

A TERRIBLE SWIM.

A CORRESPONDENT of the London 'Times' thinks that at the present day, when swimming is a subject of such great interest, some particulars may be worth printing of a wonderful swim by a Yarmouth beachman, named Brock, in October, 1835, who, when about six miles to the eastward of Newark Floating Light, off Winterton, on the Norfolk coast, was capsized with a number of other men in a yawl, in a squally sea. It was six o'clock when the accident happened, and the nearest land was about six miles distant. With the aid of a rush horse-collar, which had been one of the boat's fenders, he was enabled to cut off his petticoat trousers, as well as his striped frock and his neck-cloth. He then abandoned the horse-collar, as though it assisted in keeping him afloat, it retarded his swimming. He saw the last of his companions sink beside him without a struggle or a cry, and "he was left in the cold, silent loneliness of night, more awful than the strife of the elements that had preceded." Shortly as if to try the power of human fortitude, the sky became overclouded, and "darkness was upon the face of the deep." He no longer knew his course, and a sudden short, cracking peal of thunder burst with stunning loudness just over his head, and the forked and flashing lightning threw its livid fire around him. This passed away, and again the moon threw her light over the ocean. He now saw the Lowestoft Lighthouse and the cliffs beyond Gorleston, on the Suffolk coast, and the swell of the sea carried him to the enquired buoy of St. Nicholas Gat, off Yarmouth nearly opposite to his own door but distant five miles. He had been five hours in the water, and here was something to hold on to in the hope that some vessel might pick him up; but the cold night air might soon finish him, so he let go the buoy and steered for the land. At last an unexpected trial was at hand; a large gray gull, mistaking him for a corpse, made a dash at him, and its sharp cry brought many more of these formidable birds. These, however, he scared away by splashing with his hands and feet. He now felt assured that he could reach the shore; but the surf broke heavily on the beach, and he knew that if he could get through it he could not climb the cliffs and get to a house, and before morning he would die of cold; so, turning his back on it, he struck out for a brig anchored in Corton Roads, and with all his prevailing strength he hailed her. His cry was heard and answered; and at half past 1 a.m., having swum seven hours and a-half in an October night, he was safe on board the Betsey, of Sunderland, Captain Christian, nearly 15 miles from the spot where the boat was capsized." Brock was only 5ft. 5in. high, but in other respects his bodily proportions were Herculean; his weight, 14 stone; his age when this happened, 31.

CONVENT LIFE IN QUEBEC.

THE Quebec correspondent of the 'New York Tribune,' writing from that city recently, gives the following interesting description of convent life in that city:

"Yesterday morning I made one of a party which went to witness the ceremony of bestowing the black veil upon seven candidates, at the Convent of Je Bon Pasteur. This convent is outside the walls, between the St. Louis and St. Foye roads, and is, comparatively, a young and poor institution. Not being a cloistered convent, it is visited by many Americans. There are now over a hundred professed nuns belonging to it, and the noble work they do interests everybody in them. The convent was founded twenty-five years ago by a widow who became a nun, and who was at one time, I believe, the Lady Superior. The devoted women prove themselves worthy servants for the Good Shepherd, in going into prisons and hospitals and taking back into their own atmosphere of purity and peace the degraded and unfortunate girls they find there. Since the convent was established over a thousand of these poor creatures have found refuge from their world of temptations and crime, and so successful are the nuns, that I am told they have reclaimed nearly two-thirds of that number. These women are left perfectly free to go or remain, and those who wish really to reform, but still remain in the world, are given safe homes. For those who prefer remaining in the convent, there is an order known as the Order of Magdelene, of which they can become members, though never professed nuns. The convent supports itself by all kinds of industry.

"The ceremony of taking the veil consists of the celebration of the Mass, after which the candidates approach the altar, each bearing a lighted candle in her hand, and kneel. They are then addressed either by the convent chaplain or the bishop, and their duties, sacrifices, and future life laid before them. Afterward they make the usual vows of poverty and obedience; their nun's robes are handed them—after being blessed—and they retire. They soon re-appear in these robes, and kneel again to receive the black veil. After a short ceremony it is thrown over the head of each by the bishop, and fastened to its place by the Lady Superior. The nuns are then taken into the 'community,' which ceremony consists of each new comer's receiving 'the kiss of peace,' or the 'nun's kiss,' as it is often called. Their lips do not meet, but they kiss each other on either cheek.

"The funeral of a nun is a fitting climax to her life of poverty and self-renunciation, and the only pomp which attends the occasion is that which is gathered from the dirge music and the universal solemnity and mourning with which a convent community celebrates this last ceremony. She is buried beneath the choir of the inner chapel, in a plain, unpainted pine coffin, and in her clasped hands she hides the crucifix. She is dressed in the robes of her profession, and the veils of her novitiate and last vows are buried with her. Her sand-glass and prayer-book pass to another, to mark and bless the hours of another life, and her empty place, though held in loving remembrances by her sisters, is filled by a pew comer, whose feet have entered 'the nuns' street.'

