

like his mother. She'd immolate herself for those she loved. . .

He found himself nodding, and sat up with a start. This was no way to enjoy an evening—sleeping over a book and the fire! The book was worthy of more courtesy than that, he told himself with some of Maurice's, whimsicality.

And then, although the written words were before his eyes and though his glance seemed to follow the lines, he thought he heard the jingle of bells—sleigh bells. He heard Maurice's laugh and John's deeper voice sounded in his ears.

"Yes he did—he said that 'Seeing Nellie Home' was written by another fellow to save him the trouble," jibed John. "I thought you told us these horses could go, Maurice? They're crawling. You're not seeing Nellie home yet, remember."

"Once that fellow thinks he's made a joke or pun he skins it alive," said Maurice.

Nellie's voice cut in across the laughter. And, "You're going fast enough to suit me, Maurice." That was Rose—his careful Rose. She liked fast horses and fast cars at a very safe distance. And we're swinging in on the bridge now. . .

And then it seemed to Maurice Collins that every drop of blood in his veins turned cold with horror. There was danger. . . danger. They were on the bridge—had reached the railroad track. . . were crossing it. And like a crash from the heavens came the thunder of the express train around the curve, and the red eye shone upon the terrified faces.

"Dear God," he heard Rose say. And then, "Into Thy hands. . . That was Rose. Even death would find her ready. Nellie screamed. Poor, pretty little Nellie; the world seemed to stand still. Space was annihilated. Time disappeared. Frightful anguish tore at his very heartstrings—and then as his senses realized the impending disaster a figure, faint and shadowy, seemed to fling itself upon the horses, and they were thrown back, while the sleigh swung in upon the other track out of harm's way.

And the train thundered past—but not before Maurice Collins had caught a glimpse, indistinctly, but positive enough, of the man at the horses' heads. It was his brother Gilbert.

Moaning, he straightened in his chair. The book fell to the floor. Gasping for breath, he sprang to his feet. Why, he was in his own room. The lights were on. There were no shadows. But his heart was beating so fast. "Oh, Thank God! Thank God! It was only a dream! A dream," he whispered. "It was only a dream! He put his hand to his head in a dazed way. He sat down again, but the book had lost attraction. He moved restlessly, his fingers shaking, and the beating of his heart matches the beating of the pulses in his throbbing temples. "I am worried," he said, aloud. "I confess it. I am worried."

From outside came the sound of sleigh bells. He sprang to the window. Yes, there was Maurice. John was out, helping his mother. And now the father was at the door, and took his wife from the boy's arms.

"We've had a shock," said the lad, gravely. "Wait till we get Nellie. She's faint, I think." "It was at the track," said Mrs. Collins. She was shaking like a leaf. "The train. . . we had no warning. The gates weren't down."

"And the man? What happened to Gilbert?" asked Maurice Collins. They stared at him. "There wasn't any man," said Maurice. "No one. And yet—I swear I had help when I was swinging those horses back—I couldn't ever have done it alone. The station agent had seen it all—there'll be an explanation sometime. I suppose we didn't wait for any. You've had somebody's prayers, young fellow," he said. "I've never seen a more miraculous escape in my life."

"It was Gilbert," muttered Maurice Collins. "I saw it all—and I saw it all. I saw Gilbert swing the horses back." Rosalie put her two hands on her father's shoulders and there was a grave light on her face—a queer light that told Maurice Collins then and there what Rosalie's future was to be. She would immolate herself for those she loved, under a higher, kinder love than any she might find in this world.

"Dad," she said tremulously. "I think you've seen prayer made visible. I know Uncle Gilbert is sorry. I know he's praying for us. Send for him. It was his prayers that saved us, dad, tonight."

"I will go to him, Rosalie," said her father, gently.

And so Gilbert Collins came home among his own for Christmas Day. No one ever tried to explain the incident of that evening. There are some things which can never be explained.

COMING LATE TO MASS

Why is it, that some people come into church just at the last moment, and even a few minutes late? Let us leave aside the consideration of the fault committed by missing any part of a Mass of obligation. Let us regard it from the devout and reverent and courteous and business-like side of the question. If we knew we had to catch a train for our daily work, we would do it—we would plan our time in a business-

like way in order to do it. Yet we trifle with God's time on the one day He asked us to give Him exclusively. If we were invited to dine with a friend, we would not rush in hurriedly and out of breath, at the last moment. That were discourteous. But our best friend—ah! how different we act toward Him! We delight in long conversations with those whom we love; but we hurry into church a minute before Mass begins, and out again before the priest has left the altar, as if we were fairly anxious to have done with our prayers—our "conversation" with our Lord, whom we know we ought to love the best.—The Sentinel of The Blessed Sacrament.

