



CURRENT COMMENT

The San Francisco "Examiner," of May 26, contains a masterly criticism by Ashton Stevens, of Clay Green's "Nazareth," a Passion Play, staged two years ago for the first time in celebration of the Santa Clara College jubilee, and lately revived by the students of that famous Jesuit college.

Mr. Clay M. Greene graduated from Santa Clara in 1868 and was a schoolmate of the Rev. Robert E. Kenna, S.J., present head of the college. "A practical craftsman," writes Mr. Stevens, "who learned the theatre in the theatre, Greene has had the wit and courage to apply practical craftsmanship to the dramatization of the greatest story ever told. Good taste—the top and bottom of all art that makes for the beautiful—has tempered his audacity; and Santa Clara has a tradition that becomes an antiquity while you wait."

The rights of representation have been secured to Santa Clara college for all time. Thus this original drama is free from the dangers of commercial speculation and from the professional actor's thirst for individual glory.

The drama tells the life of Our Lord and revolves around His person, but He Himself never appears on the stage. In this respect the play is a triumph of reserved force, of dramatic suggestion. "We follow Him from the manger to the cross; we listen to His word and know the power of His presence. Always Christ is the protagonist—yet never do we hear His voice or see Him. The nearest to visual acquaintance with the Nazarene is at the last, when the temple is rent by the storm, and far in the background and high on the hill you see by the lightning flashes, the outlines of three bodies with tortured arms athwart grim crosses. That is scenery and light. All the rest that physically pertains to the presence is light alone—that is, all save the scene of the march to Calvary. Here, the roar of the invisible multitude is in positive hurt to the auditory nerve. Stones are flying and the procession is passing on the other side of the wall. You see above the wall, moving slowly, the spear heads of the Roman Legion, and the air is thick with missiles and mocking cries against the 'King of the Jews,' and presently above the wall, in a cloud of hard-fung stones, appear the top and part of the cross-beam of a great gáant wooden cross. The sky is almost blindingly alight, and in this tense, luminous atmosphere the cross vibrates painfully, rising and falling and swinging and swaying above the feebleness of its unseen support." Apart from the religious feeling of reverence for the person of the God-Man, it is doubtful whether the actual appearance of the Christ could ever be as effective as this dramatic suggestiveness of His near but invisible presence.

More than a thousand persons from all parts of California, many of them Protestants and Jews, some even professed unbelievers, witnessed this great drama on May 25, and all were not only deeply interested but strangely moved by the pathos of the play, which was repeated four times on the three following days to ever increasing crowds.

Mr. Stevens concludes his criticism with these words: "This Passion Play of Santa Clara is too

serious, too big a thing to be insulted with an indiscriminate off-hand praise. I know of no other drama written by an American that stands so good a chance of living down the ages." And the "Examiner" says editorially: "These revivals promise to become historical, and doubtless future representations will become the objective point of pilgrimages from all parts of the world."

While the southwestern States have been deluged with excessive rains and consequent disastrous floods, the east of Ontario and the province of Quebec have been scorched by excessive and prolonged heat, followed by fierce forest fires. The following despatch appeared in the Free Press of last Monday:—

Prayers Answered.

Ottawa, June 7.—A circular letter from the Archbishop, asking that prayers be given for rain was read in all the Catholic churches here to-day. Rain fell to a limited extent this evening. It is about fifty days since rain fell here until to-night.

Together with great learning Bishop McGolrick, of Duluth, combines practical good sense of no ordinary kind. He is reported to have said that he will give a gold medal to the young lady who will come before him and pass a satisfactory examination in all of the following subjects: Plain sewing, mending, cooking, how to take temperature, lay a table correctly, how to make a bed, how to alight from a street car, how to select shoes that are a decent fit, how to tie knots, how to fill a fountain pen, how to fold clothes, how to do up an umbrella correctly, to trim a lamp, open tin cans, drive nails, build fire, feed the dog, cat and the canary and other things which enter into every-day life. Perhaps there may be some things mentioned in the list which sound very simple to the average hearer, but how many of the accomplished young ladies of the day can do any or all of these things? asks the Bishop.

