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AS USUAL, NO PARTICULARS.

An item has been going the round of the Protestant papers of the United States, and has found its way into those of Canada likewise, to the effect that a missionary in Pueblo, Mexico, the Rev. Francis S. Barton, states that in a Catholic church, the locality of which is not stated, there has been a raffle for the delivery of souls from purgatory, tickets for which were sold for \$1.00. Tickets Nos 811-41, 762 are announced to have been the successful ones, and accordingly the raffle secured the delivery of three souls, the names of the successful ones being given in full. It is easily seen that the story is a fabrication, but there are striking evidences that this is the case.

NATIONAL CHURCHES.

The theory that the king or sovereign should be the head of the National Christian Church prevails in most Protestant countries, and in those also which adhere to the Eastern schism. It is the very foundation-stone of Anglicanism and Lutheranism and of the Russian Church. It has, however, brought the Lutheran Church of Wirttemberg into a very anomalous and ridiculous position. In that kingdom the king is by the Constitution made head of the Church, and he is actually called summus episcopus, or the chief bishop. Hitherto the Wirttemberg dynasty has been Protestant, and so the ridiculousness of the position has not been so apparent, but the present king has no male heir, and the successor will go to his death to a collateral branch of the family, which is Catholic. Foreseeing this, the Lutheran synod and Parliament of Wirttemberg have passed a law giving the supreme authority over the Church to a Council. Thus the accident of succession has the effect of changing the essential character of the Church. The same thing might occur at some time in regard to Anglicanism, only for the present state of the English law, which secures the succession to a Protestant to the exclusion of Catholics. It may occur, however, that the law of exclusion may be repealed, and then the same curious condition of affairs might arise in England which has actually arisen in Wirttemberg.

VAIN EFFORTS AT UNION.

In reference to the efforts which have been made during the last few years to effect a re-union between the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, by which name that denomination is known in the Northern States, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Church organs appear to despair of finding a common ground on which such union can be effected. According to the Epworth Era, which is one of the Southern organs, the difficulties of union seem to be insuperable. One trouble is that the Northern Church being the much larger body would or might require Methodist colleges to admit colored students. Such a law would close all the Methodist colleges of the South. But there is also a doctrinal difference. The Northern Methodists hold that Bishops are to retain their office only so long as the Conference may wish, while the Southerners main-

tain that the Episcopacy is essentially one of the orders of the Church, from which the Bishops cannot be deposed unless for a serious fault. A curious feature of the controversy is that while these opposite views are held, in regard to a matter which depends on divine institution, both parties still regard each other as branches of one Church, notwithstanding that the Scripture condemns schisms or sects in the Church of God. Another feature equally strange is that members of these Churches consider themselves free to believe just as much or as little of the doctrines of their respective churches as they think proper. Thus the Era says of the Southern doctrine on the Episcopate: "Personally we do not believe in this sort of Episcopacy. Thousands besides us do not believe in it." It is clear that doctrine is very indefinite in that quarter. If they want certainty on this or any other point, they must look toward the Catholic Church, which alone has authority to give definite teaching.

THE WAR CLOUD.

It was stated last week in a despatch that the Spanish and United States Governments had both accepted the Pope's mediation as arbitrator between the two powers for the purpose of averting a war between them. It has appeared by more recent despatches that the statement was unfounded, though it is true that the Holy Father expressed to both powers his desire that peace may be maintained. To this end he even endeavored to prevail upon Spain to make concessions to the Cubans such as would be satisfactory to them, and at the same time to the United States.

Spain appears to be grateful to Pope Leo XIII. for the interest he has manifested on its behalf, and the Queen Regent gave expression to this sentiment of gratitude entertained by the Spanish people; nevertheless, neither the Spanish Government nor the people of Spain seem disposed to make the concessions which are necessary, though probably, if the mediatorship of the Holy Father had been consented to, they would have accepted his decision.

President McKinley, on behalf of the United States, is now said to be indisposed to accept the Pope's arbitration. This might have been expected, for the reason assigned by the President for this unwillingness was well known to exist, independently of any statement on his part. He has declared that however unjust may be the prejudices of a large proportion of the people of the United States against any interference by the Pope in a political matter of this nature, such prejudices exist, and they cannot be controlled by the President and his Government, so that they constitute an insuperable obstacle to the acceptance of the Pope's arbitration or mediation.

The Holy Father and his Counsellors were undoubtedly aware of the existence of this difficulty in the way, and so there was not on his part any direct offer to become an arbitrator, but his desire for peace on terms honorable to both Governments was conveyed to President McKinley, as well as to the Spanish Government, but, of course, the reply of the President, though courteous, makes it impossible for the Holy Father to urge the matter any further on him, though his influence may still have some effect on Spain. That influence is used solely in the interests of humanity and Christian charity, and it would be well for both parties if it could be exerted successfully.

