

Mr. Rider Haggard.

In Rider Haggard's last novel, *Montezuma's Daughter*, which first appeared in the *Graphic*, and which is now published in book form, this popular novelist lent his name to the long exploded fable of an immured nun. While the hero is practising as a physician there comes to him one night a strange lady who, drawing aside a dark cloak, reveals "the robes of a nun." She is on an errand of mercy—to obtain "a poison of the deadliest," the purpose of which she explains. "In our convent there dies to-night a woman young and fair, almost a girl indeed, who has broken the vows she took. She dies to-night with her babe—thus, O God, thus! by being built alive into the foundations of the house she has disgraced." It is the Abbess who speaks these words, and who, "by secret influence" and in return for "her faithful services to the church," has obtained "much of mercy" for the erring one—to administer poison to her and her babe. "I may do this, and yet have no sin in my soul. I have my pardon under seal. Help me, then, to be an innocent murderess, and to save this sinner from the last agonies on earth."

It is useless to follow the gross details of this offensive melodramatic scene. But it goes on to tell how "mason monks" mixed a heap of burning lime, and how "a black-robed, keen-eyed priest came to the victim and holding the cross before her face began to mutter I know not what. She thrust the crucifix aside, and said: 'I shall not be shriven by such as you. I take my sins to God and not to you—you who do murder in the name of Christ.'

"The fanatic heard and a fury took him.

"Then go unshriven down to — you — I!"

If that is not enough to suit the taste and prejudice of the "vulgar profanum" it is useless for others to try. It is ahead of dime novel style. Mr. Haggard appends the following note:

"Least such cruelty should seem impossible and unprecedented, the writer may mention that in the museum of the city of Mexico he has seen the desecrated body of a young woman who was found immured in the wall of a religious building. With it is the body of an infant. Although the exact cause of her execution remains a matter of conjecture, there can be no doubt as to the manner of her death, for, in addition to other evidences, the marks of the rope with which her limbs were bound in life are still distinctly visible. Such in those days were the mercedes of religion."

The Catholic subscribers of the *Graphic* bore the insult with a meekness which is hardly commendable; but the challenge did not pass unaccepted. A Jesuit Father—these Jesuits are everywhere—wrote an article in the *Month* making mince-meat of Mr. Haggard's pretensions. A correspondence also followed between the novelist and the Secretary of the Catholic Truth Society, which simply elicited the acknowledgment from Mr. Haggard that the immuring of nuns was rarer than he supposed. He could bring no historical case—he had merely seen in the the museum in Mexico the remains of a woman and infant who were said to have died that way. There was no verification, no official document testifying to the fact. The bodies were alleged to have been

found immured in a religious house; and the proof is, that Mr. Haggard had seen the skeletons.

One gentleman who had resided several years in Mexico gives the most likely explanation. "Until quite recently (namely, till 1870), everyone who died in Mexico was buried or walled up in a masonry tomb." This was simply because the ground in the valley of Mexico, on which the city is built, is so saturated with water that if a grave were opened, even to a depth of three feet, it would have a layer of water at the bottom almost before the body could be laid in it." The cemeteries are collections of niches. In religious houses the dead were almost invariably disposed of in that way.

For a long time able writers than Mr. Haggard have striven to discover an immured nun and have failed most miserably. And he would have done his reputation as antiquarian and novelist, more good had he not taken hearsay as historical evidence, and had he not drawn such a false picture—a picture which brands him the slave of nursery stories, and depraved, vulgar taste.

The New P. P. A. Principles.

