

Like Wilton Lackay, of the Lambs' Club, we have little faith in those spineless souls

'Who talk beneath the stars,
And sleep beneath the sun,
And lead the life of going to do,
And die with nothing done.'

Earnestness is best proved by the test of personal effort and self-sacrifice. The Invercargill Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association have (they say) 'outlined a forward movement.' Well and good. Let their zeal in the matter take its normal path of discharge—the path of effort and sacrifice—and not come suing 'in forma pauperis' for a subsidy from public funds for the work that all other denominations are doing at their own expense. The sacrifice should be light indeed, and the effort supremely easy, if (as they claim) they are backed up by the sympathy of 'a considerable section of the community.' It only remains now for this sympathy to take its hand out of other people's pockets and put it in its own.

Notes

Mooncalf 'Devotions'

We thought we had killed off, in New Zealand, the bogus prayer falsely alleged to have been 'found in the tomb of our Lord.' But the pestiferous thing seems to have the life of a microbe. This week we received a copy of the superstitious production (originally, we understand, the work of a Jew), together with a barrelful of watery gush about it. The sender is anonymous. But we advise that he, she, or it forthwith proceed to boil the kettle with the wretched travesty. It is everywhere under the ban of ecclesiastical authority. Similia similibus—like to like: It is 'religious' eccentrics and 'pious' rantipoles that hanker most after those odd, fantastic, mooncalf inventions that have not in them a speck of true devotion.

The Deadly Cigarette

Some fifteen years ago an Italian cigar that was much affected by a certain class of smokers, was placed under chemical test by the Government at Piacenza. Among other delicacies the cigar (known as the 'Magliani') contained a piece of lime, some powdered gypsum, a nice coil of humus (earth formed in part out of decayed vegetable matter), a splinter of wood, and a length of string. Yet the 'Magliani' 'weed' was a luxury compared with the sort of stuff that is loaded into American cigarettes—according to the evidence given by Mr. Gaston, in his recent evidence before the House of Lords Committee on Juvenile Smoking. 'He said,' according to a despatch from London, 'that forty-seven out of the fifty-three States forming the American Union had legislation against cigarette smoking, which had been a relative success. The cigarette was the acute question in the United States on account of the exceedingly cheap quality of the tobacco ordinarily employed, the filthy surroundings from which it was gathered, and the drugs used. The American cigarette maker devised most ingenious concoctions to please the palate, such as cocaine and laudanum. The American cigarette was the worst article the country sent to us—worse than Chicago tinned meat—and there should be penalties for parents who permitted juvenile smoking and upon the sellers of tobacco to children.'

Embalmed beef, white poplar flour, soapstone sugar, cotton-oil suet, glucose honey, and now cigarettes with deadly combustibles that may turn little Tommy and Harry into premature slaves of cocaine! It gives a new and deeper meaning to the warning

words addressed by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes to young men in his 'Autocrat of the Breakfast Table': 'Let me assure you, the stain of a reverie-breeding narcotic may strike deeper than you think for. I have seen the green leaf of early promise grow brown before its time under such nicotian regimen, and thought the umbered meerschaum was dearly bought at the cost of a brain enfeebled and a will enslaved.' Swinburne—an ardent tobacco hater—loved James I., with all his faults, 'because he slit the throat of that blackguard Raleigh, who invented this filthy smoking.' Some sturdy killers—preferably hangmen—are apparently very badly wanted to deal with the manufacturers of American cigarettes. Which is by no means saying that cigarettes made elsewhere are above suspicion. Our age may well be called, like that of Charles II., 'the age of imposture.'

A Tale of a Thief

The man that makes himself a sheep will find plenty to shear him. The man that goes prospecting for mare's nests will strike 'em rich—generally when the old mare is off them. And when he is known to be a No-Popery gobemouche,

'The varlets will about him focke
And cluster thick into his leasings vaine,
Like foolish flies about an honey crock,
In hope by him great benefits to obtaine.'

This is what happened to the perfervid orator who recently spun in Sydney a story to the effect that a Presbyterian girl had been a servant at the Catholic Presbytery, Bathurst (N.S.W.); that she went from there to the Magdalen Retreat at Tempe; that she was there robbed of her money and clothes by the Good Samaritan nuns, put under lock and key, and 'forced to work from four o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock at night.' And so on.

This is the substance of the story spun during an exhibition of oratorical vaulting and tumbling in Sydney on 'the glorious twelfth.' The story received a prompt and sensationally complete exposure at the hands of the Sydney 'Freeman.' Everybody now knows that this latest bit of anti-convent fiction was concocted by a convicted thief and gaol-bird; that she never was employed in the Bathurst or any other Catholic presbytery; and that the story of her ill-treatment at Tempe was an impudent fabrication. A telegram to Bathurst or a telephone message to the Tempe Retreat would have spared the Orange leaders in Sydney the humiliation which has now fallen upon them. It was only when the murder was out and possible trouble was brewing that they did what people of normal caution and sanity would have done in the first instance—instituted inquiries. The result is told in the latest issue to hand of the 'Watchman,' the organ of the Orange fraternity in New South Wales. They communicated with the Comptroller-General of Prisons, and also with Broken Hill. Then tardy knowledge, if not wisdom, dawned upon them. They learned the wretched story of their 'heroine' of 'the glorious twelfth,' saw that she had lied 'in a most unblushing manner,' and confirmed the lie by swearing a false declaration. Some New Zealand newspapers that copied the original story have, thus far, not inserted so much as a line regarding its exposure and abandonment.

'The scalded dog dreads cold water.' But, then, instinct teaches the dog lessons of caution that reason, when clouded by sectarian passion, often fails to teach the lord of creation. Will the May Gould (alias Maud Harris) exposure be a warning to the Yellow Agony in New South Wales to not jump at every bit of fly-blown No-Popery bait without ex-

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