

Current Topics

The Wrong Address

An unknown correspondent has forwarded us sundry newspaper cuttings having reference to recent unpleasant incidents among certain of our separated brethren overseas. These cuttings have been sent to the wrong address. The Catholic newspaper is neither a pillory for the frailties (real or alleged) of individuals outside our fold; neither is it a record on which to blazon them. Circumstances may, and often do, arise in which, the faults or crimes of individuals have to be exposed—as, for instance, in the just and necessary defence or warning of others. Till then, the Catholic journalist will leave the unaggressive culprit in his sanctuary, under the mantle of Sweete Sanct Charitie. 'Non pascitur leo vermibus'—the lion does not feed on worms; nor will the Catholic newspaper make guilty shakels by the methods of the Man with the Muck-rake.

A Word to the Wise

Our friends of the Wellington Citizens' Bible-in-schools League are busy telling the press of the Colony the things that (they say) are being done for religious education in Austria, Egypt, New Brunswick, Hamburg, Cape Colony, and other places that are far, far away. But why have they no mention of the splendid work that is being done for Christian education by one section of the population of New Zealand? Why is there no whisper, not a breath, about what has been achieved by other 'Wellington Citizens'—Catholics, to wit—right in front of the eyeballs of the League? Is their sight adjusted only to long-range vision? Or, like Rabelais' witches, do they wear their eyes in their slippers when at home and fix them in their sockets only when they go abroad? A man's best things are often, unknown to him, round about him. Could not our good friends of the League alter their focus so as to see the things that are at their feet? And then—well, let them do as the good engineer does, harness the horse-power of their zeal as directly as may be to its normal and natural work. New Zealanders are a pretty practical people. They would be vastly more interested in what the Wellington Citizens' Bible-in-schools League is doing for religious education in Wellington, than in the (sometimes misleading) things which the League has to say about what other people are doing for religious education 'ez far away ez Payris is'. An ancient saw saith:—

'Say-well and do-well end with one letter,
Say-well is good, do-well is better'.

Is there, in the League's breast, no connection between feeling and action? Is it all to end—as all such movements have thus far ended in New Zealand—in words, words, words—or, as the French proverb hath it, in

'Beaucoup de bruit,
Peu de fruit'

—big talk, little work, as we may phrase it? Can not our well-meaning friends in the Empire City take heart of grace, seize their courage with both hands, follow the good example that other 'Wellington Citizens' offer them, and let their feelings blossom into action on the normal lines? One religious school, built, staffed, and maintained by the League would create a deeper impression upon New Zealand than a geyser of printer's ink or a shipload of talk about far-off Shanghai or Timbuctoo.

A New 'Reformer'

Some Wairoa friends send us a copy of the 'Christian Herald' of recent date. It contains a laudatory notice of 'Father Jeremiah Crowley, the famous Roman Catholic priest'. The Father (says the 'Herald') is

carrying on a 'crusade for the purpose of purifying the Church of which he is a member'. The new 'reformer' is (so at least says the 'Herald') 'like Savonarola of old'; he is also 'like the Master Himself'; 'both Protestant and Roman Catholic pulpits have been placed at his service'. And so on. We have twice during the past twelve months set forth sundry facts connect[ed] with the new 'reformer'—partly from personal recollection, partly from official documents furnished to us by the Archbishops of Chicago and St. Paul. We may again have occasion to 'return to the unpleasant subject. For the present we content ourselves with the following summary statement for the information of inquiring Northern friends. The unhappy man was excommunicated by his archbishop in Chicago while the writer of these lines was in that city in 1902. After various fortunes he finally dropped into the role of itinerant No-Popery lecturer. He still delivers from the platforms of small halls (at 'front seats one shilling, back seats sixpence', or thereabouts) violent attacks upon the faith of his baptism, written for him by an American hack journalist. He is also welcomed in the pulpits of conventicles to which an onset of Billingsgate is a joy and the breath of slander sweet. But the hot-headed itinerant is no more 'a member' of the 'Roman Catholic Church' than the Master of the nearest Orange lodge. 'Roman Catholic pulpits' are no more open to him than they were to Chiniquy, or than they are to the Slattery pair. The new 'reformer' begins (as such 'reformers' generally do) by reforming 'the other fellow'. He does this, moreover, on a curious and rather puzzle-headed method: not by appeals to the reason or the religious sentiments of 'the other fellow' but by rough and slanderous vituperation of 'the other fellow' to 'the other fellow's' enemies—for a consideration. These are the methods, not of Christ and His Apostles, but of the typical rough No-Popery barn-stormer of limited mentality. Yet there are in the poor 'ex' under notice a few saving qualities (chiefly negative) that may yet lead him back to the kindly light against which he has for the time being sewn up his eyelids.

As for his 'fame': While he was honored (more or less) in the sacred ministry, the people who now sound the loud timbrel about him would not have greeted or even noticed him upon the street. When his services are no longer appreciated in the Church of his best days, and he turns in his anger to rend her, the obscure and unnoticed cleric of yesterday suddenly becomes (to people who like that sort of thing) the 'famous' man of to-day. And the language of eulogy is exhausted upon him. It is the old story of the poodle fighting the lion. The poodle, of course, got the worst of the encounter. 'But only think of it', said the other poodles; 'a lion attacked!' That sort of Brummagem 'fame' is cheap and easily acquired. And the lacquer soon wears off the brass. 'A person', says Dr. England, 'needs no other qualification to write against the Roman Catholic religion than to be so disposed; and the abundance of the spirit becomes manifest in the vehemence of the phraseology. Little attention need be paid to facts; circumstances need not be examined; nor is it always necessary to have regard even to probability itself'.

Catholics have no use for the cast-off ornaments of other creeds. But to some of our separated brethren an 'ex' (on account of his happily extreme rarity) seems almost as great a treasure as the Orloff diamond. If they had only the grace to refrain from making unfair capital out of the new jewel in their casket, we should have been spared the pain of showing that their diamond is merely paste.

Fine Professions, Foul Practice

'Evil', says Lowell, 'is a far more cunning and persevering propagandist than good, for it has no inward strength, and is driven to seek countenance and

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