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**SATURDAY DEC. 22, 1894.**  
City News Agents.  
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**CHRISTMAS.**

"Peace on Earth to Men of Good Will," sang the angels who came from on high to sing heavenly melodies over the crib of the infant Redeemer; and even at this day, despite the lapse of nineteen centuries, men seem to become kinder towards each other as the great feast of the nativity draws nigh; it almost seems that we catch a faint echo of the song of those celestial visitors, whose melodies charmed the simple Judean shepherds on that first Christmas night.  
There is a cheerfulness and a brightness around us at this season that is noticeable at no other period of the year.  
Of the vast importance of the event which Christmas commemorates, volumes might be written. It is thus eloquently explained by the great Dominican, Father Tom Burke:  
We commemorate on Christmas Day the mystery of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God—that bowed down from His exalted throne in the heavens, that descended on earth, became incarnate of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man. It is the mystery of all mysteries, the greatest, grandest conception that ever filled the mind of God, the most wonderful work that ever emanated from God's right hand. This mystery needs an explanation, and we must consider it in its true nature, not by the deluding representations of those who pretend to teach without authority, who pretend to explain the adorable name of Jesus Christ without comprehending what that name means, who teach that the veneration of His mother and His saints detracts from His honor, and out knowing who He is. This mystery means that man's direct necessity was obviated. His greatest difficulty cleared away by the Son of the Almighty God becoming man. Man's pain was averted, God's goodness and justice vindicated, in the mystery of the Incarnation.

**UNDER THE BAN.**

If our readers have good memories they will recollect that we have often commented on the relation of certain secret societies to the Church. We said a mistake and mischievous notion had got abroad that the Catholic Church was beginning to relax in her stern opposition to such societies. This false statement was widely circulated after the adjournment of the Baltimore Catholic Congress, though that gathering had no jurisdiction at all in the matter. It is said that in some Western dioceses, Catholics were allowed to join all secret organizations except the Freemasons, and it is a known fact that Catholics did become members of the Knights of Pythias, the Odd Fellows, and similar societies. The condition of affairs in the country, at the famous New York meeting took action and appointed a committee to investigate the character of these secret societies and report. The committee did investigate and the matter was then referred to the following dispatch gives

case assembled in the Diocesan Seminary to participate in the regular quarterly conference. The bishop announced that he was in receipt of a communication from Mgr. Satolfi. The communication was written in Latin, and it stated that the apostolic delegate had been instructed by Rome to notify the archbishops, bishops and priests of the United States that the action taken by the American archbishops relative to secret and semi secret societies, at a meeting held by them in Chicago, has been ratified by the College of Cardinals and by the pope. The meeting in Chicago was held at the residence of Archbishop Feehan, and though it was known that one of its acts was to determine the attitude of the Catholic church toward secret societies, no information as to the results of this meeting was given until the letter read at the conference was received by the papal delegates. This letter contains the information that the Knights of Pythias, the Odd Fellows, and the Sons of Temperance are now under the ban of the Catholic church, and the Catholics who join any of these three societies will be excommunicated. Those Catholics who are now members of one or more of these societies will be exhorted to sever their connection with them, and if they refuse, they will from that moment and by their refusal cease to be Catholics. The decrees affect no other country save the United States.

**A QUESTION BOX.**

A novel plan for spreading information regarding Catholic doctrine was briefly noted in our local news columns last week. We refer to the "question box" that has been placed in the vestibule of St. Mary's church, for the reception of questions on such subjects as the members of the congregation, and others, may desire to be enlightened upon. The questions will be answered from the altar, every Sunday evening. It is expected that many non-Catholics will avail themselves of this opportunity to learn what the doctrines of the Catholic Church really are. Rev. Walter Elliott, the Paulist Father, who is at present preaching to non-Catholics in the diocese of Cleveland, Ohio, and who has given similar missions in different parts of the country, makes use of a question box, and finds it a valuable feature of his work.  
There is, beyond doubt, a large number of non-Catholic Americans who would readily join the Catholic Church if they understood her real doctrines. The sources from which they gained their supposed knowledge of Catholicity have been poisoned with malice. Disabused of their prejudices they would gladly find the rest and safety they crave for in the Catholic Church. Any plan that will help to spread a knowledge of our faith among the thousands whose religious convictions are unsettled, should be generally adopted. The "question box" is such a plan.  
In connection with these comments the following will be found self explanatory:

St. Mary's, ROCHESTER, N. Y.,  
Dec. 17th, 1894.  
Editor Catholic Journal:  
Enc.—Please insert the following and oblige,  
Yours etc,  
JOHN P. STEWART, M. R.

