

CATHOLIC INTERESTS.

What interests men always claims their attention, and to further them they generally make their best endeavors. Men's interests are in keeping with their predilections, which vary according to their character. The worldly-minded man has worldly interests; the spiritual-minded man places his interests in eternal things. "For where your treasure is," says Holy Writ, "there is your heart."

What are the interests that claim and should engage the Catholic mind? They are, first, the interest of God, and, secondly, those which respect man as a child of God, which both are ever guided by the holy Catholic Church. God has His interests, but they are largely in man's keeping. He has a right to be glorified in all things, but the things which He has placed under man's dominion must give their glory through man's co-operation. In this respect God, we may say, is to receive the glory of material things generally from man's proper use of them. The beauty of the fields is to inspire man's admiration, and their bounty is to be followed by his gratitude. Man's life and all things that sustain it and prolong it are to be the constant theme of his praise and thanksgiving.

Religion is the expression of man's homage to God for all that He is and does, and it is the highest of Catholic interest to see that the exercise of religion is free to all who desire to practice it. Fortunately in our country the law guarantees this freedom, and any violation of that constitutional right is speedily removed once it is made known to the civil authorities. If there be any considerable number of Catholics without the advantages of their faith it can only be attributed to their own neglect to pay the necessary expense. With religious services wanting, all else is wanting for they are the seed of everything else Catholic in a community—as a decent church, comfortable rectory, convenient school and convent and all that pertains to their necessary equipment. These are all important Catholic interests, and it is for Catholics to provide themselves with them, and, once provided, to see that they are suitably maintained and perpetuated. For this some generosity must be shown, but when one remembers all the things they will accomplish for God's glory and the eternal salvation of souls, any sacrifice they entail will easily be yielded to.

There are many things growing out of these principal ones which concern Catholic interests, but they need not be more than alluded to as they invariably are forthcoming in due time when the chief things are well established. They are, for example, devotional societies, mutual beneficial societies, relief organizations and the like. All these should command the attention and co-operation of all Catholics wherever organized. In all that concerns the interests of the Church and her members all Catholics should take such part as lies in their power. Every one can and should do something. The old can encourage the young; they can show sympathy and give support if they can not actually take part. Every Catholic man and woman physically able should try by membership with others, regardless of class distinctions, to do something for God's glory and for the salvation of themselves and their brethren. God is the God of all, therefore He should be adored as far as possible in common by all. Heaven is the home He promises to all who serve Him. Therefore, as far as can be, the Church and its societies should be availed of in common. "God is not a respecter of persons," Holy Writ declares, and men should try and adore and serve Him without giving way to human respect and the intimidation it prompts. We are all of the one great human family, and as such we should try and be a spiritual family as well.

Religion suffers, God's glory is dimmed, man's salvation is made more difficult by the class distinction which some Catholics of the wealthy and educated classes bring with them into the practice of their religion. In the fulfilling of civic duties all men are on an equality in this country. The poor man votes side by side with the rich, and with equal force; he sits in the jury as a peer with all his associates and has a voice in their deliberations and a vote in the decision as to the innocence or guilt of his fellowman. Why, then, should men wish to have distinctions made for them in the divine law, when they are not made in the human law? Catholics interests concern first God's glory, which should be the concern equally of all; they concern man's eternal welfare, which should be sacred to all in common.

Everyone works better when working with others united for the same end. This union in spiritual matters is most effective. It finds its best exemplification in the religious communities, for the good they do, and the work they accomplish is simply marvelous. All others must strive to have this spirit of union and co-operation if they would hope for anything like their results. But, while considering Catholic interests, we must not conclude that they concern the Catholic Church and Catholic people alone. God has made all men and died for all. He would save and sanctify all, and Catholics as we are, we must strive for the salvation of the whole human family, and it is a maxim that any man who would save his own soul must strive for the salvation of some other. It is by example that we can best accomplish this—the example of a good Catholic life. Let us give this example, first that we may glorify God, then save our souls, and we shall be helping to save the souls of our brethren. All this is comprised under the head of Catholic interests. Let Catholics be faithful to all it implies.—Bishop Colton in Catholic Union and Times.

More profession of a belief in Jesus Christ is not sufficient for salvation. Something in addition is required. What that something is Scripture points in the words: "Not those who cry Lord, Lord, shall be saved, but those who do the will of the Lord."

NEAR TO NATURE BUT FAR FROM GOD.

