

"The Infant Class rejoices in an addition to its library. This has been accomplished through the united efforts of five little workers in the Sunday School, who held a Fancy Sale, the result of which was the sum of \$17, which further donations raised to twenty dollars. The children desire all those who so kindly helped them to accept their thanks." L. M.

In our column of "Church News" last month one statement (received from a contributor) needs some modification. Instead of the Report of the Committee on Consolidation *condemning* such a measure, it expressed no opinion, but its recital of precedents appears to have pointed somewhat strongly against the utility of general synods. Owing to great pressure on our space, we must defer our review of church matters until next month.

In the course of Evening Sermons upon "Landmarks of the Christian Life," Canon DeVeber will deliver the last, and the Rector that upon Visitation of the Sick.

The Easter Music will include Morley's Te Deum, Stainer's Anthem, "Awake thou that sleepest," and Vincent's "As it began to dawn."

The Confirmation will be held on Monday evening, April 25th, by the Bishop Coadjutor.

THE TRIAL OF KING CHARLES I.

When the visitor to the palace of Versailles, after passing through the quiet marble hall where William I was crowned Emperor of Germany turns into the eastern corridor, his mind is overwhelmed by the number and beauty of the statues on the right hand and on the left. He gives up the effort to fix in his memory a distinct impression of each work of art. But one figure arrests his attention. It is a little man with a sword and a great flowing wig. Can any one doubt whose personality is here represented? It is Louis XIV—*le grand monarque*—the man who said "L'etat c'est moi"—I am the state;—the greatest egotist of modern times. The consequences of his tyranny fell, not on himself, but on his descendants and are too well known to require mention here. It was the same quality of egotism which at an earlier period led to the execution of Charles I. and to the temporary and finally to the utter exclusion of his family from the throne of England. If history is philosophy teaching by example it would be well for those in possession of power, who follow self interest as their guiding principle, to consider the consequences of a disregard of the rights of others, even although those consequences may not come in the form of—

"That two handed engine at the door

"Stands ready to strike once and strike no more."

In looking at the execution of the king from the standpoint of constitutional law we must first form a clear conception of this law by which actions are to be tested. Law has been defined by Blackstone to be "a rule of civil conduct, laid down by the supreme power in the state, commanding what

is right and prohibiting what is wrong." This rule affords little assistance in those cases where the question at issue is where the supreme power resides. Can the term "law" be applied to a system of rules which are not enforced by an external power? Many persons believe vaguely in a constitutional law by which the rights of states with reference to each other and the rights of ruler and subject may infallibly be determined.

The existence of such a belief may have some value in the maintenance of public peace and in the preservation of private rights. But in reality the law which we are considering is simply a system whose rules are invoked to justify a course which the dominant party has determined to pursue.

When in the neighboring republic, within the memory of this generation, war's lightning flashed upon the southern sky, a point of constitutional law was at issue. The success of the North established the point that all men are free and equal.

But this expression is the key-note of the declaration of independence, one is tempted to ask where is the difficulty here? It is found in the interpretation given by the Supreme Court of the United States in the Dred Scott case to the term "all men." Chief Justice Taney delivering the judgment of the court said "A black man has no rights which a white man is bound to respect". A burst of indignation throughout the North followed this judicial utterance. And yet in thus laying down the law the chief justice was strictly pursuing his duty as an expounder of the constitution. The ambiguity of the term "men" caused the confusion of thought upon this question which prevailed in the popular mind. Read in the ordinary sense it sustained the view of the North. But the sense which a court of law was bound to adopt, was that sense which it conveyed to those who framed the constitution. To determine its sense to their minds is to fix its meaning forever. But the idea which they intended to convey does not admit of any controversy at all. A black person to them was no man but simply a chattel to be bought and sold. The admission of the blacks to political equality with whites was no part of the times. The point which they intended to establish, and which they did establish, was that monarchy and aristocracy should gain no real foothold in the New World. But when in the course of time the expansion of the slave-holding power threatened the political supremacy of the North a new interpretation was given to the term favorable to Northern interests.

It was the duty of all parties to abide by the interpretation given the constitution by the Supreme Court. But war, the final arbiter, has settled the question in accordance with justice, but contrary to constitutional law.

Bearing in mind then that we are not dealing with a system determinate in its character, and of universal obligation, let us consider the case from the standpoint of the King. There was a venerable maxim upon which he relied "The king can do no wrong." In one of the year books, counsel says, arguing, "If the king should kill a man of malice aforethought, nevertheless he should not answer for it in a court of law." To this the chief justice agreed, "and yet" he added "It would be ill advised." A maxim such as this resembles a proverb. No sensible man would think of regulating his conduct by proverbs. They are useful, not to determine our conduct, but