

(c) The proposal to determine this question of personal conscience and religious freedom by a plebiscite?

3. Are you, as a general principle, in favor of the compulsory payment of taxes by conscientious objectors for the direct teaching of religious tenets or principles in which they do not believe?

4. Are you, as a general principle, in favor of determining questions of personal conscience and religious freedom by popular vote?

5. In the event of the scheme of the Bible-in-schools Referendum League, or any scheme of like import, becoming law, will you, if elected, vote for a fair capitation or other grant to Catholic schools for the purely secular instruction imparted therein, in accordance with the Government curriculum, and certified by Government inspectors?

The questions here suggested would by themselves alone suffice to show candidates that there is another and very important side to this question. We strongly urge upon all our readers the systematic distribution of the two pronouncements of our Hierarchy among both candidates and electors during the present electoral campaign. An announcement in reference thereto appears on page 17 of this issue.

Anti-Treating

The tongue works a world of evil. But, so far as accumulated results go, it is pretty nearly at the 'worst of all its worst worsts' when it delivers this sadly familiar 'speech at the bar'—'the same again.' In English-speaking countries the treating (or, in Colonial, 'shouting') habit leads whole armies of men to drink—as Sancho Panza drank—when they have not, as when they have occasion, and it is the indirect cause of a vast percentage of the intemperance that exists among us, and of the world of clamoring evils that follow in its train. Less than four years ago a number of zealous priests of the diocese of Ferns (Ireland) started, under episcopal sanction, St. Patrick's Anti-Treating League. The three guiding principles of the League are (1) anti-treating; (2) the practice of strict temperance by all members; and (3) the creation of an enlightened and wholesome public sentiment against intemperance and against the crime of those who lead others into excess in drink. Each member pledges himself (among other things) 'neither to give nor to accept a treat.' It is pleasant to learn from a recently published pamphlet by the League's Hon. Secretary (Rev. J. J. Rossiter) that the Anti-Treating Crusade is advancing year by year to fresh conquests. Floreat!—may it flourish like the green bay tree! And may its spiritualised good sense soon get to work to dissipate those false ideas of hospitality and good fellowship that, in these new countries as in the old, turn many a promising young man into a fuddlecap and make him multiply the stars o' nights (as Queen Whim's officers did in Rabelais) "by drinking till seven are fourteen"—in other words, till he sees double. One of our stipendiary magistrates has described the treating custom as 'the curse of the country.' And his words are none too strong.

England, Ireland, France

'There will never be any firm friendship between England and France,' says Hamerton, in a work published some years ago; 'and a momentary attachment would only cause me anxiety on account of the inevitable reaction.' The reason for his distrust of those 'momentary attachments' is furnished by the intense and traditional bitterness of feeling displayed by convinced French Republicans towards England. 'These feelings,' says Hamerton, 'are quite outside the domain of reason.' Books, magazines, and newspapers on both sides of the Straits of Dover have done

much to keep alive and intensify the traditional spirit of jealousy between neighbors who (as a recent English writer says) 'have known each other too long and met each other too often.'

A few weeks ago the present 'entente' or 'momentary attachment' between the two countries was celebrated by a Parliamentary banquet in Westminster Hall. In that picturesque and historic social function the Members of the Irish Parliamentary Party 'did not take a hand.' 'Irish sentiment towards France,' says the London correspondent of a great English provincial daily paper, 'used to be very friendly. In the Franco-German war, for instance, the sympathies of Ireland were certainly with France. But in recent years the friendly feelings of the Irish for the French seem to have grown cold. I suppose that as England draws closer to France it is almost inevitable that Ireland should become more distant. But I am told that this was not the reason for the absence of the Irish members from the banquet. The real cause was the treatment of the religious Orders by the French Government. The Irish Catholics bitterly resent the action of France in this matter, and I was told that no Irishman could be expected to express any friendliness towards "the infidel Government" that ruled in France.' 'It is a very rare thing,' says an Irish exchange, 'for an English paper to get so near the truth in connection with a matter concerning Ireland.'

Clean Art

'Way back in 1748, Chesterfield, in one of his letters, 'most particularly warned' his son against laughter. 'In my mind,' said that cultivated pagan, 'there is nothing so illiberal and ill-bred as audible laughter.' (Chesterfield, however, approved of smiling. Which was a great mercy. But even smiling is 'bad form' among the more elect of the 'uppah suckles' in England of to-day. 'High sassiety,' according to Max O'Rell's last book, 'eats, yawns, laughs at nothing; to use a well-known expression, its members sit "all silent and all dammed." It is appalling,' said the man from the land of spasmodic laughter. 'It is bad form to smile, it is bad form to applaud, it is bad form to raise the voice. By Jove! soon it will be bad form to breathe.' We in New Zealand may not go so far as Chamfort, and maintain that 'the most wasted of all days is that on which one has not laughed.' But the kill-joy life has no charm for these non-Puritan lands, and Australasians take not their pleasures sadly, nor fail to recognise the germ of mirth in Peter Pindar's couplet:—

'Care to our coffin adds a nail, no doubt,
And every grin, so merry, draws one out.'

There is many a laughing Saint upon our calendar besides Fra Filippo Neri, whose happy heart never seemed to forget the joys of Christmas, nor the inspired word of the Apostle of the Gentiles: 'Rejoice in the Lord; again I say to you, Always rejoice.'

The laughing philosopher as well as the laughing Saint has his place and function in this 'wale o' tears.'

'Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?'

There is nothing to prevent one from conveying lessons of truth with a laugh wreathing one's features. This seemed to have been a principle with the late Mel. B. Spurr, whose clean and striking monologue entertainments, both in their aim and substance and manner, placed him upon the high intellectual level of the two Coquelins in France.

Upon Spurr's monument devise
No full and flattering epitaph,
But carve there only: "Here he lies
Who helped the weary world to laugh!"