



NUNNERY EXPOSED. ITS INFAMOUS PRACTICES.

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Gives Her Experiences as a Romanist.

A Lecture Delivered Before a Large Audience at the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Chicago.

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MADAM PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—We have come here to-night not to talk politics so much as to discuss the question of convent life. I always had a very green objection to giving this lecture. I do not care to speak on the convent life. I have no very pleasant reminiscences in respect to it, but I think sometimes it does good for us to enter into such discussion so that we may become intelligent on the points of conventual seclusion.

A great many people have asked me as to my nationality. Some ask if I am French, some if I am Welsh, some if I am American, and I have said no. Very few have guessed my nationality. I am an Irishwoman, and I am proud of being Irish, but I am proud of another thing—I am proud that I am not under the rule of the Irish priesthood. Though I am of Irish descent for many, many centuries past, yet I was born in the East Indies. My father was an officer, first, in the East India Company Service. Then the East India Company Service amalgamated and became the British army. My father was an officer in the Royal Horse Artillery. He was a colonel and his name was Herbert. He died when I was only four years old, so that I have very little recollection of him, except just what I have heard from my mother. My father was a very devout Roman Catholic, and so was my mother. Consequently I was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. I was sent, when only four years old, to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, in Simla, the Hill Station in the Himalaya Mountains. It is one of the most fashionable places in India. I remember very little about my education or my life in the convent for the first four or five years, but I just want to say here that a great many people have asked me this question: "Mrs. Shepherd, do you think that the Roman Catholic sisters in the convent interfere at all with the religious principles of their Protestant pupils?" A great many people have asked me whether the Roman Catholic nuns in these convent schools interfere at all with the religious principles of their Protestant pupils, and I can answer that question to-night, both in the negative and the affirmative.

First, you must remember that the Roman Catholic Sister, or the Mother Superior, generally has two faces. She has one face that she allows people of the world to see. She has another face that is never seen outside of the community. If a Protestant lady, especially if she is the wife of someone of position, political position, and financial standing, should go to a convent school and ask to see Mother Superior and speak to Mother Superior respecting her desire to send her daughter to the convent school, probably the lady would say, "I hope you will not interfere with the religious principles of my child." Mother Superior would look at her with that most amiable look which she can put on—the society look, or parlor face, and she would say to her, "Most certainly not, Madam. We never think of interfering with the religious principles of our Protestant pupils."

The mother would go away perfectly satisfied. The child would be sent to the Catholic school. After the child had been there five or six months, Christmas or Easter would come, and it is usual at those seasons for Roman Catholic children, and grown-up people also, to exchange cards, little devotional cards, so that the Roman Catholic child would give to the Protestant child a little devotional card, and generally speaking these devotional cards given to Protestant children have the imprint of the Virgin Mary in one of her various phases of devotion, so that if the child received the card she would thank her Catholic school friend very kindly for it, and a conversation would take place. The Protestant child would not like to appear prejudiced, and she would likely say to what the Catholic had to say. By and by the Catholic child would bring to her another picture, then a third and fourth picture. Then she would present to her a little story book, speaking of the self-denial of some little Roman Catholic child, a very romantic book, beautifully illustrated, and all that conversation between the two children,

it, that they settle between God and themselves. All I know is this: I stand to-day a Protestant, and I firmly believe that if I had passed away the opportunity that God gave me of leaving the Roman Catholic authorities, and entering into the light and liberty of the Lord Jesus Christ, that I would be accountable to God for that lost opportunity.

My mother, just before she died, made this request: that I should go over to England to some of my father's relations. I want you to understand that I was not brought up in the world; that is, I knew nothing at all about the world. I had never entered into society. I had led a very secluded life in that convent school. I knew nothing at all about sin, or society, or worldliness of any description. My mother kept me away from the world as much as she possibly could. When I was sent over to England by my brother, who is a doctor in the English army, I was not quite sixteen years old. When I arrived in England, I knew nothing at all about English life. My education was not finished. I stayed with my aunt, who had a place in Salisbury, Kent. Whilst I was there I formed the acquaintance of quite a number of prominent Roman Catholic priests. My people were all Roman Catholics, occupying a good social position, so that they entertained quite a number of the Roman Catholic clergy. At that time I was what you would call a very devout and a very pious Roman Catholic. I used to go to mass regularly every morning, and then on a Sunday morning, first I would go to early communion, and then at 11 o'clock I would go to high mass, and I would go to vespers and benediction. So that I was what you would call a very conscientious and a very pious Roman Catholic. I never heard of the Roman Catholic church so intensely that if it had been necessary for me to shed my blood for it I would have done so, whilst I was in its communion; and remember that the strongest Catholic to-day is the Irish Roman Catholic. You might get ten French Catholics converted where you could not get one Irish Roman Catholic converted. Catholic men converted when you wouldn't get even half an Irishman converted. Why is it? Because it is the policy of the Roman Catholic church to keep all her influence over the women of the church. If she influences the mother she gains the child. If she influences the wife she gains the husband, and that is why the Roman Catholic church to-day is so anxious to keep her influence over the women of her communion, in order that she may retain all the power that she has got to-day.

