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CURRENT COMMENT

The "Church Times," a famous Church of England journal, lately published, anent the Royal Declaration, a leading article which we reprint on another page. This article, entitled "A Public Hypocrisy," is very remarkable, coming, as it does, from an outsider, an alien to the true faith. It emphasizes Lord Halifax's remark in the House of Lords that there was a great difference between what men said in private on this subject and what they said in public.

In the same issue the "Church Times" writes as follows:

Entirely reasonable as was the Duke of Norfolk's resolution in the House of Lords in favour of modifying the Royal Declaration, and introduced as it was by him with such good taste and moderation, we do not regret that nothing came of it, for reasons which we have given in our leading columns today. But, apart from these considerations, the Declaration, as it stands, besides being futile, is offensive in the extreme. If it is even necessary, which we question, nothing can justify the brutality with which it pronounces judgment against what is a matter of the most profound conviction and devout belief with a vast number of the King's subjects. Suppose the King were required to say that the peculiar tenets of the Baptists are blasphemous fables, is it to be imagined that the Declaration would be retained? Or suppose the King were required to say that he repudiated, as corymbant orgies, the rites of the Salvation Army, would it not at once, and rightly be acknowledged that such language was needlessly insulting? As fellow-citizens, Romanists are equally with Baptists and Salvationists entitled to consideration, and we consider they have every right to feel aggrieved at the indignity inflicted upon them by the Declaration. They must go on with their efforts to get the wretched formula altogether dispensed with. In time, it will dawn upon the public mind that the succession to the throne need not be safeguarded by such objectionable means.

It is a noticeable fact that Catholics within early years have been spent in a country where Catholics not only outnumber all the sects but are also political and social leaders, are never tempted to apologize for their religion nor to accept for it a sort of contemptuous tolerance, as is often the case with those Catholics who have been long used to being either in the minority or in a non-governing majority. Spaniards, Belgians, German Catholics and French-Canadians are probably the best representatives, at the present day, of this fearless spirit of what we might call matter-of-course Catholicism, a Catholicism that expects recognition as at least the intellectual and social equal of any other religion, because it knows itself to be as infinitely superior to any other as truth is above error. But English Catholics, whose Catholicism has stood the strain of the penal laws during well nigh three centuries, make a good second. True, since the reign of James II. they have not ruled their country, but they have kept alive the memory of the days when they did rule it, and as soon as they were allowed any liberty they took and still take far more than their proportionate share of posts of trust and government. The consequence is that English Catholics are today among the most self-reliant in the world. They are

freer than most other English-speaking Catholics on the American and other continents from an exaggerated reverence for non-Catholic learning. Too often have they pierced that bubble to imagine that it has any solidity. Here and in Ontario most of our Catholics of English speech are filled with reverential awe at the mere mention of Oxford or Cambridge. At Stonyhurst, the oldest Catholic college in the British Isles, it is occasionally difficult to persuade young men to go up to Oxford; they have such a contempt for the place. And the excuse for this contempt is recognized by the "Saturday Review," when it notes the superior mental training of Stonyhurst men, in the following passage of a recent issue: "The working of the system is observed in the curiously formed manners which Roman Catholic boys so trained bring with them to the Universities, making them often appear competent men of the world beside rather elephantine schoolboys."

Our German contemporary, "St. Peter's Bote," prints, in its issue of the 16th inst. a list of subscribers to the new Catholic church of St. Odilo at Rosthern, prefacing the list with the remark that the great majority of the subscribers are Protestants. His Lordship Bishop Pascal, O. M. I., heads the subscription with one hundred dollars. Mr. Joseph Kopp comes next with \$87.50. There follow six subscribers of \$50 each, five of \$25, one of \$20, two of \$15, fifteen of \$10, one of \$6, twenty-seven of \$5, one of \$3, eleven of \$2, and two of \$1; total \$980.50. After which the Bote remarks with refreshing directness: "What has become of the name of the Mayor of Rosthern town? It is remarkable that his name is not to be found in the subscription list, when one would naturally expect it to stand at the top thereof. Has Mr. H. A. McEwen nothing left for a Catholic church?"

Public holidays May 24, July 1, August 22, September 1, besides two public half holidays during the exhibition at the end of July and the beginning of August, all this makes five whole non-working days in less than fourteen weeks. We do not object; we simply rise to remark that this sort of thing ought to silence for ever the croakers who find fault with ecclesiastical feast days as being a loss of valuable time. Evidently the Church was wise when she multiplied festivals as days of rest for the laboring man, who then labored from ten to fourteen hours a day, since, now that his day's work is reduced to nine or even eight hours, he is exhorted to rest at the rate of twenty holidays a year.

