

The Catholic Record.

"Christianus nihil nomen est, Catholicus vero Cognomen."—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname.)—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

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A TIMELY LETTER.

The magnificent letter of Archbishop Bégin will give the quietest to the conscienceless humbugs who have been taunting French Canadians with disloyalty to England. He recounts briefly the services rendered by French Bishops to the crown, and asserts that it would be impossible to find even among the highest of England's aristocracy a succession of men who have been more loyal than the Bishops, than the clergy of Quebec.

The letter is timely since it informs the timorous who were hoodwinked by the politician; and to the intelligent Canadian who knows his French brethren, it is but an eloquent recital of deeds which, whilst showing their loyalty in the past, guarantee it for the future.

But the whole business was worked by those who believe in making political capital by trickery and calumny. A few letters started it, and forthwith we had a mob of the "intelligent" electorate howling and yelling out what they had heard or what had been told to them. Their hysterical and ignorant ravings made a good many people bemoan that such have any voice in Canadian affairs; but we suppose that on this sphere of mixed blessings we must persevere put up with "our intelligent constituents" who are driven like cattle to the polls, who know practically nothing about the question at issue, and who are ready—aye, ready to exercise their lungs at the behest of their political masters.

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

What strikes us forcibly is the dense ignorance of too many Catholics of the tenets of their belief. We do not refer to those who have been turned out on the world at an early age, but to the individuals who have had opportunities to improve and develop their minds. They know some things, of course, but too vaguely and too incompletely to be of any practical value to themselves or to others. They may be good, but they are not intelligent Catholics. We have more than once been astonished at the poor showing made by individuals from whom we had a right to expect something, in rebutting charges against Catholicity and in explaining its doctrines. They seem to imagine that knowledge of Christian doctrine belongs exclusively to the priesthood; and so they are content to go on, with the lessons of bygone days becoming dimmer with each recurring year, and thereby neglecting opportunities of untold good.

We believe that one of the principal causes of this lamentable and widespread ignorance is the indifference displayed by the family for religious reading. The children are taught, at least by example, that the catechism and other works of an instructive character may be dealt with in a very perfunctory way. Catholic parents, of course, wish their children to be devout members of the Church; but the boy and girl are quick to see how little is done to put it into effect. They learn their catechism—are compelled to learn it; but when they see the care devoted to their secular education, and the anxiety over their progress in arithmetic; when their ears are filled with fire-side gossip about social success or means of amassing wealth, they are inclined to think that the catechism is of very doubtful value to them, and so it happens that many of the children throw aside all religious reading soon after they make their first Communion.

We hear much of our progress, but very little of our leakage. And yet there is a great deal. We have heard pastors complain bitterly of the indifference of young men, of their apathy in regard to their religious interests.

They don't know better. They should know, but the slipshod manner of their upbringing in this regard has not only deprived them of a knowledge of doctrine, but has given them a distaste for it.

Religious instruction must begin in the family. That is God's great school-room.

A LITERARY APPRECIATION.

It would be well, when helping others up the hill of literary appreciation, to put ourselves in their places and remember that their mental organs are not up to the digesting of the stronger literary food which we delight in.

Appreciation is a gradual growth. Dignity of style, force of expression, do not appeal at the outset. Matter first takes the interest, the story itself; and in that we forget the writer, and follow the puppets of his dreams, intent only on their fortunes. This kind of reading should flatter the author, for it shows sincerest interest. But such serves only for amusement, and could hardly be said to be an ascent of the literary hill.

There are thousands who read books in this fashion; who know nothing of those who wrote them; who, in fact do not realize they were written by anybody; but take them as a matter of course much as a child takes its surroundings—as if they always existed, and were for his especial use. No thought is given to the making of the book. They read several works of one author, without even knowing it, or becoming in the least aware of his personality. So long as the story runs to a satisfactory end they are content.

After a few years, however, they grow weary of beautiful heroines, etc., and, realizing that the life led by the dauntless gowned females who are on speaking terms with most of the nobility, comes not within their range of observation, they turn for something better, at least more real. This is an important step and a hint at this time from a competent helper can bear great fruit.

