

education means—has already done evil enough by undermining habits of mental discipline and by removing the inhibitions and the precepts which are considered too strenuous for the growing children of modern society. The evil done in the State schools is brought to its logical conclusion by the literature of emotion which falls into the hands of the youths who have left school. The decay is all in keeping with the atheistic State which encourages people in every way to forget that they have souls to save as well as bodies to feed.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

Rev. Father Loughman, S.J., of Melbourne, who is at present on a visit to Dunedin and a guest of his Lordship the Bishop, preached an impressive sermon at Vespers on Sunday

at St. Joseph's Cathedral, in the presence of a large congregation.

In our advertising columns holders of books of tickets in connection with the Omakau Catholic church art union, are reminded that the art union has been postponed until March 26, owing to a number of blocks not having been returned. The drawing will take place definitely on that date at the grand bazaar which will be held at Omakau in furtherance of the same object, and holders are advised accordingly. Father O'Dea, who has had the organising of the art union in hand for the past six months, appeals to all friends to assist him in his great undertaking of building a new church at Omakau at an estimated cost of £5000. This is his first appeal to the public for over 20 years, and book-holders will assist this worthy object by returning blocks at an early date.

Christopher Columbus

A MAN OF INDOMITABLE COURAGE, UNQUESTIONABLE GENIUS, AND CHRISTIAN ZEAL.

(By REV. BERNARD X. O'REILLY in *New York Truth*.)

Each celebration of Columbus Day brings out a symphony of praise and a bedlam of abuse. Whole libraries have been written about the great discoverer, yet there is still a lingering doubt about the time and place of his birth, and even about the last resting place of his remains. It is said that seven cities claim Homer. Over a score claim Columbus. The startling statement was made—a few years ago—that Columbus was a Jew. The Spanish historian who tried to establish the semitic origin of the great admiral says that Columbus feared to profess his race lest the prejudices of the day against Jews would bar all help from Church authorities and from Catholic sovereigns. The arguments are far from convincing and certainly are not of sufficient weight to set aside accepted history.

When Columbus first appeared before the Spanish Court his chief support came from Friar Antonio de Marchena and Diago de Deza, Bishop of Placencia. Columbus himself declared that these two priests were always his faithful friends. It was through the influence of these men that the Government appointed a commission of ecclesiastics that met in the Dominican Convent at Salamanca. They investigated his scheme, but finally rejected it. It seems that Columbus gave unsatisfactory information to the commission and because of this his proposals were rejected. It is probable that he feared that his ideas might be used by another and he be robbed of the glory of his project. Among the early friends of Columbus was Luis de Santangel. According to Washington Irving, Santangel was the receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues of Aragon, which he advanced to Queen Isabella in aid of Columbus. If this be true, it was the Church that furnished the necessary money for Columbus' first journey.

The success of Columbus with Queen Isabella was due entirely to the efforts of the Prior of the Convent of La Rabida. When Columbus left Granada after its fall he in-

tended to go to France. Reduced to almost beggary he stopped at the Franciscan Convent of La Rabida. He begged the friar who acted as doorkeeper to allow his son to rest at the convent over night. While he was pleading with the porter the Prior, Father Juan Perez, stood by and heard the plea of the pilgrim. He was struck by the appearance of the man, who seemed to be superior to his condition. He invited him to the convent and, after having provided for his immediate wants, talked over with him the aspirations and hopes of the traveller. Columbus and his son stayed as guests of the convent and Father Perez went to Santa Fe for the purpose of inducing the Queen to take an interest in the undertaking of the Italian navigator. Columbus was called to court and through the influence of the Prior of La Rabida preparations were immediately begun for the equipment of the expedition which resulted in the discovery of a new continent. We may be sure that if Columbus were a Jew it would be known to the churchmen who were so closely affiliated with him. This would not, however, have prejudiced his cause, for at that time the Catholic Church was the only protector of the Jews in Europe.

It may be said with equal certainty that if Columbus were a Jew the general prejudice held by the southern races of Europe would have prevented him getting a hearing before the courts of Italy, Spain, and Portugal. The jealousy of the Spanish and Portuguese mariners put every obstacle in the path of Columbus. If there were a suspicion that he was a Jew, it would have been used to incite popular prejudice against him. We find no mention of it in any of the histories or chronicles that deal with his life.

That he was a Catholic is proven beyond doubt. On the eventful day that he sailed from the little port of Palos on his epochal journey across the trackless Atlantic he and his crew received Holy Communion at the hands of his good friend, Father Perez.

There is nothing in the life of Columbus that would cause the slightest departure from the traditional belief that Columbus was a Catholic and of Genoese origin. The fact that he named the island on which he landed San Salvador shows where his heart was.

Columbus was of a deeply religious nature. Whatever influence scientific theories and the ambition for fame and wealth may have had over him in advocating his enterprises, he never failed to insist on the conversion of the pagan people that he would discover as one of the primary objects of his undertaking. This is not characteristic of the Jew. Even when clouds had settled over his career, after his return as a prisoner from the lands he had discovered, he was ready to devote all his possessions and the remaining years of life to set sail again for the purpose of rescuing Christ's Sepulchre from the hands of the infidel.

There will be discussion about the character, race, and religion of Columbus until the end. In the face of contradictory pronouncements it is impossible to speak with certainty of many of the details in the life of the remarkable man who gave a new world to civilisation. But as yet we have no convincing evidence to set aside the traditions that have stood the test of four centuries. Christopher Columbus, the greatest of all discoverers, still stands as a shining example of indomitable courage, unquestionable genius, and Christian zeal.

The Cure of Ars to a Protestant

The Blessed Curé of Ars one day received a visit from a distinguished non-Catholic. Ignoring the fact that the man to whom he had just been speaking of the things of God belonged to a dissenting sect, the holy priest placed a medal in his visitor's hand at parting.

"Monsieur le Curé," said the man, "you are giving a medal to a heretic,—at least a heretic from your point of view. Still, in spite of our differences of belief, I hope that some day we shall be in heaven together."

The Curé took the man's hand in his, and, fixing upon him a look in which were expressed the firmness of his faith and the warmth of his charity, he replied with an accent of profound tenderness:

"Alas, we shall not be united above unless we have been united on earth! Death will change nothing. 'In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall lie.'"

"But, Monsieur le Curé, I trust myself to the Christ who said: 'Whosoever believeth in Me shall have everlasting life.'"

"Our Lord also said that he who did not listen to the teaching of the Church should be considered a heathen. He declared that there was but one flock and one shepherd; and He made St. Peter the shepherd of the flock." Then, in a gentler tone, the servant of God continued: "My friend, there are not two ways of serving God; there is only one true way: that is, to serve Him as He wishes to be served."

Thereupon the priest withdrew, leaving his visitor in a troubled state of mind, a forerunner of divine grace, to which he yielded later, and was received into the one true Church.—*Ave Maria*.

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