

seven in the family to equalize the fourth with the second generation in number. (3) This is a worse case. Grandfather had six children, of whom two married and had nine children, but of these nine children in the third generation only two are married and have two children, not each but altogether, though there are still some hopes. (4) Still worse. Grandfather, seven children. Four married, all had children, fifteen in all, but of these, though all are over thirty, only one is married and there are no children. (5) A much better case, and there are some of these. Grandfather had eight children, of whom six married. All of them had children, twenty-eight in all. Of these only one-half, fourteen in all, married, and they had thirty-one children, a little more than the polite average of two. They are slightly more than replacing the second generation. (6) Another of the better families. Grandparents had three children, all married and had seventeen children. A little more than the five in the family, which constitutes obedience to the precept of increase and multiply. Of these seventeen, however, only five married and they have sixteen children. They are beginning to fade. Of all the well-to-do families of whom records have reached me here is the best: Grandparents seven children. Six married and all had children, twenty-five in number, and sixteen of these have married and have forty children. Even this, however, as will be seen readily, does not represent multiplication. Apparently from what I have found, if the Church is to depend on the reproductive increase of the Irish Catholics of this country for its membership the future looks blank indeed. This is not at all a new view, I know, but has been expressed by at least half a dozen who have looked into the question somewhat before this. The one reason for calling attention to it once more is to try to tempt people to look into these conditions in their own neighborhood and let us know the facts. After looking over the data that I have in hand already I am forced to the conclusion that while the fewness of children in the families represents a very prominent factor in the unfortunate situation that is evidently developing, it is by no means the only factor, and I doubt whether it is even the most serious factor.

That is to my mind the very large number of old maids and old bachelors who are to be found in Irish families in this country. I know that even at home in Ireland there was usually at least one example of these two anomalies, and sometimes one of each in the families, though when they were large in numbers as families are in Ireland, that did not seem to make so much difference. Here in America, however, it is not unusual to have half the children of the family remain unmarried. Sometimes it is actually more than that. That question is too large to treat properly at the end of this article, so I am asking the Editor of America to let me tell a little of the story of old maids and old bachelors in a succeeding contribution, and to touch upon the question of our college graduates not having nearly so many children as they should have enough to represent them in the next generation in college, as another phase of this very interesting and, it seems to me, extremely important question.

NECROMANCY

Necromancy is derived from two Greek words, which mean the dead and divination. It applies to that special mode of divination which consists in the evocation of the dead. The practice of necromancy supposes the survival of the soul after death, the possession of a superior knowledge by disembodied spirits, and the possibility of communication between the living and the dead. As divinities were often but human heroes raised to the rank of gods, necromancy, mythology and demonology are closely allied.

Necromancy has always been common among pagan nations in all ages and countries. Isaiah refers to the practice in Egypt, and Moses warns the Israelites against imitating the Chanaanite abominations, which include seeking the truth from the dead. The classical literatures of Greece and Rome contain numerous references to necromancy. It was practiced even by Roman emperors, and not condemned by philosophers or satirists.

The seances of those days were held in caverns and in volcanic regions, or near lakes and rivers, which were popularly supposed to communicate with the infernal regions, and which thus rendered intercourse between the quick and the dead more easy and expeditious. Somewhat on the same principle, the modern psychic laboratory is located in the vicinity of a morgue or an undertaker's refrigerator for the convenience of spirits who still hover about their earthly tenement. For instance, the celebrated oracle of Theophrastus was situated quite near the River Acheron, one of the rivers of hell, and the oracle of Cumae was near Lake Avernus in Campania. The spirits that issued through belching volcanoes must have felt much relieved when they reached the fresh air; and a summons from the living must have been sweeter to them than release to a prisoner or a half-holiday to school children.

The Mosaic law forbids necromancy, declares that to seek the truth from the dead is abhorred by God, and even makes it punishable by death. Nevertheless, in spite of stern prohibitions and severe penalties, the Hebrews often imitated the example of their pagan neighbors in this as in other respects, and were punished accordingly.

In the first centuries of the Christian era the practice of necromancy was common among pagans, as the Fathers of the Church frequently testify. It was often associated with other magical arts and other forms of demoniacal practices, and Christians were warned against such observances. In the opinion of the Fathers, "the demons represent themselves as the souls of the dead." The rulers of Church and State passed severe laws against pagan magic, divination and superstition, including necromancy. In fact, little by little the term necromancy lost its strict meaning and was applied to all forms of black art, becoming closely associated with alchemy, witchcraft and magic. Notwithstanding all efforts to check or eliminate it, it survived in one form or another during the Middle Ages, and received a new impetus at the time of the Renaissance by the neo-Platonic doctrine of demons. In recent times necromancy, as a distinct belief and practice, reappears under the name of Spiritism.

The article on necromancy in the Catholic Encyclopedia concludes with these words: "The Church does not deny that, with the special permission of God, the souls of the departed may appear to the living, and even manifest to them things unknown. But understood as the art of science of evoking the dead, necromancy is held by theologians to be due to the agency of evil spirits, for the means taken are inadequate to produce the expected results. In pretended evocations of the dead there may be many things explainable naturally or due to fraud; how much is real and how much must be attributed to imagination and deception, cannot be determined. But real facts of necromancy, with the use of incantations and magical rites, are looked upon by theologians, after St. Thomas, as special modes of divination due to demoniacal intervention, and divination itself is a form of superstition."

"Spiritism and Religion," is the title of a work written by Baron Johan Liljencrants for his doctorate at the Catholic University of America. On page 9 the writer says: "While the Spiritistic movement is distinctly modern, its essential features are probably as old as the human race. We find them in what is known as necromancy, or the—at least presumed—evocation of the spirits of the departed for the purpose of divination, practiced in all ages and rather universally, but especially among pagan peoples." In this passage and several others, the learned doctor admits that modern Spiritism and ancient necromancy are substantially the same, though they may differ accidentally. But the activity of the demon, who impersonates the dead, is an essential feature of necromancy. Therefore the demon is also the chief actor in modern Spiritism. After admitting that necromancy and Spiritism agree in their essential features, Dr. Liljencrants tries to eliminate the devil from modern Spiritism, and to show that spiritistic phenomena are due to jugglery or to forces of nature not yet investigated nor fully understood. In so doing he seems to us to contradict himself. If the demon was in the old cult, he must also be in the new. Besides, it is illogical to appeal from known to unknown forces; and it is an insult to the honesty and intelligence of eminent scientists who admit the chief phenomena of Spiritism, to say that it is all a case of conscious frauds and unconscious dupes. Moreover, the condemnation of the Church supposes the presence of the evil spirit at seances.

This attitude of Baron Liljencrants is taken by several champions of orthodoxy. They think that the best way to combat the evil is to point out its deception. One clerical foe of the modern necromancy attempts to reproduce the phenomena of the spiritistic dark room, but his tricks are a fiasco to any man who knows anything about the real facts of spiritism. The best way to knock the devil out of spiritism is to admit that he is there, and to treat him accordingly. While we grant that mediums often practice fraud in order to conceal their intermittent powers and give the sitters some return for their money, we cannot admit that spiritism is always wholly deception or hallucination. In this matter as in others let us give the devil his due. We have no brief to become the devil's advocate.—Catholic Union and Times.

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When we get into the next world we shall see how foolish we have been not to go to Mass frequently on weekdays. The churches ought to be crowded every morning. The power of one Mass is enough to redeem the world. People struggle and struggle and worry and plot and plan, and it all comes to nothing. If they went to daily Mass things would be very different. There should be at least one representative at daily Mass for each family of the parish.—Stella Maris.

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