

occupation for their charitable hands at home, have gone out to reform a "Popish" people:—"An investigation into the city affairs of New York," writes the correspondent of the *Daily Times*, "displays a state of corruption in every department exceeding that of the Tweed régime. There is not so much open stealing, but there is more general and systematic fraud. The police and judiciary, the controller, assessor, and all the heads of departments are tarred with the same brush. Under such conditions, is it wonderful if the people should rise in righteous indignation and sweep away a social system which only protects crime and money, at the sacrifice of truth, public decency, and virtue?" We do not know, again, whether sensuality prevails in any extraordinary degree amongst the Mexicans, but if it does, are their would-be reformers the men to diminish the vice. Let the Protestant Bishop of Central New York inform us as to what the exertions of such reformers have accomplished at home:—"Apart from the great matters of personal religion which the Prayer Book, the Scripture lessons and the voice of the ministry will press upon you, let me call your attention particularly to two public perils which threaten immediately, and on every side the society in which we live. One of them is sensuality, in the three principal forms of luxurious living, intemperance in drinking, and impurity. No one of these three gross sins is confined to one class of people; for although wealth may be said in some sense to be necessary to luxury, yet among the middle and poorer ranks, hardly less than among the rich, in country and city alike, we see an eager passion for excitements and indulgences which are in no true sense moral or intellectual but animal. We see the spreading poison of inflamed and pampered appetites. We see it at the tables and in the evening parties of well-dressed persons who are ambitious of a certain sort of gentility, but who eat and drink as if eating and drinking were the chief relish of life, rather than conversation, or books, or the arts of beauty, or any useful service to God or the neighbour. We see it in the vile illustrations of shop windows and the dainty foulness of a literature soaked in corruption. We see thousands of men and women of every grade of education whose aims and efforts, if the truth were plainly told, bear mainly upon pleasures which are of the body, and not of the mind or spirit. It is a degrading confession. It ought to put every one of us upon sober thinking. With all our boasts of progress and knowledge, we are yet living at so low a rate. Our public schools, free suffrage, general information, and enormous outlays in machinery have lifted us no higher than this." Nor does the bishop give us grounds to place much reliance on the future efforts of such reformers in their own country. "If," he continues, "you ask yourselves the question how and where most of the boys and girls now growing up among us, are expected to get a thorough and consistent training in the principles and practice of Christian morality, or in the elements of Christian character, you will, probably, in shaping your answer, come upon the appalling fact that I refer to. It will be acknowledged that such a training is not to be found, for a majority of the children, anywhere. It is left by the families to the common schools, and by the common schools, utterly engrossed with secular studies, to the Sunday-schools, and by unsystematised and ill-governed Sunday-schools (where vast numbers of the children never appear) to chance. We hear the note of alarm. Juvenile crime increases at a fearful pace. Crowds of the young of both sexes, without parents or any protection whatever from the worst harm, are seen on the streets every evening. Their manners in public conveyances and other places are rude and even immodest. They are already on the verge of ruin. In cities they are drawn into pool-rooms, theatres, saloons, innumerable pitfalls. In rural spots, too, they are not secure, because their moral life has not been nurtured and strengthened along with their physical and mental life." Here, then, is a promising state of things—here are the enlightened and most Christian people from among whom teachers can be spared to convert "benighted Papists" in Mexico. Or would it not, perhaps, be better that even the Pagan Indians, still to be found in that country, if such there are, should be left in their comparative innocence? Let us, at least, feel no surprise when hy-and-bye, we shall see a squad of the Salvation Army proceed to convert the converted, and fully and reasonably satisfied that the services of their big drums and trumpets are as much required by the congregation gathered together in that fine Jesuit church purchased by the Methodists from the Government, as by the denizens of that other church turned by Juarez into a café. In fact, if things in converted Mexico are to resemble things in "Evangelical" America, and we may believe "Jacob Terry," the probabilities are that the Salvationists will find even worse people prominent in the conventicle than in the café, for, speaking of the Mormons, the writer in question says, "The Christian pulpit in Eastern and Western cities resounds with demands for fire and sword to extirpate 'the twin-relic of barbarism'—polygamy, and yet these bloodthirsty gossellers set in the high places of the Church, men and women, however infamous their lives, if they are rich and condescend occasionally to patronise their ministrations."—So much for the Churches, then, all of whom, according to the *Star's* correspondent, have found an "inviting field" in Mexico.

MARK TWAIN ON BELFAST PROTESTANTISM.

