

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

STORY OF A DRUMMER.

That is a good story how a smart New York drummer stopped a run on a little western bank. The commercial traveler arrived in the town just when the excitement over the bank was at its height. There was really no cause for the run; the bank was perfectly solvent, but the president—a good friend of the New Yorker—realized that, if the senseless withdrawal of the funds was not straightway stopped, it would be but a question of a few hours before the bank would be forced to suspend payment. Immediate action was necessary, and the drummer proved to be the man of the hour. His offer of assistance was eagerly accepted by the president and he was given all due liberty. Off went the drummer and in a few minutes he returned with the town assessor, who immediately fell in with his plan. The assessor was stationed with paper and pencil at the paying teller's window. The next depositor in the long, anxious line noticed that opposite his name the amount of his withdrawal was put. "What are you doing?" inquired the surprised depositor. "Oh, nothing," replied the assessor; "I am only correcting some mistakes in my personal tax list. I see you were only assessed at having \$1,000 cash, while you have just withdrawn over \$4,000." Of course the whole line of depositors heard the colloquy at the teller's window. In a minute a man dropped out of his place and left the bank. Then another went out. Then they began to slip out by twos and threes and in a few minutes there was no line left. The bank was saved.

THE POPE'S SKULL CAP.

I do not wish to leave the Vatican, writes a correspondent of The Paris Figaro, without relating an anecdote of a poetic and touching character, which possesses also the merit of showing the great veneration in which the person of the Holy Father is held by devout Catholics.

Aware of the fact that a perfect traffic in the garments of his predecessor was carried on some years ago, the present Pope rarely yields to solicitations of this nature. Nevertheless he is not immovable when he is morally certain that there is no *arriere pensee* of a speculative character in the request.

Not knowing to whom she should apply, and being determined at all hazards to get something belonging to the Pope, a young lady had recourse to an ingenious and bold piece of strategy. With her own pious hands she made a white skull cap precisely similar to the one that is worn by Leo XIII. At one of the recent pilgrimages she appeared before His Holiness, and holding out her handiwork boldly asked the good old gentleman to swap caps. At first the Pope looked astonished, but soon his face became lighted with a kindly, paternal smile, while the cap remained in the outstretched and trembling little white hand. The Pope's smile gave her courage and yielding to the impulse of her ardent piety she pulled off the Holy Father's cap and presented him with the one she had made. Leo XIII laughed, swapped caps with her and gave her his blessing.

Protection Against Cholera.

Cholera is making serious inroads in Europe. It is particularly fatal in Naples and Marseilles. It is said that the extent of the disease is concealed by the authorities of the places infected. A few immigrants suffering of the disease have been brought to New York. An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. Now is the time to take measures against the introduction of the contagion in this country. Dr. Cyrus Edson, chief of the sanitary service of the Health Board of New York, has published the following important facts:

"First—Cholera can be taken into the body only by means of food or drink.

"Second—Even if taken into a healthy stomach cholera germs are harmless, as the acid gastric juice at once kills and digests them.

"Third—Cholera germs are killed when submitted to the boiling temperature."

Bearing these facts in mind, every housewife has it in her power to protect herself and her family against cholera. The first thing is hot meals, made up of hot courses, consisting of thoroughly cooked dishes, served boiling or broiling

hot and eaten as hot as they can be borne. This means total abstinence from ices, iced or cold drinks, raw fruits, salads, and even bread.

If cholera should come, or if there is any diarrhoeal disorder, it will be good judgment for every individual to eat and drink in moderation and only of a steaming hot diet, changed and varied as often as possible.

(Written for THE TRUE WITNESS.)

THE "RESIDUUM OF ABSOLUTE TRUTH."

An Angelican's Queer Reason for not Accepting Catholicity.

On my way through this queer, and not by any means perfect world, it has been my fortune to meet with many queer, and not by any means perfect individuals, perfect, that is to say, logically, for of their moral perfection it is no duty of mine, or of any other man, to attempt to form a judgment. One of the queerest—still with the same proviso, and with all respect to the gentlemen's feelings, should he happen to come across the "TRUE WITNESS"—I met in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City, at the Pontifical Mass celebrated by the Most Reverend Apostolic Delegate. My experience of Angelicans, at one time and another, has been tolerably wide and varied considering the number of years that I have lived in this world (qualified as aforesaid); but of them all, this one was the crowning, and altogether the most remarkable specimen, which must be my excuse for introducing him to the readers of the "TRUE WITNESS."

That an Angelican should be present at such a ceremony as a Pontifical Mass celebrated by an Apostolic Delegate, did not, in any way, surprise me, knowing, as I do, by personal experience, the inordinate fondness of the tribe, or "genus" Ritualist, for "functions" of all kinds;—his own, which, viewed merely as functions, are certainly artistic; "Roman," or "Holy Eastern." I wanted, all the same, to get a talk with him, and in this I was not disappointed.

His admiration for the "Roman Church" was certainly strong and genuine; he was another example of how far a man can go towards the threshold of the church, and yet stop short. The question is, "why?" Was there any particular dogma that he could not "stomach," as our non-Catholic friends are fond of expressing it? His argument, if such it could be called, that the "Roman Church" demands the "abdication of reason" was hardly a serious one; and certainly need not, of itself, however strongly held, at any particular period of life, keep a man out of the Catholic Church.

No, there was no one particular dogma that he found difficult of acceptance. Pursuing the enquiry a little further, I came to wonder how it was that he could really believe, or really reject, any dogma, ancient or modern, true or false, that was ever propounded for acceptance by man. Which brings me to the gist of the matter, and which will, I hope, prove worthy of a little study and attention.

