

through from cover to cover, they read any odd scraps of newspaper they can come across or even the labels on jam and meat tins. We want good libraries for our country places, with a good supply of novels and magazines. At present we strive, and rightly strive, to suppress evil by legislative enactments. But that is not everything. We must supply something to take the place of unhealthy forms of recreation. Reading is one of the best forms of recreation after a hard day of bodily toil. Books are cheap, and a library can be formed at small cost. That men will read if they get the chance is proved by the following letter sent by a lady correspondent of the Lyttelton "Times":—"I have never seen any body of New Zealand working men reading so much and so solidly as the West Coast coal miners. Their keen interest in science, nationalism and economics is appalling on all sides, but even in literature they are soakers, inclined to read a good deal more than they can digest, and apt in debate to fire off speeches that are applauded as thick as the star-spangled banner with such phrases as "craft unionism," "class consciousness," "the aims of the bourgeoisie," and "the rights of the patriot." Never mind, they are a nice body of men."

The Shearers Hut.

It is not, of course, always possible to get the quiet necessary for enjoying a book. Judging from some descriptions of shearers' huts these places must be anything but quiet. One who has had some experience of them has sent the following graphic account of what he endured to the "Bulletin":—"To a quiet man, or one who is fond of reading, the shearers' hut is a den of horror. There are men whose tongues are never still, and, as might be expected, these are the ones who seldom say anything worth hearing. There is the rattling of dice and the shuffling and chatter of card-players; the repetition of "fifteen-two, fifteen-four"; and the "suchre-players' everlasting "Pass!" "I'm away!" "She's down!" "By me!" and so forth. The man who bangs his fist on the table with every winning card he plays is particularly obnoxious. Occasionally he gets his deserts in the form of a flying boot. There are draught-players, domino enthusiasts, noughts-and-crosses cranks and fox-and-geese lunatics; there are loud discussions, arguments—mostly about dogs and horses, yarning, singing and whistling, all to the accompaniment of half-a-dozen, mouth-organs, tin whistles and Jews' harps and a cracked concertina. It's hard to follow the adventures of Reginald de Clancy through the jungles of the Punjab under such disturbing conditions; it is harder still to compose a soulful epistle to your best girl, pining for her shepherd boy down south. When the lights go out you learn the sleeping characters of your shed mates. There are several asthmatical nuisances who cough intermittently; about a dozen go pig-hunting, and are pursuing the spotted one nearly all night; others fidget and kick and roll have nightmares and other nocturnal visitations, and yell blue murder in their sleep; a few are troubled with insomnia, and get up at frequent intervals to fill and light their pipes. And there are the down-goers, who come stumbling in about midnight, with noise enough to awaken the cemetery. When that row has subsided, the 30 or 40 dogs tied up outside begin to corroboree in dismal and melancholy tones. Somebody yells at them to lie down, and one or two arise to throw firewood and jam-tins at them. The nights are pretty near all alike, so you don't wonder at the number of tents and bush gunyahs that are scattered about the neighbourhood.

An English Kayvett.

Lieutenant A. Sutor, of the Royal Artillery, has been removed from the Army for criticising certain irregularities and speaking disparagingly of people in high places. At the court-martial he made a speech containing

some very telling criticisms on Army methods in general. He went into the Artillery (he told the Court) because he was told it was the most dangerous branch, and that he was terrified at the idea of getting a big shell in his stomach. But he found he had next to nothing to do in the Army. On his first day his captain, a charming fellow, gravely took him to see his gold lace wrapped up in tissue paper. After that the lieutenant was set to work. His work occupied him for about thirty minutes each day, and even that small amount was absolutely futile and inane. It consisted in signing papers which he did not understand and which nobody else understood. He enjoyed it very much, but his enjoyment, keen and intense as it was, did not blind him to the absurdity of it. By half-past ten in the morning his work for the day was over. Secretaries of War, added the irreverent officer, had not yet begun to deliver speeches on the magnificent reforms which they had introduced into the Army, otherwise he might have spent his afternoons reading them. So it went on for ten years. The life was "mighty comfortable, infinitely pleasant," and he knew the big forces arrayed against him if he rebelled against the system. After two years' service at home he was sent abroad, and spent eight years in service out of England. Things were better abroad, except when inspector-generals came to inspect them or other inspectors came to reduce the defences.

An Enterprising Governor.

Lieutenant Sutor spoke at great length, and held the attention of the court throughout. In the course of his speech, he told a good story of a Governor of Malta who made a little money by selling the vegetables out of his back garden. "I would really have admired the Governor for that," he said, "if he had only had the courage to go round with the cart himself." The lieutenant went on to say that on returning from abroad, he found the Army system at home worse than ever, and decided to speak his mind and take the consequences. He wrote a pamphlet called "The Army System; or, Why muddle through thirty millions a year, during peace?" Mr. Haldane, he said, was "as much at sea with his land forces as Mr. McKenna is on land with his nucleus fleet." He audaciously described Mr. Haldane as "the most marvellous War Minister who has ever been inflicted on a long-suffering country." He was sorry, he said, to see British officers humiliated by being told that they had the sympathy of the British War Minister. Unfortunately, his candid criticism of War Office methods was not appreciated by the authorities, and he has been informed that the King has no further need of his services.

Blessed Be Bumble.