HOLY FATHER

EXTOLLS VEN. JOHN NEUMANN
(Special to The Pilot)

Rome, Jan. 5.—The recent Decree of the Holy Father, Benedict XV., pronouncing the virtue of the Venerable Servant of God, John Nepomucene Neumann, Bishop of Philadelphia, of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, to be of heroic degree, has occasioned much joy throughout the United States and especially in the Redemptorist Order of which Bishop Neumann was an illustrious member.

The Holy Father's beautiful allocution on the occasion deserves the attention of all the faithful who are thereby urged to imitate the virtues of the saintly character held up before them.

POPE BENEDICT'S ALLOCUTION
The Holy Father's discourse was as follows:

"It is a just and natural thing that many Catholics, of different countries and of distinguished nationalities, should rejoice in the news of the decree which proclaims heroic the virtue of the Venerable John Nepomucene Neumann. Justly, therefore, the excellent Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, in reserving to the sons of St. Alphonsus a special title to the joy of today, has gracefully indicated the motives which interest that Our decree should awaken in many Catholics of different classes and regions. It awakens them, as the speaker just now opportunely said, in the Germans who gave to the Venerable Neumann the father, in the Bohemians who gave him the mother, in the unnumbered sons of distant America who to the zeal of the missionary of Williamsville, of the religious of Pittsburgh or of Baltimore owed the beginning or the unfolding of their Christian life. We applaud the opportune observations to which we have just listened.

"But the Father of the entire Christian family maintains impartial benevolence toward all his sons; therefore, as He augurs universal benefit from it, so He rejoices at sight of any fact which may result in the general interest, even when in its first aspect it would seem to be directed only toward a particular utility.

It is precisely this which falls to Us at this moment. Because, while we know the motives of especial interest which some of our sons should find in Our decree of today, we desire that not even one of them may remain indifferent to the proclamation of the heroic virtue of the Venerable Neumann. This is equivalent to saying that the ceremony of today, if it establishes in Our heart auguries of a particular nature, fixes likewise desires of a general nature.

Especially do we believe that we can say that all Our sons should derive advantage from the news of the decree of today, by reason of the very nature of the virtues which we present in the Venerable Neumann.

"Perchance the simplicity of this nature has been exaggerated by those who do not think that the heroic degree can be recognized in the virtue of this Servant of God, because to their eyes the good works and holy deeds of Neumann are those good and holy works which every pious religious, every good Bishop should accomplish. We will again repeat that even the most simple works performed with constant perfection in the midst of inevitable difficulties are able to establish the heroism of the virtue of any Servant of God.

"But, in the simplicity of these works we recognize a strong argument for saying to the faithful of whatever age, sex or condition: 'You can imitate the Venerable Neumann.'

"This does not require that all should, as John Neumann, embrace the ecclesiastical state, that, like him, they should enter the life of the missionary or should lead the life of the religious; still less can it be required that, like the Bishop of Philadelphia, they should all govern dioceses or be shepherds of a mystical flock; it is only required that all should be 'men of their duty.'

"The duty peculiar to every Christian is pointed out by God, Who, now by means of direct inspirations, now by means of the representatives of His authority, indicates to each man what path he should take in order to attain the end proposed to him. In other words: in order not to fail in this aim, it suffices to follow the path which conducts to it. Oh! why should we imagine that it should always be a clear path, among rocks and precipices, among brambles and thorns?

OVERCOMES OBSTACLES

"In reading the Life of the Venerable Neumann, we have thought it to be untrue that he did not encounter difficulties. He began to encounter them in the refusal to be admitted into the Seminary because of lack of room; he encountered them in the refusal of Holy Ordination because of the abundance of priests. And when finally he was able to follow his vocation of missionary, were there not harsh and continual struggles which he had to sustain, especially against the arts and the cunning of the enemies of Catholicism, who sought to impede or to ruin his work?

"To speak truly, we do not comprehend how, in the midst of so many difficulties he was able to effect the erection of so many churches and the founding of so many schools as Neumann erected and founded in the four years of apostolate in the vast regions surrounding the Falls of Niagara. We do not speak of the infirmity which came upon him, unless to say that it opened to him the way to seek admission into the worthy Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

The sons of St. Alphonsus have his memory in benediction; we can well believe that his life of Redemptorist did not pass beyond a wholly simple and common manner, although very shortly he had the government of important religious houses. And shall it have been a 'simple life' which he led after his elevation to the episcopal dignity? We do not believe that such could have been the life of one who, in eight years of his episcopate not only completed the work of the erection of the Cathedral initiated by his predecessor and afterward suspended because of inability to pay the debts contracted, but also caused fifty churches to be erected, and opened more than one hundred parochial schools in his diocese. We do not believe that the life of a Bishop can have been wholly simple and common who, while he did such great things for the material good, wrought much more for the spiritual, for the reform of customs and for the increase of virtue in the people entrusted to him.

