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PRIESTLY CELIBACY

EXPOSED



A LECTURE

---BY---
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Preface

A case of affiliation was lately brought before the magistrates of Stockton, in which the complainant was the daughter of a clergyman of the Church of England, a pervert to popery, and the defendant was the Romish priest of that town. This case having excited a great deal of attention, not only in the place where it was tried, but in the North of England generally, I thought it a suitable occasion to direct the attention of the inhabitants of Stockton to the doctrine of the Church of Rome in reference to priestly celibacy, and to let them see what results have always proceeded from it.

During the last few years this country has been subjected to a foreign invasion; Italian Jesuits and Maynooth priests have flocked to our shores, for the purpose of carrying on missionary operations amongst the population of England, as though all the inhabitants of this country, except the handful of Romanists amongst us, were the natives of a heathen land. Still further, the Church of Rome has arrogated spiritual authority over all baptized persons of this realm, whom she would subject to the penalties of her ecclesiastical law, had she the power to enforce it.

Since, then, Rome has seen fit to visit our shores in this double capacity, as a missionary to win and as a ruler to command our subjection, we are entitled to sift her claims, and to examine her doctrines; and since the surest protection against the inroads of Popery consists in knowing what it really is, I conceive it to be the duty of every one who is attached to the principles of truth, to endeavor to inform the minds of the people, and to direct their attention to the teaching and practice of the Church of Rome, that they may know what she is, and whereof she is made, so as to be able to understand what they must look for, if ever they should succumb to her power.

It is a great mistake, under which many persons labor, whose knowledge of the genius and character of popery is superficial, to regard it as simply a religious system. Popery has contrived so to mix up political principles with religion so to dovetail the spiritual and secular elements, that it is difficult to say which predominates; and it throws the ægis of its protection over every aggression on the rights of mankind, by putting forth arrogant claims of divine right and spiritual authority.

That system cannot be regarded as other than political which has dethroned kings, governed provinces, disturbed the peace of the

world, involved mankind in bloodshed, and enslaved not merely the minds, but the bodies of men.

It is this peculiarity of popery which brings it into such frequent conflict with the secular powers, and renders it so dangerous to the political well-being of our country. As a system of religious error, it is sufficiently deleterious in its influence over the human mind, and requires the resistance of all who feel the value of religious truth; but as a political system, it is fraught with such dangers to the welfare of the state, as to demand the most serious attention and strenuous opposition of politicians.

Nothing can be more dangerous to the political safety of a country than to introduce a spiritual power which yields its sceptre over the conscience and feelings of mankind, for the purpose of drawing off their affection from the political institutions under which they dwell.

Yet such is the kind of influence which the pope of Rome would exercise over the subjects of Great Britain. To give an individual instance of this, he has thrown the halo of religion around the secular question of titles to Romish priests in this country, and though it has been declared by the law of the land to be an infringement on the rights of our Queen, to give such titles to Romish bishops, yet such is the influence which the emissaries of the pope have exercised, that everywhere you find his dictum preferred amongst Roman Catholics to the law of the land. It holds good in every department of life, civil as well as religious, that no man can serve two masters; and since the pope of Rome so involves political questions with religion as frequently to come into collision with the law of England, they who have surrendered their allegiance to him cannot be true to their attachment to the Queen or to the laws of Great Britain.

Of this the late trial, to which I have adverted, afforded a striking instance; for on that occasion, before a bench of magistrates, the lawyer for the defendant addressed a Romish priest by the title of the Bishop of Hexham, though he acknowledged that it was not lawful to do so. It would seem, therefore, that the pope's law was held superior to the Queen's law in the presence of a magisterial body in Stockton.

Politicians, who have the welfare of their country at heart, would do well to ponder this peculiarity of popery, and realize how great is the danger of dividing the allegiance of a people, and drawing away their affections to a foreign power whose interests are diametrically opposed to our own.

No man can serve two masters; and when the pope commands his followers to do that which Queen Victoria and the law of the land forbid, we know by experience which master the devoted servant of Rome will obey.

There is something extremely humiliating to our national feeling, that any Englishman should more regard the dictation of a foreigner, pay more respect to the command of a wretched Italian

priest, than to the will of our own Queen, or the majesty of English law. But so it is; and where popery gains the ascendancy over an Englishman's heart, it must, as it appears to me, loosen his attachment to the institutions of his native land, and make him a bad subject, for no man can serve two masters.

Another important consideration, which may well induce those to look about them who have to do with courts of justice, is the doctrine which the Church of Rome holds on the subject of oaths. A Romish priest was called upon at the late trial to give evidence upon a matter in which the credit of his order and the interest of his Church were at stake. Now—after having carefully perused the various sanctions which the Church of Rome has given to equivocate and to swear falsely, and after considering the plenary absolution she offers to her votaries committing such offenses—I must say that I cannot attach the slightest weight to the testimony of a Romish priest given upon oath in a court of justice; and I leave it to any one to say what is its value, when the following doctrines are unblushingly sanctioned by the Church of Rome:

“To swear with equivocation when there is a just cause and equivocation itself is lawful, is not evil; because where there is a just cause for concealing the truth, and it is concealed without a lie, no detriment is done to an oath.

The following is the definition of “a just cause”:

“A just cause is any honest end in order to preserve good things for the spirit or useful things for the body.”

“It is lawful to use equivocation and to confirm it with an oath.”

“A confessor can affirm, even with an oath, that he does not know a sin heard in confession, by understanding as a man, not as a minister of Christ.”

“The accused, or a witness not properly interrogated, can swear that he does not know a crime, which in reality he does know, by understanding that he does not know the crime concerning which legitimately he can be inquired of; or that he does not know it so far as to give evidence concerning it.”

“A person who deceives by swearing with equivocation may be absolved, because in such an oath, which cannot be called a perjury, he has not sinned against commutative justice, but against legal justice and due obedience to a judge whose command of unfolding the truth is transient, and only lasts while the judge interrogates.”

“The accused, if in danger of death, exile, loss of property, and such like, can deny the crime even with an oath, by understanding that he did not commit it so that he is bound to confess it.”

The Church of Rome having seen fit thus to break down the barriers of morality and truth, has no reason to complain if we

should refuse to believe one word uttered by her bishops and priests under oath in a witness box.

The foregoing quotations are from the writings of the approved, canonized, and invoked St. Liguori, which were discussed some twenty times by the Sacred College; after which matured digestion they received the formal sanction of the pope, and were put forth to the world with this high encomium, that not one word worthy of censure had been found in them.

Such are the morals for which we pay £30,000 per annum!

Priestly Celibacy Exposed

Mr. Chairman and Friends: The attention of the public has lately been aroused by a case brought before the local magistrates, which involved the moral character of a Romish priest in this place; so great is the notoriety it has gained, as to make it quite unnecessary for me to refer to it more particularly.

I have invited you to meet me this evening, not to discuss the merits of that case, with which I desire to have nothing to do—but to give you some information on the general subject to which it refers. Such is the apathy that it is only on special occasions like the papal aggressions, or of local interest, like that to which I have referred, that the attention of the public can be aroused to the subject of popery; and such is the ignorance wherein people for the most part are content to remain respecting the dangerous and corrupt principles of popery, that I conceive it a duty which I owe to society, to seize any opportunity that presents itself of conveyng information to the people. Such I regard the present, and it is therefore that I have invited you to meet me this evening, that I may lay before you the facts connected with one of the most revolting pages in the history of popery.

