

HOLIDAYS AND HOLY DAYS.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

We are now at the eve of the "Christmas Holidays," we are also within a very brief space of the Eve of the Church's most important Holy Day. We have more than once noticed that people generally make no distinction between the terms "Holiday" and "Holy Day." The former is a secular expression, the latter is a religious one. Take the Sunday for example. Scarcely any person would ever dream of calling Sunday a Holiday; and yet it is a day when people are free from work and are at liberty to rest and recreate themselves, if so they desire to do. But Sunday is a Holy Day, in the religious sense, that Our Lord has ordained that it should be kept so: "Keep holy the Sabbath Day." And, again, it is not called a Holy Day, for the reason that it is a regular, weekly day of religious observance; it is the seventh day, which recurs fifty-two times in each year, and which the entire Christian world acknowledges as the "Lord's Day."

When the Church declares that a certain day, is a "Holy Day of Obligation," she means that the faithful are obliged, under the same pain of sin as attaches to the observance of Sunday, to "keep holy" that day. By this is meant that whatsoever you are obliged to do on Sunday, you are equally obliged to do on that special Holy Day. You must attend Mass, under pain of mortal sin; you must refrain from all servile work; you must insist upon all those under your control, and for whom you are responsible—such as children, servants, employees,—doing likewise. But this differs vastly from a "holiday." Any day in the week you may take, or give to others, a holiday. That means a regular working day that, by way of exception, becomes what is commonly called "a day off." There are national holidays, which are generally observed, but which have no special religious significance. The First of July—Dominion Day—is a holiday all over Canada. But there is no special obligation to attend Church on that day, nor is there any penalty prescribed for the man who does not choose to celebrate that day, or to refrain from work thereon. You have the summer holidays, when pupils take two long months of recreation. In those two months there may be found one or two Holy Days, but these no more affect the holidays than do the Sundays.

We speak of the "Christmas Holidays," these mean the eight, or ten, or more days, around Christmas time that are considered as days of relaxation from work and of special enjoyment. But in these holidays come Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and the Epiphany, all three Holy Days of obligation. It will be noticed that the Catholic Church alone of all the churches that claim to be Christian, properly fulfills the obligation to "keep holy the Sabbath;" for she alone makes it an obligation, under pain of sin, to "go up to the temple" on that day. Equally, she alone, in all Christendom, ordains that the feast be kept holy, that is to say, that certain days, which for others are Christian holidays, must be observed as Christian Holy Days of obligation. Of all the days of the year, Christmas is the most universally observed holiday; it has its domestic associations and its admirable traditions, for all Christians on earth. But for the Catholic it means far more. Without divesting it of any of its home associations, the Church accentuates its importance, by declaring it to be a Holy Day of Obligation—that means a day to be observed as is the Sunday.

In many Protestant denominations Christmas is observed by prayers and varied forms of services. But these are absolutely voluntary. There is no more obligation to participate in them than there is to attend morning or evening service on Sunday. Of course, it is popular, and even fashionable to be present in Church on such occasions; but there is no strict law of that church violated, nor any special law of God, (according to their individual interpretation of the same) disobeyed, by the one who stays at home, and seeks to make up for the lack of public devotion by a special and private reading of the Scriptures. It is entirely otherwise with the Catholic. On that Holy Day of Obligation the Catholic is "obliged," as the words mean, to "keep holy" that day; obliged to attend Mass; obliged to refrain from work; obliged not, because it will

save appearance, but because to disobey constitutes a mortal sin, for which absolution is absolutely necessary. Consequently, we are perfectly justified in claiming that the Catholic Church alone has Holy Days; and, while others have Holidays, she alone commemorates in a purely Christian manner such events as the Nativity of Christ.

Cardinal Gibbons on The Sweatshop Evil

Cardinal Gibbons in a sermon to a large congregation at the Cathedral, Baltimore, on Sunday, December 6, made a vigorous attack upon the sweatshop system and strongly advocated what is known as union-made goods. The sermon was delivered by special request, the Cardinal being one of the vice-presidents of the Consumers' League, which advocates the purchase of union-made goods. Bishop Curtis and a number of priests were in the sanctuary and many members of the league was, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He said, in part:—

"My purpose to-day is not to commend to you indiscriminate charity, but my aim is to set before you a special class of persons in this city, that you may help to improve their condition, to redress their grievances, and enable them to earn by their industry and honesty a comfortable livelihood.

"To come to the point—there is a class of persons in Baltimore and in other large cities who are employed by proprietors of large clothing establishments. Some of these workers are employed in the stores, others make garments in their own homes and bring them to the establishments.

