

GRAND ORANGE DEMONSTRATION IN AUCKLAND.

THE above was a most orderly and respectable affair. It must have been highly gratifying to Orangemen, but I hardly think Protestants generally in this part of the world will be very much pleased with it. To Catholics it must, I think, have been most satisfactory. The speakers bore testimony to the vitality, power, and progress of the Catholic religion especially in the Australian Colonies in language the most emphatic. As a Catholic resident in Auckland, I for one render them my most grateful acknowledgement for the service they thus did to the Catholic cause. We can readily pardon them for the old-fashioned calumnies and misrepresentation about Catholic doctrinal affairs which they repeated, and which many of their respectable hearers obviously swallowed as "proofs from holy writ," and the alleged pernicious character and tendency of the Catholic system. Can it be possible that their ignorance on such subjects at this time of day is excusable and innocent before God? J. W.

NOTES ON BOOKS, OLD AND NEW, IN THE AUCKLAND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY.

AN occasional short notice of some of the more popular and important books in this library may possibly be useful. It may induce some Catholics and inquiring Protestants to subscribe to the library or purchase the books noticed.

THE CHURCH OF THE FATHERS, by Dr Newman.

This small book must have had a great sale. A fourth edition was issued in 1868. It consists of short sketches of certain eminent and saintly persons of the fourth century—Basil the Great, Gregory, Anthony, Augustine, and three others; one of them a Roman lady of the highest family and great wealth.

The sketches were first published in 1833, and are the earliest compositions of what is called the Oxford or Tractarian school. They were written, as the author himself tells us, "to illustrate as far as they go the tone and modes of thought, the habits and manners of the early times of the Church."

We now know that it was partly such studies as these which under God, led the distinguished author, and so many others of the learned and pious English Protestant clergy and laity into the Catholic Church. Then began that movement towards the Catholic Church in England which has been going forward ever since, and is now so prominent a feature of the age in which we live. Dr Newman and his friends beheld in the lives of these early fathers of the Catholic church such a degree of sanctity and heroic self-denial as they looked for in vain in the Protestant Church of England, or any other Protestant Church. They saw also in the Church of that early age real "unity," a thing which never has existed in any Protestant Church for any length of time, and which certainly is not to be found in the Churches of England or Scotland. Heresies, indeed, of a most pernicious kind, did exist in those early ages, but these only exhibited in a more striking light the unity and power of the Church, which cast out all heresies from her communion, and condemned their doctrines in a bold and straightforward manner, acting as an institution invested with divine authority.

Where are the powerful and numerous sects of proud and defiant Arians of those times now, and where are their doctrines? They are where the Protestants of our day and their heresies will in due time, according to God's appointment, be—blotted out of existence; while the Church of the Fathers and her pure doctrines, will, as now, flourish in immortal youth. Strange as it may seem, there are at this hour English Protestants of the highest social position, even ministers of State such as Mr Home-Secretary Bruce, who actually do not know that such a movement as that referred to is now going on. They say, and no doubt believe, that any accessions to the Catholic body in England are mere Catholic natives of Ireland who come over to England. People are often fain to remain in ignorance of what they are afraid to know. I could have sent Mr Bruce a copy of the Auckland 'Daily Southern Cross' containing a long list of English Protestant clergy and English Protestant nobility and gentry, who within the last few years have entered the Catholic Church. He might even have known that the late venerable Duchess of Kent, the honored mother of our beloved Queen, was received into the Catholic church on her deathbed, or shortly before. This fact is chronicled in the Catholic 'Register,' published by authority, and has never, so far as I know, been contradicted.—Yours,

A MEMBER OF THE AUCKLAND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE SOCIETY.

HISTORY OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

By the Abbé J. E. DARRAS.

(Translated from the French for the NEW ZEALAND TABLET.)

Chapter II—Preparation for the Gospel.—§ I. Vision of Zachary.

1. ZACHARY, FATHER OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.—THE ANGEL GABRIEL AT THE ALTAR OF PERFUMES.

"THERE was in the days of Herod, the King of Judea, a certain priest named Zachary, of the course of Abia, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name Elizabeth. And they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame. And they had no son, for that Elizabeth was barren; and they both were well advanced in years. And it came to pass when he executed the priestly function in the order of his course before God. According to the custom of the priestly office, it was his lot to offer incense, going into the temple of the Lord. And all the multitude of the people was praying without at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zachary seeing him was troubled, and fear fell upon him; but the angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice in his nativity.

