

and then give a minute account of each altar, statue, and mosaic in the Basilica, the editor of the TABLET would possibly grow weary of my reminiscences and tell me that a bore who has been sent to Rome is very much more to be dreaded than a bore who has stayed at home. One has to see St. Peter's many times before it is possible to realize its immensity, as everything in it is on such a large scale, and in such just proportion, that the eye becomes accustomed to a false standard, and groups of marble cherubs which do not strike one as being larger than human infants, prove on examination to be the size of grown men. I remember being amazed when I touched what looked like a dimpled little marble hand, to find that the angel fingers were much longer and plumper than my own. The Basilica is built in the form of a Roman cross, and the high altar, at which only the Pope or a cardinal with special permission may officiate, is erected where the lines of the cross meet; it is immediately above the crypt containing the relics of the Apostles. Over this rises the Baldacchino, a magnificent canopy of bronze, which is supported by columns covered with exquisite designs in foliage, the gilding of which is said to have cost twenty-two thousand pounds. A hundred lamps are burning day and night around this altar, and close by is the famous bronze statue of St. Peter. Of the lesser altars one of the most admired is in the Capello della Pietà, so called from the celebrated group by Michael Angelo of the Virgin with the dead Christ resting on her knees. This is a most touching and lovely image of the holy grief. The features of the blessed Mary are by many critics considered too young, and it is perhaps more like the face of the Virgin to whom the Angel announced that she was to become the mother of God, than of the same Virgin, who, thirty-three years later, received the body of her Divine Son from the cross; but Michael Angelo wished to represent Mary to us as the model of purity, and the Queen of Heaven; and very few Catholics are disposed to find fault with him because he has made her so beautiful in spite of the years she had spent on this earth.

The catholicity of the Church which is to last till the end of time and be spread over all nations, is nowhere so clearly portrayed as in St. Peter's. There one sees confessionals inscribed with the names of all European languages, and many languages which are not European, where penitents from every land may in their own tongues seek the consolations of religion.

I find it impossible to describe for you the Dome of St. Peter's, as I do not know how its marvellous beauty is produced. I only know that as it mounts towards the sky it seems to have the power of drawing the soul heavenwards with it. Beneath its shelter is the spot of all others where I would choose to pray, as nowhere have I felt so strongly the necessity of gaining heaven, whose mansions are to exceed in beauty everything that the heart of man has conceived.

It is a curious fact that St. Peter's possesses a climate of its own, with an equable, delicious temperature which is not affected by the heat or cold outside. One can examine the statuary in St. Peter's without a shiver during the winter months, when it requires almost the endurance of an Arctic explorer to pass many hours in the freezing galleries of the Vatican.

I was astonished at first to see how much people live in St. Peter's and the other great churches of Rome, as well as pray in them. Men and women talk, walk about, and amuse themselves; beggars beg, children play, and tourists wander from picture to statue, criticising everything, and reading aloud from their guide-books; and yet no one seems disquieted or distracted. When I had seen two cardinals converse for a long time in St. Peter's, when I had been spoken to by Dr. Burke and other grave Dominicans in the Lateran, I began to think such conversations could not be very wrong, and my last scruple vanished when I had been addressed in St. Paul's (outside the walls) by Dr. Polding, the venerable Archbishop of Sydney. This seeming want of reverence may be accounted for in two ways: firstly, the churches are so immense that although there are several masses going on together at different altars, there is always a large part of the church at a sufficient distance from any service where one may talk without disturbing those who are at prayer; and secondly, the Roman people and others who live much in Rome do not divide their religion from their everyday life so much as we do. They are accustomed to think of God while they are at work, and to keep themselves always in His presence, so that they do not feel the same awe in church, which to them is the house of their loving Father, whose goodness and mercy they daily remember, as we do who only go to church from time to time to render homage to a Master whom we fear to disobey.

As I come to the limits of my space, I remember that I have told you nothing of the ceremonies of St. Peter's—nothing of the tombs nor the mosaics. But as Rome was not built in a day, neither can St. Peter's be described in one short sketch. Like a sensational novel, this description "will be continued in our next." S. G. D.

## BISHOP COWIE, AND TRACT DISTRIBUTING.

### THE CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT PRESS.

WHEN Catholic principles or practices are publicly misrepresented, as they often are, by obscure, vulgar, or illiterate persons, we have not much reason to complain; but it is different when this is done by persons of education, and who from their office or social position are likely to possess considerable influence on the public mind. In this behalf I beg to submit for publication the following statements:—

Some months ago an Anglican clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Ashwell, Taupiri, Waikato, left at my residence a certain "tract," written by a clergyman, the Rev. M. Taylor, M. D., in which it was stated in the most positive and unqualified terms that the Church of Rome prohibited the laity from reading the Bible or Word of God. As a lay Catholic I was annoyed at seeing a statement so grossly at variance with the truth circulated in my neighborhood, and I wrote a note to Mr. Ashwell, pointing out the inaccuracy of such an assertion, and the injury such a misrepresentation was likely to do to his Catholic neighbors. He had thus wronged us publicly, and it was to be presumed undesignedly. He was therefore bound as a man of honor to make reparation; but he had not even the common politeness to notice or reply to my note. I therefore brought the matter to the notice of his

superior, Bishop Cowie. The Bishop wrote me a very courteous note. He could not be responsible for Mr. Ashwell's "opinions." In reply I took the liberty to say that I did not presume to question the correctness of any of Mr. Ashwell's "opinions"; what I complained of was that he had circulated a matter of fact which was diametrically opposed to fact. I wished to know if Mr. Ashwell was doing this with the knowledge and consent of Bishop Cowie, his ecclesiastical superior. I received no reply to this note; there the matter dropped. I must say I expected better things of Bishop Cowie; of Mr. Ashwell I did not expect much and I was not greatly disappointed.

