

THE SONS OF THE CLERGY.

There is nothing, perhaps, which would seem more impossible to Roman Catholics at the present day than that their priests should be permitted to marry, and have families.

It seems so impossible, that Roman Catholics are apt to conclude that there never was a time when it was more possible than it is now, for priests or bishops to marry.

We believe that Roman Catholics do often form their opinions in this way. What they see now prevailing, they think *must* have *always* prevailed; and then they conclude that it must be right. This feeling is, perhaps, as strong about the marriage of the clergy as about anything. Nothing seems more ridiculous to a Roman Catholic than to suppose that the clergy of his Church ever did or could marry. Well, then, we will take this feeling, where it is so strong, and see what it is worth. And we ask our Roman Catholic readers to be candidly ready to be greatly astonished.

Gratian, a monk, wrote his book called the "Decretum" about the year 1152. This book was at once received throughout Europe as the great authority on Canon Law. Pope Pius IV., about the year 1560, appointed a committee of Cardinals and other learned men to correct it. Pope Pius V. continued the work of correction; and in 1580 the "Decretum," thus corrected, was published under the authority of a Bull of Pope Gregory XIII. No book has had greater influence, or done more service, in the Church of Rome: though it has come to be less thought of, as the Church of Rome has partly got beyond it, and partly got ashamed of it.

In the 56th "Distinction," ch. 2, we read as follows:—"Pope Hosius was the son of Stephen the sub-deacon. Pope Boniface was the son of the Priest Jucundus. Pope Felix was the son of Felix the priest of the title of Fasciola. Pope Agapetus was the son of Gordian the priest. Pope Theodorus was the son of Theodorus, Bishop of the city of Jerusalem. Pope Silverius was the son of Silverius, Bishop of Rome. Pope Deusdedit was the son of Stephen, a sub-deacon." "Felix the third, a Roman by nation, had Felix, a priest, for his father. Also Gelasius, an African by nation, was born of his father, Bishop Valerius. Also Agapetus, a Roman by nation, had his origin from his father Gordianus, a priest. Very many others also are found, who, being born of priests, presided over the Apostolic See."

It is clear that those who transcribed the Decretum, before printing was invented, have made some mistakes. There was no Pope Hosius, but the Roman correctors say that in an ancient copy it is "Deusdedit," and Pope "Hormisdas," for the father of Silverius. It is also probable that the first part of the quotation (our readers will observe how we have divided it) was put in by some ancient writer soon after the time of Gratian. Whoever is curious in such corrections may consult Berard in *Canones Gratiani*, vol. I., part 2, p. 180. But it is enough for us that the Roman Cardinal correctors say that *at least* the latter part was written by Gratian himself.

Where did Gratian get these curious facts? for Gratian only compiled out of older books. He took them, as Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, took them before him—from the Pontifical Book of the Lives of the Popes. Of that Pontifical book the Roman Cardinal correctors say:—

"The book, which is called the Pontifical, where these things are read, written in their own places, was begun to be written by (Pope) Damasus, and, therefore, although many things were afterwards added by others, it retained, however, the name of its first author."

This Damasus, who is said by the Cardinals to have begun this book, was Bishop of Rome from 367 to 385. Anastasius, who was the Pope's librarian, is supposed to have compiled the later lives from records in the library of the Popes, about the year 860. The book is the greatest, and almost the only authority, for the lives of the Popes in those ages.

Berard has collected the various passages out of the Pontifical Book, and we give them here, to correct any mistake made by Gratian's transcribers:—

"Boniface, by nation a Roman, from Jucundus, the priest, as his father; sat three years, eight months, seven days.

"Agapetus, by nation a Roman, Clerk of the Church of St. John and St. Paul, from his father Gordianus, the priest.

"Theodore, by nation a Greek, from his father, Theodore, Bishop of the city of Jerusalem.

"Silverius, by nation a Campanian, from his father, Hormisdas, Bishop of Rome.

