

# The Catholic Record.

"Christianus mihi nomen est, Catholicus vero Cognomen."—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname).—St. Paclan. 4th Century.

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### AN EXAMPLE FOR YOUNG MEN.

The current issue of the Catholic World contains an interesting article on Frederic Ozanam by Rev. Dr. H. Braun. We note the article because Ozanam was a man who showed what Catholic energy could accomplish. True, he had genius and knowledge, but he showed—and his success ought to be an inspiration for all of us—how these could be made to subserve the interests of God. He was not an historian and philosopher, but, long after these claims to fame have passed from memory, he will be remembered as one who did his share towards uplifting an apathetic and disbelieving generation into an atmosphere of love and faith.

### THE ESSENCE OF CIVILIZATION.

Doubtless many before his time mused over the apathy and aimless existences of those about them. But he bent himself to the task of directing the energy that was frittered away on trifles, to noble ends; of purging hearts of the dross of self-interest and of inflaming them with zeal for the cause of the Church. And in so doing he contributed to the progress of true civilization; for civilization is rooted in and made manifest by the love and sympathy which make the way smoother and the guarantee for its perpetuation wells from the hearts of those who still believe that "the essence of civilization consists in the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion; that is, the union of all that is sacred in religion with all that is gentle and strong in humanity."

### DEEDS—NOT WORDS.

Otherwise education and culture are but a veneering to veil barbarism. They can serve well enough in peace and prosperity, but they cannot but be ineffectual in days of storm. We have proofs of this round about us. Altruistic rhetoric may deceive one into believing that he is a finished product of civilization. Tito Melema in Savonora we think posed as an altruist, but that did not save him from being utterly selfish.

Ozanam, however, was one who put Christ into his social work. It entailed self-sacrifice—the spending of time and of himself, but all this mattered nothing since it expressed his love for God. And people could understand that. They had evidences that his efforts were not dictated by sordid self-interest. And men to day like to see depictions of Christianity. Words we have, and to spare, which are little heeded; actions however arrest our attention and quicken our enthusiasm and make us ashamed of our littleness and self-seeking. An unselfish deed is the price we pay for another's confidence. A man may be gifted and yet close his eyes in death without having touched a heart-string. He may be respected, but he who would lead us to higher things must gain our love. And hence it is that men who are deaf to eloquent harangues are all attention to deeds done either in the slums or among the lepers, or in places remote. They admire the one who does some work unmindful of the sarcasms and criticisms of the little folk who will not understand that seriousness and noble striving make life worth the living, and their hearts go out to the doer.

### ENDURING WORK.

We think, by the way, that the young man who steps out of the rut in our own time must have the courage of the martyr. He will of course be not imperilled by either fire or the sword, but he must be prepared for attacks from a "stiff-necked generation"—sneers and jeers and ridicule from those who do not like to be reminded of their indolence and who are guided in most things by fashion and "they all do it." But let him persevere. Even if defeated humanly speaking, he will be a man. And when the day is, as was Ozanam, a good Christian, and safeguarded in his endeavors by sound philosophy and theology, his work remains.

### CATHOLIC BRAVERY.

What is inspiring to young men is that Ozanam began his work soon after 1830, in face of the greatest obstacles. He was confronted by those who were

apathetic and who preferred the easy chair of the critic to the post of the combatant. They had their store of axioms and comforting reflections that could rout any disturbing scruple. The times were evil, but they would change and perhaps any move on their part would provoke a fiercer onslaught of the enemy. He was met too by the avowed enemies of religion. And these enemies held high position in the country. Distinguished by their intellectual attainments, they invented the phrases and epigrams that their followers used to discredit and to ridicule Christ and His Church. They had at their fingers ends the favorite objections, and those they tricked out in verbal millinery to take the eye of the safe lounge and of the man in the street. What could Ozanam hope to accomplish? It was surely a forlorn hope against the stronghold of infidelity. Before him, determined opponents, behind him those who had grown soft through inaction and who lived in dreams and expected miracles. What could he dare to effect?

Frederic, surrounded, says Dr. Braun, on all sides by enemies of his faith, bravely defended its doctrinal and its moral principles from constant attack. But he felt that words were not the most efficacious weapons to use in defense of truth. Deeds are better.

### A NOBLE ORGANIZATION.

The infidel St. Simonias pointed particularly to the condition of the labouring classes and of the very poor, and taunted the Catholics with indifference to their welfare. "Show us your good works done for the poor," cried the new quack doctors of poverty. Under the stimulus of this taunt, Ozanam and two friends, Lallier and Lamarche, determined to organize a society under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul. The growth of the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul was rapid. In 1833 there were only nine of them; in 1845 they had increased to nine thousand, six of which were in London. The motive of Ozanam and his companions in founding the St. Vincent de Paul Society was derived from Christian faith and from Christian charity. There was nothing of mere humanitarianism or of mere natural philanthropy in their work. They loved the poor because they loved Jesus Christ.

### A SOCIAL QUESTION.

Ozanam's diagnosis of the evils of his day is true of our own. The question which agitates the world, said Ozanam in 1836, is not a question of political forms but a social question: if it be the struggle of those who have nothing with those who have too much, if it be the violent shock of opulence and poverty which is making the ground tremble under our feet, our duty as Christians is to throw ourselves between these irreconcilable enemies, and to induce one side to give in order to fulfil the law, and the other to receive as a benefit; to make one side cease to exact—to render equality as general as it is possible amongst men; to make voluntary community of possessions replace taxation and forced loans; to make charity accomplish what justice and law alone can never do.

### MORE YOUNG MEN WANTED.

We are doing something along this line here in London. We have our St. Vincent de Paul Society in prosperous condition. But why, may we ask, is not the good done by that society participated in by more of our young men? We should think that such work would appeal to the generous-hearted, and what Catholic worthy of the name does not aspire to that title. It is not showy, but a work that is real, far-reaching in its effects and of incalculable benefit to the Church. "If," wrote Ozanam, "a greater number of Christians had but occupied themselves with the working class these last ten years we should be more secure of the future." We dwell upon this phase of the question a few weeks ago.

Suffice it to say that membership in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul gives one an opportunity not to do detective work nor to put all manner of impertinent and offensive questions to the poor, but to relieve their wants and to convince them that we are brethren.

### KINDNESS FILLS THE SOUL.

Doles of eal and bread bring comfort to the body, but the kind tone, the tactful manner and sincerity of the dispenser feed the soul. Every visit of the servant of St. Vincent should

make the home the better and the happier for his coming. Christ is with him, and if he be the proper instrument for Christ's work that work will be done. The crown of thorns will be there after his departure, but it will rest more easily on the brow of the wearer.

What better way to occupy some of our leisure moments! Its advantages we know from our pastor's teaching.