In the special staff correspondence of the Free Press, of June 6, on the Sunday School convention in Brandon, we find that the Rev. Dr. Kilpatrick, of Manitoba College, in the course of a thoughtful and practical address, said: "It is well to have a children's service conducted at stated intervals. The speaker gave a sketch of a Roman Catholic service, saying that the methods were magnificent; that church's methods of handling children were beyond all praise." Dr. Kilpatrick, perhaps the most widely read Presbyterian divine in this country, is a man of broad and varied culture and of uncommon eloquence. His words ought to have great weight, not only with his non-Catholic brethren who, for the most part, know so little of our methods, but with ourselves also, that we may not degenerate from our own best models in the art of teaching catechism to children and even to grown people: for the best of all preaching is that which explains and inculcates Catholic doctrine. Illumine the intellect, and you can then easily captivate the heart and persuade the hearer to act according to his faith.

On Friday of last week, at Vancouver, B.C., the most important evidence in that day's session of the labor commission was the avowal made by Secretary Shenton, of the Nanaimo union of the Western Federation of Miners, that the strike of coal miners on Vancouver's Island had been engineered by the head officials of the organization at Denver as a sympathetic strike to aid the United Brotherhood of Railway Engineers. This is one

more instance of the tyranny to which unpatriotic unions submit for the sake of outsiders who have no stake in the country. Strikes may sometimes be justifiable, but mere sympathy for a foreign organization is a very poor travesty of justice.

Persons and Facts

The prayers of our readers are earnestly bespoken for the repose of the soul of Miss Elmire Drummond, sister of Rev. Father Drummond. She died on Tuesday morning, June 9, after receiving the last rites of the Church.

One of the latest converts from the Anglican ministry to the Catholic faith is the Rev. Edward Dudley Elam, M.A., Oxon, who has acted as curate at St. Augustin's church, Archway Road, N. London.

A Mass of Requiem was celebrated in Fort de France, by Bishop Cormont, May 8, the anniversary of the volcanic eruption which destroyed St. Pierre, Martinique, one year ago, with a loss of 30,000 lives. Together with the governor and his staff, military officers and foreign consuls, United States Consul Ayme, of Guadeloupe, was present.

Speaking the other night at New Castle-under-Lyme, England, General Sir T. Kelly-Kenny paid a touching tribute to the work of the Sisters of Mercy during the Boer war. The Sisters had a convent and school at Bloemfontein, but when the theatre of war shifted to that city they sent the children home and fitted up their institution as a hospital where, for months and months, they took care of the sick and wounded. Two of the nuns lost their lives nursing and tending the sick. Most of their patients were non-Catholic soldiers.

It is not strange that remarkable public interest was manifested in Paris recently in the confirmation of the young son of President Loubet at the Church of St. Philippe du Roul. The spectacle of a son's confirmation in a faith which his father is doing his best to undermine is one of the anomalies inevitable to the situation in which France has placed herself.

At recent May devotions in Father Curren's church in Wilkesbarre, Pa., the entire congregation took the pledge for a year. More than twelve hundred marched to the church, the girls and women wearing flowers, the boys in uniform and the men wearing regalia. They raised their right hands and swore to abstain from liquor and to try to prevent intemperance in others.

St. Rose congregation, Lima, O., is building a club-house. The structure will consist of two stories, with a deep basement 44 by 66 feet. In the basement there will be bathing accommodations and a large swimming school lockers. On the first floor there will be a modern gymnasium, with running track. Two rooms on this floor will be devoted to parlor games and library respectively. The second floor will have an auditorium 25 by 41 feet, with ante-rooms, ladies' parlor and dressing-rooms.

The eyes of many scientific men will, for the summer at least, be turned upon Mountain Park, an elevated point near Wilkesbarre, Pa., where Father Joseph Murgas will at once install an experiment sta-

tion for the practical testing of his recently perfected system of wireless telegraphy. The station has been provided by the Central Railroad of New Jersey, officials of which have become convinced that the system devised by the inventive priest possesses merit. Father Murgas says that he has sent messages seventy miles by land and believes he can send them much farther by sea, and that when he has perfected his system he will be able to get better results than Marconi at less expense. Father Murgas was educated in Vienna and has studied electricity for twenty years, being a fellow of the Societe Electrotechnique of Vienna. For four years he has devoted himself to the development of wireless telegraphy. He constructed at his home adjoining the church an apparatus and has obtained excellent results at the expenditure of less than \$4,000.