Next comes the epigram stage. Some terse expression of a thought, often put up in their own brain for want of clothing, appeals to them; and unconsciously they stretch out their hand to shake with the author. He becomes to them a real being, one whom they look to as able to express for them in good form many of their own thoughts. This attracts the mental eye to mode of expression; and they come to admire more the vivid description of an occurrence, rather than experience their former absorption in the event itself. With eyes open for some beauties, others will dawn upon them; and their early delight in the brave doings of the hero will change places with an admiration of the author's clever drawing of his characters. Originality of thought or expression will next appeal; and then we are in a fair way to realize the amount of work required for the making of a book, and are more ready to appreciate and enjoy our intellectual food.

So let us not judge too harshly the writers of epigrams. We all know they can be sprinkled too plentifully over a book, and nauseate or at least weary. But they have a work to accomplish. They stimulate the literary appetite for good expression of thought and must be accorded an early place on the bill of fare.

Much may be said against the foregoing if pleasure only is the end and aim of reading. With many such is the case; and there are plenty of books—good ones too—which will meet such requirements. But the beauties of the work are lost on such readers, and though they certainly get a great deal of pleasure, they are really missing half—the better half, too; for surely the joy of interest is inferior to that of appreciation.

JOTTINGS.

Some time ago a certain Capt. Leary was commissioned to bestow upon the inhabitants of Guam the blessings of American civilization. He began his rule by expelling the friars, presumably because they failed to appreciate the wisdom of his decrees, and followed it up by certain ordinances prohibiting public celebration of the feasts of the saints.

The gallant captain adds one more tribute to that time-honored adage: "Put a beggar on horseback and he will ride to the devil."

The Bishop of Clonfert, Most Rev. Dr. Healy, is out with a scathing denunciation of the Irish party. He says that if seventy or eighty boys were brought in off the streets they would be just as good; and perhaps do

more than the present party; and that there never would be any good done until a clean sweep was made of the lot. That opinion is gaining ground daily. We do not for one moment venture to express anything but the highest praise for some of the party, such as Dillon, Blake, Davitt and others who have in season and out of season, oftentimes in unselfish way deserving unstinted admiration, advocated the claims of the old land; but we have long since ceased to have aught but contempt for the breeders of dissension, who have energetically and systematically thwarted all attempts at unity and have succeeded in making the Irish party a thing of no value or weight in Westminster. Why schemes formed for the purpose of revivifying the Nationalist cause with the blood of unity have come to naught, we do not pretend to know. But we do know that the Irishmen who put Ireland first and self afterwards have done all that men could do to appease their opponents; they have been the object of their discourteous and abusive language in the halls of Parliament, though they offered them time and again the hand of fellowship, but neither patience under insult nor expressions of amity have distinguished the hatred that has its source in insane jealousy and disappointed ambition. It would be well, as the Bishop says, to make a clean sweep of the whole lot.

We see by an exchange that a Richard Wagner was obliged, through reverses of fortune and neglect of his relations, to seek shelter in a poor asylum. That is a tragedy that is enacted oftentimes on life's boards. We have more than once in our rounds of charitable institutions come upon old dames who were put there by sons and daughters who could afford to keep them at home or to have them placed in some respectable family.

There is no more hideous cruelty than this: and the man who so far forgets his duty to the mother who cradled him, and worked for him, and whose life's dream was to see him her strength and support, as to leave her dependent on public charity, is an unspeakably despicable object.

And there are too many of them, with their snug respectability and parasitical pretence at right living, when the poor old woman breathes her last within the whitewashed walls of the poor house, they bring her home, stealthily of course, and have her buried, hoping that an ornamented coffin will hide the fact that it encloses a pauper's remains.

Dr. Mivart is, if we may believe his recent utterances, longing for a place amongst the scientific martyrs of the century. His friends are pained over his startling course of conduct, which, by the way, was not invented by the distinguished scientist, and are doubtless praying that he may obtain what he is in dire need of—the grace of humility. "The eye," as Renan, we think, remarked, "must be completely achromatic if it is to find truth in philosophy, politics and morals." The doctors' vision is blurred, superinduced mayhap by much brooding over the fate of his effusion on "Happiness in Hell" or by the disregard of the Vatican to his advice about the Dreyfus case.