"Many of these workers, men and women, are compelled to toil in sweatshops, of which there are eighteen in one section of this city, which are contracted in space and poorly lighted and ventilated. They are overworked and underpaid.

"After a careful investigation I have discovered that after laboring for six days, at ten or twelve hours a day, their weekly compensation amounts to \$6 or \$8. And with this pittance they have to pay for house rent, food and clothing, and other expenses incident to family life.

"There is something radically wrong in our social and economic condition when the employer becomes suddenly rich, while the toiler, with the utmost thrift and economy, can scarcely keep the wolf from the door. These toilers ask for no alms. All they demand is living wages. They appeal to you and the public for compassion and consideration. They are our flesh and blood. You may not be able to aid them directly, but you can do so indirectly in various ways. You can agitate the question; you can arouse public attention to pressing grievances; remove the veil so that one-half of the world can see how the other half lives.

"You can appeal to the conscience and humanity of employers themselves, who may be disposed to repair a wrong when their attention is called to the situation. And surely a little reflection will enable them to realize that they will derive more substantial happiness from the contentment and gratitude of their workers, than from the money hoarded in their safes. If they are deaf to your expostulations you can have recourse to more drastic measures.

"Thank God there is in Baltimore some clothing houses that treat their employees with justice and charity. In making your purchases you can discriminate in favor of these establishments. You will thus exercise a moral pressure on the oppressors by appealing to their self-interests.

"You can encourage and co-operate with that excellent society, existing here and elsewhere, called the Consumers' League. It is composed of ladies zealous in works of charity, and has already accomplished a great deal in improving the conditions of these oppressed toilers and of establishing happier and juster relations between them and their employers.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

A CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE.—To our little boys and girls we offer the following touching little story of the last Christmas Eve, which one Catholic girl spent on earth so that in their homes they may offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the blessings with which God has favored them. It is taken from the "Annals of our Lady of the Sacred Heart," and is from the pen of Mary Agnes Finn. It runs thus:—

It was a quiet little bush township, with quaint, old-fashioned houses, nestling among the picturesque mountain heights. The Angelus bell was sweetly, softly tolling from the tower of a grey old church, and on the verandah of the adjoining presbytery a priest, who was diligently reciting his office, paused in his walk to murmur the heaven-sent prayer. It was the close of a sultry mid-summer day, and being Christmas Eve the Father had been more than usually busy superintending the rustic decorations that had transformed the bare walls of the little church into a bower of beauty. A band of happy children who had toiled cheerfully and unceasingly since early morn, gathering evergreens, weaving garlands, arranging a wealth of flowers in every nook and corner, still lingered around the church door, their merry chatter and joyous laughter every now and then reaching the ears of the tired priest, as he snatched a few moments' respite from the arduous duties of the day.

"Who is this coming in the gate?" exclaimed a voice, and a chorus of thoughtless laughter accompanied the remark, as a small ill-clad, weary boy advanced timidly to the group, and asked:

"Does the priest live here?" "There is the presbytery, if you want him," said another, and the boy looked around in a bewildered manner as no one attempted to direct him to the house half hidden by shady trees.

"Children, I am ashamed of you!" said the priest, coming quietly forward. "Are none of you kind enough to assist this forlorn little boy? And on Christmas Eve, too! The holy time when the Divine Infant came in poverty and lowliness into this heartless world." And the good Father glanced reproachfully at the thoughtless group, who had evidently been excited to laughter by the ragged appearance of the child.

"What is it, my boy?" continued the kind-hearted priest, stretching out his hand to the tired little traveler.

"Katie, my sister, sent me," he said timidly; "she is very ill—perhaps dying."

"And where do you live?" asked the priest.

"Oh, far over the mountains," was the reply. The Father looked serious. Evidently it was a long journey, and to-morrow would be Christmas Day. He had three Masses to celebrate at different stations in his straggled Mission, and many confessions to hear. "How did you come, my boy?"

"I walked; but it is a very long way. Do you know a place called Fletcher's Crossing? Well, we live some distance from there. Our name is Donovan. I must go back now, but I will meet you at the crossing. Oh, please come! Katie begged so hard for a priest."

"Of course I'll go, my child; but you must have something to eat before you set out again," and the Father looked pitifully at the unkempt, ragged, tired boy who had braved the trying heat of a mid-summer day, and a long, weary bush tramp to bring aid to his suffering sister. But the name and the place were alike strange to him, for he had been but a very short time in the parish, though rumors had reached him that a gang of lawless men, whose object was plunder, infested the locality, though the place of their concealment could not be detected, as they moved about from one district to another, and so well laid were their plans that it was difficult to trace home their crimes to them.