Briefly, his contention was this: that behind and beyond all formulated dogmas, there remains and must ever remain, as of the necessary limits of man's finite intelligence, a "Residuum of absolute Truth." Therefore, so he continued, all apparent contradictions of dogma, as for example, Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation and Zuinglianism are merely so many feeble attempts and nothing more, to express in intelligible language an inexpressible, incomprehensible, "absolute Truth."

As an "eirenicon" for putting an end to all controversy, this "universal solvent" is, in my humble opinion, altogether without an equal, or even a rival. It simply makes any difference of teaching a matter of no possible importance; it comes to this, that it cannot signify in the very least, what you profess to believe, as at best you can only attempt to express what must always remain inexpressible. Carried out to its logical conclusion, it makes even Christianity itself—not merely any particular form of it—a mere expression of the "inexpressible." In other words, it is a very thinly-disguised Agnosticism, though I have no doubt that nothing was further from his mind. But it only shows how great a risk is involved in the beginning of a system of "solution."

That there is a certain amount of truth in his assertion, is not to be denied. But then there is a certain amount of truth in every heresy that was ever formulated;

in fact, the more of truth that any particular heresy contains the more dangerous it is. That all dogma is only an attempt to define in human terms, what is Divine and indefinable, is literally true. That such a definition sets a limit to what is illimitable, is also true; but the whole aim and object—if we may reverently say so—that Our Lord had in founding an infallible Church, was to set some authoritative, definite limits to the searching, restless, insatiable questionings of the human soul in the domain of Divine, incomprehensible truth. Without such an infallible guide such questionings must end, and have ended, in all the strange vagaries of heresy.

It must, however, be admitted that such a solution of controversy is distinctly "esoteric" and "mystic," that it would not, from its very subtlety, appeal to the ordinary mind. But, in these days, when every form of assault on Faith that the ingenuity of the devil, or of his human agents can devise, is attacking those who still cling to the service of God, Protestant and Catholic alike, I can conceive of no theory so fascinating, and, at the same time so dangerous, as this of the "Residuum of Absolute Truth." It seems to solve so many insoluble difficulties; to put an end, once for all, to the bitterness of controversy; it makes apparent differences to be really agreements; it is so beautiful, so innocent, so mystic, and so spiritual. All that, doubtless; but carry it a little further, and then tell me whether it does not bring in its train, as of necessity, all the dangerous consequences that I have laid to its charge.

But the worst of it is that we hate a logical conclusion. We will go just so far as it suits us, and no further, and we resent strongly, any attempt to convince us that the path we have chosen will from its direction lead us to some one particular place. Is it not better, not to say more honest, to look the matter squarely in the face, and see what it really does involve? My Anglican friend was, no doubt, perfectly sincere in his acceptance of the teachings of his church (for those of them that suited his taste) and would have been most reluctant to admit that such a theory as he advanced by way of reconciling contrary dogmas, or, at least, of minimising their divergencies, would, and must end in reducing those dogmas to a vague, meaningless, utterly indifferent form of words.

That we cannot express in words any appreciable portion of the full, divine, infinite and indefinable truth which underlies all dogmas, we know only too well. But that does not make a true dogma any the less true; that is to say, that when the Church defines a doctrine, however far short that definition may, and does fall short of "absolute truth," that definition, in virtue of the Divine authority committed to the Church, is the truth, as God intended us to know it. Therefore, speaking under fear of correction, any fuller definition cannot, from the nature of the case, change the truth, it simply enlarges and increases our knowledge of "absolute truth."

That is to say, if I may be allowed to add so much, that the whole matter hinges on the doctrine of a teaching Church. Once acknowledge that the Church has Divine infallible authority to teach, and there is no further difficulty to be overcome. If then, the Church, in the case of any particular dogma shall say, "Thus much you shall believe, and no more," she thereby simply reserves to herself the right to choose the time and occasion,—if such should ever arise—to give to those whom she was commissioned to teach a fuller and more perfect definition of the truth of God.

Does not this explain the difficulty so often raised by those outside the fold of Christ? They assert that the Church has change her teachings from age to age; that she has added to the infinite truth that was committed to her charge. In order to escape from the difficulty, men who might, otherwise, be drawn to submit to her authority, invent some theory as that which we have been considering. Would it be not better if we could persuade them to believe, not that the Church has changed or added to the truth of God, but that, as the necessity arose, she has amplified and perfected those definitions, imperfect, as all human definitions must be, when compared with "absolute truth," but which, inasmuch as they are delivered to us by Divine authority, are perfect as far as concerns our acceptance, our belief, our own utter fallibility and imperfection? No dogma, no definition, can express "absol-

ute truth"; such a thing is simply inconceivable; but any dogma, propounded by the Infallible Church, is the truth, the only truth, the perfect truth, the truth of God. Further than that, we may not, and we cannot go.

There is an absolute truth, which we cannot understand, but it serves, not as a solvent whereby all dogmatic religion is reduced to an impalpable, meaningless negation, but which is the strength, the foundation whereon all dogma must rest that is true to truth itself.

P. S. I fear that I have altogether transgressed the limits of human patience, to say nothing of having rashly intruded on the domain of theology; but, if I may be allowed to say so, the "Residuum" theory has had for so long a time, such a strong fascination for myself, that I felt constrained to "have it out." If, in so doing, I have been permitted to give a helpful hint to any one who may care to read this through, I shall be more than satisfied.

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J. S. BOUSQUET, Cashier.

Montreal, 28th July, 1893.

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