

mise—the 'standing' of any Cardinal in reference to the papal chair cannot be predicted, even within the walls of the Conclave, in any but, at best, a vague manner until one or more ballots have been taken in the manner described in our last issue. The Cardinals are solemnly sworn to support by their votes the person whom, before God, they believe ought to be chosen for that exalted and responsible office. They, moreover, realise the wisdom that finds expression in the old Celtic proverb 'Melodious is the closed mouth.' They know how to hold their tongues. They, and all in the Conclave, are under a bond of sworn secrecy. They are cut off from all communication with the outside world. No whisper, not a breath, of their deliberations can pass beyond the silent and guarded walls. And all the Conclave 'news' that comes to us along the wires on the Ocean's bed merely represents Dame Rumor letting her imagination run riot over the shadowy fields of speculation—wasting her ammunition on matters that, for the moment, are as much beyond her ken as if the Cardinals were holding their sittings by one of the canals of the planet Mars.

Length of Days

A quaint old recipe for attaining great old age runs thus: 'No pies or cakes, no pains or aches. Most men dig their graves with their teeth.' Mr. Bradbury, a former Governor of Maine, gave the following as the secret of length of days when he was standing near the brink of his hundredth year: 'Get an incurable ailment in your youth, and nurse it till your death.' A somewhat similar experience—minus the 'nursing'—fell to the lot of the late Pope. When nearing his twentieth year he fell into a long-drawn and painful malady that almost shrivelled up the life in him and threatened to dig him an early grave. Pain drove sleep from his pillow and in long watches of the weary night he wrote in Latin verse:

'Wakeful till latest night, thy limbs in vain
Court needful rest;
Yet pain, when charmed by verse,
Seems half allayed.'

He himself felt that his coffin and grave-clothes should soon be ready. Yet he lived far past the ordinary span of human existence and died at ninety-three with his great mind clear to the last. And ever through life he found that

'Against diseases here the strongest fence
Is the defensive virtue, abstinence.'

Our Insane

In New Zealand, as in most other countries, statistics show a steady and melancholy increase in the number of the insane. In our tight little islands the proportion has run up from 19.93 persons per 10,000 of the population in 1871 to 22.86 per 10,000 in 1881, 27.82 in 1891, and 31.17 in 1901. Just now there is a lively hum in Parliament about overcrowding and out-of-date methods of treatment in our hospitals for the insane. The modes of classification of the insane that prevail in Australasia generally fall far short of that which is adopted in the 'home' and 'cottage' systems of Belgium and Holland. In this connection it will interest our readers to learn that the first reforms in the treatment of sufferers from mental disease introduced into Australia were the work of Dr. Willson, the first Catholic bishop of Tasmania. Through his untiring zeal and devotion the lot of those afflicted people in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania was rendered as happy as enlightened and humane care and the knowledge of the time could make it. The olden treatment of the insane consisted of stripes, iron chains, and general cruelty and neglect. A Spanish monk, Juan Gilaberto Joñte, was the pioneer of the humane treatment of insanity. He established an asylum in Valencia and gathered the hapless people into it. Other Spanish cities speedily followed his example—Saragossa in 1125, Seville and Valladolid in 1136, Toledo in 1183, and divers others at various periods.

Lecky tells us that when, at the close of the eighteenth century, the French Catholic physician Pinel 'began his great labors in this sphere, he pronounced Spain to be the country in which lunatics were treated with most wisdom and most humanity.'

BIGOTRY IN WESTPORT

A CONTEMPTIBLE NEWSRAG AND ITS WORK

Westport has the best coal and the smallest and most contemptible news-sheet in New Zealand. The evil specimen of gutter-journalism to which we refer is printed quarterly in Wellington, and is published ostensibly in the interests of the small Methodist congregation in Westport. A copy of the July issue is before us. Contents: a few advertisements of Westport traders, a few scrappy reports and brevities, and three leaders—no Popery shrieks that occupy nearly half of its grand total of seven columns of reading matter. These leaders are marked throughout by the bald illiteracy that has crystallised into a settled tradition of the no-Popery press and of the more disreputable class of anti-Catholic controversy and fiction. The first is a bilious and evil-tempered onslaught on the Catholic clergy and laity of Ireland; the second is a string of rambling and unconnected ravings against 'Rome'; the third a cowardly and blackguardly attack on the local Convent of Mercy. The whole of the 'leading' matter in this microscopic quarterly is, in fact, a disgraceful exhibition of deliberate, uncalled-for, and unprovoked offence. It is aggravated by the following circumstances, which are vouched for by our discreet and well-informed Westport correspondent: (1) This venomous outburst of vilification had not the smallest pretence of provocation; (2) special efforts were put forth to circulate those wretched libels on our religion, copies of the miserable news-sheet having been left at the doors of Catholic homes throughout the town, and even at the local presbytery; and (3) Westport has ever been happily free from sectarian passion, and people of all creeds and classes have been content to work together there in harmony and mutual good-will. But there are some people who are never at peace unless they are at war, and the little Methodist quarterly has girded itself to do the devil's work of setting up religious strife and rancor where hitherto peace has abounded among the various creeds that own the Christian name.

It is no part of our present purpose to treat all the sewage that trickles, oozy and evil-smelling, down the noisome editorial columns of the little Westport gutter-journal. We will, however, permit ourselves a few general remarks which will sufficiently 'size up' the character of each of the three leading articles under consideration. (1) The first is an hysterical can-can on the 'superstition' of Irish 'Romanists' and the rapacity of their priests. Its 'authority' is, of all others, the wretched McCarthy, whose coarse, venomous, and unveracious productions (by courtesy called 'books') met with such a merciless rib-roasting from the cat-o'-nine-tails of the 'Athenaeum,' the 'Bookman,' and other literary journals and reviews, from the 'Guardian' and other Protestant weeklies, and from the London 'Times' and such other English secular dailies as accorded his gall-and-wormwood productions the unmerited honor of a notice. Even the Dublin 'Daily Express' (the organ of the Irish Orange lodges) raised its voice in earnest protest against the distortions, exaggerations, prejudice, 'wilful one-sidedness,' and thorough-paced unreliability of this Mr McCarthy. No journalist with a reputation to lose would, at this hour of the day, any more dream of quoting McCarthy as an 'authority' on persons or things Catholic than he would of citing Zola as an expert in good morals or the Westport quarterly microbe as an example of religious sweetness and light. But our microscopic contemporary is not particular. Any stone is good, enough to throw at a dog, and any stick, however rotten, is good enough to strike a blow at 'Rome.'

It is a curious freak of the lower depths of bigotry that it regards the evidence of Catholics as credible only when, like foul birds, they defile their own nest. The paltzy Westport news-sheet endeavors to give a spurious value to McCarthy's slanders by falsely describing him as 'a devout Romanist.' It makes controversial capital to so describe him. But a knowledge of the man's personal history, or even a glance at his slander-