Foster had announced great storms on or about August 12th. None came at or near that date, at all events not near enough to come within this forecast. For the most he asks for is a couple of days' allowance before or after. But a terrific local tornado or cyclone struck St. Paul and the surrounding district nine days later. In a few minutes the wind, blowing at over a hundred miles an hour, killed a dozen persons, wounded fifty more and destroyed several million dollars' worth of property. On witnessing such havoc one realizes that air in rapid motion is the most terrible of all earthly forces. The thunderbolt, though more destructive where it strikes, works less widespread ruin. Fortunately the Lord God, who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," holds in check the awful whirlwind, so that its visitations are comparatively rare, and confines the most tremendous of all storms to the uninhabited sea. A popular lecturer on astron-

omy once said that if the earth were ever swept by one of those violent outbursts of vapor that continually convulse the solar photosphere, not only every living thing on the surface of our globe would be instantly killed, but the very mountains would be flattened out. We can form some idea of this portentous violence from volcanic explosions such as that of Krakatoa, which are, after all, only air liberated with unimaginable force, a force which our own high explosives utilize, alas! too often for the destruction of our fellow men. Truly may we pray, "From lightning and tempest, deliver us, O Lord!"

In our issue of August 6, referring to the heroic death of the Japanese, Colonel Jokoka, we noted that the London "Graphic," quoted by the Montreal "Star," suppressed the fact of his being a Catholic, without, however, explicitly stating that he was a Protestant, merely calling him a Christian. Later on, in its issue of August 19, the "Star," which meanwhile must have read our comment, reproduces a long and detailed narrative of the event contributed by a certain Pravdine to the "Nouveliste Vaudois" of Lausanne, Switzerland, one of the chief centres of Geneva Protestantism. Therein we read:

As there was no Lutheran chaplain on the spot, the Russian priest of the regiment was sent to him. Jokoka begged him to read out the Sermon on the Mount. This was read in Russian, Jokoka following the text in his Japanese Bible, which had been left with him in his cell.

In this short paragraph there are two bits of internal evidence that stamp it as a fabrication. In the first place, no Russian priest carries about with him a Bible when he goes to prepare people for death. What he carries is a Ritual, which does not contain the Sermon on the Mount. In the second place, how could Jokoka "follow the text read in Russian," if, as Mr. Pravdine himself said in an earlier portion of his story, Jokoka did not understand the Russian language, but "spoke in English, and it was an Englishman employed in the Russo-Chinese bank who translated his testimony"? Evidently Mr. Pravdine is troubled with shortness of memory and ignorance of sacerdotal methods which are, in the matter of preparation for death, practically identical among Greek and Roman Catholics. Moreover, when he introduces Jokoka making his profession of faith, he represents him as saying simply, "I am a Christian." Now the being a Christian in Japan does not necessarily mean being a Lutheran, since Japanese converts to Lutheranism are but a small minority of the Christians there. Hence Mr. Pravdine's wily clause, "As there was no Lutheran chaplain on the spot," seems to be a gratuitous invention to color his whole story. Consequently, we see no reason to modify the first version, as it appeared in our issue of July 30, namely, that Jokoka "confessed to a Greek (or Russian) Church priest, no Catholic clergyman being present." He may have made his confession through an interpreter by question and answer, the answers being given by signs which the interpreter need not see. What makes our contention more probable is that the circumstance of the religious ceremony constitutes the only important difference between the two stories. All the rest—the brave bearing of the two officers, Jokoka's gift of a large sum of money to the Russian Red Cross Society, the confidence expressed that the Mikado would see that the widow and children would be cared for—is the same in the two ac-

counts. Apparently the change from Catholicism to Lutheranism was an afterthought.

In our issue of the 13th inst. we mentioned the curious case of Abbot Parker, who after being struck by lightning was found to have a cross distinctly marked on his back. Since then the case has been more carefully examined. The cross is now said to be a crucifix. In fact a picture of that crucifix was published lately, from a photograph in one of our Winnipeg daily papers. Parker himself says he never was tattooed. Dr. Griswold, a Protestant physician who attends the Catholic hospital in Morristown, N.J., where Parker is recovering from his stroke, says that, after a most minute examination of the marks on Parker's back he is sure that they are not the result of tattooing. The Catholic Standard and Times of Philadelphia wrote to someone "in a position to obtain the facts" and received the following reply:

"The crucifix is on the man's back. How it got there I know not. I believe only the fact; I discredit the 'miracle.' Dr. Griswold is one of the attending physicians of the staff and is a Protestant, although All Souls' Hospital is conducted by the Catholic Grey Nuns of Montreal. Parker (who was said to be struck by lightning) professes to have been an Episcopalian. Personally I believe the crucifix to have been tattooed, and the whole business a piece of chicanery. The man concerned has been of a very eccentric nature, and may have had the crucifix tattooed there several years ago."