ARREST OF NUNS AT DERBY.

FROM Derby we receive reports of a very strange and in many respects a most painful story. Some time ago, two ladies, dressed in a monastic habit of the Community of the Sacred Heart, were taken into custody by the police for an alleged infraction of the Vagrant Act. They had been soliciting pecuniary contributions from door to door in the town, and they were found to have gathered nearly forty shillings in the course of three-quarters of an hour—a fact which speaks well for the merciful feelings of the inhabitants of Derby. But, to the active, energetic, and officious chief-constable of the town, Mr. Hilton, the fact that these ladies had been asking for and had received alms seemed to constitute a flagrant act of vagrancy; so he had the nuns arrested. It must be inferred that, when they were locked up, they were subjected to the indignity of a personal search, since it is stated that, in addition to the money found upon them, they were also in possession of a circular purporting that their proceedings were taken with the approval of "Henry Edward, Archbishop of Westminster," and "Edward, Bishop of Nottingham"—credentials which, if they were genuine—should surely have sufficed to rescue the poor Sisters from the degradation of the police cell and the profanation of the female searcher. Let us hope that they gave up their effects voluntarily. The circular recited that they were collecting subscriptions for a charitable asylum at Homerton, where the sick poor are nursed irrespective of their religious belief. The institution likewise undertook to send out nurses to tend the poor at their own dwellings, whatever might be the disease requiring treatment. Moreover, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart proposed to take care of children belonging to the sick, visit the hospitals, and supply the sufferers there with such little comforts as the medical authorities might sanction, but which were not provided by the ordinary dietary of the house. A truly Samaritan programme. The Samaritans appeared before the magisterial bench at Derby, and the Chief-Constable Hilton duly charged them with the offence of vagrancy. That the ladies were not professional beggars or imposters seems open to reasonable doubt from the fact that a dignified clergyman of the Roman Catholic Church, Canon McKenna, was permitted to address the bench on their behalf; and the magistrates, after hearing the reverend gentleman, and after expressing an opinion that the chief-constable had "done quite right in bringing the case before them," proceeded to say that as the Sisters were not about to proceed farther than Derby in the manner described, they, the justices, would allow the matter to be withdrawn. Canon McKenna applied for the restitution of papers found on the Sisters; but to this Mr. Hilton objected. The canon threatened a summons; but ultimately no order was made, and the documents remain in the hands of the police. We repeat that this is a very strange and painful story, and one that calls for further and searching investigation. If it can be shown that the brief or circular ostensibly signed by Cardinal Manning and by the Romanist Bishop of Nottingham is a forged or sophisticated paper, and that these two females were acting without ecclesiastical authority, they would certainly deserve to be treated like ordinary begging-letter writers. But, if it proved that they were behaving in a *bona fide* manner, that there is an asylum for the sick poor at Homerton, and that the institution is prepared to carry out the plan described in their papers, it must seem patent, even to the Charity Organisation Society, that these ladies have been treated with the grossest cruelty and injustice, and it is difficult to avoid the impression that the chief-constable of Derby has laid himself open to an action for false imprisonment. If the solicitation of alms from house to house for the purpose of aiding the funds of a charity be an offence against the Vagrant Laws, there are hundreds of clergymen, lay agents, mission women, and school children belonging to every religious denomination in the country who might be caught up every week by the police, and arraigned before the magistrates as rogues and vagabonds.—'London Telegraph.'

HOW WE OUGHT TO PRAY.

WE must pray attentively. It was a saying of Cyprian—God listens to the voice of the heart, not to that of the lips. He adds, you ought to apply your whole heart to prayer, drive away everything which can disturb your attention, and attach your mind to the subject of the prayer alone. To whom ought you to be attentive, when you address him, if not to God? Can he demand less of you than that you should be willing to think of what you say? How can you hope he will listen to you if you do not listen to yourself? You pretend he will not remember you in your prayer—you who forget yourself while you are praying!

It is true, says Augustine, that I perceive the humble posture of your body, but I do not know where your mind is.

We must confess that this remark of the Saint is not severe enough for our times. The posture of the body now marks often the frivolity and irreligion of the soul. How does the mind of the worshipper wander away from holy thoughts! Attention to prayer may be practised with less difficulty than is usually imagined. Not that involuntary distractions do not happen to the most faithful minds; we cannot always govern our imagination, put it to silence, and direct our soul to God. But to stop wilfully upon the vainest and most frivolous objects in time of public prayer—is not this to wish to live always amused by the senses; always without God? To obtain not only this power of attention, but a divine delight in prayer, accustom yourself, says St. Augustine, to follow the thoughts of the priest, repeating them to yourself in silence. The attention may wander at times, but a little watchfulness will correct its vagaries.—Translated from *Penelon*.