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THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 1893.

Calendar for the Week.

- Aug. 17—Octave of St. Lawrence.
18—St. Hyacinth, Confessor.
19—Blessed Urian II., Pope and Confessor. Fast Day.
20—Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.
St. Joachim, Father of the Blessed Virgin. Solemnity of the Assumption.
21—St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Widow.
22—Octave of the Assumption.
24—St. Philip Benitus.

The Feast of the Assumption.

On Tuesday last the Church celebrated the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the solemnity of which is postponed till Sunday. It has ever been a pious and well founded tradition that the pure, immaculate soul of Mary after being separated from her body by death was united shortly after to it, and that she was taken up to heaven amidst the joy of angels, and placed upon the throne by the right hand of her Divine Son. Putting it in other words her resurrection was advanced, and what will happen to all the saints at the end of time happened to the Blessed Mother of God three days after her death. It was like our Lord, yet essentially different. With the Son it was a resurrection, a rising from the grave and a mounting to heaven by His own virtue and power; but with the Mother it was the omnipotence of God which stooped and united her soul and body, and took them, assumed them, into heaven. It was the sweetest answer in all religion to that question of scripture, "Who is this that cometh up from the desert leaning upon her beloved, lovely as the moon, beautiful as the sun and like an army in battle array?" This is in very truth "the queen who stood on Thy right hand in gilded clothing surrounded with variety."

And it was most fitting, just and proper that the Blessed Virgin should thus be delivered from the tomb, that the first and most beautiful crown should rest upon her the eldest and fairest child of creation. The great central truth of Christianity is that Jesus Christ was God and Man, that the two natures were complete in Him, and that His personality was divine. As man He was born of a woman into this world like other men. This woman who was His mother was therefore Mother of God. That sacred relation which knows no parallel, which has its origin in the recesses and secrets of the God who created us, and which has its crown in the affection and the confidence it establishes—this sacred relation of Son and Mother existed between Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin. Whatever honor and dignity a simple creature can receive that we would expect to be conferred upon the Mother of God. Nor should we say that she ought not to have died. Since death was the punishment of sin it was not due to her; for by her immaculate

conception, by her sinless life no stain or even imperfection could be found in her. But her Son had died; had offered himself because He willed it. She would therefore wish to die, that she might be like Him. And thus having lingered upon the earth for some fifteen years after our Lord's death, yearning, lonely, longing she slept, or swooned away out of very love for Him who was all in all to her. It was not the crucifixion again—that had been with her from the beginning; it was the languishing of one weary, the sleep of the truly just. The apostles were scattered at the time; and in a moment, St. John Damascene tells us, they were brought to Jerusalem, "where a vision of angels appeared to them and a singing of the angelic powers was heard, and thus many surrounded with the glory of God gave her holy soul into the hands of God." With singing of hymns the Apostles and angels buried her in Gethsemane where for three days the angels continued their chant, and then ceased. St. Thomas who had been absent arrived, and wishing to pay his homage the Apostles opened the tomb. "They were unable to find the body, as it was not in the tomb, but the cloths remained in which it had been wrapped. They found also a sweet odor coming from the tomb, which they then closed. Astonished at the mysterious miracle, they came to the conclusion that He who had been pleased to take flesh of the Virgin Mary, and to become man, and to be born of her, whereas He was God the Word and the Lord of Glory who had also preserved incorrupt the virginity of His mother in giving Him birth, had now been pleased to preserve her pure body from corruption after death, and had honored her by taking her to heaven before the common and general resurrection."

Thus was she who was most associated with our Lord's life in suffering, associated with Him also in the glory and crowning of heaven. Thus was her wonderful humility exalted by Him who had already done great things to her; and thus did her exceeding great purity save her body from the corruption of the grave.

If all this was most fitting that the mother of the Emmanuel should be first in glory as she was first in grace, that her life should have a joyous triumphant term as it had a triumphant beginning, what is befitting in the children of such a mother? Joy at her exaltation; imitate her devotion, her simplicity, her virtue. Go to her in discouragement, in temptation, in sorrow. "Her spirit is sweeter than honey, and her heritage than the honeycomb." "She is an infinite treasure of which they that draw shall become the friends of God." "Whoso harkeneth to her shall not be confounded, and they that work by her shall not sin."

Note.

In last week's issue, in the article entitled "Rev. Dr. Douglas on Divorce," a typographical error occurred which this note is intended to correct. The sentence referred to should read: "He finds (and he is not ashamed to admit it) that for purity of morals and sterling manhood the Puritanical race of New England cannot stand in comparison with the French Canadians or Irish Catholics of his immediate neighborhood, and Quebec."

The Secret of Confession.

