

importance, are reported in one shape or other in several of our contemporaries. There is a wide range of 'free-trade' in news-paragraphs which is universally accepted both by the secular and the religious press of every country, and of which our Sydney contemporary makes a free and judicious and unacknowledged use. And (g) we sometimes credit vaguely to 'Exchange,' and sometimes do not credit, articles and paragraphs which are 'going the rounds of the press,' and of which it is difficult or impossible for us to ascertain the original source. All this gives, according to the custom of secular and Catholic newspapers in these countries, a fairly high average of journalistic courtesy. Our valued friend, the Sydney *Freeman*, may possibly have a higher standard of journalistic chivalry. If so, it has (as we may also have) its moments of suspended attention. *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*—even good old Homer was sometimes caught nid-nid-nodding; and it was, no doubt, in moments of pardonable somnolency that our able Sydney contemporary from time to time momentarily forgot its (hypothetically) higher code of courtesy and failed to acknowledge the source of many paragraphs of New Zealand Catholic intelligence special to the *Tablet*—to which paragraphs, by the way, it is cordially welcome, whether with or without such acknowledgment. And, no doubt, it was in similar circumstances that it some time ago failed to credit this journal with a 'Current Topic,' which it printed in its entirety, and which involved, on our part, some research in the by-ways of history and literature. We attached, and attach, no importance whatever to the incident—content that our respected Sydney fellow-worker in a good cause paid us the compliment of knowing a good thing when it saw it, and satisfied that its omission to give us credit was due to one of those lapses of attention to which even the most scrupulously careful of our hard-wrought—sometimes overwrought—Catholic confrères are at times liable. Why, we have even smilingly caught a very Homer among Catholic journals—a miracle of scrupulosity in this direction—nodding so deeply once upon a time that it published as its own editorial paragraph a 'bit o' writin' that was done by us a year or two before. The bow cannot be always bent, and constant tension produces, even in Bessemer steel, the crystallisation that portends early fracture.

We are honored by our Catholic contemporaries almost as much by the quotation of editorial matter that is unacknowledged as by that which is acknowledged—and, by both varieties, probably beyond our merits. But it has never once entered into the ante-chamber of our brain to complain of those which fail to complete the compliment of quotation of editorial articles' by the crowning compliment of acknowledgment. Of course we are pleased where credit is given to us, and we recognise the fact that such credit is fairly due. But no real harm is done—to us—by the failure of this or that contemporary to give such credit; and we exercise our right of ever putting the best possible construction upon such omissions. Life is too short, and the work of Catholic journalism too serious, to pause in our great campaign, and waste, in quarrels over trifles with confrères and companions-in-arms, the energy every ounce of which is needed to carry the standard of our holy Faith along some fresh tower or rampart of error or prejudice or ignorance or vice.

Brer Rabbit

From advance sheets of the *New Zealand Official Year-Book* we learn that the Dominion's output of frozen rabbit has fallen off greatly since 1900—the drop in export values representing quite a tidy little fortune. The export of other frozen products (except beef) went upward at the rate of nearly 250 per cent. between 1900 and 1905. But the rabbit has fallen off as an asset. In 1900, New Zealand exported 6,040,047 of the burrowing pest, valued at £144,616; in 1905 only 2,632,874 rabbits were exported, and they yielded a return of only £60,329. There is, however, this handful of comfort in the official figures: that if the prolific rodent is less of a national asset than before, he is also probably less of a national pest.

