

should kneel during the whole service, except at the Gospel. Custom, however, has modified the law."

So runs an item in one of our exchanges, following which the writer points out the parts of a Low Mass during which it is customary to sit. Speaking of *custom* modifying the law—would not *abusing* the law fit more pat? There are circumstances and times which make it necessary to take an easy position during Mass. Some sick and weak persons must and should sit. But any person in ordinary health ought to be able to keep his knees fixed to terra firma for at least twenty-five or thirty minutes. Acrobats assume and keep grotesque and painful position for a long time in order to amuse to the crowd which pays to see them, but we, alas! are so lacking in spiritual mortification that we dread to edify our fellow worshippers by assuming a reverential and penitential posture. Let us also bear in mind that, after all, church pews, like the organ-loft, are only tolerated by holy Church as necessary evils. As a last word, let us say that it gives faith, piety and good manners an awful shock to see persons racing from Church before the priest has left the sanctuary.

#### Monastic Monuments.

Periodically someone has to rise up in defense of religious, and put sense into the heads of some ephemeral ignoramus who starts out under a flaming "scarehead" to tell the world what he knows about the "Lazy Monks." Our bright contemporary the *Sacred Heart Review* lately commenting on this stale calumny about the monks says that the "writer must be little versed in history who accuses the dwellers in monastic establishments of

indolence. They had little time to be idle, judging by their works, which were stupendous monuments to their industry and zeal. Who restored the lands that had been ravaged by barbarous hordes, bent only on plunder and slaughter, but these same monks; who made the wilderness to blossom like the rose, but the pious inmates of the monasteries; who found time from their religious exercises to set an example to their neighbors in thrift and the patient labor which accomplishes so much for the material benefit of man and the improvement of society? No wonder that the abbey were the centres, as it were, of a nest of thriving towns and villages, for the good priests and Brothers encouraged all worthy efforts of mankind to lift itself above the condition of the brute. And how they cultivated and nursed the divine flame of learning, so that the humblest might gain in knowledge as they gained in virtue! It was the monks who preserved the literature, both religious and profane, that accumulated before their time, and copied it with artistic toil for the use of future generations. Many valuable historical records would have been lost but for the wearers of the cowl, who went about their work so quietly that the loud, bombastic, scholastic pretenders after the Reformation could not understand the self-abnegation of the monks, who sought no wordly honor, but only the permanent advance of their fellowmen in all that would contribute to their enlightenment. These holy laborers knew that all true wisdom and knowledge came from God, and that in giving it to the world they were only obeying His heavenly will. Therefore, they toiled silently, feeling that the seed they sowed so abundantly would produce good fruit in the future. "Lazy monks!" If it were not for them and the Church of which they were offsprings, we would, probably, have no civilization worthy of the name. Semi-barbarism would have ruled the world as it rules Turkey in our own day and generation."