* Gratian called the Divisions of the first part of the Book by the name of "Distinctions."

b Osius Papa fuit filius Stephani sub-diaconi. Bonifacius Papa fuit filius Jucundi Presbyteri. Felix Papa filius Felicis Presbyteri de titulo Fasciola. Agapetus Papa filius Gordiani Presbyteri. Theodorus Papa filius Theodori episcopi de civitate Hierosolyma. Silverius Papa filius Silverii episcopi Romæ. Deusdedit Papa filius Stephani sub-diaconi. — Felix enim tertius, natione Romanus, ex patre Felice presbytero fuit. Item Gelasius, natione Afer, ex patre episcopo Valerio natus est. Item Agapetus, natione Romanus, ex patre Gordiano presbytero originem duxit. Complures etiam alii inventantur, qui de sacerdotibus nati apostolicæ sedis profuerant." *Decret. Dist. 56. c. 2.*

c Omnia partem aliquam hujus capituli, saltem illam, que in decimo Vaticano habetur, ab ipso Gratiano scriptam esse constat ex verbis Gratiani in extremo precedente capite, et capite penultimo hujus distinctionis. — Not. in loc.

d Liber enim qui Pontificalis dicitur, ubi hæc Scripta suis locis leguntur, a Damaso composita est scribi, ideoque, licet ab aliis multa detraha sint addita, retinuit tamen primi auctoris nomen.—Not. in loc.

"Deusdedit, by nation a Roman, from his father, Stephen, a subdeacon; sat three years, &c.

"Gelasius, by nation an African, from his father Valerius, sat four years, &c.

"Felix, by nation a Roman, from his father Felix, priest of the title of Fasciola, sat eight years, &c."

These facts we have from the only authority which the Church of Rome has for the lives of those popes. And we have, also, a most remarkable confirmation of the most remarkable of those facts in the "Breviarium" of Liberatus, Archdeacon of Carthage, who lived at the very time of Pope Silverius:—"These things being done, the Pope (Agapetus) . . . while he was settling to return into Italy, died at Constantinople. Hearing of whose decease the Roman State elected Silverius, the sub-deacon, son of the former Pope Hormisdas, to be ordained."

The facts, therefore, are clear: we have at least seven popes between the years 411 and 641, who had, each of them, a pope, a bishop, a priest, or a sub-deacon, for his father; and Gratian, who put this great fact into the canon law, tells us that a "great many" more popes are found who had bishops or priests for their fathers.

The children of the clergy must have been as plenty as blackberries, when so many of them could come to be popes in so short a time; and, clearly, they were not in bad repute for being children of the clergy. Of course, some attempt must be made to explain away all this. Modern Roman Catholics have said, "Surely these popes, bishops, and priests must have had their children before they were ordained, because they could not have had them afterwards."

Gratian, however, who had much better opportunities of knowing what could have been done in those ages, thought differently. Near the end of that "distinction" (or division) 56 of his book, chapter 13, he says "When, therefore, persons born of priests are read above to have been promoted to be Supreme Pontiffs, they are not to be understood as born of fornication, but of legitimate marriages, which were everywhere lawful to priests before the prohibition came, and which it is proved are lawful in the Eastern Church to this day."

We trust our readers are now thoroughly astonished at finding a state of things in the Roman Church in ancient times so very like the state of things in the Protestant Church now. Astonishment is a fine thing for getting people out of erroneous notions. We do believe that if our Roman Catholic countrymen could only learn facts in the history of the Roman Church, they would alter many of their opinions.

We may give more facts on this subject in our next. For our readers will surely ask, if such was the state of things before marriage was prohibited to the clergy in the Roman Church, when and how was so vast a change effected? A fair question, and one to be answered by facts. Suppose we tell how that change was effected in England? We will try; but it will be a fearful story, if we can give any adequate picture of the facts. How many a hearth was desolate—how many a family was broken up—how many a babe was fatherless—how many a virtuous mother was put to shame—how many a priest of God was driven into sin—before the ruthless policy and cruel hand of the Papacy had won that horrid victory in England, in the name of holiness to God! A harrowing tale it must be, if we can now recover anything approaching to the facts.

