

A FOOLISH HUBBUB.

THE Protestant papers are making a foolish hubbub about the conversion of Lord Nelson's second son. The 'Standard' is scurrilous and abusive; but, then, scurrility is almost a second nature with the 'Standard' when it speaks of the Catholic Church; and the 'Times,' which ought to know better, seeks comfort in the thought that such conversions must be rare, because "such weakness" on the one hand, and "such meanness" on the other, are not often to be met with in English society. The 'Times' is mistaken, both in its facts and its inferences. Conversions, whether they betray weakness or not, are common in every grade of English society, and the zeal shown in making converts among rich or poor is not, as the 'Times' strangely imputes to the Church, mean or misplaced, but a simple Christian duty. Let us briefly examine the charges brought against the Catholic Church by these reckless writers of the Protestant press, and by that distinguished Ritualist, Lord Nelson. The charges are (1) kidnapping children; (2) undermining parental authority; (3) a proselytizing spirit. We may dismiss the first, which, if true, would have been a grave offence, as a deliberate attempt to snatch a false verdict from popular prejudice, for the 'Standard' can scarcely have been ignorant that the "child" in question was a young man of twenty. Disregard for parental authority, the second charge, is shown to have been unfounded by Father Bowden, of the Oratory, who, in his letter to the 'Times,' declares that, though he does not consider parental authority to be supreme in matters of conscience, he, nevertheless, advised the son to communicate at once to his father the fact of his conversion. The third charge is more vague, and, therefore, more convenient for such a purpose as the opponents of the Catholic Church have at heart. We admit, of course, that every Catholic priest is not only zealous for the salvation of souls, but holds it to be essential for every one, whether High Church or Low, Protestant or Ritualist, to submit to the Catholic Church. If this be proselytism, every Catholic priest is guilty; but, then, so was St. Paul. It is not even pretended that any corrupt inducement was held out to Lord Nelson's son. The indecent haste with which, as it is alleged, he was received is refuted by the fact that the young man was a Catholic in heart, fully conversant with Catholic doctrine, and had only been retained in the Protestant Church by the moral terrorism exercised over him by his father. If any one is to blame for prompt and decisive action it is not Father Bowden but Lord Nelson himself, or the spiritual adviser to whose direction the son had been committed.

But enough of this special pleading, by which alone these charges are bolstered up. Let us look at the simple facts of the case. Here we have a young man, the son of a distinguished Ritualist, consorting all his life with Ritualists, attending "low or high celebration," going to confession, praying to the saints, habitually making use of Catholic prayer-books, taught, moreover, by his spiritual directors to regard his Protestant bishops and archbishops as traitors or time-servers abandoned by God, and the bulk of his fellow-Protestants in the Established Church as heretics; who then, we ask, after this can be surprised at the upshot? The common sense of the English people has already pronounced the verdict that such a conversion was the natural fruit of Ritualistic teaching. We need no other verdict. Catholics have abundant evidence from the returns made in every church and mission in London that Ritualism is leading men back by thousands yearly to the Church. Many, indeed, are deceived by its pretences and assumptions, and remain to the end ignorant that they are no better than maskers at the play, but many throw off the delusion in which they have been wrapped, and refuse any longer to put up either with counterfeit priests or with what Mr. Disraeli called "Mass in masquerade."

The English public, whom Lord Nelson has taken into his confidence, is apt to be blunt and outspoken; at any rate, it has already been pretty plainly intimated to him that he is a fool for his pains; for, had he not been himself a Ritualist, his son would not now have been a Catholic. Mr. Stanton—we beg pardon, "Father" Stanton, of St. Alban's, Holborn, as he delights to be called—has not mended matters by his ill-conditioned letter to the 'Times.' He acknowledges that three years ago, with Lord Nelson's sanction, he undertook the spiritual direction of the son, who even then was in doubt as to the Ritualistic opinions in which he had been brought up. "Father" Stanton, whilst parading his claims, has shown his utter failure in the character of father confessor. If we mistake not, the Protestant public will come to the conclusion that the most unsophisticated and sensible, the most straightforward and honest person in this business was not Protestant father confessor at St. Alban's, or Lord Nelson, who still indulges in Ritualistic practices, but the youthful son, who, brought up a Ritualist, refuses to hold Catholic doctrines and remain in the Protestant Church.—'Universe.'

SOUND ADVICE TO CATHOLIC PARENTS.

