

## OF THE ORIGIN OF SITTINGS IN CHURCHES.

THE popular and useful part of church furniture known so familiarly to every one under the name of sittings was not originally placed in the churches at the time of their erection, but was subsequently introduced, as it is not probable that such settled ideas of comfort would have occurred to the minds of the people so soon after the establishment of the churches themselves. It is difficult to determine the precise date of their invention though it may be reasonably premised that they found their way into our churches so soon as their adaptability to the purposes for which they were required came to be recognised. When the people had become familiar to the use of the church, no doubt many little improvements gradually suggested themselves, as they do in everything else the more one becomes acquainted with it, and among these the idea of having suitable accommodation for the wants of the people would not have been the least consideration. Though at first sittings may not have appeared so, yet the many advantages they would possess in enabling the people more conveniently to attend the services of the church fully counterbalanced any objection that might be raised against them on the grounds of their cumbersome or domestic nature, and would ultimately lead to their permanent adoption as a recognised part of church furniture.

Originally these sittings were extremely plain and simple in their construction but later on they were formed more elaborately, many of them, especially those belonging to monastic edifices, being very beautifully and symbolically carved, and were known under different names such as stalls, prieux, etc.

Although churches had been in existence in England in the sixth century yet it was not until eight centuries later that the sittings were placed in them. Previously to this time the people used to seek for convenient places for themselves, many of them resting on the altar tombs, while others brought little rugs and mats with them and perched themselves on the buttresses of the walls or pillars. It is easily to be imagined what a scene of confusion must sometimes prevail where everyone is obliged to seek a place for himself, and therefore any arrangement that would provide both comfort and convenience to the people would necessarily be most acceptable to them.

The pews, as constructed in Anglican churches, were not in vogue until the seventeenth century, and were quite different from the old church seats, inasmuch as they consisted of several "seats enclosed together," while the former were simply open benches arranged so that the people always faced the altar, which they would be unable to do in the pews.

In monastic churches the places allotted to the people were quite distinct from those occupied by the inmates of the monastery. The clergy occupied the stalls in the choir, while the monks or nuns had places of their own in the triforium, apart from, and above the congregation, where they could conveniently observe the service, while at the same time, if desired, the church itself could be carefully watched by them, and yet they be partially unobserved themselves. The men and women in the parish were also placed in separate parts of the church, though not concealed from one another as in the Oriental churches. The last practice was continued in England long after the Reformation, more particularly at Leverton in Lancashire, where as late as the end of the sixteenth century the "women's pews" appear enumerated among the items in the parish accounts. This was, no doubt, a remnant of monastic discipline transmitted from bygone days.

In the country places in England the lord of the manor frequently owned one of the aisles in the church he attended which he kept in repair at his own expense, having the privilege of interring his family within its walls. His seat with the armorial bearings over it was situated here, while those of his tenants were usually placed behind him.

## GEMS FROM MANY MINES.

(Gathered for the Pilot.)

GOOD is slow: it climbs. Evil is swift: it descends. Why should we marvel that it makes great progress in a short time?—*Madame Swetchine.*

IT was said of Mgr. Affre, "he is hard and cold." Yes, and so is marble; but beautiful things are made of it constantly.—*Idem.*

THERE are hearts whose mere kindness sheds more rays than the love of others, as the moon of Naples shines with a softer splendour than many a sun.—*Idem.*

NO two persons ever read the same book, or saw the same picture.—*Idem.*

LET our lives be as pure as snow-fields, where our footsteps leave a mark, but not a stain.—*Idem.*

POLITE and engaging manners are perpetual letters of recommendation.—*Isabelle of Castile.*

A WICKED intention destroys the good which we do, and a good intention is not sufficient to excuse the evil which it produces.—*St. Bernard.*

For hearts where wakened love doth lurk,  
How fine, how blest a thing is work!

—JUAN INGELOW.

I HAVE often remarked that young men given up to sensual pleasures have, as it were, an incapacity of feeling and even of understanding real friendship. To love truly, one must be pure.—*Lacordaire.*

A FALSE report does not last long, and the life one leads is the best apology of that which one has led.—*St. Jerome.*

THE majesty of the scriptures astonishes me; the holiness of the Gospel speaks to my heart. See the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp, how insignificant they are in comparison with that, is it possible that a book at the same time so sublime, and so simple can be the work of man? Is it possible that He whose history is there related is Himself nothing more than a man?—*Jean Jacques Rousseau.*