Correspondence.

ON THE ROSARY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—The *Dublin Evening Mail* for Friday, January 2nd, contains extracts from a pastoral of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark to his flock, in which he urges on them the use of the Rosary, and in particular advises all workmen, whose occupations call them to labour at an early hour in the morning, to repeat the Rosary as they walk along.

These extracts induced me to turn to an article which I remembered you had inserted on the Rosary, and which I found in your number for January, 1855. I copy the following account of what is meant by the Roman Catholic use of the Rosary, which you have cited from the *Rambler*, in the article to which I have referred:—

"In the Rosary we must first remind our Protestant

* Bonifacius, natione Romanus, ex patre Jucundo Presbytero, sedit annos 3, menses 8, dies 7.

Agapetus, natione Romanus, ex patre Gordiano Presbytero, clericus ad sanctum Johannem et Paulum, &c.

Theodorus, natione Græcus, ex patre Theodoro episcopo de civitate Hierosolyma.

Silverius, natione Campanus, ex patre Hormisdas, episcopo Romano. Deusdedit, natione Romanus, ex patre Stephano subdiacono, sedit annos tres, &c.

Gelasius, natione Afer, ex patre Valerio, sedit annos 4. &c.

Felix, natione Romanus, ex patre Felice, Presbytero de titulo Fasciola, sedit annos octo, &c.—Berard in *Canones Gratiani*, Vol. I., part 2, p. 182.

f His peractis . . . Papa . . . dum in Italian reverti disponit, Constantinopolim obivit. De ejus decease audiens Romana civitas, Silverium subdiaconum, Hormisdas quondam papæ filium elegit ordinandum.—Labbe and Coss. *Con. Gen. Vol. V., col. 775. Ed. Par. 1672.*

g Quam ergo ex sacerdotibus nati in summos Pontifices supra leguntur esse promoti, non sunt intelligendi de fornicatione, sed de legitime conjugis nati, que sacerdotibus ante prohibitionem ubique licita erant, et in Orientali Ecclesia usque hodie eis licere probatur.—*Decret. Dist. 56., c. 13.*

readers, the Hail, Mary, is repeated one hundred and fifty times, the Our Father ten times, and the Glory be to the Father ten times. Frequently only one-third of the whole is said at once; but the proportion of the three prayers remains the same. This is at least the case with what is commonly called the Rosary, or the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin; for there are others constructed on different plans.

"Now, all that non-Catholics know of this devotion is, that for every *Pater Noster* and *Gloria Pater* we say ten *Ave Marias*. Is not the deduction inevitable that we think ten (or rather five) times as much of the Blessed Virgin as of Almighty God? Or, to be extremely charitable, that we pray five times as often to Mary as to our God and Saviour? So, at least, the world has decided against us. But what is the fact? The fact is, that this is not the Rosary which we say, and that no such Rosary exists at all, or was ever heard of in the Catholic Church. The doctrine of the Rosary consists in meditations with the understanding and heart on the chief events of the life and passion of Jesus Christ and the great blessings of the Gospel, while with the lips we recite all these Hail Marys, Lord's Prayers, and Doxologies."

The *Rambler* goes on to explain that the meditations form the essence of the whole Rosary, and that the vocal prayers are only a contrivance for fixing the thoughts—just as children find buttoning their sleeves, or some other fiddling, assist them in learning anything by heart. "From childhood a Catholic is accustomed to associate the great mysteries of faith with the low, monotonous murmur, from his own lips and those of others, of those forms of prayer, and with the mechanical movement of the hands in passing the beads along with the fingers. Even when the custom is not begun in childhood, a short practice confers the necessary unconscious mechanical facility of both lip and finger; and those who, as Protestants, regarded the whole thing as incomprehensible, or laborious, or childish trifling, acquiesce with delight and gratitude in the unerring wisdom of the Church that has sanctioned so admirable and simple a means for drawing the thoughts away from the glare and gloom of this life and its agitations."

