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"Ad profectum sacrosanctæ matris ecclesiæ."

THE JUDICIAL DECISIONS, ON RITUAL.

OUR readers are but too well aware that many disputes have, in the last few years, arisen about the ritual of our Church. Ritualism, we may observe, simply means the way of performing the public worship of Almighty God. Some sort of ritual we all must practise,—the dispute has been as to what kind it shall be. There are three parts into which ritual may be divided,—the dress of the minister, the ornaments of the Church, and the mode of conducting the services. Having now had legal decisions upon all three, we may thank God that there need no longer be any dispute as to what our branch of the Catholic Church allows.

The differences in the dress of the minister are those which would most attract the attention of any ordinary observer. In one Church he would notice that the minister, having come in, habited in a white gown, would, in the middle of the service, leave the congregation, make a procession to the vestry—oftentimes at the further end of the church—returning thence robed in a black vestment. If it were a Communion Sunday, the same ceremony would have to be repeated, in order that the surplice might be resumed.

In another church the white raiment would be the only kind employed in the public ministrations. In a third the dress would be the same as in the latter, except that at the beginning of the communion service the minister would retire to the vestry, to reappear in dresses of various colours.

Next, we come to the ornaments of the church. Here, too, there was a great variety. In one we would find that, either for the sake of simplicity or *economy*, ornaments there would be none, whilst the very necessities of the public worship would be of the cheapest kind. The faded pulpit-hangings, the slop-basin to serve as a font, the mean-looking table (scarcely fit for a gentleman's kitchen), with its dirty and well-worn cover—all these too plainly declared how little danger there was that either the worshippers or their substance would be eaten up with a zeal for God's house.

In another, although limited means may have prevented as much of ornament as loving hearts would desire, still the correct architecture, the well-ordered Church, the plain but clean, neat and suitable fittings proclaim that the worshippers "have done what they could." The expressive sign of our faith—without and within—mark the building as belonging to the Crucified.

In some cases, where will and means combined, the "storied windows richly dight," the lilies of the field, as of old, teaching their lessons of God's care,—the surpliced choir leading the harmonious sacrifice of prayer and praise, the lawful*

* *Bubric.*