

Current Topics

Why Night Prayers

'Psychologists,' says the *S.H. Review*, 'tell us now that the mind of the child is in a peculiarly impressionable state just before sleep. The Catholic Church's teaching and practice about night prayers show that she always knew this. Catholic parents should be careful to inculcate by precept and example the saying of night prayers—the uplifting of heart and soul to Almighty God in thanksgiving at the end of the day. Put the thought of Jesus Christ and His love into the child's mind at night. The lessons a child thus learns from father and mother are traced indelibly upon his mind, and are bound to influence his after life.'

Parents would do well to frame this and set it up in a conspicuous place in their households.

Modernists That Have 'Left'

A Wellington contemporary copies from a London newspaper the statement that several Continental ecclesiasts, with Modernist views, have during the present year 'left the Church of Rome.' We know of several whose exit from the Church of Rome took place as the result of the conscious eliminator action of the Church herself—she spat them out. Others left in anticipation of a similar impetus—they found in the Church no rest for the soles of the feet of those who would empty of real meaning some of the fundamental mysteries of the Christian faith. The implied suggestion that they left of their own full accord reminds us of a German fable which runneth thus: A great and venerable old church once harbored, in various holes and crannies, sundry bats and sparrows and jackdaws. The pastor of the church set at length about an overhaul of the massive walls. When the workers had gone, the bats and the sparrows and the jackdaws came back in search of their old dwellings. But every hole and cranny was filled up. Then said the bats and the sparrows and the jackdaws: 'Of what use now is this great building? Come, let us forsake this useless heap of stones.' And they left the ancient church.

Pius X., the Chief Pastor on earth, closed up, by his Encyclical on Modern Errors, the holes and crannies in which sundry flighty intruders to our faith had taken shelter in the walls of the Church of the Ages. And this is how Modernists came to 'leave' the Church of Rome.

Queensland's Jubilee

Brisbane has been since Monday—and will be till the close of the coming week—what Venice was in the Italy of *Childe Harold*, a 'pleasant place of all festivity.' For there, as in other centres, Queenslanders are celebrating in holiday mood the happy day, fifty golden years ago, when their far-spreading territory became a separate colony, under the name which it still bears. Earlier in the same year Brisbane was made the centre of a vast new diocese which covered 668,497 square miles. Its first bishop was the Right Rev. James Quinn, whose foresight and zeal in introducing Irish Catholic settlers, with the aid of the Immigration Society, raised the clamor that the young colony would soon deserve to be called, not 'Queensland,' but 'Quinn's Land.' There were in all Queensland fifty years ago two priests, two churches, two small parish schools, and about seven thousand Catholics. Towards the close of 1908 the little seven-thousand flock of half a century ago had grown into some ninety and seven thousand, with 57 parochial districts, 111 churches, 98 priests, one archbishop and two bishops, 25 religious brothers, 362 nuns, 3 colleges for boys, 23 boarding-schools and 9 superior day-schools for girls, 67 primary schools, 10 institutes of charity, and 12,075 children receiving the blessings of religious education in Catholic schools. Catholics in Queensland to-day can look back with pride to the active and honorable part which they and their spiritual kith and kin have taken in building up the great Northern State. We wish Queensland, and the faith there, 'happy days, unclouded to the close.'

Topers—the Morning After

Planché's toper of the old 'three-bottle-man' school sighed for the days when intemperance was a 'gentlemanly' vice—

'When underneath your table you were bound your guest to land,
And no man rose to go till he was sure he could not stand.

'We drank champagne from glasses long, and hock from goblets green,
And nothing like a cup of tea was ever to be seen.
All night we passed the wine, nor dreamed of hyson or pekoe,
In the days that we got tipsy in—a long time ago.'

Times are happily changed, and nowadays the man would be ostracised from all decent society who would exhibit the coarse spectacle of fuddled sottishness that was considered 'gentlemanly' in a day that is not, after all, a very 'long time ago.' The heartless selfishness of such criminal folly, the false and evanescent joys of the flowing bowl, were made—from personal experience—the subject of a warning lay homily by the Premier of Victoria at Brunswick on a recent occasion. 'There is,' said he, 'no greater hell to be pictured by the human mind than that for the drunkard who has not lost every atom of his self-respect. Besides, it is a most selfish habit. A man leaves his home, his wife, and his family to go and enjoy himself—alone, or by pouring down the throats of himself or his companions the raiment of his wife and children. It destroys any natural feelings a man may possess. You know, I have tried it all myself. I have drunk in three continents (I am not proud of the boast, mind you), and found it all much alike. The misery of waking up is just the same after champagne as after the she-oak juice of the back blocks. They say champagne is the "nectar of the gods." The gods never thought anything of the kind—they had more sense. Anyway, whatever it is called, it is all the same next day.'

Evolution

One of the most interesting of the articles in the fifth volume of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, just to hand, deals with the whole subject of evolution in the light of the latest discoveries of science. It closes with the following 'general conclusions' (we add, in square brackets, a few explanatory words for the benefit of the general reader): (1) The origin of life is unknown to science. (2) The origin of the main organic types and their principal subdivisions is likewise unknown to science. (3) There is no evidence in favor of an ascending evolution of organic forms. (4) There is no trace of even a merely probable argument in favor of the animal origin of man. The earliest human fossils and the most ancient traces of culture refer to a true *Homo sapiens* [Man] as we know him to-day. (5) Most of the so-called systematic species and genera were certainly not created as such, but originated by a process of either gradual or saltatory [sudden] evolution. Changes which extend beyond the range of variation observed in the human species have thus far not been strictly demonstrated, either experimentally or historically. (6) There is very little known as to the causes of evolution. The greatest difficulty is to explain the origin and constancy of "new" characters and the teleology of the process [i.e., the use or purpose which it was designed to serve]. Darwin's "natural selection" is a *negative* factor only. The moulding influence of the environment cannot be doubted; but at present we are unable to ascertain how far that influence may extend. Lamarck's "inheritance of acquired characters" is not yet exactly proved, nor is it evident that really new forms can arise by "mutation." In our opinion the principle of "Mendelian segregation," together with Darwin's natural selection and the moulding influence of environment, will probably be some of the chief constituents of future evolutionary theories. ['Mendelian segregation,' it may be added, is based upon the discoveries of the learned Augustinian friar-scientist, Father Gregory Mendel, in connection with the hybridisation or crossing of plants and the laws of their variation, etc. Other investigators have followed up the great Catholic friar's lines of investigation, and out of it has arisen 'Mendelism' or the science of genetics, which has led to the reconsideration or abandonment of sundry theories formerly held by the upholders of evolution as it is commonly understood. An account of the Mendelian theory appears elsewhere in this issue.]

Paganism and the School

A cable message from Melbourne in our daily papers of last week read as follows: 'The coroner, when holding an inquest on three infants whose death in each case was due to suffocation, declared that Melbourne was drifting into a condition similar to what existed at the worst period of the Roman Empire, when infanticide was so common that its punishment was neglected altogether.'

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And this after eight-and-thirty years of the 'benefits' of a 'free, secular, and compulsory' system of public instruction! Is this new and revolting form of paganism—this out-Heroding of Herod—one of the coruscating constellations of 'blessings' for which, in their eagerness to hit 'Rome,' the Reformed faiths in Victoria acquiesced in the banishment of God and religion and religious influences from the public schools?

'A little while they strove, and much repented,
And, whispering they would ne'er consent, consented.'

A few months ago, in the *Australian Schoolmaster*, Miss Mabel L. Conklin wrote of the 'appalling amount of immorality' among small children, especially school children.