Now, sir, you have based a great part of your article on the supposition that this account given by the *Rambler* is the true account of the Rosary, and have discussed the propriety of saying one thing on your knees and meaning another. But in one place I observe you hit on the true answer to the *Rambler's* defence. You say:—

"We by no means deny that some persons of cultivated minds may be able, during the repetition of the Rosary, to carry on in their thoughts such a series of meditations as the writers we are reviewing describe. But these are just the persons who could without difficulty, and, we should think, with far greater profit to themselves, carry on their private devotion in words of their own. But the question is, whether this is the ordinary way in which the Rosary is employed; whether every old woman we see telling her beads does occupy her mind meanwhile in a series of meditations on the principal events of the Gospel history, or whether she rests satisfied that she has offered sufficiently acceptable service to God in the mere repetition of the prayers."

Now, sir, Dr. Grant's pastoral enables us to answer this question which you have started—whether meditation be essential to the due use of the Rosary, or whether it is only an addition, which increases the perfection of the worship?

After praising the use of meditation in saying the Rosary, he adds, "But while this meditative saying of the Rosary is necessary to secure the abundant indulgences granted by the Holy See, the paternal concern of the popes for the poor has led them to declare that the uneducated may gain them by simply reciting the Rosary, if they are unable to meditate upon its mystery."

And it is to be remembered, that it was to workmen and other persons of limited education that the bishop had just issued his recommendation to say the Rosary daily.

Now, after this authoritative declaration that the mere recital of the Rosary is sufficient to gain for an uneducated person the indulgences offered for the performance of the Rosary, from which we may infer that the mere saying of the Rosary would be a good work in an educated person, even though it did not gain these particular indulgences—after this, what will our readers think of the *Rambler's* assertion that the recital of the Rosary without meditation "does not exist at all, or was ever heard of in the Catholic Church!"

It is very much the custom of Roman Catholic writers, when defending those parts of their doctrines or practices which are found most offensive by Protestants, to pare away all the most offensive parts, and to endeavour to persuade simple-minded Protestants that no such things exist at all in the practice and faith of Roman Catholics.

The present example will show how little faith can be reposed in such denials, and that you were quite correct when you said that "the meditations, however useful they may be, are not essential, and that the mere saying of the words without understanding them is sufficient to satisfy the requirements of Roman Catholic divines."

And I see nothing but what is fully warranted in your comparison of the Rosary to the praying mills of Thibet, in which the worshipper writes his prayers on a piece of

