

HORRORS OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION

The Eden Musee has been for thirty years one of New York's "sights." Many visitors to the great city, not to mention an occasional Gothamite born and bred, have felt it an annual duty to step in from West Twenty-third street just to meet the "celebrities of the day in wax," and then to descend boldly into "the crypt" of the Musee and gaze unblinded on the various forms of grisly death there represented. One group that is sure to hold the new comer's attention is a particularly gruesome scene entitled the "Horror of the Spanish Inquisition." It is doubtless meant to be a vivid picture of the Grand Inquisitor's torture chamber. At the right of the compartment a wretched heretic hangs suspended by the wrists, while heavy weights pull down his feet, and an executioner lifts a lever which racks still more the victim's bones. Nearby sits another obstinate heretic, whose legs are encased in iron boots a "familiar" is slowly torturing. In the foreground some iron with the object, perhaps, of putting out the eyes of the prisoners, in order that the light of truth may thus be brought to their darkened souls. Another figure in the group is a wan and woeful maiden kneeling in terror before a crucifix. It is not altogether clear what kind of death awaits her, though a "cheap and chippy chopper," with a "big black block," who stands axe in hand at the extreme left, eyes the woman with professional interest and seems eager to have her finish her prayers and be neatly beheaded. Scattered on the floor in the foreground are numerous instruments of torture, some of them quite new and shining, and none that is not ingeniously fashioned, presumably, for reconciling obstinate heretics to holy Church. No cowed and scowling Dominicans, however, as is often the case in old illustrations, are represented superintending the tortures. Out of deference, perhaps, to the patrons the managers of the Eden Musee have consented to exclude from the group the blood-thirsty friar, and put in his place the zealous and efficient familiar of the Inquisition. Many have doubtless found the absence of the traditional Dominican a keen disappointment. Nor is any one being realistically burned at the stake either. That function, however, would hardly be expected to take place in a torture chamber.

When the visitor has gazed his fill at these "horror" he, perhaps, turns with interest to the "Eden Musee Catalogue" to learn just what the character of the Inquisition was. After some irrelevant information about the Greeks and Barbarians he will read a short account of the origin and history of the Inquisition that is very inaccurate and misleading, largely because the writer makes no distinction between the Holy Office of the Papacy and the ecclesiastico-political Spanish Inquisition of the fifteenth century. Speaking of the latter he makes these assertions: "It required little proof to convict one of heresy; the mere charge by the State officials was generally sufficient. Men of every class who did not wield powerful influence trembled because they expected hourly to be charged with heresy. Once charged, no matter by whom, arrest and torture followed. From 1481 to 1495, 8,800 persons, including women and children, are said to have been burned at the stake in Spain as heretics." If the word "not" be inserted in each of those sentences they will be nearer the truth. The Inquisition was a popular institution in Spain, and few had reason to fear it but the unorthodox. As Father Guggenberger reminds us in his "General History of the Christian Era": "It is not just to compare the judicial methods of the Inquisition with those of the present day. They must be compared with contemporary procedures sanctioned by the public laws. The methods which we deplore in the Inquisition were methods of the age; the redeeming qualities were peculiar to the institution. At the bar of the Inquisition the accused had ample time and means to prepare his defence. He was given an attorney who was under oath faithfully to defend his client. Besides two priests, who had no connection with the Inquisition, were bound to protect the accused against arbitrary ruling, to inspect all the records twice, and to report to the authorities. The accused had the right of summoning witnesses to his favor from the remotest region, even from beyond the sea." This method of procedure contrasts favorably with that followed during the same period in England and elsewhere. As can be learned from Sir James Stephen's "History of the English Criminal Law," not only the names of a prisoner's accusers, but the charges made by them were concealed from him until his appearance in court. Moreover, one accused on a criminal charge was not allowed an advocate, nor to bring forward witnesses in his favor. As for the punishments inflicted by the Inquisition, they were those of the age. Torture was everywhere used in criminal procedure, and burning at the stake was the penalty with which sixteenth century Europe punished some of the more heinous crimes, and as heretics were considered guilty of high treason against God, they were treated accordingly.

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The modern world seems to think that the Spanish Inquisition had a monopoly of the these cruel forms of punishment. Not so. "The rack," says Hallam, "seldom stood idle in the tower during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign." That instrument of torture is carefully described by Dr. Lingard, and with it the Scavenger's Daughter, and the Little Ease, punishments with which English Catholics were but too familiar. Those convicted of heresy by the Inquisition were burned, indeed, at the stake. But so were witches in Protestant Germany. Yet this punishment was less painful probably than being hanged, drawn and quartered, as were many of the martyrs who suffered under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. As for the number of executions in the whole of Spain, between 1481 and 1495, the figure would be nearer 2,000 than "8,800." In England during a like period of fourteen years, according to Sir James Stephen's computation, 11,200 executions took place, many of them for crimes no worse than sheep-stealing, and in Osnabruck, Hanover, as Janssen reminds us, during but three months of the year 1583, 121 persons were burned for witchcraft. Torquemada after all was an angel of mercy compared with some of his contemporaries.

