

prejudicial to the faith of Catholic children. And cases might readily occur in which teachers would foster scepticism or unbelief. There is a multitude of oft-recurring Scripture terms which have a Protestant as well as a Catholic meaning. Take, for instance, such words as 'church,' 'penance,' 'forgiveness,' 'grace,' 'salvation,' 'faith,' etc. Here, in the act of giving 'historical' or 'ethical' explanations, a teacher might, consciously or unconsciously, and under the aegis of the State, as effectually denominationalise a public school in certain matters of doctrine as if it were the Sunday school of a particular sect. This, as the Archbishop of Melbourne has shown, has been done in several flagrant instances in the State schools of Victoria. It was done deliberately, and on a wholesale scale in Ireland, where great numbers of the national schools were turned into proselytising institutions whose express scope and purpose—as avowed by the Anglican Archbishop Whately—was to wean little Irish Papists from the 'errors of Popery.'

A somewhat similar outrage on the consciences of Catholics, Jews, and others was perpetrated in 'the little red school-houses' of the United States. The story, was briefly told in the course of an editorial article in the 'Biblical World' for October, 1902. 'The fact,' it says, 'that the Bible is generally excluded from the public schools of the United States, where formerly it was used as a book of devotion and instruction, is not to be attributed to a growing disregard of religion. . . This situation has been created by the friends of the Bible rather than by its enemies; for if the friends of the Bible could have agreed among themselves as to how the Bible should be taught in the schools, their influence would have secured the continuance of such instruction. But it came to pass that the Bible was used in the schools, not only for general and ethical religious instruction, but also for the inculcation of sectarian and theological ideas. Protestant teachers taught the Bible in a way which antagonised the Roman Catholics; and teachers of the several Protestant denominations interpreted the Bible to the children from their own point of view. But the public money which is raised by general taxation for the support of the common schools comes from men of widely differing ecclesiastical creeds and connections, and cannot therefore be used for the dissemination of sectarian tenets.'

But no degree of harmony among the members of Bible-in-schools Leagues could justify the forcible extraction of taxes from people for the teaching and endowment of a form of religion which their conscience cannot accept. Moreover, every tenet of religion is, either to religionists or non-religionists, sectarian. 'An unsectarian religion would,' as our Hierarchy remarked, 'in its last analysis, be a religion which takes no particular view of, or attitude towards, religion, which is an absurdity. Take the simplest form of religion—belief in the existence of God. This is sectarian to the Atheist, the Agnostic, and the non-religionist generally, just as their views on religion—which are usually as clearly defined, so far as they go, as those of Jew or Christian—are, to the Theist, sectarian.' Learned non-Catholics of every creed and non-creed have torn the idea of an unsectarian or undenominational instruction in religion to tatters and flung it to the winds of heaven. In his 'Allgemeine Pädagogik' ('General Pedagogy,' 1901), for instance, Professor Ziegler, of the University of Strassburg, says: 'An undenominational instruction in religion, which is advocated by some, is nonsense; for every religion is denominational.' An English writer ('Fortnightly Review,' May, 1896) scores it as 'a lifeless, boiled down, mechanical, unreal teaching of religion.' The 'non-sectarianism' professedly advocated by the Bible-in-schools League was spoken of as follows by an Agnostic member of the London School Board in the same issue of the 'Fortnightly': 'The result of unsectarian teaching is to establish a new form of religion which has nothing in common with His-

torical Christianity or any other form of Christian teaching. By taking away everything to which anyone objects, they leave something which is really worthless. They will have no Creed and no Catechism, and the result is that every teacher is his own Creed and his own Catechism. The result of unsectarian teaching is a colorless residuum, which I should think would be as objectionable to the earnest Christian as it is contemptible to the earnest unbeliever.' The teaching of the Protestant or any other version of the Bible by State officials in our public schools, with explanations of the text, would as necessarily emerge in outright sectarianism in New Zealand as in other countries. We shall in due course see that the trouble would by no means be remedied by omitting the explanations, whether 'literary,' or 'historical,' or 'ethical.'

Notes

An 'Intolerant Majority'

When a discussion on religious questions has been wagging a voluble tongue for a week or two in a London daily, the probabilities are that in due course a belated echo thereof will be heard in the columns of some New Zealand contemporary. Certain outbursts of fanaticism in the 'yellow' districts of the North of Ireland led to odd spasms of controversy in the British metropolitan press. Here is an extract from a letter by a non-Catholic military officer in which he scores recriminatory charges against the 'intolerant majority' of the population of the Green Isle:—

'So far from being an "intolerant majority" as described by a correspondent in your issue of Friday last, the Irish Catholics are the most tolerant majority I have ever seen. For forty-seven years my father was Dean of Elphin, in the midst of a population where the Catholics were twenty to one. Neither he nor any of my family ever experienced anything but respect; intolerance and insult were unheard of. I think I may say the same for my family in the Queen's County for 250 years. Intolerance and insult, I regret to say, come from the Protestant minority. I was quartered at Belfast on two Twelfths of July. Both times the disturbances were commenced by the Orangemen. At Enniskillen, where I was quartered, it was the same. The real grievance of Irish Protestants is that they can no longer bully their Catholic neighbors; that the latter are free and equal; that the Catholic clergy have influence over their flocks, while the Protestant clergy have none over theirs.

'F. T. WARBURTON, Lieut.-Col.

'National Liberal Club.'

King Richard and the Sawbath

On Sunday last Mr. Seddon was caught in flagranti in Dunedin riding a horse—a guaranteed heavy-weight carrier, we presume. He had apparently forgotten that he was in a place where many people of limited education confound Sunday, the first day of the week, with the Jewish Sunday, which is Saturday, or the last day of the week. On Monday morning, however, our robust Premier received, through the local press, a hot-shot reminder that he is a Sawbath-breaker, and that his perambulations on the weight-carrier caused sore scandal to a portion of the community. Yet rumor hath it that even the clergy of some of the scandalised ones have been known to go a-horseback on the Lord's day, and we have a shrewd suspicion that the writer or writers of the letter of protest against the Premier had food cooked and beds made and floors swept on the Sawbath. We are once more reminded of the complaint of a worthy old dame who was horrified at seeing the late Queen Victoria driving to church from Balmoral one sunny Sunday morning. 'But,' objected a loyal subject in defence, 'did not the Lord and His Apostles pluck ears of wheat and shell them on the Sabbath day?' 'Aweel, they