

In conclusion, he asks what are the religions of the world doing to meet the passionate attacks on the indissolubility of marriage?

'In the Anglican communion,' he proceeds, 'no doubt there are many men of good will who view with dismay the contemporary assault upon Christian wedlock, the growing derogation from its strictness, the increasing decline of the moral tone of women, and consequently of society. But what can they effect in a Church divided against itself, where bishop differs from bishop, and provincial synod contradicts provincial synod upon this grave subject?

'The only real witness in the world,' he adds, 'for the absolute character of holy Matrimony is the Catholic Church. And whether men will hear, or whether—as it seems more likely—they will forbear, she warns them that to degrade indissoluble marriage to a mere dissoluble contract, to a mere regulation of social policy, to a mere material fact governed by the animal, not the rational nature, will be to throw back modern civilisation to that wallowing in the mire from which she rescued it.'

This question, as was observed at the outset, has at the present time, and for the people of the Commonwealth of Australia, a special practical importance. In a little time our Federal legislators will be asked to vote on the Commonwealth Divorce Bill, which will soon be submitted for their consideration.

In connection with that Bill and all such Bills, two preliminary questions have to be decided. First, has Parliament the power of abrogating the Divine law regarding the indissolubility of marriage? Secondly, even if it had the power, should it, in the public interest, exercise that power, and if so with what safeguards and limitations should it be exercised?

Sufficient proof has been advanced, and much more might have been given, from the primitive institution of marriage, from the emphatic declaration of Christ, from the testimony of St. Paul, as well as from the history and practice of the early Church, to show that it is not in the power of man to put asunder what God has joined.

But second, even if man, in his individual or legislative capacity, possessed the power of breaking the marriage bond, it is certain that, in the public interest, such power should not be used, or be used only most sparingly.

Nuns in Peace and War.

SPEAKING a few Sundays ago at Liverpool, New South Wales, on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of a convent chapel, his Eminence Cardinal Moran paid a splendid tribute to the work of the Catholic Sisterhoods throughout the world. He said it must be a consoling thing for Australia that such good work is being carried on here by the devoted Sisters, who, wherever they went, carried with them the blessings of religion. Their work in Australia was only a perpetuation of the work of the Catholic Church in every land. They saw in each part of the world the abounding spirit of charity that animated Holy Church and everywhere the same grand results. He referred especially to the great work carried on by the Sisters of Charity on the battlefields during last century. It was the first time in history that nuns had appeared on the battlefield. But during the century just closed they found the Sisters of Charity, Sisters of Mercy, and others facing the privations of the battlefield that they might bring consolation to the sick and the suffering. They found them in the Crimea administering equally to the Russian, the Turk, the Frenchman, and the Englishman.

In the schismatical States of Russia and elsewhere the Sisters had recently been doing a great work. At first they met with opposition, but they overcame it, and it was admitted that only the spirit of God could animate the wonderful charity and self-denial of their lives. They were found on the battlefield during the Franco-Prussian war ministering to the sufferings of both sides in the deadly conflict. One of the grand paintings of that time was a scene in which a lieutenant who had received his death wound was receiving the ministrations of two of these Sisters. Suddenly one of them falls dead by his side. She had been struck by a bullet, and had received her crown which was the reward of her charity. At the present time the thoughts of our military men were turned to South Africa. The poor Boers who were fighting for their country were among the most deadly enemies that the Church had ever met. No other power built up such a barrier of opposition to the Church as they did. But what was it changed the Boers? It was the work of the Sisters of Charity who went to minister among them. They recognised in the Sisters angels of charity, and gradually their opposition to the Church was broken down, and we heard to-day from South Africa, from the highest officer downwards, the one anthem of praise for the Sisters, that in ministering to the sick and the suffering no human mind could estimate the charity of those nuns. That was only one phase of the charity that characterised them during the century just closed.

When the yellow fever broke out in the Southern States of the American Union, an invitation was sent to one of the Sisterhoods to come and minister to the afflicted. At once 25 Sisters volunteered. Within two days 20 out of the 25 had received their crown of charity, but that only tempered the heroism of the others, and in a few days instead of 25, they had 50 nuns to continue the work of the stricken. All through Christendom was seen the same efflorescence of charity. It was seen in promoting peace and harmony among all classes of our fellow-citizens. Sometimes people thought nuns brought the consolations of their mission only to their co-religionists. That was not the case. If they went to the hospitals they would find the Sisters administering to all classes. Everyone of our religious institutions was open to every denomination and race. The only passport required was that the applicant be afflicted

with some form of suffering. If they paid a visit to the Little Sisters of the Poor they would find some who had been bitter enemies of the Catholic Church in England, who had attacked her from the platform, receiving the Sisters' consolations. He had himself seen there many fine old Protestants receiving the consolations they would have denied in the old days to their Catholic fellow-citizens. So it was Catholics turned the tables upon those who persecuted them.