This is an answer of the "smart Alec" type, evidently written by one who may be said to fear ridicule rather than to love the truth. His utterly unmotivated belief in the tattooing theory is completely refuted by Dr. Griswold's testimony. But there is one view of the case which none of our contemporaries seem to have taken. The admirably formed figure of Our Lord on Parker's spine may be due to lightning and yet not be a miracle at all. If there was a crucifix anywhere near Parker when he was struck, the image of it may have been transferred to his back by a natural phenomenon often witnessed. A man is standing near a tree when the thunderbolt falls and imprints on the man's side nearest to the tree a picture of that tree. There is a priest in Manitoba who was once struck by lightning and, on recovering from the shock, he found that a silver dollar in one of his pockets had been clearly marked by the electric fluid on his thigh. Perhaps Sister Duffin, formerly Superior of St. Joseph's Orphanage in this city and now Superior of All Souls' Hospital, Morristown, might enlighten us on all the circumstances of this curious incident.

Now is the time to pray for the continuance of fine weather. A violent storm or a sharp frost might ruin many a promising harvest. In an agricultural country like this, where the future depends mainly on the weather of the present, sensible people have recourse to Him who holds the forces of nature in his Almighty hand.

First the "Tablet" and now the N.Y. "Evening Post" point out the recent Privy Council decision, giving all church property to that section of the Kirk that has not modified its teaching, would logically entail the restoration to the Catholic Church of all the splendid cathedrals and other church property appropriated by the Protestant Church of England. The Lord Chancellor, in giving his judgment on the first of this month, said:

"There is nothing in calling an associated body a church that exempts it from the legal obligations of insisting that money given for one purpose shall not be devoted to another." Now most of the money and property bestowed on the Catholic Church before the Reformation was bestowed for the purpose of having Masses said for ever. The Protestant usurpers of the episcopal sees of Canterbury, York and all the rest of the English and Scotch bishoprics not only differed from Catholics on points of theory, as the United Free Church differs from the Free Church, but blasphemed the Mass, scoffed at the intentions of the donors, nay, put the donors or their descendants to death, while reveling in the revenues of their stolen wealth. The same reasoning applies still more forcibly to Ireland, where a small minority, and that a minority of aliens, foreigners, foes of all that is best in Ireland, seized the church property of the majority by no other rights than that of might and hold it to this day, not quietly as in England, where the minority only indulge in mild protests, but by the force of an immense standing army of soldiers and police, overawing the rightful owners of that church property, the Catholic people of Ireland.

Persons and Facts

Mr. Thomas More Waterton, grandson of the celebrated naturalist, Charles Waterton, whose life was interestingly sketched in the "Ave Maria" of July 30, left last Saturday to catch the White Star liner "Oceanic" on his way back to England. Mr. Waterton, who, as his name might suggest, is a lineal descendant of Blessed Sir Thomas More, has spent three months travelling in search of health in eastern and western Canada.

Mr. Chertier, father of our editor-in-chief, is now very much better. He was able this week to superintend building operations in the absence of his son.

Mr. Joseph Burke, immigration agent returned this week from a trip through the Dauphin country. The binders were already at work in many places. Of all the localities visited, Mr. Burke thinks St. Rose du Lac the most promising; many of its fields will harvest 40 bushels to the acre.

The flat top of the new Union Bank building, 149 feet from the ground, affords the finest view of Winnipeg.

Mr. Fred Chester, of Detroit, has come to live in this city. He is a Canadian Catholic who has spent some years in the States.

Count de Mun has sent to Cardinal Merry del Val a note protesting energetically in the name of the Catholic population of France against the rupture of diplomatic relations with the Holy See, and requesting him to tender to the Holy Father the assurance of their unalterable fidelity.

A pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick, which has been styled the "Sinai of Ireland," took place on Aug. 14. Mass was celebrated upon the summit at noon in the presence of his Grace the Archbishop of Tuam, the Bishop of Achonry, and the Bishop of Elphin. Confraternities from various towns took part in the procession up the mountain.

Mr. John Redmond, M.P., Captain Donelan, and Mr. P. O'Brien were entertained on Friday evening under the auspices of the United Irish League of Great Britain in London on the eve of their