

FIREMEN OF BOSTON AND THEIR CHAPLAINS.

CONVENTION of the Massachusetts State Firemen's Association was held October 16 in Boston, at which an address was given by the Rev. William St. Elmo Smith, of the French Church of St. Vincent de Paul, New York, and chaplain of the New York Fire Department.

We append Father Smith's address: "The chaplaincies in the department date back to March 28, 1899, the week following the disastrous fire of the Windsor Hotel, when men and women were hidden before their Maker without any preparation whatever, such was the rapidity of the conflagration. The usual fire lines had been formed, and the clergy from the near-by Cathedral found difficulty to break through the ranks to minister to the injured and dying, so the commissioner, who was the Hon. J. J. Scannell, thought of having chaplains recognized among the uniformed force. He reasoned that the army and navy had their chaplains, and even the houses of the Legislature, where there is no danger, and if these needed them, surely men who are called out day and night to the unexpected and the many risks attending their arduous duties, where so many are exposed to lose their lives, not to mention the wants of the many who are huddled together in the congested tenements of New York, where many are yearly smothered or burned, it would be a consolation for the firemen and people to know that near by the priest and minister are ever on the alert to come to their spiritual rescue.

"The work was to be done without any compensation whatever, so we procured for ourselves horse and carriage, uniforms, and all the accoutrements of a fireman. We rank as battalion chiefs, with the device of two trumpets surmounted by a cross upon our helmet.

"The city assigned to us a driver from the uniformed force. Recently, under our present administration, the commissioner, Hon. Mr. Sturgis, has kindly presented each of the chaplains with a horse and carriage. "In our rooms is installed a fire alarm in communication with headquarters, and all fires are registered within the rectory, besides a bell that hits the stations. There is also a telephone, to keep us warned in case of emergencies.

"We respond to all third alarms in the city proper of New York. Fourth alarms send us anywhere in Greater New York, which includes Brooklyn. Second alarms bring us in the business district below Fifty-ninth street. I have responded to as many as three third alarms in one night, which makes it a trying work sometimes, especially as I must be fasting from midnight so as to be able to celebrate my Mass in the morning.

"At the alarm, our drivers who live in the nearest fire house to our rectory, drive over for us to find us ready at the door, with rubber boots and coat on. With utmost speed we reach the fire, penetrate the lines, and move about as close to the men in danger as possible, often lending a hand to carry the line to the hottest place. At first the men found it queer to see the clergymen so near them.

"One night I heard firemen swearing and cursing, as firemen sometimes can do. One of them bumped up against me. I called his attention to the language he was using. 'Who the hell are you?' he said. 'Oh, I'm Chaplain Smith.' The men fell back, and I assure you the silence that followed was impressive. "On a Sunday afternoon in the thickly populated East Side a fireman was injured and brought into a saloon, followed by the worst of rabble. I administered the last rites of the Church to the dying hero; every head uncovered, every knee bent, and who can tell the influence it had on that hardened mob?

"Such scenes, I must say, are frequent. It was in the cold of winter at a huge fire consuming chemicals, Fireman Daniel O'Connell, of Engine Company 6, fell headlong from a roof to the rear yard. For a few moments it seemed as if he was doomed to be roasted alive, but several of his comrades, at the eminent risk of their own lives, carried him unconscious through the dense and

pungent smoke of the burning drugs to the street. While awaiting an ambulance, I administered restoratives, and during a spell of consciousness, heard the dying man's confession. It was a weird and impressive scene. There, amid the roar and rumble of a dozen snorting engines, the glare of the flames, and the heavy clouds of suffocating smoke that rolled from every opening in the building, stood a dozen fire ladders and policemen with bare heads forming a semi-circle. Within this space I knelt, my ear close to the dying man's lips. Suddenly the fire department searchlight turned its bright light on the reverent group and held it there motionless, while I gave Extreme Unction to the fireman, whose eyes were fast closing. Surely such a sight as this must have a salutary effect upon the brawny men who risk life and limb daily in the performance of duty. The knowledge that far below stands the anointed minister of God ready to give the consolation of religion in case of fatal accident, must undoubtedly steady the foot and nerve the arm of this fire fighter as he plies his perilous vocation in mid-air.

"Besides attending to the spiritual wants of the men, it has been our good fortune to save many lives. Not long ago my fellow chaplain, Mr. Wallley, who responded to the third alarm fire of the Morton House, proved himself a hero in saving, unaided, from certain death, two young men who were taken unconscious to the hospital.