I need not inform your Catholic readers, though it may be necessary for the information of Protestants, that the Holy Bible—Douai version—is publicly sold for Catholic use, in the Catholic bookellers' shops, throughout the United Kingdom and America, as well as elsewhere; nay, even in Auckland itself, in Protestant shops, with permission of the authorities of the Catholic Church; that under the same authority English Bibles are supplied officially to Catholic soldiers in H.M. army whenever they may wish to have the book; a fact of which Bishop Cowie as an ex army chaplain could not well be ignorant. Moreover, in a certain manual of devotion in general use among English speaking Catholics, there is an express exhortation to read a portion of the Bible daily. If Mr. Ashwell and Bishop Cowie did not know of this they might have known and ought to have known it. Their ignorance seems culpable. On the other hand, if they were acquainted with it how are we to explain their publishing what I complained of, or refusing to retract or make reparation for the public wrong done. I shall send a copy of this number of your paper to Mr. Ashwell and Bishop Cowie, so that they may have an opportunity of explaining themselves, if they see fit, through your paper, or otherwise. I shall, moreover, send a copy to some Protestant friends of mine, neighbors of Mr. Ashwell, and who know of the correspondence referred to, and were at a loss how to account for Mr. Ashwell and Bishop Cowie's line of conduct on the occasion. The 'Daily Southern Cross,' and 'Waikato Times,' for reasons best known to themselves, declined to publish the particulars. Mr. Ashwell, Bishop Cowie, and the newspapers named, are, or ought to be, the best judges of their own conduct, and best acquainted with their own motives. I censure them not; but leave the whole matter to the judgment of "those whom it may concern" among the public.

I should have said also, that in the English version of the Douai Bible, is prefixed a missive from one of the popes, not only permitting, but actually urging Catholics to read the Bible. This may be news to Bishop Cowie, Mr. Ashwell and others, members of the Bible Society. In common fairness they should announce the fact on the platform at the next general meeting of the Bible Society in Auckland, and through their "tracts" circulated in the district.

The above incident furnishes one of the many proofs of the necessity of our having a Catholic press here, as elsewhere. Protestants in England and the British colonies, up to the present date, have had all the power of the press in their own hands. They have used it most unsparringly, often most unjustly and craftily, as in the present case, to injure the credit of the Catholics. This state of things is drawing to a close. But as it is we must yet suffer much at the hands of the Protestant press. Our Protestant neighbors have at present wealth and numbers on their side, and thousands or millions who now see the labored—often willful—calumnies and misrepresentations of the Protestant press against us will never see the replies in the Catholic press. We may say the Catholic press as an instrument of power and for training purposes among English speaking Catholics is, in our day, yet in its infancy. It is advancing, however, to a giant's estate, and rapidly too, and will ere long use a giant's strength. The press, we know, is by birth a Catholic institution; and the present Pope is a great patron of sound Catholic newspapers. "Circulate correct Catholic information," is his constant advice to the newspaper press, an advice which the great London bully of the press, in Printing-house square, might condescend to follow with advantage to his own credit for veracity.—Correspondent.

## THE INVISIBLE WORLD AND THE 'OTAGO DAILY TIMES.'—MODERN PILGRIMAGES.

Auckland.

To me the revival of the practice of religious pilgrimages seems to indicate a very healthy and hopeful state of religious sentiment throughout Christendom. These pilgrimages are a sort of public and emphatic protest against the prevalent rationalism of the period. The very circumstance of their being treated so often with rude and flippant levity by anti-Catholic writers, such as some of those who contribute to the pages of the 'Otago Daily Times,' shews that they must be strongly influencing in some way the public mind in favour of Catholic principles. Do these comic writers really believe in an "Invisible world?" If they do, and if they be possessed of common sense and politeness (not to speak of Christian faith), they would regard and treat the subject of Christian pilgrimages rather as affording matter of curious and sober investigation than of profane and senseless merriment. Dr. Joseph Hall, who was Protestant Bishop of Exeter in 1641, and who was as much opposed to the Catholic religion and its practices as any writer in the 'Otago Times' can be, relates in his work on "The Invisible World," the following fact, which occurred to a pilgrim who had visited the shrine of St. Madern in Cornwall, in the hopes of being cured of an infirmity in his limbs, under which he had laboured for years, and which, to all appearance, seemed irremediable by any human means whatever. Bishop Hall assures his readers that he had made personally a strict judicial enquiry into the circumstances of this case, and he was well assured of their truth. A man named John Trelittle, who for sixteen years was forced to walk on his hands by reason of the close contraction of the sinews of his legs was, on visiting St. Madern's well and bathing in its waters, and as a pilgrim, suddenly restored to the perfect use of his limbs, "so that," says Bishop Hall, "I saw him able to walk and get his own maintenance. I found there was neither art nor cohesion. The thing done; the author invisible." In reference to this case the good Pro-