The subject which circumstances, not choice, have forced upon me, is one of great delicacy, and to handle it becomingly before a mixed audience, is a task of no small difficulty, for the details are so revolting, and many of them so unfit for the public ear, that it is difficult to produce the facts we possess, which form the strength of every cause. We have to do with a sink of iniquity, the very stirring of which excites pestilent miasma and poisonous fumes; but to fathom its depths, or lay bare its most secret recesses, is a task I dare not undertake: to attempt it would be safe neither for you nor me. But on the other hand, it will not do in times like these, from a feeling of false or overstrained delicacy, to abstain from making known the doctrines and practice of the Church of Rome. If that corrupt church were content to let us alone in England, we might let her alone also; but since she has proclaimed aggression as the order of the day, and claims to exercise spiritual dominion over these realms, we must not, from a feeling of shame, shrink from laying bare the secret corruptions of her teaching and practice. It is necessary that the people of this realm should be informed what she is, that the fair garb and gorgeous apparel, wherein she appears clad before the eyes of the world, should be stripped off,

and her secret corruptions be exposed. We are constrained to deal by her as Una, Spenser's graceful emblem of female virtue, dealt by Duenna, the counterpart of Rome:

"So as she bade that witch they disarrayed,
And robbed of royal robes and purple pall,
And ornaments that richly were displayed,
Ne spared they to strip her naked all.
Then when they had despoiled her tire and call,
Such as she was their eyes might her behold.
That her mis-shaped parts did them appall,
A loathy, wrinkled hag, ill-favored, old,
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told."

The subject, then, to which I invite your attention this evening, is the Romish doctrine of the Celibacy of the Clergy, and the immoral results which have proceeded from it.

The Church of Rome has broached a doctrine not to be found in scripture. The Bible tells us, it is not good for man to be alone—it further teaches us that marriage is honorable in all, and lastly, assures us that it is better to marry than to burn.

But Rome, in diametrical opposition to the Bible, declares that it is far the best for man to be alone, that marriage is not honorable in all, and that it is better a man should burn than marry.

Not content to put this out as a private opinion of her own, she must endeavor to force it down the throats of all the world, with the aid of her anathematizing piston or forcing pump, to which the Doctors of Trent had so frequent recourse, curing all who differed from her, for want of better argument.

Thus the Council of Trent has decreed:

"Whoever shall affirm that persons in holy orders may contract marriage, and that the contract is valid, notwithstanding any ecclesiastical law or vow; and that all persons may marry, who feel that, though they should make a vow of chastity, they have not the gift thereof: let him be accursed."

So much for the doctrine of Rome; the arguments by which it is defended will claim our attention by and by.

But, first, I must give you a brief history of the rise and progress of the doctrine of celibacy in the Church of Rome, and trace its true parentage and origin.

One of the very first corruptions which insinuated itself into the Church was an extravagant admiration of celibacy, which was extolled in unmeasured terms as the angelic or celestial virtue. But the doctrine itself is of heathen origin, and it was from the superstitions of the "Gentiles" that the Christian Church first embraced the false and foolish conceit that there was a peculiar and angelic virtue in celibacy. From the Gentiles it spread amongst the Essenes, a Jewish sect, whom Josephus tells us were advocates of Celibacy—from them it was embraced by the early "heretics," the Montanists, Marcionites, Manichees, and others—and just in proportion as the purity of the Church decayed, it imbibed the unscriptural fashion

of the day, an ardent, senseless admiration for celibacy. Such is the parentage of the doctrine—first, the “heathen,” then the Essenes, then the “heretics,” and lastly, the decaying Church at large.

Clerical celibacy, however, was not the original form which the madness assumed—it first ran its course amongst the people. Anthony, in the fourth century, was the first who collected together ascetics of either sex, who, renouncing intercourse with the world, betook themselves to the deserts of Egypt; and so rapidly did this new species of madness spread, that ere long the East swarmed with persons who, abandoning the occupations and comforts of life, and all intercourse with society, spent their lives in solitude and celibacy, vainly dreaming that thereby they were doing God service.

But at this period, be it remembered, and for many centuries after, the law of clerical celibacy did not exist. At various times efforts were made to bring about this obnoxious rule of life, but without success: the subject was mooted at the celebrated Council of Nice, in the year 325; we read in the history of that council that an effort was made to impose celibacy on the clergy by an express law, but that it failed, for the aged Paphnutius, bishop in the Upper Thebaid, himself the inmate of a monastery from boyhood, opposed the motion, and it was lost.

Another epoch in the history of clerical celibacy, is the reign of the celebrated pontiff, Gregory the Great, in the sixth century; for though he was bent on the same object, and did, for a time, deprive his clergy of their wives, and decree in favor of celibacy, yet I shall show you by and by that the consequences of that decree were so horrible as to compel this pope, dismayed by the direful results, to repeal the law.

Various attempts were made at sundry times, by popes and councils, to dishonor matrimony, and to deprive priests of their wives, with which tedious and insipid details I shall not weary you; but it was not till the reign of that arch tyrant, George VII., in the eleventh century, that these iron shackles were riveted upon the clergy—and he, notwithstanding his power, found it an almost impracticable task to deprive the priests of their wives.

The German clergy were the most sturdy opponents of ecclesiastical tyranny, for when Gregory, in the year 1074, enacted that no priests should henceforth marry, and that such as now had wives should relinquish either them or their sacred office, immediately, as we read in history, horrible tumults were excited by the priests, many of whom were willing rather to relinquish the priesthood than to part with their wives; and many of them seceded from the Church of Rome, branding the pontiff and his adherents with the odious name of Paterini, i. e., Manichæans.

The German clergy exclaimed they would rather lose their priesthood than part with their wives. “Let him who despises men,” said they, “see whence he can procure angels for the churches.” The clergy of Passau, when the papal prohibition was published, said

to their bishop, "They neither could or would abandon the custom which it was clear they had followed from ancient times." Such is the record of history.

We find that in the Jewish Church all the patriarchs, and prophets, and priests, had the liberty to marry. Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Joseph, Aaron, Samuel, Isaiah, and others, were all married. So distasteful to Romish ears was this fact, put forth in the works of Chrysostom, that in his twenty-first homily on Genesis, they have taken the liberty to expunge the words: "all the prophets had wives;" and as the Belgian and Spanish Index have so decreed it, of course the expurgation of this heretical comment must be correct!

Notwithstanding this caveat, however, you will allow me to remind you that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was a married priest. And now, coming to the times of Christianity, we find the Apostles themselves were married men; those leaders, those founders of the Christian Church, did not despise the marriage bond, did not think themselves too holy to lead about a wife. But, strangest of all, *mirabile dictu!* Peter, that prince of the Apostles, had a wife—O Peter! what wast thou about so to disgrace thy ministry? Didst thou know no better than this? Surely thou must have been ignorant of the princely perfection of the baccalaureate priesthood! Surely thou hadst never dreamt of Hildebrand's decree, or else thou hadst put away thy wife when promoted to the office of apostle!

No wonder, then, if Apostles had wives, that the inferior clergy should have them, too, and that one of the requirements which Timothy was to see to amongst the bishops or presbyters under his *charge*, was that they be "the husband of one wife."

