

a change of attitude and of opinion must be ascribed to the influence of the money power—so much alarmed at the prospect of Federal interference as to be now pouring out its money like water in the hope of defeating the referendum on Wednesday. When it is stated that a door-to-door canvass (by men and women) has been made of every electorate—nay, of every hamlet—in Australia; that anti-referenda speakers are tumbling over each other in every part of the Commonwealth; and that all the available motor cars and cabs have been engaged by the No-No gentlemen for 26th April, the profits may be imagined of the combines out of the monopolies they own, and out of those they propose to own.' In the light of the above explanations, the claim now made by the Australian dailies—that the vote represents a recoil of feeling in the electorates against the present Government—must be taken with a very liberal discount.

The Miracle of Ireland

In the course of a brief but brilliant article on St. Patrick, contributed to the *Catholic Times* of March 17, Mr. Hilaire Belloc develops two leading thoughts—both of them old, but both placed in a new and altogether admirable setting. The first is the truth that the personality of the great saint is a living force in Ireland to-day almost as it was in the days of his flesh; and the second is what may be comprehensively described as 'the miracle of Ireland.' Reversing Mr. Belloc's order we will take the last first, and the meaning of the expression we have used will be easily gathered from the writer's elaboration of his idea. 'We know,' says Mr. Belloc, 'that among the marks of holiness is the working of miracles. Ireland is the greatest miracle any saint ever worked. It is a miracle and a nexus of miracles. Among other miracles it is a nation raised from the dead. The preservation of the Faith by the Irish is an historical miracle comparable to nothing else in Europe. There never was, and please God never can be, so prolonged and insanely violent a persecution of men by their fellow men as was undertaken for centuries against the Faith in Ireland; and it has completely failed. I know of no example in history of failure following upon such effort. It had behind it in combination the two most powerful of the evil passions of men, terror and greed. And so amazing is it that they did not attain their end, that perpetually as one reads one finds the authors of the dreadful business now at one period, now at another, assuming with certitude that their success is achieved. Then, after centuries, it is almost suddenly perceived—and in our own time—that it has not been achieved and never will be.'

Mr. Belloc goes on to note the remarkable coincidences which seemed to combine against the faith of Ireland—all of which, however, completely failed. 'What a complexity of strange coincidences combined, coming out of nothing as it were, advancing like spirits summoned on to the stage, all to effect this end! Think of the American Colonies; with one little exception they were perhaps the most completely non-Catholic society of their time. Their successful rebellion against the mother country meant many things, and led to many prophecies. Who could have guessed that one of its chief results would be the furnishing of a free refuge for the Irish? The famine, all human opinion imagined, and all human judgment was bound to conclude, was a mortal wound, coming in as the ally of the vile persecution I have named. It has turned out the very contrary. From it there springs indirectly the dispersion and that power which comes from unity in dispersion, of Irish Catholicism. Who, looking at the huge financial power that dominated Europe, and England in particular, during the youth of this generation, could have dreamt that in any corner of Europe, least of all in the poorest and most ruined corner of Christendom, an effective resistance could be raised? Behind the enemies of Ireland, furnishing them with all their modern strength, was that base and secret master of modern things, the usurer. He it was far more than the gentry of the island who demanded toll, and, through the mortgages on the Irish estates, had determined to drain Ireland as he has drained and rendered desert so much else. Is it not a miracle that he has failed? Ireland is a nation risen from the dead; and to raise one man from the dead is surely miraculous enough to convince one of the power of a great spirit. This miracle, as I am prepared to believe, is the last and the greatest of St. Patrick's.'