### OUR HERITAGE.

When we read of Gordon of Khartoum finding time, despite his many and onerous military duties, to succour and to teach the poor of Gravesend—to befriend ragged boys and to start them in life; when we see non-Catholics devoting themselves unweariedly to the cause of the poor, we cannot but be astonished that more of us are not engaged in the work.

We, of course, belong to the Church of the poor. That is our boast and our glory. But men in our own neighborhood would be more open to conviction on that score if we busied ourselves more than we do about the victims of poverty. Calling the poor our brethren, and proving them, in so far as it lies with us, our brethren are not the same thing.

### DEATH-TRAPS.

We should like to see some concerted move on the rookeries and dilapidated structures, mis-called residences. It is futile to our mind to talk of sanitation and of precautions against disease and to allow a considerable number of people to live in buildings into which a self-respecting citizen would not put a beast. How in the name of common sense can sickness be shut out from foul-smelling and ill-lighted tenements which medical men tell us are breeders of microbes and other things. When any disease is prevalent there is hurrying and scurrying and much spilling of chloride of lime, etc., but the rookeries still stand, not only as death-traps for those who are forced to inhabit them, but as a menace to the health of the whole population.

### WANTED—SUNLIGHT AND CLEANLINESS.

We labour to beautify the city. Concededly, we might say that to an outsider it seems that a great deal of beautifying is expended on the streets whereon reside the gentlemen who are credited with having what is termed a "pull." However, let us not descend on that. But would it not be to the purpose should we devote more attention to things necessary than to things artistic. More sunlight and cleanliness, in the surroundings of those who abide without the best residential quarter, would make the town more beautiful in the eyes of God and of every right-thinking citizen than any amount of asphaltting.

### THE LESSONS OF CHRISTMAS.

In the annual cycle of the great feasts of the Church we are coming again to the celebration of that most wonderful, and at the same time most joyful event, the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who came into the world to save sinners. The occasion naturally suggests several important practical lessons. In the first place it strikingly suggests a lesson of joy and thanksgiving. If the angels were commissioned to announce to the humble shepherds the joyful news of the birth of a Saviour in that glorious song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will," surely, we, for whose benevolent Saviour was born into the world, may well join in that song with heart-felt thanksgiving to Almighty God for His great and unspendable gift to men. The heavenly messengers understood thoroughly the greatness of the blessing embodied in that lowly infant. It was not for themselves that they rejoiced, but for sinful, lost man, hitherto wandering in darkness, without God and without hope in the world.

It is, now, to the man who realizes that he is a sinner—has offended God and rendered himself liable to the Divine displeasure—that the news of a Saviour comes as a soothing balm to his troubled conscience. Are we not all sinners? Have we not offended God in numerous times and ways? If so, and we can not deny it, how can we refrain from the most heartfelt thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God that in His infinite love and compassion, He has sent His own dearly beloved Son to redeem and save us? From His lowly birth to His cruel death upon the Cross think of what that Saviour did and suffered to make atonement for our sins. Think what love must have burned in His Sacred Heart, how He longed for the salvation of all men. And now, that love is still burning in His Sacred Heart. He is daily and hourly inviting us to come to Him, and promising to bestow upon us infinitely precious graces and blessings both in this world and in that which is to come.

But we must not forget the lesson of

humility which the birth of our Saviour in a stable so impressively inculcates. The poet says that "pride is the never-falling vice of fools." If that is so we are afraid we must all be fools, for where is the man or woman in whose heart there lurks no feeling of pride? Pride is a vice—that is certain. We hate it in others, why should we not all hate it in ourselves and strive to overcome it? Think of the infinite condescension and love which brought our Saviour from heaven to earth, to be born in a stable and cradled in a manger. He came to mingle with the poor, the lowly and the distressed, and that thought is the only real consolation that thousands of His devoted followers enjoy in this world. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" these words bring to them consolation and comfort in all the troubles and trials of life, and they look forward with joyful hope, and sometimes with joyful anticipations, to the glorious rewards of eternity.

But there is also for us a lesson of charity most emphatically taught us by the birth of our Lord of which we are at this season reminded. We are not going to say a word against the beautiful custom of making presents to our friends on Christmas Day, but blessed be whose kindness and benefactions and those of his own household which he has so graciously bestowed upon us, and the injunction of our Saviour. True charity is the very life and soul of our religion. It brings us nearer to our Saviour than all other virtues, and is the best evidence of our being true disciples of Christ. "Now there remaineth faith, hope, and charity, these three," says the great Apostle, "but the greatest of these is charity." No one can celebrate Christmas as it should be celebrated, or taste fully its holy joy unless he shall have abounding Christian charity in his heart.—Sacred Heart Review.

### BLESSED AMONG WOMEN.

The second part of the angelical salutation contains the words with which St. Elizabeth greeted the Blessed Virgin when the latter visited her after the conception of the Son of God. Filled with the Holy Ghost, St. Elizabeth exclaimed: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

Blessed among women, indeed. The Virgin Mary had been chosen from among all other women to be the Mother of God. Surely a blessed, divine, and special privilege—an honor and a blessing as far above that which has ever fallen to any other creature as God is above the things of creation. Blessed in being preserved immaculate from the moment her soul animated her body. Blessed beyond the inhabitants of heaven because she was to become the Mother of God. Blessed because of Him she gave the world and through and by Whom the gates of heaven were again opened to mankind.

Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. A positive and undeniable assertion of the fact, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, was her Son—Son in the truest sense of the term—the most perfect Son of the most perfect mother. Therefore in Him, and through Him the source of every blessing for us. The instrument of redemption, the fountain of blessings. As through Eve came the curse of mankind, so through Mary was it removed.

Having been so wonderfully blessed by God, how becoming in us to honor her the greatest honor. How proper for us to do so when God so highly honored her. For in honoring the Mother we also honor her Son. This we may do by endeavoring to repeat these words of the angelical salutation in the spirit which animated St. Elizabeth when she uttered them. If we do so, God, her Son, will not permit the honor we show her to go unrewarded, but will bless us here and bring us to the enjoyment of her company in a blessed eternity.—Church Progress.

### THE PASSING OF THE GREAT DOUBTERS.

The last of the great agnostics has passed away. Darwin is dead; Huxley is dead; Tyndal is dead; Virchow is dead; Mommson died a few days ago; Herbert Spencer died last Tuesday. All were lonely men. All dwelt on bare, bleak heights above their human kind and moaned their desolate creed of "No hope," down to the multitude, and occasionally cried, "No hope here," "No here," "No here," to one another, yet patiently as they talked, not one left aught behind which will make the world brighter or better. No earnest soul will regret the passing of the six Great Doubters.