paper, puts it in the mill, grinds it round a sufficient number of times, and thinks he has offered acceptable worship to his divinities.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,
AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF INTENTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—As some of your correspondents are disposed to look on the possibility of the sacraments being actually vitiated in the Church of Rome by the defect of intention on the part of the officiating priest as a mere chimera of Protestants, got up for the purposes of controversy, I would beg their attention to the arguments of the Bishop of Minori, in the Council of Trent, on the subject. He urged—supposing an internal intention necessary, then, if a priest having the care of four or five thousand souls should be an unbeliever, yet a great hypocrite, who, whether in the baptism of infants, or the absolution of penitents, or the consecration of the Eucharist, had the intention of not doing what the Church does, then must it be said that all the children were damned, the penitents unabsolved, and that none of the communicants had derived any benefit. "He insisted much," continues the historian, "on the affliction which an affectionate father would feel, if, seeing his child dying, he doubted the intention of the priest who had baptised it; or the disquiet of one who had received baptism in an imperfect frame of mind, should he have reason to suspect that the priest who baptised him was a false Christian, and that instead of intending to baptise or to confess him, or to give him the Eucharist, he had meant only to wash him in jest, and to make a sport of all the rest." Then mark what follows: "If any one say that these cases (of meaning to make the administration of the sacraments a jest) are rare, would to God that in this corrupt age there were not reason to think them very frequent." Bishop Catharin at least was no Protestant, and he must be admitted on all hands to be a more credible witness as to what was likely to happen among the clergy in his own day than any one in the nineteenth century can be. I say, then, that it is no curious question, but one of vital importance to every Roman Catholic, if such cases as he speaks of were "frequent" then, how far there can be anything like certainty with regard to their orders or sacraments now. How any Roman Catholic now can consider himself at liberty to look on the necessity of intention in any degree as an open question I am at a loss to conceive; for the words of the decree of the Council of Trent are express: "If any man say that in ministers, when they make or confer the sacraments, there is not required at least the intention of doing what the Church does, let him be anathema." The creed of Pope Pius clearly makes this an article of faith. "All things likewise do I undoubtedly receive and confess, which are delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and general councils, and especially the holy Council of Trent; and withal, I condemn, reject, and accuse all things that are contrary thereunto." It is quite unnecessary to discuss the views of Thomas Aquinas, or of any person who lived before the 3rd of March, 1547, when the above decree was made; and as to the meaning of the decree, we have the evidence of the Bishop of Minori, who was present when it was enacted, and who argued against it, desiring that the outward act, duly performed, should be held sufficient evidence of the validity of the sacrament; but the decree was against him. That there is a difference of opinion in the Church of Rome on this point I admit; but that it is forbidden, under the penalty of an anathema, I contend is clear. In this, however, as in many other instances, it is tolerably easy to ascertain what men are required to believe in that Church; while, what they actually do and may believe is very difficult to make sure of, in a Church which has held within its fold at one time Pope Pius IX., and the Abbe Laborde, and does hold the editor of the *Univers*, and the editor of the *Observateur Catholique*.

I remain, Sir,

AN ANGLO-CATHOLIC.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

MR. EDITOR,—A happy new year to you, and many of them; and, talking of that, I may's well tell you what passed between Jerry Donovan and myself on New Year's Day. He came up after dark, and the Douay Bible along with him, and when the wife and child were gone to bed he read out one of our blessed Lord's parables, and here it is:—"A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none, and he said to the dresser of the vineyard, 'Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and I find none. Cut it down, therefore, why cumbereth it the ground?' But He, answering, said to him, 'Lord, let it alone THIS year also, until I dig about it, and dung it, and if, happily, it bear fruit, but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.'" "Now," says he, "isn't it a queer thing that I found that parable of a New Year's day, above all days in the year?" "Why," says I, "what call has it to New Year's Day more than to any other day? and what does it mean