In a speech in Exeter Hall, London, the Rev. Dr. Crothers, impugning life and religion in America, said: "One of the serious problems in America today is the growing paganism of the country communities." And he said well. Is there anything in the world as lamentable as the utter ignorance of God by the non-Catholic American farmer who eats from the very palm of Providence? He is as barren of faith of any kind as is the burned stump in the clearing. His character is sordid—the earth, earthly. The horse, the hog and the dog are his well-beloved, and his aspirations rise not above his companions. All this is the destroying work of heresy, the parent of utter infidelity. Heresy gave him the Bible, but he cannot or will not read, and if he reads he finds out, first of all, a text to justify his own indifference, apathy or infidelity. Americans are prone to laugh at the grasshoppers of Castle Garden or Ellis Island, yet with all their poverty they have hope for a purpose here and a destiny hereafter; but the poor American rustic is, indeed, a sorry character. He has not much and that little is hard earned, and he has no immortal longings to lift him to the skies before their gates close him in everlasting bliss. He has the Bible, but not the Church, and the saddest example of the utter uselessness of the Protestant's rule of faith is shown in the hard-headed honesty that despises the meeting house and lives with the crops. He is in too close touch with Nature not to feel, if he does not know, the falseness of Protestantism, and so he abandons himself to his own material phenomena and lives thoughtless and hopeless and heavy, and when he dies the corner of his farm has his solitary headstone.

How different in Catholic lands! The Angelus of Millet gives the picture of a poor countryman and his wife digging potatoes. Their feet are encased in the clods of poverty, but their sky is filled with hope and music for the sweetly pealing Angelus creates a gap in their hard work, and, consecrating it, makes their labor itself a prayer. All the charms of Nature bespeak the peace of faith, and thus they live their quiet lives with brows wet with honest sweat, with souls bedewed with grace, with hearts enriched with virtue's flowers, more fragrant and beautiful than the lilies of the field.

Take Protestantism to the country and it soon shows its incapacity. Keep it in the city, and of course a society, essentially hypocritical, deems it the respectable thing to go to church, and surrounding it with all the pomp and circumstance of the world's fashion, hides its worthlessness in glittering follies. The farmer is not a hypocrite; he asks of the earth a living, and the dull soil truthfully responds; he asks of Protestantism food for the mind and soul, and it has naught to give the starving to eat; and consequently he lives without a prayer, and dreams not of a heavenly purpose. He digs in the earth, until some other digs him into it, and then he believes in the grand end all.—Catholic Union and Times.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF DIVORCE.

The Catholic has no illusions on the questions of Divorce. The Church having definitely pronounced herself on the irrefragability absolute of the marriage tie, and held herself immutably bound by her pronouncement at all times in her history, Catholics are not obsessed by debatable theories as to the nature, good or bad, of divorce. For them it has, simply, no existence and consequently remains outside the sphere of argument or speculation.

So grave has it entered, however, into the life of the modern world, and so subversive is it of the very foundation of society—namely, the family—that no being who has the faintest glimmering of sociophilic interest in his nature, can withhold his attention from an evil, the grievous import of which strikes at the heart of the world's civilization, as surely as Atheism, of which it is, indeed, an unquestionable corollary. As a destroyer in the human fold, it is recognized by men of all conditions and creeds. The agnostic, irreverent as well as reverent, exerts his pen and voice even as the churchman and sociologist, to combat a common enemy. The atheist conceives that his destructive progress revolves the criterion of his unbelief, and, an believer though he be, he educates his children to a belief in the sanctity of the marriage bond. The atheist admits that its insolent growth provides an unanswerable argument for the existence of a canonical religion. On all sides, Palladium, the love of mankind—religion is not a religious matter, it is throwing its legions against the invader, and with a sure success.

M. Darkheim, a professor of the Sorbonne, writing in the *Revue Politique et Littéraire* (Paris), considers the question from the purely sociological point of view. Quoting Bertillon, the anthropometrical expert, that the number of suicides follows, in insignificant proportion, that of divorce, M. Darkheim emphasizes the fact, also quoted by Bertillon, that there is less suicide among the followers of the Catholic Church than in any other Church. As a general law, it may be laid down, on the basis of statistics, that where divorce is rare, suicide is also rare. Marriage, of itself, proves again, statistically, the strongest deterrent against the suicidal tendency in individuals, either male or female; it being shown that the number of suicides among married men, even when there are no children of the marriage, is once and a half less than among unmarried men. When there are children, the number becomes three times less. In the case of divorced women who are childless, suicides are much more frequent than among those who have children, the statistical proportion being as five to one.

"It is certain then," he says, "that marriage, particularly on the male sex, exercises a moral influence which is of advantage to the individuals themselves, since it attaches them to life." Once admit the principle of divorce as an "institution" to which any married person can fly for relief and on pretex which may be anything but reasonable, and the moral influence becomes at once weaker, since couples will enter into marriage, knowing that their safeguards are precarious and that the stability of the union is not strongly assured. Moral equilibrium of both man and woman can only be reliable in proportion as the bond which unites them possesses the nature of indissolubility. A rule of conduct or life from which either person may withdraw, with no other a rule; and where the element of precariousness enters into so solemn a contract, it brings with it, also, a disposition to lightly regard the obligations imposed by the vows.