"The presence of chaplains at a fire is not only comforting and assuring to firemen, but it has a quieting effect upon the inmates of burning buildings. Hysterical women often subside when the chaplains appear, or when they hear of their presence in the house. Frequently lives have been saved by taking the injured in our buggies to the hospital-injured who otherwise would have to wait for an ambulance and suffer by the delay.

"I might tell you of what was accomplished at the explosion of the Murray Hill Hotel, the disastrous fire of the Park Avenue Hotel, where we worked over many days, and eased somewhat their last agony as they closed their eyes forever. One last incident. This was at the horror of the telescoping train from New Rochelle into the Grand Central Station. By telephone I was summoned on the first alarm; reaching down into the tunnel, ghastly in the extreme was the sight that met my eyes. Clusters of men were hanging from the windows of the car, faces black with congestion, held fast in their futile efforts to escape. "A feature in connection with our work has been the service of the coffee wagon at big fires. We had noticed how the men, hungry and thirsty, many of them not eating a mouthful in their long hours of fire fighting, felt faint and exhausted, were sorely tempted to accept strong drink that was slipped among them, so we made arrangements with a ladies' temperance society, who furnish us gratis with coffee and refreshments.

"Besides our presence at fires our work consists in visiting the men in their quarters. We talk individually with the men, and many a fellow is fortified in his resolutions for good, or a return to God is made by the chance a man has to confess his sins by taking him apart in the officers' rooms.

"Weekly we made an official visit, accompanied by the chief or battalion of the district. Men stand in line, give the formal salute, and listen to an address from both of us. The call is concluded as we pass down the line and give each man a hearty shake of the hand. We might say that the opportunity for practical temperance is unlimited, and much has been accomplished.

"We follow the men everywhere as much as possible, at their hard fighting in fires; their home difficulties are communicated to us; sit out for the trials for firemen held every fortnight before the commissioner, notice the tendencies of men, their weaknesses as they are unfolded at their trials. Often chiefs and superior officers tell us of the faults of men who may be threatened with punishment or expulsion from the ranks for oft-repeated delinquencies. We speak with them and endeavor to better their spiritual life, feeling convinced that if that is right, all will be well. For you know that in bottling with fire, brute force is much in evidence; and wanted on these occasions, and so when men are constantly called upon to bring out animalism, the tendency is to submerge the spiritual, that God-spark which is given to man to fit him for the august presence of his Creator."

Beware of judging hastily. It is better to suspend an opinion than to retract an assertion.

DEPRIVITY'S PROPAGANDA ON THE STAGE.

It is said that the world is daily growing more corrupt, and it is to be feared that there is ample cause for such an unpleasant statement. However, there is a bright side to the picture, and if society is on the decline there is no stint of endeavor to prop it up and to redeem it. That a regular propaganda of vice is daily and hourly carried on is not a matter of surprise. The Devil is as active, and may be more so today, as ever he has been, and the Church, that has ever been arrayed against him and his works, is just as potent, a vigilant, and as determined at this hour as ever one has been throughout the centuries. In a recent number of the Boston "Republic," Hon. John F. Fitzgerald, editorially calls the attention of all Catholics on this continent to one of the latest efforts being made to destroy the morals of the rising generation and to undermine the influence of the Catholic Church. He says, in one place, that "The Republic" calls upon "its brother-journals" in all parts of the country to set forth in its true light this travesty of holy scenes and holy personages." In view of the fact that Canada, and especially Montreal, may be treated to the exhibition, and similar ones, to which the article refers, we feel it our duty to reproduce the principal portions of that wise and timely warning. The Editor thus writes: "It would seem that Miss Julia Marlowe's managers might have selected a play which show forth her abilities as an actress without shocking the sensibilities of Catholics. This they have done, in a most grievous manner, in "Queen Fiammetta," which is now completing a two weeks' run at the Hollis Street Theatre.

Its author, Catulle Mendes, is a Parisian poet of Portuguese descent, whose literary flights have carried him in a direction quite opposite to the soarings of Santos-Dumont. Mendes is more at home in the Inferno than in the Elysium. He is not only depraved himself, but he exalts and teaches depravity. He has beauty at his command, but it is the beauty of serpents and of panthers, of sinister, cruel passions that writhe and crouch in the dark recesses of our nature. The French courts have taken notice of his shamelessness. He counts his victims among the gifted women of Paris.

To minds like his, religion is unintelligible. The only form of beauty which they comprehend is that of Circe and the Sirens. The Madonna's loveliness escapes them. The Church, aiming to subdue and regulate passion, presents itself to them as a savage tyrant and their response to her lofty admonitions is that attitude of violent which is so familiar in the Latin countries.

