

A rank specimen of the last-mentioned class is the author of the stupid romance from distant Nebraska which has met with its exposure in the plain, unvarnished tale told by the Vicar-General of the diocese of Omaha on the tenth page of the present issue of this paper. Further rank specimens of the same evil class are the banded enemies of all religion who concocted, and, through their echoes in the British press, sent to the ends of the English-speaking world the malevolent stories—now triumphantly refuted—of the 'abominations' alleged to be practised in Catholic charitable and educational institutes at Varazze and elsewhere in Italy. The calumnies here referred to were the work of what Editor Brann calls 'the stupid prevaricator'. They were merely the coarse brutalities of the den and the street corner; inartistic in so far as they paid no heed to the first requisite of successful falsehood,

'Lest men believe your tale untrue,
Keep probability in view';

and packed with the evidences of the deep and bitter malevolence which characterises the onslaughts of atheistic Continental anticlericalism upon religion, its personnel, and its institutions.

The campaign of coarse and persistent calumny compelled the formation of a defensive organisation. The slanderers were brought to justice, and our columns have from time to time published the happy results of a long series of libel actions which have taught the atheistic press that the game of priest-baiting and nun-harrying contains more risks than red meat. The Italian Government took cognisance of the shocking calumnies published by the same papers against the Salesians at Varazze and against other institutes of Catholic charity. In every instance the trials resulted in the triumph of the incriminated parties. We have already referred, in previous issues, to the manner in which the anti-Christian press, foiled in its efforts, endeavored to cast upon the Church the discredit of such irregularities as occurred in a home for destitute girls conducted by the female adventurer and impostor, Giuseppina Fumagalli. This creature was no nun; she had never been, even for a day, in a religious sisterhood; and she disguised herself as a nun merely for the purpose of extracting coins all the more successfully from the pockets of the credulous and unwary. She had been expelled by the civil authorities from Rome as far back as twelve years ago. The Cardinal-Archbishops of Turin and Milan denounced the creature in their cathedral cities. 'They did everything humanly possible', says the Rome correspondent of the London 'Tablet', under date August 2, 1907, 'to prevent her from wearing the religious dress, and they warned their priests to refuse her and her companions the Sacraments. The woman was brought before the courts, and the anticlerical papers only sympathised with her and denounced the "priests" for their persecution. Now they denounce the priests for being in full complicity with her. Baffled in her efforts to secure recognition from the Church authorities, she hired an ex-sacristan, got him to don the clerical garb, and visit her mis-called 'religious' home as its 'chaplain'. Later on she picked up an ex-priest and associated him with herself in her fraudulent work.

The denouement came in due course at a farcical Star Chamber 'trial' in Milan. The result has been sufficiently indicated in a previous issue of this paper. The bogus 'nun', her servant woman, the sham 'father confessor', and a priest in good standing were accused of a series of grievous charges in connection with the Fumagalli institute in Milan. The well-informed Roman editor, 'Vox Urbis', writing in the 'New York Freeman's Journal' of May 2, 1908, tells how the devoted and calumniated priest who was among the accused 'was in America, working hard on the mission, when

the news flashed all over the world that he was accused by one of the young victims of the crime, and without waiting for a moment he crossed the ocean and gave himself up to the authorities. That was the act of a hero—for he must have known that he would have been treated here with all manner of indignity both by the police and the press, and it was possible that he might have remained for years instead of months in prison without a trial. On Monday evening he left the court absolutely acquitted of even the faintest suspicion—and the one witness against him confessed that she had been induced to lie owing to the methods adopted in the first examination of her. The poor servant woman was also acquitted—not a particle of evidence of any kind was alleged against her. The pseudo-nun Fumagalli was also acquitted absolutely of all the charges on which she was tried—but was sentenced to ten months in prison on an entirely different charge, that viz., of having sought to favor the escape of the fourth defendant. He has been sentenced to imprisonment for sixteen years!'

Of the fourth accused's conviction, 'Vox Urbis' writes as follows in the same issue of our esteemed New York contemporary:—

'It is no exaggeration to say that this verdict has excited the horror and indignation of the great majority of those who have followed the details of the trial; it has proved with abundant clearness that he was not in Milan at the time the crimes were alleged to have been committed. The witnesses against him openly retracted in the court their first accusations, and affirmed them again after they had been dismissed; there were numerous witnesses who proved that they had been persuaded, urged, ordered, to tell the judge that their first story was true and their second story was false, and their third story true. It was shown that the material evidences of the crime might be traced to quite another source than that of the unfortunate man in the dock. All to no purpose—somebody must be convicted, and he was the only one left. Of course his lawyers have at once lodged an appeal, and it may be safely affirmed that the result of the future sentence will be the righting of this grave miscarriage of justice.'

'On the very same day that this trial came to an end', continues 'Vox Urbis', 'a decision was given absolutely acquitting the victims of calumny in the Salesian College of Varazze. These two instances formed the nucleus of that horrible outbreak of alleged scandals which shocked the civilized world last summer. In the interval the score or more of other scandals foisted on religious institutions have been shown to be without foundation.'

Notes

'Wasn't Loaded'

Early last week two boys up North went out with a gun that, of course, 'wasn't loaded'. The local paper reports that the service at the graveside, over the younger of the pair, was 'very impressive'. There's no gun so deadly as the one that 'isn't loaded'.

Cardinal Logue and Dr. Neligan

We quote elsewhere in this issue some remarks recently made by the Anglican Bishop of Auckland in regard to 'muck-rake Imperialism'. Remembering with what violence and aplomb a number of our secular newspapers fell upon Cardinal Logue in connection with that bogus 'interview' in New York, we are waiting with some anxiety to see what is going to happen to Dr. Neligan.

A Mighty Growth

In 1813 (according to the archives of Baltimore cathedral) six priests ministered to some 20,000 souls in the whole State of New York and part of New

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and opposite Headstones, Cross Monuments etc., in Granite, Marble
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