

In Russia, the terror of the despotism, and the force by which it must change or die, Nihilism, is the creation wholly of the poets and story-tellers. Its origin was the publication of two romances, one written in 1847 by Alexander Herzen, under the title of "Whose Fault is it?" and the other, called "What to Do About It," written in 1863 by Nicholas Cernicewski, while he was imprisoned at St. Petersburg. The authors were banished and their works confiscated; but the seed had been sown, the doom-note had been struck. Another writer, more powerful than either, Turgénieff, sent out his romances among the people of Russia, and maddened them into activity and organisation. In all his books, he struck but two monotonous and dreadful notes, the inhuman degradation of the people, and the merciless rule of the aristocrat. He gave no advice: offered no remedy. He gave Russia two things: a picture of tyranny, and the word "Nihilism." He is a banished and an old man; but he is the strongest man in Russia to-day—far stronger than the skulking and hunted Czar.

There is no power more forcible to excite, to destroy, to reform, than the power of the poet and story-teller. They are the makers of symbol; and one symbol embraces and represents a thousand common facts. Their creations are truer than the petty truths of the editor, the statesman, the essayist. The Divine authority suggests the use of fable and parable in moving the people. It is well for mankind that the truly great dreamers have ever been true to the greatest truths.—*Pilot.*

OPENING OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, NELSON.

(The *Evening Mail*, January 2.)

THE new church of St. Mary's, which has just been erected on the site of the old building which was burned down on the morning of Easter Monday, 1881, was consecrated on Sunday morning by his Lordship the Bishop of Wellington, in the presence of a crowded congregation. The order of procession from the Convent Chapel to the new Church was as follows:—Cross-bearer: Two Acolytes with tapers; Eighty young girls in white who had that morning made their first communion; Forty Children of Mary in white dresses and veils and light blue cloaks; Nine novices in black dresses and white veils; Twenty-nine Sisters of the Order of Our Lady of Missions; Fourteen Altar Boys in scarlet cassocks and white surplices; The Rev. Father Mahoney, Master of the Ceremonies; The Rev. Father McNamara, Celebrant of the Mass; The Bishop, supported on either side by the Rev. Father O'Connor, Deacon, and Rev. Father Foley, Sub-Deacon. The Celebrant, Deacon, and Sub-Deacon wore a beautiful set of Roman Dalmatics in white and gold. The Bishop's purple silk cassock was almost concealed by a rich lace rochet and a handsome gold cope. He wore a gold mitre and carried his pastoral staff, which is richly studded with precious stones. After going round the church reciting the usual prayers and sprinkling the exterior with holy water the procession entered the building by the main front door. Upon arriving at the high altar the Bishop and clergy prostrated themselves and recited the Litany of the Saints, then passing round the interior the Bishop formally blessed the new church. The Rev. Father Garin, who was not strong enough to walk in the procession, had taken his place as priest attendant at the throne, wearing his usual black cassock and a white surplice, but upon the commencement of the Mass he assumed a rich white silk cope. During the offertory the Bishop retired to change his vestments, and returned to preach the sermon vested in purple silk cassock, lace rochet, and purple silk cape, over which was conspicuous his episcopal chain and cross, and instead of the mitre he wore a purple silk biretta. He resumed the mitre and gold cope to give his episcopal blessing at the end of the Mass. The Rev. Father Mahoney wore his black cassock and a short Roman surplice of the finest linen bordered with a deep fringe of very beautiful hand-made lace. The music was very effective, although the volume of sound from so powerful a choir was not equal to our anticipations.

The Bishop took for his text the words "I believe in Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God." In preaching at the opening of St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney he had proved the divinity of Christ from various sources. In the church where they were now assembled, which, lowly though it was in comparison, was a temple of Christ, and therefore immeasurably more noble than even Solomon's temple, for in it His sacraments would be administered and the principles of His civilisation preserved and inculcated, he would take the same theme, and would prove it by the affirmation of Jesus Christ Himself. In days of old, founders of nations or religions had occasionally arrogated to themselves something similar to the high majesty of God, as in the case of certain of the Roman Emperors, but this never lasted long, for the masses had risen against them and made them expiate with their lives their sacrilegious buffoonery. Now, with regard to Christ, if it were once admitted that he had said he was God they must either clearly prove that he was not so, or must blaspheme in their denial of His divinity. Able men had arisen who did deny that divinity. John Stuart Mill, that great logician and usually careful thinker, was the highest type of English unbelief, while in France an influence almost equal to Mill's had been obtained by the vastly over-rated and absurdly admired M. Renan. Mill held up our Lord as the ideal of a moral and intellectual leader, but denied His divinity, and alleged that Christ Himself never made any pretensions to it. Renan said that Christ never dreamed of passing himself off as the incarnation of God, though He no doubt delighted in hearing himself called the Son of God, and the Son of David, but were we not all in a sense sons of God? This theory offended alike historic truth and common sense. Christ claimed by positive affirmation, in private and in public, in life and in death, to be the Son of God. When Peter answered his Master who asked him, "Who say ye that I am?" that he was the Son of God, was it the application to Him of the ordinary sonship? If so, would it not have been passed by as the silly saying of an ignorant clown, instead of which Christ replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not

revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Surely this was sufficient to show that it was no ordinary sonship that Peter meant, but that through the thick veil of humanity he had seen his Master's divine nature? Then had not Christ claimed that He "came from the Father," that "I am in the Father and the Father in me?" And further, He had applied to himself the eternal things of which God alone was the author. "I am the truth and the life." But it might be said that this was only in the privacy of his intercourse with his disciples, and that He dared not assert it to the people. But He had done so. He had claimed the incommunicable power of creation. He had claimed infinity, applying to Himself the definition used by God of himself to Moses. "Before Abraham was I AM." When He claimed to pardon sin and was taken to task for it, He did not attempt to excuse or defend it but proved His power by an astounding miracle. He claimed too to regulate the share of divine worship due to God, and proclaimed Himself Master of the Sabbath. Then again he accepted the adoration offered to Himself as God. But if the people could not put Him down, it might be thought that the Law could and would. But when the representatives of religion, of science, and of power attacked Him, Jesus softened nothing down. "I adjure thee by the living God to tell me, art thou the Son of God?" And the answer came, "Thou hast said it." In saying that He pronounced His death warrant, but He heeded not that. And in death, on the very cross, before a jeering multitude He reasserted it, in His promise of Paradise to the dying thief, He claimed the divine power, and in His last cry were concentrated all His claims to be of a truth the Son of God. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Surely no subterfuge, no confusion of persons, no garbling of texts could cast even a shadow over such evidence as this, and yet Mill still dared to assert that Jesus Christ made no pretensions to divinity. After such reckless nonsense he might be dismissed as contemptible and unreliable on matters connected with religion. Then again there were Huxley, Darwin, Spencer, and others, who treated the religious convictions of others with supercilious contempt, not because they were wanting in ability or in logical powers, but because they would not carefully examine into the truth of such matters. They used powerful language and seemingly powerful arguments, and thus they gained their influence and thus did infidelity spread. The affirmation of His divinity by Christ called for three questions? Did He say what he did not believe? Did He say what He believed, but was he mistaken? Did He say what He knew to be honestly true? In the first case we had the deceiver, in the second the fool, in the third the honest believer. Mendacity, insanity, sincerity, and truth—through one of these gates we must pass. Look at His mental and moral superiority. With persecution and misery around Him and death staring Him in the face, all was bright. With a heart full of love and sympathy He had a noble and grand mind. Keen and sublime He was ingenious and simple. In the Gospels were shown the perfect mastery exhibited by Him over all opposition. With a single word He could tear away the veil that enshrouded the meaning of a text; charged with being a Sabbath breaker, He confounded his accusers with the simple question whether it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day; the clever politician sought to entangle Him by the question to whom tribute was due; the production of a penny piece and His comments upon it formed a complete answer. So in every case, by the quiet darning of His answers, the searching nature of His questions, His perfect mastery of repartee, He confounded all His enemies. Then He was sublime in His teachings; sublime in the moral principles He inculcated; sublime when He bade men to burst the prison walls of their hearts and to love all men, even their enemies; sublime when He told them to follow Him and leave the dead to bury their dead; sublime when praying for His executioners. And His sublimity was not a mere passing ray flashed upon Him from above, but a fresh, continuous, and glorious light. And if He was sublime, He was simple and ingenuous, simple, not only when saying sublime things, but even in His ordinary conversation, He was never painfully emphatic, never distressingly solemn, while with the poor He was as a child in their midst. Full of love and sympathy he hesitated not to stoop to wash the feet of the very poorest; He reasoned with the poor sinner; He argued with the publican; He did not even pass by the tainted Magdalen, while His love to His ungrateful country was touchingly displayed in His never-to-be forgotten lament over Jerusalem. Then He was as admirable in will as He was in heart, and, after all, it was the will that made the man and formed the character. He willed the most arduous of all enterprises, the regeneration of the moral and religious world, and in the face of all obstacles He carried it out. And what made the will admirable was its perfect rectitude as well as its strength. It was as holy as it was strong. It was impossible to find so many perfections combined in one man. Some were all mind, all will, or all heart, but in Christ alone was the balance so perfectly preserved, and in the most solemn of asseverations did Christ declare himself to be God. Did He then say what He did not believe? No. Was not the first and noblest gift that of truth, and could a man with such a will and heart design the deception of the human race? Then could he have asserted it by mistake? What mistake? Was there a man who could be so mistaken in his own nature as to say that he was a horse, or a bird, or a fly? How then with His grand mind could he be so grossly deceived as to believe He was divine if He was not? How, with His noble intellect, could he make the stupid and grotesque declaration that He was the Son of God if it were so? Such a declaration made by others would clash and jar with the whole course of their lives. With Christ the claim to divinity harmonised with all His actions and teachings. The gate then was closed against the possibility of mendacity in the assertion that He was the Son of God by the truth and perfection of His life; it was closed by His intelligence against the supposition that it was made in folly. Then there remained but one—sincerity and truth. He declared Himself to be God and therefore God He was. He was