It now appears to be certain that war will ensue, unless the Spaniards back down from the haughty position they have hitherto kept. They have protested against any interference with their sovereign powers over Cuba, but the United States appears to be determined to intervene, professedly in the interest of humanity, and for the protection of the trade and the commercial interests of both countries.

The President's message to Congress is ready to be sent to that body, and it is understood that it will recommend the intervention of the United States at once to make Cuba free. As this will be an immediate cause of war, every preparation is at this moment being made by both powers to take down both hostile and defensive measures as soon as the declaration of war is issued. The situation is, indeed, now so grave that it is generally thought that the war must come within a few days. The probability of this is all the greater, inasmuch as on Thursday the six Great Powers of Europe delivered to President McKinley a joint note requesting him to endeavor to put an end to the critical situation, by coming

to some agreement with Spain, whereby war may be averted. The President answered the ambassadors politely, yet he maintained the same firm attitude which he has kept in his communications with Spain, insisting that the Cuban trouble be ended at once, which cannot be effected unless Spain give up her sovereignty over the island. We may, therefore, hear at any moment that hostilities have begun. In this case, it appears highly probable that the United States, with its immense resources of wealth and men, will win in the end, but this ending will not be attained without immense losses, as Spain is also well equipped for the beginning of the struggle, at all events. It has been said that a successful war is a disaster, second only to an unsuccessful one, and it is likely that the United States will find this to be the case on the present occasion.

As an immediate preparation for the expected hostilities, orders have been sent from Washington for the American consul, and the American residents to leave Havana, and the order has probably been already acted upon. This is always regarded as a proceeding which shows the imminence of war.

LATER.—The President's message was sent to Congress on Monday. It asks that body to authorize the President to take measures to secure a termination of hostilities in Cuba, and to secure the establishment of a stable government there, and to use the military and naval forces of the United States as may be necessary for those purposes.

THE HON. W. E. GLADSTONE'S ILLNESS.

The British public generally deeply regret to hear that the Hon. W. E. Gladstone is so seriously ill that but little hope is entertained of his recovery. The Liberal party is especially indebted to him for having led them so long and so ably, and for having gained for them and for the country so many important reforms.

It has been Mr. Gladstone's constant aim to secure a real equality for all creeds in the British dominions, and it is due to him that the Irish Church was disestablished. For this measure of justice the people of Ireland are deeply indebted to the great statesman, and the extension of the franchise, and the reforms effected by making the representation of the people in Parliament more equitable, are measures which have made the government of Great Britain truly a government by the people, which was not the case when the House of Commons was composed in great part of members who had been chosen by a few electors who were completely under the control of powerful and wealthy peers and landlords.

Ireland especially will always hold Mr. Gladstone in grateful remembrance for his unselfish advocacy of her cause. It is due to him that the people of England and Scotland consented to grant such concessions to Ireland's demands as have contributed greatly to the amelioration of the condition of the Irish people, though he did not succeed in gaining for them all that they feel themselves entitled to, and what is needful that they may be well governed. It is due to Mr. Gladstone's advocacy of Irish rights that even the present hostile government was obliged to consent to grant to Ireland a form of local self government, whereby the people of Ireland have a voice at last in the management of their local affairs, similar to that which the populations of England and Scotland enjoy. Though this falls far short of what Ireland needs and justly demands, it will undoubtedly contribute much towards the welfare of the people. Home Rule itself has not been attained as yet, but there is no doubt that the earnest and continuous advocacy of Home Rule by Mr. Gladstone will have its effect sooner or later, and it is the generous support given to Home Rule by the Liberal party, under Mr. Gladstone's leadership, which has made its attainment possible.

That the grand old statesman continues to be of the same opinion as heretofore in regard to Home Rule, was made evident by a letter which he wrote to Mr. John Dillon only a few days before he became seriously ill. It was sent to Mr. Dillon on the occasion of the celebration of St. Patrick's Day by a banquet at the Hotel Cecil in London. Mr. Gladstone said:

"I send a word of sympathy to the banquet on St. Patrick's Day. Your cause is in your own hands. If Ireland is disunited, her cause so long remains hopeless. If, on the contrary, she knows her own mind and is one in spirit, that cause is irresistible."

This is a touching evidence of the interest still felt by the great Liberal statesman in Ireland's welfare, and it ought to have great weight in bringing the factionists who are causing dissension in Ireland to see the folly of their course, and to re-unite with the main body of the Irish Nationalist Parliamentary party.

