

the inanimate objects around him, for 'trees have no dogmas; turnips are singularly broad-minded.'

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In his chapter on 'The Negative Spirit,' Chesterton has something to say on what he considers the crying evil of modern literature, as it is of modern life—the lack of definite and inspiring ideals. His quarrel with the realistic fiction of the present day is not so much that it presents vivid pictures of evil, as that it gives us no vivid pictures of nobility and beauty. It is all neutral tinted, containing no image of what Chesterton calls 'a thing of clear colors and pure air.' And, indeed, if we recall any piece of literature which has made a lasting impression upon us by its nobility and purity, we shall find it is not a chronicle of faultless lives, but a single example of shining virtue, all the brighter because of its dark and gloomy background. The eye rests on the dazzling beauty and purity of the central figure, not on the dark colors of the rest of the picture, and the radiant lily shows only the more perfect because it is rooted in the muddy soil of common humanity, as Carlyle puts it, like a 'beautiful eye looking out at us' from the inner heart of nature, which is beauty. So Browning throws out the picture of Pompilia against the unlovely forms of Guido and the rest; but it is Pompilia we remember best, and not Guido. In the same way, Chesterton asks which is the happier and the healthier; the monk who spends most of his life in meditation upon the lofty and ennobling ideal of Christ, or the man of the world, who keeps himself from drink only by the morbid remembrance of the possibility of a drunkard's grave. And in this, as in other issues, the author's answer is always in favor of the ancient Catholic principle or method, in preference to the modern system. Indeed, he is more Catholic spirited than very many Catholics; for he has turned away with stern determination from the twentieth century fetishes of progress and liberalism, to their medieval antithesis. *Heretics* is very interesting reading, if only for the pleasure of seeing our Catholic principles of the importance of dogma and definite religious ideals so brilliantly upheld by one of the foremost writers of our day.

Notes

Movable Feasts of the Year

On consulting the calendars for the current year the reader will notice that the movable feasts come very early. Shrove Tuesday comes on February 4, Easter on March 23, Ascension Thursday on May 1, and Pentecost on May 11. It is extremely rare that Easter comes so early in the year. Easter can never come earlier than March 22, as for that the full moon must be on the 21st and the following day Sunday. This double coincidence comes about once in a century, and that is the only occasion on which Ascension Day falls within the month of April.

Unconscious Influence

In a very readable book, entitled *In a New Way*, by the Rev. E. C. Hearn, consisting of a series of sermon-essays on various practical subjects, the writer introduces several interesting and instructive anecdotes by way of explanation and illustration. Here is one which carries its own moral:—'In an obscure country town of New England in the days of bigotry, there once lived a young man, the son of a Protestant merchant; and every morning when on his way to work he used to meet a little lad of some ten years or so, the son of a laborer. A nodding acquaintance sprang up between them; and now and then a remark was passed. Finally, one very cold winter morning, when the snow was knee-deep, and travelling was almost impossible, the young man, surprised at meeting his little friend out on such a disagreeable day, ventured to ask him where he was going so regularly every morning, regardless of the weather or season; and this was the simple, boyish answer he received: "I'm going to serve Father John's Mass." "Oh!" exclaimed the

young man somewhat confusedly, "going to serve Father John's Mass, eh?" and as he pushed on through drifts of snow, the little fellow's answer kept ringing in his ears. What did the little fellow mean by "serving Mass?" the seed of inquiry had been sown, and had fallen on good ground; for the young man shortly after sought instruction, was baptised in the Catholic faith, and, giving up home and friends, consecrated his life to that God Whom he had learned to know and love through the unconscious influence which that little altar-boy had exerted over him by his remark about serving Mass.'

The Divorce Evil

Those people in Great Britain who are clamoring for the loosening of the marriage bond by advocating greater facilities for divorce, would do well to consider the sad state of affairs which prevails at present in the United States. 'Every right thinking man (said Cardinal Farley to a newspaper representative the other day) should raise his voice against the growing evil. It is the business of every man who loves his country to work to correct the fundamental errors which strike at family life, and it is the duty of every man to take a hand now in properly solving this most vital question. I speak against divorce, and so does every priest and bishop of the Church, because of the love of our people, because the Church now, as it always has in the past, recognises the need of protecting home and family life, and because it is God's command. . . . Just think of the facts for a moment. Statistics show that there have been some 100,000 divorces within one year. That means that the effect of a ruined home, of a disbanded family, is directly upon the double individuality affected by these divorces or upon 200,000 men and women. It means that there is a veritable army of men and women living in this country and one that is daily increasing, in which the moral rectitude has been removed. And how many children are affected by the example and direction of their parents in such cases! What an effect it has upon the lives of these children, and what an effect upon family life and homes in this country in general.'

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

Rev. Father Smyth, S.M., Timaru, who had been on a brief visit to Dunedin, left for the north on Tuesday.

The annual retreat of the clergy of the diocese, which opens on Monday, January 20, will be conducted by the Rev. Father Barry, C.S.S.R.

On New Year's Day, the Feast of the Circumcision, Masses were celebrated at 6, 7, 8, and 11 o'clock at St. Joseph's Cathedral. Very large numbers approached the Holy Table at the early Masses.

On Sunday last there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph's Cathedral from the last Mass until after Vespers. In the evening there was the usual procession, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The Rev. Father Smyth, S.M. (Timaru), preached an impressive discourse in the evening.

The Maniototo Early Settlers' Association is taking steps with a view to the celebration of the jubilee of the discovery of gold in the Mount Ida district. The celebrations will be held at Naseby on Easter Monday and Tuesday, 24th and 25th March next. It is the wish of the association to get together at Naseby on that occasion as many of the pioneers of the district as possible, and to entertain them during their stay. If funds will permit, the association purposes helping to pay the expenses of those pioneers who wish to attend but who cannot otherwise do so owing to adverse circumstances. In order to raise funds to carry out the celebrations the committee has decided to ask for subscriptions from those now in the district or who have been connected with it in the past.