The records of succeeding times I have already given, whereby you have seen that, notwithstanding the mad fury and wild fanaticism of the East in favor of celibacy during the fourth century, no law was put in permanent force to prevent the clergy from having wives till that ambitious far-sighted prelate, Gregory the Seventh, did, at all hazards, put a yoke upon the neck of the priesthood, which neither their fathers nor they were able to bear.

Rome, notwithstanding her boasts of antiquity, cannot prove an earlier date than 1074, when the Romish Church was sunk in deepest corruption, and the world in blackest darkness, for the institution of her ecclesiastical edict, which sets at defiance the law of nature.

We will not consider her defense of this monstrous act of tyranny towards the priests that acknowledge her rule.

It is a debated point amongst Romish casuists whether the celibacy of the clergy is enjoined by Scripture: for, notwithstanding the access they have at all times to an infallible interpreter, there is a vast deal of debatable ground in the Romish Church; and since they have not settled the question for themselves, it is surely no great

liberty if we undertake to do so for them, or at least accept the decision of such doctors as please us best.

Bellarmino, that celebrated doctor, confesses that "single life is not imposed upon ministers by the law of God, for there is no precept, either in the Old or New Testament, that forbiddeth ministers to marry, but that it is a positive law of the Church, kept and observed ever since the Apostles' times, and therefore it is not now lawful for ministers to marry." (cap. xviii. lib. 1, de Clericis); and Bailly writes thus: "You inquire whether clergymen in sacred orders are bound to observe perpetual continency by the divine or apostolical law? It is answered with many theologians against certain others, that the celibacy annexed to sacred orders was neither instituted nor commanded by Christ, nor by the Apostles at his command." Here, certainly, is a most candid confession from the pen of a Romish doctor—a plain acknowledgment that the celibacy of the clergy is an unscriptural doctrine. He proceeds: "Nothing is found in the Scripture or tradition by which it can be proved that perpetual continency was imposed on ministers by Christ, or by the Apostles at his command. On the other hand the Church permitted for many ages to the Greek priests the society of wives whom they had taken before ordination, and still permits; but the Church is unable to dispense with a law imposed by Christ, or by the Apostles at the command of Christ; it may therefore be said that the law of perpetual continency imposed upon sacred ministers was introduced by the hierarchy, or by the Apostles, as governors and leaders of the churches who proposed it, not as a divine and immutable, but as an ecclesiastical law, as the best mode of governing the Church. For these reasons it is manifest that the law of celibacy is at the same time ecclesiastical and apostolical."

Was there ever such a specimen of Jesuitical logic as this? How does this skillful disputant make out his case? Why, much as a fox hunter rides over the country, by jumping all the ditches. He has made a clear somersault over all the historical hiatus, and has got to the end of his argument by clearing at one leap that awkward dilemma presented by an entire absence of proof that ever the Apostles, "as governors and leaders of the church, proposed this law" in any sense whatever, either divine or ecclesiastical. So far from it, they themselves married, sanctioned the marriage of others, and Paul, though a celibate himself, vindicated his right and title to a wife with as strenuous a zeal as if he had been a Protestant. "Have we not power," he exclaims, "to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?" There are some of the doctors of Rome who are very angry with us for translating this word a wife, and charge us with willful perversion of Scripture. The case stands thus: the original (*gunaika*) signifies a woman, but is constantly, in classical use, employed to designate a wife, and you must be guided by the context as to the natural meaning. Now I would ask you which is the most likely, that Paul should claim his right and privilege to

lead a woman who was his wife, or a woman who was not? I am not much surprised, however, that a Romish priest should be offended at our translation, and that he should prefer the interpretation "an unmarried woman"; it would indeed, be a great thing to get Scripture and the practice of Paul to justify taking a young unmarried female into a bachelor establishment and to prove that the great Apostle of the Gentiles himself would have traveled with her by rail from Stockton to Leeds! To make out this would, indeed, be worth a trifle.

Such is the total absence of proof, either Scriptural, traditional, or historical, that ever the celibacy of the clergy was a law of the Church till the year of 1074.

Notwithstanding all objections, however, such is the position which the Church of Rome has seen fit to take. She has, by a law like that of the Medes and Persians, which changeth not, cut off the whole of her priesthood from the amenities of married life, the solace of domestic ties, and condemned them to a hopeless, unending celibacy.

We must now proceed another step forward in the pursuit of her iniquitous progress.

It might naturally be supposed, since Rome has conceived such high notions of the angelic purity and perfection of celibacy, and considers matrimony a defilement for those who profess a religious life, and incompatible with the higher mysteries of her faith, that she would have done everything in her power to keep those pure and ignorant of unholy things whom she had thus set apart, and to whom she denied that lawful outlet for the desires of nature.

This, surely, would have been the most suitable course, and considering the great power her superstition exercises over the minds of men, and the right she both claims and enforces in popish countries over the literature and publications of the world—surely she could not have more benignly and becomingly exercised those powers than by forbidding the perusal of all unsuitable books to her bachelor priests, treating them as wise parents do their children, by putting out of their reach whatever might pollute their pure minds.

But no! She has added refinement to her cruelty; and after having condemned them to hopeless celibacy, she has dared to stimulate their sensual passions by compelling them to study the most obscene and abominable publications, calculated to inflame their desires and pollute their minds.

With her usual sophistry, the Church of Rome has laid down the following proposition: that just as a doctor ought to be intimately acquainted with all the diseases incident to the human frame, to qualify him as a physician of the body, so ought the priest to be deeply versed in all the diseases of the soul, that is, in all kind of sin, and cases of conscience, to qualify him as a physician of souls. And, proceeding to carry out this principle, she has caused a number of text-books to be provided for her students in theology,

treating of, amongst other things, all the imaginable sins which can possibly be committed between the sexes, together with innumerable cases of conscience connected with these subjects. These bachelor doctors in their treatises have dared to invade the sacred precincts of the marriage-bed, and to lay bare to the prurient curiosity of the younger students in theology, secrets which, in prospect of their vow of celibacy, should have been concealed from them forever.

Whilst prosecuting this disgusting branch of our subject, I was led to borrow from a friend, a ponderous folio entitled "*Sanchez De Matrimonio*,"—a monstrous volume of twelve hundred pages in Latin, which is a great authority amongst the doctors of Rome; and, to my horror, I found it crammed with such indecent and abominable trash, so filthy, impure, and disgusting, that I flung it from me with indignation into a corner, as unfit to read, and whose very touch was pollution.

Then there is *Dens' Theology*—it is equally bad, and forms a text-book in the College of Maynooth—so that, just as our young men have got up Paley and Butler at Cambridge, so those students of Maynooth must be drilled in the abominable pages of *Dens*.

Such are the fruits we reap from the infatuated course our Government has pursued in the endowment of Maynooth.

By our liberal assistance, Rome is enabled to breed a supply of priests, far more numerous than her diminishing Irish flock requires; and after having debauched their minds with her impure casuistry, she sends them over by troops to England to inveigle our foolish and ignorant people, who know nothing of their tricks, and are easily corrupted by their guile.

With what a sneer of intense contempt must the College of Cardinals contemplate our mad career, whilst they themselves deny the subjects of Britain so much as burial rites, or liberty of worship!

An edition of three thousand copies of this abominable work was published as recently as 1832, with the approbation of Dr. Murray, who had laid claim to the title of His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin; but when certain portions of its obscene contents were translated into English, and the attention of the public drawn to them, he found it convenient to deny having ever given any such approbation. The publisher, however, very independently contradicted the statement of Dr. Murray, which caused great excitement in Dublin, during which he took his departure for Rome, whether to seek absolution for the falsehood he had told, or not, I cannot say—but, having been reassured by "his holiness" the pope, on his return, he strongly recommended this obscene book to his clergy and said: "He had no hesitation in commending it as a useful summary to their attentive perusal."

