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SATURDAY, DEC. 5, 1903.

Dark Before The Dawn.

With last Sunday commenced a new ecclesiastical year. From now up to the very eve of the great Christian festival of Christmas, the Church enjoins her children to prepare in a spirit of penitence for the spiritual coming of Our Lord. It has been a custom to prepare in this way, from almost the very dawn of Christianity. The joy of Christmas is both spiritualized and deepened, as indeed it should be, by this wise disposition of the Church. For four thousand years the world had been begg'd through the mouths of the prophets to duly prepare for the most momentous event in its history, but how few they were who heeded these warnings and who consequently failed to share in the ecstatic joys of the great Christmas night, and the blessings coming in its train. The Magi, or three Wise Men of the East, are splendid examples of the spirit and conduct which should characterize Christians during these days of Advent. Their summons was peremptory; it entailed much personal inconvenience to respond to it, and still more to obey it to the letter and to the very end, yet we have the word of Holy Writ for it that this was done, and without demur. Physical obstacles only crossed their path to be overcome. Neither the craft of Herod, nor the rooking scepticism of the Priests, could avert them aside for one moment from the prosecution of their mission. It was sufficient for them that they "had seen His star in the East," and follow it they must and would. The Church is now our guiding star, and the way she points, it is our duty certainly and should be our pleasure to go. Her ordinances may seem to weigh heavily upon us at times, but if faced in a cheerful spirit, we shall be the benefitted both at the great celebration now approaching and when time and Christmas shall be no more.

Original, But Very Wrong-headed.

"I never seen a presentment of a fine Cathedral in Europe," said a man prominent in the social and educational life of this city, "without saying to myself 'what a magnificent mockery,—every stone represents bread that was snatched from the very mouths of the poor.'"

There is only one thing on the side of this delicious tit-bit of philosophy, and that is its audacity. There is no slavish hugging of the beaten tracks of reasoning here. It would appear that the unsoundness of the premises counts for nothing in view of the acceptable conclusion arrived at. "Rome" (the church of Rome) went on the speaker in her meretricious hankering after pomp and display has paperized every nation coming under her sway. Are the Italians any better off for the fact that the dome of St. Peter's runs up so many hundred feet into the air? Or do the glories of Burgos and Seville Cathedrals feed the hungry mouths of Spain? and so on, and the further on, the more delightfully original and wrong-headed the diatribe.

The point of view makes all the difference in the world to any subject or argument, but we do not remember ever before to have met a champion of this particular point of view on the influence of noble schools of architecture.

It is a fact—and they glory in it—that Catholic governments, corporations, clergy, nobility and poor, have overtaken, and continue to take pride in the raising up of edifices for religious worship that shall pay to God the homage of sublime genius while they form an appropriate setting for Christian Catholic ceremonial, and a joy to the artistic soul for generation after generation.

The Catholic church is not of yesterday, nor does she make her plans and dispositions only for to-day. The character of all her work is such as one would associate with an institution whose mission among men is to last as long as time. When she plants the cross in the soil she sees to it that the roots are set deep, but to say that in the raising up and adorning of the

earthly resting places of the Godhead she has ignored the claims of the poor and even oppressed them, is to discover spleen, instead of reason and justice.

The Catholic church is as jealous of the care of the poor as she is of the honor and glory of her Divine Founder. She can, has done, and is now accommodating herself to the lowly sheds which serve as chapels in many a foreign missionary field, as well as to the magnificent temples of the European continent. It is her pride to offer God the highest fruits of the genius of her sons, her pride to point to these and exclaim: "How beautiful are Thy tabernacles O Lord."

Generations of men have come and gone, and blessed, generations yet unborn will bless that institution which could give the world and pay its Creator such tributes of adoration as the glorious piles of architecture with which the "church of Rome," the Catholic church, has girdled the earth.

As for the fine arts they owe an unrequited debt to the church, but not more so than the poor whose champion refuge, tender mother she has been from the first moment of her foundation, and as such must ever be till her mission on earth is ended.

The Medal Reversed.

It is happily a rare experience for Catholics, especially in this diocese of Rochester, to enter one of their places of worship and find it in such condition as—well, such as they would not expect to find it. This however, was our unpleasant experience when making a visit to a church on the outskirts of this city on the afternoon of Thanksgiving day.

There is something pathetically beautiful in the humble scantily-furnished chapel which indicates only the honest poverty of those who worship therein—the Divine Tabernacle seems to gain in very majestic and ineffable love, amid such surroundings—but there can be no shadow of excuse for allowing the House of God to lapse into that condition which we would be ashamed to have associated with our own home. Let us imagine the feeling and opinions of our visitors of Thanksgiving day upon entering our home if they found it cold and cheerless and generally unlovely, with a spark of fire in the stove that would require a microscope to discover it, the floor stained and unswep, and the chairs (painted and varnished well worn) scattered here and there in offending disorder. If this be so in the instance of our own homes how much more so is this true when we enter the home and resting place of our God to become likewise? Even to the most lax Catholic nothing can inflict so painful a shock as to see the abode of the Blessed Sacrament neglected. Under the best conditions, the lot of the Divine Prisoner of the Tabernacle seems, according to human lights, an unpeppably sad and lonely one, but how distressingly is this accentuated by such neglect as that referred to above.

