

Here and There

An Act of Justice.—The court at Jerusalem has at last given its judgment in the case of the action brought by Mgr. Barlasina against the Zionist newspaper, *Davar Hayom*, for publishing an article containing scandalous and blasphemous insults against Our Lord and His Virgin Mother. The action was brought under the provisions of the law which treats as a criminal offence the publication of insulting attacks upon any of the recognised religions of Palestine. The hearing of the evidence and the pleas of counsel on both sides closed on November 25, when the court reserved its decision. It has fined the editor five pounds sterling and the writer of the article twenty-five pounds, further sentencing the writer to 125 days' imprisonment. The defence tried to show that the article had been misunderstood, and that some of its allusions were mis-interpreted by the Catholics, and that it was really only a matter of fair controversy. Amongst the witnesses called in support of the Patriarch's case against the Zionist journalists were two Anglicans, Canon Danby, of the English Church, and Professor Albright, of the American School of Archaeology. It is interesting to add that the presiding magistrate was a Jewish lawyer.

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A Catholic President for Switzerland.—The Catholics of Switzerland, a little more than a million and a half in number, form 41 per cent. of its people. In several of the cantons they are in a majority. Lucerne and the Forest Cantons, the original home of Swiss freedom, are almost entirely Catholic. The President of the Republic is elected annually by the legislature at Berne, and in December the choice of the President for 1925 fell upon M. Jean Marie Musy, one of the Catholic deputies of the Canton of Fribourg. He is a native of the canton, where he was born in 1881. He made his studies at the Catholic University there, and at the age of 36 was elected to the local Council of the Canton. In 1914 he was elected as one of its deputies to the Swiss Parliament. In 1919 he was placed at the head of the Ministry of Finance, and held that position till his election as President. He was chosen by 172 votes against 50. He returned to Fribourg immediately after the voting and was given an enthusiastic public welcome. The whole city was hung with flags and at the railway station representatives of all the public bodies and local organisations awaited his arrival, accompanied by crowds of students and citizens with bands and banners. A procession through the streets, a reception at the city hall, a Te Deum in a neighboring church, and a general illumination in the evening made up the day's programme.

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The War Orphans of Italy.—The war orphans of Italy form an army of more than three hundred and fifty thousand boys and girls who lost their fathers in the Great War. The State pays an annual allowance towards

their maintenance and education, and this is supplemented by a well-organised system of voluntary help. Its chief promoters and directors have been from the first two priests, Father Scameria, who was attached as chaplain to the Italian headquarters at the front during the war, and Father Minozzi, who was during the same time the principal organiser of the soldiers' clubs. The chief agency that has co-operated with them is a Catholic association which was formed some fifty years ago for assisting orphans, and since Italy entered the war has specialised on help for its child victims. A long list of agencies, which have given help of various kinds to the association in this charitable and patriotic work, shows that most of them are religious communities or Catholic social organisations all over Italy. In connection with the convents many new orphanages have been founded and existing institutions enlarged. But tens of thousands of the children are not gathered together in orphanages but, where the mother survives or some other relative can give the child a home, help is given and education provided at a local day school. There has been a very widespread and successful endeavor to train the children of the workers and peasants for their future self-support. Many farm schools have been organised, and in several districts a plan is at work by which the boys, when they become men, will acquire as their own a cottage farm. Others are learning trades in technical schools.

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An American "Apologia".—Reference in Father O'Neill's lecture (reprinted in last week's issue of the *Tablet*) to a College in Australia named after Cardinal Newman serves as a reminder of another eminent convert, whose "apologia" caused a sensation in America about the middle of the last century (writes "Liam") in the *Munster News* for December 10). More than seventy-one years ago—on October 14, 1853—Levi Silliman Ives, D.D., up to that date Protestant Bishop of North Carolina, U.S.A., was solemnly deposed by the "General Convention of the Episcopal Church," sitting in New York, his offence being that he had been received into the Catholic Church in Rome on Christmas Day, 1852. Dr. Ives had been deeply influenced by the Tractarian Movement in England and his *Trials of a Mind*, written after his conversion, might be called an American "Apologia," which tells of the struggles and uncertainties of a perturbed soul, just as Cardinal Newman's more famous work did in his case. Dr. Ives, who belonged to an old Puritan stock, must have been a model Protestant Bishop, as he showed great concern for the poor and the lowly, the absence of the love of whom in his Church was one of his early stumbling-blocks. As in the case of Cardinal Newman, the writings of the Fathers exercised great influence in drawing him to Rome. He had no correspondence with Catholics on the subject of his doubts,

and his apologia was written without help of any kind. He states that he consulted the following Catholic authors—Passaglia's *Commentary*, Perrone's *Prælectiones* and Cardinal Mains' book on the Fathers. Dr. Ives died in 1867. The Rev. W. B. Hannou, a native of Limerick, edited *Trials of a Mind*, which was published at 15 cents by the Catholic Truth Society of Canada, which also brought out a neat booklet entitled *Memoir of a Convert*, with a short but pregnant preface by Dr. F. J. Kinsman, one of the latest American convert Bishops.

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Porto Rico's First Catholic Church.—One of the most ancient churches in the Western Hemisphere, held by many to be the second oldest in the two Americas, is to be restored and honored as one of the shrines of the Catholic Church in the New World, according to the plan now being perfected by Senor Gabriel Corre, a native and resident of San German, Porto Rico, the little village where the church stands. A commission is being formed which will soon seek authorisation from Right Rev. George J. Caruana, Bishop of Porto Rico. The church, called the Porta Coeli (the Gate of Heaven), was built by Dominican missionaries in 1537, forty-five years after the discovery of America. It stands on a little knoll overlooking the village and is reached by twenty-seven decaying brick and stone steps from the street below. Adjoining it on the left is the ruined front wall of the old monastery of the Dominican Fathers. The rest of the monastery has disappeared. The church is built in the typical style of the old Spanish churches of Latin America and is made of brick and plaster. It is still strong, its solid walls having withstood the wear of time and storms and the shock of earthquakes for nearly four centuries. The roof and ceiling are of native woods and great plain pillars of native hardwood support the roof and decorate the rude interior. The town of San German was founded by Diego Columbus, the son of the discoverer of America, in 1512. It stands but a few miles from the sea in the hill country of southwestern Porto Rico. In early days it was a military stronghold and a training camp for Spanish soldiers in the West Indies. The people of the town and the surrounding country are now, most of them, day-laborers in the great sugar plantations of the district. Spanish Augustinians are in charge of the parish. Mass is said no longer in the old church of Porta Coeli. The wooden altar has been dismantled and the statues removed from their niches. Mass for the villages is said instead in a larger church in the centre of the town. The only use to which Porta Coeli is now put is to house the Sunday School classes of the village.

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