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**NO CREMATION FOR PARSEES**

Expose the Bodies of Their Dead to Be Devoured by Vultures.

Indignation was created among the Parsees by an agitation to induce them to dispose of their dead by cremation instead of exposing them to be devoured by vultures on their "towers of silence." They are not prepared to abandon a custom which is hallowed to them by hoary antiquity and associated with their most solemn religious rites.

Through European minds the thought of allowing feathered scavengers to feast on the bodies of their beloved dead would excite the deepest feelings of repugnance and disgust, as practiced by the Parsees this method of getting rid of the dead is far from being so horrible as is generally imagined. Indeed, to the Parsees themselves—and they are the most cultivated and intelligent of all the sects found in India—it seems far preferable to burying the dead as practiced by Christians.

"Your people," said a Parsee, "put your dead underground, where they provide a banquet for worms. We put ours above ground, where their flesh is eaten by vultures. The ultimate result is the same. The bones are left. But there is a great difference in what takes place before the skeleton stage is reached, and that method. Before consigning the bodies of your dead to the earth you inclose them in coffins. You dare not allow your imaginations to picture the horrible changes that there takes place before Nature recovers what she gave. We do not seek to retard the process. The vultures do their work expeditiously. There is no putrefaction. Christian burial grounds, so I have read, are often sources of disease; Parsee dakhmas, or 'towers of silence' as you poetically call them, are never such. From a sanitary point of view they are incomparably superior to your cemeteries, and with us they are equally sacred."

"But," it was suggested, "fire would do the work even better than vultures."

"Or worms," said the Parsee. "When you Christians take to cremation we Parsees may possibly follow your excellent example. There are far weightier reasons why cremation should take the place of burial than can be urged in favor of its substitution for our towers of silence."

The towers of silence crown the summit of Malabar Hill, near Bombay, and are situated in the midst of a beautiful garden whose tropical trees swarm with vultures. They are built of stone and are about twenty-five feet high. A small door is provided for the entrance of the body. When a Parsee dies, after the performance of solemn and imposing funeral rites, the body is borne upon an iron bier to the towers, followed by a procession of relatives and friends of the dead, headed by a number of priests. Upon arrival at the garden the bier is laid down and prayers are said at the "sagri" or house of prayer near the entrance to the garden. The attendants then carry the body to the towers of silence, lay it on its stony bed and retire. Then the vultures gather about and do their gruesome work unseen. The bones are soon denuded of flesh and fall through an iron grating into a pit beneath, from which they are afterward removed by a subterranean cavern.

On the third day after the death friends and relatives again assemble at the house where the dead man lived and thence proceed to the "temple of fire." Standing before the urns in which the "celestial fire" are kept burning, priests recite prayers for the soul of the departed. His son, or adopted son, kneels before the high priest and promises due performance of all religious rites and obsequies to the dead. Friends and relatives then hand the priest a list of contributions to various charities which have been subscribed as a memorial offering. This concludes the ceremony of "rising from mourning" or the resurrection of the dead. On each recurring anniversary of the death of a Parsee memorial funeral ceremonies are performed. An iron framework is erected in the house, in which shrubs and flowers are cultivated, thus literally keeping the memory of the dead man green. Before these iron frames prayers are said twice or more times during twenty-four hours.

The Parsees are a small sect. They number altogether about 82,000, of whom 72,000 live in or near Bombay. Most of the remaining 10,000 are found in Persia. As a people they are remarkably intelligent and trustworthy, with great zeal for business. They are highly prosperous, much given to charity, and beggars are unknown among them.

**Fruits of South Africa.**  
 South African products will form a feature at the exhibition of colonial fruits held by the Horticultural Society in their Exhibition Hall, Vincent Square, Westminster. It is generally admitted that there are many fruits which would be regularly eaten if they were better known and offered in sufficient quantities and at a reasonable price. This is the opinion of the produce commissioner for the Cape, who says we may soon hope to see peaches, grapes, and Japanese plums from the Cape competing for public custom with apples, oranges and bananas at this period of the year.

