

The Force of Example



PEAKING at the Home for the Aged in Los Angeles on New Year's Day, Bishop Conaty alluded to the sentiment of New England as to Christmas and Catholicism a half century ago, and spoke of the great change that had taken place there within his own experience. During the time when Know-nothingism was rampant, the idea of a Christian Christmas was almost unknown, yet even then the heavens were working and minds were awaiting the light of truth.

He illustrated this point by narrating an incident that occurred when he was a young priest in the city of Worcester, Mass. There resided about ten miles out from the city a well-to-do family having in their employ about the place an old Irishman, who was much esteemed by them all. One cold winter day the old man was missing, and much wonder was expressed at his absence, for it was snowing hard and the day was dreary. At night he returned and a young lady of the family asked him where he had been in such weather. He replied that he had been into town. When asked why he didn't take the horse, he replied; "Sure, no man having any regard for his beast would take him out in such weather." When asked why he had gone out in such weather he exclaimed: "Sure, and I've been to Mass. Don't you know that it's Christmas?" A few days after the young lady called on the priest and asked him to explain what it all meant, for if a religion could produce such devotion she wanted to know more about it, with the result that after instructing her the good priest had the joy of receiving her into the Church, and she became a very devout Catholic. This was but one illustration of the lack of understanding of the true faith only a few short years ago, and of the tremendous force of example.