Now, as I tell you, I was very pious and very good. When I was good, I mean that I was a good Roman Catholic. I don't think I was ever very good, because I had an abominable Irish temper (laughter), and it used to get the better of me a great many times. After I had been home for some time, my aunt expressed a desire that I should enter into society. I had no great wish myself to do so, but I had been taught to be obedient to those who were placed over me. Therefore I put aside my own self, that kind of confidence and love, and aunt wished me to do. I shall never forget the first reception that I attended at home. I think, gentlemen, and you ladies, too, will agree with me that it is very much easier to enter into the world than to get out of the world. You can enter into society, and society somehow or other fascinates you and wears its web around you, and it is very hard to break away from the web, to come away from it, and go back again into this consecrated life; and so I found it. When I first entered into society it was objectionable to me, but little by little, little by little, I began to be fascinated with it, until at last I found that I could not rest unless I was at some place of amusement. I had a life was a life to a certain extent, of excitement. I was then very young. Day after day found me in some place of amusement. But one afternoon—I want to say here, that whilst I loved my mother very dearly, and there had always been a bond of perfect confidence between my mother and myself, that bond of confidence and love did not exist between my other relations and myself. I was very much persecuted at home by my own people. I was very peculiar, perhaps, and very set in my ideas. I am a very determined woman, and once I make up my mind to do a thing I do it, whether I please anybody or not. I know it is right. (Laughter and applause.) And that is just exactly where my relations and myself disagreed. My aunt made it very hard for me. She said that there were certain things I should not do. She said: "You shall not do it," and I said: "I will do it," and I did it to a great extent. I was not very much more matured. I would not have done. Consequently there was a great deal of ill-feeling between my friends at home and myself, so much that I was very glad to have an opportunity to go into the convent. But I am travelling outside too far. I was sitting up in my room one afternoon when I had passed through a very great deal of trouble, and I do not think that I care to enter into all the particulars of my domestic troubles, because it would not interest you at all. I had been in a good deal of trouble, and somehow or other I began to think of my mother and of my home, and I began to feel that I was in India, and then a feeling came upon me that I would like to go away to a place of seclusion, and away from everybody, because I was in so much trouble. I had suffered so intensely, and whilst I was thinking of this, I went up to the bookcase and took down a book and commenced reading. It was the "Life of St. Mary Magdalene," by Pore LaCordaire. And as I read that book, and thought of all the church talked about her, that she was the model penitent, and of how much she had given up, and how much she had transgressed, and yet how much she had been forgiven, and then how deeply she loved; it seemed to me as if my whole heart went out into this great thought: "Oh, that I could also give up my life to God, and have a life of repentance to God for all the sins that I have committed!"

I made up my mind that I should enter into the convent. It was necessary for me first to discuss the subject with my mother. At that time Father O'Connor was my confessor. Therefore I went to him that night, after having made up my mind that I should enter into conventual life. I lit a candle and placed it

before the statue of the Virgin Mary, and kneeled down there and asked Our Lady to help me. You may wonder why I did that. But remember, dear friends, that the Roman Catholic, from her very earliest childhood, the very first prayer she is taught is Ave Maria, or Hail Mary. Mary is always held up to the Roman Catholic as the merciful, the gracious and the beautiful. Jesus Christ is always held up first as the Son of God, and next as one who died for our sins, but who did not make entire satisfaction for us. Then Jesus is held up, as well as God, in the form of an austere judge, and Mary comes in as mediator between Jesus Christ and the soul. So that we are taught to love Mary first, and after Mary to love Jesus. Mary is first always in the Roman Catholic church. So that I kneeled down and prayed to Our Lady, and asked her to help me, and obtain for me the grace of the religious vocation. Then the next morning I rose up and went to Father O'Connor and told him of the decision that I had arrived at the night previous. We had some discussion on the point. He neither assented nor dissented, but he said to me, "Think the matter over, and then come again and tell me what your decision is."

I had a little trouble at home amongst my people about it. I do not wish to enter into that part of my family history, because it has nothing to do with my present life, and certainly has nothing to do with any religious life. I went, however, to Father O'Connor, and told him that I had made up my mind to go into the convent. Then he said: "We will have to select a place for you." Now, gentlemen, and you ladies, just allow me to say here that when a Roman Catholic woman or a man wishes to enter into a religious life, they cannot choose the order to which they enter. It is always necessary to ask the advice of your confessor, and, supposing, for instance, that you wished to enter into the order of the Sisters of Charity, and your confessor thought that it would be better for you to go into some other order, you would have to put aside your own inclination and do just exactly what your confessor told you. In other words, you have no will in the matter, but you must bend your will to that of your superior.

After talking a good while with Father O'Connor, it was arranged that I should enter into a penitential order under the name of Our Lady of Refuge. Now, allow me to explain what this penitential order is. It is a very severe order, and it is for those who wish to devote the whole of their time to penitence, prayer and meditation. It is not what is generally known as an active order of nuns, but it is a penitential order. It is one of the most austere orders that we have in the church of Rome to-day.

The first thing I had to do was, through my confessor, to apply for admission to the Mother Superior. I was put into correspondence with her. I entered into the convent first as a probationer for six months. By that time I mean that it was not necessary for me to take the vows of the order or to adopt the habit of the order; simply to enter into that probationary part of the convent to allow the Mother Superior and the Sisters of the order to judge whether I had the qualifications necessary for the life of a religious. After the six months was over I then entered into what is called the Novitiate. When I entered into the Novitiate, I took the three vows, and also adopted the habit of the order.

Now, allow me to give you the obligations of the three vows: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. By the vow of Poverty we are to give up everything that we possess. We live together in a community. It is a sin for us to use the pronoun me or mine. If I had lost my book, or if I had lost my rosary, and went to a sister and said to her: "Dear sister, have you seen my book?" or "Have you seen my rosary?" she would look at me and say: "Dear sister, I was not aware that you possessed a rosary," or "that you possessed a book." It would be necessary for me, in accordance with conventional phraseology, to say: "Have you seen our book?" or "Have you seen our rosary?" For everything we possess is common to all.