"But all this may be said aside. In our purpose we aim to obtain the universal judgment on the true character of the virtue of the Venerable Neumann, in order to be able to say to all of our sons: 'No one can remain indifferent to the initiation of simple works, while all ought to imitate the virtue of Neumann, who, in the practise of simple works, had strength and valor.'

"It seems to us that this first argument ought to suffice to persuade those near as those at a distance that no one should remain indifferent to the news of the decree which proclaims the heroism of the virtue of the Venerable John Nepomucene Neumann.

"And yet we see evidences of surprise upon the countenances of those who cannot conceive a hero apart from grand enterprises. We hasten to say that grand enterprises can be the result of simple works when these are entirely furnished with perfection and performed with uninterrupted constancy.

"To demonstrate this proposition there is need of showing another aspect of the Venerable Neumann, since the simplicity of the works performed by him do not prevent him from being a wonderful example of activity.

BISHOP NEUMANN'S GREAT WORKS

"We have already spoken of the grand number of churches erected and of schools opened by the missionary and Bishop. We cannot omit recording the still greater number of missions preached by him, of Sacraments administered, of pastoral visits opportunely made, of new practices of devotion introduced, especially the pious exercise of the Forty Hours, first known in the United States of America and established by him in a great number of churches. But the merit of an active man is not signified by the great number of his deeds so much as by their efficacy and stability, since true activity is not simply a stir; it is not a thing of a day; it is a work which unfolds in the present hour, but is the fruit of the past and should be good seed for the future. These are the characteristics of the activity of Neumann.

"Finally, he prepared his missionary work according to the inspirations of a Higher Voice. It informed him of the care with which he was to prepare to learn foreign tongues which he was to use later on; it pointed out to him the insistence with which he was to petition his Bishop to go to America, and the promptness with which he was to accept the invitation so providentially given, it spoke to him of the solitude with which he should prepare by practising as well as by words.

"It is not to be wondered at that, with such opportune preparation, the ministry of Neumann flourished most actively. Nor did he increase his activity unless for the salvation of souls, with a view only to the greater glory of God.

"His biographer asserts that the Servant of God attributed in great part the efficacy of his ministry to the disinterestedness with which he worked, because even the unfaithful said of him: 'This missionary wishes only the good of my soul!'

"The man truly active must keep his eyes fixed on the future; it is

the true method of impressing stability on his works. Neumann's stability depends on the practical estimate of things and of works in conformity and in proportion to the objective merit of each of them. It is evident that spiritual goods ought to be esteemed more than material, and that he who promotes the intellectual and moral progress ought to be called a more active man than he who works only to effect the physical and material benefits of the people.

POSTERS PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

"Neumann, particularly after his elevation to the episcopal dignity, had especial care for the parochial schools; he wished them to be neither mixed nor neutral; in foreseeing the damages which would result from both the one and the other, he favored schools openly Catholic. On his entrance into the diocese of Philadelphia he found such schools established in but two parishes; at his death he left over two hundred. Oh, Who will not say that the activity of the Venerable Neumann appears wonderful not so much for the good which he effected in the fleeting hour of the present, as for that which he secured to a future age? In promoting true intellectual progress in these children of today who rightly appeared to him as the arbiters of tomorrow, Neumann showed himself a man truly most active, and of this activity the fortunate dioceses where he worked enjoy the fruits today.

"We would add that the activity of Neumann, especially as Bishop, was efficacious and fruitful because of the sweat of his brow, the generosity with which he bore sufferings and offered himself to bear even greater for the salvation of the souls entrusted to him.

"It is opportune to recall what he did and said in the Provincial Council held at Baltimore in May, 1855. Declaring that the affairs of the diocese of Philadelphia were too extended and incommensurate to be properly administered by one prelate alone, he made known the necessity of dividing into two, fixing the new episcopal See at Pottsville. The project was praised, but the observation was made that it would be difficult to find a Bishop who would be willing to assume the government of the new diocese which was very incommensurate and poor.

"But at once the Servant of God declared himself ready to resign from the See of Philadelphia and go to that of Pottsville. He had written concerning the matter to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, which recognized the necessity of the division of the dioceses and arranged to give to the Servant of God a Coadjutor. And was it not to this Coadjutor that Neumann proposed, three years later, anew, to cede the diocese of Philadelphia and go to that of Pottsville? The change did not take place, because the holy Bishop died before the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda had pronounced on his new proposal. But the fact of his reiterated request is a monument of the generosity of soul with which Neumann bore privations and was ready to bear even greater for the good of the souls entrusted to him.

"No one can doubt that the simplicity of the works performed by our Venerable servant did not hinder him from becoming a most marvelous example of activity. That simplicity has made Us argue that no one of our sons should be indifferent to the proclamation of the heroic virtue of Neumann, because all should find in the new hero an example not difficult to imitate.