It is true Mommson did much in history, and true that Virchow did much in science, still compared with the achievements of a number of Christian workers, that which they accomplished was little, indeed. The English philosophers especially proved barren Darwin's once-popular theory of evolution is now out of date; and Tyndal is now merely a name. The cable this week compares Spencer to Plato. Yet how different the spirit of Plato from that of Spencer. Plato rayed out white hope and crystal-clear faith viewed beside the English agnostic. Great as were the limitations of the Greek pagan his work is like a draught of cool water compared to that of Spencer. No one ever waded through Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy" without turning away feeling that his soul was full of dry sand and pebbles. How can such work be expected to live? It is not alive. It was dead before its author

died. His last book shows that he half-way realized the fact himself.

It is the ancient moral repeated. No truly excellent work can be produced without faith. It was faith which carved the lion-kings of Assyria, gave to civilization the gigantic monuments of Babylon and Egypt, the art, poetry and philosophy of the Greeks and Romans, and since the coming of Christ all that is sublime or beautiful in sculpture, art and architecture. Faith builds; doubt destroys. The one energizes and uplifts; the other results in paralysis of the soul. Had Huxley, Tyndal, Spencer faith they would have lived on down the centuries with Newman, Gladstone and Leo XIII. As it was they dwelt alone on their mountain tops, and even God was not with them.

A striking proof of the failure of their work is the burst of morning-light rising over that very England in which they lolled. Despite the dusk they wrought upon their mountain-tops it is becoming Catholic England. The piety of Faber, the energy of Manning, the intellectuality of Newman—these are gradually dispersing the shadows called up by the philosophers. The pessimism silently replaced by the snow-white optimism of the great agnostics lived to see the change taking place in the England they hoped to lead astray. Because the change did take place, we may confidently expect the doers of the future to surpass the doers of the past—The New World.

### THE CURES OF LOURDES.

MIRACLES WHICH ASTONISH AND MYSTIFY UNBELIEVERS.

It may not be generally known that all the reputed miracles at Lourdes are carefully examined by a medical board (Bureau des Contestations Medicales) on the spot and on the very day of their occurrence. All other physicians of any country are invited to be present at the examination. A certificate from the physician who previously attended the patient is scrupulously exacted. Dr. Boissier has compiled and published an important medical work bearing directly on the Lourdes workers, and giving the testimony of some three hundred medical men, including many Protestant and even unbelievers, who bear witness to a healing change in their patients which no human agency known to science can explain. The author had for five years previous sat in the office where the reported cures were most carefully and even skeptically examined by experts. His reputation as a medical and scientific man beyond question and the result of his long observation was expressed in the following words: "The miracles of our hospitals, which mark the furthest limit of the power of nature and of art, are but a joke in comparison with the mysterious power that manifests itself at Lourdes. The physician who is present for the first time at this reversal of every law, stops astonished and amazed, and seeks in vain for some data on which to proceed. It took, in the year 1853, upwards of one hundred and fifty medical men went to Lourdes to study the results, so that M. Renan's gungue that "every miracle before it is accepted as such ought to be submitted to a commission of experts" is in full operation at this wonderful shrine.

An outsider, who visited Lourdes, sent his impressions to the London Spectator, a secular paper, and coming from a non-Catholic they cannot be suspected of prejudice in favor of the shrine and its marvels. "These cures at Lourdes," he says, "for merely to deny them is really idle, may be no more miraculous in the stricter sense, if all were known, than the cable of telephone. They may be merely the application of an unknown law. Then why, the caprice of them? It looks, at all events, more like the setting of known laws aside, and it is there at present that the riddle of the healing lies." Now as of old, the one is taken and the other left, if above and outside the ruthless and unrelenting forces of nature, there were some Power at work which can, and does, set those forces aside for the hour, and lend a world of meaning to the Story of the Valley of Ajalon. . . . Ridiculous powerless, too, upon a place like this; and one can only be sorry to see Lourdes written of in any flippant vein, or to read clever remarks upon the wooden figure of the Virgin, which is so entirely beside the question. It is not in the effigy that the supplicants believe. Ridicule recalls in such a case as this, and falls away. The gravity of these things is too grave."

### PIUS X. AS GRAVE-DIGGER.

Rev. Alexander Robertson, a Protestant missionary residing in Venice, is best known as an inveterate and often an embittered assailant of the Papacy and the Vatican. It is, therefore, the more surprising to find in the Pall Mall Magazine an article from the pen of this writer praising the new Pope and telling some interesting anecdotes of his earlier years. One of them deals with an incident that occurred when the future Pontiff was parish priest at Salzano, a large village near Treviso. His Holiness was thirty-two years old when sent to this parish, and he labored there nine years. Here is the incident as described by the Rev. Mr. Robertson:

A son of the soil himself, the Pope in his earlier days was always willing to help his countrymen. The Sicilian tells how more than once when a body had to be brought to the church from a distance for a funeral service, and

three men only could be found to carry it, he himself would form the fourth. When in 1872, cholera broke out at Salzano, a panic seized the villagers and none could be got to dig graves or bury the dead. Don Beppi then said to his sacristan, "You and I must do it." So getting spades they set to work. Their courageous conduct was not lost upon the parishioners, who soon relieved them of their toil."

### INDECENCIES REPUUDIATED BY A PROTESTANT.

THE CONFESSION OF A NON-CATHOLIC.

Since September the New York Apostolate Fathers have missioned the following places: Long Branch, N. J.; Rossville, S. I.; Pine Plains, Tivoli, Livingston Manor, and Newburg, N. Y.; All Saints' Church, New York City; and Our Lady of Good Counsel, New York City.

In one place, where the questions were very unpleasant and sometimes unclean, a consoling incident occurred. The questions—i. e., the unclean ones—had been extracted from a most scrupulous book, viz., *The Devil in the Church*, which, by the way, is widely advertised up State, and which is found in not a few places in the country parts as a dictionary of Catholicity. The audience was largely a Protestant one. They were earnest inquirers. The missionary finally requested his audience to observe that in all his remarks there was not one syllable of personal attack, but a plain defence of Catholicity. A Protestant gentleman of the audience, who was a prominent man of the town, arose and apologized for those nasty questions, and remarked that he in the name of the audience repudiated such uncharitable, lying and unclean attacks, and their author. "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." If the non-Catholics are aided, if they are approached and made feel that they too are the sheep of Jesus, if the truth of Christ is held up before them as the need of their lives, if it is turned round and round to strike their vision, then, regardless of attack, will the honest mind and heart rise up and follow it. It must be so; for it is the word of God which can open, penetrate, and illumine the minds of all.