The English papers have been commenting on an amazing instance of the essential brutality of the Poor Law system as exemplified by the action of the Camberwell Guardians in the case of a man named Afford. It would appear that all his life the man has had a struggle to live. According to all accounts, even in the brightest of his days, he has never earned more than 18/- a week; and in the darkest, as so often happens in these days of keen competition among the unskilled, he earned nothing. A few weeks ago he lost his job. He and his wife and five children then came to the verge of starvation. A fried fish dealer, touched to the heart, gave Afford a parcel to take home. Afford himself ate little of it: his wife and children, who consumed almost all, were next day attacked by ptomaine poisoning. The wife died. The children were just saved from death. Afford himself was confined to bed. By the time the wife had been buried and the children saved, Afford was without a home and without a stick of furniture. This was the great moment for the Guardians of Camberwell. They sent him a demand for £4 15/-, cost of treating his children in the infirmary, and gave him notice to take his baby out of the workhouse. How they hope to get the £4 15/-, we cannot conceive. Perhaps they will issue a warrant, and send him to prison for failure to pay.

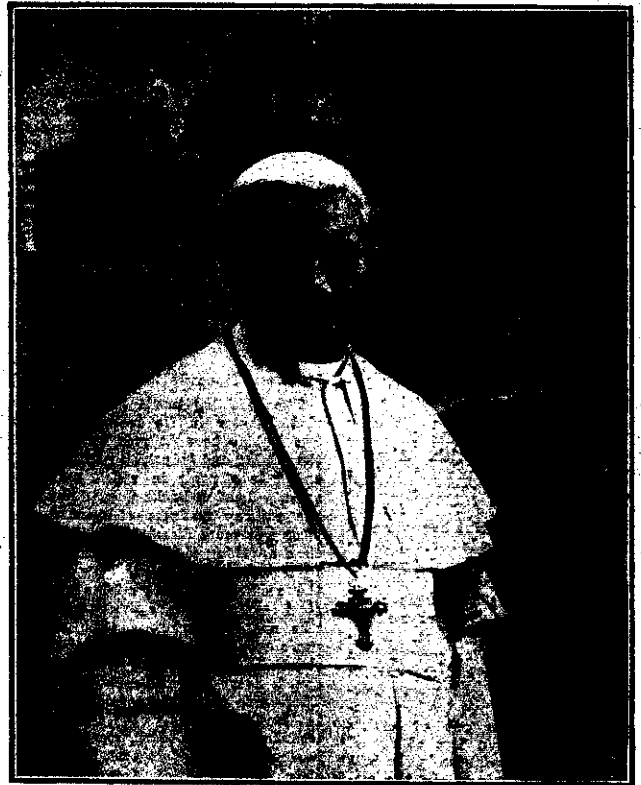
The Paradox of the Vatican.

THE PERSONALITY OF POPE PIUS X.

IN the contrast between the perfect peacefulness of all the moods of the Pope and the state of war, fierce and unceasing, which has made his pontificate so exciting, the newspapers of Europe just now behold the paradox of the Vatican. Pius X. remains to-day, concedes the "Independence Belge" of Brussels, precisely what he was when he ascended his throne, a timid, gentle, unsuspecting, urbane and pacific parish priest involved in war with all the great Latin nations of the world. The patriarch of Venice mounted the chair of Saint Peter with the intention, writes the Rome correspondent of the London "Post," of "renewing all things in Christ." A conservative by temperament, he is a reformer in the sense that he wishes to remove the abuses which have grown up

an achievement worthy of great ecclesiastical statesmen.

On its religious side, however, to follow still the British authority, the pontificate of Pius X. has not been an unqualified success. If the present Pope is the most conscientious and earnest of men, he is certainly lacking in that breadth of view which characterised Leo XIII. or an Innocent III. There can be no greater contrast than that between the way in which the far-seeing Innocent treated St. Francis and that in which his latest successor has treated the Modernists and the Christian Democrats. Of the Roman Church during the last five years, the famous remark of Lord Macaulay would be no longer true, that "she thoroughly understands, what no other Church has ever" understood, how to deal with enthusiasts." On the contrary, the system of Pius X.



HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS X.

In the course of centuries, and to revive what he considers to be the better practice of former generations. Simplicity has been his maxim—simplicity in the ceremonial of the Vatican, simplicity in the music of the Church services, simplicity in the administrative and judicial system of the great institution over which he, the most deeply religious and least worldly of men, has been chosen to preside. Tenacious of his purpose, he has carried out, despite considerable opposition, a large part of this ecclesiastical programme. He has given us the beautiful spectacle of a Pope preaching the practical and simple sermons of a parish priest in one courtyard of the Vatican; he has shown his predilection for a healthy and muscular Christianity by presiding over a series of gymnastic exercises in another. He has appointed a commission to restore the Gregorian chant; he has entrusted a distinguished English scholar with the revision of the Vulgate. And, finally, he has carried out that reform of the congregations and the ecclesiastical tribunals which had long been considered necessary, but which no previous Pope had attempted. This alone is

and Cardinal Merry del Val is to try to drive the scholars and the enthusiasts, the men who wish to reconcile learning with religion and to win over the masses to the Church, out of the fold altogether. It is quite conceivable that in the struggle with the Modernists the Vatican will emerge victorious. But it is also permissible to think that Leo XIII. would have avoided the struggle altogether.

If the policy of the Pope be thus in contrast with that of his predecessor, his mode of life continues to present an antithesis no less marked. It is well known, says the Rome correspondent of the London "Standard," that the present Pope dislikes the pomp and ceremonial that has usually been attached to every action of the Pontiff, and loves to live a perfectly simple life, disregarding all formalities that are not absolutely necessary to his position. A book called "Pius X. and the Papal Court," is by an anonymous writer, who seems to be well informed as to the habits and predilections of Pius X. The author tells us that at about five o'clock in the morning the Pope's bedroom attendant enters his