Don't be foolish enough to judge a man's friendship by the way he parts from the bank.

**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.**

The Progress on a Solid Basis and Its Students Increasing.

Much interest is manifested in the seventeenth annual report of the rector of the Catholic University of America, made public. It is for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1920.

"It seems," says the rector, "that during the past year a decided progress can be observed in the number of students and in their application to studies, in the condition of our finances and in the vital spirit of organization."

Compared with the figures of the previous year the registration of last year shows an increase of seventy-three students. The total registration in 1920 was 113 in the four departments— theology, philosophy, law and technology. In 1920 it was 187. In the department of philosophy the most students were registered during each of these years.

Adding to these figures the fifteen students from the Dominican college that attended the course of Professor Robinson in oratory without registering the university had a total of 202 students.

"From the treasurer's statement accompanying the report it will be seen that the finances are on a solid business basis," says the rector. "During the course of the past year the funded debt was completely liquidated, and the current expenses of the university have been paid up to date. As a rule, they are all paid at the end of each month, and a statement is forwarded to each member of the board.

"The money now invested to the credit of the university and placed in safe securities amounts to \$698,350.80. Receipts from the university collection amount to date to \$77,477.47. The only liabilities of the university are two annuities amounting to \$5,482.62."

The report continues: "The several insurance policies that formerly were distributed among several companies and that expired at varying periods of time have now all been placed by the action of our treasurer under the management of a firm of experts in fire underwriting and all made to harmonize in point of time, running for five years, the premiums all paid in advance. At the same time representatives of the company visited the grounds to make a close inspection of all the university buildings. On their departure they left with us directions for many measures of greater security, and we have tried to put them all faithfully into effect."

"The university has besides its credit a considerable number of unsettled legacies and of bequests not yet available, amounting to a conservative estimate to some hundreds of thousands of dollars."

**SHAKESPEARE'S FAITH.**

The immortal Bard, it is claimed, was a Roman Catholic.

The Observator Romano prints in detail a story which is causing no end of comment among Catholics in Europe. The story is entitled "William Shakespeare a Roman Catholic." The text proceeds: "The learned critic De Rougemont has published the authentic testament of the great poet Shakespeare, which begins with the words: 'In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, of the archangels, angels, patriarchs, prophets, evangelists, apostles and martyrs of the whole court of heaven and of my angel guardian, I, William Shakespeare, unworthy member of the holy Catholic apostolic and Roman religion...'

"Thus finishes," continues the note, "every pretension sustained with such persistency by Protestants that he was born, had lived and died outside the fold of the Catholic church."

"Already two trustworthy Protestants, Richard Davies (Davies) and Professor Signora, had asserted that William Shakespeare was a 'Catholic papist' as was said at that time, and Guizot affirmed that the father of Shakespeare, who bore the name of John, was a Catholic and hence educated his son in a Catholic manner."

**Worthiness.**  
 There is a great or good work we want to do. We pray for the means to accomplish it. Oh, first let us make ourselves ready for the work, and then the means will not be wanting. Pray for worthiness to receive God's waiting gifts, worthiness to do His work.

**This Life.**  
 If this life is unhappy it is a burden to us, which it is difficult to bear; if it is in every respect happy, it is dreadful to be deprived of it; so that in either case the result is the same, for we must exist in anxiety and apprehension.

**SHORT SERMONS.**

He who has no character is not a man; he is a thing.  
 We have not two lives—one for seeking truth, the other for practicing it.  
 The time we give to friendship is not lost, and it will even count as regards heaven.

Religion is to society what cement is to the building—it makes all parts compact and secure.  
 Man must never forget his brotherhood with the guiltiest. Though the hands are clean, the heart is never entirely free from the shadow of sin.  
 It is beautiful acts that make a beautiful life. What you preach or say does not affect your character much, but the habit you do a thing it becomes a part of your very self and colors your life.

The truly charitable individual forgives all because he understands all. He judges not, "let he condemn himself," and he gives not only of his material stores, but of his very self, in the service of humanity.