Mr. Dillon's reply expresses the universal feeling of gratitude which is felt throughout Ireland towards Mr. Gladstone. It was in the form of a telegram sent unanimously by the guests who were honoring St. Patrick, and was as follows:

FREEMASONRY AND LUCIFERIANISM.

The first part of a work entitled "Luciferianism or Satanism in English Freemasonry," has been sent to us by the author, the Rev. L. Fouquet of the Oblate Order, of Calgary, Alberta. The purpose of the book is to prove that devil-worship, such as has been known to exist among certain degrees of Freemasonry in Europe, is also to be found in the same order in England.

Our readers will remember that Leo Taxil, within the last few years, published most astounding accounts of the deeds of the devil-worshippers, and as he had been a leader in Freemasonry it was presumed that on his pretended conversion to Catholicity, his testimony settled the question that Luciferianism is practiced with horrible and sacrilegious ceremonies to an alarming extent among the Freemasons. To substantiate his story he brought forward the name of Diana Vaughan as his chief witness. This lady was represented to have no less a title than "Inspector General of the Palladium, and the promised bride of Asmodeus," one of the princes of Satan's Empire, having subservient to him seventy devils of inferior degree.

Many honest people were deceived by these pretended revelations of the secret doings of the Luciferians, though many others doubted much the existence of this Diana Vaughan, and even the attention of the authorities of the Catholic Church was called to the matter, and a commission of investigation was appointed by the Holy See to enquire into the question. This committee came to the conclusion that Diana Vaughan was a fraud, having existed only in Leo Taxil's fertile imagination, and it was made known that the report would be to this effect. Leo Taxil then determined that, rather than be thus ignominiously shown to be an impostor, he would himself make known that he had been guilty of an impudent fraud, and that his Diana Vaughan was an imaginary being.

Leo Taxil's book was written merely to make money, and to throw doubt upon what was known of the character of Luciferian Freemasonry; for it needed but little foresight to see that when it would come to the knowledge of the public that his revelations were fictitious; many people would push their conclusions further and conclude that all that has ever been discovered concerning the worship of satan in Freemasonry was an imposture also.

But long before Leo Taxil's time it was known that this diabolical worship existed, and Taxil's fraud only leaves the matter as it stood before he made his astounding revelations. There is no doubt that continental Freemasonry aimed, and still aims, at the destruction of Christianity, and the Rev. L. Fouquet's book sets forth many proofs, independently of Leo Taxil, that this is the case. It is also shown that in many of the degrees horrible and unlawful oaths are taken. Thus, in the British "Red covered rituals," the "Apprentice" solemnly swears to observe the regulations of the order and to keep its secrets, "under no less a penalty than to have my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the root, and my body buried in the sand of the sea at low water mark, or a cable's length from the shore where the tide regularly ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours . . . or to be branded as a wilful perjured individual."

As many persons would be shocked to take the oath with this clause, there are other "blue rituals" in which the form of oath is somewhat modified. It is needless to say that whether meant as a reality or not, such oaths are essentially evil. They are abominable if

serious, and if not serious, they are a sacrilegious use of God's Holy name, which is thus taken in vain.

Father Fouquet shows that the evil features of Freemasonry exist in its British and American forms, as well as on the continent of Europe, though it may be that the fact of its hostility to religion has been better concealed from outsiders, and as it is only to the tried Freemasons who can be relied on to carry out the anti-Christian designs of the order, that its real objects are made known, even the Freemasons themselves are kept in the dark concerning these objects which those who manage the order have in view.

Very wisely have Catholics been forbidden by many Popes successively, either to join the Masonic order, or to encourage it in any way.

Father Fouquet's book is published in plain type and on good paper, by Messrs. Cadieux and Derome, Montreal, P. Q.

UNFILIAL CHILDREN.

The New York Sun, and some other journals of that city, tell a shocking story of filial depravity which recently occurred, revealing a phase of humanity which is certainly not creditable to the civilization of our present age of progress. We can scarcely conceive that such an enormity could occur in the much misrepresented dark ages of history. At that period, before modern discoveries gave the opportunities for the general diffusion of knowledge, which has become a reality today, men were not so skilled with book learning, and only a few could be really learned, but there was at least a generally diffused knowledge of the law of God, and a respect for it, and even the spirit of chivalry which then existed aided much in leading people to do, from human motives, at least, what was honorable and just, and to pay due respect to parents and superiors.

The New York occurrence to which we refer is this: A poor woman was found dead in bed in a house where she had been living for seven weeks with friends who had commiserated her desolate condition. From a letter found in her room it became known that she had written some time before to her son, H. Carroll White, who is at present studying for the ministry in a Presbyterian theological seminary at Philadelphia. This worthy young man acknowledges having received letters from his mother, who said she was in great distress, but he tells her plainly that she must not trouble him with such letters, as he cannot help her, because his college expenses are very large, and he has to pay his own way.

