

5th Section, that dealing with robberies and swindles. Positions are thus created for four new examining magistrates, two new deputies, and four new magistrates' clerks.

### Religion and Insanity

Cable messages from Melbourne record the case of the man Pincombe, who sent threatening letters to the local Protestant and Catholic clergy, and finally 'drew a bead' on the Rev. Mr. Robinson. The trouble arose out of the fact that the man's wife has been for some time in a hospital for the insane, suffering from religious mania, and the unhappy man (who is also apparently demented) has, in consequence, conceived a bitter hatred of creeds and clergy of every kind. On receipt of the first cable message, a secular contemporary jumped to the rather hasty conclusion that religion is, in a way, a predisposing cause of insanity. But piety, according to St. Paul, is useful for all things; and religion and its principles are necessary for the completion and rounding off of even the physical side of our nature. The 'S.H. Review', in its issue of April 25, quotes from an article in a Protestant paper on religion and insanity. The article is by Dr. Starr Jordan, of Columbus, and he quotes an interesting statement made to him in the course of a private letter by Dr. A. B. Richardson, who (says the 'S.H. Review') 'was for many years in charge of institutions of the insane, the last being the United States Hospital at Washington. Dr. Richardson replies to Dr. Jordan's inquiry about the amount of insanity attributable to religion: "You have asked me a very easy question. I have tested the matter thoroughly. There are only two patients in the hospital whose insanity has any relation to religion, and I think, from their predisposition to insanity, that they would probably have become insane on some other subject if they had not on religion. Now, if you had asked me how many people in Ohio are kept by religion from insanity and out of these hospitals, you would have given me a question hard to answer, for they are a multitude. The good cheer, bright hopes, rich consolations, good tempers, regular habits, and glad songs of religion are such an antidote for the causes of insanity, that thousands of people in Ohio are preserved from insanity by them. But for the beneficent influence of religion, Ohio would have to double the capacity of her hospitals in order to accommodate her insane patients."

This would lead to a condition somewhat similar to that which was described by James L. Petigru when he was asked the way to the Charleston Insane Asylum. 'My dear sir', he replied, 'take any road. You can't go astray. The whole State is one vast insane asylum'.

### A Convent Romance

Some weeks ago we commented on an American convent romance that was evidently concocted by some one who believes in the principle enunciated in Kipling's 'A Day's Work' that 'there is no sense in telling too much truth'. The story has appeared in several versions, all worked up in the true style of the journalism that is 'yellow'. All the versions concur in making the heroine a Good Shepherd nun, 'Sister Florence' (!), and in endowing her with a beauty that was perfectly intolerable, and in giving her a 'lovier true'. At one time this was a workman employed—in the convent laundry! At another time, he is a lawyer from a neighboring town, who contrived to see the resplendent creature surreptitiously—in the noviciate! Of course an 'escape' was arranged—the nun of romance never goes out in the usual prosaic way, by the front door. Like the cow of the nursery tale, she has to jump over the moon—or to imitate the folly of the supposedly wisest of all insects, the ant, when, dragging a dead weevil to its nest, it encounters on its path a thistle

of the Scotch or Canadian variety. Insects with more common-sense and less reputation for intelligence would just walk around it and proceed serenely on their nestward way. Not so the wisest insect. It climbs the thorny stem—backwards—lugging its burden with ludicrous toilsomeness up the prickly ascent, to the top of its topmost flower; and then, with many a fall and many a prick, it descends the further side.

This is the way in which the nun of anti-convent romance 'escapes'. The front door is open to her; but her exit must, of course, be made after the fashion of the ant's 'hauling home', with incredible and ludicrously unnecessary toil and adventure. 'Sister Florence' 'escaped' in two or three different ways. Her 'lovier' and she exchanged garbs—inside the convent, by day; they likewise did not exchange garbs, but he remained outside, while she scrambled at the witching hour down by windows and walls as nimbly as any monkey, and flew, pursued for miles by the whole community across the snow-covered fields. The course of true love, in this as in many other cases, did not run smoothly. The fugitive was discovered by the searchers in a hotel in a neighboring town, and brought back. Then her laborer-lawyer 'sued far a writ of habeas corpus, the court awarded him Florence', an obliging magistrate made them one, after many stirring incidents by flood and field. And the story ought to have ended as all fairy tales should end: 'They lived happily ever afterwards'.

The ending, however, was less romantic. One version of the romance (published in New Zealand) placed the scene in an unnamed Good Shepherd convent in the State of Nebraska. The others were less discreet—they gave the name of the Good Shepherd Convent in Omaha, Nebraska. And then the indiscreet bubble was pricked. We quote the exposure of the insanely preposterous story from the Milwaukee 'Catholic Citizen' of May 2, 1908: 'In a letter to the editor of "The Cleveland Universe", Monsignor Colaneri, Vicar-General of the Omaha diocese, thus shows up its falsity: "I have not seen the scandalous story you refer to, but I can give you the details of the case that I presume furnished the basis for it. Last Thursday an A.P.A. attorney of this city, at the instance of an discharged employee of the Good Shepherd convent, secured a writ of habeas corpus for the release of an inmate of the reformatory—a non-Catholic girl. The case was not contested, of course, and the Mother Superior made no objection to the girl's leaving. That is all there is in the story. The attorney—inspired by what motives I am unable to say—gave out to the reporters a supposedly 'romantic' story about the case. I do not know how far he was responsible for the scandalous story sent to the Eastern papers."

'So', adds the 'Catholic Citizen', 'it will appear Florence was not a nun and not a Catholic—merely a penitent. The "escaped nun" was not a nun at all, and there was no escape. It appeared that the Mother Superior was not served with a writ of "habeas corpus", as she was quite willing to let the non-Catholic, Florence Tinsley, depart without objection.'

Although King Edward's cook receives a salary of £2000 per annum, he is not called upon to prepare an elaborate meal every time his Majesty dines at Windsor Castle or Buckingham Palace. Unless he is entertaining, the King much prefers a simple menu, and the same remark applies to the tastes of Queen Alexandra.

'We'll cut the Panama Canal!  
Said Uncle Sam. 'You'll see we shall!  
We shall, no sham;  
As sure 'I am  
The boss tobacco-chewer,  
But during winter time, I guess,  
For coughs and colds we can't do less  
Than ease the workman's wheeziness  
With Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.'