

fair and impartial trial, be adjudged of a pernicious tendency, is necessary for the preservation of peace and good order, of government and religion, the only solid foundations of civil liberty.'

Despite their easy acquiescence in a peculiarly strict censorship of plays, English non-Catholics have not, as a rule, taken kindly to the application of a censorship or Index as a method of imposing some measure of restraint upon the publication and distribution of the literature of the sty. In the circumstances, it is interesting to note the frequency with which, in such protests as that of Christchurch, there now arises a demand for a censorship or Index or (as a non-Catholic member of last week's deputation termed it) 'a list of proscribed literature.' Our non-Catholic friends seem to be gradually, though under protest, siding along to an acceptance of the principle of the Roman Index—like the lady in Byron's poem—

'A little still they strove, and much repented,  
And, whispering they would ne'er consent, consented.'

### Haeckel Again

'A Mother' asks us if the infidel writer Haeckel's *Evolution of Man* is a proper book for Catholic young people to read. We unhesitatingly say that it is not. Indeed, none of the same author's works are safe reading for young people. And this, partly because so very few young people have the mental training and equipment necessary to dissect the inaccuracies and the fallacies with which that aggressive atheist missionary's books abound; partly because the false and exaggerated glamor of a scientific reputation which, in the popular eye, has been thrown around him by his rationalist and free-thinking admirers, blinds the unskilled reader to the deplorable methods by which Haeckel ekes out his case in favor of an atheistic evolution. In the eyes of men of real eminence in the world of science, Haeckel has long since found his level. For a generation past his studied falsifications of facts, illustrations, etc., have, indeed, constituted one of the gravest scandals in the scientific annals of our time.

In our last issue we published, in condensed form, the latest and most serious exposure of the man's methods of bending his 'facts' to suit his theories. But this is an old resort of that prime favorite of the Rationalist Press Association. 'It is more than forty years,' says the April number of *The Month* (1909, pp. 374-5), 'since Haeckel exhibited his ideas as to how science may be abused to serve his purposes, in the notorious instance of the "three wood-cuts," which should, it might be supposed, have for ever destroyed his authority in the eyes of the world, scientific or otherwise. In his *Natural History of Creation* (*Natürlichen Schöpfungsgeschichte*), published in 1868, to support his statement that, in their rudimentary stages, wholly different animals exactly resemble one another—and thus testify that they are all developments from one identical form—he printed in one place plates which purported to be embryos of a man, an ape, and a dog, pointing out that they were exactly alike, and elsewhere three other plates, to represent those of a dog, a fowl, and a turtle, similarly indistinguishable. Presently, however, it was observed, by Professor Rüttimeyer, of Basle, that no wonder the objects represented were precisely similar, as in both instances the same plate had been printed three times over, with only the title altered, as was proved by accidental scratches and fissures on the face of the blocks. What is more remarkable, Professor Haeckel did not attempt to deny the charge thus brought against him. But, although he described it as "a very foolish blunder" (*eine höchst unbesonnene Torheit*), he was by no means inclined to plead guilty to dishonesty. . . . The case of the three woodcuts, though it has attained more notoriety than some others, is by no means singular. On the contrary, such scientific authorities as His, Semper, Hensen, Bischoff, Hamann, and others, declare that of Haeckel's plates, some are pure "inventions," and others are arbitrarily altered to suit his purpose, and that, having thus wantonly trifled with facts, he has forfeited all claim to rank amongst serious men of science.' Young people can find abundant works on scientific subjects—such as those of Father John Gerard, the writer of the article in *The Month*—without risking shipwreck of their faith by saturating their minds with the unscientific falsifications of so militant a propagandist of materialism as Ernest Haeckel.

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## CONVENT LIFE

### WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

The recent sensation (says a writer in the *Glasgow Observer*), regarding 'runaway nuns' at Colchester renders opportune some statement regarding the general rules of religious Orders relating to the reception of nuns in Catholic convents. The popular impression among unenlightened Protestants is that Catholic convents exist as receptacles for Catholic girls who have been 'crossed in love,' or that convents are instituted for the purpose of attracting women of large fortune so that their money may be collared for Church purposes, or that Catholic convents are virtually prisons to which Catholic girls are lured and interned in life-long duration, with no hope and no means of escape, being made the while to undergo cruel tortures, and to remain exposed to moral dangers beyond description or even imagination. Catholics know that there isn't the least grain of truth in any of these silly, stupid, and vile suggestions, and even enlightened Protestants either know this also, or conclude that Catholic fathers and mothers would scarcely send their beloved children to conventual institutions, as the Protestant-Alliance Protestant conceives them, if there were the least foundation for the Protestant Alliance conception of what a Catholic convent is.

To begin with, a Catholic girl who enters a convent usually enters in early youth. Catholics with actual knowledge know that there is no foundation for the 'crossed in love' theory, for the excellent reason that girls become nuns, or begin to become nuns, oftener in their teens than out of them, and while their chances in the marriage market, so far from being exhausted, have hardly begun.

In the second place, Catholic nuns can't live on air, and the days of material manna are over—for the present at least. They must live on bread and butter; on the ordinary physical sustenance of the ordinary woman of the world. This has to be provided. Where is it to come from? Where the Catholic nun is a teacher she earns her own bread. No question of fortune or dowry arises here. The nun, as an individual, is able to give wage-bearing service which may assist in the maintenance of others who, in their earlier day, have borne the burden of the day and its heat. Other Catholic nuns belong to the mendicant Orders, such as the Sisters of Nazareth, or the Little Sisters of the Poor. These also give labor which furnishes maintenance. They beg from door to door for the poor whom they succor, and from the charity given to them they first of all feed the poor, or the young, or the helpless confided to their care before they feed themselves. They work laboriously late and early at occupations which furnish physical sustenance and shelter. Here, again, as a rule, no question of dowry arises. The nun gives her labor at a calling which furnishes supply for her simple needs. Then, again, there is a third class of Catholic nuns, belonging to what are called

#### The Contemplative Orders.

These pass their time in meditation and prayer, not from any spirit of laziness, but because their life, which is that of the highest perfection, is one of constant mental communion with God, which cannot suffer even the disturbance of ordinary, every-day avocation. They think and pray, and pray and think, making their whole lives complete immolation of ceaseless worship of the Divine. It is obvious that those called to this state must live like other people while they pursue their sublime avocation. Now, where are the ways and means to come from? The Catholic Church has no national revenue nowadays. (The 'Reformers' saw to that!) Manifestly the nun who enters on such a life as this must provide the wherewithal for her material maintenance, and from such nuns (they are the fewest) a dowry is sought and received on their entry to conventual life. In this there is nothing unreasonable. A Protestant sending his girl to a boarding-school on the Continent pays for her maintenance while she is there. The Catholic parent sending his daughter to a contemplative convent finds nothing irrational or extortionate in being called upon to furnish the means for her material upkeep during her period of residence in such an institution.

With regard to the other aspect, it should be clear, even to Protestant Alliance obtuseness, that the teaching nun, or the mendicant nun, has the utmost freedom and facility of movement. She walks the streets every day, and returns to her convent voluntarily. But even in the case of the contemplative nun the utmost precaution is taken to ensure the freedom of the individual at all times. In common with nuns of all classes, she has to undergo a period of probation. A noviceship, usually extending over some years, is undergone. During this time the pro-

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