prophecies of war, massacre, blood, fire, smoke, and flood. Such things are as hot spices to the palates of the vulgar, and create a demand for the prophet's wares. Many years ago—it was after a dull year—he foretold an unexampled war, with 'mountains of dead, rivers of tears, and oceans of blood.' But it fell out otherwise. In that particular year the world was as quiet and well-conducted as a three-legged stool. Moore loves to couch his predictions—'prognostications' is his term—in words of learned length and thundering sound. It is one of the amiable weaknesses of unshaped minds. Alice, in *Wonderland*, liked the words 'latitude' and 'longitude.' She had no idea what they meant. She used them because 'they were nice, grand words to say.' The pedagogue in *Vanity Fair*, Rev. Lawrence Veal, had a similar weakness. 'He took care,' says Thackeray, 'to produce the very finest and longest words of which the vocabulary gave him use; rightly judging that it was as cheap to employ a handsome, large, and sonorous epithet as to use a little stingy one. *Old Moore* is probably the last of the line of Irish hedge-school masters. With them, as with him, a word of four syllables has twice the hitting-power of a word of two. A. M. Sullivan tells of a Bearhaven schoolmaster who was once retained to indite a complaint against a policeman. 'He read out to his awe-struck clients,' says Sullivan, 'as the finish of a sentence, "he being super-eminently obnoxious to the people." "Do you hear that," said he, "laying down the pen for a moment, and looking around with an air of pride and triumph: "supereminently! That one word alone is enough to take the jacket off him!"'

* * *

But to return to our muttons: *Old Moore* prognosticates by the stars; likewise by the moon. Like the seventeenth century soothsayer, he

> Knows when she is in fittest mood
> For cutting corn or letting blood.

Like our New Zealand 'futurists' and 'astro-mathematicians,' he prophesies on his own account, and more with an immediate view to 'siller' than to reputation. Prophetic almanac-makers, were not, however, always left to shiver in the shadow of official neglect. In the time of the Civil War in England, the Parliamentary party were the salt of the earth in their day. If there was one thing they abominated more than another it was 'superstition.' However, nevertheless, and likewise notwithstanding, they set great store upon almanac-prophecies. They accordingly licensed a man to act as their almanac-maker, astrologer, and sole fortune-teller. Unlicensed prophets were punished with all the rigour of the law. The man selected was the notorious Rushorth. With him was associated William Lilly, a noted astrologer of the times. In the almanacs they foretold victories for the Parliament with considerable zeal and assiduity. When sieges were in progress, the precious pair were brought to the spot, as at Colchester, were feasted right merrily, and, after a conference with the generals issued their predictions for the comfort of the Roundhead army. But the day came when the authority of Parliament began to sink. The power of the army increased. The *Arcades ambo* were worshippers of the Great Jumping Cat, and one fine New Year stoutly prophesied that the Parliament 'stood upon a tottering foundation.' Lilly was dragged before a Parliamentary Committee. The offending words were pointed out to him. But the old fox knew a trick or two. He had had notice of the proceedings, had the offending sheet reprinted with the obnoxious words left out, produced sundry pocketfuls of the amended almanac, and roundly and indignantly declared that the others were forgeries trumped up by his enemies with a view to working his ruin. History *does* sometimes repeat itself. A precisely similar ruse was played upon Parliament by the Irish Grand Orange Lodge, when the Society's illegal oaths and tests were under the consideration of the House of Commons in 1834. But the results were different. Lilly hoodwinked Parliament. The Grand Lodge did not. Its little trick was promptly exposed.

* * *

The century of steam and electricity and dazzling all-round enlightenment has, in the matter of divination, nothing to boast over the days of Nolly Cromwell, nor even over those of pagan Rome. In Australasia thousands of 'palmists,' 'mediums,' 'futurists,' and such-like shady folk, are living on the crass credulity and superstition that grow out of lost or weakened faith as cancers and tumours do in weakened tissue. They

> Make fools believe in their foreseeing
> Of things before they are in being,
> To swallow gudgeons ere they're catched,
> And count their chickens ere they're hatched.
>
> But still the best for him that gives
> The best price for't, or best believes.