But, happily, as we said at the opening of these remarks, the experience is a unique one. It is as much the duty of the congregation as the pastor to see to the beautification of the House of God, and to their credit, Catholics rarely fail in this duty.

An Inspiring Ceremony.

Such a ceremony as that of last Sunday at the Cathedral constitutes a good object lesson of the majesty of character of the Catholic church. The pope's ambassador was received with all the pomp and religious adoration befitting his high estate. Clergy and laity with one grand accord flocked to the mother church of the diocese to bid him welcome and receive the gracious message of indulgence with which he is specially invested by his august master.

But superior to the whole pageant—above the canopies and flowers, white robed children and chorists, copes and mitres and prismatic hued attire of the multitude filling the sacred fane in every part, rose the penitential spirit of Advent. Whenever the eye missed for a moment the obliterating purple of the celebrant and his ministers at the altar, some plaintive outburst of plain song would inculcate the reasonable warning: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His paths." It hovered over and around and permeated the whole function.

It must have been a source of keen gratification to the bishop of the diocese to have been surrounded by so many of his faithful clergy and laity even at this informal visit of the apostolic delegate and to note how smoothly all the arrangements worked. Archbishop Falconio could not but be impressed by the inspiring spectacle presented within the walls of St. Patrick's Cathedral last Sunday morning. Evidences of robust earnest Catholicity met his eyes at every turn, from the elegant sacred structure itself, to the overflowing sanctuary of Levites, and the devout mass of worshippers crowding the great nave and aisles.

Church Attendance.

While it may be contended that physical presence in church on the Sabbath and other days is not a true test of belief in the tenets of the Christian religion nevertheless it may be put down as an evidence of a person's interest in the creed he professes adherence to, the force or attraction possessed by the preacher or the drawing quality of the entertainment provided. Of course, all this applies to non-Catholics because Catholics are bound, under penalty of mortal sin, to assist in the sacrifices of the mass on Sundays and holy days. It matters not to the Catholic whether the priest is a fluent speaker, an attractive personality or whether a sermon is preached at all. Music or no music is a matter of equal indifference. He goes to church to be near his Saviour, to tread again with Him the journey to Calvary.

This leads up to the point we wish to make. On Sunday, November 15, the church news association of New York, probably a non-Catholic organization undertook to take an actual census of the number of attendants at church in a given district in the metropolis. The location and the time selected both were propitious for the non-Catholics. The district was a fairly fashionable uptown one; the time when the fashionables had returned from their summer vacations. By the way, many of the Catholics in New York cannot afford to go to the seashore, but they do go to church on Sundays. In the district selected there were 87 Protestant churches with an estimated church population of 128,345. In the same area there were 19 Catholic churches with a church population of 92,560.

What did the census show? The attendance at the 87 Protestant churches numbered 38,750, that at the 19 Catholic churches was 55,261. In other words 32 per cent of the Protestant population in the district went to church on that Sunday, while the Catholic ratio was 67 per cent. In this connection it may be doubted if the census takers were present at all the masses in the Catholic churches. It might be remarked that there are services in Catholic churches at very early hours on Sunday mornings.

However, as the New York "Times" remarks: "The natural deduction from these figures would be that the proportion of 'good Catholics' was much larger than that of 'good Protestants,' in other words, that the Catholics were more Catholic than the Protestants were Protestant."

Weekly Church Calendar.

Sunday December 6—Gospel, St. Matt. xii, 2-10. St. Nicholas, bishop and confessor.
Monday 7—St. Ambrose, bishop, confessor and doctor.
Tuesday 8—Immaculate Conception.
Wednesday 9—St. Leocadia, virgin and martyr.
Thursday 10—St. Melchisedech, pope and martyr.
Friday 11—St. Damasus, pope and confessor.
Saturday 12—Our Lady of Guadalupe.

SHORTSVILLE.

The St. Dominic's society fair which was held last week Thursday and Friday netted a handsome sum. The special contest during the fair was for the gold watch between Miss Julia Cummings of Manchester, and Miss Julia O'Bryan of this place, who was the winner. Miss Cummings was presented with a beautiful diamond ring. Over \$1,300 was realized.

Miss Mary Dunn of Seneca Falls, was the guest of her mother last week.
Miss Minnie McIntyre of Geneva, spent last week here the guest of friends.
Mr. and Mrs. M. Welch of Honeye, were the guests of the latter's parents at Manchester, the latter part of last week.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

The centenary of the establishment of the first Catholic church in Boston was celebrated on Tuesday, Sept. 29. Archbishop Chapelle of Cuba has selected two Cubans, Pedro Gonzalez Estrada and Juan Orre, as bishops of Havana and Pinar del Rio respectively.
A German Roman Catholic bishop has ordered that couples in his diocese who wish to be married shall be examined in religious knowledge before the ceremony is performed.

John S. Seibold, a retired chaplain of the United States army, formerly an Episcopal clergyman and a close friend of Grover Cleveland, has been received into the Catholic church.
Leo J. Kadaski of Quincy, Ill., has been elected by the line officers of the Uniform Rank Catholic Knights of America as commander in chief, with rank of major general, for a term of four years.

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