

and Cork; that each of them averaged almost exactly ten new cases every week for ten years; and that these cases represent a state of immorality that is 'simply appalling.' One cannot, of course, accept as evidence such statements, coming, as they do, from an anonymous writer and utterly devoid of reference or corroboration of any kind. Even if we were to accept the statements of this masked man, we should utterly reject the brutal comprehensiveness of his conclusions. For we cannot lightly set aside the conviction that those punitive maladies are very little known in Ireland outside large cities and seaport and garrison towns. Neither can we ignore the magnificent testimony which Lecky (in two of his works), Froude (in one of his lectures), and a host of other non-Catholic writers have given to the chastity which is the glory of Irish Catholic womanhood, and to the people's 'intense and jealous sensitiveness respecting female virtue.' Viewed in the light of experience in these colonies, it ought not, I think, to be surprising that

Cities like Dublin and Cork

—with their large seaborne population, their bloated garrisons, and their large residuum of poverty—should send ten fresh cases a week to free institutions of the kind referred to. I have before me the 155th annual report of the London Lock Hospital. The report, issued in 1902, covers the year 1901. The hospital is situated in the West End, many miles from the great centre of the vice and crime and misery of the Modern Babylon. A table on page 23 of the report shows that 22,250 persons were treated there in 1901, and that there were in the same year 5,193 new cases, or at the rate of 99.86 per week—that is, 'almost exactly' 100. But these, I understand, represent only a fraction of the cases that are treated in general hospitals and by private practitioners. Now, if 'almost exactly ten new cases every week' represent 'simply appalling' immorality in Dublin and Cork, what will 'almost exactly' "ten times ten" fresh cases represent in one small corner of London? And what shall we say of the cases in the hospitals of Australasia, and among the private practitioners and the 'advertising professionals' and the horde of vociferous harpies, quacks, and so-called 'specialists' that are permitted to use the Press and post office in touting for trade, and wax fat upon the multitudes that consult them? The offices and dens of this motley fraternity are, to all intents and purposes, so many lock hospitals of various degrees of magnitude. It seems to me that, beside all this, Cork's and Dublin's alleged, but unproven, ten fresh cases a week are very mildly 'appalling' indeed. And I am entitled to assume that the remarkable absence of that parasitic tribe from Ireland is due to lack of sufficient opportunities for plying their trade.

I have touched upon eight leading causes that tend to increase the rate of illegitimacy. For only one of them could a church be held directly responsible. There are others, the effects of which she might, by zeal and energy, minimise. The question will naturally arise. To what extent can she do this in a particular country? But this can only be decided by a thorough knowledge of the circumstances of the country, and not by a few garbled statistics, whether from 'Chambers's Encyclopedia' or elsewhere.

With a brief further letter on the 'Fallacy of Figures'—my third and final point—I shall drop the subject.—I am, etc.,

Editor 'N Z. Tablet.'

April 5.

THE FALLACY OF FIGURES

The following is the final letter of the series:—

Sir,—A final word on the disputants in your columns who took the statistics of illegitimate births in various countries as 'tests of Protestantism versus Romanism.'

III. In his 'Comparative Moral Statistics' (ed. 1881, p. 144) Morselli long ago pointed out the absurdity of the third principal fallacy into which the over-eager controversialists in your columns fell: namely, assuming that (1) the term 'illegitimate birth' means the same thing in every country—in other words, that the returns under this head are collected on the same basis everywhere; and (2) that they are accurate and complete.

Here are some examples of what Morselli calls 'the different and irregular information' which this class of statistics conveys:—

1. In Italy, and nowhere else, all exposed children are entered as illegitimate. In Great Britain no such statistics are collected.

2. In Great Britain and Ireland all children born out of lawful wedlock are deemed at law illegitimate, and remain so for ever. In Scotland illegitimates are legitimated by the subsequent marriage of their parents. The same may, with certain easy formalities, be done in New Zealand. In New York State, all children are

entered as legitimate if their parents—even though they have never gone through a form of marriage—speak of each other as husband and wife.

3. Under certain miscalled 'Catholic' Governments in Europe, vast numbers of children are set down as illegitimate although born in true and holy wedlock. Of this, more anon.

