

that commodity airing itself, especially when the sun is over the Tropic of Cancer, and the heat of the dog-days is in the northern skies.

What it is coming to

For ages goggled investigators groped with crucibles and alembics after the philosopher's stone, which was to turn their leaden gutters into shining bars of yellow gold. They discovered many things by the way, and laid the foundations of modern chemistry; but their quest for the magical medium of transmutation was as vain as the search of Ponce de Leon for the fountain of perpetual youth in the Everglades of Florida. Politicians, like the alchemists of old, are still in quest of the philosopher's stone that (they hope) will transmute the modern State into the sweet Utopia of the old dreamers' dreams. But Utopia is still, as before, the land of Nowhere, and as many leagues as ever beyond Amauros, or the Vanishing Point. And, as the world wags, 'there is,' as Herbert Spencer says, 'no mere political alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts.' The Premier may, like Lewis Carroll's walrus (no personalities are intended), 'weep like anything' to see the pass to which the 'leaden instincts' that lead to the divorce-mills threaten to bring domestic life in New Zealand. 'The foundations of social life,' says he, 'are being sapped by the number of divorces.' 'Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis, 'tis true.' But are the Premier and other lawmakers so dull of wit as to suppose that the increased facilities for divorce that are being provided by the present session of Parliament constitute a sort of magical political alchemy to transmute the decay that (as they say) is sapping the foundations of the nation? Have they not before them the warning example of America and Australia, and of this 'God's own country'—an example which shows that every additional tampering with the unity and sanctity of the marriage tie produces a further extension of the pig-philosophy, the temple of whose unclean worship is the divorce court?

Members who vote the extension of causes of divorce and then deplore, in advance, the foreseen results of their handiwork, remind us of the Walrus's hypocritical 'sympathy' for the oysters—

'With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.'

One of the most discomfiting signs of the moral dry-rot that has set in is the nonchalance or levity with which applications for divorce are often treated by counsel and principals. In this connection, Judge Hodges (Victoria) recently pulled up a barrister sharp on his haunches with this remark: 'You seem to treat such a matter as though it were merely a separating of dogs. The divorcing of a man and wife is a very serious matter.' In one sense Judge Hodges' rebuke was, perhaps, hardly fair—to the dogs. But it points like a finger-post to the social chaos of Beelzebub towards which divorce in Victoria is moving on ball-bearings. Two weeks ago the leaders of the sectarianising movement singled out 'the old Eastern States' of America as bright examples of educational peace of the supposed benefits of the sort of Unitarianism which they are scheming to force upon our public schools at the public cost. They forgot to state that the old Puritan stock of those States has almost died out through its own rottenness. Not to touch upon other matters, there is in Massachusetts one divorce to every 16 marriages; in Vermont one to every 10; in Rhode Island one to every 8.4; in New Hampshire (where till quite recently a Catholic teacher could not be legally employed in any public school) one to every 8.3; and in Maine one to every 6. Between 1869 and 1901 some 700,000 divorces were granted in the United States, directly or indirectly affecting, it is said, some 4,000,000 souls. And well

may President Roosevelt say: 'If we have solved every other question in the wisest possible way, it shall profit us nothing if we have lost our own national soul; and we will have lost it if we do not have the question of the relations of the family put upon the proper basis.' And we may add on our own account that 'the question of the relations of the family' will not be 'put upon the proper basis' until the Catholic teaching regarding the marriage bond is received and acted upon. Mr. Seddon and our other legislators might pin this in their hats, in readiness for the next occasion on which they will weep when 'the foundations of social life are sapped' by their own drills and rackarock.

Those 'State Reports'

It was a saying of Sir Thomas More that 'the devil is ever ready to put out the eyes of those who are content to be blind.' It is not, of course, necessarily Beelzebub's thumb that forces the eyeballs from the sockets of all those who would be blind. Plant a man of normal sight full square before the massive bulk of Mount Cook in the full noonday glare, and he may, if he so choose, close his eyes, or blindfold them, or look at his boot-toes, or turn his glance aside so as not to see. There is none so blind as those that look the other way. The Bible-in-schools leaders are doing this, and trying to get their fat and indolent fingers into the public eye when they quote approvingly a 'State report' to the effect that 'there are no sectarian difficulties' in the New South Wales public schools. But (1) the New South Wales public schools use the discredited Irish text-book of Scripture lessons that was drawn up by Dr. Whately (Anglican) and Dr. Carlile (Presbyterian) for the express purpose of 'weaning the Irish from the abuses of Popery.' And our Bible-in-schools League are not (at present) in favor of the wretched Irish text-book. Their manual is (as Dr. Rentoul has pointed out) in every respect more objectionable. Again: (2) 'not a single State report' from New England, for instance, has mentioned the scourging of the boy Whall and the caning and expulsion of some four hundred others for refusing to read the Protestant version of the Bible in the schools of Boston. No 'State report' ever spoke, even under its breath, about the infamous penal law—revealed (on paper) only recently—which made it illegal to employ a Catholic teacher in any public school in (we think) New Hampshire. No 'State report' gives a hint of the widespread boycott of Catholic teachers which (as we showed in our last issue) is carried on in the regions where the schools are sectarianised by the introduction of Protestant forms of prayer and the reading and explanation of the Protestant Authorised Version of the Scriptures. And, finally, no 'State report' has mentioned that Catholic orphans in Massachusetts were openly and systematically proselytised until a few weeks ago when, after long years of agitation, and in the teeth of angry opposition, an Act was passed in the local Legislature giving them—at least on paper—a halting and half-hearted measure of legal protection. There are many rotten things in the state of Denmark that do not appear in the 'State reports.'

It is intimated by the Bible-in-schools leaders (again on the strength of a 'State report') that only a 'small percentage' of the population of New South Wales would probably desire a change from the sectarian character of its public schools. Now Catholics are by no means a 'small percentage' of the population of the Mother State. Even if they were, their rights of conscience would be just as sacred as if they were a very large percentage. This is not a matter in which the question of rights is settled by a count of noses. Now Catholics—as our Bible-in-schools clerics well know—have never ceased to protest against the Protestantising of the public schools of New South Wales. Our opponents may not appreciate the grounds of that protest. Even that does not affect the right of the protesters to just and equal treatment. And fair-minded people, no