

**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY**

The following is the report presented at the annual meeting of the Australian Catholic Truth Society, held in the Cathedral Hall, Melbourne:—

The executive committee herewith submit an account of the result of their labors for the year ended October 31, 1910. During the period under review they have sold 102,792 penny pamphlets, as against 71,000 for the preceding year, and 5117 3d prayer books, as against 4380 in 1909. Since the inauguration of the society in October, 1904, they have printed 679,375 penny pamphlets, of which 504,714 have been sold, and 42,539 prayer books, of which 42,016 have been disposed of. In addition, 776 copies of *Lectures and Replies*, by his Grace the Archbishop, have been placed.

The result of the society's operations for the year, as will be seen by the balance sheet, has resulted in a loss of £61 14s 6d.

The total population of Australia is estimated at 4,250,000, of which Catholics comprise at least one-fourth—say, 1,000,000. It is safe to say there are in the Commonwealth 250,000 adult Catholics—the majority of whom are in a position to be members of the Australian Catholic Truth Society; yet, notwithstanding all the warnings that have been given by Popes, prelates, and priests throughout the world as to the urgent necessity of supporting the apostolate of the press, our total membership for the year comprised 164 life subscribers and 423 annual subscribers—or a beggarly total of 587 members! Under the circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that the society's operations have resulted in a loss.

The membership roll is made up as follows:—

Life Subscribers.			
	Clerical.	Lay.	
Victoria ... ..	40	43	
New South Wales ... ..	24	2	
South Australia ... ..	11	7	
Western Australia ... ..	5	—	
Queensland ... ..	4	4	
Tasmania ... ..	1	—	
New Zealand ... ..	—	6	
Fiji ... ..	1	—	
British New Guinea ... ..	—	1	
Totals ... ..	101	63	

Annual Subscribers.			
	Clerical.	Lay.	
Victoria ... ..	26	222	
New South Wales ... ..	20	30	
South Australia ... ..	8	20	
Western Australia ... ..	12	1	
Queensland ... ..	8	23	
Tasmania ... ..	4	2	
New Zealand ... ..	18	23	
United States ... ..	1	—	
Totals ... ..	97	326	

These figures speak for themselves, and need no comment from us. We will go no further than to say that even Victoria, with the largest number of subscribers—viz., 248—has no particular reason to boast of this pre-eminence.

We are afraid that our Catholic people are not yet seized with the importance of the apostolate of the press, and the need, in these days, of disseminating Catholic truth. Our present Holy Father has well said:

'In vain you will build churches, give missions, found schools—all your works, all your efforts will be destroyed if you are not able to wield the defensive and offensive weapon of a loyal and sincere Catholic press.'

Years before, on hearing of the probable failure of a Catholic paper in his diocese of Venice, he declared:

'If I had to sell my pectoral cross, give the ornaments of the church, and my own furniture to save the *Difesa*, I would willingly do so.'

At the Plenary Council held in Sydney in 1905, the Bishops, in a Pastoral Letter, said:—

'The hostility of anti-Catholic writers towards revealed religion . . . coupled with the widespread popular taste for reading, makes it necessary to supply an antidote to check the evil of rationalistic literature by the spread of cheap Catholic literature. . . . We earnestly invite the co-operation of all lovers of Catholic truth, especially the clergy and leading members of the laity, in a work which the needs of our time have made one of first importance. Little, if any, sacrifice would be required to obtain 10,000 members of the Catholic Truth Society from the million of Catholics in Australia. If every parish provided one subscriber for every hundred of its people, the society would have over 10,000 members, and an annual income of more than £2000 to devote to its noble purpose.'

Unhappily, the fact has to be proclaimed that instead of 10,000 members, we have only 587!

The generosity of our Protestant friends in the propagation of printed editions of the Bible and other religious publications stands out in marked contrast to the apathy of the Catholic body in similar work. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are donated by Anglicans every year for the spread of the Gospel, and large amounts are left in wills for the same purpose. We admit that they are rich,

and we are poor; yet, no one can deny that we could do infinitely more than we are doing at present if we really grasped the importance of the issue, and the urgent need of the propaganda.

