

Current Topics

The Exhibition

The New Zealand International Exhibition at Christchurch is fairly and auspiciously launched upon its educational mission. For some months to come it will be the People's University. We hope shortly to wend our way thither for a little extra schooling.

Ourselves

The hopes entertained by us in enlarging the 'Tablet' and introducing certain new features into its columns, have found ample and gratifying fulfilment in the greatly increased and still increasing ranks of our supporters, not alone at home, but also beyond the seas that wash the shores of New Zealand. In its issue of September 15, the San Francisco 'Monitor' devoted its first editorial paragraph to 'The New Zealand Tablet', which it over-kindly describes as 'one of the most brilliantly edited Catholic newspapers in the world.' And by the same mail there came direct to us from an archiepiscopal reader—a great and learned American Prelate whose name is a household word among Catholics wherever the English tongue is spoken—this encouraging comment: 'The "Tablet", as I judge it, is an ideal Catholic paper'. Similar kindly and encouraging words have come to us from the British Isles and from every State in the Australian Commonwealth. It is no small thing 'laudari a viro laudato'—to gain the kindly commendation of men who stand among the vanguard of our Hierarchy and of Catholic journalism. But we cherish no illusions—knowing our ideals, feeling painfully how far we fall short of them, and realising the extent to which a Catholic paper for popular perusal must ever be an effort to compromise among a thousand incompatible tastes. Yet we thank our friends afar and anear that they are to the 'Tablet's' few journalistic virtues very kind, and to its larger catalogue of journalistic faults a little blind. Our cis- and trans-oceanic friends have furnished us with numerous much-needed pads and buffers against the onsets of the exacting and generally emphatic class of critics who regard the Catholic editor chiefly as a convenient punching-bag. For the which, and for all, thanks, and evermore thanks.

That 'Outfit'

New Zealand Catholics who were a few years ago lured by oily-tongued wheedlers into paying fancy prices for a 'sick-call outfit' may be interested to learn that the same article is being retailed through the ordinary channels of trade in Australia at about sixty per cent. less than was charged for it in this Colony. There are many ways of shearing sheep and plucking geese. One favorite method followed by slippery itinerant rogues was the simple one of securing recommendations—by an odd present of their wares to Catholic persons or institutions whose word would have some weight with possible purchasers. Well, the children of this world are generally wiser in their generation than the children of light. There are few indeed of the arts of imposture that are not known to the itinerant vendors who pawn off gaudy rubbish on too confiding Catholics at not more than six times its proper selling price. And one of these arts finds expression in the old motto: 'Steal the hog, and give the feet for alms'.

A Flank Movement

The following paragraph appeared a few days ago in a New Zealand daily contemporary: 'Through the donation of a sum approximating £400, the Director of Education in South Australia has been enabled to prepare a scheme for the distribution of free copies of the New Testament throughout public schools of the State.' The presumption is that the Testaments here referred to are copies of a sectarian version of the Holy Scriptures—most probably the grievously erroneous transla-

tion known as 'the Authorised' or 'King James'. How's this? The Bible-in-schools party were solidly defeated in their frontal movement for the sectarianising of public primary instruction in South Australia. Is this an effort on their part, or on the part of some of them, to capture the schools by a flank movement? And can it be that 'the Director of Education in South Australia' is officially turning himself into a colporteur, and converting his Department into an agency for the distribution of a sectarian and incorrect version of God's Good Book in State institutions? If there's anything in the statement quoted above, our alert and straight-hitting contemporary, the Adelaide 'Southern Cross', will, no doubt, have a tilt at it. On both sides of the Tasman Sea, the Party deprecate 'sectarianism' in the public schools. But the sectarianism that findeth not favor in their sight is 'the other fellow's' sectarianism. 'I differ with you; I am right and unsectarian; therefore you are wrong and sectarian. Jam res judicata est—judgment's passed, and the court has risen'. It is the good old rule, the simple plan of argument: 'my doxy is orthodoxy, your doxy is heterodoxy'—what is Catholic or Jewish is sectarian; what is Protestant is unsectarian.

The MacDonnell Letters

A long-drawn controversy has been for some time seething and bubbling all over the British Isles in connection with the appointment of Sir Antony MacDonnell as Under-Secretary for Ireland. The discussion has boiled over the boundaries of the Home Lands, and little spirits of it have trickled through the cables into New Zealand. Those not behind the scenes are sorely puzzled by the fact that an Irish Under-Secretary should have been placed in a position of independence of Prime Ministers, Chief Secretaries, and political parties. Sir Antony's marked Irish sympathies made him from the first the object of the special execration of the Ulster Orange Members of Parliament, who, if the opportunity offered, would cheerfully kick him south of the Tropic of Capricorn. There has been a general feeling that King Edward was the prime mover in Sir Antony's appointment. And it is commonly surmised that the mysterious reluctance to publish the correspondence in connection with the affair is due to a natural desire to keep the royal name out of the verbal melee that is whirling and eddying around Sir Antony's position. The 'Glasgow Observer' quotes from the London correspondent of the 'Daily Dispatch' the following paragraph which (it says) 'simply expresses publicly what everyone has been saying in private on the subject since the contention began': 'I have it on the highest authority that the difficulty in producing the much-talked-of letters does not rise from any objection on the part of Sir Antony MacDonnell or of Mr. Wyndham, but that all the statesmen interested are concerned in keeping the name of the Sovereign out of the affair. Sir Antony was not anxious to be appointed Under-Secretary. The Governorship of Bombay was at his disposal. The Irish appointment was only accepted by him at the earnest request of his Sovereign and under conditions which precluded the possibility of being thrown over by the politicians.'

A Precious Pair

A lank, pinched, sooty-handed philosopher of Laputa spent eight years upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers. His task was labor-dire and heavy woe. But it was as easy as making an apple-dumpling compared with the hopelessness of any effort to extract the truth from those wandering pets of Ananias who, under the generally false designation of 'ex-priests' and 'ex-nuns', make a dishonorable livelihood by coarsely maligning the Catholic Church and body. Six years ago our 'Pink Pamphlets' chased out of New Zealand, Tasmania, and Australia a particularly odious pair of impostors—to wit, the Slatterys—and

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