The priest led the boy to the kitchen, where an appetizing meal was placed before him, and then he withdrew to make his plans. He would hear as many confessions as possible, and would then start out on his journey at moon-rise, with the hope of getting back towards midnight, or at least sometime before morning.

"I will go now," said the lad, after giving the priest directions which were somewhat difficult to follow, "for Katie is alone."

"Are your parents living?" asked the Father, as he accompanied the boy to the gate.

"Mother has been dead many

years; father is living, but he has not been home for days. I do not know where he is; he often stops away for weeks."

The sun was settling like a great globe of fire when the boy set out on his homeward journey across the mountains, but it was moon-rise ere the priest, bearing the Blessed Sacrament, mounted his horse to seek out the lonely bush home of the dying girl. Soon he had left the township far behind, and was trying to follow the mountain track, seeking out the landmarks indicated by the lad. All was hushed and still, there was no sound but the "song of the cicada," or the gentle rustling of the forest leaves. No thought of danger disturbed the heart of the priest, as he quietly murmured loving words of praise and adoration to the God of Love who accompanied him on his lonely ride; but, as the hours wore on, and he seemed no nearer his destination, he grew uneasy. He glanced at his watch—it was just midnight—and as he called to mind it was Christmas morn, "Gloria in excelsis Deo" burst from his lips as he pictured to himself the shepherds who kept their night-watch on the hills of Judea on that first Christmas night when "an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone around them," and now on this lonely mountain side he knelt for a moment and adored the "Word made Flesh" hidden beneath the lowly sacramental veils.

But the thought of the dying girl urged him onward, and a fervent prayer for guidance issued from his heart. Was that a light gleaming at a distance? or only the dying embers of a bushman's fire? The priest directed his horse's head towards the light, and found that it proceeded from a half-burnt log, and he was about to ride away, when he was suddenly stopped by a rough-looking man who seemed to have risen up from behind the log.

"I am afraid I am bushed," said the Father, "can you help me?"

"Who are you?" said the man in gruff tones.

"I am a Catholic priest on my way to visit a sick person," was the answer.

A jeering laugh broke from the man, who said: "Come with me; I will see." He laid his hand on the horse's bridle, and in a few minutes led the priest to the entrance of a kind of cavern, which was closed by a rude wooden door. He gave a peculiar low whistle which was immediately answered from within, then the door was cautiously opened.

"Come inside," said the man; "I will look after your horse."

"But," protested the priest, "I must continue my journey without delay." Then, thinking it wiser to humor the man, he did as desired, and entered the hut, which seemed to be enveloped in smoke. For a moment he could not see, but somewhere out of the dense cloud came sounds of laughter, and when the Father was able to discern anything at all, he discovered that it proceeded from some men seated round a rude deal table in the centre of the hut. Great rough-bearded fellows they were, and they looked at the poor tired priest with a kind of amused curiosity.

"I am in want of a guide," said the priest; "will one of you come with me?"

"Not until you have handed over your valuables, my good friend," was the reply.

Then it suddenly dawned upon the Father that he had fallen into the clutches of the lawless mountain gang, and with no thought in his mind but that of saving the Adorable Sacrament from outrage, he made a rush for the door.

"Stop!" thundered a voice, and turning he saw a revolver pointed at him. A sudden thought occurred to him to tell these desperadoes the whole truth, and to throw himself upon their generosity.

"My men," he said, "you are welcome to the little money I have; also so my watch. You shall have them freely if you will give me your word to spare the other treasure I bear with me. I am taking the Blessed Sacrament to a dying girl."—"And," interrupted one of the gang, "you carry it in a golden box—jewelled, too, perhaps—so you needn't think we shall let a prize like that escape us."

The priest's heart was filled with anxiety, but he determined to make another effort. "Do you know that this is Christmas Night? the night that brought 'peace on earth?' Surely, then, for the sake of the holy memories it must recall, you will not commit any violence. But, remember, the Holy of holies that I carry with me I will defend to my dying breath, and if you lay sacrilegious hands upon it, it will be only when mine are clasped in death. So, my men, reflect a moment before you commit so terrible a crime."

A coarse burst of laughter followed the pleading words of the priest, and then a rough voice shouted: "You

may talk as you please, but the golden box is ours."

On hearing these words a fierce-looking man, whom the priest had not noticed before, came from the further end of the hut, revolver in hand. He was of immense stature; the others were lambs in appearance compared with the newcomer, whose eyes gleamed like live coals in the semi-darkness.

