

Current Topics

New Books and Good Books

In the articles of the *New Zealand Tablet* Company it is provided for the development of a Catholic book depot, in connection with our printing works, if at any time it should seem advisable to the directors to undertake the work of carrying on such a department. The distribution of good literature is the primary object of the company, and it has long been recognised that this could be more effectively done if we had always on hand a stock of standard works such as we recommend from time to time to our readers. While the war lasted, to launch out in any new direction was for many reasons not prudent. Now that there is a probability that things will become normal once more, we have already made arrangements with publishers in London, Dublin, and America, and in a very short time we hope to advertise a list of new books by good Catholic writers. We will also be willing to receive orders for books which we may not have in stock, and we will endeavor to help promoters of Catholic parochial libraries as far as lies in our power. Our aim is the circulation of good books among our people, and with this end in view we confidently rely on the support of the Catholic community, in whose interest solely we are acting. We have been requested to say that all business will be conducted on a strictly cash basis, which will be more satisfactory for ourselves and more advantageous to our clients. In addition to Catholic literature, we will be able to offer our readers the latest Irish publications in prose and verse, which, as far as possible, will be personally selected and recommended. It may be some time before our stocks come to hand in quantity, but as new books arrive we will notify our readers through our advertising columns, to which we invite the attention of the clergy, the nuns, and the Catholic public.

Private Judgment

The principle of private judgment is responsible for the dissensions which shivered the work of the Reformation into a thousand warring sects. In the Catholic Church, as all good Catholics know, there is a clear line of demarcation drawn between the Church Taught and the Church Teaching. To St. Peter and his successors—to the Pope and the bishops, and the clergy authorised by the bishops—is committed the task of instructing the faithful. They are the judges as to what is and what is not Catholic doctrine, and to them and not to the flock was entrusted the mission of instruction in matters of faith and morals. Protestants may, and do, exercise the right of saying what they will accept and what they will reject. Catholics know, or ought to know, that it is not for the ignorant laity to say that this must not be preached because they do not like it, or that that is not a subject that comes within the priest's sphere as a teacher. If they are very ignorant and very uninstructed, they will in rare cases imitate the Protestants and attempt to usurp the rights which Christ gave, not to them but to the Church Teaching. It may happen that a priest will go outside the proper limits of his sphere; and in that case it is the business of his ecclesiastical superiors to correct him. They will not fail to do so if it is necessary, and whether it is or is not necessary, is a matter for them to decide. Here again, we may meet with the case of an ignorant, bumptious layman, through want of good manners and through lack of right Catholic feeling, taking on himself the task of a bishop and attempting to dictate to a priest as to what he shall or shall not preach about. Needless to point out the Catholic sense of a community always puts such persons in their proper places eventually. In Catholic Ireland, so strong is the faith that not even the most notorious *seonin* would ever think of scandalising the people and showing disrespect for the altar by withdrawing from church because he did not like the hard truths uttered from the altar.

Macpherson's Lies

President Wilson emphasised the fact that such papers as the London *Spectator* were doing untold harm to England by their ignorant or malicious misrepresentation of Irish affairs, but our local *Morgen Post* man blunders on in their wake, too thick-skinned to be shamed even when the London *Times* exposes his crass ignorance of the whole Irish problem. We are not going to delay further with the *Otago Times* and its "dastardly methods," as it is our purpose here to throw some new light on the Muckpherson manifesto about "crime" in Tipperary. Already we explained how the inspector of the police obstructed the legal inquiry and forbade police witnesses to give necessary evidence. The jury naturally refused to bring in a verdict that was not in accordance with the evidence, but Muckpherson had no hesitation in constituting himself into judge and jury and publishing a false statement concerning the tragedy. He knew that any lie was good enough for the Jingo press abroad, and he was right. In addition to what we have already published on the subject of the Knocklong affray, the following paragraph, passed by the censor, appeared in the *Irish Independent* of July 15, over the signature of Seamus de Burca, T.D.:—"A detachment of Republican soldiers rescued a prisoner from his British captors. One of these, acting presumably on the instructions of Dublin Castle, and following the example of the British forces in Limerick who murdered their prisoner (Mr. Byrne) a short time previously, covered the defenceless handcuffed victim with his revolver and fired, the bullet being knocked aside by and wounding one of the rescuers. Whereupon a melee ensued in which two of the combatants were killed and several wounded." We have already exposed some of Muckpherson's famous "plots," which are quite in keeping with the doings of the infamous Sergeant Sheridan who, after his exposure, boasted that the Government did not prosecute him because he knew too much about its methods. Muckpherson's lies about the martial law in Limerick and about the kidnapping of children have been condemned freely in the English press. With reference to the alleged "proclamation" in Tipperary, published by the *Otago Times* man, on September 24, Mr. de Valera has already said:—

"In my own case, an academic exercise, intended to show that if Ireland were given her freedom she would be able as an independent nation to raise an army of 500,000 men, sufficient to defend herself in time of need from outside aggression, was found on my desk in my house. This was twisted by the English Government into the statement that on my person was found plans for a revolutionary army fully worked out, and intended to be used in co-operation with Germany. The same exercise indicated how, owing to Ireland's peculiar geographical position, her coasts could be defended from invasion by a small fleet of submarines operating from our Irish harbors. This was twisted into the statement that we proposed putting the Irish harbors at the disposal of German submarines. I give this simply as a sample from my own personal experience to show how England fabricates evidence when she needs it. Neither I nor my companions were allowed to reply to this charge, or to communicate with anybody whosoever for several weeks after our arrest, and then no letters with any reference to our imprisonment or the causes thereof were allowed to be sent outside the prison. In this latest 'explanation' there is mention of a Sinn Fein proclamation in Tipperary. Who is responsible for that proclamation? It is much more likely that that proclamation was got out and put up by the agents of the English themselves than that it proceeded from any Sinn Fein sources. Sergeant Sheridan may not be known to the American public, but Tipperary was the scene of his operations also. There has been no such proclamation of the Republic Government covering any area, but there has been an Act passed by the Republican Government asking the Irish people not to fraternise with the English force of occupation, the armed constabulary. These forces were to be ostracised socially. I was myself the mover

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