

THE SECRET SOCIETIES OF THE RITUALISTS.

The vehement crusade against Ritualism in the Church of England now going on in the Old Country has kindled an interest in the matter here, where we stand little in danger of these undesirable innovations. Mr Walter Walsh, author of 'The Secret History of the Oxford Movement,' is one of the many who have contributed to the flood of literature and speech on this subject at home, and his writings and addresses have commanded attention. In a recent lecture delivered by him in England, he dealt with the secret societies of the Ritualists. He observed that the 'Holy Cross' Society was an exceedingly secret one, and care was taken to prevent objectionable persons entering it. Even the great newspaper of the Ritualistic party in the country was impressed with the secrecy surrounding the 'Holy Cross' organisation, as it said it could not get hold of its documents. (Laughter.) It worked in secret by a secret committee, and it published a number of little books on religious topics. If they got hold of any of these little books, such as one containing 'Pardon through the Precious Blood,' and they saw it stated that it was edited by a committee of clergy, they might rest assured it came from the 'Holy Cross' organisation. That society issued confessional books for little sinners of seven or eight years of age, and he put it to them if it was not right for him (the lecturer) to advise them to keep their children out of the way of these father confessors? There were plenty of Protestant churches to send their children to without being indebted to these kind of teachers. He quoted from the little books statements to the effect that priests only must hear confessions, for when God was on earth He gave the priests power to confess sins. The priest, it was said, was the 'doctor of your soul.' But he (the lecturer) knew there were doctors and doctors, many of them quacks. There was only one true and great physician for the soul, Jesus Christ. In these books the writers attempted to frighten little children into the confessional box by telling them that if they did not confess they would go to the everlasting fires of hell. This 'Holy Cross'

movement was managed by a penitential committee to whom the confessors could appeal for advice in difficult cases; and he added that the infamous book, 'The Priest in Absolution,' was dedicated to the master and the brethren of this order. When, twenty years ago, Lord Redesdale exposed this book in the House of Lords, the whole country rose up to condemn it. It was a disgrace to Christianity. He had a copy of the book, the original edition, for which he had paid six guineas. Dr. Pusey had told them that there was not the slightest trace of private confession to the priest in the primitive Church; and if the believers in the primitive Church could get to heaven without a priest he (the lecturer) supposed believers to-day could do so. For more than twelve hundred years the Church existed without private confession, and it could exist still. No one, of course, objected to prayer to God to forgive the penitent sinner; but they did not require a priest for that. The Society had existed for about forty-five years; several bishops belonged to it; and those figures who appeared to represent it were like marionettes at an entertainment; somebody below and out of sight pulled the wires. Another famous organisation among the Ritualists was the 'Order of Corporate Reunion.' It was at one time doubtful whether the English clergy (in the opinion of some Ritualists) had valid orders and could administer valid sacraments, so to get out of the difficulty three foreign bishops came over from the Continent whose orders were acknowledged as valid by the Roman Church. A ship was hired, the party went on board, put out to the Channel, and thence to the Atlantic Ocean, so as to be out of everybody's diocese, and there some Anglican bishops were re-baptised, re-ordained, and indeed they went through the various steps of consecration. Their duty then was to return to England, and to go through the proper ceremony with other clergy, so as to have them properly ordained, and so on. This was, ecclesiastically, an unlawful act, as the foreign bishops acknowledged the Pope's supremacy. One of these English bishops, after his re-baptism and re-ordination, had, it is said, re-ordained more than eight hundred Church of England clergymen; and there were now bishops serving the

Church here who believed in the Pope's infallibility and yet remained in the Church. One of these re-ordained bishops on his death-bed was received into the Roman Catholic Church by Cardinal Manning himself, who was specially summoned by telegram, although a Roman Catholic priest was residing in the neighbourhood. The third of these re-ordained bishops was still alive, and he was glad to say that if the ecclesiastical authority could not—or would not remove him from his church the London and South-Western Railway would do so—for they wanted the site for railway extensions. Another society was that of St. Osmund, of which Mr Athelstan Riley was formerly a prominent member, and he was now engaged in working in favour of Christian unity. This society taught the worship of the Virgin Mary—prayers were to be offered to her seven times a day it advocated a litany of the saints, and other prayers which they would not find in the Book of Common Prayer nor the Bible. There was a great deal of superstitious foolery taught by the members of this order. The 'Order of the Holy Redeemer' was very busy in many Protestant parishes, teaching the doctrines of Liquori, the adoration of the Virgin, and the members ac-

cepted the Bishop of Rome as the head of the whole Church of Christ. In 'The Guild of All Souls,' another secret society, they openly said mass for rousing souls out of purgatory. Many of the Ritualistic members of the English Church Union are at the present time working hard to get the Prayer Book revised in their way, and he earnestly advised them to fight against that attempt at revision. The 'Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament' was another society represented by such a teacher as Father Ignatius, who believed that the host on the altar was indeed very God. These men were setting up false Gods and false Christs, and, in concluding, the lecturer strongly urged his hearers to do all they could to purge the Church of England of such false teachers, who were bringing the blighting curse of open idolatry upon the country.

EARLY STRUGGLES OF STEAM.

Admiral Sir Charles Napier fiercely opposed the introduction of steam power into the royal navy, and one day exclaimed in the House of Commons: 'Mr Speaker, when we enter Her Majesty's naval service and face the chances of war we go prepared to be hacked into pieces by cutlasses, to be riddled with bullets, or to be blown to bits by shot and shell; but, Mr Speaker, we do not go prepared to be boiled alive!' The last words he brought out with tremendous emphasis. Yet, in a few years, Sir Charles Napier found himself in command of the largest steam navy that the world had ever seen.

Lord Stanley (subsequently the great Lord Derby) presided over a select committee of the House of Commons to examine into the state of steam navigation. George Stephenson, the eminent engineer, who was examined, spoke of the probability of steamships crossing the Atlantic. Good heavens! what do you say? exclaimed Lord Stanley, rising from his seat. 'If steamships cross the Atlantic, I will eat the boiler of the first boat.' This pledge was never redeemed.



A WHARFED CLAIMANT.



"E HOMAI RANAI HE PENUHANA MAKU."
("I wonder if they will grant me a pension.")



"KI TAKU MOHO KA HOMAI."
("I believe they will give it to me.")

Photos. by C. Daxen.

PENSIONERS AT RAWENE, HOKIANGA, N.Z.

See "Illustrations."