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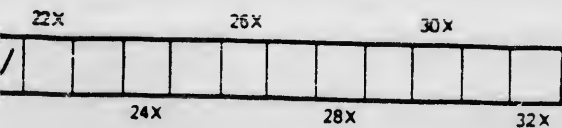
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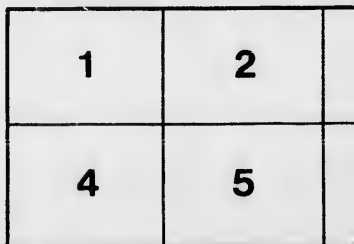
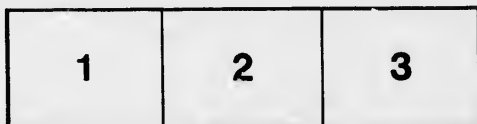
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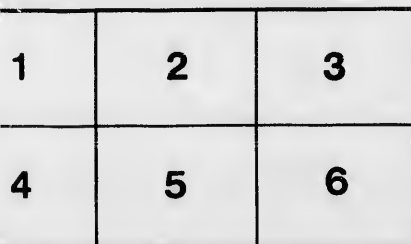
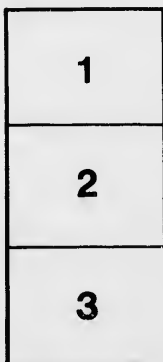
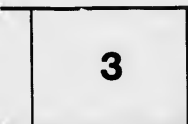
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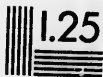
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TRACTS BY CANADIAN LAYMEN.

NO. 4.

MERE ANGLICANS.

The position and circumstances of the Church of England tend to develop in her certain types of character peculiar to herself. It is our present purpose to consider one of these types, and to define as well as we can the conditions which go to make up the 'mere Anglican.' This *genus* is ubiquitous in our communion, but arrives, we are bold to say, at its greatest perfection in Canada; and its special features are more readily traced among the clergy than among the laity.

By a 'mere Anglican' we mean a man who is unable to recognize the Catholicity of any orthodox body outside of his own; and who scrupulously venerates the Rubrics of the Prayerbook, always excepting that Rubric on Ornaments, which is meant to be read concurrently with them all. In his eyes, the English Church, as she exists at any particular time, is spotless and incapable of improvement; while all other communities are either grovelling in hopeless superstition, or blindly following sectarian guides in quest of uncertain pasture. In a word, he is ready to say in good earnest what Lord Byron wrote in satire:—

"I know we are crammed
With the best doctrines till we quite overflow;
I know that all save England's Church have shammed,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And Synagogues have made a sorry purchase."

The 'mere Anglican' usually acknowledges Apostolic Succession, because it fences him off from the swarm of heterogeneous sects by which he sees himself surrounded; and he preaches Baptismal Regeneration, because he finds that doctrine indelibly stamped on the offices of the Church, and he is too honest to deny a principle to which he is thus formally pledged. Further than this he rarely goes, though he is believed to hold higher doctrine than he delivers, and has even been known, in a strange pulpit, to reveal a theory of the Real Presence, albeit modified by many reservations. Defect is his chief error. Seeing so much of good in what there is of him, we naturally wish for more. As he stands, he belongs

neither to the party of active advance, nor to that of active opposition; but walks as it were on the edge of a razor between the two.

In Synod, he has long officiated as a sandbag, protecting the walls of Zion against the artillery of the enemy, and yet doing so in a merely passive manner. All revolutionary measures he would earnestly deprecate, and mildly annuls those ferocious Deans who would make a Cumminsite wreck of the Book of Common Prayer. At the same time, he considers that people in England have gone a great deal too far, and hopes that we in Canada shall be preserved from ritualistic extravagances.

It has been cleverly said that the last thing of which an Englishman thinks on retiring to rest is what he shall compromise in the morning; and this love of a universal medium will partly account for the very common wish to steer what is thought a safe and middle course in matters of religion. But it should be noted that truth does not necessarily lie in the exact average between two opposing statements; while those who play for mere safety act an inglorious and temporizing part, and are not the men, nor ever were, by whom the battles of the Church are won. St. John did not develop Catholic theology by striking the medium between Gnosticism and Christianity, but by boldly enunciating the dogma of the Incarnation.

