

torpedo that was, we think, first used in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. One of its chief characteristics was the serene impartiality with which it blew friends as well as foes into eternity. It was rigged on the end of a twenty-foot pole, placed on a dark night in a boat constructed in such a way that its approach would not be noticed, held seven feet under water beneath the iron sides of a hostile vessel, and then fired by the pressure of an electric button. This rude weapon was used nine times by the Russians during the war. It sent one Turkish iron-clad and two steamers to the bottom and damaged three other battle-ships. Russian and Turkish torpedoes also did, during the same war, some minor and promiscuous damage to the fleet of the Czar. With the aid of a similar out-rigger torpedo, the French, in the Tonkin war of 1885, sank a Chinese frigate of 3500 tons. By the time the Chilian civil war broke out in 1891, the torpedo was able to 'walk the water like a thing of life,' driven by its own self-contained motive power. One morning the two Government gunboats 'Lynch' and 'Condell' had 'a little affair of honor' with the Congressionalist iron-clad, the 'Blanco Encalada.' 'Twas all in Caldera Bay. Several Whitehead torpedoes were fired at the 'Blanco' at a range of little more than a hundred yards. Each carried sixty pounds of gun-cotton—mere Tom-Thumb affairs compared with the business-like wreckers filled with two hundred pounds of high explosives that are wreaking destruction at long range in the Korean Sea. After seven minutes' fighting one of the Whiteheads struck the 'Blanco' amidships, tore a hole in its ribs about twenty feet by twelve—big enough for a loaded omnibus to pass through—and sent it and a hundred and twenty human lives to the bottom in nine minutes. Two years later, during the revolt of the Brazilian navy, the armor-clad turret-ship 'Aquidaban' was sent head foremost to the floor of the sea by the bang of a Whitehead torpedo. The 'Chen Yuen,' a Chinese battle-ship, was, we believe, the last victim of the torpedo until the dance of death began around Port Arthur. All manner of war-vessels, as well as torpedoers, are armed with this deadly engine of death. And to this moment there is no effective defence against its secret approach and its giant blow. For the time, the chemist scores easily over the iron-master in naval war.

## Notes

### Dry Rot

The signs of dry-rot in our population, to which the Premier referred in his recent circular, are specially noticeable in the falling-off in school attendance in nearly every part of New Zealand. The Otago Education Report for last year shows (p. 6) an almost continuous decline from 1890 to 1903. The attendance at the close of 1903 was only 19,504. This was the smallest attendance since 1881, when the numbers stood at 19,274. 'The decline in the number of children in attendance,' the inspectors say, 'is, no doubt, part of the great question at present occupying the attention of moralists, statisticians, and statesmen.' The highest morality is the highest patriotism. And the emptying benches in our schools bode ill for the future of New Zealand.

### Deeds versus Words

Words are cheap. It is deeds that tell. 'They people the vacuity of time,' says Carlyle, 'and make it green and worthy.' While the Bible-in-schools League and such-like organisations in New Zealand have been talking hollow-sounding platitudes about the benefits of Christian education, Catholics have been up and doing. They have been spending a million and a half to bring the little ones to Christ, while the others have been wagging their tongues and tightening their purse-strings, whining to get their neglected duty done for them by the State, and to be allowed to pick the pock-

ets of Catholics, Jews, and thousands of other objectors to provide the cost of turning the public schools into Protestant Sunday-schools. It may be very pious to feel for the souls of the little ones with the tip of the tongue. It is certainly a very economical form of sympathy. It would be more to the purpose if the Bible-in-schools League felt for their children, as Catholics do, in their pockets. This would furnish a practical test of their zeal for the souls of the rising generation, and it would save them the humiliation—not to say degradation—of going cap in hand to the Government to entreat it to become a teacher of religion as well as a builder of railways and a grader of Langshang pullets and Aylesburg ducks. Jews, Lutherans, and others are following the example of Catholics in the United States in the matter of Christian education. In a recent address at Notre Dame University, Bishop Stanley (says the 'Ave Maria') declared that a conservative estimate of the cost of the parochial schools in this country would be \$25,000,000, while the expenses of our colleges and academies would amount to as much more. "Fifty millions a year in addition to our ordinary taxes paid for education!" said the Bishop. "Does not that prove the earnestness of our belief in the necessity of education in its true sense? And ought not this fact alone to silence forever the barking fanatics who call the Catholic Church the foe of knowledge?"

### That 'Peaceful Mission'

Tibet is a little storm centre in mid-Asia just now. The project of 'interference' in Tibet (presumably for frontier defence purposes) has been in the air for at least five years. It was treated by the 'Times of India' as a proposal for 'cold-blooded buccaneering' and by the 'Pioneer' as a 'wild cat scheme of annexation.' What it may turn out, we do not know. But, at any rate, what was officially termed 'a peaceful mission' set out for Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, armed to the teeth and stuffed to the chin with munitions of war. The slow-witted hillmen of the mid-Asian Switzerland mistook the 'peaceful mission' for an armed invasion of their mountain territory. In the effort to convince them of the peaceful nature of the mission, several hundred Tibetans were pounded into mince-meat by repeating rifles and Maxims and mountain-guns. And now Lord Lansdowne has, like the Tibetans and the rest of the world, discovered that, after all, the thing that is happening along the rocky road to Lhasa is war—war to the knife. Tibet is a border country. Worse still, it is rich in mineral wealth. Worst of all, it is a buffer-State between British and Russian territory. And it looks as if its long seclusion were now to be broken, not by a 'peaceful mission,' but by a war which has apparently for its object the annexation of the country or its reduction to a tributary State or a 'sphere of influence.'

### A Strange Omission

Sairey Gamp, when she met the newly-wedded couple in Dickens's 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' had one eye on their visiting card and the other eye on futurity. Just now the newspaper magazines have one eye on Manchuria and the other on Tibet. We have articles and sketches galore on the scenery, the sport, the domestic customs, and the religion of Tibet—the highest and most mountainous nation on the face of the planet. But—strange omission—we have not yet come across, in the course of over two score articles on the Himalayan kingdom, even a passing reference to the fact that our first and best knowledge of that mysterious country and its people came to the world through the work of intrepid Catholic missionaries. We owe, for instance, a map of Chinese Tibet, that is not yet superseded, to Jesuit missionaries who some two-hundred years ago—in the early part of the eighteenth century—guided and instructed the Lamas in a survey of that region. In 1844 the celebrated French Vincentian missionaries, Fathers Huc and Gabet, attended by only a single Chinese

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