MARK TWAIN, writing some time since on a visit of his to Belfast says:—

Belfast is a peculiarly religious community. This may be said of the whole of the North of Ireland. About one-half of the people are Protestants, and the other half are Catholics. Each party does all it can to make its own doctrines popular and draw the affections of the irreligious toward them. One hears constantly of the most touching instances of this zeal. A week ago a vast concourse of Catholics assembled at Armagh to dedicate a new cathedral; and when they started home again the roadways were lined with groups of meek and lowly Protestants who stoned them till all the region round about was marked with blood. I thought only Catholics argued in that way, but it seems to be a mistake. Every man in the community is a missionary, and carries a brick to admonish the erring with. The law has tried to break this up, but not with perfect success. It has been decreed that irritating "party cries" shall not be indulged in, and that persons uttering them shall be fined 40s and costs. And so, in the police court reports, every day, one sees these fines recorded. Last week a girl 12 years old was fined the usual 40s and costs for proclaiming in the streets that she was "a Protestant." One of the Belfast local jokes was very good. It referred to the uniform and inevitable fine of 40s and the costs for uttering the party cry—and it is no economical fine for a poor man, either, by the way. They say that a policeman found a drunken man lying on the ground, up a dark alley, entertaining himself with shouting, "To hell with!" "To hell with!" The officer smelt a fine—informers got half.

"What's that you say?"

"To hell with!"

"To hell with who? To hell with what?"

"Ah, bedad, ye can finish it yourself—it's too expensive for me to do it."

I think the seditious disposition restrained by the economical instinct is finely put in that.

SYMBOLS AND TRADITIONS CORROBORATING SCRIPTURE.

(From the *Catholic Mirror*.)

Rev. J. F. X. O'CONNOR, S.J., of Woodstock College, delivered the third academic lecture of the season in the hall of Loyola College, on Monday night, on "Egyptian Picture Writing and Cuneiform Inscriptions," in which he showed, by means of stereopticon views, the striking similarity between the picture writing of the ancients and that of the North American Indians and the Aztecs. Even our own familiar English, he said, is not free from these cabalistic marks, as instance the common symbol for dollars, which is popularly but erroneously supposed to stand for "Uncle Sam."

The study of the ancient lore hidden in the cuneiform characters of legends of the East, is not merely a movement valuable in its gratification of the learned and curious, but also from the fact of its inadvertent corroboration to Holy Writ. Not, indeed, that the Scriptures need other confirmation to us than the simple words of God, but it is a satisfaction to be able to answer the enemies of Christianity with records of history outside of Holy Writ. In the newly-deciphered language we have an account of the Creation, a description of the Garden of Paradise, and a legend of the Deluge. The analogy between these accounts and the narrative in the Bible is most striking. It is the same tradition evidently applied in a different sense.

Since the Hebrew and Assyrian have substantially the same tradition, and since the evidence clearly points out that they were not taken one from the other, the remaining explanation is that they were taken from the same original tradition handed down in different ways from the lips of Noe. Thus in the Scriptures we have an account of the Deluge. Outside the Scriptures, and in no way connected with them, we have another account of the fact. What other reasonable explanation can there be than the truth of an original tradition from which both were taken?

If the Chaldean cuneiform narrative translated by Berosus is remarkable for its resemblance to the Scriptures, the Assyrian cuneiform narrative of the Deluge is simply astounding. If the future Chaldean and Assyrian discoveries are of equal importance to what has been made known, they cannot be published too soon. The chief idea in all is that the flood was sent as a chastisement. Genesis says, "Noe opening the window of the ark which he had made, sent forth a raven, which did not return."—"He sent forth also a dove after him . . . but she not finding where her foot might rest, returned to him into the ark."

The Chaldean legend is as follows: "Xisthrus loosed some of the birds; these finding no food nor place to alight on, returned to the ship. A few days later Xisthrus again let them free, but they returned to the vessel their feet full of mud. Finally, loosed the third time, the birds came back no more." The cuneiform interpretation draws much closer to the Scriptures. Izdober states that successively were sent out a dove, a swallow, and a raven: The two former not finding a place to alight came back, but "the raven saw the corpses in the waters, ate, rested, turned and came not back." In the Mexican legend, Tezpi sends out a vulture which does not return. Among the Greeks and Latins the legend is preserved by the fables of Ovid, and the odes of Horace.

As the cuneiform inscriptions date back at least 2,000 years before Christ, and thus probably anterior to the time when Moses wrote down the traditions of the Jewish people, we get some idea of the value of their testimony. We must recollect, too, that the tower of Babel was built shortly after the Deluge, and when all the earth was of one tongue, and the traditions of the primitive revelation which had been preserved from the time of Noe were yet fresh in their minds.