at all?" "Well," says he, "I think the meaning is plain enough. The sinner is the barren fig-tree, and God is angry with him for not improving, but remaining useless and good for nothing, and He says, 'cut that sinner down, for he's doing no good, but only cumbering the ground.' And then our Lord Jesus Christ says, 'Lord, let him alone this year also, and I'll do my best to improve him. Give the poor creature one more opportunity. Perhaps he may improve, and his poor soul may be saved, but if he don't improve this year, then AFTER THAT thou shalt cut him down;' and, Dan," says he, "maybe that's the very way it's with ourselves. Perhaps God was going to cut us down for our careless lives, and never thinking about our souls. But the Lord Jesus Christ said, 'spare those poor sinners for this year. Give them this year to think about their souls; but if they don't make a good use of it, then, AFTER THAT, thou shalt cut them down.' And, Dan," says he, "when I read that parable and remembered that 'twas New Year's Day, it seemed as if 'twas a message from God, telling me to look to my soul." "Well," says I, "'twas a curious thing, I allow, and I'm thinking it won't do to put it off any longer, but we must look to our souls in earnest." "That's just what I'm thinking," says he; "but it's putting it off I was, and saying to myself there's time enough to think about it; but maybe this is the last year that will be given us, and if we don't make a good use of it, we may be cut down as cumberers of the ground. And," says he, "there's many a one under the cold clay now that was well and hearty last New Year's Day, and who can tell where ourselves will be this time next year?" "True for you," says I, "many a strong man was laid low, and many a young man was carried to the grave, since this time last year, and maybe our own turn may come next." "There it is," says Jerry, "God may call us away, as He called many a one around us, and then what's to become of our souls? and I have no peace at all in my mind," says he, "for I've nothing certain to rest my soul upon. One priest says different from another priest, and one book says different from another book, and between them all I'm in doubt how my soul is to be saved: one stands up for the blessed Virgin, and another holds on to the saints; and one says that masses will do it, and another says that holy water will do it, and another says that absolution will do it, and another says that fasting and penance will do it, and another says that Extreme Unction will do it, and then another says that nothing but Purgatory will do it: and all the while the time is slipping away from me, and I'm in dread that between all the stools my poor soul may fall to the ground." Well, sir, I seen that Jerry was in real earnest, and says I, "what makes you more troubled now than you were six months ago?" "I'll tell you, then," says he. "At first I was only vexed that Protestants should be picking holes in our religion, and I took a pride in being able to speak up for it, and I argued for arguments sake, and to try to win a victory, and I read the Bible to find texts on my own side, and I didn't care what it said on the other side, and 'twas only my pride that was touched, but my heart wasn't in it at all, and I thought that I might argue if I liked, or let it alone if I liked, and I gave it up for a while, and says I to myself, let the priests and parsons settle it between them, for it's no concern of mine." "Troth, then," says I, "that's the wisest thing you said this many a day, and it's only a pity you didn't stick to it." "I did my best to stick to it," says he, "but I wasn't able, for evermore that verse was sounding in my ears, 'What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?' And then I'd say to myself, whose soul is that verse speaking about? Is it the priest's soul? No. Is it any of the neighbours' souls? No. It's MY OWN SOUL; and then I began to see that 'twouldn't do to leave the matter to the priests and parsons." "If that's the way," says I, "it's no wonder that you're in earnest, and," says I, "you remind me of my father (the Heavens be his bed), who came in one night, and says he, they're going to run a new road through the master's land that will spoil it entirely, but, after all, says he, it must run through some one's land, and he must only take it easy. But, my dear, his tune was changed next day, when he heard that 'twas to run through his own ground, and it's he that raised a pillilew." "That's the way with us all," says Jerry; "it's when a thing comes home to ourselves that we get in earnest about it, and," says he, "as long as I thought that 'twas some other person's soul the verse was speaking about, I didn't much care; but when I saw that 'twas my own soul it was speaking of, then I saw that I should stir myself about it." "But, Jerry," says I, "what makes you in such a hurry? sure you've time enough to think about it." "So I thought myself," says he, "till I seen a brother's son of mine in good health one day, and dead the next. We didn't think he was bad at all; but when the doctor came he told him that he was dying. 'Run for the priest,' says he, 'run for him at once.' 'It's too late,' says the doctor, 'for you haven't half an hour to live.' I'll never forget the awful look he gave us when the doctor said 'it's too late;' and, sure enough, before the priest was half way, poor Owen was dead; and then, I thinks with myself, that may be my case one of these days, and maybe 'tis when it's too late I'll be thinking of my soul." "Well, Jerry," says I, "there's no denying that death may come to us at any

