

A DELICATE QUESTION.

Relations of Catholics Inside and Outside the Church.

The next Catholic Congress will devote itself entirely to social topics—social topics which in various forms have shaken the world since the time of Moses; but there is one social topic that is too delicate to be handled; and that is the social relations of Catholics and non-Catholics. I presume we may say "parish" now—with one another.

We know that the main strength of non-Catholic religious organizations lies in the strengthening of the social side of their "church relations." Every minister understands that the eloquence will hold his flock together, nor the beautiful prayers he addresses to them, nor his choir, nor his service of song, nor his Thursday evening meeting. He does not depend on dogma; for to his congregation dogma is unpleasant to the pampered ear.

Therefore he must depend on the interlinking of the social chains. He succeeds in proportion to the skill with which he does this. Mr. Lyman Abbott, for instance—Mr. Baecher's successor in Plymouth church—has succeeded in a most difficult position, because he knows the management of the social wires.

But Catholic churches are not social clubs. And so far as careful and complete organization is concerned, nothing can exceed the perfection of organization within Jesuit congregations. We have all observed the care with which the Fathers of the society—God bless them!—will create a parish out of nothing and make it flourish through all difficulties. A priest has no time for the little social attentions which occupy so many of the hours of the minister and the minister's wife. Besides, he can not dine with one member of his congregation, except on special occasions, without exciting the criticisms of the rest of his people. There is an impression in Catholic congregations that the poor man's corned beef and cabbage is just as good as the rich man's *pate de foie gras*. And the priest must accept this unless he is willing to cause much heart-burning and dissatisfaction. The consequence is, that from motives of prudence, a priest with every grace of mind and charm of manner, must stay at home a great deal. For in this country, there is nothing that the body of Catholics resent so much as any seeming partiality on the part of their pastor for the rich. A priest with us has no social position; he is everybody's equal and everybody's superior.

The priest, then, is powerless to rattle the social dry bones into life as the ministers do. Whatever can be done must be done by the people themselves. Do they do enough of it? Would it add to the strength and the influence of the Faith in this country, if more of it were done? And how can it be done?

There is a constant complaint that the Catholics are unsocial among themselves. There is a constant complaint that good young men and young women drift away from us because they are frozen out of their proper environment. There is a constant complaint that while there is the greatest equality in our churches, we are devoted more to the worship of caste outside of them than any other class of people. "God and myself," the sarcastic say, is our motto—and that our neighbors are only helped by us when they are entirely trodden down by the world; that we have no room for equals, and that we are merely tolerant to inferiors. This is not true; but it has an appearance of truth. In Brooklyn once a colored man took a long time in blacking my boots, and it occurred to me that I might do a little evangelizing, in order to distract his mind from the vastness of the work he had undertaken and to strengthen my patience; but he settled me. "If you Catholics," he said, "would make as much of us outside your churches as you do when we go in 'em, you might catch some of us."

There is no analogy between old Ned's speech and the subject in hand, —it only reflects a feeling that is common,—a feeling that we kneel together at the same altar rail and in the same pew and then "cut one another dead." Who, for instance, is so adept in the social art of freezing as the eminent woman in a congregation, who has a grandfather she is not afraid to acknowledge?—or whose husband can afford to set up a brougham?—or who is well received in that Protestant circle, for whose recognition so many "foolish women" long?

"I'd rather be Gently damned beside a duke, Than saved in vulgar company!"

Are there not women in Chicago who, if it were not for certain scruples, would reflect this sentiment where the affable Mrs. Patter Palmer is concerned? And pious creatures in New York who feel that heaven would be hardly heaven without dear Mrs. Van Roosevelt, who sometimes looks in at the sewing society where frightful flannel garments are manufactured for unknown Catholic children? Have we, in fact, not a great many snobs with us?—Maurice Francis Egan in *Buffalo Union and Times*.

Like the Mystic Wedding of the King's Son.

Rev. Bernard Vaughan, S. J.

There is something peculiarly beautiful and beautifully holy in the linked lives of the truly Christian man and wife that the Apostle can only compare them to the mystic life of Christ with His Church.

Jesus loves His Bride for her own true worth, because she is incorruptibly good, inexhaustibly patient, inexpensively holy, infallibly wise and indefectibly true. Take a rapid glance back down the vista of time that marks her steady progress through well nigh two thousand years, and what do we see? What do we read in her life, but a history luminous with token after token of love and loyalty to Christ, unmatched, untouched, by the rarest deeds of human chivalry?

Let the husband love his wife as Christ does the Church. Not then for her merely natural gifts, the endowments of her mind or heart, or sweet companionship, though the thought of these may force you to avow, "There is none I love like Thee," but love her for the likeness of God that is in her and the beauty of grace that dwells in her and the odor of Christ shed around her. And be sure she will return love for love. "I to my beloved and my beloved to me" is the keynote to which the music of your life shall be set, harmonious with the life of Christ and His Church.

