

become still more complicated. Flaws have been found in the arrangement first proposed, and it now turns out that fixing the date of Easter as indicated above solves only half the problem.

As Easter is the anniversary of the Resurrection, it must fall on Sunday. On that score there is no dispute. But in our calendar Sunday does not always occur on the same date. Hence a change in the date of the first Sunday of April, no matter how slight, would interfere with the object in view—namely, the fixing of the date which is to determine the ecclesiastical year. How can that difficulty be met? We shall see.

The length of the year does not depend on the will of the dwellers on this orb, but is determined by an astronomical phenomenon. For although we can begin the year on any day we choose, that will not prevent its length from being determined by the interval between the two successive spring equinoxes. In round numbers the year consists of 365 days, 5 hours and 48 minutes. We may neglect the seconds which vary a little in the course of the centuries and are practically the same numerically. This, however, constitutes a problem which puzzles the most skilful mathematicians.

We are unable to control the fact that the earth does not make a complete number of rotations during the period of its revolution around the sun, and if our years always consisted exactly of 365 days, we should find ourselves always 5 hours and 48 minutes behind these astronomical phenomena.

Julius Cæsar saw this, but by supposing that the year was equal to 365 day and 6 hours, and by adopting a year of 366 days every four years, he fell into another error. About 11 minutes were left out of his computation, and those 11 minutes grew little by little to such a figure that Pope Gregory XIII. felt called upon to construct what is known as the Gregorian Calendar.

At the present time we are up to date, but according to the new reformers everything is not yet perfect. For it must be borne in mind that the numbers 365 and 366 are not divisible by 7. Hence there is not and never can be, in any year, a complete number of weeks of 7 days, and as the days follow each other in an order that never varies, it will be necessary at the end of 52 weeks to add one day or two in order to complete the year. If the first of January is a Sunday, the first of January following will be Monday, and in the bis-sextile years it will be Tuesday.

How is this state of things to be remedied? Different solutions more or less complicated are suggested. I shall select only one of them.

We can, they tell us, always begin the year on a Sunday, and make all the days of the month correspond identically with the days of the week. But what would be done with the day at the end of the year? Make that troublesome Monday neutral, they suggest; a ferial, or supplementary day, and call the first of January following, Sunday. By making two days neutral in the bis-sextile years the problem would be solved.

For Catholics, however, who believe in the divine consecration of the week and of Sunday, it would not be optional to say that Monday or Tuesday is Sunday. Even when Gregory XIII. was reforming the calendar and ordered that the day after the 4th of October should be called the 15th and not the 5th, he was not changing the order of the days of the week but was dealing only with dates.

This reason seems to me to be peremptory, and on the other hand, because we cannot control the march of the earth around the sun, the problem as it presents itself to-day would appear to me to defy solution, in the manner at least which the reformers of to-day would like to impose on us.

Dr. Pennefather, in a letter to the *London Times* apropos of the postponement of legislation for the mentally deficient, calls attention to the excellent results from New Zealand's compulsory education of afflicted children.

THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Some interesting information is given in the first volume of the detailed report of the Census of 1911 for England and Wales which has just been published in Blue Book form. From the statistics it appears that the decennial rate of the increase of population 10.89 per cent. is the lowest recorded since the first census was taken in 1801. It never before fell as low as 11 per cent. A comparison with other countries shows that in five European States the rate of growth was above that of Great Britain, and that in six—France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Austria, and Hungary—it was lower. In France the population has practically been stationary, the rate of increase being only 1.6. This is all the more notable because there is very little emigration from France. Italy has a low increase, 6.8, but the number of emigrants that leave that country every year is high. Germany has a good rate of increase, 15.2. Of all the countries Ireland is the only one in which there was an actual decrease of population in the ten years. This, of course, was due to emigration—an exodus from which the Green Isle has suffered so long and so severely. Many of her sons and daughters have helped to give a percentage of 21.0 to the United States.

Saturday was the hottest day experienced this summer at Ashburton, the temperature in the shade reaching 90 degrees.

The *Oamaru Mail* states that harvesting operations have already commenced in parts of the Waiareka district. One crop of oats has been in stook for some time.

At a meeting of the Seamen's Union at Wellington on Tuesday night, which was attended by over 70 members, the following resolution was carried unanimously—That the Press Association be given till 12 o'clock on Wednesday to remit to the union their apology, together with the signature of the person who sent the message to the office of the association in the first instance, and failing that the union's solicitors be instructed to proceed against the association in court with an action for slander.

The turnip fly has made its appearance in the Roslyn Bush district and threatens to do considerable harm to the crop (says the *Southland News*). The grass grub is also making its presence felt, but over only a limited area. Several farmers state that the country could not look better despite the heat and absence of rain, but that moisture would be required soon if crops were to develop. Increased supplies of milk are being received by the factories, and, generally, present indications are that the farming industry is in for a prosperous time.

Throughout many parts of this district (says the *Ulva Leader*) it is observed that the Canadian thistles are not growing nearly so luxuriously as in former years. Large patches of them are affected with the blight which made its appearance a year or two ago, and which appears to have widely spread this year. It is also said that the land has become 'thistle-sick,' and that the thistle, like the Scotch thistle of some years ago, is gradually dying out. Whether this is so or whether the blight is having an extended detrimental effect, it is certainly a fact that the Canadians are not nearly so strong in growth as has been the case in former years.

The very important reason why every mother and father should see that their daughters are able to do housework, in all its branches, is that motherliness, the care of the home and children, is the essence of all true womanhood. Call it domestic science if you wish (says the *Catholic Tribune*), but after all it is purely and simply plain, ordinary housework. The reason that domestic science touches the practical everyday life of every man, woman, and child, makes us readily understand why the demand to teach it in our parochial and public schools, finds such a strong echo in the hearts of practical people.

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