There is, however, a streak of good in most things. Between his murders, Peace had 'good moments' that he devoted to hymn-writing. The tiger is said to be 'orl right w'en yer comes to know 'im.' President Roosevelt admires the 'good points' of that whirlwind fighter, the grizzly bear. And some years ago Brer Rabbit found his apologist. It appears that the rodent is, after all, 'not understood' by those—and their name is legion in these countries—who class him as a pest. The good rabbit, like the 'good Injun,' is commonly supposed to

be the dead one. And the welcome flow of shekels that comes from over-sea year by year for his fur and skin and corpus redeems him from the charge of being a wholly unmixed evil. 'There are,' said Brer Rabbit's new knight-errant in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'millions of acres in the pastoral districts of Australia that have never seen a farm tool or plough and furthermore vast areas have been trampled down by generations of sheep and cattle. Has it ever occurred to the grazier that the rabbit, by burrowing and scarifying the soil is actually increasing the productiveness of the land. . . . When the squatter has eradicated the rabbit how is the rabbit's useful work going to be done? If he is to reap the present productiveness of his soil he will have to spend more money in ploughing than it costs him at present to keep the rabbit under.' Which led the Sydney *Freeman* to remark: 'Well, at first the squatter would feel a bit lonely; but after a while even the terrors of the plough might be softened by the reflection that, though his friend the rabbit might be an excellent servant, he demanded a high rate of wages when he claimed the whole of the produce of the land. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.*'

In Uncle Remus's old plantation legends, the king of animal cunning is not Brer Fox, but Brer Rabbit. Some years ago a deputation from the Pasteur Institute in Paris came to Australia to shake salt on the latter's tail. They failed. Last year Dr. Danysz and his virus for the extermination of the rabbit in Australia also 'went under.' Thus far, Brer Rabbit has scored in every round chiefly by his voluminous fecundity—against dog and gun, against great organised 'drives,' against the trapper, against poisoned dainties and deadly gas, and against the virus of the bacteriologist. Brer Man may, however, yet find among his growing microscopic menagerie a microbe with a more potent virus than that of Dr. Danysz, to let loose in the big warrens of Australia and New Zealand. And then Brer Rabbit must look once more to his armor.

Another Messiah

London's spinal column has been quivering on and off during the past four years with shocks of sensation produced by revelations regarding the doings of a new sham 'Messiah' and his chosen followers in a place in Somerset called 'The Abode of Love.' The latest claimant is the head of a new Epicurean sect on whom the ordinary laws of morality seem to sit very lightly. He (we are told) 'asserts his divine origin, and is openly worshipped by some of his followers.' A great Frenchman once advised a conceited friend of his, who was thinking of starting a new religion, to try the effect of being slain and rising again on the third day. But in this dawn of the twentieth century no such inconvenient tests are needed. *Toujours l'audace*—claims of sweeping audacity made the Eddy woman in a few years a millionaire and almost landed 'Elijah II.' on the same dizzy financial position. The more phlegmatic and practical English people are not so readily drawn by the magnetism of preposterous religious claims. Yet, a century ago six thousand four hundred of them paid twelve shillings to a guinea each to that strange specimen of the religious visionary, Joanna Southcott, for bits of sealed papers which (she assured them) were passports to life eternal. She announced that on October 10, 1814, she was to become the mother of the second Shiloh or Prince of Peace. An expensive cradle was prepared for the expected princeling. But he never appeared. And two days after the following Christmas Joanna went out by one of the thousand portals of death. 'Her followers,' we are told, 'continued to believe that she would rise again from her trance. In 1851 they still numbered over two hundred, with four places of worship, and were not quite extinct in 1897.' The making of individual private judgment the final court of appeal in religion leaves people 'tossed about by every wind of doctrine' and exposes them to the wiles of pseudo-Messiahs in a way from which Catholics may be said to be entirely free. And (as the rationalist Lecky has remarked) ages of weakened religious faith are commonly ages of marked credulity. This is what creates the opportunity of the Dowies and the Eddys and the Somersets 'Messiahs.'

Youthful Criminality

Samuel Johnson averred that he liked a good hater—heaven knows why, except this: that hatred, like some other passions, furnishes its own punishment by sinking its fangs into itself, as does the wounded snake; and the deeper the hate, the deeper the wound. Hatred is the most reckless of the reckless passions. We may say of it what O'Connell said of bigotry: 'She has no

'In comes a gancie gash good-wife' (Burns) an' mak's her Hondai Lanka Tea—the favorite wi' shrewd house-wives.

'Time tries a'—even Tea, and Time has given the laurels to pure Ceylon Hondai Lanka.