Then there is another author of great celebrity, who has defiled reams of paper with the most impure, corrupt, and disgusting details

that ever entered into the wild conceit of a filthy old bachelor to imagine.

I refer to Liguori and here I must say a word or two about the authority of his writings, for one of the Jesuitical means of defense employed by Rome against her adversaries, is her being always ready to cast overboard her friends when it is convenient so to do, thus resembling the prudent mariner in a storm, who casts overboard his goods to save a ship; but the skill of the Romish pilot far exceeds that of the sailor for she always contrives to take her goods on board again, as soon as the storm is over—for whilst she deals thus unceremoniously with her best friends, in controversy, she pays them the highest honors, and makes the best possible use of them when dealing with her own people.

Thus, if you produce that learned Doctor Sanchez, a writer of great weight in the Church of Rome, whose foul pages are quoted as authority by Bailly, Delahogue, Dens, and a host of others, they at once cast him overboard, and say the Church of Rome is not responsible for the writings of a private individual. Again, if you produce Peter Dens, and prove that the students of Maynooth and other Romish colleges are drilled in the contents of his impure pages, still they cast him overboard, notwithstanding Dr. Murray's imprimatur, and refuse to have anything to do with him—he was only a private individual. But, happily, they are not able to treat Liguori in so cavalier a manner; by good fortune they have nailed his colors to the mast with their own hands—for as late as the year 1839, Liguori was canonized as a saint; and after all his writings had been more than twenty times discussed by the Sacred Congregation, they received the highest imprimatur which Rome herself could append, it being decreed by the said Congregation, that not one word in them had been found worthy of censure, which declaration received the endorsement of Pope Pius VII.

And, now, indeed:

"I could a tale unfold,
Whose lightest word would harrow up your souls;
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood."

I warned you at the outset that we had to do with a sink of iniquity, the very stirring of which would excite pestilent miasma, but that the fathoming of its foul depths I could not venture. Already have I stirred it as much as I dare; but to give you quotations from Sanchez, Bailly, Delahogue, or filthy Dens, I cannot do it:

"Their secret filth good manners biddeth not be told."

Advance we then a step further, in what Hogarth would have termed Rake's Progress, or the History of Priestly Celibacy.

After Rome has deprived the young priest of his natural rights, and condemned him to a life of perpetual celibacy, no matter what his temperament may be, and after she has debauched his mind with filthy Dens and his compeers, what is the next step she takes for the preservation of his virtue? She next decrees that every

woman in the parish, young or old, beautiful or ugly, modest or immodest, her ladyship in lace, and the scullion girl that lights the kitchen fire, shall come to him for confession, and shall be closeted with him in private as long as he likes. And during that secret conference, what are to be the topics of conversation? Is it the deep mysteries of religion which engage their minds?

"Reason the high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate?"

Assuredly not! for now it is that Sanchez, Delahogue, Bailly, and filthy Dens, come into play with all their impure casuistry. Now it is that this bachelor priest is to catechise the newly-married wife, and to bring the burning tints of shame into her pure cheek—now it is that he must ferret into all the secrets of the marriage-chamber, assisted by "Sanchez De Matrimonio," and ask questions which no modest matron can endure to hear.

Next comes the tender maid, pure as the morning dew that sparkles in the grassy glade, her simple mind like the drifted snow, untainted with defiling stains, in blissful ignorance of sin. If there be on earth a loathsome object of contemplation that can sicken the heart of man, it is that of a sensual, bloated priest, whose mind has long been debauched by the pages of Rome's obscenest casuistry, sitting in sly and watchful contact beside a delicate maiden, into whose simple mind he distills the first thoughts of sin, whose cheek he causes to mantle with the first blush of virgin shame.

Under no other form does sin appear so loathsome as when thus concealed beneath religion's garb; nor does man ever so closely resemble the "subtle adversary of souls," as when, clad in priestly robe, he pours his defiling strains into the confiding ear of a simple maid:

"Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Assaying by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions as he list—phantasms and dreams—
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
Th' animal spirits that from pure blood arise,
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure; thence rise
At least distemper'd, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires."

Bailly gives the following instructions to a priest-confessor: "If the penitent be a girl, let her be asked, has she ornamented herself in dress so as to please the male sex? or for the same end has she painted herself, or bared her arms, her shoulders, or her bosom? Whether she has frequented church in order that she might show herself to be looked at? Whether, in company with others, she has spoken, read, or sung, anything immodest? Whether she is not attached to someone? Whether she has not allowed him to take liberties with her? Whether she has not allowed him to kiss her? But if opportunity shall offer for carrying the inquiry farther, the confessor will do his duty, but, however, prudently and cautiously."

Only think of the unparalleled impudence of these bachelor priests

in thus catechising young ladies! I must confess that if I were one of the fair penitents and a saucy priest put any such impertinent questions to me, I should box his ears for him and never cross the threshold of his inquisitorial vestry again.

But all that wait on the disciple of Sanchez, Liguori, and filthy Dens, are not so delicate, refined, and pure as those who have already engaged our thoughts. There come in troops, men and women of all sorts, to confess and obtain absolution; many of them stained with vices of the deepest dye; every kind of tale, every description of sin, every particularity of immodest thoughts, words, and acts, are poured into the prurient ear of the listening priests, so that his mind, at length, becomes a great immoral cesspool, into which all the impurities of the district drain, and which must receive all the filth of an entire community. Knowing what I do of a Romish priest, I never wonder that he cannot look an honest man in the face, for what with his study of Romish unclean casuistry, what with his debauching pure minds with his filthy questions drawn from those authorized sources, what with his receiving into his own mind all the adulteries, fornications, unnatural crimes, unholy actions, desires, and thoughts, of all the countryside, his mind becomes a quagmire of foul, pestilent impurities, the consciousness of which is stamped on his very forehead.

We have now made the following progress with our subject. We have seen the Church of Rome propounding a rule of life, opposed to the law of nature, binding the iron shackles of compulsory celibacy on her priesthood. We have seen her corrupting their minds with lessons of impurity, and defiling their imaginations with unclean sophistry; and, lastly, we have seen her sending them forth into the world, where a principal part of their duty consists in confessing females in private; or, in other words, conversing with them on topics most calculated to inflame their passions.

And now, I would ask this audience, whether it is possible her priesthood can be preserved pure under these circumstances? Remember that this process is commenced in youth, when temptation to sin is at the strongest, and the passions most ungoverned. Remember, also, it is not only the quiet, the demure, the frigid, who are subjected to this discipline, but the hot-tempered, the passionate, the sensual. Look at those burly Maynooth priests, men of the coarsest clay who are lashing their infatuated and degraded followers into fury, uproar, and bloodshed, from time to time, in the sister Isle; think you that these fellows are to be trusted alone with females, after having feasted upon Sanchez and filthy Dens? Assuredly not; the system is one of monstrous corruption, the fruitful parent of immorality and vice; and it remains for me now to show you what results have proceeded from it, the practical fruits it has ever borne. The testimony of history, and the voice of experience have ever witnessed to this fact, that compulsory celibacy has always been attended with frightful corruption.