We are not only told to do that, but we are told that we must pick up every crumb of anything, or even a needleful of sewing cotton. We must use the thread that is in our needles until there is not sufficient even to pull through the needle, hardly, so that we might not waste any more thread. We are told to waste even two inches of sewing thread, that we are breaking our vow of mortal poverty. The crumbs we have to pick up, and if we cannot pick them up with our hands or our fingers, it is perfectly in order, gentlemen, for us to get down on our knees and pick up the crumbs that fall on the floor, so that we might not waste them. I remember after I had been in the convent for a very short time that the Mistress of Novices said to me one evening, as we were kneeling in chapel: "Sister Magdalene Allico, I find that you waste your crumbs very much. Now, just a short time before you came into the convent, there was Sister Mary Frances Xavier here, and she died. While she was in life she wasted her crumbs very much. After she was dead I was passing through the refectory one morning, and I saw the holy soul of the poor nun lying on the table, and I began to cry. (Laughter.)" Then she said: "I had a vision in which the sister appeared to me and told me that for every crumb that she had wasted during her life, she was suffering in purgatory a quarter of an hour extra pain in purgatory." (Renewed laughter.) You may see that I did not waste any crumbs after that. That was to prove to me that it was very wrong to waste my crumbs, good, bad or indifferent. Now, that I was in accordance to the Vow of Poverty.

If you have any real estate, or if you have any money, it is necessary for you to make that over, too. Now, the Church of Rome claims to-day that Miss Kate Drexel has the entire disposal of her seven millions of dollars, and good, liberal Protestants will say: "Well, Miss Drexel can do what she likes with her seven millions of dollars." I would like a Protestant minister to go to Miss Drexel and ask her to give him a thousand dollars for some Protestant mission. She would tell him that she couldn't do it. Why? Because, whilst Miss Drexel nominally is her own mistress, as far as

her finances are concerned, every cent of money that she pays out is paid out under the advice of her "Director of Conscience," and that will be a Jesuit. Therefore, it is very nice to say she has got entire control. She has no control over her money at all, but she must disburse it just exactly as her confessor tells her to do.

Then by our Vow of Chastity we are never supposed to look up into the face of any man; but I cannot say for certain that the sisters never did look up into the faces of the priests that used to come there. I won't go back for that. (Laughter.) Then again, by our Vow of Holy Chastity, we are not allowed to touch each other's hands, or enter into conversation about anything connected with our home associations. We are not to give very much thought to our father, mother, brother or sister. We are told that we are there in the convent to forget that we were ever anybody but the person we are called in the convent. We are there to forget that we ever had any home associations, that we ever had any relations at all, for we are told that if we begin thinking too much of our friends, we are breaking our Vow of Holy Chastity, and that we are, therefore, dishonoring our Divine spouse, Jesus Christ.

Then comes the Vow of Obedience, and this takes the supremacy of the three vows. By your Vow of Obedience you are to obey the Mother Superior and your confessor. Liguori, in his instructions to Novices, says: In respect to obedience the religious must do everything they are told to do by their spiritual director. If the spiritual director should tell them to do something that is a sin, and if their conscience tells them it is wrong, they must put their conscience aside; they must obey their director, for God is better pleased by submissive obedience than by going according to the dictates of conscience. The moral obligation of the sin will not rest upon the one who committed it, but upon the director who told them to commit that sin; and you know there is a great many people who are very willing to shift the moral obligation of sin upon the shoulders of somebody else, and I never knew a class of men more willing to bear the burden of the sins of all their penitents than the Jesuits. They will bear everybody's sins—it is wonderful—not only their own but twenty other persons' also, and I don't know how they are going to get through the doors of purgatory at all with all those sins upon them (laughter).

Now, we have to rise up very early in the morning. At four o'clock the nuns' bell rings. We then rise. The first thing we do is to bless ourselves and to call upon the holy names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Then we prostrate ourselves upon the floor and kiss it. Then we dress ourselves, and every article of clothing that we put on we kiss, because it was blessed when it was given to us. The blessing goes on in the convent once a year, especially at Easter time, when the priest comes in to bless everything in the convent from garret to cellar. He blesses every article of furniture, and then he goes around and he throws holy water on the walls, and he throws it into the garret, he throws it in the laundry, so that whilst other things are being blessed the black beetles and the mice are being blessed also. (Laughter.) We used to rise up then at four o'clock, robe ourselves, then go down to the church to make our morning meditation. That morning meditation lasted generally about half an hour. The meditation consisted in the celebration of mass, and then we went into the refectory to have our breakfast. Our breakfast consisted of a little piece of bread and a small cup of cocoa or tea, very weak. It wasn't strong English breakfast tea. Some of the sisters who had great devotion to what is called the first of the three vows, Chastity, would take a large tablespoonful of salt, and put it into the tea, and drink that brackish liquid, and as they drank it they would offer it up to Christ in reparation for the vinegar and gall that was given to him on the cross. The spiritual merit that they would gain from having practiced this mortification they would apply to some soul in purgatory, or lay it up in the Bank of Indulgences for themselves, so that it might be put to their credit when they arrived in purgatory themselves. (Laughter.)