Marriage, it must be remembered, modifies the material and moral economy of two families, the relations subsisting between the persons married not being what they were before marriage. Even when there are no children, the marriage has brought about relations which are independent of the couple wedded. The rights of third parties are consequently involved and the fact that one member of a given family has divorced, may lead other to dissolve their contracts. When children are born, the physiognomy of the marriage changes its aspect altogether. The married couple cease to exist for their own sakes; and their end in life henceforth transcends their own personalities. Each parent becomes at once a functionary of domestic society, obliged to perform all duties. They owe these duties to others besides themselves; and more to the others than to themselves; and should they shirk them, having once accepted clearly defined responsibilities in the contract by resorting to divorce, they are in exactly the same position as the contracting party who is guilty of breach of contract. Here, then, is shown the self-stultification of civil law which punishes severely the wilful breach of contract which may involve only two persons, but which lightly rescinds a contract in which the lives and happiness of numbers of others besides the principals are inextricably and involuntarily involved.

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to belong to him, and one barrel of which had been lately discharged. He was convicted of the murder, and the court sentenced him to penal servitude for life in Siberia. Conformably to canonical rules, he was degraded from the priesthood before this sentence was carried out; and then his hair was cut off, and he was clad in convict apparel, and then incorporated in the chained gang of criminals who made their march to Siberia. Years passed away, and everything about the occurrence had been forgotten, except by a few persons. Then the organist of the church of Orator, finding himself at the point of death, sent for the principal persons of the district, and in their presence confessed that he was the murderer of the official. He added that he had done so in the hope of being able to marry his widow. After committing the crime he took the gun with which he had shot the unfortunate man, and hid it where, upon his suggestion, the police found it, and he ingeniously managed to direct suspicion on the priest. But the strangest part of his story remains to be told. After the arrest of the priest, being torn by remorse, he visited him in prison and went to confession to him, disclosing that he himself was the criminal. He had then the purpose of acknowledging his guilt before the tribunal, but his courage failed him, and he allowed things to proceed on their false course.

Thus the poor priest, Kobziowicz, knew well who was the genuine murderer, but he knew it only through the confessional. A word would have set him free from the terrible charge. But this would have broken the seal of the confessional, and he preferred to undergo degradation and penal servitude for life, and lose his good name and be regarded as a shameless criminal. The confession of an organist was subsequently taken in regular legal form, and then the Government sent directions to have the priest sought out and set at liberty, his innocence being publicly proclaimed. But he was beyond the reach of human compensation, and had gone before a Tribunal where error is not admitted and where ample justice will have been done to his heroic virtue. He died without ever having let the slightest sign transpire of the real condition of things.

CONVERSIONS DUE TO CATHOLIC TRACTS. That American Catholics should display much more zeal than they do in the distribution amongst non-Catholics of tracts and leaflets, setting forth and explaining Catholic doctrine and teaching, is proved by a well authenticated story that is now published. Writing of a successful mission to non-Catholics that was conducted during the month just passed in the Carnegie Library building at Bufala, Ala., Rev. Xavier Sutton, C. P., a Southern priest, tells the following interesting story of a conversion, due, under God, to the distribution of Catholic tracts by an Irish-Catholic peddler on his rounds: "Not very far from Bufala's a diocesan missionary, fighting the rain and cold of a winter's night, lost his way in the dark woods attempting to reach a dying Catholic. After wandering hopelessly for a time he at length perceived in the distance a faint glimmering light betokening a human habitation. Drawing nigh he requested admittance in the name of humanity and of God. His request was granted, with the comforting assurance that his permanent convenience could not possibly be considered. The first question put by the host to his midnight guest was the astonishing one: "Do you know what a priest is?" My wife if very sick and does nothing but moan and call 'Priest, Priest, Priest!' That may be a patent medicine; can you tell me?" His visitor did tell him, saw the sick woman, received her into the Church, in which she died a few hours later. Thus was the zeal of an Irish peddler who distributed Catholic tracts on his rounds amply rewarded."—The Missionary.

THE SECRET OF THE CONFESSORIAL. N. Y. Freeman's Journal. Blessington, Wicklow, Ireland, July 15, 1906. Dear Father Lambert—Some months ago I read in the Freeman an article about the secrets of the confessional where reference was made to a case in Russia. You regretted you had not the exact statement. I had it, but was unable to put my hand on it until today. I clipped it from the London Tablet some twenty years ago (March 6, 1880). Enclosed is the clipping.

Very truly yours, T. CURRAN, P. P. THE SECRET OF THE CONFESSORIAL. In the year 1853 the cathedral church of Zitimir, in Russian Volhynia was the scene of the most mournful of all Church ceremonies, the graduation of a priest. The church was filled to overflowing by persons who lamented aloud; the Bishop whose painful duty it was to perform the sad rite, Mgr. Borowski, could not restrain his grief, all the more because the priest who was subject to it was universally known and hitherto universally respected. His name was Kobziowicz, and he was Catholic priest at Oratow, in the Ukraine. From the time of his ordination he was regarded as one of the most pious and zealous priests of the diocese; he had considerable reputation as a preacher, and was greatly esteemed as a confessor. He rebuilt his parish church and decorated it, and from the time he was placed in charge of the parish he seemed to redouble his zeal. All at once, to the amazement of everyone who knew anything about him, he was accused of having murdered a public official of the place. The chief piece of evidence against him was a double-barrelled fowling piece, which was found hidden behind the high altar, which was proved

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