

1353. It had been almost forgotten when it was taken out of its reliquary in 1898, on the occasion of an Exhibition of Sacred Art. The outlines of a human form, seen from the front and behind, are distinguishable on it, and on the occasion of the exhibition just referred to it was noticed that the images were, so to speak, negatives. The assertion led to a great deal of controversy. Some people contended that these extraordinary images were supernatural, while others declared they were nothing but common paintings dating from 1353. It was carefully photographed, and from these photographs M. Paul Vignon, Doctor of Science, and M. Corson, assistant professor at the Polytechnic School for Government Engineers and Artillery Officers have made a very careful and thorough study of the subject. The result of these researches was embodied in a 'communication' prepared by M. Vignon and presented at the last meeting of the Academy of Science, held at Paris, on April 21, by Professor Yves Delage, the well-known Zoological Professor at the Sorbonne.

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The communication first dealt with the nature of this remarkable imprint and with the incidental facts that had been ascertained regarding it. The researches, Professor Delage stated, go to show that the imprint on the shroud may be accurately described as a 'natural photograph' of the body which was wrapped in it. The negative taken of the shroud four years ago, on being developed, showed the exact positive image of a corpse. The unavoidable inference was that the marks on the shroud were themselves a negative imprint. As it had been suggested that they might have been common paintings transformed later on into negatives by a chemical action, he demonstrated that that was impossible. The communication to the Academy proceeds as follows: 'Moreover, the images are infinitely superior from the anatomical point of view to anything that could have been produced in the Middle Ages, and they correspond to all the geometrical conditions of the marks. They consequently do not constitute a pictorial work. The winding-sheet has really preserved the marks of a body which bore the *stigmata*, or marks, of astonishing realism.'

It was further demonstrated by the photographs of the shroud that the body of the man buried in that shroud had worn a crown of thorns placed far back on the head. On the upper part of the forehead blood had flowed from several wounds, and trickled slowly down in a furrow to the eyebrow, where it had coagulated. The drops of blood were of the natural spherical shape, and not conventionally designed in the form of tears. Another photograph shows the traces of the scourging. The whips found at Pompeii would have produced wounds and lacerations of the form found on the shroud. The mark of the lance is there, and also the mark of the nails driven, not through the hands, as they are generally represented in pictures and on crucifixes, but through the wrists. The weight of the body, it was pointed out, would in most cases tear the hand.

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The problem which the scientists then set themselves was, to find a theory which would explain how such an image could be produced on linen by natural causes, and with this purpose in view the two investigators carried out a somewhat elaborate series of experiments. As a result, Dr. Vignon found that a corpse shortly after death emits ammoniacal vapors, and that the latter reacted chemically upon oil mixed with essence of aloes, the substance with which the shroud of Christ is recorded to have been impregnated. Dr. Vignon proved that a linen sheet smeared with this oil will reproduce with the exactness of a photograph the imprint of a body giving out the ammoniacal vapors, which permanently dye the linen a reddish brown. Proceeding, the writer of the paper maintains that there is a remarkable agreement with the historic circumstances of the burial. It was necessary the body should be either washed, anointed, or bound in winding sheets, and a perusal of the original text of the Gospel will show that it was thus. Finally, it was also necessary that the body should not have remained in the shroud sufficiently long for it to decompose. Everyone, no matter what may be his religious opinion, says the communication, knows that on Easter Sunday the tomb was empty. The theory thus advanced has been practically accepted by no less an authority than the *Lancet*. After describing in great detail the exact chemical action which would take place in such a case, the *Lancet*, as quoted by the *Otago Daily Times* correspondent, remarks: 'The action by which, therefore, the image of the dead Christ was recorded on the cloth would appear to be due to chemical change rather than to the effect of light. On this explanation an exact image, even to minute details, such as wounds produced by the thorns and marks of the blood drops and of flagellation by whips of a definite kind, is not by any means beyond the bounds of probability.'