## THE MISSION IN CHRISTCHURCH.

SINCE my last communication to you, His Lordship Dr. Redwood and several priests have arrived here, and yet with all this increased assistance, and although His Lordship sits in the Confessional, the mission will not be closed before next Sunday. Every day brings in its quota of poor frail humanity, some hardened sinner or old toper, and "the cry is "still they come." During the past week immense crowds of people, some of them coming very long distances, have been attending the services. The missionary is certainly reaping a rich harvest in this portion of the vineyard. On each of the two Sundays that he has been here, the church, at both the morning and evening services, was so densely crowded that the people had to be allowed inside the altar rails in the sanctuary, around the Bishop's throne, and right up to the altar steps. It was deemed advisable, on last Sunday, in order to make room for the people, to prevent children under twelve from coming to last Mass, and with all this many persons were unable to get inside the door of the church. We had High Mass, *coram Episcopo*, with Rev. Father M'Namara as celebrant, Rev. Father Gouttenoire as deacon, Rev. Father Ginaty as sub-deacon, and the Very Rev. Father Hennebery as assistant priest at the throne. The choir performed Haydn's 1st Mass. Offertory, "O, Salutaris," by Himmel, sung by Mr. Loughnan with great effect. It was by far a larger congregation than that of the preceding Sunday, and much as the people expected to hear, they certainly never dreamed of the surprise that was in store for them. It was known that Father Hennebery would deliver his great sermon on Temperance, and administer the pledge some time during the mission, but no one ever expected that it would come off so soon. The sermon, if I may go back to it, is peculiar. It proves the drunkard to be a sinner of the blackest dye, in his drunkenness breaking every one of the commandments, and this is proven and illustrated by a number of skilfully and well chosen anecdotes, which are dovetailed into the discourse, and fit in so admirably that they seem part and parcel of it. While all of these illustrations show up the horrible effects of strong drink, and are chosen from life, some of them are so ludicrous, and told with such effect, that it is impossible to maintain one's gravity. Even His Lordship and his priests inside the sanctuary were obliged more than once to yield to the unconquerable impulse to laugh; and strange, no one feels that they do wrong, for they cannot help themselves. It was about two hours and thirty-five minutes from the time the preacher ascended the pulpit until he came down, and when all was over the good Father was evidently fatigued, and no wonder. The sermon produced such an effect through the town amongst the Protestant population that Father Hennebery has been requested to deliver it in some large public hall in the city for the benefit of those whose religious prejudices prevent them from attending our church. He has not yet replied to this request, but if he does so and consents to it, there is every reason to believe that it will assume a public character, for many of the well educated and respectable Protestants of this place are becoming tired and disgusted with the follies and absurdities of Good Templary.

The converts are becoming so numerous since the mission began that it is necessary to put back the evening devotions until half-past seven—half an hour later—in order that that half hour may be entirely devoted by Father Ginaty to their special instruction, without, as has been up to this case, one coming now and another again throughout the day. I have heard various estimates given of Father Hennebery's age. I may inform you that he was born in 1830, he is therefore in his 47th year. He is a native of that dear old land which has given to the world some of its greatest men, and to heaven some of its greatest saints—a land that may be called the evangeliser of the nations, a land that since the day that Patrick put it on the right track has never turned to the right nor to the left, but through weal and woe has fondly clung to that direct unerring path that leads to life, to heaven, and to God. He belongs to the order of the congregation of the precious blood of Christ, and you will be able to form a sort of slight estimate of what he is doing in the cause of temperance, when you hear that within the last three years he has given the pledge to about one hundred thousand people. It must be borne in mind that Father Hennebery did not come to New Zealand for the purpose of delivering controversial sermons. His first, his great object is to gain over erring Catholics, to point the way to Heaven to those of his own faith who stand in need of his advice, and to bring Catholics, good and bad, to a closer and more intimate union with their God. But while doing this in a very effectual way, he does not ignore the fact that a great many Protestants who nightly come to hear him, have also souls to be saved, and for their benefit, as also for the more solid instruction and grounding in the faith of his own flock, he usually expounds the dogmas of the Church, and proves conclusively that to Catholics, and to them alone, belongs the "Divine prerogative of certainty" in matters of faith, and that now, as in the days when Dryden wrote the Church of Rome is still, "The milk-white hind, unspotted and unchanged;" and that in her alone is to be found truth, and that

"Majesty,  
Power, glory, strength, and  
Beauty, all are aisled,  
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

RATHKEALENSIS.

Christchurch, Nov. 28.

HARDLY a day passes but the *Germania* mentions some new conversion to Catholicism that has taken place in the North. The conversion of the Baroness de Berling at Copenhagen was mentioned quite recently. On the day of her abjuration this lady presented the Catholic community of Copenhagen with property of more than a million francs in value.

JAFFNA is full of crowds of famished old men, women, and children crying out, "We are hungry." The *Jaffna Catholic Guardian* gives warning that, unless abundant rains soon fall, and unless timely measures are at once adopted to stave off the impending calamities, Jaffna will witness in December and January appalling desolation.