

POLITICS IN NEW ZEALAND; POSITION OF CATHOLICS!

POLITICS are an evil game. And, all things considered, we can understand the feeling that led Artemus Ward to vote for a dead statesman (Henry Clay) because there was no body living worth voting for. "Inasmuch," said he, "as we don't seem to have a live statesman, let us by all means have a first-class corpse." The contest that, as we write, is still raging for a year's brief lease of the Caversham seat presents, in some respects, features as unsatisfactory as those which raised the sarcastic gorge of "the genial showman." Five of six contestants scrambling for one electorate in the Government interest must prove an embarrassment of wealth to the ministry. Two of the contestants are endeavoring to trap fanatical votes by raising the most vindictive and lying and cowardly no-Popery shriek that has for many years disgraced a electioneering campaign in New Zealand. The one Catholic candidate would be, of all others, fitted by his talent and other personal qualifications to adorn the councils of a nation. A paragraph published in the secular papers before our last issue went to press—were we officially informed—interpolated and unauthorized. But in his formal pronouncement upon

the subject towards the close of the week, he elected to take a position that has been viewed with surprise and regret by his Catholic friends.

LACK OF ORGANIZATION.—Other, and even successful, Catholic candidates throughout the Colony have adopted a similar attitude in reference to our educational grievances. And the sense of surprise with which their pronouncements, when first made, are usually received by the Catholic body argues the existence of a healthy sentiment upon the subject amongst our people. But the sentiment soon dies, and—as Pope said in another connection—"we first endure, then pity, then embrace." Catholic feeling upon the subject is running to wild and woful waste for want of constant and intelligent direction—in other words, far lack of organization. Heaven preserve the lungs and larynxes of those that protest! But talk is cheap, and wind-power not over costly, and indignation seldom dear. And when we, Catholics, have exhausted our spasmodic vocabulary of condemnation and finished slaying all opponents with our mouths, we would do well to sit down and cool off and calmly examine our

consciences to find out if we also, as well as the candidates, are not to blame—if we have not, as a body, contributed by our apathy, our neglect, our grovelling pursuit of passing temporal advantages, to the unsatisfactory position which the vexed question of our educational grievances occupies at present in the public eye. We have allowed it to be almost frozen out of politics; we do not particularly trouble the general run of candidates with the matter; and we seem disposed to keep our views to ourselves for our private enjoyment. But once in a while we wake up and rub our eyes—like the British public in one of its accesses of virtue over King Bomba or the unspeakable Turk—and, with a sudden spasm of enthusiasm for our "principles" we berate or be-maul some luckless candidate for deserting them. All this is mere childish caprice. When we rise in our passing anger and flay opponents, we should, on our own part, backsheesh—and get very little of it, as we have shown; and many of the remember to put on sackcloth and ashes and mend our political ways.

THE BARRIER.—What have we,

the great Catholic body of New Zealand, been doing to advance our educational claims? The question is a remorseful one. Bits of gallant outpost work here and there over the matter of school inspection; a rare question put timidly—almost apologetically—at election times; some lone voice in the pulpit once in a while; and the New Zealand "Tablet" speaking in season and out of season, but, to some extent, we fear, the wilderness. Mostly words, words, words. And yet there is no loss of faith in the inherent justice of our claims, nor, we believe, of hope in the ultimate triumph of our cause. Our faith is right. But where are our works? Religious bigotry is the great barrier that stands in the way. What have we done to enlighten it? Little or nothing. And it requires teaching year in, year out, in season and out of season; and the best propaganda against it is conducted, not amidst the discordant din and evil clang of an electioneering campaign, but in "the still hours when storms are gone." The principle, "non in tempestate Deus," has, in altered terms, its application here.

