

was brought forward to test the power of the Committee to set aside, in effect, the secular clauses of the Education Act, and, by a judicious 'rigging' of the working hours, make sectarian instruction practically part and parcel of the public school curriculum. Last Monday's judgment debars the School Committees from so doing. The decision is good, so far as it goes. But it does not remove one of the chief objects in running School Committee elections on sectarian lines; neither does it give full assurance of security to dissenters from a State school creed. For the School Committees elect the Education Boards, and it is still within the power of a well-organised minority, working quietly or in the dark, so to conduct the Committee elections over a School Board area, that they might be able to dominate within its limits the administration of the Education Act. A determined effort in that direction was made in and about Wellington at the recent Committee elections, the Bible-in-schools League interviewing and putting forward candidates, and pledging support only to such as would support the reading of the Protestant version of the Scriptures in the public schools. That effort was solidly defeated. We set very little practical value upon a beggarly half-hour's scriptural instruction in a week, in an atmosphere that is unreal, unreligious, and unsuited to produce the best results from such teaching. But it has at least the negative advantage of being better than nothing. We have the profoundest sympathy for every effort of our separated brethren to give biblical and religious instruction to the children of their various faiths outside the working hours of the public schools. But we think that more attention should be directed to the efforts that are being made—and successfully made in various places—to introduce sectarian instruction into the primary public schools, and even (as we happen to know) to make some of our high schools a medium for disseminating, through alleged manuals of 'history' and otherwise, an extremely objectionable form of anti-Catholic fable and bias and misconception.

Notes

Kind Appreciation

Our native modesty prevents us publishing in full the kindly remarks addressed to us this week by an esteemed non-Catholic reader in North Canterbury. 'May I', says he in part, 'as a non-Catholic reader of the "Tablet", express my delight with the paper? It is only for the last month or two that I have been reading it, and it gives me great pleasure. Your quotations are wonderful. . . As a reader who would like to know more, let me thank you for the pleasure your paper has given me, by its wide knowledge and its literary excellence'.

Misfit Names

The South African war has left us many a 'young idea' that carries its date-label in such names as 'Mafeking', 'Kimberley', 'Baden-Powell', and so on. But there is another phase of child-naming that forces unfortunate units of humanity to carry intolerable burdens throughout life. It takes, for instance, a good deal of trouble to live up to such a name as George Washington. 'God-parents', says the 'Irish Independent', 'in naming children after illustrious persons, unfairly pledge them to a career of greatness before they are of an age to understand the magnitude of the obligation. The result is seen in the extraordinary roll of offenders reported in Marylebone Lane Police Court recently. Oliver Cromwell (drunk and disorderly) was followed by Horatio Nelson (defaulter in education rates); and a line of namesakes recalling Gay the lyric poet, Green the historian of the English people, Liv-

ingstone the explorer, and Gore the Bishop, comes next. Copyright in names is urgently needed. Not merely for persons, but for places, too. While the gold boom was vigorous some years ago, a Dublin builder called his two-storey houses "Klondyke", "Coolgardie", etc. And the misuse to which music halls put great names is typified in the misunderstanding which led an inexperienced London cabman to drive his fare to Marlborough House when he wanted the "Prince of Wales".

'Romantic Abduction'

Strange things get smuggled past the Customs officers at times, and stranger things sometimes, by the necessities of the case, elude the vigilance of the editor of a large daily or weekly paper. Last week's Christchurch 'Weekly Press' contained a venomous absurdity that, we believe, would never have marred its columns had it passed under the editorial eye. We refer to a grotesque 'snake-yarn' headed 'Romantic Abduction'. It tells of two 'lovers' who, after many melodramatic absurdities, were successfully united in matrimony. One was 'a beautiful nun' with the amazing name of 'Sister Geneva'. She lived in a convent that was situated Nowhere. The other was a Mr. Dye, who also lived at No Address. Dye was a lover of 'Geneva'. So, we presume, was the inventor of the story. When 'Geneva' decided to bottle herself up (so to speak) in a convent of Nowhere, Dye disguised himself as a workman, entered that extraordinary convent, found his way to the novitiate, and succeeded in 'urging his suit' upon 'Geneva'. Geneva 'listened to his passionate protestations and agreed to fly with him'. But Dye 'was discovered by the Mother Superior and ejected'. And 'Geneva' was corked up once more.

Then Dye 'burglariously entered' the convent of Nowhere. It was midnight; 'a blinding snowstorm was raging'; 'Sister Geneva' 'crept barefooted downstairs and escaped by means of an open window'. But the nuns were ready for them—they charged in a body (also, probably, barefooted) out in the snowstorm. The flying couple were ordered to 'halt' by that military community; there ensued 'a hand to hand struggle'; the nuns captured Dye; Sister (Old Tom) Geneva got away, but the nuns searched for her all night till, finally, they located her at the Kiel Hotel, in the city of Nowhere, and brought her back, by a 'stern command' to the convent of Nowhere. Having bottled her up, they let go Dye, who forthwith trickled out of the convent. Having secured his liberty, he, with the aid of an obliging p'lecceman, 'rescued his sweetheart'; they went off and got married by a Judge at Nowhere. And so the story ended 'in the triumph of love'.

As usual in the anti-convent romance, we have here the energetic 'lover' who scales lofty walls and barks his shins without the 'smallest necessity'; and the 'beautiful nun' to whom it never occurs to go out by the customary way—the open front door. In the present case, however, the clumsy fabricator struck upon an unfortunate, but (in the circumstances) probably very appropriate, name for his heroine. By all the rules of the anti-convent romance, Dye ought to have brought her down from the top storey in his strong, manly arms, by a rope ladder two hundred feet long. But there was probably too much 'Sister Geneva' in him—or Sister Beer-and-Whiskey—to think of that customary detail. He made up for it somewhat, however, in the delirium-tremens fight in 'the snow-covered fields' and in the midnight chase to the 'Kiel Hotel'. There are probably some people even still who believe in these Munchausen 'yarns'. If so, the schoolmaster has not by any means succeeded in expelling all the ignorance that there is about.