

## Current Topics

### Our Editor on Tour

Judging from communications received in Dunedin during the past week, the Rev. Dr. Cleary has been meeting with much encouragement and success thus far in his tour through South America. 'Although,' says our valued contemporary, the Buenos Aires *Southern Cross*, 'it is his first visit to South America, Dr. Cleary does not come quite as a stranger. His credentials in the shape of work well done for Faith and Fatherland arrived before him. Moreover, he speaks and writes Spanish, as well as Italian and other languages, and he felt "at home" the first day he set foot on our shores.' Dr. Cleary holds, as already announced by us, a commission from the Australian Catholic Truth Society to establish in such principal centres as he deems well, with the aid and advice of local archbishops and bishops, agencies to which reference can be promptly made for correct information in connection with the doubtful or calumnious stories affecting Catholic persons which appear from time to time in the columns of the secular press. He is likewise authorised to link up with the Australian Catholic Truth Society, for this purpose, organisations on similar lines that exist elsewhere. An agency is arranged for in Montevideo, and in Buenos Aires and Santiago the project has been taken up with the greatest enthusiasm, and ideal men appointed to the work—learned ecclesiastics connected with the administration of active daily papers, and therefore in a specially favorable position to secure, through their correspondents all over Argentina and Chile, prompt, accurate, and detailed information regarding such questions of fact as they may be called upon to investigate. The *Pueblo* (daily) of Buenos Aires, *Los Principios* (the chief daily paper of Cordoba), *La Unión* (a very live and ably edited daily of Santiago, the capital of Chile), and other papers, daily and weekly, have devoted much attention to the Rev. Dr. Cleary and to this movement for a world-wide agency of Catholic truth against the campaign of anti-Catholic fiction. By this means our editor and his mission have been made known and welcome everywhere. Among the warmest supporters of the movement, and of its still greater extension, is the present brilliant Papal Internuncio at Santiago (Chile), a former college companion of Dr. Cleary. Our readers will likewise be gratified to learn that the kindness extended to our editor by the ecclesiastical authorities everywhere has likewise been shown in a marked degree by the Ministries of State in Argentina and Chile—in the shape of extended interviews and of voluminous information of all kinds regarding the commercial, industrial, and educational life of the two countries through which he had passed when the last mails left from South America. Dr. Cleary was then about to enter upon his long and toilsome trip through the rugged mountains and high, cold tablelands of Bolivia.

### A Warning to Brides

Now that Lent is over there will be the usual arrears of accumulated wedding contracts to be wiped off, and a pleasant prospect it is alike for priests and people. 'Next to a baptism,' says the priest in a recent story, 'there's nothing I like so well as a happy wedding.' Brides will be well advised, however, to take warning by the misadventures of others, and see to it that the small fry of the family are kept in the background, else will they get for themselves shame and confusion of face. 'Who gave the bride away?' asked a friend of the family after a recent wedding in America. 'Her little brother,' said the best man. 'He stood up right in the middle of the ceremony, and yelled, "Hurrah, Fanny, you've got him at last!"'

Sometimes it is the little sister who is the innocent disturber of the wedding day felicity, as in the following scene at a wedding breakfast. Company are all seated about the table. A pause in the general conversation. Happy husband to his wife's six-year-old sister at the other end of the room, 'Well, Julie, you have a new brother now.' Julie: 'Yes, but mother said to papa the other day that she was afraid you would never amount to much, but that it seemed to be Sarah's last chance.' Intense silence for a moment, followed by a rapid play of knives and forks.

### Not Wanted

We referred last week to the troubles which the unhappy Slatterys were encountering in their painful pilgrimage through the United States. From recent Home files we are glad to learn that in England also the 'ex-

priest' and 'escaped nun' have ceased to be a 'draw'—that they are, in fact, a perfect drug in the market. Some of the libraries are declining to admit to their shelves the book recently published by Miss Moulit—the latest 'escaped nun'—not because it contains anything startling, but simply to show that they have no sympathy with hysterical and unprovoked attacks on the religious faith of any section of the community. The 'escaped nun' lecturer is faring even worse—there is so little demand for her services that her occupation is practically gone.

Our old friend Edith O'Gorman—otherwise known as Mrs. Auffray—in particular has happened on evil days. Some years ago, it will be remembered, this lady, accompanied by 'Professor' Auffray, visited New Zealand, and, thanks to the notoriety achieved by a public discussion with a zealous but not over-discreet Protestant gentleman, she succeeded in gathering in a considerable quantity of the 'needful' before leaving our shores. It appears to have done her little good, however, for to-day in the columns of the *Protestant Woman* she frankly informs the public that she is hard up. 'Three years ago,' it is announced, 'she sustained a severe financial loss,' and she is therefore obliged to take to the footlights once more. 'She trusts that the Protestant Christians of England and Scotland will help her in her time of trial by inviting her to the towns and cities in the kingdom to give her much-needed lectures.' In the *Protestant Observer* she has a still more pitiful tale to tell. She writes to the editor saying that unless she can obtain considerable financial assistance 'she will, before summer comes, be in danger of having her home sold up, where she has resided for twenty-two years.' It is, of course, very sad, and the thought of the happy home being broken up is particularly harrowing; but a few weeks of financial stress may lead Edith to do a little hard thinking.

### An Air-ship Controversy

An interesting fight has been entered upon in America between Professor J. J. Montgomery, of Santa Clara College, the leading Jesuit institution of California, and the well-known Wright Brothers, to settle who is entitled to the honor—and, incidentally, to the profits—of being the first and original 'bird-man.' The claim is that Montgomery, the Catholic professor, and not the Wrights, is the original inventor of the heavier-than-air machine, and that the Wrights have infringed on the professor's patent. Amongst the witnesses who are to be called in support of Professor Montgomery's claim is Mr. Victor Lougheed, a high authority on the history of aeronautics, and author of the work entitled *Auto Vehicles of the Air*. Lougheed has expressed himself as follows on the question in dispute:—'The so-called Wright patents and all aeroplanes now in use are direct infringements on Montgomery's patent. In 1893 Montgomery absolutely described the successful machine of to-day, and was then prepared to do all that is being done to-day. Twenty-five years ago Montgomery made the first flight ever made in an aeroplane, and in 1885, a year later, he evolved the parabolic curved wing which is the sole support of all aeroplanes now in use. The Wright patent calls for a flat surface wing, but neither Wilbur Wright nor his brother Orville, nor any other person, has ever used a flat surface wing to support their machine in the air.' The Professor himself has defined his position in these terms:—'The Wright airships are infringements of my patents. A large number of Eastern capitalists have interested themselves in my work with airships, and I shall protect my rights against the efforts of the Wright Brothers. I am prepared to prove that the Wrights have no right to the use of the machines they are using. This matter must and will be settled finally, no matter what action is necessary.' The issues at stake are very important and far-reaching, and the case may yet turn out to be an international affair.

In the meantime the controversy has drawn attention to the extent to which Catholic colleges and universities are leaders in this, the latest and certainly not least fascinating of the sciences. We have before now referred to English and Continental Catholic aviators, and the San Francisco *Monitor* furnishes us with the following summary of what American Catholic institutions are doing:—'Many of our institutions of learning devote time and money to the study and perfection of aviation. Paulhan, the champion bird-man, is himself a practical Catholic and graduate of Catholic schools. Montgomery, the claimant for honors as the original bird-man, is not only a Catholic and a graduate of Catholic schools, but a teacher as well in one of this country's best known religious institutions. For years the Catholic University of America has maintained a department of aeronautics, and now Professor Zahm, formerly of that institution, has published one of the standard