

Current Topics

The Papal Interview

It may be presumed that after Cardinal Gasparri's definite and emphatic repudiation of the *Liberté* interview as 'misleading and inaccurate,' and his further assurance that no more mischief-making journalists will be allowed to approach the Holy Father, we will hear no more of the matter. It is well that the Cardinal Secretary of State has spoken out, for the anti-clerical papers were getting promptly to work to weave a tissue of fabrications around the incident. For example, an Italian paper, *Il Secolo*, hastened to inform its readers—and the item was cabled to the ends of the earth—that Cardinals Amette, Mercier, and Bourne had written to the Pope, describing the difficulty of the position in which they found themselves owing to the effect upon public opinion of the *La Liberté* interview, and asking to be allowed to deny the interview. There is not the slightest doubt that this was pure invention. The *Secolo* is a very popular halfpenny paper, published at Milan. It is run by rabid anticlericals, and has probably done more than any other agency to turn the laboring classes in northern Italy from the Church and from all the sweetening influences of religion. There is, therefore, not the remotest likelihood that Cardinals Amette, Mercier, and Bourne would be chasing this publication with information. In referring to the interview incident last week, we mentioned that the comments of the New Zealand secular papers on the situation had been very reasonable and temperate in tone. In this connection it is a pleasure to give especial commendation to the leader in the *Christchurch Press* of Saturday, June 26. This article frankly refused to accept the correctness of the reported interview, pointed out that Papal Infallibility had nothing to do with the subject, declared that it was quite unnecessary for the Pontiff to make an *ex cathedra* pronouncement to assure the world that he thinks the actual crimes of Germany foul and unchristian as his opinion upon such points might be taken for granted, and deprecated any attempt to involve the Pope in giving a judgment upon the war—a view and attitude which was in every way eminently sensible and satisfactory.

Arizona Prohibition

Some time ago we commented strongly on the highly unsatisfactory position which had arisen in Arizona as the result of a particularly crazy prohibition law which was some time ago enacted in that unhappy and apparently crank ridden State. Either inadvertently or otherwise, the law was so worded as to make it a criminal offence to manufacture wine in or to import wine into Arizona for any purpose whatsoever—thus debarring, of course, its introduction for the purpose of carrying out the great central act of worship and sacrifice in the Catholic Church. Our very esteemed contemporary, the *Sacred Heart Review*, assures us, gently and affectionately, that all the same Mass has not ceased to be said in Arizona. We hardly needed the kind assurance; as a matter of fact we stated, when dealing with the subject, that ultimately some way out of the bungle would of course be found. But even our reposeful contemporary will not, we presume, deny the following facts. (1) That the Arizona law, as it stands, prohibits the importation of wine for sacramental purposes. (2) That railroad companies are refusing to accept wine for carriage into Arizona, and that at least one priest has had his order for altar wine refused on the ground that it could not legally be filled. (3) That Bishop Granjon has made application to the courts for an injunction to suspend the operation of the law so far as the exclusion of wine for sacramental purposes is concerned, but thus far without success. These are the facts; and with due obeisance to our contemporary, we frankly confess that such a situation seems to us to call for something better from a Catholic paper than an attitude of philosophic calm. We see absolutely no merit in a Catholic paper remaining placid and imper-

turbable while a Catholic Bishop is compelled to go, cap in hand, to the law courts for permission to say Mass; and in our humble judgment there are no medals going for the Catholic defenders of the faith who have no protest to make against such injustice and indignity—to say nothing of the annoyance, uncertainty, and expense—being inflicted upon the Catholic body. We won't go so far as to accuse our contemporary of fiddling while Rome is burning, because, in the first place, Rome isn't exactly burning, and in the second place, we don't know whether our Boston brother is addicted to the fiddle. We hope he is not; for as a working journalist, he has doubtless, like the rest of us, already enough to answer for. But we do think it is a mistake to adopt a look-the-other-way policy when extremists are riding a hobby to death, and, incidentally, are riding rough-shod over the religious rights and liberties of Catholic people. We are specially interested in the Arizona development, because we have been threatened with a precisely similar trouble in New Zealand. We repeat what we have previously said, that this is one of the cases in which prevention is better than cure. We have no desire to see our New Zealand Bishops going from court to court, and incidentally piling up heavy lawyers' bills, in order to secure the right of their priests to obtain wine for the celebration of Mass; and we think the best way to prevent such a misfortune and humiliation is to speak out to our people clearly and plainly and strongly before it is too late. Here, as always, fore warned is fore armed. For Catholics, the danger of even a temporary interference with the celebration of Mass is not a thing to be tamely endured or lightly thought of; and much as we admire our excellent contemporary, we fail to see that it has the slightest ground for self-complacency, or for patting itself on the back, at being able to remain inactive and unmoved in such a contingency.

To Abolish Tipping

Probably there are very few countries in which the tipping system operates within such narrow and restricted limits as in New Zealand; yet small as its vogue is, it cannot be denied that it is generally felt to be a nuisance. It is not out of motives of meanness that the public dislike the system. It is partly because of the annoying uncertainty as to what is to be considered the proper amount of gratuity in a given case, and partly because of the tyranny of the custom, which compels you to give whether you have received any real *quid pro quo* or not. Of these two factors, the first is undoubtedly the most troublesome. If you see a beam of surprise pass over the face of the recipient, you know that you have been a fool, and have given twice as much as he either expected or deserved. If on the other hand you fall below his anticipation, he will cast on you 'that look which the boldest flinch from.' No self-respecting citizen likes to be placed in a dilemma in which, with the best of good will, he is liable to come out as either a fool or a niggard; nor does he find it pleasant to have to go through the torturing anxiety confessed to by the young man in *Candida*. Candida asks him, with the sympathetic inflexion of voice which would wring confidences from a stone, why he had looked so haggard and worried in the cab. 'I was thinking,' is the answer, 'what I ought to pay the cabman.' The public, we repeat, are generally speaking perfectly willing to pay a fair thing for services rendered; but they would infinitely prefer a fixed and stated charge to the present haphazard and uncertain system.

Nor can it be pretended that the system operates otherwise than injuriously on the recipient, making him truckling and mercenary before payment, and quite possibly rude and impudent afterwards. It is therefore very much to the credit of the New Zealand Cooks' and Stewards' Union of Workers that its representatives should have made an earnest appeal to the Arbitration Court to disregard tips in fixing the minimum wages for stewards; and it is satisfactory to note that the Court has sympathised with the aspirations of the Union