A century ago France was most prosperous. Churches and schools were being erected in all quarters, and the outlook was most cheering. What is the position now? What has been the cause of this falling away? Undoubtedly the absence of a vigorous Catholic press.

On the other hand, Catholic Germany is strong and powerful, because she possesses a capable press, ever ready to explain Catholic teaching, and to defend the Church from her enemies.

We think we have said enough—'more in sorrow than in anger'—to show the Catholics of Australia that they are not doing their duty by the A.C.T.S., and we hope that our words will touch their hearts, and cause them to become active co-operators in our work for the future.

All the machinery is ready, and all that is needed are the 'sinews of war' to enable the society to be a hundred times more useful than it is at present.—(Rev.) John Norris and J. T. P. O'Meara, hon. secretaries.

**MR. JUSTIN MCCARTHY'S REMINISCENCES**

Visited in his home at Folkestone, a *Daily News* representative found Mr. Justin McCarthy full of memories of the past. The interview was asked for in view of the fact that in November the veteran journalist, politician, and historian entered upon his eighty-first year. For the *Daily News* the occasion was of domestic interest, Mr. McCarthy having been chief leader writer on that journal subsequent to his surrendering the editorship of the *Morning Star*, which was controlled by John Bright.

In reply to his visitor, Mr. McCarthy said he was now engaged upon the final volume of his history, which will bring it up to the end of the late King's reign.

From history Mr. McCarthy turned to his reminiscences of London journalism, and of the great Liberal statesmen of his day.

'When I was editor of the *Morning Star*,' he said, 'I saw much of Bright; there was nobody like him. In those days at the office we used all to have tea together at 5 o'clock. Bright would often drop in there, and we held a sort of free Parliament. What a fund of humor he had. Gladstone was more inclined to sarcasm. Both of them had voices of extraordinary effectiveness in public speaking. Gladstone's rose up to the rafters and to every corner of the gallery as a lark soars up into the sky, but he had not the deep, rich, mellow notes of Bright.'

'I left the editorship of the *Morning Star* to travel in America, and on my return in 1871 I joined the *Daily News* as a leader writer. The paper had acquired a great reputation from the work Archibald Forbes did for it during the Franco-Prussian war. Henry Labouchere had also written for it his 'Diary of the Siege of Paris.' The *Daily News* and the *Morning Star* had been the only two papers to sympathise with the North during the American struggle. They both predicted with confidence the ultimate victory of Lincoln and his party. The *Times* surpassed itself in the vehemence of its advocacy of the South, and even a month before the end of the war refused to believe that its proteges were beaten.'

Thackeray, John Stuart Mill, and George Meredith were among Mr. McCarthy's friends. Sadly he related how, just a week before Thackeray's death, he received a note inviting him to a 'quiet' dinner with the novelist. 'I accepted, but before the day arrived Thackeray, like Colonel Newcome, "stood in the presence of the Master." John Stuart Mill taught me to champion the rights of woman; he would be glad to know that I am a member of the local society for promoting women's suffrage. Meredith could be very charming when he met with people who did not bore him, but he had a keen tongue, and could make a man feel uncomfortable at times. His love of the open air amounted to a passion, and before his health broke down he was possessed of tremendous physical endurance.'

'I was once invited to a house in the Isle of Wight, and told that Tennyson was to be there. Naturally I was delighted, but when I got there, lo and behold! there was another guest—Garibaldi in red shirt and flowing cloak. The poet was quite eclipsed by the man of arms, and got no chance to shine.'

'Tell the *Daily News*,' said Mr. McCarthy in conclusion, 'that in the changes which time brings my principles have not altered. I was with the paper in its battles and triumphs for liberty in the old days; in its struggles for the same cause I am with it still.'

When fire broke out in St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, San Francisco, early on Sunday morning, October 23, matters for a while looked serious for the children. But the excellent discipline saved them. The fire started on the third floor, and soon had spread to every part of the frame structure. Headed by Sister Helena, the eighteen Sisters of Charity in charge roused their pupils, formed them in companies, and carried through the fire drill in the face of flame and smoke. The girls fell into line with military precision and marched down to the main entrance. Not one child received a scratch or a burn.