

to discuss the ever-present difficulty. They are (1) to frame a new Scripture text-book for intended use in the schools; (2) they want (according to an apparently authoritative statement in the columns of our local morning contemporary) only 'Bible-reading' in the schools, without 'religious teaching' (1); and (3) they are in favor of submitting the whole question of text-book and Bible-reading to a referendum of the electors of the Colony. Our Protestant friends are gradually swinging round the circle of possible positions on the education question. They will come at last, we trust, to find that the only real relief is to be found in the natural and practical corollary to the Catholic view. And the Catholic view is this: that parents and the Christian Church can never abdicate, in favor of the State, their solemn duty of imparting religious instruction to the young. The New Zealand Government would do well to leave to more foolish lands such thorny and contentious things as the creation (in effect) of a bureau of religious teaching, and stick to the things of which it has both knowledge and experience: to the grading of butter and fowls; to the exclusion of the codlin moth, the phylloxera insect, and other undesirable immigrants, and to the rest of the charming variety of motherly and grandmotherly functions which it has so long exercised.

Nobody can doubt the earnestness and single-mindedness of the grave assembly of Protestant delegates that have gathered at Wellington to find a remedy for the tangled woes of an education system such as that which has so greatly contributed to make the United States to all intents and purposes a non-Christian land—with some 50,000,000 of its population attending no form of religious service. But the delegates have set themselves a heavy task—"and labor dire it is and heavy woe." (1) The experience of Victoria goes to show that the mere framing of a text-book to suit Jews and Gentiles is surrounded by a thick zereba of thorny, perhaps insuperable, difficulties. (2) As to 'Bible-reading' from the text-book 'without religious instruction,' it is one of the things that "no fella can understand." Is the young idea, for instance, to be informed that the Bible is God's WORD, a revelation of His holy Will? If it is, then it gets 'religious instruction' in three several dogmas of the Christian faith. Again: the lessons in the proposed text-book will either contain matters pertaining to dogma and morals, or they will not. If they will, the contention that there is no religious instruction falls through. If not, what, in the name of reason, is the use of the Bible text book as a means of strengthening the moral back-bone of the rising generation? Or is there a hidden magic in, say, the story of DOEG or of SISARA that will produce moral fibre? Or are our youth to be brought up in the idea that the Bible is a mere bit of old-time literature—a rather dull 'Robinson Crusoe'—and that Christianity is not an inspired revelation to man—not something which penetrates the joints and marrow of our life—but an empty speculative code of ethics like those of pagan Greece and Rome? Mr. LABOUCHERE is opposed to religious teaching in public schools. Yet, in a recent issue of 'Truth,' he puts the following 'posers' to those 'pastors of flocks' who would emasculate the truths of Christianity in the manner referred to above: 'Would they be satisfied with such teaching in their chapels and in their Sunday-schools? They send out missionaries to convert heathen in foreign parts. Would they assent to these missionaries limiting their efforts to such teaching? Would they dream of teaching it to their own children? It seems to me that if they would have Christianity deprived of all its essentials and become a mere form, they would advocate such teaching.' As to the 'conscience clause,' of which so much is made by the Wellington assembly: the Archbishop of Melbourne has from time to time shown, by reference to a large class of incidents, that it is a delusion and a snare.

(3) As to the Referendum, it might be a valuable resort, both for Government and for the people, in matters of which the average elector is a sufficient judge. But we have long since expressed the conviction that no matters should be submitted to it that affect the religious or political rights of minorities, or that have aroused, or are likely to arouse, strong party or sectarian feeling. The proposed solution of the educational difficulty involves, moreover, the acceptance, by the State, of the Protestant and sectarian principle of Bible-reading without note or comment and of the private

interpretation of the teachings of the Sacred Volume. It is palpably a question of the non-submittable kind. It is no trifling problem, and requires for its settlement cool heads, a thorough knowledge of all the conflicting interests involved, a spirit of mutual good-will, and a determination to respect rights of conscience at all hazards. We Catholics feel deeply and sacrifice much on this question, simply because we realise better than others the great possibilities and the fearsome risks of the young lives entrusted to our care. Dr. BEVAN, the Melbourne Congregationalist leader, said some time ago that 'the strength of the Catholic Church was secured by the training its children received.' 'If you want,' he added, 'to win the world for CHRIST and keep it for Him, your work is among the children. The training of the children will solve the great problems of the future.' And so say we.

Notes

Dr. Grace in Battle

The late Dr. Grace was a man of splendid grit, and his experiences in the Maori War make very interesting reading. The 'Otago Daily Times' published a few days ago an extract from his 'Sketch of the New Zealand War' which well illustrates this phase of the late Doctor's character. He is describing a fight at early dawn at Matarikoriko:—

'Suddenly, like a transformation scene in a pantomime, the Maoris were amongst us. I was stricken with terror and dazed with admiration. The Maoris, with their tongues out, eyes starting out of their heads, jumping from side to side like panthers, flourishing their tomahawks, shaking the feathers of their taiahas in our very noses, presented a dreadful spectacle. Our men rose in a panic, rushed to their stacked arms, which were unloaded, and clean bolted. A few men were wounded at my feet. One in particular, shot in the thigh, and bleeding profusely, looked in my face with the eye the sheep casts on the butcher as the knife is descending. Great God! what was I to do? If I remained I would be tomahawked. Desert the wounded man I could not. Suddenly I had an inspiration. I jumped up from the side of the stricken soldier, fired one barrel of my revolver at the nearest Maori, and yelled out: "Tipperary to the rescue!" The running soldiers turned like a flock of starlings. "Give them the point of the bayonet, boys," I shouted. The revulsion was immediate. One great yell, "Tipperary," went up to heaven. The Maori disappeared like a bad dream, and I made off with my wounded.'" For this it was urged on General Pratt that Dr. Grace should be mentioned in despatches. 'I was all dishevelled, my hands and clothes stained in blood,' he writes. 'The General said: "He is too young to mention in despatches. At the least, he might have washed his hands."'

A Dangerous Pastime

Playing with fire and toying with sin are risky games. The moth may go whirling gaily round the candle, but he commonly ends by flopping into the simmering grease and getting his little life scorched out of him. For some years past a marked tendency has been displayed at Catholic bazaars in New Zealand to entice sundry small coins out of the pockets of the curious by amateur fortune-telling. It is carried on in perfect innocence, and as a harmless pastime, by those who are no believers in it as a relic of pagan superstition. But it is none the less, toying with a crime against the first commandment. Some time ago we drew attention to the objectionable nature of this bazaar pastime. We find, by a recent issue of the Milwaukee 'Catholic Citizen,' that our position in the matter has been taken up by Bishop Canevin, of Pittsburg. In the course of a condemnation of the practice, he said that 'some people who get their fortunes told at these bazaars and fairs believe that their fortunes are truly told, and, therefore, commit sin in having their fortunes told; he, therefore, counselled those engaged in the good work of carrying on these bazaars and fairs to eliminate fortune-telling from the devices they adopted to raise money for charitable and other meritorious purposes.'

Consumption Cures

There was a time when, if a medical man's diagnosis spelled consumption it meant a sentence of death. The patient made his will, and his insurance policy was not