Now, dear friends, we are apt to call, or some people here call, the Church of Rome a branch of the true Church, or a branch of Christ's Church. I do not call it anything of the kind. I call the Church of Rome to-day civilized Paganism. (Applause.)

After breakfast—and remember we had been in silence from eight o'clock the previous evening, after breakfast we would then go back again into the church and say our office, and by our office I mean certain prayers that we had to say at a certain hour, and if we omitted to say them, we would come to six the next morning, and confess it unless we had dispensation to omit saying them by the priest or our Mother Superior. After we had repeated our office, we would then go into the various departments wherever we worked. Some of the sisters used to make the vestments, and consider the priest's vestments and altar cloths. That was the work that I generally used to do myself in the convent. Other sisters were great adepts in making linens, and, of course, we used to get a great deal of work in from the stores. Remember this—that nearly every bit of hand linen that you purchase in the stores as a rule is made inside of the various convents of the Roman Catholic Church. I might just mention a little incident that occurred in Philadelphia. I went into Wanamaker's once in Philadelphia, and I saw some very nice handkerchiefs there, and purchased some, and as I turned around I saw, "Convent stitched handkerchiefs," and I stopped. I said to the man: "Are these handkerchiefs stitched in a convent?" He said, "Yes."

I said, "Give me back my money." (Applause.)

He looked at me, I said: "I have a principle. You give me my money," and I got my money, and I walked out and left the handkerchiefs behind me. (Applause.) If I knew that some poor Roman Catholic woman was really, really poor and wanted help, I wouldn't refuse

to help her, but I wouldn't give one cent of money—if I had ten million dollars to-night, I wouldn't give—no, not one-half cent of money to any Roman Catholic convent or Roman Catholic institution of any kind, for the reason, but I knew Roman Catholic family that was in want, I would try to follow the teachings of my Master to relieve the afflicted—if I found that they were really and truly in want. (Applause.) But I do not propose to give a cent of money to keep the Roman Catholic priests in cigars and brandy. (Cries of "Hear, hear," and applause.)

Then we would work until eleven o'clock. At eleven o'clock we would repeat the Litany. The bell would then go for dinner, and we would go into the refectory. During the dinner hour one of the sisters would read to us from some of the books, at least, that they used to read to us from. The ladies knew all about it. I told them in the lecture this afternoon, and if you want to know you had better ask them. (The speaker being requested by a large vote of the audience to relate the incident, proceeded to do so. Cries of "Hear, hear," and applause.)

Now, remember that you are anxious to hear it yourselves. It is not a very nice thing to repeat, but it will show you just exactly how we have to mortify ourselves. It was during the season of Lent, when we are supposed to abstain from everything in the way of luxury, and on this occasion one of the sisters was reading from the "Life of St. Catherine of Siena," and when she came to a certain chapter in the biography it mentioned the fact that St. Catherine of Siena had one time in her life served in the capacity of nurse in one of the hospitals, and during the time she was there the doctor came to the hospital and dressed the wounds of a cancerous patient. St. Catherine was present there and she was assisting the doctor. She held the basin in her hand and all the corruption from the wound was put into this basin. St. Catherine was carrying the basin away, and as she did so she happened to glance into the basin, and the whole of her nature revolted against that which was in the basin. Instantly she remembered that she was a spouse of Jesus Christ, that there was also a secular nurse by her side, and that perhaps this natural feeling of revolt had caused this defection to the secular nurse, and so wishing to establish herself again in the mind of this nurse and wishing to make some sort of reparation for the feeling of revolt, she had come to her and she raised up her heart in prayer to the Lord or to the Virgin Mary, and she put the basin to her lips and swallowed everything in it. Now, gentlemen, this, remember, is a part of religion, and we had to sit down there at the dinner table and listen to this villainous being read to us, and if we had turned away from our dinner we would have been punished for that. We were there to cultivate the grace of mortification, and it was necessary for us to do it; and the more we mortified ourselves, the more filthy, abominable things that we could hear during the time that we were eating our meal, the more and more we would be supposed to approach to sanctity.

You know that there is a saint that they call the Dirty Saint in the Church of Rome, and it speaks of him that on one occasion he used to have vermin run up his arm; that he had actually named the vermin, and as they were going to get away from his arm, he would say, "Go back, Peter! Go back, John!" That is what they call the Dirty Saint. So the Church of Rome canonizes a person for being perfectly clean and holy, and then canonizes him for being dirty, just the same as they canonized Simon the Stylite, who was supposed to remain upon a pillar for thirty years and never came off of it. Think of it! For thirty years upon a pillar! People talk about canonizing a person. They are going to canonize Christopher Columbus and the first of the three saints, and in a short time the next person that they canonize will be St. John Boyle O'Reilly, the late editor of the *Pilot* of Boston, a man that one of the newspapers I read on Sunday called a patriot and a soldier. How was he a patriot? He has never been worthy the name of patriot. I do not wish to speak against the dead, but at the same time, against the people in the State of Massachusetts have had a great deal of trouble with John Boyle O'Reilly, and some night I intend to give a lecture to the Chicago people on the life of John Boyle O'Reilly. The next person that they will canonize will be John L. Sullivan, and John L. Sullivan and Mike McDonald will be side by side with St. Patrick on the 17th of March. (Applause and laughter.)

