

Current Topics

A Warning

We recently received a request to allow our columns to be used to advertise the request of an English priest for offerings for Masses. We declined, as it was contrary to the Church's law. We now learn that the Melbourne *Advocate* has had a letter from an English Bishop, who writes of the party in question: 'He is an impostor, and I have done my best to warn people against him in England, Ireland, and the United States. He has deceived people in all parts of the world.'

The man's printed circulars have, to our personal knowledge, reached New Zealand. A word to the wise ought to be sufficient.

The Church in America

'Westward the star of empire takes its way.' And in the West, too—under the Stars and Stripes—there has arisen the star of a new conquest of the Church. After his last year's extended visit to the United States, the distinguished Abbé Klein sees under the star-spangled banner a great coming Catholic nation. 'It would,' writes he in the *Paris Correspondant*, 'be necessary to go back to the first centuries of Christianity to find an example of progress comparable to that made by the American Church during the last twenty-five years.' 'Soon,' adds he, 'our Church will have nothing to envy, as far as her home missions are concerned, in the Protestant Churches; and if already, without such an agency of diffusion, she has developed two or three times more than the most prosperous among them, what ought not to be her progress now! In a quarter of a century, she has outstripped all the other denominations put together; she can make of the United States—fulfilling a dream which begins to be a dream no longer—the first Catholic nation of the world. Among the motives for hope which I encountered on my last visit, none seems to me more encouraging than the birth of the Catholic Church Extension Society.'

'Driggleddy-Driggleddy'

A learned bacteriologist has lately been sending cold shivers up and down the spines of some people by a catalogue of the micrococci and the macrococci, and the lephthorices, and the spiromonas, and the streptococci, and the other fearfully and wonderfully named wild beasts that were picked up in the streets of Auckland by a lady's bedraggled skirt that had made overtures to them on a muddy day. They remind one of Foote's small gentry, the Picinnies and the Joblillies and the Garyulies, and the Grand Panjandrum himself, with the little round button on top. The old Roman poets imagined, in the mermaid, a beautiful maiden, the glory of whose intolerable loveliness above ended in the dishonor of a very fishy fish below. And fashion, with its long skirts (not yet quite abandoned), decrees that women's attire, resplendent above, shall end in a foul trap or trawl for the capture (on wet days), and transfer to our homes, of myriad pestiferous microscopic enemies of our kind. T. E. Brown strikes off the situation in one of his recently published dialect poems:

'Bless me, the way she had with her clothes!
The slackin' and tautin', and luffin', and dippin',
And nippety-nappety, trappin' and trippin',
And a hitch to starboard, and a hitch to port,
And a driggleddy-draggleddy all through the dirt!'

So end all the finery—the frills and laces and furbelows (we are a bit uncertain as to the terminology)—in 'a driggleddy-draggleddy all through the dirt!'

A Story of Slaughtered Innocents

Hudibras's Squire, Ralpho—a sort of minor English Sancho Panza—pleaded as follows for what he considered the sacred right of the saints of Puritanism to prevaricate in a holy cause:

'For if the dev'l, to serve his turn,
Can tell the truth, why the saints should scorn,
When it serves theirs, to swear and lie,
I think there's little reason why;
Else h' has a greater power than they,
Which 'twere impiety to say.'

According to Mary Twain, people 'so disposed' (as Sairy Gamp puts it) have their choice of 869 different ways of saying the thing that is not, when it serves their turn. The reverend

orators of the saffron sash seem to have discovered and applied pretty nearly every variety of error in matters of fact in the annual eruption of 'the glorious twelfth.' In Ireland,' said the Very Rev. Dean Phelan, V.G. (Melbourne), on a recent occasion, 'we used to call the second week of July the "Dog Days." The weather became so warm that the canine creation lost its mental balance, and mad dogs became the terror of the country. Then a small section of the community, far higher than the brute creation, became mentally affected. The wave of madness grew in volume and intensity as it extended northwards, and broke like thunder claps over Portadown, Derry, and Belfast on the 12th, and ended in vapor, as all matter composed of gas generally ends. Now, there seems to be nothing in our July weather to beget a wave of madness; on the contrary, we have had cold, bitterly cold weather for the past weeks. So we must account for this wave of insanity with which we have been visited on other than atmospheric grounds.' The speaker referred to an attack made by one Orange clergyman, at a demonstration in Melbourne, on St. Joseph's Foundling Home, Broadmeadows. The speaker began his attack by a story to the effect that in a Catholic foundling hospital near Sydney 82 per cent. of the infants die before they reach the age of one year. 'The Church authorities in Sydney,' said Dean Phelan, 'are more than able to defend their own frontier, and had the King William orator stopped there I should not touch the matter. But when he went on to say that "not many miles from Melbourne a similar state of things existed," he could only refer to the Foundling Hospital at Broadmeadows. It is the only institution of its kind connected with the Catholic Church in Victoria.'

Dean Phelan then proceeded to rackarock the foul calumny. He said:

'I am supplied with information from the books of the institution, and those figures are guaranteed by the honorary physician, Dr. Thomson, whose care, and time, and trouble in connection with the hospital places us Catholics under a lasting obligation to him. And I am supported in this statement by Dr. Wood, who is pre-eminently at the head of his profession in the treatment of infants, and who pays an occasional visit of inspection. Dr. Wood has placed on record in the pages of the *Intercolonial Medical Journal* his appreciation of the marvellous success which has attended the efforts of the Sisters at Broadmeadows. When visiting the home some months ago he quoted for me statistics from the leading foundling hospitals of the world, and assured me that we have put up a record in Melbourne which they failed to establish in London, Paris, or New York. Take last year—that is, from June of 1907 to the end of last month. There were 85 infants in the hospital in June, 1907, and 40 were admitted during the twelve months. From that number 9 died, or an average death-rate for the year of 7.2. You will appreciate this marvellous success of the Sisters when I tell you that the infant mortality in the State of Victoria is over 12 per cent., and when, furthermore, you remember the vast difference between the delicate children sent to Broadmeadows—the most of whom are without mothers—and the child of a happy mother in a private home; where its infant wants are supplied from Nature's own fountains. And how has that success been achieved? By the skill of the Sisters in the treatment of their charges, and by the spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice characteristic of those who devote their lives to the service of God. During the terrific and prolonged "heat" wave of last summer—a wave which left an empty cot in many a home, and a sword of sorrow in many a mother's heart—not a single life was lost at Broadmeadows. Yet the self-sacrifice which that involved—the watching night and day, the taking of temperatures, the foreseeing of dangers, the applying of remedies—all this, I say, is singled out by the apostles of calumny as a work for which "someone should be hanged."

Strangely enough, the men who substitute this dancing-dervish business for the clean and gentle teaching of Christ, waste their time wondering 'why men don't go to church.' Most men have, happily, sufficient manhood in them to revolt against the coarse and calumnious attacks on the flower of Catholic womanhood that, for several years past, have disgraced the 'July platform,' and the pulpits of a few notoriety-seeking clergymen; in Melbourne and Sydney. A way to some church doors will probably be open for many men when these reverend Wahhabees experience a change of heart, abandon what Dean Phelan terms the butchering truth and murdering charity—and turn to some such Christian occupation as planting cabbages or cleaning boots.

Socialism

Proteus (of old pagan Roman mythology) was almost as elusive and hard to capture as the leprechaun, the dwarf and tricky guardian sprite of Irish buried treasure. He assumed all sorts of different (hence called protean) shapes, and eluded the seeker's grasp in the form of a lion, a tiger, a whirlwind, a

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