We must now proceed to facts: once more I am reminded of the

danger of stirring that cesspool, on the borders of which we stand. Without facts, however, it is impossible to establish the statement I have made; and the difficulty is not to find the facts, which superabound, but to select those which can, with any decency, be produced. A solemn sense of the responsible duty, in times like these, to open the eyes of men to the corruptions of the Church of Rome, has alone induced me to enter on this revolting subject, and I shall spare my feelings as much as I can, yet the truth must be told.

The result of a compulsory celibacy has always been to deprave the morals of the community, and especially of those themselves placed in that false position. I shall proceed to bring forth from the cesspool of history, a few of the facts by which this statement is borne out, and they shall refer to the different ages, since the experiment was tried—early, mediæval, and present times.

With respect to the evil consequences of celibacy in early times, I would observe, that what I shall adduce refers not exclusively to clerical celibacy, for that was not established, as we have seen, till the dark age of Hildebrand; but I conceive the case becomes all the stronger, for if monks and nuns, under a foolish vow of celibacy, did nevertheless fall into sin, so that the whole Church became scandalized thereby, though the system of confession did not exist, and the writings of filthy Dens had not yet appeared, how much stronger the case against the present system of ecclesiastical celibacy, with all these evil adjuncts to boot!

Cyprian, in the third century, inveighed against the nuns on account of their shameless licentiousness; and this was not a local or incidental abuse, for it has spread itself on all sides, and had become, notwithstanding all remonstrances, the common usages of the Coenobite ascetics, and even of some of the anchorites.

Chrysostom, a century and a half later, though he was a warm admirer of celibacy, yet uttered the following mournful, but somewhat ridiculous, complaint of its evil effects:

What a sight it is," says he, "to enter the cell of a solitary monk, and to see the apartment hung about with female gear, shoes, girdles, reticules, caps, bonnets, spindles, combs, and the like, too many to mention. But what a jest it is to visit the abode of a rich monk, and to look about you, for you find the solitary monk surrounded with a bevy of lasses one might say, just like the leader of a company of singing and dancing girls. What can be more disgraceful? And in fact the monk is all day long vexed and busied with petty affairs proper to a woman. Not merely is he occupied with worldly matters, contrary to the apostolic precept, but even with feminine cares; and these ladies being very luxurious in their habits, as well as imperious in their tempers, the good man was liable to be sent on fifty errands; to the silversmith's, to inquire if my lady's mirror were finished, if her vase were ready, if her scent-cruet had been returned; and from the silver-smith's to the per-

fumer's, and thence to the linen-drapers, and thence to the upholsterer's, and at each place he has twenty particulars to remember. Then add to all these cares the jars and scoldings that are apt to resound in a house full of pampered women! St. Paul says, 'Be ye not the servants of men;' shall we not then cease to be the slaves of women, and this to the common injury of all?'

This is certainly a very curious peep which old Chrysostom gives us into the habits of the fourth century, and the raillery of the ancient divine would almost make one fancy that it was Will Honeycomb pouring forth his sparkling wit in the pages of the "Spectator." But where, we are apt to exclaim, have the expurgatorial doctors of the "Index" been? If her nimble scissors could clip the pages of Father Chrysostom, when he made so simple a statement as that "all the prophets had wives," what were they about to leave unimpaired so profane an exposure of the habits of the monks?

I would here observe, that it would be a very useful thing to publish an edition of Chrysostom's works in Stockton; for amongst them are to be found two treatises, one against clerics and virgins dwelling together, another against virgins dwelling with clerics, which treatises, had they been some time ago duly studied and regarded, might have been the means of preventing much scandal in this place. And as it is said there is nothing new under the sun, let me tell you the reasons given in defense of this ancient custom. For Chrysostom informs us that, notwithstanding the obloquy it brought upon the church amongst the heathen, and the scandal it created amongst believers, the clerics persisted in having young women to dwell with them, under the pretense of patronage to the worthy, and defense to the helpless.

I pretend not sufficient skill in the laws and discipline of the Roman Church to be able to tell whether the decisions of the Second Council of Arles, which was held in the fifth century, be now in force; all I would say is, that had they been observed in the town of Stockton, the tongue of scandal had been restrained her license; for by that council it was enjoined, "that no person in holy orders, above that of a deacon, should have dwelling under his roof of any woman, save his grandmother, his daughter, his niece, or his wife." Much more needful, methinks, now-a-days, this wholesome statute, when Romish priests are forbidden either wives or daughters, though in some parts of the world they still have nieces enough, who, the tongue of rumor reports, do oftentimes "dwell under their roof."

Harken now, to Chrysostom's mournful dirge over the obsequies of fallen celibacy:

"Alas! my soul, may I well exclaim, and repeat the lamentable cry with the prophet, alas! my soul—our virginity has fallen into contempt; the veil is rent by impudent hands that parted it from matrimony; the holy of holies is trodden under foot, and its grave and tremendous sanctities have become profane: and that which was

once had in reverence as far more excellent than matrimony is now sunk so low as that one should rather call the married blest.'"

Such were the fruits of celibacy in the third and fourth centuries.

We will now proceed down the course of time to the mediaeval age of Gregory the First, who flourished in the sixth century, and see how it fared with celibacy in these later times.

Gregory was a great zealot in favor of clerical celibacy, as we have already seen; but what were the fruits of his enforcing his unnatural law we learn from the following narrative, given us by Udalric, bishop of Augusta, in a letter to Nicholas the First, where he says, "Gregory, by his decree, deprived priests of their wives; when, heads of six thousand infants that had been drowned in shortly after, he commanded that some fish be caught from the fish-ponds, the fishers, instead of fish, found the ponds. When Gregory ascertained that the children thus killed were born from the concealed sin of the priests, he forthwith recalled his decree and purged the sin with worthy fruits of repentance, extolling the apostolic command, "It is better to marry than to burn," adding from himself, "It is better to marry than to be the occasion of death."

Such were the fruits of celibacy under Gregory in the sixth century!

We now come to the testimony of the celebrated Bernard in the twelfth century. He exclaims, "If, according to the prophet of Ezekiel, we could look behind the partition, that we might see the horrible thing in the house of the Lord, perhaps the foulest abominations would appear on the inside. Alas! the enemy of man hath defiled the body of the church with the execrable ashes of the Sodomites, and indeed, the most filthy and abominable crimes have defiled some of its very ministers also. Many of these cannot be concealed on account of their multitude, nor, by reason of their impudence, do they court concealment; would that those who cannot contain, would fear to enroll themselves as the adherents of celibacy! It is better to marry than to burn, and to be saved in the humble grade of the common people, than to live worse, and to be judged more severely in the sublime ranks of the clergy."

Pass we now from those dark ages of acknowledged corruption to modern times, and let us see what are the effects of compulsory celibacy in this age of superior refinement and morality wherein we live. Would we judge of the system fairly, however, we must see how it works in really Romish countries, where it is unrestrained by the watchful supervision of Protestant eyes and is able to indulge its prurient tendencies without fear of detection.

First, then, let us turn our attention to South America; there the celibacy of the priesthood has settled down into a tacitly acknowledged system of concubinage, which differs little from matrimony, except in the absence of the hallowed sanction of the marriage-bond. A sea captain, who traded to South America, told me some

years ago that when his ship was lying in one of the ports of that country, a Romish priest came on board one day desirous of engaging a passage for himself and his niece. The captain forthwith led him to the gentlemen's cabin, where he selected one of the best state-rooms; after which the captain proposed to show him the ladies' cabin, that he might choose one for his niece, but the reverend gentleman declined, saying that the one he had chosen would do very well for them both! Our worthy captain, however, whose unsophisticated notions of celibacy could not understand such strange relationships, in a burst of honest indignation turned the reverend paramour out of his ship, and vowed that neither he nor his niece should ever set foot on board again.