As a consequence of these premises, the 'mere Anglican' inevitably finds himself in an isolated position, distrustful of others and distrusted by them; his parish, if he be a priest, becomes a happy hunting-ground for all manner of unbelievers; the aggrieved parishioner, surrounded by a compact phalanx of 'weak brethren,' intimidates him at the Easter vestry; the Church (?) Association marks him as one who would no doubt be a ritualist if he dared, and inundates his neighbourhood with 'occasional' trash; and his life degenerates into a burden.

The best cure we know for 'mere Anglicanism' is a consideration of the status occupied by the English Church in Christendom; for when any sufferer from this complaint will remove his eyes from the chalk-line along which he is trying to tread, he soon discovers more things in heaven and earth than his previous philosophy dreamed of.

Undoubtedly, the basis on which our Church claims a

divine mission to English-speaking Christendom is the grand fact of her Apostolic Orders. Our LORD sent His Apostles in the same manner as His FATHER sent Him; and because the evangelization of the world could not be effected by twelve mortal men, He left with them the supernatural power of sending other bishops, in the same manner as they were sent. And if we had not, at the time of the so-called Reformation, by the grace of GOD preserved an unbroken episcopate, our candlestick would have been removed as surely as that of Ephesus.

The Sects, such as Baptists, Christadelphians, Plymouthites, and a number more, have no valid orders, and consequently all their ministrations are void, except those in which the Church admits the intervention of lay agency. As churches, they have no more authority than a Gas Company.

But we are only a part of Christendom, and it would ill become us to claim that we, and none but we, are the Temple of the LORD. The great Churches of the Latin and of the Greek Obedience have also an unimpaired succession, and offer the True Body upon the Sacred Altar as we do. And since the reunion of Christendom, which is only a question of time, is to be compassed by the fusion into one of those bodies which are Apostolic, and by the absorption of those lay organizations which are not so, it follows that everything is important which differentiates us from the latter, and which assimilates us to that unity at which we are one day to arrive. The use of the Sign of the Cross at the final article of the Creed is in itself a small matter; but it becomes more than a trifle when it is made as a symbol of unity with the Holy Church throughout all the world, which employs the same sign; and it is no longer trivial when used as a protest against Protestantism, which would banish the symbol altogether, except as an item of personal adornment. The same line of thought,—for we are unwilling to take lower ground,—applies to many other Catholic customs.

When the first English Bishop of Quebec landed at the end of last century, the Roman Bishop of Quebec greeted him with the kiss of peace, as a brother in the Apostolic rank. This incident is both a fragrant memory of the past, and a cheering presage of the future, when Judah will no longer vex Ephraim, and when we shall be one fold under One Shepherd. Is the English Church immaculate, that when the Catholic Faith is feebly hinted at, we are always warned against "the

errors of Rome"? Are there not enough schismatics and Associationists, who deluge the land with mischievous pamphlets, and pour a daily torrent of misrepresentations through the public press?

We emphatically deny that our Bishops and Priests are in a position to carp at what they consider Roman abuses, while our own vineyard is in its present state of squalor and neglect; and we predict that when our Communion is restored and cleansed, the disposition for this paltry cavilling will have died away: being sure that the decaying Evangelicalism of to-day will never place the Canadian Church in that prosperity to which the Venns and Simeons of the past failed to raise the Church at home.

What then, it will be asked, is the blot at present upon the Church of England?

Only alluding by the way to minor matters, such as the denial of Confirmation to children, the defective character of our offices, the general deadness in our congregations, we come to the main point, and that is the alienation of dissenting bodies from the English fold. When we have gathered in the Noneontormists and Wesleyans, for whose schism our own rulers have been largely responsible, and when we have offered to other sects readmission by proper means, and when we have purged our articles and formularies from the very taint of Geneva: then we may sit down with clean hands, and discuss the point, where the Real Presence shades off into transubstantiation, and inquire whether she

"Who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make himself a creature,"

was, or was not, miraculously preserved from all stain of sin.

In the meantime, we would "labour and wait," hoping that thoughtful inquiry may lead many, who are now mere Anglicans, to a more widespread view of the great mission of the Catholic Church.

This tract is inscribed to the constituents of the Rural Deanery of Collingwood.

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Tracts 1, 2 and 3, on "The Dark Ages," "Protestant Simplicity," and
"Catholic Unity" still in print; also "VOX DEI AUT VOX POPULI," by a
Canadian Layman.—Price 50 cents.

NOTE.—The tract on the "Ornaments Rubric," which should have
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