

## Current Topics

### A Muzzle Wanted

No human institution is perfect, and consequently it is not strange to find serious faults in connection with that well-known ass, the law. The best thing about English law is probably the jury system, but it must be remembered that even that becomes useless when godless schools, and Chief Justices who defend them, have for generations taught people that God and religion are matters of indifference. Then follows logically moral obliquity, indifference to the sacredness of an oath, and the readiness of twelve good men and true to put a Masonic sign before the value of evidence and their obligation to act thereon. Again, the licence allowed to lawyers in their dealing with witnesses is in itself a good thing. But like other good things it can become a curse and a scandal. Of this we had an example in our Law Courts recently. An eccentric, aged man was charged with annoying a woman whom, not wisely, he reproached and reprimanded for conduct which perhaps unreasonably he found blameworthy. The magistrate and the prosecuting lawyer appeared to think his judgment was unwarranted and his interference an impertinence, which it may have been. But when the lawyer in question went so far as to say that the accused was a person who went to church every morning and got drunk every evening, he was uttering what we have heard people who know the old man well characterise as a most scandalous and false assertion. Possibly the lawyer only said what he was told by his clients, but surely it is a monstrous thing that such a calumny can be uttered with impunity and then caught up and spread far and wide by the press.

### Protestant Literature

Even apart from the Maria Monk type of garbage, beloved by the P.P.A. and the Full Moon Orangemen, Catholics and their religion are grossly misrepresented in the average novel or article which touches upon the Church. Some short time ago we came on a novel in which we were told that a Jesuit wore a soutane, fringed with white lace! An older book described the celebrant as swinging the *thurifer*, whereas, as every Catholic, and every Protestant of ordinary culture knows, the *thurifer* is the altar-boy who swings the *thurible*. More recently we read of another Jesuit who "took the Sacrament," and who was transformed from a layman to a fully-fledged S. J. priest in three years. All things considered, the wooden spoon goes to the erudite and scholarly writer who is the subject of the following note from Rev. D. A. Casey, Litt. D., in *Truth*:

A certain David A. Blumenfield, who is writing a series of syndicated articles on "European Personalities," devoted this particular one to Pope Pius XI. And he sure made some "Blumen" funny blunders.

The Pope, he tells us, takes his bath at seven o'clock, after which he says Mass. "Nine sees him at breakfast, which consists of a cup of coffee and a slice of dry toast, after which he celebrates a second Mass."

If you think that is "going some," just wait. After lunch he takes a stroll in the Vatican Gardens. "After the stroll there is more work for the man who rules Catholicism from Syracuse proper to Syracuse, N.Y. There is a Mass to be said . . . sermons to be criticised, etc." Three Masses a day, and two of them without fasting! And a big city daily printed this stuff.

The whole article is made up of blunders as egregious and amusing as the above. The writer makes the Pope sit up at night counting the "secret funds of the Vatican." And he gravely informs us that the Holy Father spends an hour every Friday at Confession, "confessing such sins as a Pope may conceivably have." Poor, scrupulous Holy Father! Mr.

Blumenfield should have sent his article to *Life* or *Judge*.

### The New Broom

One can hardly help feeling amused at seeing how calmly the once fiercely anti-Labor press accepts the present state of affairs in England. So far there has been none of that organised detraction which was employed so strenuously against the Ryan Government in Brisbane, and, for some reason, there are evidences of a square deal for the new Ministry. Indeed, cables reach us that seem to prove that Mr. McDonald is making good in many directions and that those terrible Labor people are filling their positions with even more ability than their predecessors of the old order which has gone where the good niggers go. England treated Russia so shamefully in the past ten years that when an Australian M.P. wrote a book about the matter, our illustrious Prime Minister would not allow us to read it, and now England is trying to make good the past and to establish friendly relations with the Powers that be in the mysterious country between the Baltic and the Caspian Sea. France, too, is well-disposed towards the new administration and impressed by its sincerity, and for the present the signs of trouble have disappeared from the political horizon. Later, we shall see whether the Orangeman Government of Belfast will be able to persuade the Labor people to break pledges and tear up scraps of paper as successfully as they did the Liberals and Tories who moved no hand to save the butchered Catholic men and women during the past five years. Supporters of jobbery trouble at seeing how the new broom sweeps from their sinecures hordes of well-paid and useless Civil Servants who were a heavy charge on the tax-payers. At the worst, the new Government cannot be a greater failure than its predecessors, and as far as present indications go it promises well to learn by the mistakes of the past. It has its hands full of hard problems, and it is far more likely to solve them than the Red Tape-tied and hide-bound administrations which have gone out of office.

### General Smuts

Reading our poor daily papers, one would imagine that there was only one Colonial Prime Minister in the limelight in Britain during the past few months. But in spite of the good money wasted in telling us what happened in Limavaddy, and other equally insignificant things, the serious press of England, which mentioned Doctor Massey hardly ever or not at all, fully appreciated the fact that South Africa has in her Premier a real man. Smuts would loom large in any gathering, and among the mediocrities who now rank as Britain's best statesmen, he is a giant. Hence, it is no wonder that even in England voices are calling on him to come and save the country from destruction. We are pleased at such recognition of a brave and good man, for he was almost the only one of the overseas Ministers who had the courage to say a strong word against the brutalities meted out to the Irish patriots by a Government which had hardly ceased ranting about the need of crushing tyranny for ever and ever. Smuts was a friend of Ireland's, as he is a friend of justice; and because justice means much to him, and because he has the brains and the courage to speak for it, he stands forth among the cowards who follow the crowd and sing the song of the Jingo according to orders. No panic cry from Lloyd George could cause Smuts to lose his head. No Orange whipper-in could muzzle him. The mean, pettifogging, bigoted tricks of other men are beneath him. When he fought to the end for his little country, himself a felon in the eyes of our Imperialist flag-flappers who are not fit to black his boots, he proved he was a man. When other delegates tamely signed the iniquitous Treaty of Versailles without a protest, Smuts told the world what he thought about it in eloquent words. And so it is that now when the rest of them are of no account in the councils of Europe, the South African statesman is recognised as the man who could most likely save England from the ruin and