**FRENCH CHURCH LAW**

IT MAY BE MODIFIED BEFORE IT BECOMES OPERATIVE.

The Firmness of His Holiness and the Action of the French Bishops Have Moved the French Ministry to Come to Terms With the Vatican.

A public address delivered by Pope Pius X. a few days ago at the Vatican to some foreign pilgrims gave a broad hint that the troubles of the Church in France were approaching a satisfactory solution. The Pope plainly expressed himself pleased that at last the French officials had come to terms with the Vatican authorities regarding the desirability of making some modifications in the new law separating church and state in France, so as to render it at least less objectionable to the Church authorities.

This open allusion of the Pope to the matter is only a confirmation of rumors prevailing in Vatican circles for some days past, that because of the firm attitude of the Pope French public opinion had become so modified as to threaten the very existence of the present ministry as soon as parliament assembled in November.

Besides, the recent letter issued by the French bishops, which exhorts the French Catholics to defend their religious rights "with energy," has so stirred public opinion in French Catholic strongholds that, notwithstanding the boastful declarations recently made by M. Briand and M. Clemenceau, both members of the French cabinet, that the new law would be carried out as it stood, the cabinet has now determined to hear what the authorities on the other side have to say regarding the matter.

Just before the recent solemn assembly of the French bishops in Paris dissolved M. Briand, the minister of worship, expressed the opinion that at least some of the prelates would call on him for a conference before returning to their own diocese. But not one called on him. Then came the turn of the French officials to seek an interview with some authoritative prelate, and one of the French bishops closely connected with the Vatican received a visit from M. Briand and was told that the French officials were desirous of knowing what modifications would render the new law of separation less objectionable to the Vatican authorities. Assurances were given the prelate that if the Vatican authorities suggested some points for modification the matter would be submitted to parliament before Dec. 11, the day on which the provisions contained in the separation law would have to be enforced.

The prelate in question lost no time in informing the Vatican authorities of this change of front on the part of the French officials, and a meeting of the cardinals in Rome at the time was hastily called by Pope Pius X. At this conference, which was presided over by His Holiness, it was decided to make the proposals required by the French ministry the subject of a private correspondence between one of the cardinals and the French prelate who enjoyed the confidence of the French officials, in order not to give the slightest recognition to the law of separation.

The principal point of modification in the new law on which the Vatican authorities insist is that an amendment be introduced in the text of the new law making illegal those lay associations which shall be formed in France without the authorization of either the parish priest or the bishop of the diocese, so that no such association should be recognized by the French officials as legal unless it were also canonical. Such an amendment, it was thought at the Vatican, would offer sufficient guarantees that the property of the Church in France would never fall into the hands of schismatic or unauthorized bodies.

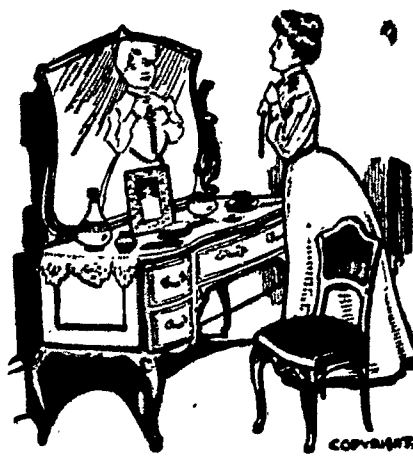
Other points were also urged by the Vatican, such as to guarantee the free use of the churches, seminaries, episcopal residences and presbyteries exclusively for the Church purposes and to prevent the official recognition on the part of the French government of priests and bishops objectionable to the Vatican authorities.

A special messenger was dispatched to Paris with the instructions just detailed, and it is more than probable that by this time the French ministry has already acted on the matter.

Orders have just been sent from the Vatican to all the French bishops to have the lay associations already formed in many parishes of France, which have already applied to the government for official recognition, to withdraw their application and in case the recognition had already been granted to dissolve and await events. Over 100 such applications had been filed with the French ministry with the consent of several of the French bishops and parish priests.

