

ON A CERTAIN AGGRESSIVENESS.

In writing the last of these short articles I may be pardoned for taking advantage of the chance of making a little sermon: it will be my only opportunity for this year, and the chance is tempting. For a text I take Cardinal Gibbons "Christian Heritage," not the book itself, but the spirit of the book. He had taught us what we ought to have taught ourselves—that Christian zeal does not excuse un-Christian bitterness; that the knowledge that we are of the Fold of Christ does not justify us in calling foul names at those who happen to be outside. He has taught us this by example, and we would do well to heed the example.

We Catholics are brought more and more into contact with men of opposite religious opinions or of no religious opinions. Among these is the agnostic, who says he knows nothing, but pretends he knows everything. The Cardinal has shown us how to deal with him, and I hope, cured us of slinging the decrees of the Council of Trent at men who deny the Divinity of Our Lord, and of an unpleasant habit of trying to knock our dissenting brethren on the head with "The End of Controversy."

We start out with a false premise—that all who do not see the truth are blinded by their own fault. The teaching of the Church of Christ does not warrant this. To say a sharp thing about the spiritual ruggedness of another may be easy and seem deserved, but what man of heart and good-breeding would say similar things to a man who was physically ragged?

The cruel but half-concealed theory of modern civilization, that all the poor are undeserving, is just as Catholic and charitable. There are Catholics who take advantage of death in a household to tell what they hold to be hard truths—that is, they collect a quantity of jagged paving-stones and drop them on hearts already bruised. And their manner of doing this, so offensive to charity, decency, and common-sense, irritates the sufferers against the religion they assume to represent. Yet who are more complacent than these militant Christians? They generally delight in casting their paving-stones when their victims are in their power. Has this method ever made a single convert? Do we not all know of people within our own circle whose hearts have been hardened against the beauty of the Church because some of our extra-militant friends have used her symbols as objects of assault?

It is not aggressiveness we need, but charity—the charity which sees clearly the struggles of others and understands them. Has not St. Paul defined it for us? And while some of us exhaust our sarcasm on the man who calls this great Saint merely "Paul," how many of us reverence him as we ought by getting his words by heart?

If our Protestant friends in writing used the word "Roman Catholic" as an adjective to as many unpleasant nouns as some of us now prefix the adjective "Protestant," we would be more bitter than we are in our outcries against their bigotry. The time has gone by when the name priest was synonymous with all horrible cruelties and deceptions. Why is this so in the United States? Is it because more people read Catholic books and understand our doctrines better? Not at all. It is because they have come to know priests personally.

Novels are the expression of our time, just as the drama was the literary expression of the time of Elizabeth, or the satirical essay that of the time of Queen Anne. Take the priest in any late work of American fiction, and you will find out what the average American thinks of him, or more, how he affects the man who judges him without regard to his spiritual character. In "The Midge," by H. C. Bunner, for instance, there is a French priest who seems to have the hearty esteem of the author. In John Habberton's latest story, "All He Knows," there is another priest. There are no gibes at him: he is drawn reverently and even with affection. The reason is easy to find. Contact with priests has taught these writers that they are not ready to howl anathema on every occasion; that, from their pulpits, they do not send all souls to hell who outwardly bear the name of Protestant. And these writers reflect, too, public opinion, which may be directed by gentleness, but which can not be forced.

If there is a man among the roll of our prelates who deserves to be held up to us all for special imitation, it is that Bishop of Boston afterward known as Cardinal Cheverus. He subdued the most un-Christianly bigoted town in this country to a recognition of the real spirit of the Church. It is not recorded that he thundered and stormed, appealed and abjurgated; or that instead of a crook he used a club, and stumped stray sheep that he might drag them into the fold. He was gentle to Protestants, though he never concealed the pain he felt that they should have been led astray by Luther and Calvin and the rest. He recognized that it is very hard for a Protestant to hear hard things said of a belief which his father and mother loved. You sometimes feel that his prejudices ought to be spared in the interests of truth; and that may be true—but prejudices rooted in the heart often seem to be principles. And to root out one of these requires all the skill of a Cardinal Cheverus; and if you and I go at it thoughtlessly with our little hatchets we may make a mistake, dear friends. Let us not forget, in our zealous Christianity, that we are Christians.—*M. F. Ryan, in Ave Marie.*

THE WAR ON WHISKEY.

A natural sequence of the position taken by the late Catholic Congress was the mass meeting held lately in Baltimore under the auspices of Catholics in favour of high license at Harris' Academy of Music. On the stage sat His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons, Mgr. McColgan, Archbishop Elder, Bishop Virtue, Bishop Keane, the Rev. James Nugent, the Rev. James Cleary, and some hundreds of prominent citizens interested in the movement. Every seat in the great theatre was occupied, and crowds were turned away. Mr. Harris tendered the use of the Academy free as a favour to his friend, Archbishop Ireland. Cardinal Gibbons presided. As he came forward to speak he received a warm greeting. Cardinal Gibbons said:

"I appear before you to-night not only as a churchman, but also and chiefly as a fellow-citizen anxious for the moral welfare of my native city. Whatever contributes to the moral growth of Baltimore, whatever contributes to the happiness of the people, has my most hearty co-operation, and I firmly believe to-night that the noble cause which will be advocated here, if successful, will contribute, under God's blessing, to the moral welfare of our beloved city; to the welfare of our people, to the domestic happiness and tranquility of the poorer classes and of the laborer. The blow that we strike to-night is a blow struck for the cause of the laboring man, and it must and shall be successful."

The Cardinal was followed by the Rev. Father Nugent of Liverpool, the famous temperance apostle.

"No honest man," he said, "can justify the existence of a liquor saloon. As commonly conducted it is an institution that cannot be defended. They are the resort of the vile, the degraded, the obscene. There crime is concocted and the ballot-box corrupted."

The speaker gave statistics showing that \$900,000,000 was annually expended in the United States for liquor, and said it was usually by the class who can least afford it. He was continually applauded, and ended by asking all present to band together and rescue the people from the control of the liquor saloons.

Rev. James Cleary, President of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America was next introduced. He said: "The position of the Catholic Church on Temperance and other social questions has been clearly stated in the Catholic Lay Congress held in Baltimore. The corrupting influence of the saloons in politics, the crime and pauperism resulting from excessive drinking require legislative restriction, which we can aid in procuring by joining our influence with that of the other enemies of intemperance. The Catholic Church is absolutely and irrevocably opposed to drunkenness and to drunkard making. In vain we profess to work for souls if we do not labor to drive out an evil which is daily begetting sins by the ten thousand and peopling hell. In vain we boast of civilization and liberty, if we do not labor to exterminate intemperance. Education, the elevation of the masses, liberty—all that the age admires—is set at naught by this