

THE celebration of Luther's birthday in Dunedin

THE LUTHER CELEBRATION was nothing very remarkable after all. In fact, had the reporters thought it desirable to go a-courting like that one in Dublin of whom a contemporary recently told us, or had they been absent from any less gallant cause, it might still have been possible for them to have written out in advance very tolerable reports of all that took place. Bishop Nevill's speech alone, perhaps, would have betrayed them, for His Lordship spoke in an unexpected sort of a manner, and one, we fear, conducive in no way to the union of Christendom. On the contrary, Dr. Roseby first interrupted and afterwards contradicted him—maintaining that all the Churches represented were of an equal antiquity with the Church of England, and that none of them were infallible. Bishop Nevill's contention, we need hardly say, was that the Church of England had always existed in a state of infallibility, although for some time corrupt, in England, whereas the sects had been born of the Reformation. The mind of the Anglican divine, however, is a mystery that can be understood, if it be understood, indeed, only by himself, and whether it be the High Churchman, buoying himself up on palpably groundless theories, or the Low Churchman, acting with an inconsistency that seems hardly honest, the position appears to those who look on perplexed and unfortunate in the extreme. That Bishop Nevill should depreciate Luther who so loudly railed at the true founder of His Lordship's Church—that is king Henry VIII., was natural, but that he should think it prudent to do so, and to assert his own fancied superiority, in such an assembly was somewhat strange. Perhaps it was owing to the feeble manner in which his pretensions were put forward that His Lordship got off so easily. The Mayor, honest man, who presided, does not appear to have known very much about Martin Luther, and indeed, it is evident that in this respect he did not stand alone—but he had read up for the occasion Mr. Froude's article in the *Contemporary Review*, and taken a notable propagator of falsehood as an authority—and so is what they call history taught among the masses. As for the rest of them, they seemed to have got up their parts as best they could, some from one source, some from another, but there is not a sentence in all the reported speeches from which we could infer that any speaker there had ever studied the works of Luther himself. Dr. Stuart, for example, gave us all that stuff about the interesting student's study of the Bible—which by the way is variously related, and its striking and lasting effects upon his mind. But said Luther, in his "Table Talk," "I read very much in my Bible whilst I was a monk, during my youth; but this availed me nothing: I simply looked upon Christ as another Moses." Dr. Roseby, again, narrated the old fable concerning the indulgences, showing in the narration a complete ignorance of what an indulgence is. His reverence likewise made that display of learning which we are accustomed to in the reports of his addresses, and with the usual betrayal that the display made was a very shallow one. How, moreover, Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, could have described the state of the Church in the 16th century is a wonder that Dr. Roseby himself alone can explain—has the doctor *par hasard* also made a journey through the Inferno, climbed the hill of Purgatory, or mounted into Paradise? For in some one or other of these regions only could he have learned from the lips of these men the condition of the Church in the century alluded to, and even there he might better have learned it from some one else. But if Dante, for example, in his proper day, denounced popes and cardinals, rebuked preachers and found fault with religious Orders, who than he was more submissive to the Church?—Not one tittle of her doctrine does he call in question, and his great poem may still be read by Catholics as a deep and instructive theological work and as a fervent book of devotion.—Petrarch, Boccaccio and Erasmus are not authorities that may be trusted. Of the other speakers, some said one thing, some another, but none gave Luther credit for his full merits. As the Bible-reader, the translator, or in the words our worthy Mayor seems to have fussed up somewhere and got off by heart for the occasion—"the man, the monk, the scholar, the author, the reformer, the poet and musician." As all these Luther was duly celebrated, according as a little misleading and superficial reading had made the speakers acquainted with his history. But in his chief character as the "jolly good fellow" he was shamefully neglected. Not one speaker among the lot deigned to spare a word in order so to describe him. This pleasing duty then falls to our share, and we fulfil it, in concluding our article, with a quotation from the reformer's own lips in which the whole man stands clearly revealed:—"Poor Jerome Weller," he says, pitying an unhappy friend, and yearning over him in the great depths of his most pious soul, "you have temptations; you must get the better of them; when the devil comes to tempt you—drink, my friend, drink deeply; make yourself merry, play the fool, and sin, in hatred of the Evil One, and to play him a trick. If the devil says to you, 'You surely will not drink,' answer him thus: I will drink bumpers, because you forbid me. I will imbibe copious, potatoes in honour of Jesus Christ.' Follow my example. I should neither eat, drink, nor enjoy myself so much at table were it not to vex Satan. I wish I could discover some new sin, that he might learn to his cost that I laugh at all that is sin, and that I do not think my conscience charged with it. Away with the Decalogue

when the devil comes to torment us, when he whispers in our ear, 'You will be damned in the next world.'—Was it not a crying omission, then, to refrain from honouring Luther also as the "jolly good fellow"? And, by the way, a new idea strikes us. May there not have been method in his madness? Our contemporary the *Morning Herald* may possibly be right, for what "jolly good fellow" would not willingly keep a troop of devils in attendance on him if only he could put them to such excellent uses as Luther speaks of? This doctor made a famous use of them, and how have they in turn behaved towards him? Dr. Roseby might ascertain this, perhaps, on his next excursion into another world.