time; [and, sure enough, 'twould be an awful thing to be short taken that way." "That's the very reason," says he, "that we should see about it at once; and tell me," says he, "if you had to bring a load of turf from the bog, and the night coming on, would you say there's time enough; I needn't be in any hurry about it?" "Troth, I wouldn't so," says I; "but I'd stir myself, and set to work at once, so as to be home before dark." "Well," says Jerry, "that's what we should do for our souls. Our Blessed Lord says 'the night cometh when no man can work;' and I'm thinking that the night there means death, and our Lord is warning us that once death comes upon us 'twill be too late to do anything for our souls. So," says he, "I'm determined not to put it off any longer, but to see after my soul at once." "But," says I, "you needn't be so frightened about it; you're no worse off than all the rest of us." "Don't trust to that," says he; "for them's the very words that cost poor Con Sullivan his life. He was going to America, and had almost taken his passage, when a cousin of his that's a ship carpenter says to him, 'Con,' says he, 'take my advice and don't go in that ship; for she's an old boat, and I'm in dread that if she meets rough weather she'll go down.' So Con went back and told some of the boys that he'd wait for a better ship; but they laughed at him, and, says they, 'Sure you're no worse off than the rest of us.' So he went with them, to his sorrow, for the vessel foundered, and all hands were lost; and I'm thinking that when poor Con was going to the bottom, it didn't do him much good to have others going down with him; and in like manner," says he, "if my poor soul was lost, 'twould be very poor comfort to say that others were lost too." "By my word," says I, "I don't doubt but you're right after all; but what are you going to do?" "Why," says he, "I'll do my best to find out the truth, and if I can once find it I'll hold on to it." "And," says I, "are you going to leave our old ancient religion?" "No," says he, "if I find that it teaches me how my soul may be saved; for," says he, "'twould be like shedding my heart's blood to quit it; but," says he, "if I find that it's wrong altogether, and that my soul is in danger by means of it, then I MUST quit it; for what would it profit me if I gained the whole world, and suffered the loss of my soul?" "Well," says I, "I can't blame you; but tell me how you'll find out whether we're right or wrong?" "Well," says he, "I'll speak to the priest, and try to get some satisfaction from him; and I'll read the Douay Bible, and I'll talk with the readers, and won't set myself against inquiry, but I'll listen to both sides of the question: and what's more," says he, "I'll set about it at once, and I won't let next New Year's Day come round without seeing after my soul; for who knows but that God has said 'I'll let him alone THIS year also; but if he don't improve then, after that I'll cut him down;' and Dan," says he, "if you'll take a friend's advice, you'll be after doing something in that way yourself."

Your humble servant to command,

DAN CARTHY.

"WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST KNOW."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—Can you understand the enclosed sheets which I have picked up? The Redemptorist Fathers have been here for some time, teaching the people and hearing confessions, and it may be that one of the young ones was puzzled about some of the things that came across him in confession, and asked the advice of the elders, or maybe the Holy Fathers (who, I am told, never eat a bit of dinner but a dry crust, or something of the kind) have a conference every night with one another, and compare notes. As these holy men have come to the country to teach us our duties, I am sure they will be obliged by your giving publicity to the enclosed, and, upon any of them proving property, you will, of course, restore him his papers. It must be a great comfort to masters and mistresses to know how much their servants may rob them of without committing mortal sin; and the public in general will be glad to know that their Holy Fathers regulate the quantity of water to be put in their spirits; how much sand may be put in sugar to allow a reasonable profit to a grocer, and all other things which "any Christian must know."

I remain your humble servant,

CATHOLICUS.

A. B. is in service with a master who is said to be worth £400 a year. A. B. confessed that at three different times during the last month she has stolen a pound from her master, who was very careless in leaving money about.

Query—Was the sin mortal or venial?

Answer—Mortal.

Reason—If she had gone to confession after each theft it would only have been venial, as a pound is less than a day's income (see page 20); but each not having been pardoned in confession (when, indeed, it was not necessary to confess it, being only venial), the accumulation has rendered it a mortal sin, as she should not have taken more than about 30s., that being a day and a-half's income.—*Uno. dis.*

Mem.—To recommend more frequent attendance at confession.

B. C. confessed to having stolen a shilling from a labour-

* Supt. Hist. de Conc. de Trente, l. ii., c. 86.

† Sess. Sept., Can. xi.

‡ Luke xiii., 6-9.

§ John ix. 4.

¶ 1 Mark viii., 36.