SPURS CATHOLIC ZEAL

"And should not this marvellous activity of Neumann serve as spurs to the zeal of many, to exert themselves,—and all should do so—for the glory of God, and the good of their neighbor?

"Oh, may it become in truth an efficacious stimulus for those who, with Neumann, have the common vocation of missionary; may it be likewise for Bishops who, with Neumann, have in common the dignity and the responsibility of a very high office; but may it also be a spur to all those who, in our days, call themselves promoters of Catholicity. We desire that they may be active, but with that activity of the Venerable Neumann, and which was so marvellous because prepared by study, nourished by zeal and disinterestedness, wisely ordered to its end, and made fruitful by incomparable generosity of soul.

"We cherish the hope that Our desires may be fulfilled, because the sons of St. Alphonsus will certainly precede in imitation of the example of their Venerable Confrater, thus increasing the glories of their worthy Congregation.

"But to the end that the lesson drawn from the decree of today may be taken by all with that fervor which it merits and may be practiced by all with that zeal which is necessary, we implore the abundance of heavenly blessings upon Our sons both near and at a distance.

"Oh, The blessing of God excites a holy emulation in well-doing among those who, by reason of nationality or ministry or dignity have especial bond with the Venerable John Neumann. But, in the light of the holy benediction of God, the efficacy of the decree which proclaims heroic the merit of the Bishop of Philadelphia, extends

beyond the classes which have especial bonds with him and effects that no one remain indifferent to this proclamation, because all ought to imitate him in whom the simplicity of works did not impede the wonderful activity of life."

THE CHALLENGE OF NEW YEAR'S DAY

The New Year, today no less than in the days of the earliest Christians, marks the renewal of the conflict between the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christ. The Kalends of January in ancient Rome had its message of sensualism and of pride, against which the followers of St. Peter had to steel themselves if they would be true to the teaching of the Gospel; and in our times the promise of joy with which the New Year, climbing over the disappointments of the old, makes its smiling bow to credulous humanity, is scarcely less deeply saturated with paganism than it was in the days of the Saturnalia and the Lupercalia. As of old, so now, there must be searching of the Christian heart to see in what manner shall be fulfilled in us during the coming year of grace the words of St. Paul. "The old things are put aside, all things are made new."

There is a sense, very lamentable but startling in its actuality, in which these words are true. Our generation is doing away, with a disconcerting thoroughness and a bewildering rapidity, with the old things that once were the staple of our American life: God, the immortality and destiny of the soul, the restraints of the eternal law, aspirations after everlasting beatitude, the Divinity of Christ, Revelation, and in general the lessons that Christ taught. And the new things, the things now in vogue, the things that are the incarnation of the spirit of the times are naturalism, agnosticism, opportunism, disregard for the truths that are supremely important, crude, shifting maxims of moral conduct, materialistic standards of happiness, callous absorption in sense enjoyments, overweening pride and frank contempt for the eternal decencies.

The Christian sense of the words of St. Paul is quite the reverse. The much-lauded things that the spirit of the times calls new, the Apostle classed as old; and the things that the world is making such feverish haste to cast aside as old and outworn are the new conception of life taught the weary world by the Incarnate Word for the saving and the redemption of mankind. New Year's Day, therefore, is a time for taking stock of our ideals and our practise. Our environment is not such as to keep those ideals clear or to make their practice easy. We are living in the midst of those who do not share our conception of life, and it is inevitable that we should gather some of the dust of the world as we go through our daily ways. We need to indulge in periodic mental house-cleaning if we would keep our souls free from contagion, to challenge our hearts sternly if we keep them from drifting with the popular current.

The question put to us by New Year's day should be met squarely. Are we compromising, or are we in fact what we are in profession? Is our Catholicism a mere veneer or is it something that goes to the very core of our being? Have we the courage of our convictions? On the answer to this question will depend in large measure our right to happiness in the twelve month now beginning.—America.

A YOKE OF LOVE

One knows how difficult faith is and yet how easy. Dogma is a yoke; but that is not the last word; it is a "light" yoke, a sweet burden, a yoke of love. Consider Our Dear Lord's belief in us; was there ever faith like that? He had no need to believe in Himself—but to believe in us! Consider the magnificent belief required to institute the Blessed Sacrament—this "Precious of miracles" for us! And yet in our pettiness we call it a "yoke" to believe in God! The Sentinel of The Blessed Sacrament.

A man in any station can do its duty, and doing it, can earn its own respect.—Emerson.

The real calamity of life is to become bitter; to let go, to cease striving; to cease unfolding and growing.

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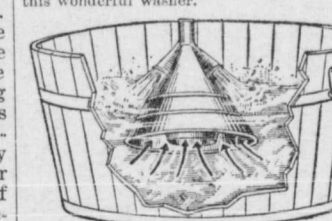
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