

The Catholic Church and The Drama.

Mr. Hall Caine, presiding recently at the opening of St. Maughold's Catholic Bazaar, Ramsey, Isle of Man, which was attended by Mgn. Carr, V.G., and Mgr. Nugent, said it would be within the memory of some of his Catholic friends that after the last time he stood on a Catholic platform he was taken severely to task by a club to which he belonged in London for want of fidelity to its Protestant principles. He made no apology for standing on a Catholic platform again. He was not there as a Protestant, as a non-Catholic, or as a politician; he was there as a citizen who had nothing but admiration for the efforts the Catholic Church was now making in the interests of education, and could wish to aid them by any means in his power. Speaking as a dramatist he recognised the good feeling which had nearly always existed between the dramatists and the Roman Church. That Church had been the friend of the drama in nearly all ages and countries. The English drama in its earliest forms had probably been made by monks and priests, and the morality plays were almost certainly intended as illustrations to the teachings of the pulpit. When the drama widened its scope and embraced scenes of secular life the Catholic Church still clung to it, encouraged it, and guided it. The Church had not been responsible for what the drama had done in latter and more licentious days, but even at the drama's lowest the Church had held on to it and tried to lift it up. It would be allowed by students of the drama that the dramatists had reciprocated the goodwill of the Roman Church. Even the most liberal of them had rarely or never used the drama as a vehicle for abuse of the Church or of its ministers. On the contrary they had nearly always treated the priests or Bishops, the services and offices of the Church with a becoming reverence. In this connection Mr. Hall Caine instance Shakespeare, who, he said, was probably not a Catholic. Might it always be so? If the Church was to be dealt with in the drama, if its offices were to be indicated, or its ministers were to be presented on the stage, let it be with the reverence that was due to all sacred things and to all the great professions.

A Contrast.

We (Ave Maria) commented recently in these columns on the contrast between German liberality and French intolerance in the matter of religious congregations. A contrast equally discreditably to the Republic wherein 'liberty, equality and fraternity' has become a meaningless formula, is emphasised by a circular, which the German Minister of War has sent to all garrison commandants in the Empire, relative to the observance by the soldiers of different religious festivals. Catholic soldiers are dispensed from all military service on Easter, Pentecost, Christmas, the Circumcision, the Ascension and Corpus Christi. The commandants are further ordered to see that, so far as the demands of the service will permit, Catholics in the army may observe Epiphany, the Purification, the Annunciation, the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception, and the feast of SS. Peter and Paul. Moreover, general officers are authorised to take account of local religious festivals, customs and usages and allow their troops to take part therein whenever the requirements of the service permit such participation. When one turns from these generous provisions to the petty tyrannical proclamations issued by the War De-

partment of France—the thousand and one prohibitions that debar the French soldier from attending to his religious duties—ona is more than ever inclined to discount the frothy protestations about the 'liberty' enjoyed by the citizens of the great European Republic.

French Benedictines in the Isle of Wight.

A correspondent of a New York Episcopalian paper gives the following particulars in regard to the exiled French Benedictines now domiciled on the Isle of Wight. He says:

I have had an opportunity of visiting Apuldurcombe, in the Isle of Wight where the Benedictines from Solesmes are established. Their whole force amounts to 80 persons. Of these 18 are priests. It is an ideal place for a monastery, two miles from Ventnor, situated on the slope of a well-wooded hill surrounded by a park of magnificent old trees. I believe the property was Lord Yarborough's once, but it has been much reduced in size. Till the monks took it, it had been an academy or school for young gentlemen. It seems now to have found very fitting use. A suite of rooms on the ground floor has been converted into the chapel for the principal officers, a further room is arranged with two or three altars as side chapels. The refectory is at right angles with these on the same floor. Above are the dormitories and other accommodation needed for the brethren.