"You must let this man go free!" he thundered out in fierce tones.

"We have a word to say in the matter as well as you," said another.

"I say you will not harm him," and he interposed his giant form between the priest and his companions. The hard heart of the man had suddenly been touched with remorse, for when he heard the Father pleading for the Blessed Sacrament, time had, for a space, turned backward in its flight, his thoughts flew back across leagues and leagues to ocean to his childhood's home—the Island of Saints. He saw again the little thatched-cottage, and the mother with her children around her, reciting at even-tide the Rosary of Our Lady. He saw the ivy-covered church, half hidden by trees, noon and night, and the long-forgotten "Angelus" was sounding again in his ears. He saw the venerable village priest with a flock of bright-eyed children around him, to whom he was imparting the Divine truths of religion, and then came their First Communion Day, one happy Christmas morn. Could it be true that he had been one of that happy band, that for him a tender-hearted mother had carefully brushed and made ready his best garments, the knot of white ribbon so long and lovingly treasured, and the candle laid aside with reverent care! Could it be true that now on another Christmas morn he was to permit his lawless gang to lay sacrilegious hands on the Holy of holies! No—bad, sinful, terrible as his life had been, he would not allow such an outrage as that!

There had been silence in the hut since his last remark, but the ominous looks of the rest of the gang plainly said that he was not going to have his own way.

At this crisis the door was pushed open, and the boy who had visited the priest stood in their midst. His face was very pale, and bore traces of tears. "Have any of you seen a priest passing this way?" he asked imploringly. Then catching sight of the burly form holding the revolver, and the priest who stood with his hands firmly clasped over his breast as if guarding the Blessed Sacrament from harm! "Father," burst from the lips of the boy, "what are you doing here? Let him go free! Poor Katie is dying."

"God, forgive me," exclaimed the man, "Katie dying! Oh, my child, my child!" Then Donovan turned to the others, saying, "You must let him go in peace! My child is dying!" Evidently they were somewhat afraid of him, for he turned to the priest and said "Go at once, I will defend you."

The Father needed no second bidding. He rushed out and mounted his horse, which was tethered outside, Donovan the while guarding the door. The horse his son had ridden was there also, and in a moment he was on its back with the boy on the saddle before him.

"Ride on now, for your life," he shouted. But the words had scarcely left his lips, when the report of a pistol shot was heard, and Donovan reeled in the saddle.

"Are you hurt?" anxiously shouted the priest.

"Never mind me," was the reply, "hasten on to the child."

When they reached the cottage they found the poor girl very ill, and suffering from want of proper care. Her father's remorse was pitiful to see. She was the creature that he loved best on earth, his one redeeming point was his affection for the girl who seemed far too fair and gentle to be the daughter of such a man.

But time passed. Poor and hasty were the preparations made for the Heavenly Visitor, but the sick girl's heart was comforted when Jesus entered therein, bringing with Him the Christmas gifts of peace and hope, for on his knees by her bedside her father promised to return to God, who had, by a miracle of the Blessed Sacrament, subdued in a single moment a heart hardened by years of sin.

Then, and only then, did the priest discover that Donovan had been wounded in the side, but with all the strength of his rugged nature had concealed his suffering until his child's wishes had been gratified. The priest after carefully bandaging the wound, left on his return journey, promising to return as soon as he could.

It was just day-break when he entered the presbytery, and when a little later he stood at the foot of the altar to celebrate his Christmas Mass his heart was filled with joy, for he knew that the Angels in Heaven

were rejoicing over the sinner who had resolved to do penance.

Many weeks of suffering ensued for both Donovan and Katie, but in the end they both recovered, and he was true to his resolve to lead an honest life. He removed from the mountains to the township and so thorough was his reformation that in a short time there was not in the parish a more exemplary Catholic than he. His conversion was truly a miracle of the Blessed Sacrament, and love and devotedness to it was now the mainspring of all his actions. Every evening at the close of his day's work he repaired to the church to pour out his thanks at the foot of the altar for the wondrous mercy vouchsafed him, and tears of repentance flowed from his eyes when he oftentimes recalled with a shudder how near to insult and outrage was our Blessed Lord that memorable Christmas Eve when He, in His mercy, subdued the heart of the sinner by His tenderness and love.

Joliette College Fire.

