genealogical unity to their bewildering host of divinities, and of being a convenient and handy table of reference." Homer and Hesiod supplied a good basis of religion, and though legends of the Gods were often discordant the Greeks were scrupulously careful in observing traditional rites, the due discharge of which constituted their claim to be truly "religious." Father Huby gives some very necessary paragraphs on the chief divinities with their outstanding features, on hero-worship, popular festivals, and the mysteries, which represent the first break with the traditional mythology. The reviewer speaks at length of the Eleusinia and presents a good reconstruction of the ordinal of the strange ceremonies attached to them.

With the rise of Athens in political supremacy and the huge development in all branches of art under the golden rule of Pericles, the Greek religion was doomed, and with the advent of the philosophers, the decadence set in. Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes together with the Pythagorean school, passively heralded the revolt; the Eleatic school actively. Then came the influence of the Sophists, the professed agnosticism of Protagoras, the absolute nihilism of Gorgias, and the scepticism of Euripides. Pindar, Aeschylus and the "kindly" Sophocles made a stand for the old order, and so did the people at large, as we can judge from the punishment meted out to Diagoras, Protagoras and Socrates. Ritual and worship, however, rather than profession of faith kept the old religion together; then came the conquests of Alexander, and Greece was open to foreign influences. "In the fusion of ideas and races which was characteristic of Hellenism, a change came over Greek mythology." Later, the "Caesar-worship" of Rome was introduced into Greece and Asia Minor, and added to the medley of creeds. Side by side with Rome, the Greek religion at last fell before the triumphant march of Christianity.

"The Religion of the Athenian Philosophers," by Rev. H. Browne, J. J. and "Aquinas," by Very Rev. V. McNabb, should be read after "Ancient Greece." We saw in our last paragraph that the new rationalism in Greece properly started in the time of Pericles; "it was based upon the study of physical phenomena rather than upon merely abstract lines of reasoning." With the Sophists, who were at a time its exponents, it grew to be discredited. This much-maligned body of men were "rightly or wrongly, and in a manner which was not popular," writes Fr. Browne, "regarded out to Diagoras, Protagoras and Socrates. Ritual and worship, however, rather than profession of faith kept the old religion together; then came the conquests of Alexander, and Greece was open to foreign influences. "In the fusion of ideas and races which was characteristic of Hellenism, a change came over Greek mythology." Later, the "Caesar-worship" of Rome was introduced into Greece and Asia Minor, and added to the medley of creeds. Side by side with Rome, the Greek religion at last fell before the triumphant march of Christianity.

It is Wise to Prevent Disorder.—Many causes lead to disorders of the stomach and few are free from them. At the first manifestation that the stomach and liver are not performing their functions, a course of Parmelee's Vegetable Pills should be tried, and it will be found that the digestive organs will speedily resume healthy action. Laxatives and sedatives are so blended in these pills that no other preparation could be so effective as they.

representative of the Catholicism of his age, he rightly finds a place in the series. "Aristotle is everywhere the master of St. Thomas. He rarely, if ever, departs from the master. All that is true in Greek ethics finds its place in the vast synthesis of the Christian thinker. He does not destroy but fulfill. He subtracts little but adds much. There is hardly even a chance word of Aristotle that is not developed and whole areas of Christian ethics are added to Aristotle's masterly summary of Grecian thought." And so the Church has ever assimilated what thought and action other systems of thought and action—Fr. McNabb in a few introductory pages on the life of St. Thomas, shows how a "world-wide experience" stood the philosopher in good stead. The world was his province; his various activities placed him among all conditions of men; his were the "opportunities a master-mind had of making a vast synthesis of world knowledge such as was possible to the 13th century." St. Thomas and the Soul, Theory of Knowledge, Doctrine of God, Ethics, Soteriology, Asceticism and Mysticism, Political and Social Economy are the chief headings under which the reviewer's remarks fall, and appended is an example of St. Thomas' manner and method of argument. When, as of late years, there has been such a senseless outcry against Scholasticism, it is profitable to investigate matters for oneself, and to compare the vapourings of modern with the weighty sentences of that giant genius of seven centuries ago. A. B. PURDIE

Other histories of religions published are: "Egypt," by Rev. A. Malton; "China," by Rev. L. Wiegier; "Ancient Syria" by G. S. Hitchcock, B.A. "The Koran" by Rev. E. Power, S.J.

Champlain Monument at Summer School.

