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New Zealand Tablet.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1874.

THE ENGLISH ELECTIONS AND THE CATHOLICS.

NOTHING surprised the Liberal party more than the result of the recent elections; and indeed it is very probable that the Conservatives themselves were astonished at their great success. The Liberal party fancied that the Catholic vote would be in their favor, come what might; whilst in justice to Mr DISRAELI it must be said that instead of courting the Catholics, he took elaborate pains to convince the nation that he rejected an alliance with them. Nevertheless, the Conservative success has been mainly owing to those whom their leader had almost insulted. And why? Why did the Catholics fall away from the party to which it was supposed they naturally belonged, and help to put in power their hereditary enemies? The reason is obvious: The Liberal party, wittingly or unwittingly, it matters not, had been playing into the hands of the godless party in the Empire; whilst, with all their faults, the Conservatives had clung tenaciously to the sound principle that the education of a people should be based on, and informed by, religion and Christian teaching.

Here is to be found the true reason of the support given by Catholics to Conservative candidates during the late elections in England and Scotland. The Liberal party did not calculate on the sincerity, depth and earnestness of the religious principles of Catholics; and thought that they would abandon the great cause of denominational education for the sake of party; and that nothing would induce them to vote for members of the party of their old oppressors. But, as they now know to their cost, they grievously miscalculated. With Catholics religion is paramount to every other consideration; and after the things directly religious, comes the Christian education of their children. The Conservatives were pledged to denominational education, and therefore the Catholic vote was cast in their favor.

To us the policy of the Catholics of Great Britain is interesting and instructive. Wherever Liberal candidates, pledged to denominational education, presented themselves, the Catholics supported the Liberals. But in those constituencies where the only candidates pledged to denominational education were Conservatives, the Catholics, it may be said, unanimously voted for the Conservatives. In the constituencies, however, such as Salford, where all the candidates were in favor of purely secular education, the Catholics abstain from voting; and thus in many places the Liberals lost the powerful aid which used in bygone contests to place them far ahead of their Conservative rivals. Catholics supported the Denominationalists everywhere, and obtained from voting at all, rather than afford the least aid to a Secularist. There may have been an exception or two, where one of the candidates was extremely objectionable. In such a case, Catholics had presented to them a choice of evils, and of course they chose the lesser. Suppose, for example, such a man as Mr WHALLEY—a member of the Liberal party, but at the same time a fanatical hater of Catholicity—was opposed by a Secularist who was both a gentleman and a scholar, and a moderate man generally, it is very probable that in such an event Catholics would vote for the Secularist so moderate and gentlemanly, in order to keep out the almost insane bigot, and prevent him from disturbing the decorum of the House of Commons.

But, in ordinary cases, when all the candidates for any particular constituency were Secularists, the Catholics refused to incur the responsibility of supporting any of them. In pursuing this course, they were only discharging an obvious duty. Except in such a case as that imagined above, they would have been guilty of a very grievous crime, indeed, if they helped into power men who were pledged to establish a system of education which could only result in training the rising generation of Englishmen in godlessness. And let us bear in mind that we, placed in similar circumstances, are bound to pursue a similar line of conduct. Ordinarily speaking, we cannot vote for any man pledged to a secular system

of education. The only exception would be the case of two candidates, both Secularists, of whom one, for reasons peculiar to himself, would be so objectionable, that it would almost amount to an imperative duty to vote for his opponent.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF OTAGO.

THE Report of the Education Department for the year 1873 now lies before us. From this document it appears that during last year there were in operation in the Province 143 elementary schools, having 221 teachers, 11,451 pupils, and an average daily attendance of 7,425. Of these 11,451 pupils, 6,242 were boys, and 5,209, girls. Of the 221 teachers, 144 were schoolmasters, and 17 male pupil teachers—total male teachers, 151; 36 schoolmistresses, 9 teachers of sewing, and 25 female pupil teachers: total female teachers, 60. Besides the elementary schools, amongst which are classed 5 grammar schools, there were two high schools in Dunedin. The Rector of the Otago High School reported that the average quarterly enrolment of boys was between 107 and 108; and the Lady Principle reported that at the Girls' Schools the average quarterly enrolment was 126. At the end of the year there were 17 pupils resident with the Lady Principle; but there were none resident with the Rector.

In the elementary schools, 1008 were learning the higher rules of arithmetic; 257, algebra and geometry; 4315, English grammar; 2354, British history; 383, Latin; 22, Greek; 270, French; 4867, geography; 345, book-keeping; 1997, mapping; 2536, sewing (girls); and 2768 singing from notes.

The total expenditure on District Schools amounted during 1873, to £30,169 6s 9d; of which sum the Government contributed £17,452 15s 6d; whilst the several districts raised from school fees £10,642 3s 2d, and from contributions, £2,074 8s 1d; total, £12,716 11s 3d. To this is to be added the expenditure and receipts of the two High Schools. The expenditure of these amounted to £3,333 10s 10d; of which sum the Government contributed £1607 10s 6d; the balance £1726 0s 4d was made up from the fees of the pupils. There were also 9 provincial scholars receiving free education, and a payment each of £30 per annum for three years.

The total number of pupils attending Government schools in the province, amounted to 11,693; the total expenditure, independently of buildings, to £33,728 17s 7d; of which the Government contributed £19,330 6s; and school fees and voluntary contributions amounted to £16,442 11s 7. The voluntary contributions, however, are small, amounting to only £2074 8s 1d. These figures would be incomplete did we not also state that last year the Provincial Council voted a sum of £20,000, for school buildings. There is one other statement necessary,—now that the site and buildings have been provided at the public expense, the girls' High School is nearly self-supporting, but not altogether so; it is still several hundred pounds behind the expenditure: but the boys' High School has put the public to an expense of more than £1300, to help to educate 108 lads—the sons of well-to-do people—after having provided school buildings, &c. for them.

No one can read the above statement without coming to the conclusion that the Provincial Government of Otago, and its people, have made great and generous efforts in the cause of education. Independently of the very large university endowments, an expenditure of beyond £50,000 in one year on popular education is very large indeed for a population of 30,000 souls. And a school-roll of 12,000 children out of a population of 80,000 widely scattered through the Province, speaks well for the appreciation entertained by the people, of the value and importance of education.

We are really sorry to be obliged to say one word in censure, or in any way to detract from the significance and grandeur of these figures. But duty compels us to protest once more against a system which though most generously supported out of a genuine love of education, is calculated, we are convinced, to lead ultimately to the injury of the community. We see in it two things to be censured. One is the absence of the denominational principle. If education be not founded on, and animated by, clear and well defined and catechetical religious teaching, it will lead to infidelity and fanaticism, undermine all the securities of social order, and endanger both life and property. We also notice that for nearly 6000 females, there are only 60 female teachers, of