

BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

EVERY subject that Father Newman undertakes to write upon is invested with new beauties by the magic touch of his skillful pen. Here is a beautiful tribute to the Benediction service that should inspire every Catholic with new veneration for this sublime spectacle:—

The Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is one of the simplest rites of the Church. The priests enter and kneel down; one of them unlocks the Tabernacle, takes out the Blessed Sacrament, inserts it upright in a Monstrance of precious metal, and sets it in a conspicuous place above the altar, in the midst of lights, for all to see. The people then begin to sing; meanwhile the Priest twice offers incense to the King of heaven, before whom he is kneeling. Then he takes the Monstrance in his hands, and turning to the people blesses them with the Most Holy in the form of a cross, while the bell is sounded by one of the attendants to call attention to the ceremony. It is our Lord's solemn benediction to His people, as when he lifted up his hands over the children, or when he blessed His chosen ones when he ascended up from Mount Olivet. As sons might come before a parent before going to bed at night, so, once or twice a week, the great Catholic family comes before the Eternal Father, after the bustle or toil of the day, and He smiles upon them, and sheds upon them the light of His countenance. It is a full accomplishment of what the priests invoked upon the Israelites, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord show His face to thee, and have mercy on thee; the Lord turn His countenance to thee and give thee peace." Can there be a more touching rite, even in the judgment of those who do not believe in it? How many a man, not a Catholic, is moved, on seeing it, "Oh, that I did but believe it!" when he sees the Priest take up the Fount of Mercy, and the people beat low in adoration!

It is one of the most beautiful, natural, and soothing actions of the Church.

ST. PETER'S AT NIGHT.

If you happen to be in Rome ever on a Holy Thursday, remain after the *Miserere* until the hour of church closing, and give yourself to the exquisite reverie and quiet, you will gain a repose to the soul that is unusual; a divine peace will come down upon you that will make amends for much of the wear and tear of the storm and unrest of everyday life that is forever about and within all mortals, even the quietest existence. What a sight it is! The vast mysterious spaces; the huge vaults of darkness; the great dome of domes that seems unfathomable; the dark solitudes of the many unlighted chapels, and the profound depth of the Council Hall as seen over the tympanum of the great enclosure. Then the lurid light of the torches, the masses of light, enter at the sepulchre altar. These throw strange, bright streams into the transept, up into the far-off dome, even touching here and there a glittering stone or a shining marble cornice down the long nave; then they plunge into the dark apse and are lost. Added to these curious unearthly effects of light in the great space is the strange population of colossal marble figures that start into a new and weird life. They are high up in air, leaping over entablatures or stepping forth majestically from huge dark niches—great giants clothed in ancient draperies, all of whose gestures seem to tell the one solemn story of Christ crucified. It is the most wonderful combination of mysterious space, effective architecture, grandiose decoration and strange effects of lights and shadows ever created by mortal genius.—Anne Brewster in *Philadelphia Bulletin*.

SKETCHES OF THE REFORMATION.

No institution known among men had ever a more purely evil origin than the Anglican Church. It is almost unique in its unspeakable infamy. The closest scrutiny can discover in it not one redeeming feature. Savage pride, lust and cruelty on the one hand, matchless turpitude and ignoble servility on the other; such are the foul sources of its being. The founders could not plead even the poor apology of fanaticism. They hardly so much as affected a religious motive. That plea was not urged till later, when their heirs found it necessary to justify their work. In the beginning of the so-called Anglican Reformation nobody pretended that the Church had erred in doctrine. The question did not arise. Henry put people to death for denying Catholic truths which Elizabeth put them to death for affirming. When Bacon, Cranmer's chaplain, prematurely broached Protestant ideas, he was compelled to do public penance, and promptly retract his heresies. England was invited to accept a new lay pontiff; but that in Henry's judgment, was all the Reformation she needed. She was free to believe what she always believed; the only new article in her creed being this, that all "ecclesiastical jurisdiction" has its fount in "the royal power," and not in the Chair of Peter. Admit that, said Henry, and his vice-regent Cromwell, and you may invoke the Saints, hear Mass, adore the Sacrament, and pray for the faithful departed. Woe to you if you refuse to do either! But the invisible allies of Henry knew that this was only a beginning. They looked on with content and waited for the end. It was not long in coming. One of the popular errors of our day is to speak of the Anglican Reformation, as if there had only been one. There were, in fact, several, each differing from the other, though all were potentially included in the first. Not only all the infinite varieties of doctrine within the Anglican Church, but all the swarming sects outside it, spring from the original denial of the supremacy of the Holy See. In that heresy every other is contained. It implies them all. It subverts the Church, denies God, puts Saints and Angels to flight, dries up the sources of grace, robs the Sacraments of their efficacy, kills unity, destroys authority, abolishes mission and jurisdiction, makes strife incurable and division permanent, and substitutes for the light yoke and unerring guidance of "the blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles," the crushing tyranny of the godless State, or the senseless caprice of the individual conscience. Take away the Holy See, and God's Church is gone. The Church of Cain has taken its place.—*London Tablet*.

