

Those Eastern Mendicants

Two Easterns—'bearded like the pard'—are at present and have been for some time perambulating New Zealand, soliciting subscriptions from all and sundry. The object of their collecting tour (so say the bearded strangers) is to build churches and orphanages in their own country. At the homes of Catholics these mendicants have represented themselves as 'Catholic priests.' We have already notified our readers that they do not belong to any Church or rite in union with Rome. They bear no credentials signed by any prelate or priest of our Faith, and they have not been authorised by any of our Bishops to collect moneys from Catholics in any part of New Zealand. One of them, who called upon us, is the bearer of a document in an Eastern language. He also exhibits what purports to be a translation of the same, authorising him to collect moneys in foreign lands for the establishment of schools, orphanages, and churches for the poor. Both documents bore very clumsily made seals in colored ink. But we took occasion to point out two missing links in the chain of evidence as supplied to us: In the first place, no independent testimony was tendered to us that the principal document was in the handwriting of the Eastern patriarch whose name it was said to bear; and in the second place, no independent testimony was submitted to us to prove that our visitor was the person named in the document. So far as we were concerned, his double claim to be a priest, and to have been duly authorised to solicit subscriptions, rested in its last resort upon his personal testimony, and upon that alone.

In an interview accorded to a representative of the 'Press,' the Anglican Bishop of Christchurch has been 'saying things' about Eastern mendicants. 'He knew nothing,' says the 'Press' interviewer, 'against these two Oriental missionaries in particular, but his experience of previous visitors coming with similar stories from the same part of the world had made him very suspicious of them generally. From time to time so-called priests of Oriental Churches had paid visits here, and he had found several of them to be utter frauds.'

... There was one standard test of the genuineness of such missionaries which the present visitors to Christchurch were unable to fulfil. The Eastern patriarchs have definitely undertaken to send through the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, Bishop Blyth, credentials in all those cases in which they sanction an appeal for funds, and these credentials the visitors could not show. 'Unless,' said Bishop Julius, 'these visiting Syrians, or Chaldeans, or whatever they may be called, who come to us from time to time, present that credential, certified to by the Bishop of the diocese, I trust my people will have nothing to do with them.' ... It had been noticed in the past, the Bishop stated, that roving religious mendicants from the East went round and round the colonies, and never returned home. They kept no statements of accounts, and no one knew whether the money went home, or what became of it. ... Archdeacon Gould, who had been led to speak in defence of these two men, had only their own word to go upon.'

A much-travelled Anglican missionary, now in Christchurch, was also interviewed. He (says the 'Press') 'had a conversation with the two strangers, which made him very doubtful of their bona fides. He considered that they contradicted themselves several times, though, of course, they could not talk English at all well.' The publication of the report of the 'Press' interview brought one of 'the two swarthy strangers from the Orient' to the office of our Christchurch contemporary. He made a series of statements in more or less broken English. The chief pertinent matter elicited from him is set forth in the following extract: 'As some doubt had been cast on the destina-

tion of the money collected, he was asked if he could produce any evidence that it had reached the authorities of his Church. He explained that there were no banks in his country, and then, in tones of reliance on the good intentions of all human beings, declared that his "brother" had taken it back.' Archdeacon Gould (Anglican), of Oamaru, proceeded to make crows' meat of us for a recent paragraph of ours in reference to those Oriental mendicants. He had his say in the columns of an Oamaru contemporary. So had we. And there, for the time being, the matter ended. The Archdeacon vouched for the bona fides of the visiting Oriental money-seekers. He now owes it to himself, to the public, and to the Eastern strangers (assuming their bona fides) to state explicitly the grounds on which he gave his personal guarantee in regard to their claims. On the question of their bona fides we have expressed, and express, no opinion. But Catholics would do well to keep their money in their pockets until the position is made quite clear and the relation of these foreign mendicants to our episcopate are adjusted in accordance with our laws and usages regarding money-seeking clerical strangers. As regards Archdeacon Gould's claim to the title 'Catholic,' we shall be prepared to grant this when he has established his right to it—and not before. And, with some knowledge of the subject, we have no hesitation in saying that any attempt to establish such a claim, in the face of adverse criticism, would be labor dire and heavy woe.

'The Church and the World'

We understand that the first edition of 'The Church and the World' by the Very Rev. Father Le Menant des Chesnais, V.G., is already exhausted, which, considering the short time that has elapsed since it was issued, shows that the work has met well-merited appreciation, and has been a distinct success. A second edition (revised) is now in course of preparation, and will be ready shortly.

New Publications

We have received from the office of 'The Liberal Herald,' Wellington, 'The Liberal Labor Calendar' for the current year. The calendar is admirably compiled, and shows in a nutshell the advance of the Colony during the administration of the present Government, besides other matters of general interest. For those who have neither time nor inclination to refer to official publications for information on certain matters the calendar will be found extremely useful.

Among the many school annuals issued at the close of the scholastic year that of St. Patrick's College, Ballarat, occupies a very high position. The college, which is a most successful institution, is conducted by the Christian Brothers, who have shown themselves there, as elsewhere, to be in the forefront, as educators. The publication, which is edited by the students—one of whom, by the way, is a grandson of the late Dr. Kevin Izod O'Doherty and of 'Eva' of the 'Nation'—is very creditable to all concerned, the letterpress and illustrations being very good. In addition to a record of the college work during the year and other events connected therewith the annual contains a number of original contributions in prose and verse on various subjects, which display more than ordinary literary merit.

Very few of the college magazines are to be compared to 'Our Alma Mater,' the organ of the students of St. Ignatius' College, Riverview, Sydney. The letterpress, illustrations, printing, and general get-up of the publication are excellent. The Christmas issue, now before us, is devoted mainly to a record of the work done by the students during the year in classroom, debating hall, and athletic field. As these reports take up the greater part of the 70 pages of the semi-annual very little space has been left for those literary contributions in prose and verse, which were a feature of the midwinter issue. There is, however, an interesting account of the site on which the college stands, and of the founding of the institution, with a very good photograph of the late Father Dalton, S.J., its founder and first Rector.

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