

State punishes the officer who will not fight a duel— who, in the words of the Emperor Joseph II., holds himself to be something better than a Roman gladiator—with dismissal from the service without any mercy. . . . He (an officer) has only to choose between a life of comfort, in which duelling will maintain him, or a life full of privations, into which a refusal to duel will plunge him. . . . As things are now, one must esteem much more highly the courage of that officer who is openly opposed to duelling than that of the officer who accepts the pistol, forced into his hand by the State. The latter may just as well fire the pistol through cowardice, despair, indolence, or convenience, as through bravery.

It requires a high order of courage to face and defy the loss of position and social ostracism that follow a refusal to duel in the German and Austrian armies. But instances of such courage are, happily, sometimes found. Marquis Taki declined acceptance of a challenge issued to him by a foul-mouthed insulter of himself and defamer of a lady of high birth and blameless life. Samuel Butler sums up the position by the mouth of Hudibras:

‘Quoth he: That man is sure to lose
That fouls his hands with dirty foes,
For where no honor’s to be gained,
’Tis thrown away in being maintained.’

‘First,’ said Marquis Taki, ‘no gentleman is called on to fight a slanderer; and, secondly, I, as a Catholic, object on principle to duelling.’ An officers’ so-called ‘court of honor’ branded the sturdy Marquis as a coward, and, on their recommendation, the Minister of War cancelled his commission. Count Ledochowski wrote to the Marquis, commending him for his conduct as a man and a Christian officer. And for this high crime the Count, too, was dismissed from the army. The papal decorations that now adorn their gallant breasts are the Crosses of Valor or moral bravery, earned under circumstances more difficult than are presented amidst the fierce din and conflict of war.

We are not as far in time as we are in change of heart from the roystering, drinking days when duelling entered as closely into the marrow of the civilian and military life of the British Isles as it does to-day into that of the Austrian and German armies. The Duke of York, Canning, Castlereagh, the Dukes of Buckingham, Bedford, and Wellington, Lord Winchelsea, and hundreds of minor note endeavored to drill little tunnels in the bodies of political opponents. When Charles James Fox denounced the Government for issuing bad gunpowder to the army, he was challenged by Mr. Adam, Secretary for War. Adam contrived to insert his bullet beneath the skin of a non-vital part of his opponent’s anatomy, when the incorrigible Charles James sent this verbal shot across the measured fifteen paces: ‘Adam, you’d have killed me if you hadn’t used Government powder.’ The wild drinking customs of the time were a prolific cause of ‘affairs of honor.’ One morning, for instance, a Galway squire was ‘discovered’ blazing away with a pair of hair-triggered duelling pistols at an ace of spades nailed to an oak tree in his park. He explained the circumstance to his wondering friend: ‘I’ve a dinner party of friends this evening, and I’m getting my pistol hand in practice.’ Refusal of a challenge by any one out of Holy Orders meant—as it does in Austro-German military circles to-day—immediate expulsion from club and social circle. The last duel was fought in Scotland in 1822; in England so late as 1845, in Ireland still later—in 1851. The withering ridicule of the dramatists—the antics of Mansie Waugh and the empty bragging of the cowardly Bob Acres—did much to strangle off duelling in the British Isles. A fatal encounter between two British officers in 1843 led to amendments in the Articles of War that made this sort of encounter too perilous in the army. It will take drastic measures to stamp out duelling among army officers in Austria and Germany. Such a consummation can hardly be hoped for so long as this form of murder is encouraged by high-placed military officials.

Notes

Pig-tail Imperialism

The Anglo-Normans of the Pale became ‘more Irish than the Irish themselves.’ And Mr. Seddon is more Imperialist than the Imperialists themselves. In the interests of Imperialism he sacrifices revenue to the extent of two pence a pound on tea grown under the British flag. Ceylon receives the chief benefit of Mr. Seddon’s generous impulse. But it had hardly taken effect when Mr. Chamberlain—the Grand Panjandrum of Imperialism—coolly claps an extra duty of two pence a pound on all Empire-grown tea imported into Great Britain and Ireland. The tea-planters and the Governor of Ceylon protest that the additional duty will have a seriously depressing effect on that important industry in its exports to England in competition with cheaper ‘Chinese teas.’ Of course it will. But the protest of the British tea-planters of Ceylon will be as barren of result as the protest of the starving British miners of the Rand. After the mostly foreign magnates of the Rand, the next greatest beneficiaries by the South African war must be the wholly foreign heathen Chinese Kismet! It is as the decree of fate. Every dog—even a yellow one—must have his day. And on the coat-of-arms of the Chamberlain peerage that is to come, will be blazoned—‘or’ upon an azure ground—a pig-tail rampant.

French Iconoclasm

Proudhon’s motto ran: ‘Property is robbery.’ The motto of Premier Combes and his Freemason and Radical and Socialist following is ‘Religion is a crime.’ A new phase of their war against religion in France was reached when on Good Friday—of all days of the year—crucifixes and religious emblems of every kind were, by Combes’s orders, removed from every court-house in the country. ‘The order,’ says a Press despatch ‘is causing agitation in Paris and throughout the provinces. At Havre the workmen declined to take down the sacred images, and at Lyons the refusal of the workmen to do the same thing compelled the authorities to call upon officials of the Bureau of Public Architecture for aid. In order to prevent demonstrations on the removal of crucifixes, etc. from the Palace of Justice and other tribunals in Paris the work is being done behind closed doors.’ Here is a Protestant eye-witness’s statement of what took place in Lyons: ‘Crosses which revolutionists of the Eighteenth Century had respected, were torn down. . . . A search was instituted for the remnants of all these symbols of our salvation. Fragments of them were picked up from the sewers and from the waters of the Rhone. One twisted image of Christ our Lord, that had been wrenched from the cross, was fished out of the mire by the Pont-des-Flaneurs. Several thousand persons, gathered to remove this image of the Saviour whom French Radicals and Socialists repudiate. These benighted Catholics carried the distorted image, in impromptu procession, past the house of the Mayor. . . . So boisterous did they become, in their wild, unreasoning protest against the reign of “free thought,” that gendarmes and police felt compelled to restrain them, particularly when some of the crowd tried to force an entrance into the Mayor’s house. Several “free-thinkers,” who had taken part in the outrage of the night before, were rather roughly handled. The Mayor decided to wash his hands of it, after the fashion of Pilate, and had posters placed in conspicuous localities, expressing his disapprobation of the act of the iconoclasts.’

Bible-in-schools: Press Opinions

The great body of the secular press of New Zealand spoke in terms of high commendation of the recent manifesto of the Catholic Bishops on the radical changes which the Bible-in-schools League propose in

LADIES of refined
taste delight in the
Exquisite Flavour of

McKENZIE'S HONDAI-LANKA XXXX TEA

FIRST AWARD Paris Exhibition to the Growers in Ceylon.