I was agreeably surprised to find in him (the Prior) the same Dom Maquereau whom I had visited five years ago at Solesmes, now promoted to be Prior of the Order. It appears that they had been obliged, on leaving Solesmes, to send all the appliances for their printing work into Belgium, as it was too cumbersome to bring to England. Now the work of editing is carried on at Apuldurcombe and when ready for the Press copy is forwarded to Belgium. The work had of course, been interrupted for a time, the Prior went on to say, but had by no means been stopped. Their beautiful Abbey at Solesmes is at present in charge of two gendarmes, it will be confiscated by the Government of France and sold. But there is no sadness amongst the monks. They look forward. They are simply applying the oft-verified saying, 'The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.'

A good deal has been said of the repugnance felt at the 'invasion,' as it is termed, of Roman monastic bodies into England. Last year the Channel Islands passed special laws to prevent their localising themselves in Jersey. I took the opportunity of enquiring amongst the villagers how their advent to Apuldurcombe was considered. 'Considered?' was the reply. 'I only hope they may stop for ever. They help every one, assist all the poor and charitable societies, employ all the labor on the country side, and we looked upon as our best friends.'

'Yes,' I said, 'that is natural for Roman Catholics.'

'Catholics?' was the response, 'there are only two here. It is all—and Protestants indifferently, that they help.'

'Are their services attended by the people?' I asked.

'Crowded never any room for Catholics who may come from a distance or come late. I hope they will stay for ever,' was the conclusion.

'All their offices are carried on in the same quiet and matter-of-fact manner as at Solesmes.'

At this season everybody is liable to Coughs and Colds. Avoid all danger by taking TUSSICURA.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor.

The London correspondent of the Melbourne 'Advocate,' writing under date August 15, says: I have just had a chat with Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P. for the Scotland division of Liverpool, who is considering the proposal that he should proceed to Australia as the delegate of the Irish Party in response to an invitation from the Melbourne and Sydney branches of the United Irish League. Mr. O'Connor finds some difficulty in making up his mind in the matter. On the one hand, he would like to see Australia and assist in the effective reorganisation of his countrymen throughout the Commonwealth. On the other, he is closely tied to London by long-standing journalistic engagements, and in particular, his widely-popular and highly-successful weekly paper, 'M.A.P.,' demands his constant editorial supervision. I urged him to make the trip a good six months' holiday, and pointed out the attractions of the colonies in the most glorious colors at my command. But at present he cannot see his way to a longer absence from London than three months, and even that would entail considerable anxiety and inconvenience. This arrangement would leave only a month for actual work in Australia, and he asked me whether it was possible to visit the principal centres of Australia and New Zealand in that time. I replied that it might be done, but it would involve travelling at tremendous high pressure. This consideration, however, has no terrors for T.P., who is an old campaigner, and can sleep as comfortably in a railway carriage as on a feather bed.

In one of his American tours he kept on trains for a hundred nights running, after speaking for a couple of hours each night in a hundred towns. Before this letter reaches Melbourne, you will probably know by cable whether Mr. O'Connor is coming or not. It is to be earnestly hoped that he will accept the invitation. He is in the front rank of House of Commons debaters, and he can present the case for Irish self-government with a force, a fluency, and a power of argument and conviction unsurpassed by any orator of our time. At the age of 21 he came from Ireland to make his way in the great world of London. He encountered many privations and disappointments at the outset of his career, but he eventually triumphed over all obstacles, and now at 54 enjoys one of the highest reputations as author, journalist, and Parliamentarian.

It is quite refreshing (writes a Melbourne correspondent) to note the manly action of the Mayor of Hawthorn and the whole of his brother councillors in snuffing out the Shepherd adventurism. Their action is thus reported—At a special meeting of the Hawthorn Council the Mayor (Cr G. Swinburne) intimated that a deputation representing Roman Catholic citizens had waited upon him on the previous night at his residence and objected to the local Town Hall being let to Mrs. Margaret Shepherd. He understood that the hall had not been let to Mrs. Shepherd but to a person representing her. He had, however, consulted some of his fellow-councillors, and instructed the town clerk, under the conditions upon which the hall was let, to refund the money and decline to allow them the use of the hall. He asked the Council to ratify his action. Cr Goldsmith moved that the Mayor's action be endorsed. He did not agree with lectures being delivered from their Town Hall concerning the religious faith of a large proportion of their ratepayers. The motion was seconded by Cr. Russell and carried unanimously.