

ness after witness—journalist, photographic expert, musician, merchant, man of letters, optician, ex-professor of history, colonel of artillery, etc., etc.—came forward to testify on behalf of the accused. Some had watched the process throughout, and were satisfied that trickery had not been practised. Many had obtained on the plate unmistakable portraits of those dear to them, and found it impossible to relinquish their faith. One after another of these witnesses were confronted with Buguet, and heard him explain how the trick had been done. One after another left the witness-box, protesting that they could not doubt the evidence of their own eyes. . . . Incidentally, there were two or three curious bits of evidence on the value of recognition as a test. A police officer stated that Buguet showed him a portrait which had done duty as the sister of one sitter, the mother of a second, and the friend of a third (*Procès des Spirites*, p. 23). Again, it came out in the evidence that a very clearly defined head (reproduced as an illustration to Moses' article in *Human Nature*), which had been claimed by M. Leymarie as the portrait of his almost lifelong friend, M. Poiret, was recognised by another witness as an excellent likeness of his father-in-law, still living at Dreux, and much annoyed at his premature introduction to the spirit world.' Of course it is easy for the medium who has, in any way, been able to procure portraits of specific dead persons, to project them as 'spirit forms' into photographs of living sitters. And with the aid of an artist having some capacity for recalling and delineating faces that he knew, many curious and mysterious effects might be produced by the camera. But the facts stated above should, we think, induce our readers to accept with the greatest caution even the most positive asseverations contained in sundry current writings of Catholic and other authors regarding photographic 'spirit forms' that are 'recognised' as the deceased friends or relatives of this or that particular sitter. If such things happen in the green tree, what may not take place in the dry—if such positive 'recognition' can commit so grievous errors in the case of the clearer and more artistic 'spooks' of Buguet, what is the evidential value of such 'recognition' in the case of the fainter and more fuzzy forms that (for sufficiently evident reasons) are favored by the great body of photographic mediums? We may add that the upshot of the trial referred to above was that Buguet—who was, perhaps, the most famous and successful of the whole line of 'spirit photographers'—was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of five hundred francs (£20). With the false pride or hallucination that will not admit being the dupe of another's cunning, many continued to believe in Buguet, and the most preposterous theories were put forward by Stainton Moses and other spiritists to account for the discovery of the convict's methods and his confession of guilt. One of the drollest 'explanations' of the exposure was given by a prominent spiritist, William Howitt, who roundly declared that the whole thing was a conspiracy of the Jesuits to overthrow spiritism! The result was, however, a slump in 'spirit photography' in England, from which it has never recovered. A few sporadic efforts have been made since then to revive those 'manifestations.' But, with a few exceptions, these have resulted in little better than splashes of white such as might be produced by light passing through slits or pinholes in the camera and falling on the sensitised plate. All the remainder of which we have seen a record bear evidence (according to Padmore, vol. ii., pp. 123-5, and sundry eminent conjurers whom we have consulted) of second exposure or other methods of 'faking' and manipulating the photographic plate with fraudulent intent. But a glance at the article on 'spirit photography' in our last issue makes it sufficiently clear to us that the powers of trick photography have not even yet been nearly exhausted by the 'meejums' who fool the credulous and the unwary with camera and sensitised plate and illusive 'spook.'

The recent competitive examination for thirty vacant clerkships on the Great Northern Railway of Ireland appears to have resulted in the appointment of twenty Catholics. This average has been attained in all the examinations held since the House of Commons, at the instance of Mr. MacVeagh, M.P., compelled the Railway Company to open their clerkships to competitive examinations.

The great end-of-season sale is now proceeding at the New Zealand Clothing Factory, Octagon, Dunedin. Some real bargains in men's and boys' clothing are offered. Our readers unable to visit the establishment should send for a catalogue....

Messrs. Brown, Ewing, and Co., Ltd., Dunedin, are about to hold a two-weeks' summer sale of drapery and clothing, beginning on Monday next. The highest class goods will be at sale prices during that time....

