

Current Topics

'Love' and 'Liberty'

Auckland has the privilege of publishing an interesting 'Christian' journal which, like the Bernini school of sculpture, seems to have arisen in a storm. It is conducted by church-people—for the glory of God. Here is one of its mottoes from the current issue:—

'We maintain that in matters of opinion, matters of expediency, and methods of labor, there should be entire liberty of expression and practice, providing (sic) always that everything is done in subjection to the all-important law of love.—I Cor. 13.'

In the same issue this 'all-important law of love' and 'entire liberty of expression and practice' are put into operation in the course of an editorial article that is (so to speak) filled with 'fire, hail, snow, ice, and stormy winds'. The editor refers to the 'well-known Christian charity' which moved the 'yellow' section of the Auckland population to refrain from boycotting those 'weak-kneed Protestants' who showed a half-hearted, apologetic, or unpugnacious opposition to Home Rule during the visit of the Irish Delegates. He then grills the 'weak-kneed' ones to the following lively tune:—

'But we are now beginning to feel that this particular kind of charity has about exhausted itself—has reached its limit, and signs are not wanting of the desire to call into requisition a stern boycott of those traitorous Protestants who have traded so shamefully upon our assumed simplicity. And this will be the dawning of a brighter day for Protestantism, liberty, and righteousness.'

Alice in Looking-glass Land was puzzled full sorely when Humpty Dumpty made the word 'glory' mean 'a nice knock-down argument', and made 'impenetrability' signify 'We've had enough of the subject, and it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the rest of your life'. Well, there are probably a few people in Auckland just how who are racking their brains to discover how such strange, new meanings came into the terms 'liberty', 'righteousness', 'love', and 'entire liberty of expression and practice'. Does the Auckland 'Christian' journal, like Humpty Dumpty, give these words extra pay for extra work?

A University Question

Sweet are the uses of agitation. It can even slay an old and vast monopoly, as patience is said to kill the doughty giant despair. Yet such monopolies die hard, and 'pass out' with the wild and furious 'flurry' of the harpioned whale. After forty years of strenuous pressure and protest, Irish Catholics are, it seems, at last to be placed, in the matter of university education, on somewhat like a fair footing with their Protestant fellow-countrymen. The intentions of the Government were outlined in sufficient detail in our last issue. It took nearly half a century of arguing with stocks and stones to convince statesmen on the other side of the water that the Catholic claims are not (as Lord Dunraven said) 'the bugbear they seem to ill-informed people'. The Irish Catholic Hierarchy formally assented to the following exposition of the case by the same noble Lord:—

'There is no question of a Catholic University, or of the proscription of any kind of learning, or of a College exclusively for Roman Catholics, or of a College to every post and emolument of which a Protestant may not aspire.'

And now there looms in sight the end of the long struggle to secure for Irish Catholics a University training apart from the intensely Protestant atmosphere and traditions of Trinity College, Dublin. The moral of

it all is this: that 'tis dogged that wins; and that we must 'learn to labor and to wait'. Time is on the side of every good cause that has a long, hard, desert road to travel to reach its Mount of Vision. Even total failure were better in such a cause than the hopelessness that sits still with folded hands and sewn-up lips. But in the dictionary of God's good work there is no such word as 'Failure'.

There lives a Judge
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim
Faithfully kept is as a noble deed.

In His pure sight all virtue, and all noble effort, succeed. The success may come as to the immediate object of patient striving. But is there no other measure of success but the conventional one of achievement along the one chalked line of single effort? Ask the Saints. And ask the Scientists.

After Many Years

Now you see him; and now—pht!—he's gone with the click and squeak of a Jack-in-the-Box. We refer, of course, to the 'Romish' priest who accidentally 'discovered' a Bible ('a new book to him'), read it, and forthwith renounced 'Popery' and became a 'Christian'. For a long time past he has been 'lost or mislaid, stolen or strayed'. But now he has (so an Auckland religious monthly tells us) materialised once more. As usual, he has reappeared in a happy land, far, far away—this time in Bohemia. And—again as usual—he is a sort of 'chimæra bombinans in vacuo'. He has no name, no history, and no address—no sign-board, no label, no father, no mother, no home, no country. Or if he has, these are dark secrets which the narrator cautiously keeps to himself—entre soi et soi-meme. 'Spec's he just growed, like Topsy—or (vastly more probably) 'growed' like the story of the Fakenham Ghost. At any rate, the word 'Fake' seems written very large across the tale.

Two Agitations

The Reformed denominations in Victoria were not happy till they had public instruction secularised there in 1872. The measure was swept through Parliament on a tornado of anti-Catholic invective. The true color of the supporters of the Bill (said the Hon. Thomas Howard Fellowes at the time) was 'an Orange banner blazoned with "No-Popery."'. The measure failed to effect its purpose—which (as Mr. Wilberforce Stephen said) was to 'rend the Catholics asunder' ('Argus,' June 26, 1872). And now the very same forces are at work, under the same old saffron banner, and with the same old methods of vituperation, to un-secularise the public schools and make them in effect the Sunday-schools of the various Protestant denominations. Nay, a raucous cry for the compulsory closing of all Catholic schools has gone up from the mouth of the interesting gentleman whom a Sydney weekly describes as 'the woolly-headed microbe who bosses the Orange lodge in Victoria.' The incident is referred to here as indicating the temper of the movement for sectarianising the public schools of Victoria, and compelling Catholics to pay a part of the expenses of the process.

In all the years since 1872, the clerical agitators have been too tired to impart instruction in the schools. There is a Hottentot saying that 'labor kills a man but strengthens a woman.' There is a good deal of such Hottentot philosophy among the non-Catholic clergy when there is a question of laboring for the souls of the little ones in the secularist public schools. 'Let the Bible', says the Archbishop of Melbourne, 'be taught out of school hours by the representatives of the different denominations.' Abundant opportunities are already afforded for this purpose. During four different periods of the day, namely, (a)