For he shall be great before the Lord; and shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. And he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias; that he may turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just, to prepare unto the Lord a perfect people.' And Zachary said to the angel: 'Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.' And the angel answering said to him: 'I am Gabriel who stand before God; and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring these good tidings. And behold thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass; because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time. And the people was waiting for Zachary; and they wondered that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out he could not speak to them, and they understood that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he made signs to them, and remained dumb. And it came to pass, after the days of his office were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days Elizabeth his wife conceived, and hid herself five months, saying: 'Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein He hath had regard to take away my reproach among men.' (1)

2. EXTRINSIC PROOFS OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE.

This page opens the evangelical narrative. It is drawn from the first chapter of St. Luke, which chapter, along with the second, all the Rationalists agree in ranking among the legendary interpretations added to the original recital by the credulity of subsequent ages (2). A miracle, at the outset of the history of Jesus Christ! The Rationalists cannot bring themselves to admit it. It is then in the name of natural order, immutable in its laws, as science has revealed them, that the power is denied to God of manifesting His oracles to a Jewish priest, and of speaking to him by the ministry of an angel! Unfortunately for the disciples of Strauss, the miracle this time prevails over them on all sides. To escape that of the vision of Zachary, they precipitate themselves into a whole series of prodigies. The first page of St. Luke, according to you, is an apocryphal addition. Be it so. Then it is the pen of forgery that has written on the cradle of John the Baptist this sentence: "The multitude will rejoice on the day of his nativity." Yet if this prophecy is the work of an impostor, why has it been realised? Why is it that each year the day of the nativity of St. John the Baptist is celebrated over the entire world? Are there many persons, think you, in the world at present who know or celebrate the birthday of Alexander or Cæsar? Yet these latter made a sufficiently illustrious figure in history. And behold, over the cradle of an obscure child of Aaron, an impostor, a forger predicts that the world will never lose the memory of so glorious a nativity! This prophecy—incredible, absurd, if viewed in the light of an historic probability—is nevertheless accomplished to the very letter. After eighteen hundred and seventy years the world persists in celebrating the birth of John the Baptist. In two thousand years to come, if the universe be destined to reach that age, it will be the same, and you will find that quite natural. A legend! nothing is easier to imagine; but to introduce it into the evangelical text, more obstacles are to be met with than the Rationalists seem to think. St. Luke, in the four verses which form the prologue to his Gospel, and the authenticity of which has never been called in question by any known exegetist, gives notice that he resumes the historic recital of the Incarnation from the beginning (3), and that he will pursue it according to the chronological order (4). Such are the two features which he points out beforehand as being exclusively characteristic of his work. Now, the two first chapters of St. Luke—that is to say, the birth of John the Baptist and the history of the first years of Jesus Christ—being suppressed, in what would the Gospel of St. Luke be distinguished from that of St. Mark, since it commences like the latter with the baptism of the Jordan (5). How would he justify the intention previously implied of resuming the recital from the beginning—that is to say, further back, even than St. Matthew, who starts only from the Annunciation? St. Luke could not have understood his own meaning, then, when he was tracing, with his inspired pen, the prologue of his Gospel? And here is a second miracle which the Rationalists will have to submit to in compensation for that of the vision of Zachary, which shocks them so much. They will explain how an evangelist, who did not understand his own meaning, has been able to subjugate the fate of the universe. This is not all. This impostor, this falsifier, who, in the second or third century, is said to have interpolated the legend of St. John the Baptist, must needs have been a true thaumaturgus in order to succeed. His greatest miracle would have consisted in rendering himself invisible. In effect, no one saw him, no one suspected him, in the whole series of Christian history; he escaped all researches. Origen, in the year 200, had not seen him; and to escape the notice of Origen, more than ordinary skill was necessary. But, above all, in the year 150, Celsus, the pagan, the enemy of the Gospels, did not see him. To elude his gaze, so full of hatred, would require finesse almost approaching to a miracle. Now, Celsus, the philosopher, cites the first chapter of St. Luke, and he takes occasion to endeavor to tarnish the immaculate name of Mary (6). Where, then, make place for your invisible forger in an historical period so scrupulously guarded? Tertullian, Irenæus, prior to Origen, did not know him. St. Papias, whose precious testimony Eusebius notes with so much care, had not the least suspicion of his existence. Keep, then, along with your other myths, these miraculous apocrypha. The first page of St. Luke could not have been invented as an after stroke by a posthumous forger.

(1) Luc. i. 5—25; (2) Vie de Jesus, introd., pag. xli; (3) Luc. i. 3; (4) Ibid; (5) Marc. 1; (6) Origen, Contra Celsum, lib. i. cap. xxxix.

It is estimated that Iowa alone consumed 6,000,000 bushels of corn this past winter for fuel, because it could not be sent to market at a profit. It takes five bushels of corn to pay the freight of one bushel from Iowa to New York.