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If this theory should come to be fully established it is indeed, as the *Lancet* points out, 'an intensely remarkable and interesting instance of the light which the very latest developments of scientific research may throw on traditions and con-

troversial matters in history.' Although the Academy of Science made no response to Dr. Delage's proposition to send a committee to Turin to pursue a supplementary inquiry it is not at all likely that the question will be allowed to remain where it is. Further, investigation and experiment are sure to follow, and the indications are that the final result will be to establish the authenticity of the sacred image beyond the doubt or question of even the most hardened sceptic.

A Protestant Protest Against Divorce.

Even the Protestants, who do not usually worry themselves very much—at least in any practical way—about the terrible evil, have become alarmed at the state of things disclosed by recent statistics in some of the Australian colonies and at the very serious proposals which are now being submitted to the Federal Parliament as the outcome of the prevailing lax notions regarding the sanctity of the marriage tie. In New Zealand things are bad enough. By the Divorce Act of 1898 a divorce can now be obtained in this Colony by either party to a marriage on the ground of desertion by the other party for five years, or habitual drunkenness for four years, or imprisonment for seven years. But in the new Federal Divorce Bill now before the Federal Senate it is proposed so far as the Commonwealth is concerned to throw the door more widely open. If this Bill becomes law a divorce will be obtainable throughout the Commonwealth on the ground of desertion for only three years or for habitual drunkenness (no period defined) or for aggregate imprisonment for only three years. Such legislation strikes at the very foundation of the stability of married life and is indeed a standing invitation to married couples to have their unions dissolved on the slightest possible pretext. Under such a law all that a discontented party has to do is to skip away for three years or take to drink and the other party has at once the right to demand a divorce and can if necessary be easily provoked into exercising that right. This opens up possibilities that no one who has any regard for the interests of decency or social morality can view without grave concern and it is little wonder that thoughtful members of the community are up in arms against the proposal to establish such legislation throughout the great Commonwealth.

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The concern felt by Protestant members of the community has on this occasion taken practical shape in the preparation of a circular and petition which are being distributed and signed at the doors of all the Protestant churches, with the exception of the Wesleyans, the members of this latter body having for some reason or other refused to enter their protest against the Bill. The circular which is being distributed, stating the grounds of the petition, is as follows:—

Federal Divorce Bill now before the Federal Senate.—Why every citizen should oppose it. 1. The welfare of the State depends upon the sanctity of the family relations. 2. The civil law should, therefore, be kept as close as possible to the law of Christ. 3. This Bill allows re-marriage for the following causes:—(1) Desertion for three years; (2) Habitual drunkenness; (3) Imprisonment in the aggregate for three years; (4) Repeated cruelty during one year. The law of Christ does not. 4. Judicial separation can always be granted without the right of re-marriage. 5. The Christian law secures the greatest happiness of the greatest number. 6. Cases of hardship should be relieved, but not so as to injure the whole of the community. 7. By making divorce easy, you aggravate the very evil you seek to alleviate. (Judges on the Bench have repeatedly testified to this. Statistics prove it.) 8. Once begin to relax and you open a door that cannot be closed. 9. Therefore, instead of relaxing the marriage laws, the State should protect the family, punish severely all transgression, and assist the injured. N.B.—Divorce is often no punishment to the wrongdoer, but a relief. 10. Finally, it is not just to bring down the higher standard of four States (W.A., S.A., Q., and Tasmania) to the lower level of two (N.S.W. and Victoria).

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS.

Stricter Laws.		Divorces in proportion to marriages.	
Canada	...	...	1 in 2500
United Kingdom	...	...	1 in 909
Western Australia	...	...	1 in 555
Queensland	...	...	1 in 435
South Australia	...	...	1 in 400
Laxer Laws.		Divorces in proportion to marriages.	
Victoria	...	...	1 in 71
New South Wales	...	...	1 in 36

Legislation is proposed for the whole Commonwealth on similar lines, against which YOU are asked to PROTEST.

Comment—Increase the facilities for divorce and you increase the demand.

'How oft

The sight of means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done.'

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Circulars and petitions are good in their way and we earnestly hope that this effort to defeat such retrograde legislation

Hancock's "BISMARCK" LAGER BEER.

NEW ZEALAND'S
NEW INDUSTRY.