The secular newspapers wax jubilant over his defection, and we may have scientific martyrs galore resurrected to bear witness that Catholicity has been ever an obstacle to progress. But the fact is that Dr. Mivart professes to cast discredit on the Resurrection of Our Lord and to assert that He was born and conceived as other men are. Assuredly this lies not within the range of science; and if he come under the ban of excommunication, it will be, not because he has gone far afield in scientific speculation, but because, misled by pride, he has presumed to throw away the bright torch of faith for the flickering light of human reason. A Catholic must believe what the Church teaches, no matter what his crotchets or fanciful imaginings may say to the contrary; and the moment he denies any lots of that teaching he ceases to be a Catholic.

No man, no matter how erudite a scholar he may be, can explain away or modify the truths revealed by God. That is settled for all time; its principles remain the same, and the Church

proclaims them to all nations will brook no interference with them. Catholic truth is not a subject for discussion, but for obedience. How beautiful are the words of Brownson: "I have been, during thirteen years of my Catholic life, constantly engaged in the study of the Church and her doctrine, and especially in relation to philosophy and natural reason. I have had occasion to examine and defend Catholicity precisely under these points of view which are most odious to my non-Catholic countrymen, and to the Protestant mind generally; but I have never, in a single instance, found a single article, dogma, proposition, or definition of Faith which embarrassed me as a logician, and which I could, so far as my own reason was concerned, have changed or modified, or in any respect altered from what I found it, even if I had been free to do so. I have never found my reason struggling against the teachings of the Church, or felt myself restrained or found myself reduced to a state of mental slavery. I have, as a Catholic, felt and enjoyed a mental freedom, which I never conceived possible while I was a non-Catholic."

A PARISIAN CLOISTER.

Sacred Heart Review.

One day, about a year ago, writes a Hartford correspondent, I visited a quaint, dingy, old convent—seemingly lost and forgotten, shut in and hidden from view by immense new edifices on every side—of cloistered nuns, in one of the older quarters of the city of Paris. I found myself—chance did it—near the army of ubiquitous and unmerciful sightseers, with my Baedeker in my hand, inside the door of the chapel in a small space left to the outside world, and cut off from the choir by a high framework of thick, cold, black iron bars, suggestive of the awful majesty of the law.

I have no remembrance of the architectural style or beauty of the place, although the study of lines, and arches, and columns was the object of my excursion. For as I put my hand upon the big, old-fashioned knob, a cadence of voices fell upon my ear; and, when I entered I heard and saw what disturbed the heretofore even tenor of my pet pursuit. I heard a symphony of soft, sweet, low voices,—voices such as the cherubs of Michael Angelo ought to have, music that was ethereal, and filled the sacred edifice like incense. And I saw the nuns were there, two hundred of them, and this was the office hour.

I slipped in, feeling half guilty, in silence, on tiptoe, dreading as a sacrilege to make one discordant sound to mar that heavenly harmony. I crept, all eyes and ears, in a flush of surrexitation, as near as possible to the grating, and falling on my knees, feasted my eyes on a sight that was new, to me, at least.

Two hundred holocausts, virgins that follow the Lamb whereso'er He goeth, robed in white, like their souls, from head to foot, with those long, loose, flowing immaculate veils. That presence and that music seemed to charge the atmosphere to saturation with holiness, sacrifice and purity. There was nothing else to see or hear for me. I was spell-bound, hypnotized, intoxicated; and as I slowly recovered from this first trance, a thought flashed across my mind: "Was I ever so near heaven before?" And I whispered to myself that this choir was fit to be transplanted hence at this very moment before the throne of the Almighty, there to continue their anthem forever and ever.

I could not see the faces, only the forms, those two hundred forms, snow white, and I listened to that divine melody and inhaled that incense of prayer. I looked and listened, I drank and drank, and there I could have remained always, kneeling, praying, and drinking in that scene; for I did pray, thinking that then, for the first time since I was a little boy, my prayers ascended with theirs, were carried up with theirs, to God's throne of mercy.