Those desiring explanations of points they do not understand in the lectures given every Sunday evening in this church, must confine their questions to the matter treated in each instruction. No others will be noticed except the name and address of the persons desiring special instruction on other subjects, be subscribed to their communications to prove their sincerity and desire to learn the truths of our holy religion.

**FATHER DAMIEN'S DEFENSE.**

Robert Louis Stevenson, the distinguished author who has just died at his far off Samoan home, will always be gratefully remembered by Catholics for his noble defense of the memory of Father Damien, the leper martyr of Molokai, against the cowardly slanders of a creature named Hyde—a reverend calumniator who envied the glorious fame which the saintly priest won. Curiously enough this fellow's name, if we remember it correctly, was the same as that which Mr. Stevenson had previously chosen for one of the characters in his most famous work—Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This Rev. Mr. Hyde charged that the departed Father Damien had

contracted leprosy through his own uncleanly habits. He belittled the great work of Father Damien and made a number of charges against his character. Mr. Stevenson, who had visited the scenes of Father Damien's labors and appreciated the wonderful sacrifice he had made for the forsaken lepers, replied in a series of letters, proving Mr. Hyde a liar and calumniator of the most despicable character, and completely vindicating the character of Father Damien.

**Difference Between a Political and a Parish Priest Illustrated.**

New York Times.  
The people of St. Stephen's parish in East Twenty eighth street, will on December 30th see their church entirely freed from debt. Dr. McGlynn gave up St. Stephen's in January, 1887, and nine months later the Rev. Charles H. Colton became its pastor. He found the congregation disorganized and scattered, no schools, and the church in bad repair and with a debt of \$130,000. Since then the debt has been paid off, \$125,000 additional has been expended in improvements and repairs to the church, and the three houses, 134, 136 and 140 East Twenty-ninth street, have been purchased at a cost of \$65,000 more. The congregation has been gathered together again, the poor have been looked after and cared for by the St. Stephen's Saving Circle and other organizations for that purpose. Several parish societies have been started and built up a flourishing condition, and new life generally has been infused into the parish.

**THE GOSPELS.**

**GOSPEL: St. Luke iii. 1-6**—At that time "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip, his brother, being tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, under the high priests Ananias and Caiaphas; the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

We are to learn from all this that we should be strengthened in our holy faith by considering that everything regarding it had been prepared, foretold, and completed by the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.

**Weekly Calendar.**  
Sunday, Dec. 23.—Fourth Sunday in Advent. Epist. 1 Cor. iv. 1-5. Gosp. Luke iii. 1-6.  
Monday, 24.—Vigil of Christmas. Fast.  
Tuesday, 25.—Christmas. Holiday of Obligation. First Mass, Epist. Tit. ii. 11-15. Gosp. Luke ii. 1-14. Second Mass, Epist. Tit. iii. 4-7. Gosp. Luke ii. 25-30. Third Mass, Epist. Heb. i. 1-12. Gosp. John i. 1-14.  
Wednesday, 26.—St. Stephen, First Martyr.  
Thursday, 27.—St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.  
Friday, 28.—The Holy Innocents.  
Saturday, 29.—St. Thomas of Canterbury, Bishop and Martyr.

25-50 Brook Mink Head Boas, Now \$1.50  
At the overstock fur sale at Meng & Shafer's, the leading manufacturing furriers.

