

sacred, less from God than those which belong to the domain of the spiritual. Throughout the history of the Church such views have received practical expression in various forms of asceticism, in recluses, coenobites, flagellants, "eremites in cell," and orders which in some epochs and countries have embraced an immense portion of the Christian population. The influence of such views is still powerfully though more imperceptibly felt. The gambols of childhood, the recreations of young and old, the pleasures of society, the study of the Arts and Sciences would now be denounced by few as irreligious; but how many still regard them with suspicion, considering them as weaknesses that they must tolerate, instead of acknowledging them as good gifts of God, or as duties that we owe to Him! Hence their feeling that they cannot enter into such a sphere without hurt to the soul and the great weakening of piety; hence the continual restraint that is upon them so unworthy of those who are born unto liberty and who ought to look upon everything in heaven above and earth beneath, in the family, the state, and all the work of ordinary life, with the grateful thought "all are ours," for our "Father made them all." To take an instance: if we heard a number of little children singing hymns, or repeating scriptural lessons, we would be delighted, and if they engaged in such religious exercises heartily would be persuaded that God accepted them, and that the sight must be pleasant to angels as to us. But I believe that there are Christians who would regard with very different feelings the same children keeping holiday in the fields, full of fun and happiness, skipping like lambs in the mead, and bursting into shouts of delight and irrepressible catches of song. I fear that there are some who would look upon such a sight with little sympathy, would let their heads shake and their countenances darken,—who, while admitting that there

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