However, the purpose of this article was not so much to defend the Spanish Inquisition as to explain how its method of procedure was no harsher, but in many instances milder, than that of the age in which it flourished. In conclusion here are three suggestions that are earnestly offered to the managers of the Eden Musee. First, remove the crucifix from the compartment in the "crypt" called the "Horror of the Spanish Inquisition." Second, change that title to "A Torture Chamber of the Sixteenth Century," or something similar. Third, substitute for the account of the Inquisition, now published in the "Eden Musee Catalogue," some facts about the "cruel and unusual punishments" that were common all over Europe up to comparatively recent times. The "crypt" will thus lose none of its "horror," and the Eden Musee none of its patrons.—Walter Dwight, S. J., in America.

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Let us confess our sins with sorrow and confidence. Put aside all trouble. Have as much contrition and humility as possible, but do not trouble. "Every troubling thought is from the devil," says the sweet and wise St. Francis de Sales. And trouble and spiritual worry are not contrition; neither are they pleasing to God.

ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL

The city of London, Ontario, has reason to be proud of St. Joseph's hospital. It is conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph and is in existence for well over a generation. From small beginnings it has assumed very large proportions and even generous enlargements are found insufficient in our day to meet the demands made upon it for accommodation of the sick. In the near future it is contemplated to add another extensive wing.

On Tuesday of last week at St. Peter's hall a class of thirteen graduates received their diplomas and the occasion was in every way most interesting one. Bishop Fallon made the presentation of the diplomas and in a short address brimful of salutary advice and words of encouragement referred in most complimentary terms to the great work being done by the institution. The words of His Lordship made a deep impression not only upon the graduates but upon the large number present. Miss Aline Hargitt read the valedictory address to which Dr. J. P. Mugaan replied in fitting terms. Addresses were also delivered by Mayor Graham and Col. J. Gartschore.

The graduate nurses are: Misses Mary O'Meara, Mabel Sinclair, Hannah McRae, Margaret O'Meara, Margaret MacIntyre, Genevieve Shaughnessy, Alice Beattie, Elizabeth Brown, Rita Lee, Rena Urquhart, Aline Hargitt and Georgina Brown.

THE CATHOLIC RECORD compliments the Sisters upon their great work. May they go on and prosper and may every blessing be with them and about them in their truly charitable and God-like endeavors to relieve suffering humanity.

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DIED

CARRIGAN.—In Wyoming, Ont., on March 28, 1913, James Carrigan formerly of Biddulph aged seventy-six years. May his soul rest in peace!

McKENNA.—At the residence of her brother 236 College St., Toronto, on April 14, 1913, Miss Teresa McKenna, Teacher, formerly of Woodstock. May her soul rest in peace!

URGES EARLY MARRIAGES

Rev. Father Angelus Lager, O. C. C., pastor of St. Cecilia's church, Englewood, N. J., in a sermon recently urged his young parishioners to marry early, and if the young men are to timid to propose, he will do it for them.

"There are too many bachelors and too many young unmarried women in this congregation," he said. "All of you who are old enough should be married. You can't make the complaint that the high cost of living prevents you from marrying, young men, for it is not the high cost of living. It is the cost of high living that stops you. That is the real reason why there are so few marriages to-day. And, young men and young women, when you find someone of the opposite sex whom you love, don't wait too long before you get married; for then you are apt to be kept waiting all your life."

"And when you do get married it is well that you should have large families. Children are far better than automobiles, and sometimes it is impossible to support both. Have the children first and let the automobiles come after. Because the family next door have no children is no reason why you should allow the same condition to exist in your family."—True Voice.

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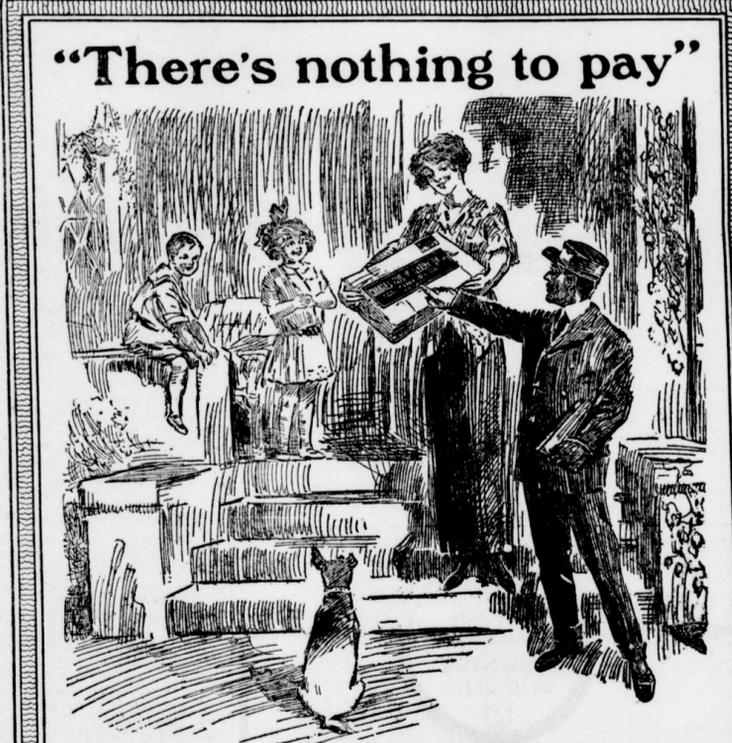
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