Reports from Chicago announce the success of an invention which will add about 100 per cent. to the value of that heart-rending invention, the telephone. It is a system with an automatic switchboard, and the great advantage is that it does away with "central" altogether. No more "hello girls," or the making of remarks over the wire to distracted patrons. In the new order of things it is only necessary to turn a small dial till you have formed the combination of figures in the number wanted. It is the same device as that used on the time clocks of a bank safe. As soon as the number is arranged you touch a bell-button and that rings the bell on the other end of the wire. Having found your man and entered into conversation, there is no danger of being interrupted at the critical point by having the wire "cut off," as happens so frequently by the system now in vogue. A conversation over the automatic telephone is kept up until both parties are ready to hang up their receivers. Besides this advantage there is the satisfaction of knowing that no idle and inquisitive young lady is drinking in your conversation. According to the officers of the new concern there will be 10,000 of their instruments in use within six months. Already they have it working in more than 10 cities of some 25,000 population, and nothing but satisfaction is expressed for the plan that eliminated "central" from the scheme of things.

Clerical News

Rev. Father Frigon, O.M.I., is preaching a mission to the parish of St. Laurent, Man.

Rev. Father O'Dwyer, O.M.I., left last week with Rev. Father Guillet, O.M.I., on a visit to Duluth.

Rev. Father Van Heertum, of Regina, is visiting the Premonstratensian brethren at De Pere, Wis.

CONSIDERATIONS ON CATHOLICISM BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

Sacred Heart Review—CCXXXIII.

As I have said, Mr. Lansing appears to know very little more about the line of the Popes than about the succession of the Mikados. He makes Bellarmine, who died in 1621, contemporary with Clement XIV., who died in 1774; he twice makes Benedict VIII., who died in 1012, contemporary with the Council of Constance, which met in 1414; and on pages 209-10 he makes it pretty plain that he does not know when Gregory the Great reigned, but that he has a vague notion that it was in the tenth century,

three hundred years after he died. Indeed, it would be no very gross exaggeration to say that he does not know when any Pope lived, except the last three or four, only that when he takes at second hand, or rather at twentieth hand, the date of some event or document connected with a particular Pope, he of course remembers, for the moment, when such a Pope was reigning. Yet this would give no assurance that he might not, a few pages later, put the Pope in question hundreds of years out of his place.

It is really interesting to watch the way in which the Lansings and Christians, and similar riffraff, go about their work of malignant falsehood. For the most part they are wholly incapable of personal research, and utterly indisposed to it. Their principle of proceeding is very simple and effective. Whatever they find to suit their purpose in earlier books of the same vulgar and virulent character as their own they at once note down. The thought of examining it, to see whether it can be verified, never comes into their heads. Nor do they ever think of inquiring what it means translated out of the language of its own time into the language of ours. Still less do they ever wish to consider how it is related to the current morality of its time, by which alone, usually, acts and opinions can be fairly judged.

Yet they know perfectly well how to apply this last principle when it turns to their own advantage. Ask Lansing, for instance, whether we can account Cranmer a good man, who burnt Baptists and Unitarians, and he would answer: "Of course he was a good man, and a martyr besides. He honestly believed Anabaptists and Arians to be aggravated heretics, and for centuries the very best men had allowed, though all had not equally urged, that obstinate heresy might lawfully be punished by fire. If Cranmer were living now and said such things, we should abhor him as an odious criminal, but how can we call him a criminal for acting in his own time on a doctrine which the very best men, even the most benignant otherwise, almost universally admitted? There were a few Catholics, and a few Lutherans, and a few Calvinists, that disputed it, but they were a mere handful. Therefore Archbishop Cranmer was a good man, a saint and martyr, although if he did the same things now we should send him to the gallows. It is most unjust to determine a man's worthiness or unworthiness by a code which in his day had scarcely come into sight."

I do not acknowledge Cranmer for a martyr, for he did not go to the stake as long as he could keep himself from it by reiterated falsehood, but the rest of Lansing's supposed answer is perfectly sound.

So also one might say: "You praise this and that English judge, living since the Reformation (say Sir Matthew Hale), as an excellent man. Yet, as Robert Hall says, the English penal code, down to about 1820, was barbarous and sanguinary almost beyond all other codes of Europe. Yet these men, whom you call excellent, and even pious and benevolent, administered this bloody code, and even more or less defended it. What talk is this?"

Lansing's answer would be (crediting him for the nonce with sense enough to make it): "Commonly a man can hardly live in a country unless he accepts its general code of morals and law. Therefore Nature wisely bends most men's opinions, and still more their formal acts, to their circumstances. Until things are ripe for a profound reform, martyrs of that reform would mostly throw away their lives. Therefore it is wisely provided that there shall be few of them, until the time comes when their exer-