After the lecture one evening, a Protestant woman approached the priest and requested him to hear her confession. The missionary said: "You are a Protestant?" "Yes, but I wish to make my confession. Will you please hear me? I know you cannot grant me, a Protestant, absolution, but you can hear me." This poor woman was the victim of consumption and heart disease. She felt that her end was near. She said: "I am doomed, Father; I may live a month, but I shall not live three. Please hear my confession? I feel the need of opening my heart, of unfolding it to some one. Oh, confession is a solace when one's hand rests on the gate of eternity!" "I feel," she continued, "that the hand of God is heavy on me; else why do I suffer?" After she had finished her confession the priest reminded her that Jesus Christ died for her as well as for him. "Jesus," he said, "died for all and loves all, and wishes all to follow Him. Will you kneel and pray with me?" The good woman knelt and prayed with the priest. She arose and, taking a crucifix which the priest gave her, said: "If you can tell me how a priest can forgive sin, I shall become a Catholic; for, if it is so, then this is a sacred way of approaching nearer to Christ which I have never found before." What a solace, what a security it would be, to enter the Eternal Court of God with this sacrament of pardon! The ways of God are wonderful. The healthy and purse-proud worldlings might smile at this honest, noble heart; but they some day will find the wrappings of the world, will face the Great Beyond, and they, too, will seek security, solace, and strength to meet the eternal Judge. May they find it!—The Missionary.

### Things to Forget.

If you would increase your happiness and prolong your life, forget your neighbor's faults. Forget all the slander you have ever heard. Forget the temptations. Forget the fault finding and give a little thought to the cause which provokes it. Forget the peculiarities of your friends and only remember the good points which make you fond of them. Forget all the personal quarrels or stories you may have heard by accident, which if repeated, would seem a thousand times worse than they really are. But out as far as possible all the disgraces of life; they will come, but they will grow larger when you remember them, and constant thought of the acts of meanness makes you more familiar with them. Obliterate everything disagreeable from yesterday. Start out anew with a clean heart to-day so that you may write upon a clean sheet for sweet memory's sake only those things which are pure and lovely.

### For Want of Energy.

Submission to what people call their "lot" is often ignoble. If your lot makes you cry and be wretched and you are not sure that it is really Providential; get rid of it and take another; strike out for your self; don't listen to the shrills of your relatives, to their jibes or their entreaties; don't let your own microscopic set prescribe your goings-out and comings-in; don't be afraid of public opinion in the shape of the neighbor in the next house when all the world is before you, new and shining and everything is possible if you will only be energetic and independent and seize the opportunity by the scruff of the neck.



breath. "Well, then, I'm glad of that. You wanted to see me about anything in particular?"

"Well, Father—" she blushed, and hesitated and blushed again, and dropped her eyelids, and twisted her fingers, nervously. "I'm thinking of getting married."

"That's good news," and now Father Laurence laughed outright. "Getting married? Well, now! And who may the young man be? A member of the parish?"

"No, Father."

"Where does he come from?"

"No? How lives up there, Father. We—we want to get married on Sunday."

"A week from Sunday! Dear child, the following Friday is Christmas Day."

"Yes, Father. We want to get married before Christmas Day."

"This is the forbidden time—surely you know that. Marriage cannot be solemnized in Advent. These weeks should be filled with preparation for—"

"I'd have to get a dispensation, Father?"

"You would, certainly."

"Would the one dispensation do?"

"The one dispensation do? You mean—that?"

"He isn't a Catholic, Father?"

Father Laurence drew a deep breath, looking at her as if he did not comprehend.

"That's pretty bad, child. What is he? What religion does he profess?"

"Oh, none, Father. He believes in every religion. She looked at him with her bright eyes, her lovely face full of animation. "He believes all men are brothers. He believes in humanity. Oh, he is so very clever, Father—very clever. I often wonder how in the world he can like me."

"But of course you do not agree with him?"

"In what way, Father?"

"Believing in every religion?"

"Oh! I am very liberal, Father—very liberal. A great deal more so than most Catholics whom you meet every day. I think each one is right in his own way, all roads lead to heaven."

Father Laurence turned aside, his eyes seeking the gas jet.

"Why did you come here?" he asked quietly. "Why did you come to me to-night?"

"She did not understand him.

"Why—because we want to get married."

"Oh, you do? And whom do you wish to join you in Holy Matrimony?"

"Why, you, Father."

"I am a Catholic priest, dear child."

The point was lost on her.

"Yes, Father. He thinks the Catholic religion all right—he can't see, of course, the meaning of a good many things—he calls them superstitions and all that. But he has no feelings against it."

"That is kind of him," interrupted Father Laurence. "You, out of your own mouth, admit that you are one with him. You don't believe in your own religion?"

"Oh, Father I am a Catholic—certainly, I'm a Catholic! I go to confession every three months. I receive."

"Why, why, why?" he asked, insistently. "Since every religion leads to God why bother about the Catholic religion—the idolatrous, the superstitious? Why are you a Catholic?"

"She looked at him, anxiously.

"We are all Catholics," she began.

"My mother—my sisters—"

"But why are you a Catholic?"

"She hung her head. She did not know how to reply.

"Have you ever attended Sunday school?"

"Yes, Father."

"How long?"

"Until I made my First Communion, Father."

"Of course," he spoke dreamily.

"Until she made her First Communion!"

"A year of religious instruction to last a life time—to give the sterns and buffets of the unfaithful world! What wonder, what wonder, that such things come to pass?"

"He roused himself, sighing.

"It is against every law of the Church to bind together a Catholic girl and such a man as you describe," he went on, addressing her. "Of course you are aware that he must pledge himself to bring up all children granted to your union in the faith of the Church. Did you know that?"

"I thought that could be overlooked, Father. His promising, I mean," she added, hastily. "Of course, I would not permit my children—"

"You are ignorant of the first rules of your faith. Even with that promise on his part such a marriage as you contemplate is permitted only as the very last resort. Did you know that?"

"I knew priests didn't like it, Father."

"Priests, child? The Church, rather. Your great, wise Mother, the Church, who loves each little lamb of her flock so dearly as to wish to guard it from every hand from straying into forbidden paths. You are trying to drift away from your own Mother—a Mother, whom Christ, when He came on Christmas Day, came to leave for you. Look what you are doing. beloved child! Two weeks from now is the anniversary of that day when the great Creator came to earth a helpless infant—came to the cold of Bethlehem, the sneers of the world, the agony of His cross, to establish this Church, this fold for you. For your dear sake He came. And what are you doing? You are thrusting His priceless Christmas gift away from you. You are putting Him out of your life—making His heart ache worse than that which the spear transfixed it. Child—when the spear transfixed Mother—you named after His beloved Mother—you won't do that? Surely, surely you do not want to go out into that dark country beyond the Catholic faith where all is unbelief and indecision? Let me show you what you are doing. Let me prove to you what a heritage you are relinquishing—you, who are named for Christ's Mother. You know, just as surely as you stand there, that this man will never become a Catholic?"