That system of concubinage is not confined to South America, and is not an invention of the present refined age, for we read in Nicholas de Clemangis (about A. D. 1400), "In many dioceses the rectors of parishes, for a certain stipulated sum to the prelates, generally and openly kept concubines."*

And among the Helvetians, it was an ancient use and custom, that, when they received any new priest into their churches, they would premonish him to take his concubine, lest he should attempt any misuse with their wives and daughters.

A certain German bishop is reported to have said at a certain banquet, that in one year there were brought unto him eleven thousand priests which openly kept concubines.*

We will now turn our attention nearer home, and inquire into the effects of celibacy at the present day in Spain and France.

The Rev. Joseph Blanco White, a Spanish priest of great celebrity and unquestionable veracity, writing on the celibacy of the priesthood, expresses himself as follows:

"My feelings are so painfully vehement, when I dwell upon this subject, that neither the freedom I have enjoyed for years, nor the last repose of the victims, the remembrance of whom still wrings tears from my eyes, can allay the bitter pangs of my youth. A more blameless, ingenuous, religious set of youths, than that in the enjoyment of whose friendship I passed the best years of my life, the world cannot boast of. Eight of us, all nearly of the same age, lived in the closest bond of affection from sixteen till one and twenty. Of this knot of friends not one was tainted by the breath of gross vice, till the church had doomed them to a life of celibacy, and turned the best affections of their hearts into crime. It is the very refinement of church cruelty to say they were free, when they deprived themselves of their natural rights. A virtuous youth of one and twenty, who is made to believe Christian perfection inseparable from a life of celibacy, will easily overlook the dangers which beset that state of life. Those who made and those who still support the unnatural law, which turns the mistaken piety of youth into a source of future vice, ought to have learned mercy from their own experience; but a priest who has waded, as most do, through

the miry slough of a life of incessant temptation, falling and rising, stumbling, struggling, and falling again, contracts, generally, habits of mind not unlike those of the guards of oriental beauty. Their hearts have been seared with envy.

“I cannot think on the wanderings of the friends of my youth without heartrending pain. One, now no more, whose talents raised him to one of the highest dignities of the Church of Spain, was for many years a model of Christian purity; when, by the powerful influence of his mind, and the warmth of his devotion, this man had drawn many into the clerical and religious life, he sank at once into the grossest and most daring profligacy; I heard him boast that the night before the solemn procession of Corpus Christi, where he appeared yearly at the head of his chapter, one of two children had been born, which his two concubines had brought to light within a few days of each other.

“Such, more or less, has been the fate of my early friends, whose minds and hearts were much above the common standard of the Spanish clergy. What then, need I say of the vulgar crowd of priests, who coming, as the Spanish phrase has it, from coarse swaddling clothes, and raised by ordination to a rank of life for which they have not been prepared, mingle vice and superstition, grossness of feeling and pride of office, in their character?”*

What a complete likeness does this graphic picture bear to the Maynooth priest, supported by English money, and then sent forth like the plagues of Egypt, over our country, to corrupt the morals and pervert the faith of our people!

We must now turn to France. The following description of the priests of that country is from one of themselves, and is extracted from a work entitled, “Confessions of a French Catholic Priest,” edited by Samuel Morse, in the year 1836, in the city of New York.

“I shall surprise you by saying, that in France the immense majority of our young men in our seminaries are not corrupted; many of them are virtuous. They are ignorant, superstitious, fanatical, but I declare they are not vicious; that may be conceded, although apparently in contradiction to their indecent studies—for they are taught it is necessary to learn these in order to be able to fulfill their duty, and that, to hear confession in all its extent, it is necessary to know all human perversity. Be that as it may, I can affirm that it is painful to the sense of decency in man to be obliged to be familiar, as we are, with such books.

“But the corruption of the clergy begins when they are out of the seminary. Young men are sent into a parish in the quality of curates or vicars. At the commencement they fulfill their duty with care, and for a time remain faithful to their vows. Many have told me this after their fall. By and by they open their astonished eyes.

*Lasicius in Theolog. Moscov. cap. 15, ex Joann. poregrin in conviv. p. 158. Spirae, 582.

Restored to freedom, after ten or twelve years' thralldom in a college, they become different men, and gradually forget their vows. 'Oh!' said a young priest, with tears in his eyes, after having four or five years discharged the duties of his station, 'God only knows what I have suffered during this time: If I have fallen, it is not without fighting: had I been allowed to choose a wife, as such is the law of God, who destines man to marriage, whatever our rules teach to the contrary, I should have remained virtuous; I should have been the happiest man in the world; I should have been a good and holy priest, while now I am—O! I am ashamed of myself!'"

What a sad picture is this! and does it not call forth our feelings of sympathy and compassion toward those unhappy men who are placed under such cruel bondage, and exposed to such superhuman temptations, by the ambition and the wickedness of the Church of Rome?

Our author proceeds: "The resolution being taken of enjoying life, as they say, after having been so long deprived of it, the only question is to enjoy it safely and secretly, viz., without dishonor. In this manner, through their dark ministry, they have immense power upon the minds of women, for they attack only those whose dispositions they have long studied in confession. A priest, in a parish not far from mine, laid his snare for a young married woman, who had the reputation for piety because she attended mass every morning. He, through his diabolical arguments, triumphed over her scruples. She went to him in the vestry almost every morning, before the bell rang for mass. He confessed and absolved her, and she received the communion at the altar. The good people said, admiring her daily practice. 'How pious is this young wife; she partakes of the sacrament every day; she is doubtless a saint!'"

"There are no means which their cunning does not invent to meet with victims. But if a priest, in spite of his proverbial cunning, be discovered and be denounced to the bishop by public opinion, he may be removed in order to silence the scandal, and sent to a distance where he is unknown."

There is a variety of details of a similar kind, which time will not permit me to produce, showing how disastrous are the results of this wicked compulsion to celibacy over the morals of the priests in France at the present day.

Seeing then, that such is the immoral tendency of celibacy in Roman countries, are we to suppose that the system fares any better in other lands? If it could be shown that this were really the case, what a triumph it would be over Rome. If, after the unquestionable evidence that wherever Rome is dominant her celibate priesthood is dissolute, it could be shown that in other lands they are pure, surely this would be a strong admission in favor of non-Catholicism; and the Church of Rome should feel deeply indebted to those she stigmatizes as heretics, since they have done for her priesthood what with all her power she is unable to do herself, viz., to keep them pure. But

I claim no such merit on our behalf, for I don't believe that a celibate priesthood is pure in England, any more than in South America, Spain, France, or any other popish country. They are men of like passions with their brethren abroad, and the same causes will produce the same effects; the only difference being that greater caution and circumspection must be used where non-Catholic eyes are looking on, and a free press is ever ready to hold up the offender to public ignominy and shame.

Now the statements which I have produced are entirely borne out by the testimony of Rome herself. We never think of making laws against crime till the crime itself exists. I don't believe that ever there was a law against sheep-stealing till after sheep had been frequently stolen, and men began to find the loss of their sheep an intolerable nuisance. Now, so corrupt a thing is celibacy, that it has given rise to a new crime, and Rome enjoys the unenviable notoriety of having to enact ecclesiastical statutes to check a vice unknown to the rest of the Christian world.

