

to be harmless. This wonderful Panama council accuses the Catholic bishops and priests of being the causes of many evils that exist, and of many more that do not, in Latin America. The clergy are explicitly and implicitly charged with inefficiency, narrow-mindedness, want of zeal, and indifference to their mission, and of thereby inducing all sorts of social and political scandals in their respective communities. Among the men, says the Congress, faith is in peril and morals at a very low ebb; the clergy are so ignorant that they can not keep up with the intellectual progress of the people, nor show them how to be Christian and at the same time true to the laws of the mind and the accepted facts of modern knowledge. As the "scholarship of modern France" has been responsible for this progress we can have no doubt at all that the pan-Protestants will soon show the people how to reconcile it with Christian ideals. We are content to let them try. Of course it is immaterial to say that more than thirty years ago Guzman Blanco secured by a revolution a constitution which dispensed with convents and monasteries and similar Popish strongholds, and that his policy found its counterpart in almost all the Latin American republics. From the pan-Protestant viewpoint that was just as it should be. And we cannot withhold our admiration of that sweet reasonableness—so characteristic—which blames the Catholics for the crimes of their persecutors.

With a touching spirit of chivalry, worthy of the best traditions of their forbears, the pan-Protestant fathers proceed to blacken before all the world the good name of the women of South America. "The death rate among infants is also great: from 40 to 90 per cent. die under two years of age. The causes are an unguarded milk supply, an appalling diffusion of venereal diseases, and a state of morals which leaves half the children to be reared by an unmarried mother without aid from the father." A saintly pan-Protestant lady, Florence E. Smith, says that no less than 60 per cent. of the women of the whole continent have lost honor, self-respect, and hope. Dr. Robert Speer, acting-chairman of the congress, states that it is safe to say that from one-fourth to one-half the population is illegitimate. We may incidentally mention that within the past three months these calumnies have all been exposed in the columns of *America*, and that figures have been produced showing that the South American women compare favorably with ladies nearer home so far as morality goes.

We will close this "unprovoked sectarian attack" with a choice quotation. A Bible Society hawker—alias, a souper—reports: "Out of my twenty-three years of experience let me testify that after all my travels through Central America I have yet to find one Roman Catholic able to give a reason for the hope that is in him." We wot of soupers who in an incredibly short space of time were sent away wondering at the vigor of the faith as manifested by Catholics. And they did not return. Which of us does not know the oleaginous and sanctimonious hawker whose testimony is of such value to the pan-Protestants of Panama? On the whole, the continuity with Martin Luther is admirably manifested by the Panama fathers.

.. NOTES ..

The "Sun" and the "Tablet"

Recently we asserted in perfect good faith that the editor of the *Sun* said he had inserted an attack on the *Tablet* without reading it, and that when he saw it he regretted it. Our informant now assures us that this is not true, and that the version of the editor of the *Sun* is correct. We unhesitatingly apologise to the *Sun* for the misstatement made. We express to our informant our regret for the misunderstanding that has taken place.

Nascitur, Non Fit

As an instance of the truth of the old saying "A poet is born not made," we submit the following gem: A grave bishop once came upon a group of workmen whose language was not by any means up to the standard of even Mr. Hanan's pure English undefiled. "My men," said he, "where did you learn to swear like that?" "You can't learn it, gov'nor; it is a gift," was the reply.

Definitions

There are few things more difficult than to make a good definition. Until you try it you cannot realise the crux it is to define a thing offhand. In Johnson's *Dictionary* the curious reader will find many entertaining examples of the great lexicographer's readiness at definitions—many, too, which will convince one that there was a world of humor beneath the great Doctor's ponderous manner. But even he could hardly excel the definition given of the Positivist Church in London by an irreverent modern: "The Positivist Church is three persons and no God."

Great Books

Have you ever noticed how a chance quotation from one of the classics seems to shine out when you meet it in a page of ordinary writing? The contrast is like that between a real diamond and a paste imitation. This is particularly true of Shakespeare in English and Dante in Italian. They are the Masters par excellence. A passage from their works has the elusive and indefinable beauty of a simple flower. Their words look so simple that their perfection seems quite easy and natural: to them it was: but how few have ever succeeded in imitating them! The description of Falstaff's death appears to the reader exactly what a dissipated old harridan should say, and yet who but the great poet could paint the picture so true to life in so few words. One line in Dante tells us volumes about the change perceived by the poet when he came out of the Inferno:

*Di lontano
Cominciò il tremolar della marina.*

There you have a picture of a new world, and an idea of a great peace beneath the stars that are shining down on the breathing sea. Do not let us neglect the old books. We want them all the more here because of Mr. Hanan's schools in which "pure English undefiled" often seems to mean cowardly attempts at proselytising.

Some Quotations

An old lady objected to Shakespeare because "his writings were full of quotations." As a matter of fact his works are, after the Bible, the source of most of our familiar quotations, many of which have become current coin in the language now. Other prolific sources are Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*; Gay's *Beggars' Opera*; Pope's works *passim*; and also Swift's. It was the latter genius who wrote the now familiar words, "Whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow on a spot where only one grew before would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together." Cromwell's "Put your trust in God, but, mind, keep your powder dry," was expressed in different words by Benjamin Franklin, who said, "God helps them who help themselves." We have heard the same expression literally translated in Italian many a time: and the irreverent form, "God is on the side of the big battalions" is Voltaire's, borrowed perhaps from Tacitus: "*Deos fortioribus adesse.*" "Hobson's choice" comes from one, Thomas Hobson, keeper of a livery stable, who professed to allow his clients to choose their horse, but always succeeded in giving them the one he wished. "Fresh fields and pastures new" is Milton's, who, however, wrote "woods," and not "fields," and would hardly consider the modern gloss an improvement on the original reading.