"Yes, Father," she answered, humbly.

"Can you prove to him the beauty

of your faith? The reasons why you believe? Child, you have need to learn them yourself before you can teach another. Be wise, be wise. You would want never to come to church?"

"Oh, no, no, Father—"

"Yet what gift of grace are you so sure of that this will not happen to you? Listen to an old priest who has been greater, stronger holds on faith than yours give way beneath the carping criticisms of those who did not understand. Listen to me now."

"Yes, Father." His voice was so grave and gentle—and so sad. "I will listen."

"Put off your marriage to this man for six months. Come to me, then, for instruction, say just one half hour a week. Let me show you why you are a Catholic. Join the Sodality. Ah! You don't want to lose Mary for a Mother? You don't want to lose, from out your life, the glorious presence of God upon the altar. Now, do you?"

"No, Father."

"I thought not—I thought not. You are my own good little lamb, who will not drift away from us. I will pray for you."

He put his hand upon her shoulder, gently.

"God be with you, little struggling soul!" he said.

She left the sacristy. With kindly words he followed her to the door. She went away from him—down the steps. He stood looking after her.

"God be with you all, my people," he said. "God be with you all, and hear my prayers for you. There are worse things than death in this world, the star-studded sky. And while I make petition for them—and you—do not forget, when it is God's will, to do the like for me, and those who are given to my charge."

He went back again to the light that burned before the hidden Christ. And there he knelt. The heavy burden at his heart grew less. He saw the woman puffed with her own conceit grown humble. He saw the clouded home made bright, and those by it made happy because one man could conquer his besetting sin. He saw the dormant soul of the girl, fragrant and fresh as a flower with devotion and love for God. All this he saw. And the heart of the priest beat high.

It dreams came true!

You know Father Laurence, you people who read these lines. We all know him. He has come to us, every one of us, when most we needed him. Let us be prodigal. Next of our good works, our aims, our prayers, for those who daily win God's grace for us.

God be with them! Let us pray for them.

shopping. Oh, I saw everything—all the riches of the earth displayed in windows. Remember that the great delight in most of them is in looking at them, and if they are personal ornaments you cannot very well see them after you put them on. I fastened my eyes fully from the outside of the windows. It was the best Christmas shopping I ever did, and I have done no more shopping in my time, I can tell you.

"Midnight Mass—grand, celestial! No, sir; not a Catholic, but I do not let that fact stand between me and epicurean enjoyment."

"I slept the sleep of the contented man, sir, dreaming of the beautiful, bright skies and green fields and pleasant waters of summer that are all mine, sir, as much as a king's."

"See my Yule log! He pointed to a piece of cannel coal beside the stove. "I will light that by and by. I will roast a little joint of meat over it and make me a little vassail-bowl of elder with a roast apple in it—and when my pipe is lit and the street lamp shines on the ceiling I will recite for myself some of the old mine's plays of Christmas—"

"Pardon me," said I, starting up. "I must go. You tempt me to share your feast and lose my position. I must go. I wish I knew how to be as happy as you."

"Be content," said the strange old man.—Seaton Lord.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CRIB.

Therea Beatrice O'Leary, in *Review Magazine*.

It is fitting that we should owe the most beautiful of Christmas devotions to Saint Francis of Assisi, the brown-robed mendicant whose passage through the hills and valleys of Umbria has left a golden memory in the heart of the world for seven hundred years. He was the apostle of simplicity, this gentle saint who could speak so wisely to his little brothers, the birds, who could learn such wonderful lessons from his little friends, the fishes. He found God everywhere and saw His likeness in every thing. He sanctified the commonplace, so being the symbol of the Creator in the least of His works, blessing the beasts, praising God in the flower, loving every created thing. He loved the lambs because they reminded him of the Lamb without spot, and we read that when he met them being led to the shambles he wept tenderly and would not go on until he had redeemed them from death. One day, seeing a poor little sheep walking in the midst of a troop of goats, he said sadly to his brethren: "It was thus that our Saviour walked with the Jews and Pharisees."

God's love for His creatures is so great that He would save their gentle master from distress, but they had no money. A passing dealer—one of those opportune providences that follow the footsteps of Francis—seeing the embarrassment of the brothers, paid for the sheep and gave it to the saint.

Is it any wonder that such a man should have been seized at once with the idea of the human beauty of the Incarnation? Is it any wonder that he should have seen in the Nativity not the coming of the King, not the unspoken mystery of the Redemption, but the birth of a Babe in Bethlehem? Saint Francis may not have originated the devotion of the Crib—it is one of those beautiful heart-growths by which Christianity has nourished the human soul from the beginning—but he at least popularized it in Italy. Christmas was his spiritual holiday. It was the feast of love, and Saint Francis is the world's greatest preacher of the love of God. His brothers asked him one day if it was right to eat meat on Christmas when the feast fell on Friday. "Assuredly," answered Francis, he of all the saints the closest to the Passion, he of the Stigmata—"assuredly, I would even wish that princes and great ones of the earth strewed the country and the highroads with meat and cheese in order that the birds and the beasts of the field should have their share in so great a feast."

And he began to consider how he should bring the Christmas-tide near to the hearts and vivid to the imagination of the peasant folk of his country. It was only a genius, one whose mind was as quick as his heart in the service of his Master, who could have hit upon an idea so universal, an appeal so irresistible, as the cradle of infancy. From a purely human point of view, the Nativity is one of the great master strokes which makes Christianity, as a human system, so incomparable, so magnificently the most abject helplessness, to weigh down a little outcast Babe with the omnipotence of the Creator of the world—what conception of human genius could be at once so bold and so beautiful, so awful and so winning?

Saint Francis saw the possibilities of increased devotion to his dear Master that would follow the emphasizing, the humanizing, of this idea. He determined to have a great Christmas festa, of which the renown should spread through the length and breadth of Italy. He was in Rome—it was already close to the end of the year 1223—and going to the Holy Father, he craved leave to go to Greccio to celebrate the birth of the Saviour with his brethren, to gather together the population from all the neighboring hill towns and to make the underlying mercy and love of the Incarnation so patent to all that no heart in Italy should be able to resist it. With the Pontiff's blessing and Godspeed, he started forth, the joy of Christmas already singing in his heart. It was the vigils of the feast before he arrived in Greccio. He had conveyed minute instructions to his good friend, Giovanni Veltia, and he found everything in readiness in accordance with his pious plans. An altar had been built in the open air. A skillful craftsman had among the brown-robed brothers had fashioned a crib, everything as the evangelists had described it and tradition had pictured it in the stable of Bethlehem. The shrine was in the heart of the wood and at midnight the Friars Minor

led thence a strange company of mountaineers and peasants, awed and silent, who lighted the way through the black aisles of the forest with flickering torches. As they proceeded they broke the mysterious silence with song, repeating over and over again the haunting verses of the Umbrian Christmas carols, those liquid Italian religious melodies compared to their harder northern hymns of a colder Christmas sound harsh and conventional.