Coming almost in the wake of the terrible conflagration that reduced to ashes the splendid edifice of the Ottawa University, the news of the destructive fire that played havoc with the College of Joliette, on last Saturday morning, would seem almost like a great warning to all large institutions of education, telling their directors how true it is that "eternal vigilance is the price" of safety. No doubt one of the principal cares of the directors and professors in all our homes of education is to see to the safety and comfort, the health and necessities of the pupils. Yet, with all the good will in the world, there is one terrible enemy that we can never dread too much and against which we can never take too much precaution—that is Fire.

About eleven o'clock, on Saturday last, just an hour before the call to dinner, a fire broke out in the study-hall of the Joliette College. While the firemen were able, after an hour's battling in a most heroic manner, to get the flames under control, it was not until immense damage had been done. Very happily there was no loss of life. There are about three hundred and twenty-five students in the institution, and the staff consists of about thirty priests and ecclesiastics. The Blessed Sacrament, the chapel ornaments, and the sacred vessels were saved; but the chapel, which was one of the most beautiful in the province, was ruined. None of the private belongings of the pupils could be saved. All went up in smoke. The Rev. Father Beaudry, who is the Superior of the College, is also Superior-General of the Order of St. Viator, in the Province of Quebec. It must have been a sad and affecting spectacle for that venerable and devoted priest, for his great heart was in his college. In all Quebec there is scarcely a college that was better equipped than that of Joliette, and its reputation as an institution of higher education has long since gone beyond the limits not only of the province, but of Canada. We most heartily sympathize with both the Fathers and the pupils in the severe losses that they have sustained, and we trust that the ordeal through which they have bravely passed will serve as a stimulus to renewed activity in repairing the losses, and not as a damper upon the well known courage and zeal that have always characterized the inmates of that admirable establishment. There is no need for discouragement, for Providence has certainly a grand future in store for an institution that has done so much good in the past. But, we must repeat, without the faintest idea of finding fault in any way, that these severe lessons, coming one on the other, should teach us that where so many young people dwell together under one roof, the precautions that should be taken, are almost innumerable. Not the shadow of a risk should ever be allowed, and the buildings, especially those that are of years standing, cannot be too safely protected against the eternal menace of fire.

With Our Subscribers.

I enclose you one dollar for subscription to your paper. I have been Your paper should be in every Catholic home and I will, if possible, make it better known in this locality.

Yours truly,

W. D.

Enclose you find one dollar subscription to your paper. I have been a subscriber for nearly forty years, and it is the best I have ever read.

It was not long found his way on gain; he gave Sir Philip full account of the with some interesting in as to the reflection, and the color of his dress. Then he sang all through, and produced the music of it next so that Sir Philip could play the piano. This was of a real friendship, went by Leo rarely from school without only a few words of balustrade. In him a new medium for with the outside world, his interest in his people began to day seemed to bring and he found the house lighter feet. He was new spring welling up, from which, it drew in deep draught, inspiration, of energy the joy of living had and he knew that she to him, who came in Mary the Mother of God, leaned down to him, his dream, and stretch hands to draw him from slough of misery and he was sinking out of man aid. Every glance of that vision him, to fill him anew; and ever his thought to her in unconscious praise, while Leo's A known by heart, was lips. He was learning prayers, wherewith to the library, amongst illuminated missals, v Catholic books of devotion through these, and with a strange reverence beautiful book of "The Lady," which had belonged to the Queens of England illuminated, and bound with gold clasps—a from a collector's. This, Sir Philip took and he kept it always yet another token of to this sweet mistress gallery, in the western house, partially closed only by one large window of painted glass, exquisite picture of the Titian, brought from V gone Ralston with a Sir Philip had himself the gallery several times his eyes on the fair in found so much to deprecate in the silence and with the furniture all Holland covers, that he der for the picture to be hung in his own sitting placing himself before ed an unspoken vow, never part with it. He of great value, and algent had been making some of the more valuable pictures and cabinets a great advantage, be ready cash; but the him greatly—he felt he break up his home at day Leo came to his state of excitement, with a fight with poachers, ture of one of them, game preserves. Poach very ripe of late on the staff of keepers had been that the game was looked after, and poached tipped their numbers, come very bold. Leo was disturbed state he them had fired at Dadd hit him, "but he might you know," and the bo close to Sir Philip with apprehension, Sir distressed.

"Daddy says it's a d that there is so much tempt them," said Leo never known the pheasant or soon such great tragedies; he does want y ter and see about it," then, throwing his arm Philip, he cried impet do get better soon, Sir praying to Our Lady e make you well, but sh time." Sir Philip's eye "She is making me bet answered gently, "but I that I shall ever be ab shooting again. I ca