The spell thrown over me was almost complete. One thing I shall never forget, for it is indelibly printed on my mind just as it occurred. It was simply the bowing of those two hundred heads at the name of Jesus. It occurred so silently, that name; and each time those heads, all just alike (and those heads, too, for no proud heart could bow like that), bowed slowly in measured time, as it were; slowly, while the two syllables were uttered more softly and more reverently, and slowly they arose, only to bow again in the self-same cadence. And thus the swaying went on as the name of Jesus came to their lips. And I thought of a field of ripe wheat bending to and fro before a gust of wind; and they were the wheat, the ripe wheat of sacrifice, living, immaculate hosts of the altar.

God is good; and He accepts the little we offer Him. But my philo-

sophy of life went to smash, shivered into a million little pieces without, on my part, a resistance, an objection, an apology, or a regret. And I stood, or rather knelt, there on the ruins of my pride and passions, wondering at it all, and at myself, knelt humble, submissive, repentant, and happy, the veriest child, while I learned over again from this living book of innocence, heroism and prayer opened out before me, the long forgotten and discarded lessons of my catechism, and solved the riddle: the *when*, the *why* and the *where*. I did not philosophize; or, at least, it was not the cold, heartless, skeptical philosophy with which I had been imbued; but the philosophy of goodness, of loveliness, of heroism, the philosophy of grace and love, whose *ultima ratio* is "God says," and whose syllogisms need only a clean and honest heart to be understood. And this dearest, sweetest, divine lesson was taught me by the Brides of Christ.

Thanks to God, the lesson then learned I have not forgotten or unlearned—nor shall I ever.

I had been undone and done over again, and when I arose to go, a desire seized me to stay and see once more the "swaying of the ripe wheat;" and I stayed and stayed, as long as the name of Jesus was over-nounced, stayed till the chime was over.

Then I left, in silence, as I came. I left them silently praying, perhaps for me; left a lighter and a better man. And when I reached the door—it was ridiculous, perhaps a sin, but—I turned around, and I, full of wickedness, I blessed those Brides of Christ, and went out with a lump in my throat.

When I reached the street I saw a big, burly, brutal "cocher" belaboring his jaded horse. As I passed him he uttered a most infernal blasphemy. It never sounded like that to me before; and before I knew it I was in the middle of the street, with uplifted cane, ready to brain the miserable wretch. But just then the thought flashed across my mind how I heard the *u* pronounce that name, and I saw the uplifted hand dropped, the "cabby" looked astonished, and I went home.

Perhaps some day I may again see the Brides of Christ. Kerdec.

"IS THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION DECLINING?"

Dr. Briggs answers the above question in Appleton's Popular Science Monthly for February and his answer is full of doctrinal errors. He is evidently a great theologian in his own estimation. He is a religious reformer who denies the inspiration of the Bible and proclaims that "the only authority to which man can yield implicit obedience is 'divine authority,' and the fountain of that is not in the Bible alone, but also in 'the Church and the Reason.'" He does not say what Church he means, but the presumption is that the great Briggs would never submit his vast intellect to the slavery of an infallible Church. He asserts that dogmas "regarded as important and even essential" are on the eve of disappearing, and views this as a "healthful advance in Christianity." With all due respect to Dr. Briggs we have no hesitation in saying that he does not know what he is talking about. He does not know what faith is, and he is muddled beyond description when he speaks of the disappearance of essentials in Christian teaching.

An analysis of faith shows that it must be one: "One God and one Faith." It must be prudent. St. Paul, writing to the Romans, tells them to present their reasonable service. It must be supernatural. It is "the root and foundation of all justification, and is not obtainable by the mere energies of nature alone: 'For it is given to you for Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.'" It is given to you to believe, and therefore a supernatural gift; but it is given in the manner arranged by God Himself, whose Apostle tells us that it comes by the way of hearing God's word from the one sent by God, *Fides auditu, not ex conceptu*, as Dr. Briggs asserts. "How shall they believe Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach unless they be sent?" Faith must be certain and unchangeable: "If any one preach to you a Gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema." St. Paul further shows that to bring men into the unity of faith, God chose the way of prophets, Apostles, teachers, working together in the same ministry to the building up of one body in the bonds of charity.