Francis was jubilant. We are told that he could not refrain from shouting tears of joy. One suspected that the good saint, with all his inimitable piety, had a touch of the dramatic instinct or at least had well developed that sense of the picturesque which is so strong in all true sons of Italy. The Italian immediately groups his ideas into pictures: he at once seizes upon the right artistic moment to perpetuate an emotion. It is for this reason that faith in Italy flowers into so many lovely fancies, and that Italy has been the world's inspiration and the world's teacher in art.

At the midnight Mass that followed the procession to the crib, Saint Francis filled the office of deacon and preached, there in the midst of the trees, as he liked best to preach, of the birth of the Babe, of the angels and the shepherds, of the manger and the oxen, of all the dear traditions that had glorified the Cave of Bethlehem for twelve hundred years, that are near and as clear as the light of the sun. The love of Jesus so welled up in the preacher's heart that every time he came to the sacred name he was obliged to pause for very ecstasy of devotion. "His voice faltered as if he had tasted a delicious honey," says one who writes of him, "or heard a hidden melody the notes of which he wished to catch. The Cavaliere Giovanni Veltia, a true and worthy man who had abandoned the career of arms to serve Jesus Christ, affirmed on oath that he saw a child seemingly asleep over whom our saint bent, covering him with kisses and as if were awakening him from his slumbers."

The straw which the apparition touched is credited with afterwards working several miraculous cures. A chapel was built on the site of this first Italian crib after the death of Saint Francis.

The devotion was taken up as promptly and as ardently as the saint foresaw. His holy friend, Saint Clare, immediately introduced the custom into all the convents of her order. Like Saint Francis himself, she was never so happy as in preparing the crib, in meditating with her Sisters on the infinite sweetness of the mystery of Bethlehem.

It is related in the quaint and precious chronicle of Bernard of Besse that her devotion to the Christ-Child once merited for her a proof of the divine favor of the young devotee. He relates that the Sisters of the convent of Saint Danien were preparing to celebrate the feast of Christmas. Only Saint Clare, the victim of a torturing illness, was unable to share in the festivities. When her daughters went down to the chapel at midnight to chant the matins of the Nativity, she could not control her disappointment and burst into tears. She upbraided her heavenly Spouse with the pious familiarity of those who are nearer the things of heaven than of earth. And the Master listened. Bernard records that Clare felt herself suddenly transported, whether in spirit or reality she was never afterwards certain, to the Church of the Sacro Convento. She distinctly heard the chanting voices of the Friars Minor; she distinctly saw the crib with its smiling infant; she distinctly felt that she received the new-born King in the Blessed Eucharist.

Whether or not Saint Clare was favored with such a miracle, it is certain that the devotion of the crib spread over Italy and over the world with miraculous enthusiasm. The "Bambino" is almost a national institution in Italy. For years, in what had once been the capitol of pagan Rome, there gathered throngs from all over the country to celebrate the birth of Christianity. Then took place the historic procession of the "Bambino," the jewel set statuette of the Infant Jesus made of olive-wood from the Garden of Gethsemane, and venerated through the year in the Franciscan Convent of the Ara Coeli.

The Christmas of the north is different from the Christmas of the impetuous, the imaginative peoples of the South. The traditions and customs are different, but the same all over the world. Its accessories may change with changing climes, but the spirit that builds the crib is as universal as the mission of the Church. The old gospel story is re-told every year in every church; it is told in picture letters, that all alike may take it into their hearts, that all alike, as children on the verge of life, may comprehend the edges of the mystery that encompasses the Christmas tide, seeing dimly in human fashion, what it was given Mary to see when the angel came to her one March morning in the little house of Nazareth.

feast of Charity, an old man rose—the venerable Alexander. His name was on the list of the condemned for whom the Roman officers were seeking. He pointed upward: "The roof of stone hides the stars, but they shine; and they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars of heaven. I know that when the Saturnalia passes, I shall be given to the beasts. But the hosts of the righteous shall increase, shining in their beauty, and Bethlehem's star shall never set."

But a clear and holy light, as from the remembrance of the unshaken faith in which their brethren died, rested upon every face. The places of the martyrs were filled. Men, women and consecrated youth swelled the host that gathered to keep the birth-night of the Christ. The Star of Bethlehem shone steadily over heaven Rome.

A Genoese mariner believes himself born to carry the gospel of Christ to an unknown people and an undiscovered world, a world lying in the mysterious waters of the West. He travels from city to city seeking a powerful patron, until at Santa Fe, in the south of Europe, takes place the memorable meeting with the king and queen of Spain.

With an equipment of three ships he looses from Palos, and sails to the mysterious waters whose secret shores no eye has seen. Golden days come and go; nights of calm and new stars. Near midnight on Oct. 11, 1492, he sees a light in the far horizon, knows his destiny is accomplished, is sure God has fulfilled the prophetic meaning of his name—Columbus, the seeking dove. Morning comes; the New World stands revealed; he leaps on shore, unfurls the banner and cross of Castile, and sings Te Deum.

The missionary mariner sails away again. He discovers Hispaniola, and here he and his followers offer the first Christmas devotions in the New World. Santa Fe, on the Rio Grande, probably was the place where the first Christmas anthem was sung in our own land. Columbus visited the region in search of the Seven Cities of Gold almost one hundred years before the Mayflower sailed into the Christmas-tide storm of Provincetown Bay. The Franciscan missionaries soon followed Coronado.

How poetic must have been the first Christmas in the new born town! The mission church is surrounded with mountains whose summits are covered with eternal snow. The sun of the fitful December day goes down, leaving every peak a colossal monument of light and splendor. Evening's curtains fall. The service begins. Down the light ladders of the pueblos come the descendants of a race unknown, and make their way to the church. Music tells the tale of the Virgin and the Child. Then arises the Gloria, and it floats out like a breath from the Bethlehem angels over the habitations of the dominant race of the world. The moon rises over the mountains, and turns into whiteness stubs and chapel. In the bright air stands the mystic sign of the cross like a shadow, and there ascends heavenward in the silence the sweet words, in the Latin tongue, "On earth, peace!" The Star that shone over Bethlehem, upon the West.

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In all the affairs of life let it be your great care not to hurt your mind or offend your judgment. And this rule, if observed carefully in all your department, will be a mighty security to you in your undertakings.—Epictetus.