This is the spirit in which Catulle Mendes has drawn his picture of Bologna during the Italian Renaissance. The leading figures of his play are Churchmen—a cardinal, who is Cesar Borgia under a slight disguise of name—a young friar, who consents to assassinate a queen—a Grand Inquisitor, who decrees in the name of the Pope himself the tragic and cruel catastrophe. Over this wicked consummation the Cardinal in his red robe presides like a consecrated Mephisto. Worldly intrigue, fanaticism, intolerance—these are the aspects of Catholicism which are exhibited to the spectator in this play. Borgia, Ravaignac, Tiquemada, such are the figures selected as typical of the Church.

Even the comedy scenes are irreverent. The spirit of this degenerate Latin plays about holy things with a curious fascination, as if fascinated by its own intrinsic delight. In the second act we see a convent chapel, in which the gay queen, Fiammetta, tempts the young monks with songs and dancing and influences their pure hearts toward a longing for the pleasures of a court not renowned for its innocence. These monks throw off their vows and resume it with the coming and going of the abbess, as one dons and dons a mask. The whole scene is a satire on the supposed hypocrisy of convent life, relieved only by a spurious pity for the unhappy inmates.

Catholics know that such a picture is false. The face of almost any nun reflects it. There is no laughter more rippling and true of

ring than that of the religious sisterhoods in the hours of recreation which they all enjoy, and the cloister contains far more of true happiness than the Venusberg.

Nothing of this, however, appears in Miss Marlowe's play. No religious figure in it is quite innocent and sincere, except the abbess, who is the subject of ridicule and, moreover, insignificant. Certain grisly incidents of religious history are shown, as if this were all there were to it. By this process of selection one could compose hymns from Voltaire and piece together profane sentences may be literally true and yet profoundly untypical, and this is the case with "Queen Fiammetta." It does not even afford a just picture of Renaissance Italy, which had its saints as well as its artists and brigands. No one denies that the paganism of the Latin blood asserted itself boldly at that period and that the spirit of a Nero and a Claudius sometimes crept into the gown of a Churchman. It reappears occasionally in modern times (let us say contemporary Paris), in the robes of a poet or a prime minister. Yet poetry is not essentially licentious; nor is persecution the whole study of a statesman.

But "The Republic" is not dealing especially with Catulle Mendes. It cannot prevent foreign authors, living in the Paris of Combes and Waldeck-Rousseau, from giving shape to their own interpretation of religion, however base and blind it may be. But it can and does warn American Catholics to shun these imported exhibitions. It calls upon its brother-journals in all parts of the country to set forth in its true light this travesty of holy scenes and personages. Only a few years since, religious themes were avoided in the drama, by an unwritten rule which rested on the doubly sound foundation of prudence and good breeding. If we may not appeal to a lost sense of courtesy, an instinctive reluctance to give offense, in the breasts of the theatrical managers of to-day, we may at least entreat their prudence to take heed of our objections and our numbers. We are some twelve to fifteen millions in this country, chiefly collected in the cities, where theatrical troupes seek their patronage. A united voice of protest on our part might result in a revival of the old principle of forbearance and the speedy retirement of this bigoted production by the unspeakable mocker Mendes."

THE SENSATIONAL LIES OF THE SECULAR PRESS.

READERS of newspapers supplied with European correspondence by the Press Publishing Company were recently treated to the following choice morsel of news, especially cabled, and displayed under "sensation" headlines:

"Paris, August 30.—Louis Probst, a government engineer, asserts that most of the water used to heal the pilgrims of Lourdes does not flow from the grotto where the Virgin is said to have appeared but is brought from a river in a neighboring cave through subterranean pipes, said to have been secretly laid by monks years ago. Engineer Probst occupies a high position here and is a firm believer in the Roman Catholic religion.

"A year ago he took his wife, who is afflicted with a malady the doctors had pronounced incurable, to Lourdes expecting a cure by a miracle, but as soon as she plunged into the tank she died.

"While the arrangements for her funeral were being made the engineer spent several days in observation. He noticed that the water used in the bottling department did not taste like that in the grotto and it occurred to him that the enormous quantities consumed could not be furnished by the scant grotto spring. Afterward he got a quantity from the grotto to investigate, and now he has made a report, in which he gives a chart of underground channels and analysis showing different chemical elements in the water. Last year nearly 3,000,000 pilgrims went to Lourdes, and the monks in charge contributed \$250,000 to St. Peter's papal fund besides buying more lands and buildings.