Dr. Briggs shows a lamentable lack of Christianity in the professor of Biblical theology. He has no idea of the Church founded by Christ as it is presented to us under the idea of a body of witnesses. He is ignorant of the fact that to the care of witnesses was the deposit of the doctrines of religion committed by Jesus Christ. Testimony was chosen by Him as the vehicle for the transmission of those doctrines. By witnesses the faith was to be proposed, preserved, propagated and defended. The precursor of our Saviour, we are told, "came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men might believe through Him." Christ Himself assumed the office of witness,

for in the Apocalypse St. John calls Him "the faithful witness." He chose His apostles as witnesses of His works and doctrines: "But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth." Understanding this purpose of the Redeemer to entrust the deposit of revelation to the testimony of witnesses, St. John says: "And we have seen and do bear witness (or testify) and declare unto you the life eternal which was with the Father and hath appeared to us." Christianity is not on the decline, but hereby is, and the sects will be swallowed up by infidelity or join the Catholic Church.—American Herald.

RENOUNCES PROTESTANTISM.

Cambridge Livingston, a Well Known New York Society Man, Becomes a Catholic.

New York, January 23.—The Times of to-day says:

"The fact became generally known yesterday that Cambridge Livingston, a son of the late Robert Cambridge Livingston, and whose mother was Miss Maria Whitney, has become a Roman Catholic. Mr. Livingston, who is a well-known member of the prominent family of that name, and who is also related and connected with several other of New York's oldest families, is a bachelor about thirty-two years old. He was graduated from Harvard in the class of '90, and has for some years been a prominent member of the Knickerbocker Club. He is also a member of the Catholic Club, which latter organization he joined after becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

"Mr. Livingston's change of creed was not brought about, it is said, by any particular influence. There are other Roman Catholic Livingstons, notably Johnston Livingston, the president of the Knickerbocker Club, who is a cousin of Cambridge Livingston, and his daughters, the Countess de Laugier Villars, formerly Miss Carola Livingston, and her sister, Mrs. Geraldyn Redmond, formerly Miss Estelle Livingston. Miss Elizabeth Livingston, a distant cousin, became a member of the Roman Catholic Church last spring.

"Mr. Livingston, whose immediate family reside at Islip, L. I., where they have had a country place for many years, and who are prominent members of the Episcopal Church in that place, is reticent about his change of creed. It is understood among his friends that, being of a religious turn of mind, he became a member of that Church as a result of personal study and investigation, in which last he was aided by his cousins, the Countess de Laugier Villars and Mrs. Redmond. The death of Lieutenant William Tiffany, the fiancé of his sister, Miss Maude Livingston, which occurred in Boston from malarial fever contracted during the Cuban campaign in the early autumn of 1898, deepened Mr. Livingston's religious convictions, and it was soon after this that he became a Roman Catholic.

"Mr. Livingston inherited from his father a small fortune, and has had time to cultivate his literary tastes. Some years ago he was much interested in politics, and for a time took a prominent part in the Tammany Hall organization of his district. He has been in mourning for a year, but before that time was a well known figure at all the more fashionable entertainments of the season here and at Newport."

SOMEWHAT ORIGINAL.

A correspondent who confesses that he is "a Methodist having no sympathy with Romanism" is disturbed by reading in his Bible the words, "Whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain they are retained." He writes to the Outlook inquiring "why Protestantism has discarded or discredited that authority as given by our Saviour when commissioning His disciples, as even He was commissioned? Why do we accept His ambassadors and repudiate part of their commission?" And the oracle of the Outlook replies in this remarkable way:

"This authority, whatever it is, bestowed, not upon a hierarchy or class, but upon all those upon whom Christ breathes, saying, 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit.'—that is, upon all who are inspired by a divinely imparted spirit of holiness. Christians remit—that is, get rid of or deliver from—sin when, by their influence, example or teaching, they induce sinners to repent of sin and abandon it; they secure or approval, they help, directly or indirectly, to fasten sins on the individual or the community.

Lo! here is an illustration of the workings of private judgment among the more educated classes of sectarianism; and we can not conscientiously say that it seems to us much better than that school of exegesis that makes the Church, not to be the Scarlet Woman. By this method of interpretation we hold ourselves ready to prove that Shakespeare's plays are base plagiarisms from the Mother Goose melodies. We sincerely hope that the correspondent will not consider the editor's answer satisfactory.—Ave Maria.