Don't forget the old man with the fish on his back. For nearly thirty years he has been traveling around the world, and is still traveling, bringing health and comfort wherever he goes. To the consumptive he brings the strength and flesh he so much needs. To all weak and sickly children he gives rich and strengthening food. To thin and pale persons he gives new firm flesh and rich red blood. Children who first saw the old man with the fish are now grown up and have children of their own. He stands for Scott's Emulsion of pure cod liver oil—a delightful food and a natural tonic for children, for old folks and for all who need flesh and strength. **SCOTT & BOWNE, Chemists, Toronto, Ont. 50c. and \$1.00; all drug stores.**

think I'm very bad, laughed under his







CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

The end of 1903 has been reached. When it was opening, we looked forward hopefully to the coming of its days.

But they are gone into the Eternity of the Past. Their good and evil are indelibly recorded. Regrets are, in one way, useless.

And it is not advisable to brood too much on the dark side—or transgressions, or failures, or misunderstandings, or misfortunes, or maladies, or mishaps.

A new year is almost at our door. See 1904 comes to offer us its days. And while now is the only time that is surely ours, we can make plans to use them advantageously if the good God gives them to us.

First comes our work that relates to our temporal welfare. How shall we advance in it? What must we do to increase our chances for a home and a competence?

Next may be considered our social interests. How shall we make more friends? What opportunities for the kind deeds shall we seek out?

And our own improvement, mentally and physically, may well demand some care.

Then, last of all to be mentioned, but first of all in importance, is the condition of our spiritual life. We must take new resolutions for that combat with the world, the flesh and the devil.

They are glad to be told that the way to spiritualize their life is to live it for God's sake; to offer Him every morning all their thoughts, words and deeds; to have His will as the motive of their existence.

They are willing to be reminded that their flesh with its softness and concupiscences is an enemy in the way of their salvation.

They will be glad to be reminded that they should train themselves to put it in pain, to deny it a share of even lawful gratifications, to fast, to control its impulses and exhaust its excesses through exercise, and to rule it so that every one of them can assert that, with God's help, he is master of the house of clay in which his spirit dwells.

They will rejoice to learn how to keep themselves in the consciousness of the presence of God, by means of frequent ejaculatory prayers: "My God and my all," "My God, I do this for Thee," "My Jesus, mercy," "Lord, I give Thee my life," "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, we implore that we may ever love Thee more and more."

They will gladly make use of the information that, to keep in the state of grace, the sacraments should be received regularly at least once a month. Communion is food for the soul. That divine Manna gives life and strength.

The young man who receives it worthily every month, is sure to be noble, continent, upright, clever and strong-willed. His very thoughts are clean. His eyes are clear and his looks are straightforward. He loves the light.

With such ideas considered and such resolutions adopted for the new year, 1904 may well be greeted with joyous salutations.

It will bring blessings. It will speak of victories. It will make a good record. It will go into the Past, when its last day is over, bright, beautiful and beloved.

Hail, New Year! Welcome 1904! We who hope to make good use of thee, salute thee!

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS. THE LITTLE STRANGER.

There is a popular household story that is repeated year after year to German children at the beginning of the Christmas holidays.

In a little cottage on the borders of a large forest there once lived a poor wood chopper, with his wife and two children. He was a good and pious man, but was scarcely able to earn enough to provide food for his family.

One snowy evening when the wood-chopper came home, he brought with him some green houghs, and after the evening meal began to hang them over the mantel-piece.

"Christmas is here," said he, "and I have no presents for you; but we will offer to the Lord the beautiful altars of grateful hearts. God will bless us."

"Who is there?" asked the wood-chopper. "A homeless child."

A child entered, very beautiful, but in ragged clothing, and stood before the fire. "Who are you?" asked the wood-chopper, kindly. "Whence do you come?"

"I am a Stranger and have no home," answered the Child. "Come to the table, little stranger," said Marie. "There is not bread enough for us both; you shall have my supper."

"And I will let you sleep in my bed," said Valentine. "There is not room enough for two. I will sleep on the floor."

The family sang their evening hymn—The woods are all silent, and the little Stranger fell asleep in Valentine's bed.

At midnight the family was awakened by the sound of music without the door. The storm had abated and the stars shone clear in the cold sky. Very sweet music it was.

"Hark!" said Marie. "It is the song of children. What do they sing?" "Listen!" said Valentine. The family was still and the voices sang:

Oh, happy home, to heaven highest, Wherein Thou, Little Stranger, liest. Like the softly attuned musical glasses seemed the music out of which rose the carol. The family heard it with delight. The song was repeated:

The music drifted away as in a cloud of light, higher and higher, and was lost in the air. In the morning the Little Stranger woke, and said that he must go. "You will be blessed," he said simply, "because you took me in. Take this sprig of evergreen," he added breaking a twig from the tree that the cutter had brought home, "and plant it, and you shall one day know who I am."

It was a sprig of fir, and the sprig grew, and the fir tree bore silver nuts and golden apples, and Marie and Valentine never again knew the want of food, or a bed, or of an abundant Christmas table.

It was the first Christmas tree.—The Feast of the Holy Innocents.

CONTINUED FROM SIXTH PAGE. No further doubt about their vision or their message he sent them on to Bethlehem. But they were going to return.

Herod thought so, and, in fact, commanded them to do so. That was part of his scheme. He wanted to know where the Child was, in order that he might go and adore Him.

But they received orders from a higher power to go back another way into their own country. And they obeyed the higher power. Then Herod was exceeding angry. He became a perfect maniac. He could do anything now, in his fierce-ungovernable hate. There was no doubt in the world about the truth of Christ's coming to found a new and everlasting kingdom.

the life of the Child before His Divine mission had been accomplished, and think of the great Chaldean bowing his head in lowly reverence even before the prophet of the Lord, and making him a member of his council because he spoke the truth.

There was Herod, dying, and strange men stood before him like the messengers of fate. There was no man living whom he trusted; there was no man living who had any confidence in him.

He was struck at the world's salvation. He was striking at human liberty. He was striking at the everlasting justice of the everlasting God. But he was blinded by his passions; he was striking in the dark. It was Herod against every human interest.

"Go and bring me word where the Child is," He was going to worship Him by sacrificing Him. Sometimes injustice is attempted on so grand a scale that it overdoes its strength.

But it was not as mean a coward as Herod. Pilate later on made at least some attempt to do justice. We can see him listening to his wife, when she asked him like the Roman lady that she was: "Where is the legal reason for it?"

He was dealing only with a Child. Did you ever hold a little fluttering bird in the hollow of your hand? Did you feel the beatings of its heart? Did you realize how much stronger you were than that little, helpless thing?

Did you realize that you had only to close your hand to crush out its life? Take that as a figure to illustrate the position of Herod when the Saviour was born at Bethlehem. But there was a difference. He had a human life in his hand. In your case, it was only a bird.

And in the heart of his victim was beating the life of the world. Another difference—you were willing to listen to the pleading of your captive. He was unwilling to grant any mercy to the infant in his power. It is a terrible thing when a man has his mind made up in advance to do wrong.

