

shown to be quite wrong by some of the learned Jesuits of the day, who, with the assistance of Chinese men of letters, proved that the resemblances to which Needham had called attention were merely superficial.

But our interest now is in his controversy with Spallanzani. Lazaro Spallanzani (1729-1799) was born at Scandiano in Modena and educated at the Jesuit College at Reggio di Modena. There was some question as to his entering the Society; he did not do so, however, but repaired to the University of Bologna, where his kinswoman, Laura Bassi, was then professor of physics. He became a priest, but devoted his life to teaching and experimenting. He must have been something of what we in Ireland used to call a "polymath" for he professed at one time or another in various universities, logic, metaphysics, Greek, and finally natural history. He first explained the physics of what children call "ducks and drakes" made by flat pebbles on water; laid the foundations of meteorology and vulcanology and is perhaps best of all known in connection with what is termed "regeneration" in the earthworm and above all in the salamander. His experiments still hold the field in a region of study which has vastly extended itself in recent years, becoming of prime importance in the vitalistic controversy. In the dispute, however, with which we are concerned Needham and Spallanzani defended opposite positions. The former, as the result of his observations, asserted that, in spite of the boiling and sealing up of organic fluids, life did appear in them. His opponent claimed that Needham's experiments had not been sufficiently precise. The latter had enclosed his fluids in bottles fitted with ordinary corks, covered with mastic varnish, whilst Spallanzani, employing flasks with long necks which he could and did seal by heat when the contents were boiling, showed that in that case no life was produced. He declared, and correctly too, as we now know, that Needham's methods did permit of the introduction of something from without. The controversy went to sleep again until the discovery of oxygen by Priestley in 1774. When it had been shown that oxygen was essential to the existence of all forms of life, the question arose as to whether the boiling of the organic fluids in the earlier experiments had not expelled all the oxygen and thus prevented the existence and development of any life.

In the further experiments which this query gave rise to, we meet with another illustrious Catholic name, that of Theodor Schwann, better known as the originator of that fundamental piece of scientific knowledge, the cell-theory. Theodor Schwann (1810-1882) was born at Neuss and educated by the Jesuits, first at Cologne, afterwards at Bonn. After studying at the Universities of Würzburg and Berlin he became professor in the Catholic University of Louvain, where his name was one of the principal glories of this now wrecked seat of learning. Thence he went as professor to Liège, where he died. He was, says his biography in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "of a peculiarly gentle and amiable character and remained a devout Catholic throughout his life." Schwann's experiments tended to show that the introduction of air—of course containing oxygen—did not lead to the production of life, if the air had first been thoroughly sterilised. It was thought that this question had been finally answered when it was reopened by Pouchet, in 1859. He was a Frenchman, the director of the Natural History Museum of Rouen, but as to his religious views I have no information. It is quite probable, however, that he was a Catholic. Pouchet and all on his side were finally—so far as there can be finality in such a matter—disposed of by Pasteur, of whose distinction as a man of science and devoutness as a Catholic nothing need be said.

It is a great folly, says St. Teresa, to be willing to violate the friendship of God rather than the law of human friendship.

CONVENT OF SACRED HEART, TIMARU.

A SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR LADIES will be preached by Rev. Albert Power, S.J., to OPEN on the Evening of FRIDAY, January 2, 1920, and to CLOSE on the Morning of WEDNESDAY, January 7.

By applying in time to the Rev. Mother Superior, ladies wishing to make the retreat may reside at the Convent during these days.

CLINCHER CYCLE TYRES are guaranteed six, nine, twelve, and fifteen months.—HAYWARD BROS. & CO., LTD., CHRISTCHURCH, Wholesale Distributors for New Zealand.

AN ENGLISH EDITOR'S VIEWS.

The editor of the London *Sphere*, Mr. Clement Shorter, has been travelling through the United States. Evidently Mr. Shorter used his eyes and ears intelligently while here (says the *New York Journal*).

In a communication printed in the *Westminster Gazette* Mr. Shorter says:—

"A small paragraph in the newspapers announces still further heroic efforts in Prussianism in Ireland—including the suppression in Cork County of such purely educational agencies as the Gaelic League.

"I recently travelled the whole breadth of the United States, and was amazed at the effect of Irish propaganda in every city. That small paragraph, almost lost in English newspapers, is the outstanding item of British news in every journal across the water, especially in the West.

"It is supported by startling headlines. The English visitor seeks vainly for any news from these isles other than prominently printed cable despatches on some aspect of the Irish misgovernment. This applies as much to pro-English journals as to those of the Hearst press, which usually have the largest sale in every city from New York to San Francisco.

"If we do not stop this provocative policy with regard to Ireland, it is perfectly clear to me that we will be at war with America within ten years.

"That statement will be repudiated, I know, by such pro-English journals as the *New York Times* and the *Tribune*, which last is more English than we are English, but quite ineffective.

"But in accepting consoling statements as are carefully selected for quotation in this country by American correspondents, we are living in a fool's paradise. They do not represent one per cent. of the population of the United States."

The London editor is right about American sentiment toward Ireland. He is also right in believing that the resumption of the brutal tactics of coercion will undo, and more than undo, all the British propaganda work done by "such pro-English journals as the *New York Times* and *Tribune*."

A wholesale repetition of imprisonments, shootings, and hangings in Ireland will undo not only the pro-English work of these pro-English New York papers, but all the pro-English work of all the pro-English propagandists in America, foreign-born and native-born.

Such organisations as the Pilgrims, the National Security League, the American Defence Society, and the minor imitations of those propaganda bureaux, will have spent all their time and money in vain if the English Government they adore is foolish enough to try again to drown Ireland's yearning for freedom in the blood of Irish men, women, and children.

The tactics of "Bloody Balfour" cannot again be employed without rousing the fierce indignation of Americans.

Of course, such tactics would be excused and even applauded by the associations we have named and by the New York journals the London editor very truly characterises as "more English than we are English."

But we do not have such associations or such newspapers in mind when we speak of Americans.

We mean Real Americans.

Selfishness is probably the greatest curse of the human race. The selfishness of youth is due to thoughtlessness. The selfishness of middle age is due to heartlessness. The selfishness of old age is due to carelessness. But it's just plain selfishness in every case, no matter what be the cause; absolute disregard for the well-being of friends and neighbors and the exaltation of self. The thing that makes us love and honor others is the complete absence of selfishness, says a contemporary. There is no surer sign of greatness than the willingness to take the humblest place. It is an infallible sign of a small soul to be always clamoring for the front seat.

ST. PATRICK'S DOMINICAN CONVENT, TESCHEMAKERS.

A RETREAT FOR LADIES, conducted by a Dominican Father, will begin on DECEMBER 27, 1919. No special invitations will be issued, but full particulars will be given in later advertisement.

Intending Retreatants are requested to APPLY EARLY to the MOTHER SUPERIOR.

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