And with a few brief strokes this gifted writer brings vividly out the living and abiding influence of the great saint's personality in the Ireland of to-day. 'Not only was there a St. Patrick in history, but there is a St. Patrick on the shores of his eastern sea and throughout all Ireland to-day. It is a presence that stares you in the face, and physically almost haunts you. Let a man sail along the Leinster coast on such a day as renders the Wicklow Moun-

tains clear up weather behind him, and the Mourne Mountains perhaps in storm, lifted clearly above the sea down the wind. He is taking some such course as that on which St. Patrick sailed, and if he will land from time to time from his little boat at the end of each day's sailing and hear Mass in the morning before he sails further northward, he will know in what way St. Patrick inhabits the soil which he rendered sacred. . . . When I was last in Ireland I bought in the town of Wexford a coloured picture of St. Patrick which greatly pleased me. Most of it was green in color, and St. Patrick wore a mitre and had a crozier in his hand. He was turning into the sea a number of nasty reptiles: snakes and toads and the rest. I bought this picture because it seemed to me as modern a piece of symbolism as ever I had seen; and that was why I bought it for my children and for my home. There was a few pence change, but I did not want it. The person who sold me the picture said they would send the change in candles for St. Patrick's altar. So St. Patrick is still alive.'

Another Tract

'Irene' (North Island) writes to us: 'Having accidentally come into possession of the enclosed true (?) story I hope you will find space in the columns of the *Tablet* to analyse its truth.' The enclosure is a small tract, entitled 'The Adventures of a Bible,' by the Rev. J. H. Townsend, D.D., and bearing the now familiar imprint, 'E. Whitehead, Main street, Palmerston N.' The publication is of the usual Bible-conversion story type—only somewhat more so. Instead of only one benighted Catholic being snatched as 'a brand from the burning,' in this veracious narrative there are three—and all high-grade converts at that. The first is a Dublin lady (Mrs. Blake) who, intending to go to a fashionable society entertainment in one of the many rooms at the Rotunda, went by mistake into a Protestant mission service—a circumstance that seems hardly complimentary to the mission service. Here she heard some verses read from the New Testament which impressed her. At the close of the service she 'asked the gentleman whose words he had been reading'—and ended by borrowing the preacher's Bible. In a few days 'the light shone into her understanding, the burden long weighing on her conscience rolled away into the open grave. . . . and the joy of peace was in her heart.' Before she had time to return the Bible, however, the priest paid her a visit; and for a time things were only muddling with the lady. In this scene with the priest, the reverend Munchausen who penned the pamphlet is seen at his very best; and for the diversion of our readers we transcribe a sentence or two. With 'an embarrassment in her manner, and at the same time a restful calm in her eyes,' the lady had made a clean breast of things. 'With downcast eyes she spoke,' says the narrative, 'but when she glanced up her spirit froze with terror at the look of the man before her. It was black with rage! Never before had she seen such fury depicted on a face. "Give me that Book!" he said hoarsely. "It isn't mine!" she cried, vainly attempting to stop him. "Give it to me," was the reply, "or your soul will be damned eternally; that heretic has nearly got you into hell, and neither he nor you shall ever read the book again." Seizing it as he spoke, he thrust it into his pocket, and, giving her a fearful look, strode out of the room.' The 'look' must have been a particularly deadly affair, for we are informed in frequent italics how it haunted the lady. 'The lady sat as if paralysed—she heard the hall door shut, and something in her heart seemed to shut also and to leave her alone in her terror. That awful look searched her through and through; only those who have been born and brought up in the Church of Rome know the nameless horror which their idea of the power of the priesthood can inspire. Then, too, she thought of the gentleman who had lent her his Bible; his address was in it, but she could not remember it and knew not where to write. This was very grievous, but oh! *that look*—it was branded on her memory.' However, in spite of 'that look,' the priest panned out not so badly. Instead of burning the Bible he read it; 'found forgiveness for his sins by that Book'; and died happy within a fortnight. And the good work did not end here. A nun, who in some mysterious way seems to have been in charge of 'Father John's' presbytery, with woman-like curiosity, 'could not resist looking into the Book' after the priest's death. It was enough—she 'was fascinated and read more and more,' and in no time she too was converted. There was really no reason why the chain of conversions should ever stop; and the Truthful James who wrote the story must—like a certain historic character—have been surprised at his own moderation.

Amusement and amazement are the two feelings which will fill the minds of Catholics on reading this extraordinary 'literature'—amusement at the grotesque notions of Catholic persons and practices possessed by the writer, and amazement that any sane Protestant should be found

"Drunken at e'en, drouthy in the mornin'."—the best substitute for Glenlivet is Hondai-Lanka Tea.

"If yo brew weel, ye'll drink the better." Hondai-Lanka Tea well brewed is fit drink for princes.