

## Current Topics

### 'Catholic Marriages'

The demand for the N.Z. Tablet publication, *Catholic Marriages*, still continues to be very active. A second edition of the book was entirely absorbed by Australia. The third edition (revised and improved) is just now ready, and orders covering a large number of copies of it are in hand.

### Catholics in the Fleet

Our Auckland correspondent telegraphs that 'there are four thousand five hundred Catholics in the American fleet; twenty-five per cent. of the officers are Catholics; while Rear-Admiral Emory is a most devout Catholic.' On the flagship there are three hundred Catholics, and one-third of the fleet's effective strength belong to the Old Faith.

### Fleet Week and Trunk Line Week

Two events of considerable importance to New Zealand have been crowded into the past few days, and the two will be linked together for ever in the annals of our history. One is the first visit of the American fleet to Auckland; the other is the opening—in connection with that auspicious event—of the Trunk Line that links together Wellington and Auckland through 426 miles of country that comprise some of the wildest and most interesting scenery within the seas that lap the Dominion. Young New Zealand offers a right hearty and expansive welcome to young America, that visits us by proper deputy—a deputy that we in 'the islands of the sea do specially appreciate, namely, the great white fleet that is the guardian and guarantee of peace throughout the wide expanse of ocean in which we live. But when the fleet is gone, and its visit, and the flags, and the speeches and songs of welcome, and the happy fraternising of sea-divided kin, are over, we shall still have, in the Trunk Line, a great engineering and commercial record to remind us of the memorable things that were crowded into these few happy days. The great timber and other resources of that extensive central region will now be brought near the markets of the Dominion; the patient waiting of many years will have its reward; a new and favorite track will be opened for the tourist; and the slopes of white-topped and actively volcanic Ruapehu and Tongariro will in due course be turned into beauty-spots for the sight-seer from afar and for the weary seeker of that rest of mind and body which Goethe found on every mountain height.

### Cost of America's President

President Roosevelt is the ruler-in-chief of America's navee. When he commands it to go, it goeth, and when he saith to it, Come, it cometh. The President is also the temporary ruler of his people—the uncrowned king, for his term, of all the realms over which flies the banner of the Stars and Stripes. And he is, all things considered, one of the most economical heads of any State in the world. The salary of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for instance, is £20,000 a year. But to this must be added the heavy expenses of running a pretty extravagant vice-regal court, which a French observer (M. Paul-Dubois) has described in his *L'Irlande Contemporaine* (Paris, 1907) as 'peuplé de snobs, de parasites, et de parvenus' ('inhabited by snobs, parasites, and parvenus'). The President of the American Republic rules over nearly twenty times as many people; but his salary amounts to only 50,000 dollars (£10,000) a year—just the half of that which is paid to the representative of the King in 'the most distressful country' that from 1841 onwards lost at the rate of about a million inhabitants each decade.

'A million a decade! What does it mean?

A nation dying of inner decay—

A churchyard silence where life has been—

The base of the pyramid crumbling away.

A drift of men gone over the sea,

A drift of dead where men should be.'

(Chesterfield, by the way, would rather have gone down to posterity as the Irish Lord Lieutenant than as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. But his dream was never realised.) To return to our President: Besides his salary, he is also 'found.' And the 'finding' of him runs into the tidy little total of 64,865 dollars (£12,973) a year. It covers private secretary, clerks, door-keepers, messengers, steward, fuel, the family bread and

butter, pork and poultry, etc., and repairs and furnishings of the plain, square brick box with windows in it, known as White House, his official residence. All things considered, America does not seem to pay too dearly for its presidential whistle—especially when we compare the vast young Republic with the Cinderella Isle, or with (say) the French Republic, whose President 'tobs' £24,000 a year, together with a palatial residence, and £6496 annually for 'contingencies.'

### Grape-Shot Men

'I must,' said the first (and greatest) Napoleon, 'make scholars that will be men. And nobody is a man without God. The man without God I have seen at work in 1793; and that man you do not govern—you put grape-shot into him.'

A purely secular education (so far as it is concerned) raises up men without God. Such men may be, as a class, safe and reputable citizens so long as times are good, and the world goes well, and Christian thought and feeling and sentiment continues (as it does) to dominate our civilisation and fence in dangerous passions as the American engineers restrain with bank and mole and wall the turbulent waters of the Chagres in Panama. But the Chagres broken loose is but a paltry picture of what might happen with the wild passions of godless men raging unrestrained, as they did in France during the grape-shot periods of 1793 and 1871.

### Costly Irreligion

An English politician found a conscience costlier than a wife and a carriage-and-pair. But the townspeople of Dijon are finding it a good deal more expensive to disobey than obey the dictate of conscience which places a discount upon irreligion and injustice. Till a few years ago the municipal hospital was served by nuns. The annual expenditure upon the institute was then about 275,000 francs (£11,000) a year. Then, one fine morning, the nuns were driven out and their little belongings seized and sold. The Paris correspondent of the London *Tablet* of June 27 writes that 'since the Sisters were turned out, the cost of maintenance has risen by some 150,000 francs (£6000), though the number of patients has not increased. Nor is that all,' he continues. 'There has been a strike among the nurses. Then a Commission was appointed, and now for some reason or other the members have been sent packing. And now an official inquiry has been instituted, for the results of which the townspeople are anxiously waiting. So far there is nothing to show for secularisation except a balance on the wrong side, so that the luxury is proving an expensive one.'

### Anonymous Attack

In the columns of the *Otago Daily Times* the Rev. Wm. Hewitson (Presbyterian) has been reading the Riot Act to one 'Carpus' (a clergyman, apparently), who has lately been making anonymous attacks upon a pastor that has recently been a good deal in the public eye. With the subject and the merits of the controversy we have no concern—it is a domestic affair of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand, and there we leave it. But the anonymous assailant is everybody's concern. None in all the land have such painful and frequent and free experience as Catholics have of his coward blows. And the Rev. Mr. Hewitson's flagellation of the varlet is a joy for ever. Here are a few extracts from his latest letter that deserve a place in the literature of this baleful subject:—

'The law provides statutes of limitations, but there is no limitation to the vengeance with which some men pay. Lapse of time, honorable service to the community, advancing age, not even the grave is sufficient to protect from the unrelenting zeal with which some men take vengeance. . . . The subject referred to has been buried for 20 years. What of that? The longer buried, the more piquant. As "Carpus" goes to and fro into the homes of ministers and elders, instructing them in the distinction between courage and treachery, I wonder if he will still wear the mask—this time of his private personality? Is it too much to expect that he will preface his disquisitions on honorable conduct and orthodox teaching with the announcement: "I am 'Carpus,' the man who mutilated the documents, fired at a brother minister's character from behind a hedge, and disintegrated a trouble that had been buried for 20 years?" I have often felt indignant at the way in which public men and classes of men—members of Parliament, city councillors, ministers, and others—have been attacked from behind a pseudonym. I do not object to open attack on the wrong-doing of public men—quite the reverse; but I am persuaded that anonymity in attack runs readily into malicious and irresponsible writing. I wish to do what I can to make the temper of our Church intolerant of a man who uses a mask to attack another's character, and to give a misleading representation of an opponent's opinions. This has been my chief concern in writing at this time.'

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