This crime is known by the name of "Solicitatio," and its perpetrators are called "Solicitants." In plain English, it is the seduction, or attempt at seduction, of a female penitent by a priest in the confessional.

So scandalous was the immorality of the priesthood in Spain in the sixteenth century, that Paul IV. was obliged to issue a bull, of which the following is an extract: "Whereas certain ecclesiastics in the kingdom of Spain, and in cities and dioceses thereof, having the cure of souls, have broken out into such heinous acts of iniquity as to abuse the sacrament of penance, in the very act of hearing the confessions, by enticing and provoking females to lewd actions, at the very time when they were making their confessions. * * * *

Such was the prefatory introduction to this famous bull of Paul IV. And the blow aimed at her immoral priesthood was followed up by solemn edict of the inquisitors, published in all churches of the Archbishopric of Seville, that "any person knowing, or having heard of any friar or clergyman having committed the said crime, should make discovery of what he knew, within thirty days, to the Holy Tribunal."

When this edict was published such "a number of females went to the palace of the Inquisitor in Seville alone, to reveal the conduct of their infamous confessors, that twenty notaries, and as many inquisitors, were appointed to take down their several informations; but these being found insufficient, and the inquisitors being overwhelmed with such pressure of business, thirty days more were allowed for taking the accusations; and this time proving likewise insufficient, had to be extended again and again. Ladies of rank, character, and noble family, flocked to the Tribunal; but the authorities in Rome were so alarmed at the storm they had raised, that, fearful of the consequences of such an exposure, they hushed matters up the best way they could; and this Holy Tribunal, contrary

to the expectation of everyone, put an end to the business, by ordering that all crimes of this nature should henceforth be consigned to perpetual silence and oblivion.”*

Many bulls have since been published, proving that this monstrous vice still abounded. Thus, Gregory XV., in 1622, Benedict XIV., in 1741, and again in 1745, fulminated their ineffectual thunders against those priestly celibates who were guilty of so monstrous a crime.

I cannot close this branch of our subject without a word or two about nunneries.

Such is the authority which Rome now arrogates for herself within the territories of Queen Victoria, that notwithstanding the majesty and power of the law extend over the length and breadth of the land, yet has Rome dared to set the officer of justice at defiance, and to say to him, “Thus far shalt thou come, but no further.” There is no nook or corner in this well-ordered country whither the ends of justice may not be pursued, save and except those consecrated prisons which Rome has established on the free soil of Britain, whose grated portals bid defiance to the authority of the Queen on her throne.

It is too bad that Romish priests should be permitted to inveigle young women into nunneries in this land of liberty, and having got them there, should be suffered to lock them up in durance vile; when once their tender feet have been involved in the snares and bird-lime set for them by Rome’s bird-catchers, farewell forever all hope of liberty! However much they afterwards repent the foolish step—however widely their eyes may afterwards be opened—though their heart-strings should crack with passionate desires of freedom, and their souls sicken in the hopeless despair of perpetual bondage—for them no door of hope is open, no avenue of mercy within their reach;—though dwelling on the soil of Britain, the land of freedom, yet are they the veriest slaves, the serfs of Rome, compared with whose most pitiable condition the negro’s servitude is an enviable lot.

To such an extent has Rome carried her defiance of law, that an honored stranger has been robbed in England of his lawful wife, and to this moment is unable to obtain justice in this land.

I blush for our country, for the weakness of law, for our debased subserviency to Rome, that a stranger should have appealed in vain for justice at the highest tribunal, and that the house of commons should have turned a deaf ear to a petition “to right a poor man in his brave struggle, after long endurance in England of such wrong as no tribe of red Indians in his native land would not have risen up en masse to vindicate upon its perpetrator. My heart

*Narrative of the Inquisition, etc., by Hyppolite Joseph Da Costa Pereira Hurtado de Mendoza, vol. 1, pp. 117-119.

bleeds for the sufferings which Pierce Connelly has endured in our land at the hands of Rome. It makes one hang one's head, and almost ashamed of the name of Englishman, to think that our country could suffer such indignities and such injustices to be heaped on the head of a stranger, who has in vain demanded, petitioned, and implored that his lawful wife be set free from the clutches of Rome, and restored to her husband and children.

Whenever nunneries have been thrown open to public gaze, they have proved the dens of infamy and shame, little better than ecclesiastical seraglios, so that one ceases to wonder at the watchful jealousy of the priestly porters.

If it be, as their advocates contend, that these secluded sisters are so serenely happy, so tranquil and contented, so virtuous and so seraphic, so blessed with celestial peace and joy in their voluntary retirement, then I ask, why those gloomy walls, those massive locks, those grated windows, those blockaded portals? As soon would I believe that the wire cage that confines the mournful lark was not expressly meant to bar her egress to the joyous fields, where, rising on gladsome wing, and towering to heaven's gate, she might pour her celestial notes in joyful strain, wild in the freedom of her glad escape—as that these bars and bolts of monastic gloom are not placed to check the longed-for escape of imprisoned slaves.

Such strict watch and guard, however, are needed, not merely to retain the bodies of unwilling victims, but likewise to place restraint on rumor, with her many tongues, that deeds of darkness may not come to light.

I will now, however, give you a few revelations of what goes on inside these nunneries, notwithstanding the lynx-eyed jealousy of their priestly conservators to conceal it from the light of day.

In the year 673, the Council of Cloveshoe found it necessary to order that "the monasteries should not be turned into places of amusement for harpers and buffoons, and that laymen should not be admitted within their walls too freely, lest they might be scandalized at the offenses they might discover there; because on this account, not only causes of divers and nefarious suspicion arises, but they are propagated and repeated, to this disgrace of our profession. Wherefore let not the cells of the nuns be the abodes of shameful talking, drunkenness, and luxury."*

Boniface wrote as follows, in A. D. 730: "And we are informed of that which is worse; this crime of greatest magnitude (fornication) is committed with nuns throughout the convents, and with virgins dedicated to God. It is to be noted that in that crime another great wickedness lies, because, whilst those harlots produce offspring wickedly conceived in sin, they often, for the most part,

*Wilkins' Concilia, i. 97.

kill them, not filling the Church of Christ with adopted sons, but satiating the grave with bodies, and hell with miserable souls."†

In the year 1777, "thirty nuns of the monastery of Amesbury were accused and convicted for their unclean lives, whereupon the king, having expelled the nuns for their incontinence, distributed them in other houses, to be strictly guarded."‡

But I might detain you till midnight with details of this kind, and we therefore advance on to the day of Reformation, when a thorough exposure of these infamous houses was made, and we are able to ascertain what was the state of the nunneries of England in the sixteenth century. The commissioners appointed by Henry VIII. to inquire into the state of the monasteries, reported that "monstrous disorders were found in many religious houses—whole convents of women abandoned to lewdness, signs of abortion procured, of infants murdered, and of unnatural lusts." This testimony was confirmed by another body of commissioners appointed, not by Henry, but by Paul III.

Similar details I could give you, did the time permit, of the immoral state of nunneries in succeeding years, nearer our own times; thus it is related, "that on taking down two convents of monks and nuns that were contiguous, about fifty years ago, there tumbled out as many dry bones of infants as would fill a large basket, and a private trap door was found that communicated from one convent to the other."* A precisely similar discovery took place a few days ago at Quebec, when, on clearing away the foundation of a nunnery, a quantity of bones and remains of infants were found beneath the pavement.