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

Cardinal Manning, showing how devotion to the Blessed Virgin raises womanhood to their true position of dignity among men:—"I will say to women, imitate the Blessed Virgin; and if you love and venerate her, her image will pass unconsciously into the very substance of your life and heart. Imitate her true dignity, that dignity which does not consist in clamouring for rights and in running a race in the intellectual culture of men. Man and woman have a diverse perfection, and the union of these perfections, which are diverse, make up one perfection which is indissoluble. Women have a dignity and perfection of their own which no man can imitate without lowering himself. An effeminate man is an abomination, a masculine, self asserting woman is a monster. The pattern of our Blessed Mother is a pattern of womanly dignity. Woman has her sovereignty, and her kingdom is her own heart; and in the home over which she rules no man can dispute that sovereignty; if he rise against it he is mutilating that divine law by which he rules supreme. Such was the state when God created man and woman in Paradise, and the world has wrecked the recollection and is striving to efface the image of that two-fold perfection which rises into one. Man is the image of God; man is the head of the woman, and the head of man is God. These are the words of the Holy Ghost. In Jesus and His Blessed Mother the first creation is not only restored but elevated to a divine perfection, and you are called to be children of the Incarnation. The highest creature in the new creation of God is a woman, and the Second Adam is God himself.

The *Catholic Examiner* gives the following description of the riches of nature in India as seen in the valley of the Rungheet, on the descent from Darjeeling:—"This noble river, the Rungheet, winds through a stupendous gorge, the precipitous mountains on either side stretching upwards many thousand feet, densely clothed with magnificent primeval forest. . . . It is almost impossible to describe at all adequately the exquisite and almost heavenly beauty of the scene, or the delicate coloring of the rocks and boulders on the margin of the river, which is that of porphyry and alabaster, contrasting quite etherially with the metallic green of the water. We seem suddenly to have been transported into Fairyland, and all is more like an extravagant dream than reality. Gorgeous butterflies of every hue are sailing in the air or sunning themselves on the banks, where, sitting with wings erect, they look like Dutch galiots at anchor, the most numerous among them being the large swallow-tail species, robed in black velvet, with scarlet spots on their wings and long antennae. Birds in plumage of scarlet, blue, and orange, flit among the branches of the majestic sol; and a perfectly marvellous little creature, belonging to a species of lepidopterous insect, with a vermilion body, and wings of transparent and glittering emerald, hovers above us and around us in multitudes, while the air is filled with a melodious chorus of happy creatures."

Many Yankee prisoners were sent to Charleston, South Carolina, during the war. So great was their number at one time, that they were confined in the cellars of unoccupied warehouses, where the dampness and confined air rendered their imprisonment extremely dangerous to health. Many died for the want of proper clothing and food and general exposure to cold and malaria. As soon as the Catholic Bishop of Charleston knew these facts, he interested the ladies of the city in preparing bedding, clothing, and other comforts for their use, and obtained the permission of the commandant of the post to see to their proper distribution. So hostile were the people generally to any demonstrations of relief for the Yankees, that, but for the high consideration the inhabitants felt for the personal character of the Bishop, they would have accused him of political sympathy with the Northern prisoners. Scores of Protestant prisoners owe their lives to the kind efforts of this Catholic Bishop in ameliorating their condition during the confinement in the cellars of the City of Charleston.—*Conn. Catholic*.

Most Irish readers are familiar with Charles Phillips' penegyric on the character of Washington, pronounced at a dinner on Dinas Island, Killarney. But it seems he was preceded in his eulogy by an earlier Irish admirer of the "Father of his Country," in testimony of which is quoted the annexed advertisement, which appeared in the *Londonderry Journal* of April 30, 1783:

"Whereas, on February the 14th, 1783, it pleased kind Providence to confer on Matthew Neely, of Burnally, parish of Tam-laghtfinlagan, and county of Londonderry, a man child, whose appearance is promising and amiable, and hopes the Being who first caused him to exist will grant him grace. Also, in consideration and remembrance of the many heroic deeds done by that universally renowned patriot, General George Washington, the said Matthew Neely, has done himself the honour of calling the said man child by the name of George Washington Neely, he being the first child named or so called in the Kingdom by the name of Washington, that brilliant Western star."

The windows of the newly-opened "Evangelical Church" at Naples, have been ruthlessly smashed with a shower of stones hurled from the strong arms of ungrateful Italians, and, of course, the mischief is laid at the door of the "Clericals." The Catholic papers, however, in Rome and elsewhere, disclaim all participation in this violence, even by desire—much less by counsel—and advise the Neapolitans to let the stones remain in the road. They do not wish to see anyone's windows broken, whether he be good or bad, Clerical or Evangelical; but in giving this advice to the natives, they have a word of good counsel for the Quixotic Missionaries also, which is to shake off the dust of their feet against the Italians, and go to the place whence they came; there are many ships in the Bay of Naples, especially English and American ships, and by taking a passage in them, they can at once secure their safety, and find a field for their work among their two hundred sects at home.