

exposure of a medium of first-class reputation in Paris. Two others followed in quick succession in England, and the Society for Psychical Research, after a lengthy course of investigations, reported against the reality of any spiritistic phenomena which had come under their notice. We may here state that the story of the séance told by 'Quip' in our last issue represents an actual occurrence. The worst features of spiritistic frauds is the heartless manner in which, for filthy lucre, they play upon the affections of many over-credulous believers desirous of communicating with parent, child, or friend, and the shameless indecency with which such discreditable proceedings are carried on.

Hanky-panky

There is, of course, room for diabolical intervention in the case of spiritism. But as regards 'manifestations' through the agency of mediums, they are simply steeped in fraud. All the really verified 'manifestations' that have been brought under our notice are produced by sundry electric contrivances that it is not necessary to specify here, bits of cheap and sometimes absurdly simple mechanism, ridiculously easy sleight, or by what is called 'hanky-panky,' or by prestidigitation. Most of the rapping, tying, handcuff, sealed bag, sealed knot, and such-like exhibitions represent conjuring of so clumsy a kind that, if honestly given as sleight-of-hand, they would not be tolerated by an audience of rustics in the bar of a wayside inn. We have time and again, in private life, exposed the wiles and ways of the spook-medium, and expressed regret that the many Catholic writers who have dealt *ex-professo* with this noisome class of impostors, did not, before committing their productions to print, consult some first-class conjuror, and exhibit a reasonable hesitancy about accepting as verified fact all the wild stories told by enthusiastic witnesses about this or that medium's supposed marvellous powers. For—even taking the most reliable witness—there is a world of difference between the 'method' of a conjuring trick and what is called its 'effect.' The best efforts of the most 'powerful' of the ordinary mediums are far surpassed by any smart conjuror, and are put completely in the shade by the wonders of the art of modern 'white magic' as displayed in the splendid exhibitions given by Maskelyne and Cooke in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly (London). It is the conjuror, and not the theologian or even the detective, that is best qualified to judge whether particular 'manifestations' are (as they commonly are) the outcome of fraud on the part of the medium, or of spirits called 'from the vasty deep'—

Of calling shapes and beck'ning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names.

The illusions of the Davenport brothers have long been well known to the conjuring fraternity. Their famous 'cabine illusion' may be ordered at any good conjuring depot, but it like the others, is about as antiquated as the 'flying cage' and the 'wizard's supper,' and, for that reason, is no longer exhibited on the present-day stage. And yet in the issue of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* that was published last year an article on 'Spiritualism' (the proper name is Spiritism) the Davenport sleights are set forth in an exaggerated way and solemnly put forward as preternatural performances! The article, by the way, is written, not by an adept in conjuring, but by one who seems to have swallowed the whole Spiritistic position without so much as a savoring grain of salt.

The Church's Attitude.

The position of the Catholic Church with regard to Spiritism is soon told. (1) The Church recognises the fact that intercourse between disembodied and non-embodied intelligences or spirits and people living in the body upon the earth is not alone possible, but has actually taken place, as is proved by many passages of the sacred Scriptures. But (2) the Church strictly forbids the practices of Spiritism. She requires her children to take no part in them, forbids them to be present at séances, or to consult mediums. These things, be it known, are but the modern counterpart of the old pagan Greek practice of necromancy and of those attempts to conjure up the spirits of the dead which were condemned with such severity in the Old Dispensation. 'Neither let there be found among you,' said the great leader of Israel, 'any one that consulteth soothsayers, or observeth dreams or omens; neither let there be any wizard nor charmer, nor any one that consulteth pythonic spirits [the ancient name for mediums] or fortune-tellers, or that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things; and for these abominations he will destroy them' (*Deuteronomy* xviii., 10-12).

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Moreover, Spiritism, as a theory of religion—as expounded some time ago at a convention of Spiritism in Rochester (U.S.A.)—is mere Pantheism, a denial of a personal God, the Creator. 'It cannot tolerate,' said one of the speakers, 'the ignominious belief of salvation through Jesus Christ.' The author of a *Treatise on Modern Spiritualism*, published in 1897, when travelling in search of materials for his book, came

across 'over 200 cases of minds injured or driven to insanity by it.' Add to this the fraudulent nature of the medium-business, and our young men and maidens will find sufficient reason to keep away from the dingy parlors in back streets where fraudulent and vulgar female or male necromancers hang out their card and catch the silly, curious, and the unwary. They are of the race who can fervently repeat Pudd'n-head Wilson's maxim: 'Let us be thankful for the fools; but for them the rest of us could not succeed.'