Correspondence

[We are not responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

The Celtic Revival.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—An article which you call 'Our Irish Letter,' and which has the heading 'Hobbies,' appears in your issue of November 21, 1901. That article is one of the most absurd, and at the same time one of the most mischievous, that I have read for a long time. It begins with a dissertation on hobbies in general. Then it names three hobbies. One of the three it calls the 'Celtic Revival.' Obviously the Celtic Revival is the strenuous effort which the people of Ireland are now making to cultivate the language of the Irish nation and to restore it to the position which it held as the national speech for thousands of years. According to your 'own correspondent' that strenuous effort on the part of the present generation of Irishmen, is a 'hobby,' which is 'in danger of wearing out public patience.' 'It seriously threatens to become a nuisance and a bore.' The people who are engaged in it are 'a swarm of ants, leaving a nauseous trail behind them that disgusts all who taste the food afterwards.' Then this writer, without having given the slightest hint of a change in the subject matter of which he is treating, proceeds to talk of two Celtic Revivals, viz., 'The really strong current that has set in in Ireland in favor of the revival of our native language, games, etc.,' and, 'a number of anti-Catholic and anti-Christian men and women, who want to force themselves 'into the very van of the movement.' Here the reader of the article gets lost. What has become of the 'hobby-horse?' Is the Celtic Revival only one hobby, or is it two? Is the 'really strong current' one hobby, and is the thing with 'Pan' at the head of it a second hobby? Is it allowable to call 'a really strong current' a hobby? Is it allowable to call by the name of 'hobby' a deep-laid plan to turn the 'strong current' aside from its legitimate course? 'Fortunately, so far, our clergy are in the movement.' Which of the two hobbies are the clergy riding? Or, are they riding tandem? 'But they want, and they are beginning openly to say it, not Catholic Irish, but Pagan Irish.' Who are 'they?' Are they the people who are becoming a 'nuisance and a bore?' Or are they a sub-division of that class, viz., the 'strong current?' Or are they the other sub-division, namely, the people with the prefix 'Pan?' The writer appears to possess a peculiar power of seeing the 'hobby' sometimes single and sometimes double.

If this article had appeared in a Dublin paper I would not have considered it necessary to call attention to it. Dublin readers would not be misled by it. If it had appeared in a paper of little note and of limited circulation I would not have taken any notice of it. But appearing as it does in so important, so influential, and so widely-read a paper as the NEW ZEALAND TABLET, it has naturally come under the eyes of people whose good opinion is valuable. It is not to be tolerated that such people should take from the pages of the NEW ZEALAND TABLET the impression that the great movement going forward in Ireland at present for the rehabilitation of the Irish language 'is becoming a nuisance and a bore!' The article is calculated to produce that impression on the minds of people who live so far away from Ireland, and who have not had an opportunity of giving to the Irish language movement much close attention.

I wish to assure them that the movement is not a 'hobby.' It is an all-pervading and an all-absorbing force which is driving people to the constant and steady performance of hardest work, and to the sacrifice of time and of health and even of life. That force has its origin in the settled conviction in the minds of all that the loss of the language would mean the loss of national life. To call that movement a 'hobby' and a 'nuisance' and a 'bore' is not only an abuse of language but a gross misrepresentation of a great public fact.

I will ask you to give to these few words of vindication the same opportunity of coming under the eyes of your readers as the article on 'Hobbies' got.—I am, etc.,

PETER O'LEARY, P.P.

Castlelyons,
County Cork, Ireland,
January 22, 1902.

Our readers in Otago will note with interest that Messrs A. and T. Inglis, George street, Dunedin, are now showing in all departments the newest goods for Autumn and Winter wear....

The Government Insurance Department has money to lend on country, city and suburban freeholds. The terms of repayment are of a most liberal character, and can be ascertained on enquiry....

There is a grand show of Autumn and Winter Goods just now at Messrs. Herbert, Haynes and Co.'s establishment, Princes street, Dunedin. British and foreign manufacturers have contributed their quota to the stocking of all departments with the latest novelties in millinery, mantles, costumes, dress fabrics, silks, velvets, laces, etc....