

name for irreligion and indifference to all religion. In the very same way, when the Holy See condemned Socialism it was 'Continental Socialism.' It was the four schemes he had briefly set before them. Anyone who read the Holy Father's encyclicals, especially that beautiful one of 1891 or the beautiful one just issued to the Bishops of Italy, would recognise that the Holy Father commended in the highest way legitimate democracy, and encouraged those who were engaged in the amelioration of the condition of the masses throughout the world—encouraged them to persevere in their mission and noble efforts, and gave his blessing to all who were engaged in such work. He trusted that genuine democrats in Australia, to whatever party they belonged, would continue their work, and that they would walk in the light of the beautiful encyclicals that the Holy Father had issued from time to time, and that they would find themselves strengthened, in the noble cause in which they were engaged, by the blessing which the Holy Father communicated to them. For his part he thought it was not intruding in any way on any political party to commend such genuine and legitimate development of Australian ideas. He felt sure that the different schools which they saw erected would be so many factors in bringing home to families and places those true principles, and true fruits of such genuine Christian democracy.

SLANDER ON THE ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

METHODS OF THE ORANGE LODGE

Further developments (says the Melbourne 'Advocate') have taken place in connection with the case of the girl Ella Laughton, whose declaration containing a number of charges against the Sisters of the Good Shepherd was published in the Orange journal, the 'Watchman,' by Mr. T. A. Rogers, and was witnessed by T. A. R., J.P. Our readers will remember that, in our issue of July 1, we made a complete exposure of the falsity of that declaration, and commented upon the many suspicious circumstances connected with it, notably the fact that the mysterious T. A. R., J.P., evidently desired to conceal his identity under the initials mentioned. We showed that T. A. R., the justice of the peace who signed the declaration in his magisterial capacity, and T. A. Rogers, the chief representative of the virulent Orange 'Watchman,' were identical, a connection in itself sufficiently suspicious to suggest the bogus and untruthful nature of the charges. In our issue of July 8 we gave the declarations of both parents of the girl Laughton, whom she declared to be dead, and the whole fabric of falsehood and conspiracy was completely destroyed. Up to that time, and for some weeks later, the Laughton girl was harbored by the 'good Orange sister' who, in conjunction with T. A. R., had engineered this shameful transaction. Within the past few days Laughton returned to her parents' home, and some additional particulars have been disclosed, which show how industriously the parties concerned have worked out the plot. It appears that the 'good Orange sister' who sheltered the Laughton girl, and kept her from her parents' home, is no other than a Mrs. Hickman, who made herself so conspicuous at the V.P.D.A.-cum-Orange Society meeting which took place at Collingwood on July 22, at which she put forward a number of

Slandrous Statements

against a convent, and which, we may safely affirm, are as gross a tissue of falsehoods as those which she was instrumental in having published in the 'Watchman.' It appears that the girl Laughton, after absconding from the convent, was induced to enter Mrs. Hickman's home, and that the latter piously ejaculated that 'her prayers were answered, as she had got a girl from the convent at last.' The next step was to put certain leading questions to the girl, and then to invoke the valuable aid of T. A. R., J.P. With such an experienced assistant, little difficulty would be experienced in turning out a spicy bit of 'copy' for T. A. Rogers and the readers of the 'Watchman.' On Wednesday last our representative interviewed Mrs. Laughton, who was accompanied by her daughter, at the office of a Melbourne solicitor. The girl, Ella Laughton, seemed penitent for all the annoyance she had caused her parents, and for the wrong done to the nuns at Abbotsford through her misconduct. She pleaded, in extenuation, that she was ashamed to return home after leaving the convent, and that most, if not all, the statements made by her about the nuns were suggested to her by carefully pointed

questions. She further declares that she told Mrs. Hickman the nuns never ill-treated her, but, on the contrary, were always kind to her. The following brief

Statutory Declaration

made by the girl was taken down in presence of her mother, Mrs. Goldspink, and our representative, and was declared before Mr. James Ormond, J.P.:

I, Ella Laughton, of No. 4 Tyrone street, North Melbourne, in Victoria, do solemnly and sincerely declare—(1) that the statements made by me to Mrs. Hickman about my treatment in the convent are untrue, and such statements were made by me in reply to questions put to me by the said Mrs. Hickman. (2) That I was not aware that I was making a sworn declaration when I signed the statement in the presence of Mr. Rogers, and neither he nor Mrs. Hickman explained to me that it was a sworn declaration. (3) That Mrs. Hickman, in addition to what is contained in such declaration, asked me how the nuns treated me in the convent, and did they not lock me up in a room and strap me, but I informed her that they treated me well, and gave me plenty of food, and never locked me in a room, or used the strap, and that I left because I wished to get a situation. (4) That on the day on which I went to Mrs. Hickman's house, the said Mrs. Hickman said to her husband, 'What do you think? My prayers have been answered; I have got a girl from the convent.' (5) That I have been in Hickman's employ up to the 26th July, 1905. And I make this solemn declaration, conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of an Act of Parliament of Victoria, rendering persons making a false declaration liable for wilful and corrupt perjury.

Declared at Melbourne this 2nd day of August, 1905,

ELLA LAUGHTON.

Before me,

JAMES ORMOND, J.P.

It is not improbable that further steps will be taken in this matter, for it is impossible to permit this shameless conspiracy of slander to continue without making some effort to bring the guilty parties to account. These cowardly defamers of those pious ladies who have given up their lives to the work of reclaiming the fallen and destitute creatures that abound in the city, have found, by experience, that those whom they most shamefully malign never think of defending themselves. But surely it would be a reproach to the manhood of the community if such infamies were permitted to be perpetrated with impunity. We therefore hope that the exposure of those vile conspiracies that have been made in these columns recently will rouse public opinion, and that decent people of every creed will join in denunciation of deeds that are only worthy of a band of assassins.

Another Slander.

It is only a few weeks since (continues our Melbourne contemporary) we exposed an Orange slander in reference to the Abbotsford Convent, but no sooner is one slander refuted than another one is concocted. This is the essence of Orangeism. Lies and slanders, often and well, are its mottoes. The slanderous statement, of which we now complain, was made at the meeting of the Protestant Defence Association at Collingwood, when, according to the 'Argus,' Mrs. Hickman stated that a girl, whom she would not name until a sworn declaration was obtained from her, had volunteered information conveying imputations against the manner in which a certain convent—Abbotsford—was conducted. The girl had stated to her that she had been beaten with a buckled strap, and for three days locked in a room where there was no bed, and fed on bread and water.

In a letter to the 'Argus' Mr. J. Fitzgerald called upon the officials of the V.P.D.A. to bring forward some evidence in support of the accusation, or in the interests of truth and decency withdraw it. To this the president of the association replied that the accusation was made by Mrs. Hickman at the meeting, and that the obligation of substantiating it rested with her. In a further communication Mr. Fitzgerald reminds the president of the P.D.A. that 'if there is to be no responsibility in the circumstances, any irresponsible and malicious person may speak the thing she or he will, and malign a great charitable institution without being brought to task. From the press reports of the proceedings it may be fairly inferred that the statements made had the association's encouragement and approval, as they became public through the channel of the association, and were not discountenanced by the chairman, and there is, therefore, an honorable obligation on its part either to disavow or to disprove the allegations made.'