**ST. BRIDGET'S.**

Confirmation Administered  
The sacrament of confirmation was administered in the presence of a large congregation to a class of fifty-four boys and fifty-nine girls and to six adults, three men and three women, at St. Bridget's church at 4 o'clock Sunday afternoon by Bishop McQuaid, assisted by Mgr. DeReggi, as master of ceremonies, Rev. Thomas A. Hendrick, Rev. F. Oberholser and Rev. V. Deby. There were also present in the sanctuary Rev. J. F. O'Hare, Rev. William Gleason, Rev. A. Smeltz, Rev. T. O. Murphy and Rev. M. Hargather.  
The Bishop asked if the boys had taken the pledge, and being answered said that he wanted to administer it as their Bishop, and that he would only ask them to keep it until they were 21 years old. Fifty four hands were raised and each boy repeated after the Bishop: "I promise Almighty God to abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors until I reach the age of 21 years, and I promise solemnly to keep this pledge."

Fine Silk Umbrellas for Holiday Presents.  
The largest assortment, the latest style handles, at surprisingly low prices, at Meng & Shafer's, leading hatters and furriers.

See the Meng & Shafer Special Holiday derby, the noblest hat ever produced for holiday wear.

**Ovid.**  
The young ladies of this village met last week Thursday night at the residence of Misses Rafferty, for the purpose of organizing a reading circle. There were quite a number present. The officers elected were as follows: Miss Ella Feehan, pres.; Miss F. L. McDonald, vice pres.; Miss Rose Hamratty, sec.; Miss Julia McDonald, treas. The name "Asteris Literary Union" was given the society. The Union will meet once a week, at the homes of the ladies of the Union, until a permanent place can be obtained. This week the Union met at the home of the Misses McDonald.

Thos. Mackin, of Ithaca, visited in town a few days this week.  
James Hamratty, of Willard, is spending a week vacation at his home here.  
John McCarragher was on the sick list the first of the week.

Mrs. C. Tripp, is sick with a stroke of paralysis.  
Miss Mary Riley was called home this week by the death of her brother John Riley of Seneca Falls.

Miss Katie Riley spent Sunday at Seneca Falls.

\$40 to \$65 Baltic Seal Capes. Now \$25 to \$40.  
At the overstock for sale at Meng & Shafer's, the leading manufacturing furriers.

**GREECE.**  
Death of an Estimable Old Resident.  
Mrs. John Straub who for 64 years has been a resident of this place, died Monday evening, last at 10 o'clock p. m. Although death was not unexpected it will be sorrowful news to her many friends. Mrs. Straub was a most devoted Christian, and a member of St. John's Evangelist church, where she attended up to her illness. She is survived by her husband Mr. Jno. Straub, two sons Geo. and Frederick of this place and five daughters Mrs. Frank, Mrs. Jos. Paelle, Mrs. Peffer, Miss Julia Straub and Miss Mary Straub all of this place. The deceased came to this country with her parents but when a little girl, when she lived three years in Rochester, and the remainder of her life in Greece. The funeral took place Thursday morning at 10 o'clock from St. John's the Evangelist church here where solemn high mass was said, Rev. Father Straub was assisted by Rev. Father Hargather and Father Rauber of Rochester, then to Holy Sepulchre cemetery. The deceased was 70 years old.

Mrs. Kelly an old resident of this place died Sunday evening, last, Dec. 10th. Mrs. Kelly had been ailing for some time. The deceased was a devout Christian, a kind mother and had a kind word for all who knew her. She leaves a husband and three sons to mourn her loss. The deceased was 74 years old.  
Branch 155, C. M. B. A. meets Dec. 22 at the Hall.  
Everyone seems to be getting ready for Xmas.  
\$1.25 to \$5 Children's Fur Sets. Now 75c to \$1.50.  
At the overstock for sale at Meng & Shafer's, the leading manufacturing furriers.

Reduced Rates, for Christmas and New Years, Travel via the Nickel Plate Road.  
The Nickel Plate Road, always on the alert to give its patrons the best to be had, and at lowest rates, will sell tickets during the Holiday season at greatly reduced rates. For all information call on the nearest ticket agent, or address F. J. Moore, General Agent, No. 28 Exchange St., Buffalo, N. Y.

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