

Gay lays down for newspaper and other fibsters the following golden rule of the ungentle art of lying:—

'Lest men suspect your tale untrue,
Keep probability in view.'

The Dresden Ananias, however, outraged this cardinal principle of the game and produced a farrago of palpable contradictions and grotesque improbabilities that could not have deceived anyone who uses his eyes and brains. Here are a few samples in point: (1) The Kaiser, in a vulgar fifteen-minutes' abuse of Bishop Benzler, is made to refer to himself as 'King' in Alsace-Lorraine. But even the clumsiest Dresden fibster and his most sleepy-headed London or New Zealand echo might be expected to know that the Kaiser is King only in Prussia, and that in Alsace-Lorraine and the rest of the Fatherland he is Emperor. (2) The Kaiser is made to accuse Bishop Benzler, of Metz, of having 'interdicted' a Catholic cemetery in his diocese. But the waterspout of imperial abuse is represented as having been poured out on the platform of the Strassburg railway station; it is, moreover, not directed against the Bishop of Metz, but the 'Bishop of Strassburg'; and to crown the absurdity, the high crime which it is intended to punish is not the interdicting of a Catholic cemetery, but the 'cursing' and 'anathematising' of a PROTESTANT one! Of course no Catholic bishop claims jurisdiction over a Protestant cemetery. Verily, the Dresden Munchausen sadly violated the 'unities' in the insane tale which he set afloat. (3) Kaiser Wilhelm is also made to wind up a long-drawn tirade of misstatement, misrepresentation, and vulgar abuse by threats of using the 'mailed fist' upon the Catholic body and recommencing an era of religious persecution. This is, perhaps, the most grotesque improbability in all the silly tale. The Kaiser is no Solon. But he has too much elementary prudence to indulge in threats of that sort. One greater than he—the Man of Blood and Iron—went farther in that direction than mere threats. He tried harsh and actual persecution. But he went to Canossa. Moreover, we are glad to believe that there is not in all the German Fatherland a Catholic bishop that would tamely endure, either from King, Tsar, or Kaiser, such falsehoods and such tyrannical menaces as the agent of the Father of Lies in Dresden placed in the mouth of the Emperor Wilhelm II.

The whole story is, of course, a fabrication—the coinage, presumably, of the brain of some imaginative journalist whose head was duddled with deep potations of Schiedam schnapps or Dresden beer. As soon as the little Dresden journal published its 'faked' speech to the world, the story was blown to smithereens by reputable journals all over Germany. Yet, in the face of these public, repeated, and authoritative denials, the Berlin correspondent of the London 'Daily News' repeated the grotesque 'yarn.' No-Popery venom seems to be more urgently called for than brains as a qualification for the position of Continental correspondent of the 'Daily News.' For years past that Nonconformist organ has made itself the sounding-board of the Continental atheist press, and, generally speaking, it displays a fanaticism that is reminiscent of the wild No-Popery days of 1851. Even apart from this, the 'Daily News' might take as its motto the principle set forth by a character in Kipling's 'A Day's Work': 'There is no sense in telling too much truth.' Our readers will, for instance, recall its sensational and detailed description of the massacre of the Legations in Pekin in 1900—an event which, happily, never took place. Only a few months ago the same ha'porth of morning sensationalism published a disgraceful forgery which, to its cost, it imputed to Colonel Vaughan, brother of the late eminent Cardinal of that name.

The 'Daily News' version of the Dresden fabrication was published on an auspicious date—Guy Fawkes's day—and was duly cabled to us out here on the outer rim of the world. The attention of the Bishop of

Metz was drawn to the affair, and this is what he had to say about it:—

Metz, 13th November, 1904.

'All the Catholic papers in Germany have already some time ago protested against the so-called utterances of the Emperor to the Bishop of Metz. Not one iota of the expressions is true. These perfidious falsehoods show the spirit in which the agitation against the Catholic Church is carried on.'

✠ 'W. BENZLER, Bishop.'

The 'Times' and reputable journals generally, both in and out of England, did not disgrace their pages by republishing the insane 'fake' which was so gushingly welcomed by the 'Daily News.' It passes our comprehension that in New Zealand it should have been taken seriously by any journalist not adorned with a strait waistcoat. But one of the most common forms of insanity is that of the people who think that nobody else thinks.

Another Sensation

We have referred to the 'Daily News' as the sounding-board of the atheist and anti-religious press of the Continent of Europe. Another of the foetid tit-bits of No-Popery which it recently picked up was a charge of aimless and diabolical cruelty against the Sisters who conduct the Orphanage of Providence at Aix in Provence, France. It is quite sufficient refutation of the story to state that it originated in the rabid columns of the 'Matin,' of Paris, whose similar charges against the Sisters of St. Dominic, at Tours, some nine months ago were shown to be envenomed fabrications wrought and through. The famous lace-making nuns of Aix are, with the characteristic looseness and contradictoriness of such tales, variously, described 'Sisters of the Good Shepherd' and 'Sisters of the Order of St. Thomas de Villeneuve'—two wholly distinct and separate religious congregations. Again: The chief 'witness' of the 'Matin' is Madame Elodie Ricard, whom it pretends to have interviewed and from whom it professes to have elicited a tale of callous brutality. But the Madame was promptly upon the 'Matin's' tracks. In a letter to the 'Provence Nouvelle,' she gave the 'Matin' romancer a backhander to the following merry tune: 'The 'Matin' has attributed to me a deposition I have never made. I have never had to complain of a single Sister during my stay in the convent, I protest against the use that the editor of the "Matin" has made of my name.'

For the rest: the Aix Orphanage is under the control of the Government and is frequently visited by their Commissioner. No adverse report, no whisper of evil was made against it till the forgers of Madame Ricard's name got a grip on the lobe of the 'Matin's' ever willing ear. And even then (says the Paris correspondent of the 'Glasgow Observer') 'neither the police nor the Parquet (the Government Prosecutor's Office) have found that there was sufficient evidence to warrant their taking up the case.' In France a sensational tale by the 'Matin' is voted one-third to three-fourths false. In New Zealand, of course, the lineal descendant of its news staff from Ananias and Sapphira is not so well known. And hence there may be many here who might think that there was something really serious behind the palpable exaggerations that encrust the surface of the story from distant Aix in Provence.

Many of our readers will remember the envenomed persistence with which, during the months of June and July of last year, the rag-tag-and-bobtail news-sheet that is the Organ of New South Wales Orangeism, charged the Sisters of the Catholic Orphanage at Manly (Sydney) with starving, over-working, and otherwise cruelly ill-treating their young charges. An investigation was demanded by Cardinal Moran. It was granted by the See Government and conducted by Mr. Green, chief officer under the Children's Protection Act, and Sub-Inspector Tindall, of the Police Department. The