

Current Topics

Died Poor

The late Bishop Doyle, of Lismore (New South Wales), stood possessed (we are told) of one shilling and sixpence when death came to him, with sudden knock, a few weeks ago. Some people are possessed of money. Some are in worse case: they are possessed by money. Bishop Doyle belonged to neither class. The needs of charity, of religion, of education, in his big, scattered diocese, furnished, day by day, many temptations to his generosity. He yielded with smiling grace. And, as he looked around at the work achieved by his open-handed largess, he must have felt that poverty has joys which are worth the winning.

'Secular v. Religious Education'

His Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop of Sydney has favored us with the following commendation of the latest publication issued from the office of this paper: 'I have received the brilliant pamphlet on *Secular versus Religious Education*. It is a most useful and instructive contribution to the educational controversy, and cannot fail to do a deal of good.'

*

Referring to the same publication in the course of an editorial article in its issue of June 26, the Melbourne *Tribune* says: 'It is a remarkable, and, we think, unprecedented, occurrence in the history of Australian journalism for a secular paper to allow the Catholic position in education to be so exhaustively stated in its columns. We can imagine the wild amazement that would greet such an enterprise on this continent. . . . We do not need to add that it was effectively and thoroughly stated, and that the book which is the result of the discussion must take a chief place in the literature on the subject. This book is a permanent and valuable asset to the Catholic people, not only of New Zealand, but of Australia, and it aids in the formation of a sound judgment on the question at issue by its clear exposition of principles, its wealth of information, and its mastery of facts. . . . We wish this book a wide circulation and a wide reading amongst Catholics, for it will teach the reader that the Catholic position in regard to education is impregnable, in logic and in fact.'

Misleading Crime 'Statistics'

They do some things better in New York State. The State Legislature has (we learn) passed a law making it a misdemeanor for a person arrested for a crime to give an assumed name. This useful measure was pushed through the Legislature by 'Americans bearing Irish names.' And their object was to discourage the practice—common there and far from uncommon here—of offenders of all nationalities labelling themselves, for the occasion, with Irish surnames. An early opportunity was afforded for putting the new law into motion. 'A man arrested for drunkenness,' we are told, 'appeared before Magistrate O'Connor the other day, and told the magistrate his name was Sullivan. "It is, eh?" the magistrate significantly inquired, at which the prisoner, alarmed at the officer's tones, quickly answered: "No, your Honor; my name is Stillman. I took the name of Sullivan because I thought it sounded better." "What!" indignantly exclaimed the magistrate, "you took the name of Sullivan to get drunk under? Don't you know it is one of the most honored names, that it was a Sullivan who struck one of the first blows for liberty in the American Revolution?" 'It was news to the offender, whose sentence was doubled for wilful slander of others in an effort to save his own name.'

*

Such a law is needed in every part of Australasia. More urgently still do we need a law to prevent the extremely common practice of criminals (Jewish, Protestant, and of no-creed) describing themselves as 'Roman Catholics,' and thereby supplying the materials for the misleading and worthless 'statistics' of comparative denominational crime. Reputable citizens are made to feel the weight of statutes in such cases made and provided, if they err in census-paper entries or in their returns for income-tax assessment. But every thief and burglar and forger and pickpocket and magsman in the country is permitted, with perfect impunity, to lie like Ananias in the matter of returns that are made the basis of 'odorous comparisons' between country and country and creed and creed. The wide publicity recently given to this form of fraud in the secular press of Dunedin and Wellington has left an impression from which some good result may, perhaps, be anticipated. Those charged with the con-

pilation of our criminal statistics cannot fairly afford to ignore the aspect of the matter that has been thus forcibly brought under the public notice.

That 'Escaped' Nun

According to the editor of *John Bull* (issue of May 8), pressure is alleged to have been made by a prominent official of the Protestant Alliance to induce 'the young lady who recently "escaped" from a convent, under circumstances that were made the most of by the sensational press, to appear on your platforms. I presume the limitless funds which scattered gold watches among the railway porters will quite admit of the offers that have been made to Miss Moul. If, however, that lady has any complaint to make against convents—and I am told she has not—she would do well to make it under other auspices, and to make it "without money and without price." Some of us remember Ellen Golding, "the rescued nun," whose tale your society vouched for, and which turned out a tissue of falsehoods. Is not it playing the game a bit low down to bring pressure to bear upon a young woman in this lady's circumstances?'

The Accession Oath

Some day British legislators will put that 'relic of barbarism,' the accession oath, like Judas, '*in locum suum*'—in its place. An outstanding feature of the recent effort to have it amended was the wholesome and whole-hearted way in which it was flailed not alone by the secular newspapers, but by the non-Catholic religious press as well. These leaders of public opinion are very weary of seeing the Catholic faith singled out from among the thousand-and-one variegated creeds within the far-flung Empire, and designated by the new Sovereign as superstitious and idolatrous. 'The formula,' says the *Guardian* (a leading Anglican religious newspaper), 'as it stands is utterly indefensible, and would be so even were the King not the Sovereign of millions of Roman Catholics. Only the most rabid partisans can possibly desire to see it retained as it stands.'

Quacks and 'Symptoms'

'Doubtless the pleasure is as great
Of being cheated as to cheat.'

A point would seem to be given to Butler's metrical dictum by the eagerness and the springing hope with which people place themselves in the hands of quacksalvers, who (as Voltaire remarked) pour drugs, of which they know nothing, into bodies, of which they know less. Owing to the pressure of the law in New South Wales, numbers of those parasites have left that country for the country's good. And numbers of them, we are told, have settled down in Auckland—there, no doubt, to see more of your 'innards' by a glance at a hair cut from your head 'the first thing in the morning' than would be revealed by an X-ray apparatus working with a twenty-inch spark. We have been favored, by a client of one of those modern Paracelsuses in the Northern capital, with a sheet of the sort of 'literature' that they cunningly circulate for the purpose of working their victims into a wholesome state of alarm. The 'literature' referred to is a sheet of questions fairly bristling with 'symptoms.' The mere perusal of one of these printed sheets is enough to give nervous people 'symptoms.' An eminent scientist who 'passed out' some years ago used to say that the reading of a quack-head's 'symptom' pamphlet left him racked with doubt as to whether he was suffering from softening of the brain, or enlargement of the liver, or valvular disease of the heart. But he contrived to outlive them all, and died at last of mere unromantic influenza. Rousseau long ago gave an all-round warning against the reading of medical books and 'symptom' stuff by lay folk. 'I could not read the description of a malady,' he said, 'without thinking it mine, and had I not already been indisposed, I am certain I should have become so from this study. Finding in every disease symptoms similar to mine, I fancied I had them all, and at length gained one more troublesome than any I had yet suffered, which I had thought myself delivered from; this was a violent inclination to seek a cure, which it is very difficult to suppress when once a person begins reading physical books.'

*

Now, this is just the result anticipated by the wily quack. The average man that gets 'symptoms,' gets with them 'a violent inclination to seek a cure.' And to whom should he go but to the confident charlatan whom 'no disease can baffle'? Goethe has well said that 'he who studies his body too much becomes diseased—his mind becomes mad.' These simple people should (as we have before remarked) be regarded as *in statu pupillari*—as