And the mind of Herod was always made up in advance, when his own interests seemed to be at stake. He was always prepared to do injustice for the sake of accomplishing his designs. But this time he was going to do injustice, and yet not carry out his plans. He sent the wise men, telling them to return and bring him word about the Child. But they did not return. They went back another way into their own country.

They were neither slaves to Rome, nor friends to Herod. And when the dying old man found that he had permitted him to be deceived, he sent the messengers of death to take the life of every child in Bethlehem of two years and under. Surely there could be no escape for the Child of Promise and of Prophecy. But He who had already received the homage of the East from those who represented twenty centuries of tradition was now going to receive the homage of the West in Africa. The hand that Herod raised against Him was destined to fall powerless by his side. The injustice was too great. The crime was too terrible in its consequences.

He thought there was no man but Caesar strong enough to restrain him. He forgot the Almighty. It was one of those occasions when the direct intervention of Heaven by a miracle is necessary to prevent a serious and a widespread injustice. And the hand of the Almighty was raised to save His people. He sent an angel. And the angel pointed to Egypt. The Eastern peoples had already knelt beside His cradle in the person of their representatives. The idols of Egypt must fall down at His coming. It almost seems impossible to explain the escape of our Divine Redeemer from the hands of Herod. There are so many things he might have done to prevent it. But in his blindness and his madness he did the very things that he should not have done, and he left undone the things he should have done. It was only a short time after, that the angel came to Joseph, telling him to return, because he was dead who had sought the life of the Child. And then it was only a few more years before the temple and the city built by Herod were destroyed. And Rome itself, the mighty and indomitable, went down. And then was fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel concerning the kingdom founded by Our Divine Redeemer: "In those days the God of heaven will raise up a kingdom, that shall never be destroyed. And His kingdom shall not be delivered to another people. But it shall break in pieces and destroy those other kingdoms. And it shall last itself forever."

No Divorce Among Quakers. William T. Briggs, of Brooklyn, writes to the Sun, New York, to correct what he is sure was an unintentional error on the part of that journal.

"You say," writes Mr. Briggs, "the Roman Catholic Church is alone in holding matrimony to be a sacrament of religion." This is not true for there is one other denomination which does not recognize divorce for any cause whatsoever.

It is the Society of Friends, sometimes called Quakers. In the time of George Fox and William Penn this was one of the irrevocable principles of Friends, and it is just as irrevocable to-day as it was over a hundred years ago. Their remedy for unfortunate or ill-divorced marriages is separation; but divorce, never!

Books are men of higher stature.—Mrs. Browning.

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And the mind of Herod was always made up in advance, when his own interests seemed to be at stake. He was always prepared to do injustice for the sake of accomplishing his designs. But this time he was going to do injustice, and yet not carry out his plans. He sent the wise men, telling them to return and bring him word about the Child. But they did not return. They went back another way into their own country.

They were neither slaves to Rome, nor friends to Herod. And when the dying old man found that he had permitted him to be deceived, he sent the messengers of death to take the life of every child in Bethlehem of two years and under. Surely there could be no escape for the Child of Promise and of Prophecy. But He who had already received the homage of the East from those who represented twenty centuries of tradition was now going to receive the homage of the West in Africa. The hand that Herod raised against Him was destined to fall powerless by his side. The injustice was too great. The crime was too terrible in its consequences.

He thought there was no man but Caesar strong enough to restrain him. He forgot the Almighty. It was one of those occasions when the direct intervention of Heaven by a miracle is necessary to prevent a serious and a widespread injustice. And the hand of the Almighty was raised to save His people. He sent an angel. And the angel pointed to Egypt. The Eastern peoples had already knelt beside His cradle in the person of their representatives. The idols of Egypt must fall down at His coming. It almost seems impossible to explain the escape of our Divine Redeemer from the hands of Herod. There are so many things he might have done to prevent it. But in his blindness and his madness he did the very things that he should not have done, and he left undone the things he should have done. It was only a short time after, that the angel came to Joseph, telling him to return, because he was dead who had sought the life of the Child. And then it was only a few more years before the temple and the city built by Herod were destroyed. And Rome itself, the mighty and indomitable, went down. And then was fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel concerning the kingdom founded by Our Divine Redeemer: "In those days the God of heaven will raise up a kingdom, that shall never be destroyed. And His kingdom shall not be delivered to another people. But it shall break in pieces and destroy those other kingdoms. And it shall last itself forever."

No Divorce Among Quakers. William T. Briggs, of Brooklyn, writes to the Sun, New York, to correct what he is sure was an unintentional error on the part of that journal.

"You say," writes Mr. Briggs, "the Roman Catholic Church is alone in holding matrimony to be a sacrament of religion." This is not true for there is one other denomination which does not recognize divorce for any cause whatsoever.

It is the Society of Friends, sometimes called Quakers. In the time of George Fox and William Penn this was one of the irrevocable principles of Friends, and it is just as irrevocable to-day as it was over a hundred years ago. Their remedy for unfortunate or ill-divorced marriages is separation; but divorce, never!

Books are men of higher stature.—Mrs. Browning.

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CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

Christmas comes every year, but it is always new. His name is Emmanuel, because He is the Saviour of His people.

When Jesus was born, God came down to live among us in a visible manner. Only those who will receive holy Communion on Christmas will adequately celebrate the day.

Have you no room in your heart for Christ? Think of the gloom His coming will dispel if only you receive Him in the right spirit.

Christmas is properly the soul's festival, and offers a grand feast for calm meditation and rapturous joy. The cradle of Bethlehem was the cradle of liberty. For the truth alone can make men free.

Better is 50 cents a week given to the poor-box on every Sunday for the next four months than a \$5 bill at a special collection.

This is the feast of the children. Let every Catholic family see to it that at least one poor child is glad on it. So shall joy abound!

In many a home Christmas this year will naturally be a sad day on account of some recent bereavement. But let the troubled hearts be comforted with the reflections that the dead who died in the Lord are happier where they are and that they do not desire to see their surviving relatives in grief because of them. So let them enter cordially into the spirit of the feast and rejoice.

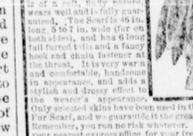
Christmas belongs of right to the poor. Mary and Joseph were poorest of the poor when they wandered through Bethlehem seeking shelter, and found every door closed against them. The poor were privileged to be the first worshippers at the manger of the new-born King—poor shepherds hidden thereunto by angels. In every age the thought that Christ made poverty holy has been the mainstay of the poor, has been a star of hope for the wretched. Therefore it is right in this holy time to remember.

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Think of your own faults the first part of the night, when you are awake, and of the faults of others the latter part of the night, when you are asleep.—Chinese Proverb.

