

His Favorite Hymns.

A favorite hymn of the late President McKinley was Cardinal Newman's 'Lead, kindly light'; but the first place in his estimation seems to have been held by a hymn written by another great English Catholic convert, Father Faber. It has been widely quoted in the American papers:

'There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in His justice
Which is more than liberty.
For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.'

Exaggerated Riots.

Some of the cable agencies would soon file their schedules if they were paid for the amount of true and unadulterated information which they send on the wings of the lightning to the secular papers. Some time ago the noisy Masonic agitations against religious houses in Madrid were cabled to the ends of the earth as of enormous extent and significance, whereas it would appear that they were in reality no worse than half a dozen schoolboys singing 'Annie Rooney' to the accompaniment of a kerosene-tin 'drum' in comparison with the long-drawn Orange pandemonium in Belfast, of which the cable-man vouchsafed us no information whatever. 'A gang of bibulous students from an atheistic college making night hideous with execrations of religion and the clergy would,' says the *Ave Maria*, 'hardly be regarded as a significant anti-Catholic demonstration in the United States; but Spain is pretty much out of the tourist's way, and is therefore fair game for the sensational news-manufacturer.' And an English lady, Mr. C. E. Jeffery, writes as follows to the *London Catholic Times*:—'Here is a scrap of conversation I heard on board ship between two men,—one a resident of Spain, where he was engaged in commercial pursuits; the other his friend, who had come to meet him at Gravesend. Said the friend: "Things are looking serious in Spain. What terrible riots you have been having in Seville!"—"Have we?" said the other laughing. "You know more about them than I do, then."—"What! Didn't you see anything of them?"—"No: all I saw was the account of them in the English papers. Fact is, these things are grossly exaggerated. We in Spain hear very little about the matter."

Burning Negroes Alive.

Till a comparatively recent period in British history wives who murdered their husbands were deemed guilty of petty treason and were burned alive. And this, too, after the penalty had ceased to be enforced for any crime in Continental Europe. This fearful penalty was a recognised punishment for what were regarded the graver crimes in every country during the middle ages, although, heaven knows, it was mercy itself by comparison with the torture of the picket, etc., which prevailed in the British army in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and the horrors of British and American prisons of that and a later period, and the nameless agonies of the 'convict hells' of Sydney, Tasmania, and Norfolk Island a few decades ago. The middle ages are pelted with words as hot as drops of molten lead for permitting the penalty of burning alive—perhaps on Mark Twain's principle that 'to be good is noble, but to show others how to be good is nobler, and is no trouble.' Pulpit orators and pressmen have not to go back four or five centuries to find the penalty in full force. Burning negroes—and occasionally even white men—alive is a favorite recreation in the southern and some western States of America: so common, indeed, that secular newspapers have practically ceased to comment upon the matter. A few weeks ago a negro named Noles was tied to a stake at Winchester, Tennessee, his clothes were saturated with kerosene, a torch was applied, and the unfortunate man's soul was slowly roasted out of his body in one long-drawn agony of screaming. He was suspected of having assaulted and murdered a white woman, and was dragged to his death without even the decent formality of a trial.

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'In the middle ages,' says the *S.H. Review*, 'the victims of the faggot were tried fairly and fully according to the jurisprudence of the times. Burning at the stake was a legal, recognised and accepted form of punishment for a crime which was looked upon as particularly heinous. At the present day, here in America, no trial is given to the unfortunate victim. He may be seized on suspicion. The mob tortures him to death in a way that would seem horrible from the standpoint of the middle ages. Before we criticise other times and other peoples we ought to look around us. We would see enough, if we were thoughtful, to make us keep silent on the middle ages.'

Shallow-minded Critics.

'There are some shallow young men,' says the *Catholic Mirror* 'who delight in appearing as "free-thinkers." Some even of Catholic ancestry are among these, and while they would, perhaps, declare themselves to be Catholics, they show very plainly they are not possessed of the true Catholic spirit by the manner in which they declaim against Catholic customs and observances and even against tenets which involve faith in Christianity. They would be insulted if called heathens, but their denomination as infidels they would probably regard as a compliment to their mental ability based upon their advanced views in the matter of religion. They remind one of the story of a certain French priest who asked a member of his flock why he did not come to Mass. "Oh," Father," was the reply, "I am a free-thinker."

"Have you ever read the Bible?" asked the abbe.

"No," was the response.

"Chateaubriand's Genius of Christianity?"

"No."

"The writings of St. Augustine or of Bossuet?"

"No."

"Well, do you know the contents of the little catechism?"

"I think not."

"My dear man," said the priest, "you are not a free-thinker. You are only an ignoramus."

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'So it is,' the *Mirror* concludes, 'with numbers to-day who esteem themselves free-thinkers or rationalists, when, if the truth be known, their mental equipment incapacitates them from almost any exercise of thinking. There are men who occasionally go to church and are esteemed Christians of one denomination or another; sometimes they are reputed Catholics, and their professions are of just this order. Whatever the state of their conscience, whatever of faith and reverence they may inwardly possess, they are ashamed to manifest in their conversation much respect for piety and religion while they evince indeed a certain sense of pride in their liberalism, their agnosticism and freethinking, which are indeed but their ignorance.'

In Lighter Vein

(By 'QUIP'.)

*. Correspondence, newspaper cuttings, etc., intended for this department should be addressed 'QUIP,' N.Z. TABLET Office, Dunedin, and should reach this office on or before Monday morning.

The Black Cat.

A rather curious incident is related by Miss Cargill, one of the Monowai passengers, in connection with the finding of that vessel. On the Wednesday evening, at 6.30, the engineer saw a beautiful black cat on board, and immediately concluded that the ship would be picked up that night. Of course, the inference was, by all the rules of logic, irrefragable. And right enough, as fate would have it, that very night the Mokoia hove in sight and rescued the drifting Monowai. That made the connection between the black cat and the rescue as clear as proof of Holy Writ. Dr. Nikola scored his biggest successes when his yellow-eyed demon of a black cat was purring or double-arching her back and fuzzy tail beside him. A black cat is clearly a lucky piece of furniture about a place if there's a logician or a wizard on the premises to 'read' him, and as soon as the Union Steamship Co. places one of the sable felines—with, of course, a skilled interpreter—on each of their boats they will earn the everlasting gratitude of the travelling public.

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The Roman generals of old carried odd coops of game-fowls, with a pack of fortune-tellers who professed to foretell the fortunes of war by the way in which the birds negotiated their feed-grain and pollard. And as this is, *par excellence*, the golden age of fortune-tellers, I see no reason why shipping companies shouldn't have at least one official black cat, or a spirit medium, or a palmist on board for the comfort of people who find such things indispensable to civilised existence when on shore. My neighbor Mrs. Browne, for instance, had to leave her boots unlaced yesterday until she sent for her guiding-star, the 'futurist,' and learned that, for that particular day, the left boot was to be laced first. Rome was once saved by the cackling of a flock of geese; why not the Monowai by the purring of a black tom-cat? I should, however, like to have this little difficulty cleared up: How on earth—or on sea, for that matter—did that cat swim the 250 miles of ocean that separated the Monowai from New Zealand on that Wednesday evening? If it didn't swim the distance—and I am half inclined to think that it did not—that cat must have been on board on October 17, when the Monowai broke down. Of course this does not alter the fact