WE commend the following utterances of the renowned Jesuit missionary, Father Damen, to the careful consideration of Catholic parents. Their force must come home to every heart; and we print them in this prominent portion of the 'Union' in the hope that they may the more readily catch the eye of all those charged with the guardianship of youth, and bear goodly fruit in the heart. Says Father Damen:

"If you wish for reading matter, are there not plenty of good Catholic weekly newspapers, which do not contain all the silly trash to be found in 'Harper's' or the 'New York Ledger' But some will object and say, 'Father, I like very well to have a Catholic paper in my house, but I cannot afford the expense,' and you will pay 10 cents for an anti-Catholic paper that never has any good word about our good religion, and you will not pay 5 cents, half the price, for a paper that defends Catholicity. Shame on

you! Story papers and others of that stamp malign the Catholic Church, while Catholic papers take part with it. Will you then contribute to support our enemies or our friends? If you support anti-Catholic periodicals, you support the enemies of the Church. If, on the contrary, you support Catholic periodicals, you support those who defend the principles of the Church against the attacks of Freemasons, infidels, and the whole host of sinners arrayed against us. Take sides, then, and choose for yourselves; and let your choice be on the side of the religion of your fathers, by your preferring Catholic to anti-Catholic journals.

"The anti-Catholic journal costs five dollars a year, and the Catholic journal does not cost quite three dollars a year, so that as far as expense is concerned the latter is the cheaper of the two. When you have the Catholic journal in the house you have useful as well as entertaining reading for your children. You have stories, too, of a moral tendency, where you will find food for pious thought. You also get instructed in your religion, and you are able to defend your faith, for you can find answers to objections in Catholic journals. The Catholic press is a power for Catholicity, and every Catholic worthy of the name should support it. It defends our religion against the attacks of infidelity, and by sustaining it we, to a certain extent, sustain our religion. Therefore, get a Catholic paper into your house every week, and your sons and daughters, by perusing it, will become better citizens and better Catholics. If you do not give your children good reading they will get bad reading for themselves; so it remains with you, fathers and mothers, to let them receive good, sound ideas of their religion by means of Catholic newspapers. The Protestant papers are against it, and are supported by Freemasons and all the enemies of the Church. Therefore do not support them, because by doing so you inflict injury on your religion."

We may be permitted to supplement these salutary utterances of the great missionary—than whom few have a better opportunity of experiencing the necessity of a solid, healthy Catholic literature being diffused among our people—by the following pertinent remarks of our very able contemporary, the 'Catholic Review':

"If the Catholics of America have not a powerful press, crowned by an efficient daily paper in New York, the reason is to be found not in their inability to support it, as many think, nor in their inability to read, as Protestant Parson Talmage alleges in reply to the 'Catholic Review,' but in their unwillingness to stand by their own, to oppose their enemies, and to support and read their own literature. To our shame be it said, if the support we Catholics give to the corrupt and anti-Catholic press of America were withdrawn from it, we would seriously weaken it; if it were given to our own papers, American Catholics would have the strongest and best papers in the world. Whose fault is it that we have not? Answer, Catholic, is it yours!"—'Catholic Union.'

GOLDEN WORDS.

THE Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster has addressed the following interesting message to the Rev. Patrick Byrne, President of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America, on the subject of temperance—a cause which is very dear to the heart of the eminent prelate, as is known by his untiring action for its furtherance in Great Britain. The message reads as follows:

"In thanking you for the address of affection and sympathy which you have sent to me, in the name of your whole body assembled at Cincinnati in convention, I must begin by saying that I would to God I was worthy of the love and veneration or of the gratitude which you express to me. If I needed anything to bind me, to the last hour of my life, in maintaining our common conflict with the pestilence of intoxication, it would be enough to remember that the little I have hitherto done has been in any way a support to your efforts. As a pastor of souls I have before me the wreck of men, women, children, home, and all the sanctities of domestic life. I see prosperity turned into temptation; the wages of industry not only wasted, but, as they increase, making the plague more deadly. I see legislation impotent to remove the evils it has caused, and I am driven to the last slow but sure hope, an appeal to the Catholic heart and the Christian conscience of the people. The Apostle says: 'It is good not to eat flesh and not to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother is offended or scandalized or made weak.'—Rom. xiv. 21. St. Paul did not limit this to the meats offered to idols. He lays down the law of generous charity: If my liberty in using what is safe to me encourages others in the use of the same, which is dangerous to them, then I will use it no more. If my denying myself in this, which I am free to renounce, shall help or encourage even one soul who has fallen through intoxication to rise up and break his bonds, then I will gladly abstain as long as I live. If we can spread this higher law of love and generous self-denial, a public opinion will soon grow up before which our legislation will give way.

"As a pastor of a great flock of the children of Catholic Ireland it gives me a great joy to receive your address. I will tell them how, across the wide sea, you join with them and me. They will join in every word I am writing, and their prayers will be offered for you all, and for the spread of your Catholic Total Abstinence Union throughout the New World. Our League of the Cross will be in line with you in the Old World, and my prayers at the altar will go up for both to the Good Shepherd in whom we are all one.

"Reverend and dear fathers and brethren in Jesus Christ, may every best and every perfect gift descend upon you and yours and upon your country.

"Convey these words in my name to the Catholic Union in its next convention, to be held at Philadelphia, and believe me to be always your affectionate servant in Jesus Christ,

"H. EDWARD,

Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

"Westminster, June 15, 1876."