

One of the chief causes of this systematic depopulation is nothing less than a deliberate massacre of innocents on a scale which far out-herods Herod. In a recent issue of the 'Popular Science Monthly,' Dr. A. Lapthorn Smith declared that '2,000,000 child-murders annually are a fair estimate of the number occurring on the North American continent.' The 'New World' (New York) declares that the actual total of the great massacre is far in excess of Dr. Lapthorn Smith's estimate of this fearsome butchery. Sundry subsidiary remedies have been proposed for this menacing public evil. But the radical and indispensable cure is for the nations to retrace their steps to the old Catholic principles—to saturate the minds of people with the conviction of their personal responsibility to an all-seeing God, to bring home to them right teaching as to the sacred and indissoluble nature and true purpose of the marriage-bond. The school, the home, the paper, the pulpit—all are needed for this work. That way alone lies the remedy. And bachelor-taxing and family-bonuses and such-like quackhead remedies are no better than spraying a cancer with lavender-water or dosing cholera morbus with pink pills.

The Torpedo

The dramatic success of Japan over Russia in naval war has, even more than the success of the little yellow men on land, given the world an earnest of the fighting qualities of a nation that only thirty years ago started on a renaissance of unexampled swiftness. In the early days of the war relatively small havoc was wrought by the torpedo in the first naval attack on Port Arthur. But the news that still keeps filtering through the submarine wires has to a great extent retrieved the reputation of that engine of destruction when it gets squarely to work among the ships that fight upon the sea. In blood-letting inventions the world now moves with the speed of the Scotch Express. It seems a far cry back to the time when, in the American Civil War—a little over forty years ago—the torpedo was a crude bombshell tied to the end of a stick. In those days it had an uncanny trick of hoisting friend as well as enemy, with a serene but unpleasant impartiality. Sometimes the friend went up first—and farthest. By 1877 the torpedo had been so improved that it sank or damaged six Turkish and seven Russian vessels of war of various sorts and sizes. The French, in the Tonkin war of 1885, performed, with two ordinary steam cutters, a feat which furnishes an almost exact parallel with the hurried but (to men of the world's navies) somewhat disappointing work done by the two adventurous torpedoers that stole past Russian watch and ward into the harbor of Port Arthur seventeen months ago. They sank at her moorings a Chinese frigate of 3500 tons, and sent its crew to feed the sharks that prowl in the waters of the harbor of Shein. In the Cuban war, the 'Blanco Encalada' was sent to the bottom by a torpedo after a brief exchange of leaden incivilities that lasted only seven minutes.

But the torpedo of the Russo-Japanese war—with its two hundred pounds or more of high explosive—is a much more formidable dealer of destruction and death. The earlier form of this sinker of ships is to that used in the Straits of Tsushima pretty much what the old twelve-inch smooth-bore mortar—with its maximum range of 2500 yards—is to the modern twelve-and-a-half inch Canet gun, which sends a shell weighing 386 pounds, and charged with 275 pounds of high explosives, shrieking through the air to a distance of thirteen and one-eighth miles. Some of the worst damage done to the Russian ships in the Korean Channel was effected by twelve-inch guns that 'lobbed' high explosives among the upper works and knocked things to smithereens from a distance of five miles. When the torpedoers got to work, we are told that almost every messenger of destruction they sent out 'struck home.' In a little time they sent no fewer than seven warships to the bottom of the sea. All this seems to bear out the verdict

passed some years ago by a United States naval commission, which (says Bloch in his 'Modern Weapons and Modern War') 'came to the almost unanimous conclusion that torpedo-boats will certainly destroy an armor-clad if they escape destruction during the two minutes in the course of which the vessel attacked will be able to employ its quick-firing guns. But,' adds Bloch, 'the effectiveness of defence is weakened by the fact that in all navies the number of torpedo boats is from three to seven times greater than the number of armor-clads, and the loss of several torpedo-boats cannot be compared in gravity with the loss of a single armor-clad carrying an incomparably larger crew, and costing an incomparably greater sum.'

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

ON THE

TEACHING OF THE CATECHISM

The following Encyclical Letter on the Teaching of the Catechism, addressed to the Bishops of the world, has been issued by our Holy Father Pius X :—

Venerable Brethren,

Health and the Apostolic Benediction.

A time of great trouble and difficulty is this in which Our littleness has been raised by the inscrutable designs of Divine Providence to the office of Supreme Pastor of the whole flock of Christ. Long has the enemy been prowling round the fold, attacking it with such subtle cunning, that now more than ever seems to be verified the prediction made by the Apostle to the elders of the Church of Ephesus: 'I know that ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock.' (Acts xx. 29.).

The reasons and causes of this religious decadence are being studied by those who still cherish zeal for the glory of God, and differing as they do in their conclusions, they point out, each according to his own views, various ways for protecting and restoring the Kingdom of God on earth. But to Us, Venerable Brethren, it seems that while other reasons may play their part, We must agree with those who hold that the main cause of the present lassitude and torpor, and of the most serious evils that flow from it, is to be found in the prevailing ignorance about Divine things. And this fully bears out what God Himself affirmed through the Prophet Osee: '... And there is no knowledge of God in the land. Cursing and lying and killing and theft and adultery have overflowed, and blood hath touched blood. Therefore shall the earth mourn and every one that dwelleth in it shall languish' (Osee iv. 1 ff.).

That there are among Christians in our time large numbers who live in utter ignorance of

The Truths Necessary for Salvation

is a common lament nowadays, and one that is unhappily only too well founded. And when We say among Christians We mean not only the masses and those in the lower walks of life, who are sometimes not to blame owing to the inhumanity of masters whose demands leave them little time to think of themselves and their own interests, but we refer also and even more especially to all those who, while endowed with a certain amount of talent and culture and possessing abundant knowledge of profane matters, have no care or thought for religion. It is hard to find words to describe the dense darkness that environs these, and, more painful still, the indifference with which they regard it. Rarely do they give thought to the Supreme Author and Ruler of all things or to the teaching of the faith of Christ. Consequently they are absolutely without knowledge of the Incarnation of the Word of God and of the redemption of mankind wrought by Him, and of Grace which is the chief means for the attainment of eternal welfare, and of the Holy Sacrifice and the Sacraments by which this grace is acquired and preserved. They fail to appreciate the malice and foulness of sin, and they have therefore no care to avoid it and free themselves from it. Thus they reach their last day in such a state that the minister of God, anxious to take advantage of the slightest hope of their salvation, is obliged to employ those final moments, which should be consecrated entirely to stimulating in them the love of God, in imparting a summary instruction on the things