And now coming down to our own times, in the year 1823, the bodies of two newly-born infants were found by the gardner, buried within the walls of the nunnery of Dungarvon. This discovery, though suppressed by the priests, at length blazed out and came to trial, when it was clearly proved that Father Maher, P. P., of Dungarvon, was the father of these children, by two nuns of the house; and three servants testified on oath that the said Father Maher had had improper intercourse with no less than nine of these nuns at certain intervals.

And lastly, I shall give you a peep into our English nunneries at the present time. A lady, confined in an English nunnery, as we have reason to suppose, against her will, or at all events against her husband's will, has communicated to her husband an attempt made upon her chastity by a Romish priest. Under these circumstances I am not at all surprised that the injured husband should feel himself aggrieved or complain that "the copper Cardinal has a suite of apartments in the same house with my wife; and though he or

†Epist. of Boniface to Etzelald.

‡Prynne, ii. 228.

*Hist. of Switzerland, p. 767.

any filthy priest may be closeted with her alone, and by authority, for hours, yet at this moment, in England, that mother is not allowed to see her daughter for one moment alone."

The following statement may further satisfy your mind, if further proof you need, that at the present day, in England, those closely watched and carefully barred nunneries are not at all times seats of secluded innocency, angelic purity, and celestial devotion:

"I had a long audience of leave from the Pope, in 1848, and was charged by His Holiness with a message to a near relative, living in a convent in England. On arriving, in June, I went to the convent and rang at the priest's door; I was told that the priest was not up, as he was not well, and I was shown into a parlor. After waiting for some time, I went up stairs, and opened his bedroom door. The priest was quite well; he was not more than half dressed, and a young nun was standing by him, who, on seeing me, immediately fled. I made a representation to the bishop, but the priest was not removed."

I am indebted for the above to Mr. Drummond, who has thoroughly exposed the filthy purlieus of a nunnery, in his able pamphlet, and he is prepared to produce the name of the person from whom he received this communication. I believe the priestly paramour thus detected was none other than Dr. Asperti, whom Mr. C. Connelly denounced to Dr. Ullathorne, as having detected him with a nun in his bed-chamber.

I think I have now given you facts enough to satisfy any reasonable man of the immoral tendency of priestly celibacy; and if there be any individual present who does not understand the subject, I must decline the attempt to enlighten that man's mind.

It may be asked, what possible motive can Rome have for clinging with such tenacity to this unnatural law of celibacy? When hard driven by her adversaries, she is obliged to give up scriptural authority and to plead that it is merely a matter of discipline; but she has had painful experience of that discipline, she has found it a total failure, she has long discovered its immoral tendencies, and by her edicts and bulls has proclaimed its mischievous consequences. Like unto whited sepulchers, it has indeed appeared beautiful outwardly, but within it is full of dead infants' bones and all uncleanliness. Instead of promoting sanctity, it has produced vice; instead of exalting men to heights of seraphic holiness, it has debased them in the mire of impurity.

Why, then, persist in it, since it is only a matter of discipline and has failed so egregiously? I will tell you why: True, it has utterly failed to restrain or sanctify the priesthood, but it has not failed of the great end which Hildebrand had in view from the first, and which, since then, has never been lost sight of by the crafty rulers of Rome. It has not failed as an instrument of her aggrandizement and her power.

The celibacy of the clergy may be termed one of the most

powerful political engines ever devised by cunning and wielded by ambition; by this means the pope has brought into existence an ecclesiastical body-guard for the defense of popedom throughout the world; a corps of spiritual Janizaries, detached from all ties, domestic, social, patriotic—men without family, without country, without aim or object, except the aggrandizement of their body, in blind obedience to their spiritual head.

No wonder, then, that the pope of Rome clings with instinctive grasp to the doctrine of priestly celibacy. No wonder that he turned a deaf ear to the outcries of Germany, when the representative of the people in the kingdom of Wuertemburg did, from time to time, solicit him that their clergy might be allowed to marry.

No wonder that he turned a deaf ear to the petition of the unhappy slaves of this vicious custom, a petition signed by two hundred and eighty Romish clergymen, in the grand dukedom of Baden, imploring His Holiness to repeal the obnoxious law, to knock off their embittered shackles, and give them leave to marry.

But no! the celibacy of the clergy is too useful an instrument, too powerful a weapon! Rome will never cancel the decree of Hildebrand, for by it she is furnished with such a body of spies as never secular tyrant could boast of.

She has sent forth her emissaries over the face of the earth, everywhere devoted to her service, cut off from all inferior attachments of family and country to do her bidding. Napoleon had his spies in every quarter, but that great general could only survey the outside of things by means of his espionage. Rome gets within, scans the secret motives of men's deeds, has tidings of every contemplated act, private and public, before its execution; by means of this power she reigns as a queen, and laughs at the princes of the earth. Give up the celibacy of the clergy? No, never! Never whilst she can wield the sceptre of her power, seated on the seven hills.

Rome has put dishonor upon the sacred bond of matrimony; for though she pretends to exalt it as a sacrament in order that she may have priestly power to exercise, or in other words, what she loves above all things, a finger in every man's pie; yet she has insulted the marriage bond, by extolling celibacy as a far holier state; her writers constantly express themselves in terms derogatory of marriage, and only the other day Mr. Connelly was abused by the organ of Rome as "a filthy old man," for desiring the restitution of his lawful wife.

Matrimony is adapted for the highest development of all that is great and good in man; the union of the two sexes, in the endearments of domestic and social life, is that state which is best calculated to lead on both to perfection, to soften what is harsh, to strengthen what is weak; it ennobles the human character, draws

forth the sympathies of our nature, gives scope for the best feelings of the heart, excites the noblest energies of the soul.

"Love refines
The thoughts, the heart enlarges, hath his seat
In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure."

Rome has degraded woman from her rightful place in the family of man; has dragged her from the social board and the happy ties of domestic life; has corrupted her mind; has imprisoned her body in doleful solitude, where she is kept against her will; and I say, had Rome no other guilt to answer for than the wrongs she has inflicted on woman, she would still deserve the eternal execrations of mankind.

Are we then to remain in tame quiescence, whilst our deadly foe, with rampant energy, invades our domestic hearth, to rob us of our social peace and home-endearing joys?

Most assuredly not! Morals decay, female purity fades,* the human mind degenerates beneath the blight of Rome's unhallowed breath; and hampered though we be by truckling politicians and luke-warm friends, there is, I trust, enough of stern, uncompromising principle left amongst us to make Rome stand back and to drive her from our shores in dire disgrace. The ashes of our martyrs are still revered, the blood they shed still cries for justice, the candle they lighted, though dimmed, is not extinguished; and, I trust, the coming struggle—for come it must—will rid this land forever from the cure of priestly celibacy, and all the other monstrous figments of Rome's unhallowed creed.

*The Rev. Mr. Seymour has recently published some statistics, which bring to light the awful, and almost incredible, immorality of popish countries—an immorality intimately connected with the subject of this lecture, nay, one of the natural and necessary consequences of priestly celibacy, which seems to have assisted in depraving the morals of a large portion of the community, and has succeeded in lowering the standard of female virtue, compared with other countries, by at least forty or fifty per cent.

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