A decision in an English court of law is causing a good deal of talk and excitement in High Church circles. Sir Frederick Jeune, Chief Justice of the Court of Probate and Divorce, lately ruled that a minister of the gospel has no right to plead privilege when asked to state in court the substance of a confidential communication made to him in his sacred capacity by one of his parishioners. This means that the secrets of the confessional may be revealed. And as the practice of auricular confession is continually increasing amongst High Church people it seriously affects the clergymen who practise it. In the case in point the minister did repeat what had been told him rather than incur the wrath of the unjust judge. Hitherto it had been an unwritten law in England that a minister of the gospel should not be asked to disclose a statement made to him under the seal of the Sacrament of Penance. No judge ever demeaned himself so low as to insist that this sacred bond of confidence should be broken until Sir Frederick Jeune wandered from the track of honor into the by-ways of bigotry and petty persecution. But what is to be said of the minister who, not wishing to get into trouble, betrayed his poor penitent? It may be that ministers with wives and children will feel loath to incur imprisonment; that they will not sacrifice their social standing to the requirements of their office. But Catholic priests are not much concerned how an English judge decides such a point. The priest knows he can never reveal the secret of the Confession. Thumb-screws, racks and all the tortures are not sufficient to drag it out of him. Their duty is plain, and countless examples are on record in which devoted priests have suffered for years or died in martyrdom rather than violate the greatest confidence one individual can give another by opening his heart to him in the Sacrament of Penance.

Assize Courts in Ireland.

The returns of the Summer Assizes in Ireland have been very disappointing to the hopes of the Coercionist opposition. It was expected that sufficient proofs would be given of the increase in crime in that country to justify the English people in voting at the coming elections for a continuation of Coercion and Crimes Acts; and, although some of the judges, appointees of the Salisbury Government, attempted to overlook the figures or exaggerate the offences, the general verdict is that Ireland has not been, in fifty years, so free from outrage and crime of every name as she is just now, under a paternal Home Rule Government. At the Kilkenny Assizes Sir Peter O'Brien, the Lord Chief Justice, whose zeal under the Balfour regime entitled him to the soubriquet of Peter the Packer, was forced to admit that "as far as relates to crime, there has been a substantial—a most substantial—decrease in the serious class of crime," and even he was bound to add, "a decrease in the minor offences." But here, says the Dublin Freeman, his Lordship's congratulations ceased, for he immediately set himself to show, with a gusto that was in marvellous contrast to the few words in which he

dismissed the important decrease in crime, "that the condition of the country was in a much worse condition than the returns proved." He waxed very wrothy over a couple of cases in which the police assumed that outrages were committed through hostility to certain prominent politicians, and grow eloquent over the absolute necessity of showing "absolute freedom of speech and absolute freedom of action" to all of her Majesty's subjects. Sir Peter, posing as the champion of freedom of any kind, says the Journal, is indeed a sight for gods and men. What freedom did Sir Peter confer, a few years ago, on the Catholics, who were excluded from the jury box by his own manipulations whilst Orange bigots were exclusively empanelled to try Catholic prisoners? It is a pity Sir Peter did not uphold freedom of speech and action at an earlier period of his career. Had he done so, and acted on such principles, the memories of jury-packing in the days of coercion would not stand up now "in accusing mockery of his words."

But Sir Peter, although in a bad way at Kilkenny, was more than disappointed and mortified in Carlow. At the Assizes in this county he had to submit to the humiliation of being presented with a pair of white gloves. There was actually no criminal offence whatever to be tried at the Summer Assize Court in Carlow.

The gentlemen of the Grand Jury in Clare passed a resolution in which serious complaint was made of the manner in which crimes were classified in the official returns; in fact, that they were cooked to suit the Gladstone regime. The Orange member for Ulster, Mr. T. W. Russell, put a question to the Chief Secretary in Parliament on the subject. Mr. Morley's answer showed that Mr. Russell had discovered a "mare's nest." He merely stated that the very gentlemen who are now engaged in the work of classification are the same who have performed that duty for the last ten or twelve years.

At the Maryborough Assizes Judge O'Brien uttered the very serious complaint that there was only one case of arson returned whilst there were nine claims for compensation for malicious burning before the Grand Jury. Mr. Morley explained in Parliament that the police only returned cases of arson which they honestly believed to be such, but an application for compensation is no proof that an outrage had been committed.

In North Tipperary the Lord Chief Justice said: "I am glad that the general condition of your county, as I am told by the County Inspector and Crown Solicitor, is quite satisfactory." In the County Leitrim Judge Harrison said: "None of the cases indicate a condition of lawlessness or any condition of crime calling for comment." In County Louth Mr. Justice Andrews declared: "I am glad to be able to congratulate you on the condition of your county." At Clonmel, South Tipperary, Sir Peter O'Brien said: "Certainly much external peace exists all through this riding." And so on, through the North and South, East and West, the juries in every county, without exception, have been