And now for

Some Statistics.

The figures of the illegitimate births given hereunder are (unless where otherwise stated) taken from 'The New Zealand Official Year Book' for 1902, p. 340. The religious statistics are (with the exception of the 'Statesman's' percentage of Protestants in Denmark) copied or compiled from 'Whitaker's Almanac' for 1904—

Austria (23,797,000 Catholics, 1,832,000 non-Catholics), 14.55 per cent. of illegitimate to total births, Bavaria (4,357,138 Catholics, 1,804,134 non-Catholics), 14.00 per cent. illegitimate births. Saxony (population in 1900, 4,199,758, of whom only 140,255 were Catholics), 12.90 per cent. illegitimate births. Sweden (population in 1902, 5,198,752, nearly all of whom are Protestants), 10.80 per cent. Denmark (population in 1901, 2,449,540, of whom 98.5 in every 100 are Protestants), 10 per cent. illegitimate births, according to the 'Statesman's Year-Book' for 1901. The German States (Protestants 62.5 per cent., Catholics 36.1 per cent. of population), 9.21 per cent. illegitimate births. Hungary (11,774,000 Catholics, 7,397,000 non-Catholics), 9.01 per cent. illegitimate births. Belgium, 8.51 per cent. illegitimate births. France, 8.26 per cent. Scotland (1897), 7.0 per cent., varying (for the counties) from 3.5 per cent. in Dumbartonshire to 14.1 in Wigtownshire. Italy, 6.34 per cent. England and Wales (1899), 4 per cent.—minimum (for the counties), 2.8 per cent. in Essex; maximum, 6.6 per cent. in Herefordshire. Ireland (74.21 per cent. Catholics, 25.79 per cent. non-Catholics, in 1901), 2.6 per cent. illegitimate births, 'the rate varying from 0.7 in Connaught to 3.6 in Ulster.' A table published by Leffingwell ('Illegitimacy,' p. 153) shows that in Mayo, the most Catholic county in Ireland, the rate is 0.5 per cent., or only one birth in 200 illegitimate. No religious census is taken in England, Scotland, France, and Italy.

Some writers in your columns have whooped a great deal about the apparently high rate of illegitimacy that prevails in

Austria and Bavaria.

The explanation is very simple. It is contained in an article by a Protestant writer ('A Layman's View on Confession') in the 'Church and the World' (1867). It is summarised as follows by Young in the 1895 edition of his book, p. 508, and he and others whom I have read witness to the existence of the same causes at the present time, though in a somewhat mitigated form in Bavaria: 'Legal marriage is practically forbidden to great numbers in German Austria and Bavaria. No person in Austria can marry if he does not know how to read, write, and cipher. In both Austria and Bavaria a man must show that he possesses a sum of money quite out of the reach of a great many before he can get a license to marry. Of course they marry all the same, secretly, but, as they can show no license, all their children go down on the State records as illegitimate.'

One phase of the war against religion in

France and Italy

is this that the anti-Catholic Governments of those two countries refuse to recognise any marriage unless celebrated before a registrar. In Italy especially fervent Catholics resent this, and know that marriages entered into before their pastors do not require the sanction of any Government for their validity. Statistics published by Minister Tanani in 1879 showed that from 1866 to that date about 400,000 had been celebrated in Italy in the church alone. And in 1892 there were 3818 of these marriages in the district of Bologna alone. All the issue of these true and sacred unions appeared on the records of the country as illegitimate!

I will not waste powder and shot upon the tricky comparisons made in your columns between the best cities and districts in one country and the worst in another. I think that I have sufficiently proved that the statistics of illegitimate births form no adequate criterion of the comparative moral delinquency of peoples living in different countries and under different conditions. The case is different with 'the inhabitants of the same country, living precisely under the same civilising environments' (Leffingwell, 'Illegitimacy,' p. 21. cf. pp. 53, 85). Where pre-natal murder, infanticide, artificial sterility, polyandry, and marital infidelity are notably absent, or comparatively negligible quantities, the rate of illegitimacy may, as Leffingwell opines, fairly express the moral sentiment of a people. In these respects Ireland forms, perhaps, a better ground