"Lourdes was a mere hamlet fifteen

years ago. To-day it is a beautiful, solidly built city of 80,000 inhabitants."

Rev. J. Van der Hayden, of the University of Louvain, says in the "Catholic Sentinel," that this dispatch contains more lies than sentences.

"Of course," he says, "any one who puts implicit faith in all that he reads in his favorite newspaper, especially when the news come by special cable, as did the above, had his belief in the Lourdes' shrine considerably shattered, after perusing this sensational item.

"Indeed, who could be better qualified to expose the monks' clever canalization scheme than an engineer, and a government engineer at that! Moreover, he is an exception to the common run of present day state officials in France; he is a firm believer in the Roman Catholic religion. Hence, he could not possibly have acted in his denunciation out of hatred or malice towards the Church. If it had not been added that he was a firm believer, it might have got into the head of the sceptical newspaper reader—a rare bird nowadays—that the fellow with the "high position" was a common fraud of the Professor Muller type, the learned Bavarian pedagogue who attacks the Church, as per his own acknowledgment, for revenue only. Not very long ago, Professor Muller expressed his willingness to give up his anti-religious zeal and to devote himself to scientific subjects entirely, if the Bavarian bishops would but be pleased to drop in a few shekels, when he would pass the hat around among them.

"All grounds for doubting the truth of the great piece of information were eliminated by the careful stating; that Louis Probst was a government engineer, that he was a firm believer in the Roman Catholic religion, that he occupied a high position.

"But alas and alas for all the titles of Louis Probst!

"He is neither an engineer, nor a Catholic nor a man with a high position, according to the ordinary standard of a 'high position.'

"He is a common, every day clerk, in an obscure dry goods store, of an obscure provincial town. All the engineering he ever did consisted in measuring out yards of calico for his employer's customers.

"His Catholicity is as wide of the mark as his engineering, for he is a member of the Lutheran church, and one of the most venomous anti-Catholic agitators of his district.

"His wife may have been sick, and she may have plunged in the water of the grotto; but she certainly did not die there, for she is alive and well.

"The observations he made while the wife, supposedly dead, was being prepared for burial, might as well have been made for the purpose of the lie, thousands of miles away; they would have had equal value—viz., none at all.

"The Superior of the Lourdes Fathers did not at first condescend to notice the foolish inventions of a notoriety-seeking humbug. When he did, on account of the immense publicity given to the fake, the famous engineer came out with the startling retort—that the Fathers had in the meantime done away with all trace of the incriminated canalization, making the proof of the fraud impossible to him.

"The idiot did not reflect for a moment that if the channels existed no more, neither could the enormous quantities of water continued to be furnished. Up to date no one heard that the flow diminished in the least.

"If the monks contributed \$250,000 to the Peter's Pence, they certainly did not make the Press Publishing Co. correspondent, nor Mr. Probst, the confidant of that little transaction.

"The good Fathers very likely contributed their modest share to the Papal Fund as it is every Catholic's filial duty to do; and the veracious and omniscient correspondent multiplied that contribution by a thousand, just as he multiplied the population of Lourdes by ten.

"Indeed, a town that shows only an increase of six or seven thousand in fifteen years would not deserve to be made the object of a yarn of the dimensions above stated; but for the sake of a beautiful, solidly built city of eighty thousand inhabitants, one may do something."

WALTER C. KENNEDY,
DENTIST,
758 Lagachetiere (Palace St.)
Two Doors West of Beaver Hall,
MONTREAL.

CRIMES OF THE TONGUE.

R. H. T. SUTTON in a recent address, at a banquet, held under the auspices of the Knights of Columbus, speaking of "Crimes of the Tongue," said—

"We are all so busy with the cares and pleasures of the world that we are prone to forget our own imperfections, like the man St. Paul spoke of, who beheld his countenance in the glass and presently went his way and forgot what manner of man he was. We are apt to take our ideas of ourselves from the image reflected in the mirror of public opinion, and it is only serious illness or approaching death that brings us to a full realization of our wrong-doing. It therefore behooves us, to study ourselves carefully, in order to eliminate that which is objectionable from our lives and to cultivate that which is good.

"It is the duty of every member of our organization to exert his influence for all that is manly and good and to oppose with the same zeal all that is lacking in these essentials. But few men, indeed, have escaped with unblemished conscience from the sins of the tongue. The tongue, in large measure, shadows forth the true character of man, showing whatever good or evil he possesses in life. There is to-day no other existing social evil which disturbs so much the friendly relations between men or renders the domestic life of men and women so unhappy as the crimes of the tongue.

