

Catholic Church—an event which was attended by some very extraordinary occurrences (described to me by an eye-witness)—and his duties as a Catholic brought about the cessation of all spiritistic practices for a time. But it is a fact that a year after this event he was induced to hold a séance in Paris, at which the Emperor Napoleon was present, and that subsequent to this he resumed his mediumistic career.'

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As to the general effect of Spiritualism on the life and character of those who follow it this author's testimony goes to show that it is wholly bad. 'The first impressions,' he says, 'which spiritistic phenomena are apt to cause in the sceptical mind are no doubt calculated to awaken the dormant spiritual faculty, and to bring the mind face to face with the realities of the unseen world; but it is in very few instances only that this can be said to have become the stepping-stone to higher things. . . . It is a fact universally acknowledged and admitted by experienced spiritualists that the influence of the séance-room is on the whole debasing, and that it tends to banish all true devotional feeling and true religion.' Which amounts pretty much to saying what Artemus Ward less elegantly but more forcibly expressed when he said, speaking of the professional spiritualist: 'He don't do nobody no good and is a cuss to society and a pirit on honest peple's corn beef barrils. Admittin all you say abowt the doctrin to be troo, I must say the reglar professional sperrit rappers—they as as makes a biznis on it—air abowt the most ornery set of cusses I ever enkontered in my life.'

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The teaching of the Church on this subject has been often stated in the N.Z. TABLET and our readers are all familiar with it. It could not be more tersely or concisely expressed than in the following paragraph which appeared in a recent issue of the *Osservatore Romano*: 'The theory of the Church, based on Biblical history, is that the world of spirits exists, and that the apparition of spirits is classed among events that have occurred or may occur, or will occur, if it be God's will. In the meanwhile the Church condemns the evocation of spirits and everything relative or pertaining thereto.'

Catholics and Non-Catholic Worship.

In view of the then approaching Coronation and of the religious services to be held in connection therewith a correspondent in a recent number of the London *Tablet* raised the question of the attitude of Catholics to such services and wished to be enlightened as to their exact position in the matter. He himself argued that it was the *internal* and not the *external* act that was of importance in such cases. If, for instance, he said, I sit down to a banquet with Protestants on a Friday, and if, moreover, meat is put upon my plate, and I even raise it to my lips, but do not taste it, I have not broken the law of abstinence, however much *appearances* may be against me. If, again, I go to Mass, *but have no intention of assisting thereto*, but merely go for the purpose of listening to the music, or from some other motive, I do not hear that Mass, even though I *appear* to my neighbor to do so. Applying these principles to specific cases of non-Catholic worship he contended that if he went to a Coronation service merely to see the show, or to a funeral merely to express sympathy, or to a marriage merely to honor the bride he was not to be condemned as joining in the worship provided he excluded from his mind the intention of taking part in the religious side of the act.

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The letter evoked from a *Tablet* contributor a clear and full statement of the teaching of Catholic theology on the question and as the matter is one of general interest we reproduce the substance of his remarks. With regard to the example first quoted by the correspondent the *Tablet* writer points out that an individual would certainly commit the sin of scandal if by 'appearing' to eat meat on Friday he gave his Protestant friends to understand that he was breaking the law of the Church. The writer then disposes of the main question as follows:—

'There are cases in which Catholics may be present at Protestant services, as spectators (e.g., at funerals or marriages), or as officials or attendants (e.g., soldiers in attendance on a prince), but never as partakers, in the sense of joining formally and outwardly in non-Catholic worship. Hence it is not, as "Inquirer" seems to imply, a mere distinction of internal and external. A Catholic, by Divine Law, cannot join even outwardly in anything which in itself or in the common estimation of the public, implies profession, approval, or sanction of a false religion. In the early Church, the outward offering of a mere grain of incense before a pagan altar was rightly held to be apostasy, even though inwardly the offerer had no intention of worshipping and had nothing but abhorrence for the false worship. The natural and normal way in which men outwardly profess their adhesion to a sect is by going to its places of worship and assisting at its services. A Catholic cannot do these things without sharing in such outward professions, unless he is cleared from such imputation by

the fact that there is some circumstance publicly known, which makes it sufficiently plain that his presence is due to civil or social and not to religious reasons. Such circumstance is, at a funeral, the presence of the remains of a dead friend to whom he desires to pay respect; or at a wedding, the presence of the bride or bridegroom, whom he desires to congratulate; or at a coronation, the presence of a sovereign to whom he wishes to pay civil honor. In all such cases, it is the outward publicly known circumstance which relieves the assistance of a Catholic of all note of religious participation, and gives to it the character of purely civil or social courtesy. Of course, as "Inquirer" states, even then there must be no inward assent to false worship. I have merely wished to point out what, indeed, all Catholics know, that we cannot deny our faith outwardly, even though we keep it inwardly; that we cannot do things which, in the ordinary acceptance of mankind, imply profession of false religion, though inwardly we may not conform to it, and that the distinction to be kept in view is not merely that of external and internal, but that which separates religious from mere civil honor. To determine the latter, as marked off from the former, a public external circumstance—the burial of the corpse, the marriage of a bride and bridegroom, the coronation of the King, suffices.'

Priest and Puritan.

The Boers, as is well known, are of Puritan stock and are reputed to hold to their religious beliefs with all the old Puritan tenacity, but they seem to have little of that silly dread of and dislike to Catholic priests which are sometimes displayed by their co-religionists in more civilised communities, so at least it would appear from the testimony of a Catholic missionary in Cape Colony, who gives the following account, quoted in the *Ave Maria*, of his experiences amongst the Boers:—'In every house a chapter from the Scriptures is read every evening, with singing and prayer; this not alone on Sundays, but every day alike. This is done whether there are guests present or not. I have very often been asked to read the chapter from the Bible and to offer prayer, which I was naturally always willing to do. On Sunday every family rides to church; and when the distances are too great, the neighbors within five or ten miles assemble at a farm, chosen beforehand, to hold public worship in common. But every family travels to church at least twice a year, however great the distance may be. The journey often lasts several days, so that the visitors to the church spend a week or longer in their waggons and tents. Boers are Protestants and I am a Roman Catholic priest, but I speak of them just as I found them.'

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We have read lately of a Catholic priest in one of the American cities accepting an invitation to lecture in a Protestant church on the Catholic religion, and of his taking full advantage of the opportunity to do good service for his Church. But the picture of the priest leading the devotions of these old Puritan farmers is still more out of the common, and a still more remarkable illustration of the way in which circumstances conspire to make 'extremes meet.' All the same the picture is a pleasing one, and the experiences described are creditable to all concerned.

His large circle of friends will regret to hear that the Right Rev. Mr. Kiney, of Prospect (says the *Freeman's Journal*), is still seriously ill, though a slight improvement in his condition is noticeable within the last few days. The Monsignor's duties during his illness are being fulfilled by the Rev. T. O'Reilly, of Parra-matta.

The newly-erected Catholic church at Tuggranong was opened on Sunday, June 23, in the presence of a large congregation. The Coadjutor-Archbishop of Sydney, assisted by the Rev. Father O'Gorman (Michelago), performed the opening ceremony. The Rev. Father Collander (Queenbeyan), and the Rev. Father O'Driscoll (Bugendore) were also present. The building, which is a handsome one, is built of weatherboard, and has seating accommodation for 200 persons. After the opening ceremony speeches were delivered by Fathers Collander, O'Gorman, O'Driscoll, and others. The building cost over £200, £127 of which was collected that day.

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