AND AT ELECTION TIMES,

what have Catholics been doing? Giving their votes, from one end of the Colony to the other, alike to non-Catholic and to Catholic candidates who are opposed to our views and rights and interests in connection with the education problem. Such candidates are supported merely or chiefly for their political or party leanings, or for their proved or anticipated power to "benefit the district." It is a question of prospective railway sidings, work-shops, "billets," engine-cleaning sheds, roads, turn-tables—mere hen-roost politics. There is an accused venality or spirit of implied barter over it all, that, to a sensitive man, must be like contract with Asiatic leprosy. And Catholic voters have learned to overlook the hostility of candidates and members to our just educational rights. They coddle and stroke the hand that strikes them, just because it can dispense Government crumbs. They hunt—with less avidity, it is true, than others—for short-sighted wights are content to receive as the reward of their support the ghastly political "favor" which drops a son into the position of an underpaid hack clerkship or condemns him for life to the pick

and shovel of the navy or the sur-faceman—like a galley-slave chained to the oar. That is what we have been doing. We have fine principles on our lips and fine, if distant, hopes in our souls, and we make, with light and happy hearts, a thousand splendid sacrifices to teach our children that there is more in life and beyond it than the multiplication table and dollar-worship. But we have taught members and candidates that they can count on our support almost irrespective of their views on the one question of questions for us. We greet a string of twelve opponents—Catholics and non-Catholics—with a smile, and aid them with our votes. But when the thirteenth steps forward and follows in the footsteps of all the others, we suddenly recall our "principles" and smite him with a dire anathema maranatha and make him a scapegoat to bear the sins of all. Would that we were either consistently hot or consistently cold, so that friend and foe alike should know where to find us on election day! But this shilly-shallying is a trap for candidates, and it is unfair to ourselves.—New Zealand Tablet, Dec. 19.

WONDERFUL LIFE OF THE CURE OF ARS.

There is no more wonderful life in all the annals of modern times than that of the Venerable Jean Baptiste Vianney, the renowned Cure of Ars. It is now forty-three years since that saintly priest closed his eyes to the light of this world to open them in the light of God. An article in the "Rosary Magazine," from the pen of Grace Tamagno, dealing with the wonderful life of the Cure of Ars, has recalled to our mind the extraordinary story of his seventy-three years on earth. About eight years ago a serial life of the Cure of Ars appeared in the "Ave Maria." Subsequently the articles, written by Kathleen O'Meara, were gathered into a volume, which forms one of the most edifying and interesting books that could possibly be read. It is remarkable that the sketches of the good and saintly priest of Ars, which have appeared in English are from the pens of female writers. Yet, it seems fitting that he who had done so much for the protection and the elevation of the members of the more feeble sex should be honored in an especially manner by gifted daughters of the Catholic Church.

It would be absolutely impossible for us to deal, at present, with the more extended life of the Cure of Ars, consequently, we propose taking a few extracts from the shorter article, which the pages of the "Rosary Magazine" contain. However, perhaps a few words regarding the scope of the more lengthy history would help in conveying a general idea of the most remarkable periods and events in the life of the venerable priest.

Needless to say that it opens with an account of his parents, his birth and his early years. Then comes the period of military service—that national novitiate that all French citizens must pass through. Briefly are related his flight from the world; his entry into the Seminary; his ordination and his first mission. From the very beginning he was subjected to trials that would have shaken the determination and undermined the faith of many a man. He was so poorly equipped, both in memory and in powers of comprehension, for serious studies, that his ordeal was one of the most severe. His appointment to the parish of Ars; the total absence of any religious sentiment in the neglected people of that place; the miraculous manner in which he was helped to convert them; his own fasts and privations; the persecution of evil tongues, which became so terrible that he fell ill; endured untold physical sufferings, and finally died to Dardilly; his return to Ars; the pilgrimages that began to centre at that quiet spot; the miracles daily performed by the Cure; his days and nights in the confessional; finally, his blessed end—all these constitute the leading features in that beautifully written life of the holy priest, Jean Baptiste Vianney.

It might be actually said that during nearly half a century the Cure of Ars lived in the confessional.