Cliff Haven, N.Y., Sept. 9.—With appropriate remarks quite fitting the occasion, Rt. Rev. Mgr. McMahon, President of the School, today closed the eighteenth session of the Catholic Summer School of America—the most notable year in the history of the beautiful Catholic colony which bears the name of that intrepid sailor and explorer, Samuel Champlain. In more than one respect has the session been worthy of note. The month of July witnessed the tercentenary celebration of the discovery of Lake Champlain, an event in which the Summer School took no small part and which brought together on the beautiful assembly grounds many of the most eminent men of the day. The President of the United States, the representatives of the leading nations of the earth, men notable in the affairs of State and nation, the Prince of the Catholic Church in America, and many of its clergymen—all to do honor to one who, though he came on a mission for one of the most powerful kings of his time, never forgot that the souls of men "are more important than the discovery of strange seas or the exploring of wilds as yet unknown to man. The Tercentenary celebration, bringing together as it did three great nations to honor Samuel Champlain, was a splendid tribute not alone to one of the many figures in history, but likewise to the Catholic Church, the principles of which he planted firmly in the new world. Catholics throughout the world should rejoice at the success of the Summer School session just closed—rejoice at the tribute to Champlain, as also to Commodore Macdonough in whose honor the month of August saw a beautiful show of granite dedicated, crowning the tireless efforts of the officers of the Summer School to mark the last resting place of heroes of the Battle of Plattsburg, who gave up their lives in their country's defence. As crowning event of the session just closed, comes the announcement of the Champlain Tercentenary commission to the effect that beside the white birch cross which surrounds the bluff overlooking the Summer School grounds, and the historic lake, the heroic figure of Samuel Champlain, a monument to cost \$50,000 is to be erected. For this much credit is due to Mr. John B. Riley, chairman of the Executive Committee of the School, Plattsburg, N.Y., who together with Senator James J. Frawley and Assemblyman James Foley, and many other prominent Catholics, have done much to make it possible. To the Rt. Rev. Mgr. D. J. McMahon, who has presided over the notable session to the Rev. Thomas McMillan, C.S.P., who prepared the fine lecture schedule, to the officers and the trustees of the School who without compensation labor to make so much possible, the gratitude not alone of the patrons of the school, but all Catholics is due. The lectures this week were delivered by Denis A. McCarthy, Associate Editor of the Sacred Heart Review, Boston, who spoke on Irish Wit and Humor, An Hour of Irish Poetry, an Hour of Irish Folklore, and A Poet's Outlook on Life.

New Chapel for Port Kent.

Never in the history of Port Kent, has that pretty little village looked brighter than it did on Monday last when its inhabitants and those of the surrounding country donned their holiday attire and joined the numerous summer visitors from the various hotels at the laying of the corner stone of the new Sacred Heart Chapel on the lake front. This beautiful edifice, erected through the munificence of Mrs. Edward Rowan, of New York, is in pure Gothic style, made substantially of rubble stone and was designed by Mr. Elliott Lynch, architect, of Fifth avenue, New York. Callanan Brothers, of Keesville, were the contractors and carried out their important work in the most satisfactory manner. Shortly after two o'clock the guests commenced to assemble and by three o'clock fully five hundred people had gathered around the church. The Reverend Doctor Driscoll, D. D., D.C.L., of Plattsburg, who officiated, was attended by Father O'Rielly, of Keesville, Father O'Rielly, of Norwich, Conn., Fathers Murphy, Duffy, Flood, Pierce, Nolan, English, O'Rourke, and several others. The Rt. Rev. Monsignor McMahon, of the Catholic Summer School, was also present. The ceremony of laying the corner stone was most impressive, the Rev. Doctor recited in his sacred vestments and assisted by ten distinguished churchmen as acolytes, chanted the Litany of the Saints most solemnly. Mrs. Richards, of Plattsburg, was the organist, and Miss Edith Rowan rendered Goutard's "Ave Maria" in a

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EMBARRASSING. A rather pompous-looking deacon in a certain city church was asked to take charge of a class of boys during the absence of the regular teacher. While endeavoring to impress upon their young minds the importance of living a Christian life the following question was proposed: "Why do people call me a Christian, children?" the worthy dignitary asked, standing very erect and smiling down upon them. "Because they don't know you," was the ready answer of a bright-eyed little boy, responding to the ingratiating smile with one equally guileless and winning.—Lippincott's Magazine. The ease with which corns and warts can be removed by Holloway's Corn Cure is its strongest recommendation. It seldom fails.

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SO HE WAS. A teacher had told the class of the wonderful voyage of Columbus and how he insisted on continuing the voyage after the other men were clamoring to return. Then she asked: "Who was Columbus?" with the view of hearing how well they had followed her talk. One little hand went up. "Well, Johnny, who was he?" asked the teacher. "Columbus was the gon of the ocean," was the answer.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1909. PATENT IS HEREBY... QUEBEC, District Superior Court. No. 1009. Montreal, wife com-... MAS MULVEY, of State for... AULT, the Petitioners. & RAYMOND, attorneys for Plaintiff.