

Current Topics

Pius X.

Prince Bülow, the German Chancellor, saw Pope Pius X. some time ago, had a lengthy interview with him, and 'sized him up' in an entirely satisfactory way. 'I have seen him,' said the Prince, 'for the first time. He made an excellent impression, and is not only a man of a fine and cultured mind, but also of great intelligence. Those who depict him as merely a kind, worthy priest underrate him. Not but that it is a privilege for a man to be a good and worthy priest.'

Punctuality

Louis XVIII. was, for an easy-going day and court, a stickler for punctuality, and described it as 'the politeness of kings.' King Edward possesses this form of royal politeness in an eminent degree. In the case of 'the great Duke' (Marlborough) manners may be truly said to have made the man. But Nelson, who was more than the Marlborough of the ocean wave, once declared that the thing which made him was that, all his life, he was ready a quarter of an hour before the appointed time. 'If,' says Max O'Rell in his book of confidences, *Between Ourselves* (1902), 'if some men whom I know were to say to me, "On August 10, 1903, I shall be with you at twenty minutes past four," I should never think of reminding them; I know they would be there. These men are all successful; this quality is essential to success in all the pursuits of life. The reliable—absolutely reliable—man is the one who is wanted everywhere. . . Punctuality and consideration for other people's feelings are the two noblest attributes of the perfect gentleman and of the perfect lady. . . For punctuality, bring up your children in military style; teach them that one minute past ten o'clock is not ten o'clock. If you succeed, you will have done them a much better turn than if you had loaded them with all that has been written in Greek and Latin. As for the dear wife of your bosom, teach her punctuality at her own expense. If she comes late when you have given her an appointment, don't make a scene, don't scold, don't sulk, don't bore her. Look pleasant all the time, as if you were always happy to have her, early or late. Next time go without her.'

Our boys would do well to paste these punctuality counsels into their hats. Householders might advantageously frame and glaze them and hang them up where they may be read by all—especially by the laggards whose religion hangs so loosely upon them that they are behindhand with their appointment with the King of Kings when the Sunday morning smiles. Strange, indeed, that the very people who are never late for football match or picnic train, come lumbering to Mass with serene and leisured pace, Sunday after Sunday, when only by a generous interpretation of the Church's law—if at all—they are able to fulfil the most sacred obligation of the Lord's day.

Reforming the Toper

If Parliament acts upon the lead of the Government (and we hope it will), there are strenuous times coming for habitual drunkards—the talented toppers who follow not wisely but too well the drinking motto of Rabelais' Gargantua, and drown both the thirst that is present and the thirst that is to come. The Wellington correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times* states that the Attorney-General (the Hon. Dr. Findlay) will move to insert sundry new clauses into the Police Offences Amendment Bill, when that measure comes before the Council in Committee. The gist of the new clauses is given as follows:—'The definition of habitual drunkard' in the principal Act is extended to include a person twice convicted of breach of a prohibition order. Justices of the peace are not to have jurisdiction to deal with habitual drunkards. The duration of an order for detention is not to exceed three years. Every person, other than a registered medical practitioner, who, without the written authority of a magistrate or registered medical practitioner, procures, attempts to procure, or delivers any intoxicating liquor for a person detained in an institution for habitual drunkards is liable to a fine not exceeding £20. On receipt of a written application from a person detained in such an institution, a magistrate may order his release on probation, subject to such conditions as the magistrate thinks fit. On any breach of such conditions the magistrate may cancel the order, and send him back to the institution, or any similar institution, to complete his term. When any person has been convicted of any offence punishable by imprisonment, and the judge or magistrate is satisfied that

the offence was committed under the influence of drink, and that the offender has been thrice convicted of drunkenness within the preceding nine months, or is the subject of a prohibition order, and has been twice convicted of a breach thereof, the judge or magistrate may, in addition to or in lieu of imprisonment, order the offender to be detained in an institution for habitual drunkards. A magistrate is to be given power to remove a habitual drunkard from one institution to another, or to a hospital. A judge or magistrate may issue a warrant for the arrest of a person against whom an order for detention as a habitual has been made.'

Youthful Paganism

A non-Catholic clergyman up North has been entertaining—or rather shocking—an audience by relating sundry instances of the armor-plated ignorance of even the elementary facts of religion that he discovered among children frequenting State schools. And, by a curious coincidence, an esteemed clerical friend has furnished us with an instance in which the State-trained child of nominal Catholic parents (recent arrivals in his district) compressed his entire knowledge of Christ into the assertion that He was the discoverer of America. Calverley writes of schooldays in which he was associated with a boy-companion—

'He was what nurses call a "limb";
One of those small-misguided creatures,
Who, tho' their intellects are dim;
Are one too many for their teachers.'

And (adds Calverley):

'All the theology we knew—
Was that we mightn't play on Sunday;
And all the general truths, that cakes
Were to be bought are four a penny,
And that excruciating aches
Resulted if we ate too many.'

There's a god deal of this sort of practical youthful paganism about. Among Catholic children, it is to be found only among those who are brought up under a system of public instruction which, in effect, ignores the Almighty. The Catholic clergy, more than those of any other creed, go out to seek and instruct the neglected ones in the public schools. But even the best and most zealous effort fails, at times, to produce commensurate results.

A Matter of Quotation

It has been our misfortune to appear to have fallen from journalistic grace in the eyes of one of our ablest and most valued Catholic contemporaries. The manner of the Fall was this: In the 'Intercolonial' news of our issue of September 10 we printed six items relating to incidents (chiefly in connection with the American fleet) which were reported in one shape or other both by the Catholic and the secular newspapers 'beyond the water.' One or two brief items were, it appears, reprinted by us in the particular form in which they appeared in the columns of the *Sydney Freeman's Journal*. They were not, however, credited to our contemporary. One paragraph, taken by us from the enterprising *Catholic Press*, was, however, attributed thereto, and the *Freeman* finds some dark significance in the incident—apparently a conspiracy among its religious contemporaries to deprive it of its due meed of literary credit, since the *Tablet's* supposed lapse from grace comes 'after a similar act by the Melbourne *Tribune*.'

A glance at the 'Intercolonial' news-column of our previous issue, and of our Papal Jubilee Number of September 17, would have sufficed to satisfy our esteemed Sydney contemporary that the incident contains no significance whatsoever. As, however, the question has been raised, we may here and now state the principle that we, in common with the great bulk of careful journals in these countries, follow in regard to giving credit to contemporaries. We acknowledge the sources of (a) all editorial articles; (b) contributed articles, stories, sketches, and poems; (c) extended reports; (d) news-items that are special or exclusive to any particular journal; (e) news-items of any kind, for the accuracy of which we are not prepared to accept responsibility. (f) We sometimes do, and sometimes do not—'just as it happens,' or 'as the spirit moves us'—state the source of brief news paragraphs dealing with events which are of little or transient interest, or which, besides being of no great

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