**A Glimpse of Heaven.**  
 A well known priest had preached a sermon on the joys of heaven. A wealthy member of his church met him the next day and said, "Father, you told us a great many grand and beautiful things about heaven yesterday, but you didn't tell us where it is."  
 "Ah," said the father, "I am glad of the opportunity of doing so this morning. I have just come from the hilltop yonder. In that cottage there is a poor member of our church. She is sick in bed with fever. Her two little children are sick in the other bed, and she has not a bit of coal or a stick of wood or flour or sugar or any bread. Now, if you will go downtown and buy \$10 worth of things—nice provisions, fuel, etc.—and send them to her and then go and say, 'My friend, I have brought you these provisions in the name of God, you will see a glimpse of heaven before you leave that little dwelling.'"

**High-Grade Furnishings for the Bedroom**



The great variety of stock and the wide range of values which we show in furniture and furnishings for the sleeping-room is an assurance of satisfaction to our patrons in finding just what they want and at a positive saving in price.

**Dressers**--Rich solid mahogany Dressers, tana or dark finish imitation mahogany, birdseye maple, curly birch, golden oak, white enamel and weathered oak. Regular Princess or Empress style. Chiffoniers and Dressing Tables in all woods to match. Combination Toilet Dressers for small rooms and Washstands of every style. A sample of our dresser values: Solid Oak large size 4-drawer Dresser, two swell top drawers, pattern sharp, bevel mirror 24x30 inch, carved and shaped standards. **\$15.00**

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New pattern all brass Bed, 2-inch posts, 18 brass rods, ornamented with ferules top and bottom on both head and foot, 2 1/2 inch flat mounts, double cross-roads **\$24.75**

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 First appearance of  
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 Matinees, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 10 Cents  
 Evenings--10, 20, 25, 35c & 50c

**Choir of Birds.**  
 At the Chapel of St. Peter in Florence there is a choir of birds, the only one of its kind in existence. The birds—300 in number are all in separate cages, which are arranged in rows on both sides of the altar. The leader is a girl, who has had the birds under her own personal training for more than two years. The whole of the musical part of the service is most exquisitely rendered by them. The leader starts each hymn by whistling the first few notes, and then the birds take it up, in obedience to the movement of their instructor's hand.—Exchange.

**Work of Earthquake.**  
 Street car lines leading out of San Francisco demonstrated the effects of the recent earthquake in a peculiar way. Photographs of the line show the track apparently undisturbed except in spots the rails are twisted or buckled longitudinally. It was as if each rail had been pushed together toward the middle from the end with the result that the steel rails bent as if they had been mere wire in the hands of a man. The buckling on this line occurred in spots over a distance of three miles.

**Reduced Rates to New Orleans**  
 Via "America's Greatest Railroad," New York Central, account Knights of Pythias, Supreme Lodge, Biennial Encampment. Tickets to be sold and good going October 15th to 18th inclusive; good returning until October 30th.

**A Lengthy Law Suit.**  
 In 1813 certain villages of Lorraine sued the Departments of Forests in defence of the right to cut wood in a certain forest. After nearly three centuries of litigation the Supreme Court at Leipzig has just given a final decision against the department and condemned it to pay all costs.

**Killing a Malay Desperado.**  
 "The men sent out by the Kedah authorities to hunt down the Stung gang of robbers, or pirates, succeeded in killing the ringleader. Like many other Malay bad characters, he was popularly supposed to be invulnerable, and I am gravely told by a Malay friend that the punitive expedition found him absolutely invulnerable to bullet or spear," says a writer in Everybody's Magazine. "Bullets simply bounced off his body like peas off a drumhead, while, when he was thrust at with spears, they either snapped or had their points blunted directly they touched his skin. He would not have been killed at all if one of his pursuers, wiser than the rest of the party and versed in witchcraft, had not thought of the expedient of a spear made from the spike of a sting ray's tail. He was stabbed eventually with this and so killed."

**Are You Going to New Orleans.**  
 One fare, plus \$1.00, for return tickets by the New York Central Lines, "America's Greatest Railroad." Tickets to be sold October 12th to 15th. Call on ticket agents for full information.