

which is strongly recommended by the Hierarchy of the United States, is sure to result in many advantages for the Church. The well-known missionary zeal of the Paulist Fathers may be taken as an assurance that it will be effectively carried out.

GENERAL.

A Refutation.

A non-Catholic clergyman in New York having in the course of a sermon made the statement that 'wherever the shadow of the Papacy had fallen, human liberty had withered,' was taken to task in the columns of the Brooklyn 'Citizen' by the Rev. W. F. McGinnis, D.D. In the course of a splendid refutation Dr. McGinnis asked for some evidence of the palsy power of the Church on the reason of such men as Bossuet, Sir Thomas More, Montaigne, Lacordaire, Chateaubriand, Newman, Manning, Brownson, Pasteur, Roentgen, and De Rossi—to name but a few; and of the padlock on the consciences of St. Philip Neri, St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis de Sales, St. Paul of the Cross, St. Vincent de Paul, Dom Bosco, and Father Damien. He showed the moral superiority of Catholic countries by Protestant testimony in comparing, for example, England, where upwards of 60,000 people die annually from the effects of alcoholism, with Spain, where drunkenness is unknown; of Sweden, the lowest in the scale of purity among civilised nations, with Ireland, the most chaste; or, England again, with one criminal in 190 of her population, and Scotland a little worse, with Belgium, having one criminal to every 1700 of her people, and Spain but one in 1000. Dr. McGinnis might have made some still more striking comparisons on facts nearer home—as between American Catholics and American Protestants in the matter of divorce and other crimes against marriage and family; or socialism and anarchy, and resultant crimes against the state.

Decline of Materialism.

M. Ferdinand Brunetiere, the French Academician, has been saying in Florence that Materialism is no longer fashionable, that inveterate unbelievers are turning towards Christianity convinced of an environment of mystery that science has been unable to penetrate, and that the Catholic Church has been making so much progress, especially in America, that New York is now the next great Catholic city after Paris and Vienna.

The St. Pierre Catastrophe.

A cablegram received in Paris states that 13 Fathers of the Order of the Holy Ghost, 11 secular priests, 33 Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, and 28 Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres, disappeared in the catastrophe at St. Pierre.

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Lettuce as a Medicine.

Various medical properties have been ascribed to lettuce, and it has especially been recommended as a good soporific, inducing pleasant sleep after eating it at night. There has been some doubt in the medical world as to the value of lettuce for any medicinal purposes, and the medicinal preparations from the plant were finally dropped in England and the United States. But recent investigations and experiments show, says Dr. Atkinson, that the narcotic constituents of the plants are very noticeable and of value. It is now established by the proper authorities that there is present hyoscyamine, the principal alkaloid of belladonna and henbane, not only in the cabbage and cos, varieties of the common lettuce, but also in the wild lettuce. The amount in young plants is not very great, but in the green extract the alkaloid occurs, to the extent of over two per cent. The value of both the wild and cultivated lettuce for medicinal purposes has consequently increased in the minds of many. The soporific value is not in the meantime lessened by this discovery. The plants were used years ago by many people for inducing sleep, and science has simply proved that there was some truth in their belief by tracing the soporific properties to their source.

Musical Pirates.

London has been enlightened of late (writes a correspondent of the Melbourne 'Advocate') by the raids upon the musical pirates. Perhaps you do not know what a musical pirate is. I don't think there are any in Australia. A musical pirate is a man who stands on the kerbstone and sells to passers-by for twopence the words and music of a popular song, for which you would have to pay two shillings in a shop. At first sight it would seem that he is rather a public benefactor than a pirate, but that is not so. He defrauds the author, the composer, the publisher, and the retail music-seller of many thousands of pounds every year. It may puzzle you to understand how he can sell at a profit for twopence in the street what costs two shillings in a shop. But the explanation is easy. You see, the music-selling business is a huge lottery. Nobody can tell, not even the most expert musician, that ever lived what song is going to catch the public taste. Sometimes the most idiotic things, such as 'Ta-ra-boom-de-ay,' catch on, while superior songs fall flat. A song may be a failure at first, and afterwards a world-wide success. Such was the experience of 'The soldiers of the Queen,' which was written and composed by a young Irishman named Barrett while he was organist of a Birmingham Catholic Church. He has now changed his name to Leslie Stuart, is established in London, and is rolling in wealth derived from his songs and his successful operas—'Florodora' and 'The Silver Shipper.'

The well-known song, 'Queen of my heart,' did not make any impression whatever when it was first sung here in the Gaiety Theatre; but when it was transferred to the Prince of Wales' Theatre, and introduced into the opera of 'Dorothy,' it made a tremendous hit, and became the success of the season. When a song does catch on, the rush for it is enormous. Such universal favorites as 'The Holy City,' 'The Star of Bethlehem,' etc., are veritable gold mines to all concerned in their production. The net result is that, out of every hundred songs that are printed and published, 89 or 99 are commercial failures. The one that does succeed has to pay for the

losses on all the others. That is why the music-publisher charges the public two shillings for what actually costs him in production less than twopence. Now you see where the pirate comes in. He does not touch any of the failures, but the moment a song becomes a great success he pounces upon it and does a roaring trade as long as its popularity lasts. There are thousands of these pirates in London and all the large provincial cities. The present raids upon them are the result of the phenomenal success of a melodious ditty, 'The honeysuckle and the bee.' It has been all the rage here for some time, and doubtless is now being warbled all over Melbourne and Sydney.

A Bill for the suppression of these pirates is now passing through Parliament, and, if not crowded out by the congestion of Government business, may become law before the end of the session. The author, the composer, and the publisher of a successful song have certainly the same right to protection from piracy that novelists, painters, and sculptors, now enjoy.

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