From long before daylight, until noon, save during the hour for Mass, and from one o'clock until any hour in the night, he sat there giving advice, hearing sad stories, absolving sinners, and praying for the souls of men. Until he sat in the confessional he probably never knew what sin really was; and he made, on several occasions, the extraordinary admission, that if he had realized what it was to be a priest, he would have hidden himself at Char-traine, or La Trappe. We say that he lived, but we could almost say that he died in the confessional; in fact, he was taken from that holy tribunal of his labors, where the hot air of a July day had sapped the very last atom of his remaining strength, to close his life, amidst intense physical sufferings and mental ecstasies.

The following disjointed extracts we now take from Grace Tamagno's article, and we are confident that they will serve to cast a new light upon the story of the holy priest, a light in which many of our readers have never beheld the renowned Cure of Ars. We begin with his appointment to Ars.

"But religion had been too long proscribed for the people to feel its benefits when after the Concordat, the Church was again allowed her rights in France. So when Father Vianney reached his new charge, he found a dilapidated church, but little frequented by the villagers, who spent their entire time, particularly Sundays, carousing, dancing and attending to their money-making interests. As the people would not come to the Cure, clearly the Cure must go to the people. From day-break until night, with the exception of the noonday hour, the priest knelt prostrate at the foot of the altar and prayed for his flock. At midday he visited them. His method was always the same. He entered the house, he prayed with the children, and then stood leaning against the wall while the family ate, and preached the goodness and mercy of God. Nobody then noticed his lowliness of stature or the meanness of his attire, but all felt the truth of the words uttered by the austere priest before them. When the laborers returned to the fields, he went back to his prayers in the church, or prepared his sermon for Sunday. Gradually the Cure's devotion to his flock came to be recognized by some of them, and he soon induced those few to attend daily Mass and to assist at the telling of the beads in the evening. Gradually their fervor increased, so that the little band so divided their time of devotion, that there was not an hour of the day or night when there was not somebody of the church, adoring the Blessed Sacrament."

"To consolidate and perpetuate the work which his zeal had commenced, and to make the good example contagious, the Cure started two confraternities. That of the Rosary was intended for the wo-

men, and that of the Blessed Sacrament for the men.

"Having gathered and organized his congregation, Father Vianney now had time to attack the abuses in the parish, which he did, one by one. As his people became imbued with their rector's zeal and goodness, they had less time and desire for the pleasures of the tavern. And these latter, being poorly patronized, closed one by one. The love of dancing was harder to vanquish, but as the girls finally refused to attend them, the men at length gave up having balls. Then the Sunday working was gradually abandoned. In six years from the time of Father Vianney's arrival there, Ars, from being a town whose inhabitants showed no inclination towards Christian pursuits, had become a model, to be held up to all other French villages. A traveler who had spent several days there, and had seen no signs of drunkenness, or who had heard no vulgar or irreverent exclamations through the entire settlement, spoke of this fact to one of the inhabitants. The peasant merely answered, 'We are no better than other people, but we should be ashamed to indulge in such pastimes when we have a saint in our midst.'"

"He had observed in his trips through the country, the moral as well as temporal destitution of the poor orphan girls in these villages, and so he planned a refuge for them, the House of Providence. According to his usual custom, he matured his plans by prayer, for he never rushed into his good works. He possessed 20,000 francs, and with these he bought a house at the edge of the town, and trained two of his parishioners to take care of it and its inmates. As the needs soon exceeded the size of the house, and funds were sadly wanting, the priest spent his days helping the men building the additional parts. He wished not only to shelter and teach the orphans, but also to clothe and feed them; but where was he to find the money? Personal privation and Divine Providence would do the work. He had so great a confidence in the Divine Goodness that he communicated it to the directress of the home. One time, when there was but enough flour to make two small loaves of bread, he told the women to mix the dough the same as ever, and as they kneaded it, it increased in bulk until there was enough to make ten large loaves."

"His bed was a bundle of straw, but when he wished a special favor from God, he slept on the board floor, or upon the ground. This servant of God usually began his day a few minutes past midnight. He generally spent sixteen hours in the confessional. From midnight until seven o'clock in the morning he heard the confessions of those who had often traveled from distant parts to receive absolution at his hands. At seven he celebrated Mass. Mass finished he returned to the confessional until eleven o'clock, when he mounted the pulpit, and gave an instruction whose force resulted not from rhetorical periods, but from the fervor and sanctity of the priest who delivered it. The sermon terminated with the Angelus; then he took the little food which was his daily meal. He was back in the tribunal of penance before one o'clock and he remained there until late at night."