EDUCATION AND CRIME

The following letter from the Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., St. Joseph's Cathedral, Dunedin, appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of January 7:—

Sir,—In my letter to you of the 26th ult. I said: 'I have made my protest and do not intend to follow the subject further.' Your article of even date is so unjust to the Catholic body that I am forced, against my expressed inclination, to call attention to two points therein.

1. Though in your article of the 4th inst. you admit 'That what I had said on the prevalence of juvenile crime had unfortunately a good deal to justify it,' and in your article of even date you say 'We are constrained occasionally to deplore the prevalence of juvenile crime,' yet you then proceed to argue that because the statistics do not show an increase of the number of criminals condemned to gaol in the Dominion since 1892 there is no actual increase in juvenile crime. I did not write of the INCREASE of crime. I wrote of the PREVALENCE of crime at the present day, which you yourself have already practically admitted, and which is lamented by most of the press in the Dominion. I might also answer that the statistics of to-day do not take account of a large amount of crime that the statistics of 1892 took account. We have progressed in the manner of dealing with old and young offenders since then. In addition to those admitted to probation, of which the statistics quoted by you take no account, numbers are now handed over to charitable organisations that in those days were sent to prison. This fact alone alters the whole significance of your figures and greatly weakens their value for purposes of comparison. Personally, I prefer the expressed opinion of the judges, magistrates, and business men of the Dominion to statistics of such a kind. It is well known from Auckland to the Bluff that such men lament the prevalence of juvenile crime. The situation is such as ought to make men pause and think. It is a matter of clear and necessary inference that our educational system has a great deal to do with this admitted sad state of affairs. The general upbringing of the youth of the land has to bear the responsibility of it, and the educational system (which, no matter what you say to the contrary, ignores God's laws as the moral sanction of our actions) is one of the most important factors in the upbringing of the child.

2. When you cast down the usual shibboleth 'of the number of Catholics in gaol' as a proof that our Catholic schools, as seen in the result, are no better, but even worse, than the public schools of the Dominion, I am afraid you are cutting 'a rod to beat yourself.' If you prove to me that even a fair minority of the prisoners in our gaols, who sign themselves 'Catholics,' were ever educated in our Catholic schools, or that 70 per cent. of them were ever adult members of a Catholic congregation, I will admit the failure of our Catholic schools. It is a notorious fact that the so-called Catholics who get into gaol come from that class which does not attend our schools. In as far as they have received any education they are, in the vast majority of cases, the product of the public school system, and as such will tell against it. It is still more notorious that many, very many, of the prisoners, who for various reasons put themselves down as Catholics on the gaol register, were never even baptised into the Catholic Church nor born of parents who professed the Catholic faith. Every gaol chaplain has proof of this fact; it was ably demonstrated in the *New Zealand Tablet* a week or two ago; and at the present moment, if you put a reporter at my disposal with the kind permission of the Dunedin gaoler, I will give you proof of the number who are at present there who have no right to the title Catholic which they assumed when put behind the prison bars. Therefore, before you can argue from the prison statistics you will have to prove, first, that every prisoner who is enumerated as a Catholic is a genuine Catholic; and, second, that he has been educated in a Catholic school. If both propositions are not proven, it is manifestly unfair to saddle the Catholic body and the Catholic school with his delinquencies. Let the school in which he got his education bear the burden.

Before I close this, my last, letter on this subject allow me to draw your attention to what I may call 'another injustice to Ireland.' In your first article on this subject you place her amongst the countries which show a low 'birth-rate' without any explanation. In some able articles published in *The Times* (11th and 16th October, 1906) Mr. Sidney Webb discusses the question of 'Physical Degeneracy or Race Suicide.' In the course of these articles he says: 'Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom in which the birth-rate has not declined. In Ireland itself it has declined a little in semi-Protestant Belfast, but not at all in Roman Catholic Dublin.' Even if it did show a decline it is manifestly unjust that a country where

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