Then after dinner we could go out for recreation for just one hour. We were not allowed to speak on any subject against conventual rule. We would go again into the community room at one o'clock. Then we would set to work until two o'clock. At two o'clock the bell would ring, and the Mistress of Novices would repeat the rosary and we would respond. Work would continue again until five o'clock. All this in perfect silence. Then at five o'clock we would go into the church, make our meditation until a quarter of six, and then to six the bell would ring, and we would go back into the community room. The six o'clock supper bell would ring, and we would go into the refectory and have our supper. At seven o'clock we would go into the church to say our office. At half past seven we would have recreation until eight o'clock. Then we would assemble in chapel to confess before Mother Superior all the little faults that we had committed during the day, and receive a penance for them. We not only made our confession once a week to the priest, but we also had to go through what is called a "manifestation of conscience." We have to go to the Mother Superior every Tuesday morning, and tell her everything connected with ourselves. She would simply sit down and ask us questions, and probe and probe, so that she would understand our disposition very thoroughly, and see what we were best qualified to do. But remember, this "manifestation of conscience" helps the Mother Superior to understand just how she can use us. She will know our virtues and our vices; she will know where we are easily tempted or where we are very strong, and so she will use us for the glory of the church, and very often for her own ends. And let me say that the Mother Superior in the convent makes it very often hard, very hard for the sisters in the convent. Generally speaking, the Mother Superior is a woman who is ambitious; or, in other words, she is a thorough wire-puller. That is the only thing I can call her a thorough wire-puller. And remember, we have woman suffrage in the convent, for there every three years we can vote for the Mother Superior. I was once in the garden with the other ladies who had the garden, and the other ladies had her faction; so that they study politics in the convent as well as in every other place.

Now, after that we retire to bed, and we are supposed to be in perfect silence, but I know that I have heard in the night a great many groans coming from the rooms in which some of the sisters slept. I told you a little while ago that we were never allowed under the Vow of our Holy Chastity to give too much thought to our parents, or to our home or our home associations. Now, dear friends, I remember on one occasion that I was allowed to walk across the garden with Sister Magdalene Augustine. I told you a few minutes ago we were never allowed to touch each other's hands, but because this sister was very ill, the Mistress of Novices had told me to walk around the garden. I did so, and after a few turns we sat down in a grove dedicated to our Lady of Lourdes. She said to me: "Sister Magdalene Allico, I think that our Lord is going to take me away very soon." I didn't know what to say to her. I didn't answer her very much. She said: "Will you pray for me?" I said: "Certainly I will." She said: "Will you offer communion for me on the anniversary of my death?" I said: "I will." I said to her: "Sister Magdalene Augustine, are you not happy in this life?" "Well," she said, "as happy as I ought to be, perhaps, or perhaps as happy as I may be under the circumstances." She said: "There is one wish in my heart: it is an unnatural wish, but I have been trying to crush it down, but I cannot do it, and I know that I am going to suffer a great deal longer in purgatory because I have given way to this unnatural wish, and it is an awful thing to think that after all that I have done, after all I have given up, after all the prayers that I have said, and the penances that I have suffered, that my soul may languish in purgatory for so many, many years. And she caught hold of my hand very convulsively and said, "You will promise to pray for me?" I said: "Sister Augustine, what is the unnatural wish? What was the unnatural wish that you gave way to?" She said: "I ought not to talk to you. It is against the rule of the holy order that I should talk to anybody, but I cannot help it. My heart is almost broken." She said: "If I could only see my mother before she died,"—that was the unnatural wish.

Remember, she was there to crush down every feeling of love for her mother, or father, or brother or sister. Two or three nights after that Sister Augustine was very, very ill, and asked that I might be allowed to sit up with her. Permission was granted, and when the infirmarian went away, I was sitting down in the infirmary repeating my rosary, when suddenly I heard her say, "Oh, my feet! Oh, my feet!" and I went up to her bed and took up the linen sheet that covered her feet and I shall never forget the sight that met my view. Her limbs were all swollen, her feet were festered and cut. A terrible suspicion came into my mind. I stooped down and I picked up the infirmarian's shoes. I found in them little pieces of china and glass. That poor girl, believing that she had given way to an unnatural wish, that she had broken her vow of holy chastity to a certain extent, that she would have to suffer a great deal in purgatory for having done so, put these pieces of china and glass into her shoes, that poor consumptive girl,—and she had walked upon them so that she might suffer some of that purgatory in this life rather than in the life to come.

Now, dear friends, you give a great deal of money, or send a great deal of money to foreign missions, but if you are asked to give a dollar sometimes for the conversion of Roman Catholics to the light and liberty of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in this country, you are apt to stand up and say, it is very un-American, or you are apt to say, it is un-American for an American to preach the gospel to the Catholics of this country; if it is un-American to give them Bibles, then it is un-American for you to send your money to Spain to convert the Roman Catholics, instead of using it amongst your neighbors in this country. If you want to convert the Roman Catholics, convert those who are your next-door neighbors, and let Spain look after the Roman Catholics there; let Italy look after her own people, let England convert the Roman Catholics there, and let the American people, if they want to convert Catholics, convert them in this country, not only to the true teaching of the gospel, but also convert them over to become true and loyal to the United States. (Applause.)

I do not want to say one word to hurt the feelings of any Roman Catholic. I am simply telling you what I believe to be true, and what you ought to do if you are interested in the question of Roman Catholicism.

