

MARRIAGE

GOULTER—GUDGEON.—On October 20, 1908, at S. Colomba's Church, Ashhurst, by the Rev. Father O'Beirne, Harold Oakley Goulter (of Moana, Kaikoura), second son of Charles Goulter, of Hawkesbury, Marlborough, to Geraldine Mary, eldest daughter of the late John Basil Gudgeon, and granddaughter of the late Major Cooke, H.E.I.C.S.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

J. W. P.—That is the correct price for *Catholic Encyclopedia* in three-quarter morocco. A very good but very much cheaper binding, in buckram, is supplied by the publishers, and we recommend it to all to whom a difference of many pounds in the total cost of the fifteen volumes is a consideration. (2) The agreement duly signed and witnessed is binding in law, and is not, we think, annulled by notice previous to delivery. See book notice in this issue.

MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiæ causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1908.

OUR HIBERNIANS—A MISCONCEPTION



CATHOLICS have one precious privilege which, perhaps, they do not at all times appreciate. Outside the pale of our faith there are to be found a surprising number of persons who, with tinted spectacles and magnifying glasses, search the Church of Rome for sores as industriously as the prospector sifts the earth for gold or diamonds, and who devote so much time to this interesting pursuit that they commonly forget to look to the spiritual

households to which they owe real or nominal allegiance. Some of our well-meaning volunteer critics have lately been losing their rest—quite needlessly—over the Hibernian-Australasian Benefit Society. A suggestion was made to establish a branch of this splendid organisation in a Southland district. The suggestion elicited from an anxious brother of another faith an expression of surprise that this Society should be tolerated by the Catholic clergy of New Zealand, seeing that (according to him) a practically identical organisation (or one with which the Hibernians of this Dominion are affiliated) lies under the ban of the Church or clergy in Scotland and in the United States. The evidence of this latter statement, as regards Scotland, is furnished (1) by a circular letter of the Scottish Bishops, dated July 14, 1907, and having reference to the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Of the which, more anon. (2) As regards the United States, our anxious Protestant friend supplies a statement—also in reference to the Ancient Order of Hibernians—which is said to be taken from the *Toronto Sentinel* (Canada). Of the which, likewise, more will appear in due course.

1. At the outset, we may remark (a) that neither of the statements, alleged above, directly affects the Hibernian-Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, which is a separate, independent, self-contained organisation; (b) that this admirable association extends throughout the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand; (c) that there are no branches

of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in any part of Australasia; (d) that the Hibernian-Australasian Catholic Benefit Society is not, and has never been, affiliated with the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Scotland; and (e) that, for the past three years or so, it has been affiliated with the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the United States. We are at present unable to say whether there is or is not any connection between the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the United States and Scotland. And now a word as to the Ancient Order of Hibernians. (a) It is incorrect to describe it simply and without qualification as 'a condemned society' in the Catholic meaning of that term. For, in the first place, the ends and aims of the society, as set forth in their rules and constitutions, are of the most praiseworthy kind, and represent the high-water mark of a truly Christian benefit organisation. In the second place, the overwhelming majority of the branches and members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians are in close touch and friendly relations with the Church (as, for instance, in Ireland and America). In the third place, the only sections of the organisation of that name that came even into momentary conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities were a few branches in Scotland as far back as 1882. And in their case, the trouble arose, not over the aims and objects of the association, but over abuses of a purely local and temporary character. For these abuses they, and they alone, were condemned by the Holy See on December 14, 1882. This condemnation carried with it no disapproval of the objects of the organisation; it was purely and solely a penalty of spiritual deprivation for given abuses which had, in time, grown as excrescences on an otherwise excellent organisation. The judgment of the Holy See was a rule of local discipline, arising out of a local case, for Scotland. It had no application to the members of the Order elsewhere. Moreover, the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Scotland seems to have soon outgrown the particular abuses which led to its condemnation there, and the judgment against them seems to have fallen into desuetude. That circumstance, however, did not delete the writing against them; and so much was, in effect, intimated by the Scottish Bishops in a joint letter bearing date July 14, 1907. Their Lordships held, in accordance with the canons, that the judgment should be deemed to be in force until revoked. In the meantime they submitted the position of the organisation to the Holy See for instructions. But they nowhere in their letter, or in any later pronouncement in connection with the case, intimated any objection to the society as it is now, or suggested that the grounds of condemnation—which existed in 1882—are to be found in the organisation to-day. We have not learned the details of the ruling of the Holy See in the matter; but we may state that the proceedings of the various branches of the Ancient Order of Hibernians now fill a large part of the news columns of the two great organs of Catholic opinion in Scotland, the *Glasgow Observer* and the *Catholic Herald*, of Edinburgh. And, finally, we may remark that the whole question of the approval or condemnation of this or that association of Catholics is the Church's own internal and domestic affair, and that she is perfectly capable of managing it without aid or counsel from friends outside her gates.

2. According to Mark Twain, there are 869 ways of conveying a false or misleading impression. One of these (to be referred to at the close of next paragraph) is well illustrated in the story regarding the Ancient Order of Hibernians which is said to have been taken from the *Toronto Sentinel* of January 23 (presumably of the present year). The story, summarised in briefest terms, runneth thus: That a Catholic priest in Philadelphia refused to 'permit' a funeral service in his church because a lodge of the Ancient Order of Hibernians 'had been invited to attend'; that his alleged reason for such refusal was this: that he was told some unstated things (which he believed to be 'facts') by some condemned 'Molly Maguires'. (We may here state that the 'Molly Maguires' were an Irish secret society which, for some years previous to 1877, made themselves very objectionable in the coal regions of Pennsylvania. Like the Orange fraternity, they seem to have aimed at securing an undue share in political power and place, and their career—happily a short one—was marked by crime, and even blood, though not in any degree comparable to that of the Ulster organisation. A number of their leaders were convicted and executed in 1876-7, and the society was then broken up.) The *Sentinel* story furthermore credits the Philadelphia priest with having stated that he submitted the unstated things aforesaid (which he regards as 'facts') to Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia; that the Archbishop declared that the alleged 'facts' 'would constitute one of the greatest scandals the Catholic Church had ever known'; and, finally, that the Archbishop prevented the submittal of the before-