We are treated to another dose of P.P.A. principles which savour more of Judaic intolerance than Christian forbearance. It seems that those already advanced were not strong enough to suit the taste of the more selfish and more zealous. The oath as finally adopted reads:

"I do most solemnly promise and swear that I will not allow anyone a member of a Roman Catholic Church to become a member of this order, I knowing him to be such; that I will use my influence to promote the interest of all Protestants everywhere in the world; that I will not employ a Roman Catholic in any capacity if I can procure the services of a Protestant; that I will not aid in building or in maintaining by any resources any Roman Catholic church or institution of their sect or creed whatsoever, but will do all in my power to retard and break down the power of the Pope; that I will not enter into any controversy with a Roman Catholic upon the subject of this order, nor will I enter into any agreement with a Roman Catholic to strike or create a disturbance, whereby the Roman Catholic employees may undermine and substitute the Protestants; that in all grievances I will seek only Protestants, and counsel with them, to the exclusion of all Roman Catholics, and will not make known to them anything of any nature matured at such conferences; that I will not countenance the nomination, in any caucus or convention, of a Roman Catholic, for any office in the gift of the Canadian people, and that I will not vote for, nor counsel others to vote for any Roman Catholic, but will vote only for a Protestant; that I will endeavor at all times to place the political positions of this Government in the hands of Protestants. (Repeat.) To all of which I do most solemnly promise and swear. So help me God. Amen."

Candidates further obliged themselves not to associate in any way with Catholics. This trouble might be saved them if they would merely make themselves known: our people would gladly give them a wide berth. An additional promise was inserted in the first oath administered to the candidate, the observance of which goes so far as to prohibit a member from walking down street with a Catholic or from going into a store of one. Can passion and bigotry go farther?

Separate Schools.

There is nothing like a little opposition. It acts with all the powers of a charm. Here we have the P.P.A. howling with rage against the Separate Schools, and the system stands at attention and steps forward with vigor developed by the hate of our enemies.

To the East we have the valiant Archbishop of Kingston turning a school on Howe Island into a Separate School. This was a clear case of

principle. Catholics sometimes make this mistake in sections which are so far as population goes altogether Catholic. The law requires the textbooks of public schools to be of a certain character. This character is agnostic; it ignores religion altogether. For a Separate School to use these books is a mockery. Better throw off the mask. A section of Catholics are just as much obliged to read Separate Schools as a province. Acting therefore upon this principle—the only one upon which a Catholic prelate could stand—his Grace Archbishop Cleary insisted upon the Howe Island School being turned into a Separate School. It was, we repeat, the assertion of a principle, not the tyranny of a majority of Catholics over a minority of Protestants; although this would only be using their own weapons.

To the West, we have, according to the *Sarnia Observer*, the Catholics of Petrolia deciding to establish one or more Separate Schools. Why? Because they cannot stand the insults which are heaped upon their children, so that attendance at Public Schools is intolerable. That is the reason. And that is not peculiar to Petrolia. Ask any fair minded parent of Toronto what idea is instilled into his children about Catholics in the Public Schools of the city. They will tell you a tale which is enough to make earnest men think and the faint hearted tremble.

The Venerable Joan of Arc.

The decree of the Supreme Pontiff ordering the veneration of Joan of Arc and the further proceedings of her cause of beatification recalls the memory of one of the most remarkable figures of history. It does more. It puts her in her right place in history; for no one can deny that the peasant girl who saved her country and was put to death through rage and superstition carved out a high niche by her courage, her piety and her many virtues.

Born at Domremy, a small village partly in Champagne and partly in Lorraine, A.D. 1411, she grew up in simplicity under the training of a pious mother. A prophecy of Merlin, that the calamities of France were to be removed by a chaste virgin, fixed itself in the mind of Joan that she was the one called by God; and when friends besought her not to enter upon her task "There is," she used to say, "no help for France but in me. I would rather spin by the side of my poor mother, but I must go. My Lord calls me." She succeeded in gaining the confidence of the Dauphin Charles. In less than eleven days this village maiden and child of seventeen wrung from the foes of France the fruits of eleven years of conquest. The end came, when she was taken prisoner and fraud and ignorance allied themselves against her, and consigned her to the stake. But even here she is more impressive with the word of pardon for her enemies upon her lips, clasping her crucifix, than when she bore that same crucifix in triumph as she entered Orleans. England and France both rejoice at the well deserved honor which the venerable Joan of Arc has received at the hands of Leo XIII, and France has another reason for being grateful to the Holy Father.