We are never allowed to speak to each other in respect to anything connected with ourselves. I remember one occasion when Sister Palladia, one of the sisters of the convent, was walking around with me in the garden during the time we were holding a spiritual retreat, and she said to me, "I have a spiritual retreat we have to keep more perfect silence than at any other time. We have been repeating our rosary, and somehow or other, I don't know just exactly how it happened, we drifted away into conversation. Sister Palladia said to me, 'I have a spiritual retreat, and you are talking to me.' I said, 'How is it possible?' She said, 'He kissed me when I was in confession.' I said: 'How could he kiss you when you were in confession? There is a partition in the confessional box so that the father could not kiss you there.' She said: 'No, but it was during the time our church was undergoing repairs, and we had to make our confession in the sacristy.' And, of course when you go into the sacristy to make your confession the priest sits upon an ordinary chair, and you kneel by the side of the chair and make your confession to him. She said: 'It was during the time that I was confessing to him in the sacristy that he put his arm around my neck and

(Continued on Second page.)

(Continued on Second page.)

A SAD TALE!

It is About Chicago Physicians.

Those Who Wish to Have Healers, and Mesmeric Operators Suppressed.

THE FITNESS TO DOCTOR ILLUSTRATED—ILLEGIBLE PRESCRIPTIONS—DEADLY POISONS AND PENCIL MARKS—HANDWRITING THAT OUTRANKS HORACE GREELEY IN ITS INDECIPHERABLE OBSCURITY—FACTS FOR LAW MAKERS TO CONSIDER—A PATIENT SUFFER IN THE HANDS OF A GOOD NURSE—A VOICE FROM PITTSBURGH, PA.

TO THE EDITOR:—The following, from the *Times* of this city, illustrates some important points that it would be well for Spiritualists, healers, hypnotists and mesmerists to consider:—

"Only the recording angel knows how many death warrants are written each year in this city, in the guise of doctors' prescriptions," said a well-known drugist to a *Times* man.

"The sentences are frequently executed, too," he continued, "although every precaution to avoid it is observed by druggists or 'chemists,' as we are getting to be called by anglo-manics. Occasionally a blunder causing the death of some innocent patient of a physician who cannot or will not write legibly is discovered. Then what a cry goes up about the carelessness of apothecaries. We are denounced from Joppa to Jerusalem and back again to Jericho. Nothing is so bad to be said about us. Some times a resort to lynch law is advocated by the newspapers, but when this is done it is a case of 'they don't know what they are talking about.' I do not deny that druggists now and then make a mistake, but the occasions where the blame for an accidental death is on our side are extremely rare."

"But there is another side to the story. Physicians are, as a rule, very poor writers. Not all of them, of course, but a large proportion of them write such a 'fat' that the most keen-eyed copyist cannot make out what word the indecipherable hieroglyphics were intended to represent. When you consider in connection with this the fact that most prescriptions are written in the symbology of chemistry and *materia medica*, you will wonder that more fatal blunders are not committed. I will show you a few of the prescriptions that have been sent to this shop to be filled. From them you can form an idea of the difficulties a druggist meets."

Here the druggist went behind the glass screen which separated the prescription-compounding sanctum from the outer shop. He made a rapid search through what seemed a round, long pillar of soiled paper, but which was really several thousand prescriptions crumpled into a wire. These bits of paper were mottled with stains of sickness, pain, suffering, and perhaps death. The man of calomel and blue mass tore from the wire a dozen or more of the bits of paper fastened on it.

"Read them," said he, pushing them towards *The Times* man. Although the latter had a long experience in reading copy, and had "handled stuff" that was simply awful in its illegibility, the "hooks and pothangers" of the medical man defied him.

"What do you think of this?" said the drug man, holding up a prescription of a face-simile of which is here presented:

"Fluid Ext. Gelsomium.
Acetate Potassium.
Water.
Teaspoonful every three hours."
"There is a poison in this one," said the druggist. "But that fact did not make the man who wrote a bit more careful. Now, here is another. It is written with a blue pencil on a reddish sort of paper, and this combination of colors renders it very difficult to read. Like the others it includes a poison—chloral hydrate in this case. True, it is intended for external use, and I so marked plainly on the package in which it was put up. But I think it can safely challenge you to learn from an attempted perusal of that prescription how or where it was intended to be used."

Here is the third sample of a doctor's inability to cope with the principles laid down by Mr. Spencer:

"Hyd. benzoide.
Iodide potassium.
Tinct. Aconite root.
Arsenic.
Syrup orange peel."

And here is what it all means:
Iodide potassium.
Powd. camphor.
Chloral hydrate.
Hydrocyanic acid locally.
Here's a beauty—a very daisy in the way of non-readable recipes," continued the druggist, as he delved again into the pile and brought out a paper covered with scrawling, straggling lines.

"Such would be the result if he had to fast with the ordinary man—or even many a skilled pharmacist—would be picking the meaning out of this seemingly incoherent scribble. Yet the life of the patient for whom it was written depended on its right reading by the druggist to whom it might be compounded. By this translation I write for you, you see it contains two poisons—aconite and arsenic. An error on my part in using either of them improperly might have caused the death of the person who took the medicine. Take this with you."

The reporter took it, and with it the explanation written by the druggist, and here it is:

"Hyd. benzoide.
Iodide potassium.
Tinct. Aconite root.
Arsenic.
Syrup orange peel."

"Now can you wonder that blunders are occasionally made by druggists? This is not our only annoyance. Doctors often write so carelessly that we can not distinguish the name of a harmless drug from a deadly poison. Take sulphate of zinc and sulphate of magnesia, for instance. The first is poison, the second is not. Yet often prescriptions come here written in such a way that it is impossible to tell which article is intended for the medicine. In such cases we judge by the rest of the prescription and the quantity of the doubtful article. If it seems clear that a poison is meant and the amount prescribed would be a dangerous or fatal dose, we keep the prescription on some pretext until we have had time to send it back to the physician for verification before filling it."