"Constantly practising such strenuous self-sacrifices, one is scarcely astonished to hear that Father Vianney had many attacks of illness, each one of which the doctors declared would be his last. When he suddenly recovered from them, he would tell those who preferred sympathy, that his manifold sins had

merited even greater punishment. Many of those who should have upheld him, complained to his ecclesiastical superiors of the error of his ways. Father Vianney, far from being offended, considered these detractors his truest friends, and thanked them for pointing out his faults. He even added postscripts to their letters of complaint and acknowledged his many faults. But he refused to write his signature to a letter of apology which one of his friends (?) had drawn up for him. The distrust of his conferees shows that the pilgrimages which were constantly wending their way to Ars, were not the result of human exploitation."

"Spiritual wants, business trials, family woes, were all submitted to his judgment, and his contemplative spirit seemed to unravel the most intricate conditions. Truly like the prophets of old, he seemed inspired of God. Those who came to the Cure from idle curiosity, or more bitter motives, a mysterious power moved to bend the knee in his presence, and it is from their ranks that there were recruited his most fervent converts. This life, which it would seem from its many good works, should have continued forever, came to an end on the fourth of August—the feast of that other good man and great saint, St. Dominic, in 1859. And now at his tomb, the deaf hear, the blind see, and the dumb speak, and though their number is less, pilgrims still flock to the earthly remains of the Venerable John Baptist Maria Vianney, better known as the Cure d'Ars."

Timely Hints to Parents.

Have you a little baby boy. A few months more than two years old. With soft brown eyes that brim with joy. And silken ringlets bathed in gold. Who, toddling, follows you around. And plays beside you near the hearth? Whose prattle is the sweetest sound To you of all glad notes of earth? Have you a little baby boy. Who, when the voice of slumber calls. Reluctant leaves each tattered toy. And in your strong arms weary falls? Who, yawning, looks with sleepy eyes Into your own and faintly smiles; Then shuts his lids and quiet lies. And drifts away to Dreamland's isles?

Have you a little one like this, Who puts all troubling thought to flight. When, climbing up, he plants a kiss Of love upon your lips at night? If so, then humbly bow your knee And lift your heart in thankful prayer.

For you are richer far than he Who, childless, is a millionaire! —W. L. Sanford in Galveston News.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS.—It is a holy privilege to be allowed to teach a child those things that he should know, presenting to his young mind, in simple language, something about those mysteries he longs to solve. Yet how many parents turn a deaf or at best a careless ear to the questionings of childhood. "The child annoys me so," says one; or "He asks such absurd questions, and is so persistent that he most makes me wild," and similar flimsy excuses are offered by parents or others who have the care of young children just entering into that stage of life where they, more than perhaps at any other time, "want to know."

The heedless answers frequently given often make such false impressions of the child's mind that many a future lesson will be required to efface them. It is certainly just as easy to tell the truth if only one stops to consider, as to start the child off on the wrong track by some thoughtless reply to his queries. The story is told of a little one who asked gazing skyward in wild-eyed wonder, "Mamma, what are the stars made of?" To which the young mother replied, "My goodness, child, I don't know." "Who does know, mamma?" insisted the little one. "Oh, I can't tell. I suppose God just put them there for us to look at and may be to light the nights. There, don't bother me." Was this the way to open to the longing young investigator the mysteries of nature in one of their most beautiful phases? The budding soul looked far away into the blue vault above, and saw the golden star-lamps swinging there, and yearned to know something about them, how they were lighted by night and faded away by day. To him the shining constellations were a sort of fairy-land, into which he longed to enter by way of song or story, but the door was shut in his face and he went about his play robbed of his rightful knowledge. Not that a child could be made to comprehend the movements of the universe, but there is something about every subject that may be given him, to which he may add as he grows older.