CANTERBURY CATHOLIC LITERARY SOCIETY

Christchurch, Nov. 10, 1883.

AFTER the ordinary routine business had been transacted at the meeting of the above society, on Monday evening, November 5, and the President had handed over the prize to Mr. Kennedy, who briefly returned thanks, the programme for the evening, a musical and dramatic entertainment by the "Dramatic Club," was next proceeded with. The first item was a song by Mr. Hennessy, which was very well received. The next was a song, "Whip poor will," rendered in a very tasteful manner by Miss Flanagan. Mr. Hoban's comic song was productive of a good deal of amusement. In response to an encore he gave "The Musician" in his usual happy style. Miss King's musical abilities are too well known, so it is almost needless to say that her contribution on this occasion was on an equality with her previous efforts. Mr. Bagley gave a recitation, in the costume of an Irish peasant, in a capital style. He must be congratulated that his "get-up" was devoid of that buffoonery so inseparably connected with Hibernian characters on the stage. Mr. Carroll was heard with great advantage on this occasion in the song "You and I," which he did excellent justice to. Miss Adams sang "Remember" in a very careful manner, which was much admired. Mr. MacDonald received an encore for his song, "I'm not a man, etc." Miss Pender was extremely successful in her rendering of "Kileen Alanna," it being characterised by much taste and feeling. Mr. Kiely sang a song in the costume of a "plantation gentleman," which was loudly applauded. His dancing was very good, displaying an agility and dexterity that would be difficult to exceed. The first part of the programme concluded with a "Temperance Lecture" by "The Blue Ribbon Boy," Mr. Adams. This was exceedingly funny, thoroughly well acted, and immensely enjoyed by the audience, whose risible faculties were actively engaged during its delivery. In the interval Mr. Bowden gave some examples of his ventriloquial powers, which were pretty successful.

The second consisted of a farce, with the modest title of "The Lucky Sixpence." Jack Scampwell, Mr. Hoban, a good-for-nothing, finds himself "hard up," and as a natural result holds a "council of war" as to whether he would gracefully retire from the toils and troubles of the world, and spend his declining years within the aristocratic precincts of a workhouse, or put a bold face on the matter, and never say die. Mr. Hall acted the part of the old gentleman who is troubled with two very difficult things to mind, and requires a good deal of looking after—a gouty leg and a pretty daughter. The old gentleman meeting Scampwell, mistakes him for his nephew, whom he is expecting. Miss Heartyman, who found an excellent representative in Mr. Hennessy, has some doubts about the identity of the false nephew, these doubts being confirmed by the arrival on the scene of the veritable Charles Heartyman, this part being taken by Mr. Bagley. She recognises in a moment her true relative, and his identity is verified by the fact that the cousins retained the halves of a broken sixpence, which they agreed upon before parting. During this time there is a governess, Miss Starchy, a lady who is not as frigid as her name implies. She is instructress to Miss Heartyman, and determines to spread her net for her employer's nephew, but unfortunately succeeds in catching only the impostor. Mr. Adams succeeded in making a very good Miss Starchy, and in displaying that lady's several accomplishments, even to fainting on all proper and necessary occasions, in a very natural way. As a natural result everything comes right in the end, everybody is happy, and marriage is the crowning of their bliss. Mr. Baxter had not much to do as a porter, but what he had was made the most of. It might seem almost invidious to mention any one in particular, as the whole performance was extremely well acted, and above the average of amateur plays; still, Mr. Hall's representation of the pompous Mr. Heartyman was so very natural as to elicit the admiration of all, whilst the rôle of the governess was so ably sustained by Mr. Adams as to entitle him to the first place in his company.

Admission was only to friends of members by invitation, but yet the rooms were crowded by an appreciative audience, and to judge from those present, it is evident that the members reckon their friends to be confined chiefly to the ladies, as the number of that very interesting section of the human race was three times as numerous as the sterner sex. This is a gratifying fact, for whatever is popular with the fair sex is sure to draw the other. Great praise is due to the Dramatic Club for their spirited entertainment, and also to the ladies who so ably assisted them, and to Mr. Oakes who acted as pianist. Mr. Bowden in an especial manner deserves great credit for the capital manner in which his company acquitted themselves.

It is said that the value of the idols manufactured and exported by England for the Indian and African trade exceeds that of the Bibles, tracts, and hymn-books exported by her to those countries. She sends idols to Africa and India, cotton prints with idolatrous pictures on them to China, and opium to the same country. England is a very religious country, too; but if the devil ever ran short of brimstone, she would supply him with all he could handle, for cash down.—*Buffalo Catholic Union.*