"And it is not alone the members of the so-called weaker sex who indulge in this crime, but strong-minded men as well. There is no other crime that becomes so quickly uncontrollable, and there is no other reform which would elevate society more. It is falsehood and slander that cause perpetual strife among kindred, and develop the fullest bitterness of hatred between man and man. Then, Sir Knights, let us, in our efforts to do good, make a bold crusade against this most dangerous enemy to the soul.

"Theft and murder are awful crimes, yet in a single year the aggregate pain, sorrow and suffering they cause a nation are but microscopic compared with the sorrows resulting from the crimes of the tongue. Place, if you will, in one of the scale pans of justice the evil resulting from the acts of criminals, and in the other, the grief, tears, and suffering caused by the gossiping tongues of those who are supposed to be Christians, and you will be amazed to see how quickly the former will shoot high into the air. At the hands of thief and murderer few of us suffer either directly or indirectly, but from the careless tongue of friend or the cruel tongue of enemy, who is free?

"Shakespeare said, more than four centuries ago, 'Be ye pure as ice or as chaste as the unsunned snow, you cannot escape calumny.' The same is true to-day. No human being can live a life so good, so pure, as to be beyond the reach of malice or immune from the poisonous emanation of these tongues. The insidious attacks upon one's reputation, the loathsome falsehoods by which they seek to ruin character, are like the insect parasite which kills the heart and life of a mighty oak. So cowardly is the method, so stealthy the piercing of the poisoned thorn, so insignificant the separate acts in their meaning, that one cannot be on guard against them. Ah! the dynamite gun, with all its deadly and destructive power, cannot be compared with the slanderer's tongue. The gun kills bodies only; the tongue kills character and reputation. The gun does its work alone; each loaded havoc has many accomplices. The full evil of the tongue passes down through ages and it is supposed to trace it to its finality.

"Then, Brother Knights, let our promises of brotherly love serve to prevent us from indulging in the crimes of the tongue; let us try to remember the good things we hear about each other and reject the slanders. Let us also be free and Christian-like in our forgiveness of those who inflict wrongs upon us, for the man who has not the spirit of forgiveness in his heart cherishes an enemy who may yet arise to slay him. We should be sparing in our condemnation of others, for who of us is assured of his own salvation? To those who have been slandered, I could do no better than quote the language of our Blessed Redeemer, when He said: 'I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that calumniate and persecute you.'

"The wind was howling the poor rectory. The heaped high in great reached even to the w and the white flakes w ing through the air. Above all the conus kneel, clear and rever

They called her small, dark-haired, great mournful eyes, such deep black circles from County Kerry companions knew of her she toiled from early at night in one of the which are so frequent England States of A them, she received in pittance, of which the went to the dear one land. But what was in that? Nothing, sum of every three was do "Kerry" worked her with the rest in tha which is often found the Irish character. T ence between her and ions lay, perhaps, in the which she hedged hers her companions, wit hearts, respected it.

During the short e each day, no one was than "Kerry" to hear land across the sea, n share in all joys and for herself, she seldom ter. In fact, she seen the world, save that ings found their way one at home. At rar letter came, having h queer, foreign writing, girls next saw her the pious redness, about forbad questioning.

Was there any little It could be traced to opportunity to lighten some poor soul? "Ker After hours she could ing along with the rest ed compartment of on establishments called Boarding Houses, and when the meagre supp finished, she disappear seen again until retirin was she after her har work. Perhaps if you poor invalid in the ne came of an evening to ly life, sometimes to b saved from a scanty m answer you. Perhaps t ter, so lonely in the corner could tell. the sanctuary lapp see when she entered and harder to pierce the s its feeble rays. Surro peep over the shoulder white angel with the g would be satisfied.

There was one differ her cot and the rest. was a tiny picture of And many of her comp ed that she had a spe to the saint. When sh her short night prayers turned lovingly toward picture. When any of came to her with their would invariably send foster-father of the Ch specially was it whispe or Brigid's mother wa poor lonely girl would hand steal into hers and ple words, "I am sure will give her a very h am praying hard for h

This reminds me of larity which the keen were surprised to obs try"—a great dread of ever a weird tale of a being told, "Kerry" way unseen, and were ed, she would fairly s self, and look so pitte questioner would forbe further.

For three years, day and week after week, steadily to her labor, of her companions of slender little form. Then, after an unusua ter, she found herself. But many had greater she had much to be At all events, she was tated for work, and th most important consid

The wind was howling the poor rectory. The heaped high in great reached even to the w and the white flakes w ing through the air. Above all the conus kneel, clear and rever