"Ah, she will love him truly. He shall have a happy home; She will order all his days. When beneath his roof they come."

And if, God so willing, your "happy home" should be made yet happier still by fruitfulness, then your first thought and care will be to lay these sacred pledges of God's love to you at the feet of His Spouse, our Mother the Church, that in her bosom nestling they may there drink in, pure from its source, the Catholic faith, and so shall these little ones become, later on, the solace of your age, the pride of your house, and the glory of that grand old tradition handed down to you by your Catholic forefathers as the precious heirloom, the pearl beyond all price.

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THE "SALVE REGINA."

One of the sweetest and most beautiful hymns or antiphons with which the Catholic Church salutes the ever-blessed Mother of God is undoubtedly the "Salve Regina," or "Hail Holy Queen." It rises daily from the lips of many thousands of priests and religious at the end of Compline and the faithful are wont to include it in their evening prayers. It is a suppliant prayer, a cry for help, and who can read it attentively without being deeply impressed by its meaning? Surely it must be most acceptable to the tender heart of Mary.

This favorite prayer was composed by a Benedictine monk called Hermanus Contractus, or Herman the Lame. Herman was the son of Count Wolfrath II. and Hiltrude, and was born in the year 1013. Of fourteen children he was apparently the most unfortunate, for, when about six years old, he caught a severe cold, in consequence of which his limbs were so contracted that he obtained the surname of "Contractus," or the Lame. In the hour of trial he had recourse to the Comfortress of the afflicted, and sought her assistance. Nor did he seek in vain. Restored to health, he was allowed to visit the monastery school of St. Gall's, in Switzerland. His quiet and amiable disposition won him many friends, and his great learning the highest honors in the monastery. At the age of thirty he took his solemn vows. According to Trithemius, he was thoroughly skilled in philosophy, astronomy, poetry, with the Latin, Greek, Arabic and Hebrew languages. The most important of his writings, at least, as far as they have come down to us, is his "Chronicle." It extends from the birth of our Lord up to the death of the author, A. D. 1054, and is of great documentary value to the historian.

The concluding words of the *Salve Regina*: "O clement, O loving, O most sweet Virgin Mary," were added, as is well known, by St. Bernard about the year 1146. St. Bernard was commissioned by Pope Eugene III. to preach a crusade, or military expedition, for the recovery of the Holy Land. The saint readily complied with the wish of the Pope, and preached with truly apostolic zeal at Constance, Basle, Treiburg, Cologne and other cities.

On Christmas Eve he came to Spire, and was accompanied to the cathedral by the Bishop and people in solemn procession. Conrad III. and the princes of the empire who were assembled at the Reichstag, or Imperial Diet, at Spire received the saint with every mark of distinction. On entering the Dom, *Salve Regina* was intoned with the greatest enthusiasm. St. Bernard was deeply moved, and as the last words resounded: "After this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus," the saint exclaimed: "O clement, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria!"—"O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary."

The inhabitants of Spire have perpetuated the event on four plates of brass in their famous cathedral. On the first plate near the principal entrance are inscribed the words: "O clement, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria!" on the second, "O pia" on the third, "O dulcis;" and on the fourth, at the foot of the altar, "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary."

Such, dear reader, is the origin of the "Salve Regina."—Francis in *Franciscan Tertiary*.

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Our Duties Towards Non-Catholics.

It is an undeniable statement, says Father Vaughan in *The Tablet*, that we show ourselves far less anxious to spread truth than others do to spread error, and that we make much less effort to build up than others are making to pull down.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless a fact, that millions, even at the present day and in this very country, know nothing more of the Catholic Church than the gross and libellous caricature invented and sketched by her bitterest enemies, and which is in truth and in effect nothing more than a miserable scarecrow, intended to repel and to disgust. Could we but see the frightful monstrosity, which stands for the Catholic Church in the minds of many bitter anti-Catholics, we should cease to wonder at their bitterness. What, in so many cases, they hate, is not the Church at all, nor anything resembling it, but its counterfeit which is made as hideous as malignity and rage can make it. Indeed, no one could love such an unlovely thing.

Let Truth be presented to the masses in its true form, and many will be attracted towards it. Truth is great, and shall prevail. Where there is sincere inquiry, free discussion, and lucid exposition, truth will certainly come to the surface, and prevail. There is an inherent beauty and loveliness about it which draws and wins over the mind, much as mere physical beauty draws the eyes and enralls the heart. The mind is made for truth, and will never really rest save in its possession. It finds no secure anchorage in error.

People are wishing each other the compliments of the season and exchanging gifts. Did it ever occur to you to send an ailing friend a package of Ayer's Sarsaparilla? If not, do so now; and try this medicine yourself, if you need a first-class blood-purifier.

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