The School and Character.

President Roosevelt (whose name, by the way we must pronounce Rose-ze-velt) seems to have a fairly strong working capital of that

Good sense, which only is the gift of heaven,
And though no science, fairly worth the seven.

He sees through stone walls and iron doors, at least as far as your average shrewd and observant citizen, and has 'sized up,' on Catholic lines, the place of religion in education in a way which ought to be an example to the puny legislators of these colonies who fear to touch a difficulty which Canada, England, Scotland, and even Prussia have settled in a perfectly satisfactory way. 'We must cultivate the mind,' said President Roosevelt recently in an address to the Long Island Bible Society; 'but it is not enough only to cultivate the mind. With education of the mind must go the spiritual teaching which will make us turn the trained intellect to good account. It is an admirable thing, a most necessary thing, to have a sound body. It is an even better thing to have a sound mind. But infinitely better than either is to have that for the lack of which neither sound mind nor a sound body can atone—character. Character is in the long run the decisive factor in the life of individuals and of nations alike. Sometimes, in rightly putting the stress that we do upon intelligence, we forget the fact that there is something that counts more. It is a good thing to be clever, to be able and smart; but it is a better thing to have the qualities that find their expression in the Decalogue and the Golden Rule. It is a good and necessary thing to be intelligent; it is a better thing to be straight and decent and fearless.'

And so say all of us. But to form character along the lines of the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule, the gentle influences of religion must surround and mould the mind and heart of the child, not for a hurried, and, perhaps, perfunctory, drowsy, and unwilling half-hour or hour on Sunday, but during the whole course of those highly impressionable years that are passed by our rising generation in the school. There has been of late years a marked revulsion of feeling among the leaders of thought and public life in America in favor of religion in the school. We hope that it will shortly be imported to New Zealand.

MORE 'STUFFING' STATISTICS.

THE following further returns from Christchurch give fuller confirmation, if such were needed, to the fact that both in relative number and pay Catholics are represented in the public service in a proportion far below their percentage in the total population of the Colony. The lists given hereunder are made up from the estimates for the year ending March 31, 1902:—

Public Trust Office.—District agent, salary, £350 per annum; clerk, £150; clerk (Catholic), £60; cadet, £52. There is only one Catholic in the office.

Government Life Insurance.—District manager, total salary, £475 per annum; clerk (Accident), £250; clerk, £150; cadet, £70. All are non-Catholics.

Customs, Lyttelton and Christchurch.—Collector, £525 per annum; landing surveyor, £350; first clerk, £280; clerk, £160; clerk, £125; two clerks, £105 each; cadet, £75; cadet (Catholic), £65; tide surveyor, £250; warehouse keeper, £175; landing waiter and examining officer, £245; three others, £230, £220, £190; two do (writer), £187 each; looker (Catholic), 9s per day; 1 do, 8s per day; boatman, £145 a year; messenger, £146. This gives a total of 21 employees, of whom only two, or less than one in ten, are Catholics. The total amount of public moneys drawn by those 21 employees is £3925 4s per annum. Of this amount the two Catholics receive only £205 8s, or £1 in every £19 2s 2d paid in wages and in salaries in the Lyttelton and Christchurch Customs. Here is 'stuffing' with a vengeance!

Thus far we have catalogued in detail, and one by one, 345 employees of the public service (including the police force) in Christchurch. Of this number only 40, or a little over one in every ten, are Catholics. We have not yet been able to work out in detail the proportion of public moneys which these receive in wages and salaries, but all the figures that we receive from time to time strengthen our previously expressed conviction that they draw less than £1 in every £15 expended locally under these heads. The fact-shy retailers of the 'stuffing' legend must go further afield

Hancock's "BISMARK" LAGER BEER.

NEW ZEALAND'S
NEW INDUSTRY.