"Not a druggist but has saved many lives in this way. It is to his own interest as well as to the doctor's to see that no evil results from their joint work in prescribing and compounding medicine. I would advise all persons to read the prescription given them by their physician in his presence, and if they find it illegible or obscure, to insist on his rewriting it. That is the only safeguard."

"Isn't that a nice, cheerful thing to have brought to you to decipher, and from its directions compound something on which may depend the life of a human being?" continued the dispenser of pills and potions. "You can't read it; neither can ninety-nine men out of a hundred. And yet that prescription was written by one of the leading physicians of this city. The plain legible front on it are our marks—prescription number and charge."

"You might study it a year, and then you would not know what was meant. It took me an hour, experienced as I am in such things, to make it out. Leaving out the quantities, here is the translation," and the druggist wrote on a slip of paper:

"Chlorate potash.
Muriatic acid.
Distilled water."

"You will notice that the second ingredient in the prescription is muriatic acid—a deadly poison. One would think that a man would be more careful in describing such a dangerous article. Yet if a mistake were made the blame would fall on the druggist, and not on the vile culprit—the doctor."

"Here is another," went on the druggist, and he pulled another scrawled paper from the wire. You will notice that this is written in lead-pencil on a smooth paper, so that even were the letters plainly formed it would be difficult to read."

The druggist's second selection and the meaning of the scratches on it appear below:

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Muriatic acid.
Distilled water."

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nature had not conformed to—not if he had attended a medical college for a lifetime. Such a legal advantage might with equal propriety be conferred on lawyers, physicians, but it is not if it need be, to exercise such a power would be chemists, psychologists or scientists."

In protesting against the proposed law, let it be understood that the test is not made in behalf of Spiritualism alone; it is in behalf of everyone who desires a fair field and equal rights and privileges for all; and let it be understood that the opposition to such a law is not in favor of the most vicious practices, whether by mediums, mesmerizers, hypnotists, or any other evil-doers, but, if any law on the subject is deemed necessary, it would be sufficient to provide for the punishment of evil-doers in this or other lines of professional conduct, or if more than this, if prevention of the opportunity for wrong-doing is aimed at, it would be only necessary to enact that no one should be subjected to magnetic or hypnotic influence without his or her consent, witnessed by two or more relatives, or other witnesses of good character in the neighborhood; or if the patient or subject was under age, or incompetent to give consent, then by the consent of two or more persons of good character, or by the guardian evidenced in like manner. This would be ample protection against all fraud and imposition; much better protection than the certificate of a regular medical practitioner, whose honesty and integrity are in every large city to certify to anything for a consideration."

The science of Astronomy was retarded in its development for nearly two hundred years by similar methods when the church had power to lord it over human rights and liberties. Such class legislation as this scheme proposes is in the same old line of handicapping the people and is a growing evil of the present day. I am no medium or magnetizer or hypnotist myself, nor in any wise interested in Spiritualism. I have known this kind of healing to succeed many times where the regular practitioner's methods had failed, and I see no better way to raise my feeble voice against the proposed outrage than by bringing it to the notice of the public. I have no paper where circulation is almost equal to that of any other weekly paper of any sort in the nation. J. F. CUMMINGS.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

TO THE EDITOR:—The following, from the *Indianapolis News*, gives an incident worth recording:

A child was buried a week ago, and if the father is correct, the dead mother of the infant delivered the funeral sermon. This sounds and is extraordinary, and involves, of course, more or less of occultic influences. It is not, however, what it is worth. How it happened let the father himself tell."

Mr. B. Frank Schmid is one of the proprietors of the Central Chair Factory, and a citizen of known standing. Until a few weeks ago he was a member of the Society of Friends. He is a devoted believer in the immortality of the soul. It is probably just such experiences as his that have led Edward Everett Hale, Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, Rev. Minot J. Savage and others to undertake to solve the mysteries of the phenomena of Spiritualism. To-day he is a devotee of Spiritualism. He has a beautiful grove on the south bank of White River, with good water and natural gas, and its nearness to the centre of the State cannot fail to meet the approbation of our people."

"I regret to have to say that Mr. Hunkle's article is the first stab in the back that I have received from a Spiritualist. I have no doubts in my mind that to that class who pay nothing, and yet want to rule, we pass them by, hoping that they may yet see their error, and become better and wiser men. The thirty acres of land purchased for the new cemetery, near the corner of the State, but as they all belong to that class who pay nothing, and yet want to rule, we pass them by, hoping that they may yet see their error, and become better and wiser men."

"My wife Emma," said Mr. Schmid, "died a few months ago. The infant to which she gave life at her death passed away a week ago. My wife had been a member of Dr. Rondthaler's Presbyterian Church, and for that reason I called him to officiate at her funeral. He could not go to the cemetery, and just before we started he told me that he had requested the undertaker to say a few words of prayer at the grave. On the way out I felt myself strangely moved, and became conscious that the spirit of my beloved wife was whispering to me."

"I tell the undertaker to say nothing at the grave," the voice said to me, "I will see that all things needful are said." At the grave, as we stood about, I again felt the presence, to me visible, of my wife. With her eyes directed towards me, she said, "I heard her say: 'My friends, do not weep. The little babe, whom you have known so short a time, is at peace and in its mother's arms,' etc., etc."