There is a wondrous lack of originality in the methods of the frowsy, ungrammatical, or half educated prophetical tricksters that prey upon foolish women and pin-headed youths in all our large cities. A friend forwards to this office a copy of an insane spiritualistic paper published in Melbourne and circulating in New Zealand. 'Crystal balls for developing clairvoyant vision' are pointed out to me as something new. They are as old as the hills and are not nearly so useful for producing double vision as their purchasing-price in Jamaica rum would be. Not to travel farther back in history, rounded crystals were used by the Welsh imposter Dee—Queen Elizabeth's salaried astrologer and seer—during his pretended communications with the angels. There are many new things under the sun. But the fraternity of prophetic charlatans do not seem to have got hold of them. It is, perhaps, because the old frauds 'get there' by as short a route. This saves waste of brain-power. And among that class of tricksters and their dupes brain-power is at a discount.

THE FEAST OF A PROTESTANT SAINT.

On the 30th of last month a body of Anglicans assembled to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the execution of Charles I. An enthusiastic supporter of the movement describes the unhappy monarch as 'the only canonised English [Anglican] saint since the Reformation.' There is so strong an aroma of 'Popery' about the term 'canonisation' that few of our Anglican friends care to employ it. The life of Charles I. underwent none of the rigid searching with lamps that in the Catholic Church is a condition of even being declared Venerable or of being beatified, much less canonised. Apart, however, from this he approached as nearly the fact of canonisation as any Anglican is ever likely to. A church was dedicated to the hard-used monarch in Plymouth. It was built in 1657—only eight years after the masked executioner had shortened his inches by the stroke of his heavy axe. Parliament, too, the supreme authority on such matters in the Establishment, passed an Act (12 Car. II., c. 30), appointing January 30 of each year a day of solemn fasting in memory of the king's murder, and provided a special service for the occasion. According to Lathbury's *History of Convocation* (p.p. 305 sqq.) two offices for the festival were published in 1661. One of these contained the following petition, with its singularly Catholic allusion to the intercessory power of the martyrs: 'That we may be made worthy to receive benefit by their prayers, which they, in communion with the Church Catholic, offer up to thee for that part of it here militant.' This petition was laid aside and another form published, by Convocation in the following year, 1662. The service was, according to Procter, removed from the Book of Common Prayer by Royal Warrant dated January 17, 1859. Parliament canonised Charles I. The Crown decanonised him.

A COLLEGE FOR CONVERTS.

The latest of the many-sided activities of the Holy Father furnishes strong evidence of the interest which he takes in the progress of Catholicity in England. He has founded the new College of St. Bede in Rome, in connection with the English College, and endowed it out of the papal treasury with a sum of £12,000. To baulk the grinding rapacity of the Italian Government, the fund will be administered by the Archbishop of Westminster for the time being. St. Bede's College is intended chiefly for English clerical converts who desire to become priests, and to return as missionaries to help in the spread of the Faith in the fair island that was once known to the Catholic world by the title of the Dowry of Mary. It is pleasant to know that all the vacant places in the new missionary College are filled. The students—except those who have free places—pay a pension of £50 per annum, and attend classes at the Gregorian University. The Rector (who is also Rector of the English College) receives a modest stipend of about £45 a year.

EVANGELISING THEM.

The 'evangelisation' of Cuba is fairly launched. A notorious Methodist clergyman has settled down at Havana to guide the benighted Papist natives of the new American colony in the way that leads to life. It is a mere coincidence that, according to a secular paper, the new evangelist 'has at least nine wives, most of whom died under suspicious circumstances.' To their credit, the Methodist body have peremptorily recalled the budding apostle of Cuba. He, however, sticks to his post, and answers letters of recall by texts of Scripture and pious platitudes. *Memo:* He is the stuff that so-called 'ex-priests' are made of. He is vastly better than some of them and by no means so bad as the rest. And of such is the new kingdom of heaven.

Meanwhile the New York *Sun* of January 12 gives a far from roseate view of the state of things brought in by the new *régime*. It is from the pen of the Hon. H. C. C. Astwood, formerly United States Consul to San Domingo, and now missionary of the American Methodist Episcopal Church to Cuba.

Profanity and intemperance, says he, are the greatest evils that our civilisation is teaching in Cuba. The poor little Cuban boys and girls are being contaminated by the fearful conduct of some of our men. Decent Cubans are horrified and live imprisoned within their homes, leaving their countrymen to be judged by the rabble that mingles with our rabble. Generals Lawton and Wood

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