THE DIFFERENCE between children who are taught what is practicable at home, and those who depend entirely upon text books, is very noticeable in schools. The one supplements his school studies with all sorts of queries which are patiently answered by mother and father, or perhaps an older brother or sister; and with this added information he steps briskly ahead of others in his class who are naturally just as bright as he. Many a less fortunate classmate looks on in pathetic surprise and perplexity at being so thoroughly outstripped by his companion, who perhaps numbers less years, but seems to have found some reservoir of knowledge in the left-hand, knows nothing. A young girl once said, passionately, at being thus outdone: "I wish I had a mother or father who could tell me something I wanted to know," and the bitter tears of humiliation gathered in her bright eyes. Parents do not seem to realize what children suffer at being left behind in an honest race, and so often it is because their questions are not answered which might set them in the right track. Another girl once complained that the teacher talked to the class, but did not talk directly to her, and that consequently she could not understand the problems in her arithmetic. Upon hearing this, the young mother undertook the task of helping the little maid evenings, explaining in detail wherever she seemed deficient. The consequence was the girl soon found herself apace with the best of them. She was shy and afraid to ask questions before her mates, but at home she opened her heart, and found response, if the mother in this case had said, as some do: "Oh, don't bother me, what do you go to school for if not to have the teacher help you?" how different would have been the result.

Children naturally thirst for knowledge, and happy is the little man or woman who has a mother willing and able to answer questions, be they apparently ever so absurd or foolish. And, happily, there are also mothers who fear that the children will outgrow her ability to

teach them, and so improve every opportunity for storing their own minds with the means of enlightenment.—Detroit News-Tribune.

Where Temperance is Enforced

A writer in "Harper's Weekly" says that the railroad force of our country has become stronger in its example and power for good than all the temperance organizations.

"The discipline of the railroad employees of the country is probably stricter, and better enforced, than in any other line of work. A number of years ago temperance was not strictly enforced on trainmen, but the engineers were compelled to report for business in a perfectly sober condition. There were some lax rules in regard to the trainmen, and it was not uncommon to see many of them drinking at the public-houses along the route when their train was waiting for orders. But to-day not only temperance, but almost teetotalism, is enforced on our leading railroads, especially among engineers, firemen, switchmen, and train-despatchers and conductors. The managers of the railroads found that many of the accidents were due to drink among the employees, and, after considering the problem for a few years, the man who could not get along without drinking was gradually forced from the ranks of the railroad employees. To-day these workmen represent the largest and strongest army of upright, sober, industrious men in the world."

This writer says that dismissal for drinking is the worst possible thing that could happen to a railroad man in any position. "If he applies to another road he must furnish reference or tell where he was last employed. His record is then looked up, and each road furnishes another with the correct data required. If the dismissal has been for drinking, the applicant is very naturally turned down. Yet allowances are made for human weakness, and if an otherwise good employee falls once, unless he is an engineer or train-despatcher he may receive a reprimand and warning. He is then placed on trial, and if he does not repeat his offence he may be retained indefinitely. Indeed, many men have been reformed from drink in this very way. Realizing that their positions depended upon their sobriety, they have steadily refused to touch liquor at all. In this effort to reform they are mightily helped by their associates. These are all railroad men who are placed in the same position; they must live a sober life. Consequently the weak man in the number is encouraged rather than tempted, and his battle is rendered much easier."

A SECULAR EDITOR'S VIEW.

If the escape of the Biddle brothers, condemned murderers, from the Pittsburg jail, through the aid of the warden's faithless wife, their flight with the woman, and their desperate fight in the snow when overtaken, in which both men were mortally wounded and the woman shot herself, had been produced on the stage by actor folk it would rank among the most exciting melodramas.—New York Sun.

SUBSIDIZING MANUFACTORIES.

Under a law passed two years ago the Hungarian Government may subsidize almost any kind of manufactory.

CHINESE INDEMNITY.

The first monthly instalment, amounting to 1,820,000 taels (\$1,274,000), of the Chinese indemnity was paid on Friday to the Bankers' Commission of the Powers at Shanghai.