The *Hamilton Spectator* gravely informs its readers:

"The United States Treasury Department is advised that the Court of Appeals has decided that holy waters, as used in the Church, are entitled to free entry as wafers unmedicated."

It might be a typographical error and should read "waters medicated." Even so, the paragraph would have been better if any Catholic school boy had revised it before it appeared.

A Timely Speech.

Few speeches have ever been delivered in Toronto more opportunely than was that given by the Hon. J. G. Joly, ex-Premier of Quebec, who addressed a large audience on Monday evening, Feb. 10th. A Protestant representing a Catholic constituency, he spoke not as representative of the Quebec minority, but as a well qualified witness. The various points touched upon were: 1st. The Protestant minority and office; 2ndly. The question of religious rights, more particularly referring to Mr. Papineau; 3rdly. The non-interference with religion; 4thly. Legal matters; and 5thly. The Jesuits' Estate Bill.

Upon all these points Mr. Joly made an admirable defence of the spirit of justice and fair play which animates the majority of Quebec. Upon the second he showed clearly the hollowness of those who object to the payment of the clergy in Quebec:

"The minority, in fact, does not scruple to find fault with the religion of the majority, and to pity that majority; would like to remedy the present state of things, and is quite willing to relieve the French-Canadians from many abuses, the weight of which they themselves do not feel. But what could they do if they deprived the French-Canadians of the religion in which they were brought up? He shuddered to think of the results of such an event. The Protestants showed great grief at the sight of the clergy supported by tithes, and the farmers paying 1/20th of their products to the priest. For his part, he thought that the fairest way of supporting a clergy, and was acquainted with Protestant clergymen who would be very glad to be so supported. He thought it the fairest of all systems, that when the Almighty sends plentiful harvests His priest benefits by Divine bounty, and when the crop is poor the priest also suffers. It was perfectly right to associate the clergy with the farmers' welfare. And it is one of the most beautiful features of the character of the simple French-Canadian farmer to see the honesty and faithfulness with which he discharges his duty to his church. But, though the Protestants pity the Roman Catholics for that, yet the Roman Catholics do not interfere with the manner in which they pay their clergy—or rather with the manner in which they do not pay them. The Roman Catholics do not interfere with the church-building of the Protestants; and, while the Protestants attribute much of the poverty of the Roman Catholics to their habit of church-building, the poverty of the Protestant farmer was never attributed to his church building. In point of fact, the Protestant church is usually the worst building in the district. There is a feeling which does honor to the habitant, and that is his pride in his church. There is very little ornament in his own house, but all his ambition is to decorate his church and to make it a monument worthy of his God. If those present could but see how he enjoys this they would say that the money thus spent was well laid out. And as to the assertion that the farmers are bled to build churches, it must be remembered that new churches are not built every year."

Turning to the Jesuits' Estates Bill he said:

"The greatest objection made to the Jesuit estates bill was that it had set aside the authority of her Majesty, and substituted the authority of the Pope therefor. In the long preamble the whole case was laid out, but in the practical preamble the authority of the Pope was not substituted for that of her Majesty. In the agitation that took place at the time it was said that the sacred rights of her Majesty had been ignored, and that the power of the Pope had been recognized instead. Now, in the whole body of the bill there was not one word of the Pope or the Holy See, or anything of that kind. It might be asked why had the name of the Pope appeared in the preamble of the bill? He would appeal to any lawyer to know if he wanted to wind up any company, to make any arrangement, to settle any claim whatever by legislation, would it not be indispensable that there should be stated the rights of both parties, and especially that it should be provided that the authority to approve or sanction the agreement should be stated?"

"If I had been in the House when this bill was passed," declared Mr. Joly, "I as a Protestant, would have insisted upon having the name of the Pope in it, and his approval of it, so that the claim should not have been made a second time. I should have said that it was indispensable that the Pope's name should be placed in the bill."