

And so say all of us who read the reports of the 'inflammatory political speeches' referred to by the 'Argus'.

Those Convent 'Scandals'

'A nickname', says Isaac Disraeli, 'a man may chance to wear out; but a system of calumny, pursued by a faction, may descend even to posterity'. Such a 'system of calumny' has been 'pursued by a faction' of late in northern Italy, as their first line of attack upon the religious Orders there. Happily, circumstances have, thus far, prevented their slanders descending to posterity. The action of the courts, and the course of official investigation, have proved—for the moment at least, a serious set-back to the anticlerical faction. In our last issue we referred to the alleged 'scandals' at Varazze and elsewhere, which the 'Weekly Press' dished up to its readers in language that was 'frequent and free', without so much as a hint regarding the official exposures which had dynamited them long before. A further query on the Varazze 'scandal' moves us to remark that the imaginative youth who concocted the horrible stories against a companion in the Salesian College there, was (says the Boston 'Pilot') declared by anticlerical doctors to be a degenerate of the most pronounced type. Even the 'Giornale d'Italia', which at first took him up, clapped him on a pedestal, and accepted his blackguardly tales as true, has found it desirable to revise its first impressions and to admit that the youthful degenerate 'had sinister aid in his evil work'. The 'Giornale d'Italia' adds: 'Leaving it, therefore, to science to establish the nature and the entity of the phenomenon of this boy who has turned half Italy upside down, we note that anybody who wishes to find a written source for this monstrous product has but to remember the ludicrous pages of that perverse and infamous writer, Leo Taxil, a liar always, whether he combated Catholicism, or whether he was attacking Freemasonry in the same vituperative way after he became its enemy.'

The justification of the slandered religious in northern Italy came in at the rate of a mile a minute. But will the exposures of the Varazze and Milan 'scandals' close the anticlerical steam-factories where such calumnies are generally concocted and exploited? By no means. With a few verbal alterations, we might apply to them the words that Newman wrote, in his 'Christ Upon the Waters', regarding Reformed calumniators of the Church: 'There is a demand for such fabrications, and there is a consequent supply. Our antiquity, our vastness, our strangeness, our successes, our unmovableness, all require a solution; and the impostor is hailed as a prophet, who will extemporise against us some tale of blood, and the orator as an evangelist, who points to some real scandal of the Church, dead and gone, man or measure, as the pattern fact of Catholicism.'

'Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a lucky hit;
Shrink not from blasphemy, 'twill pass for wit'.

Such would seem to be the motto of the more bitter kind of banded haters of religion in Italy and France. And in the matter of credulity of anti-convent tales of portentous wickedness, there seem to be, even in this twentieth century, a few journals in English-speaking countries that have the ready and indiscriminate appetite of the adjutant-bird—or of the renowned goat of Harlem.

Celibacy

According to Max O'Rell, 'it requires an ounce of courage to get married, and a ton of it to remain married'. Homer, Plato, Virgil, Horace, Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and many other great lights of the world (adds he), died bachelors. 'Socrates', adds Max, 'was an exception, but his wife killed him before

the cup of hemlock did,' and 'Byron tried matrimony, but was not more successful than Moliere'. Max has much advice to give on the subject, but he has not been able to improve on that of St. Paul. And the Apostle of the Gentiles, while exalting the married state, makes the virginal state (for those who are called to it) the better one, and the more suited to the Christian ministry.

The 'Ave Maria' does not attach 'any particular importance to non-Catholic approval of Catholic doctrine or discipline'. Yet it confesses to 'a certain interest in the statement of the grounds upon which such approval is based'. For this reason it reproduces the following extract from a paper on 'Clerical Celibacy and Reunion' contributed to the Anglican 'Lamp':—

'The Catholic Church is inspired by the Spirit of all wisdom. And in requiring her priests to be all celibates, she does it, not only because it is the higher state, but because that state creates a certain psychological attitude to the priest which is necessary to the effective accomplishment of the work of the Church. The conjugal state, on the other hand, in addition to its hampering responsibilities, brings about a confusion of mind which, more or less, unfits the man to sympathise with the sacerdotal life and to enter perfectly into its spiritual responsibilities. Compare the religious influence of the Church of England before the reformation with her influence now. Will any Catholic' (Anglican) 'undertake to say that the Church of England to-day, with only a fraction of the English-speaking people attached to her communion, is the spiritual power she was when all her clergy were unmarried and unreservedly devoted to the exercise of their priesthood? No doubt her married ministry has produced many great men from among the children they have begotten according to the flesh. But, oh, at what a price! Where is the flock that was given thee by Pope Gregory the Great—thy beautiful flock of the English race? Alas! it is scattered among a thousand heretical sects, which have sprung up because of the neglect of thy married priests, who fed themselves and their families and fed not their flocks'.

THE CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND

MEMOIRS OF THE EARLY DAYS

(Contributed.)

(Continued from last week.)

AUCKLAND.

An Opportune Proclamation.

No account of the annoyances to which the missionaries at Hokianga were subjected in those days would be at all complete which ignored the part that was taken to suppress them by Baron de Thierry. This gentleman, a French Protestant, who had received a large part of his education at Cambridge University, and had served with distinction in the Portuguese Army, owned about 40,000 acres in the neighborhood, which he had purchased from some native chiefs for thirty-six axes; he was therefore entitled to some consideration from his co-religionists. With the authority of a small potentate, he issued a proclamation calling upon the persecutors of the Bishop to desist in their efforts to drive him and his clergy from the island, and calling upon them as 'Christian men to pause before they hurry into acts which must inevitably lead to bloodshed.' The 'proclamation' went on to say: 'The Baron de Thierry is by religion anti-Catholic, and it is far from his object to plead for any particular faith; he pleads for all faiths and for all classes and conditions of men, and more especially does he entreat the white residents to pause and consider the great responsibility which they assume by leading New Zealanders into acts which they are taught to believe they may commit with impunity as an independent people, but which will end in conflicts which every honest man must deplore.' Notwithstanding this appeal, no sooner had the French corvette left the New Zealand waters than the persecution of the missionaries became as active as ever. A meeting of the natives was convened to devise means of getting rid of the Frenchmen without bloodshed. But the Catholic chiefs and natives, of whom by this time there was a considerable number, convened a meeting also, at which it was re-

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