

"Deny thyself—take up thy cross, and follow me!" had been the temperance lecture thundered in their ears from their pulpits, and whispered in their ears from their pulpits, and whispered in their ears from their pulpits...

But if you look around you at the same time, you will find that, numerous as these sorts and fortifications undoubtedly are as protests against foreign invasion, the forts and castles (her monasteries and convents) which the Catholic Church has erected as protests against intemperance, are far more numerous still—so that you will be forced to acknowledge: "This is truly a temperance-loving Church. It is no fault of hers at least if the vice of drunkenness prevails against her."

But there is one difficulty which the Catholic Church experiences (and has always experienced) in her battle against intemperance, which should not be overlooked. You have all heard of Sylla and Charybdis; and you know doubtless that a Monkish old Poet was once heard to declare "That if from Charybdis you're anxious to run 'Tis exceedingly likely—unless you take care, You'll fall into Sylla—as sure as a gun."

objected to wine as a thing bad in itself—some even objected to wine for sacramental purposes. We have these heresies still amongst us, and hence the delicacy of the position of the Catholic Church. If in her fight against drunkenness her bishops and prelates denounce wine too strongly there is the fear of Manicheism—If in her fight against Manicheism they advocate the claim of wine as a creature of God, they are immediately accused like our Saviour of being wine-bibbers. Well! Gentlemen, better be accused of drunkenness than heresy any day!

It is impossible to read the homilies of such men as St. Chrysostom, St. Austin, and St. Cesarius without feeling how deep and continuous was the struggle which the Catholic Church had to maintain in Asia, Africa and Europe in those 3rd, 4th and 6th century days against drunkenness, and how heroically these her representative men maintained the struggle.

But you will ask me how did it possibly happen, that drinking at all (I do not say drunkenness) was ever allowed at these religious festivals? Well, I think it is easily understood, even if we had not direct testimony on the subject. How does it happen that even now-days at our wakes there is always a "little drop" of whiskey and a few pipes and an odd plug of tobacco stowed away in some odd corner? Because the Church cannot put a stop to it.

But if we would thoroughly understand the nature of the fight which the Church has had to carry on, we must study the many and various abuses which she has had to contend against. The Church, gentlemen, has been contending against abuses ever since her foundation by Jesus Christ on the great day of Pentecost. There have ever been two standards—the standard of the Cross—and the standard of the Devil. The Church bears aloft the standard of the Cross—and depend upon it, the devil's most efficient weapon—his "breach loader," his "needle gun," his "Krupp cannon," his woolwich infant, his "iron clad" in his warfare against the Church is drink; his "household brigade," his "heavy dragoon," his "old guard," his "pet battalion" is the drunkards.

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There appears, however, to have been a difference (in their origin at least) between these drinking abuses of Africa and those of England and Ireland. In Africa they were concessions (oh! these weak-kneed concessions) to the pagan converts. In Ireland, in the wakes at least, they appear to have sprung up from the necessity there was of guarding against contagion or of countering the sickening effects of a dead house.

But here again the Church was equal to the occasion. She put her foot down upon these vigils; and gave the people something else to do—fast. "Wherefore," says the homily, "holy fathers ordained the people to leave that waking, and to fast instead." It is a sad thing, gentlemen, but you see holy church had to pluck up both wheat and cockle.

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I am sorry to say that amongst my countrymen in England as early as the time of St. Dunstan there was a very disgraceful custom called challenging, i. e., trying, who could drink most at a draught. We find this same custom in Ireland in 1623, when Archbishop Maloney O'Quigley, who died a martyr

at Sligo in 1645, denounced it in Provincial Synod. St. Dunstan, to put a stop to this custom in England, prevailed upon King Edgar to order pegs to be put in all drinking cups, below which no one was allowed to drink. But the devil circumvented Bishop Dunstan; for he taught the people that if they were not allowed to go below the pegs, they should at least never stop short of them.

But there were other kinds of "ales." Like our raffles and bazaars and pic-nics these ales were various means of raising money for charitable purposes. There were 1. Bid-ales, sometimes called help ales. 2. Bride ales, sometimes called bride bush. (A brush stuck on the end of a pole constituted a tavern.) 3. Give ales. 4. Church ales. 1. Bid ales were in reality ale pic-nics got up for the relief of some indigent person, and were called bid from bidden—invited. The bid ales still exist in part of Yorkshire—for instance when a poor family wishes to emigrate—someone buys a barrel of beer—invites the neighborhood—each pays what he can or what he wishes—the proceeds going to the poor.

An indefatigable collector of "rusty sayed saws" was in the habit of jotting down any saying new to him on the back of cards, letters, etc., and thrusting them into his pocket. On one occasion he had an altercation with a stranger at a friend's house. The quarrel becoming warm ended by the collector excitedly handing the other (as he thought) his card. On the gentleman's preparing to vindicate his honor or next morning, it occurred to him to learn the name of his antagonist. On looking at the card he found no name, but, in place of it, traced in good legible characters, "Nothing should be done in a hurry but catching flies." The effect of this was irresistible, and the result an immediate reconciliation.