

cants leave the church immediately after the Mass at which they have received the Body of Christ, laugh and chat on the way home, and never pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament on that day of Eucharistic blessing ! Formerly, half an hour's thanksgiving was considered the minimum for pious persons ; now five minutes or less is considered sufficient.

At the time of the great Oxford conversions, fifty years ago, many lay converts were so enamoured with the Church's prayers that, men and women of the world though they were, having to mingle in the gayeties of high society, they recited the breviary every day, which means at least an hour of vocal prayer, besides hearing Mass and saying many other prayers. Such practices were common among Catholics of the last century and the beginning of this. Nowadays, if a Catholic layman makes a meditation of fifteen minutes each day or a short spiritual reading, ten to one, he is an ex-seminarian or a future priest or religious. We refer especially to English-speaking Catholics, more particularly in this western hemisphere. In other countries Catholics may have a less militant faith, they may talk less loudly about it, but they keep it much more alive by solid practical piety.

The fact is the atmosphere around us is unfavorable to the spirit of humble dependence which prayer supposes. We hear so much of self-respect, self-government, self-reliance, self-repression, that we end by becoming, even in matters supernatural, subjectively self-sufficient. Unfortunately it is only *subjectively* ; we are self-sufficing only in imagination ; *objectively*, that is, in reality we are and ever shall be incapable, by our own unaided natural powers, of harboring even a thought that maketh for salvation. If we could transfer to the operations of the soul the laws of matter, those natural secrets the marvels of which we are unravelling more and more every day, our feeling of self-sufficiency would be perfectly reasonable. There is no doubt that science has traced to purely natural causes certain