He expressed sorrow at her distress, but he reminds her that he had a hard struggle to get education, toward which she had never contributed a dollar, so that he imagines himself under very little if any obligation to her. In fact, he says, she had only supported him during eight of the twenty-six years of his life, after which she had left him in homes and asylums, until "he came to the determination to dig out for himself."

To all this he adds that he must think soon of getting a wife and a home, all of which requires money, so that he must begin to lay by something for his future needs, without doing anything for his mother; though he says that after he shall have begun his work in California he may be able to do something for her. In conclusion he tells her that surely the friends who are supporting her now will give her a bed and something to eat, for he can do nothing for her, and he can write no more to her as he is very busy with his studies.

It is surely a strange state of affairs when a student for the Christian ministry can thus proclaim that he does not feel himself bound by the divine commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

The son's letter was written on March 14, so that the mother did not long survive his cruelty. They are told by the papers that she was sixty-three years of age at the time of her death. Twenty-four years ago her husband died leaving her alone to bring up her son, which she managed to do during the next six years, after which, finding she could not earn enough to support both, she placed the boy in a juvenile asylum until he was able to make out a living for himself.

For a year before her death Mrs. White, being broken down in health, could not work, and was taken into an almshouse, where she remained until a few weeks ago. She then wrote her son for help, and received the answer we have given above in brief. It appears, therefore, to be true that the

mother did not take so much care of her son during his whole childhood, as parents usually do, but it was because she was unable to do so, and certainly her poor circumstances did not exempt the son from the fulfilment of his filial duties according to the law of God. Besides, that son had his mother's care for the eight earliest years of his life at all events, and he was under the obligation of gratitude, as well as the natural obligation of filial respect, to care for his mother in her necessitous condition. The education he is acquiring will be of little benefit to him, if he has not learned this, and we fear that the ministerial work to which he intends to devote himself will have but little fruit, as it is accompanied with so much heartlessness.

It is to be feared that at the present day there is much heartlessness of the same kind that this young student has shown. We have met with instances of children who owed much more to their parents than did Mr. H. Carroll White to his mother, and who have made their parents' declining years wretched by their ingratitude and deliberate abuse, even when those parents had shown to the last only unalterable love even for their degenerate offspring.

"Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend, More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child, Than the sea monster!"

The unselfish love of such parents for their children is well described by Rudyard Kipling:

If I were drowned in the deepest sea, I know whose tears would come down to me, O, mother of mine, O mother of mine!

Almighty God has promised to dutiful children a special reward, the like of which is not attached to the fulfilment of any other commandment of the decalogue:

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou may'st be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee." (Ex. xx, 12)

GODLESS EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

In Ontario the Public schools are not entirely without the recognition of God, as prayers are recited at the opening and closing of school in 93 per cent of the schools of the Province, and in 43 per cent such religious teaching is imparted as may be drawn from the mere reading of the Bible without commentary by the teacher. The conscientious convictions of the minority are respected by a provision in the law whereby those who do not wish to be present may absent themselves from these devotional exercises. We must add to this mention of the provisions made for religious instruction in the province, that in 131 per cent of the schools it is reported by the Minister of Education that there is more full religious instruction given. This will be chiefly found to take place in the Catholic and Protestant Separate schools, so that we have still four hundred and four Public schools properly so called, or 7 per cent, in which there is ample religious instruction. We know that in many if not in most instances this occurs in the Public schools of thoroughly Catholic localities.

The provisions of the law whereby these results are secured constitute a minimum of what we can call religious teaching, but Catholics, whose convictions are that a religious education is necessary, have their principles respected by the right which they enjoy to establish Separate Catholic schools wherever their own taxes, or voluntary contributions, supplemented by a small Government grant, are sufficient for the maintenance of a school. With the exception that these Catholic schools are not in every respect placed upon an equal footing with the Public schools, these provisions afford the necessary freedom of education for which Catholics have contended, and at the same time, in no case are the rights of Protestants invaded, as they are not taxed in any form for the support of the Catholic schools. It may, indeed, be said that the rights of Protestants are over-guarded, as they are not even allowed to pay their taxes for the maintenance of Catholic schools when they send their children to them, as happens in many instances, sometimes because the Public school is so distant from their residences that it is difficult for them to send their children to it, and often because they prefer that their children should have the benefit of the moral influence existing in the Catholic schools.

There ought, of course, to be a change in the law whereby the Catholic schools should receive the taxes of those Protestants who send their children to them, the more especially as facilities are afforded to Catholics to send their children to the Public schools, and to pay their school taxes

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