"You may have imagined all this," suggested the *Indianapolis News* reporter. "I was more skeptical on these matters not long ago than you are, and am not now talking at random. I tested the authenticity of the voice before that day and will give you the test that convinced me."

"One day recently (before my wife's death), while walking along oppressed with the loss of my companion, I passed a medium's house. Impelled by curiosity alone, I entered and asked for a sitting. The medium immediately upon being put into use, bore the inscription: 'Emma.' Interested but incredulous, I asked: 'If this is my wife Emma, write something that only you and I know.' Presently I got this response: 'Did you not get the books and the money?'"

"I was thunderstruck at this question. You must bear in mind that I was a total stranger to the place and to the medium, and a scoffer besides. The question on the slate referred to the books of the dead. When my wife was dying I hurried away to get the doctor. Unhappily, while I was away death came to my wife. Her last words to the housekeeper were: 'Tell Frank that I have bought two volumes and hid them away in the closet upstairs to be given to him as a surprise on his birthday, and that I put \$20 for the children in a vase under the match-safe in the bed room.' The housekeeper told me these things, and nobody else on earth ever heard them. You can see that the question shook my faith—or, rather, my lack of faith."

"Not entirely convinced yet, I said: 'Emma, if that is you, give me some convincing evidence that you know what is going on here on earth, and that you are with me at times. Tell me something that has occurred since you left me.'"

"The answer was: 'Since I died you have hung my picture in the parlor, enlarged to life-size. It is very good; the eyes are perfect, the mouth is a trifle large, but the likeness is good.' I have these things were perfectly true. I was further convinced that I could become the medium of communication with the unknown world, and I have found this to be true. I took my partner in business to my house, and there we held communion with the departed. He is a disbeliever in Spiritualism, but he will tell you that he never only had state writings, but heard voices of the dead."

Believing as Mr. Schmid does, that these things have actually happened to him, it is not strange that he, too, would like to have intelligent men and women, lawyers, preachers and doctors included, scientifically investigate this. He began it an infidel and a skeptic. He is a believer and is filled with the subject and its possibilities."

Indianapolis, Indiana.

TO THE EDITOR:—The following, from the *Indianapolis News*, gives an incident worth recording:

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Written for *The Progressive Thinker*.

THE INDIANA CAMP.

It is Bound to Be a Success.

It Will Open with the Best Talent.

TO THE EDITOR:—In No. 48 of *THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER* I find an article with the heading, "A Proposition for a Camp-ground," written by Robert Hunkle, of Rochester, Ind. He says that Mr. Colby, of Madison, has proposed to establish a permanent camp-meeting in this State as an effort in the right direction, but I believe that it would meet with a more ready response had the location been in a more desirable place. Then he asks the question: "What was the use of appointing two committees on camp location, and then leave the matter all in the hands of one man?" In reply to this I would say that there was but one committee appointed, and that it was not all left in the hands of one man. The committee selected the grounds, made its report to the Association while in session; the report was accepted and the land purchased. He further says that the committee was not all present, therefore could not transact any legal business. This is not true; a majority of the committee was present and did transact business. Again, he says, "that it appears that Dr. Westerfield had previously to the meeting of the Association, that the grounds were suitably located in his own convenience." In this he is also in error. When the committee met they had five tracts of land, situated in different parts of the State, offered for a camp-ground, with the price of each tract and the location of each tract. The point recommended by Dr. Westerfield was rejected by the committee on account of the high price of the land. Mr. Hunkle further says: "So I suppose he took it upon himself to discharge the committee, and to take the land in his own name. I will now say, for the benefit of Mr. Hunkle, that the committee was chosen by the State Association, and are intelligent business men, living in different parts of the State, and they nobly discharged the duty assigned to them. Mr. Hunkle fears that the point selected will not be self-sustaining. In that he is right, providing all Spiritualists are like himself, as he has not paid one cent to aid in this glorious enterprise; but I am happy to inform him that there have been many who have done so, and are giving from one to five hundred dollars to aid in paying for the ground and fitting it up in good condition for a camp-meeting."

Mr. Hunkle also says that he writes this from an ill-feeling toward any one who has not paid for the land. He says that he believes that statement after carefully reading his article, I have no objections. I have now passed my seventy-fourth year, and have spent the last forty years in doing all I can for the advancement of our glorious philosophy, and in the time I have spent, I have done more for the cause of Spiritualism than any other man in this State. I have been successful in my efforts, leaving all sentiment and all unproved assumptions aside, we seriously ask ourselves, as a community, what we ought to do, what justice requires us to do. If justice demands what might be called charity, let us not call it charity, but let it be the word of Science, the word of Science is Justice. Are, then, charity and justice incompatible? Far from it; there is a charity that is just—that is no more and no less than justice—and there is a justice that is charitable in the highest sense. We shall attack the word of Science, and we shall leave, leaving all sentiment and all unproved assumptions aside, we seriously ask ourselves, as a community, what we ought to do, what justice requires us to do. If justice demands what might be called charity, let us not call it charity, but let it be the word of Science, the word of Science is Justice. Are, then, charity and justice incompatible? Far from it; there is a charity that is just—that is no more and no less than justice—and there is a justice that is charitable in the highest sense. We shall attack the word of Science, and we shall leave, leaving all sentiment and all unproved assumptions aside, we seriously ask ourselves, as a community, what we ought to do, what justice requires us to do. If justice demands what might be called charity, let us not call it charity, but let it be the word of Science, the word of Science is Justice. Are, then, charity and justice incompatible? 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