

A Correction

Some years ago (so the story runneth) a Nebraska weekly paper charged a hard-hitting militant politician—one Major Starkwright—with being a man of pie-crust promises. 'He was never known to keep his word,' said the weekly. It was during the agony of a hard-fought electoral campaign. Some days later the Major—according to promise—called to the office of the offending newspaper. He 'reasoned' with the editor—his most convincing arguments being of the kind that are bound in calf or driven home with what is known in the language of the ring as 'a dirty left' and 'a straight-jobbing right.' In its very next issue the Nebraska weekly said: 'We regret having done Major Starkwright an injustice, and cheerfully print this acknowledgment. The Major promised to visit this office, and has done so. He is a man of his word, polished and scholarly, and can kick like a brindled ox.'

We never had much idea of the quality of justice that is done, so to speak, at the point of the bayonet, or under the ungentle suasion or knuckle-dusters or tanned cowhide. For this reason we have consistently set (too often, alack! in vain) the non-Catholic religious press of New Zealand the example of the open column and of spontaneous correction of any error regarding other creeds that may have inadvertently crept into our columns. In our issue of the 6th inst., for instance, we stated that the Rev. J. J. Cairney, at a recent meeting of the Dunedin Presbytery, opposed the Bible-in-schools scheme. A careful re-reading of the report, however, shows that the opposition displayed by him was to the following resolution: "That the presbytery promises to support the (Bible-in-schools) League financially by recommending to the congregations within its bounds to give a retiring collection for this purpose, or otherwise to give the people encouragement and opportunity to support the League." The report really contains no expression of opinion by Mr. Cairney on the merits or demerits of the project for having a Bowdlerised version of King James's Bible taught by public officials, at the public expense, in the public schools of New Zealand. Mr. Cairney is entitled to this correction, which we insert of our own accord, and without request or pressure from any source.

Wanted to Know

Bishop Montgomery (Anglican) said in a recent address in Tasmania: 'Nowhere is a gentleman so much needed as in the mission field. . . . If we are to succeed in the mission field, we can only do so by sending out those who have the instincts of gentlemen as missionaries.' The failure of Protestant missions to Catholic countries is to be chiefly attributed to other causes besides the evil manners and generally low social standing of the 'evangelists' themselves. The more logical Catholic mind, for instance, sees no mental halting place between Catholicism and infidelity. But, incidentally, contempt or dislike for the Reformed propaganda is fostered by the manner in which (as we can testify from personal knowledge) many missionaries—who fall notably short of Bishop Montgomery's requirements—ram their wooden heads against the institutions and customs of the country and shout and publish coarse and violent attacks upon the cherished religious sentiments of the people. And then, we presume, they pose as martyrs if any resentment is shown towards displays of evil taste and bad manners.

The Italian and the Spaniard, for instance, know a gentleman as far as they can see him. And no people are quicker to pick out a boor and set him in his proper social grade. Recently in Spain popular resentment ran high in protest against the oratorical violence of some of those enthusiasts who were plying the profession of proselytisers without having taken the

same precaution of furnishing themselves beforehand with the instincts of gentlemen. The upshot of the affair was the enforcing of an evil law—which was once in full action in the British Isles—prohibiting the use of external emblems of a religious character on churches not belonging to the State creed. In the present case a difficulty is also said to have arisen over an inscription on the church-front, which (it is contended) was offensive in intent or implication. The affair gave rise to an angry query in the London 'Guardian': 'By what right does the Spanish Government order two crosses to be removed from the English church recently consecrated at Barcelona?' The 'Catholic Times' made haste to give the following reply: 'By the same right that the British Government orders that no Catholic shall occupy the throne, nor become Lord Chancellor of England, or Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. By the same right, too, that the British constitution calls all Catholics idolaters and blasphemers, and insults believers in the doctrine of Transubstantiation. By the same right, too, that British law forbids legacies for Masses for deceased persons, and calls prayers for the dead a superstitious use. And more of the kind; but why go on? The reverend gentleman trusts "that those in authority will bring pressure to bear, and see that a protest is made on behalf of the English Church-people dwelling in Spain." If he is a man of logical principles, he will himself protest on behalf of English Catholics dwelling in England, and also of their brethren dwelling in—or rather flying from—Ireland.'

Things are, in some respects, moving nowadays at a pace that is calculated to scare sober-minded people out of their seven senses. But the spirit of tolerance—which implies changes in the inner sentiments and feelings of large bodies of people—sometimes drags along with the slow and leisurely crawl of a bullock-team along a Taranaki by-road, or like some of those Swiss glaciers or frozen rivers of ice, that grind their slow way through the upland valleys at the rate of four to seven miles a year. But, thank God, it does move. 'As late as 1844,' says the noted American Protestant divine, Dr. Startuck, in the 'S.H. Review' of June 24, 'a Catholic convert in Sweden was virtually put to death, dying indigent and broken-hearted in Copenhagen, the year after his own country had disfranchised him, confiscated his goods, and banished him.' Sweden's pace in toleration has been conspicuously slow, but she has moved far from the spirit which animated the legislation of 1843. In England, till 1870, it was a crime, punishable by two years' imprisonment, or by a fine of £500, for a priest to conduct the marriage ceremony for two Catholics, if one of the contracting parties had not been a Catholic for fully twelve months. And the famous Yelverton trial in the sixties and a later case at Enniskillen proved that the law was no dead letter. Here again the world has moved to pleasant places along the paths of peace.

Germany has still to travel far before equal religious liberty will be enjoyed by the subjects of the Kaiser. At the close of the last session of the Reichstag a Bill was dropped which had for its object to secure personal and corporate liberty of worship throughout the Empire. 'As an instance of what takes place,' says the 'Catholic Times,' 'we may say that the three hundred Catholics of the industrial town of Meerane, in the Kingdom of Saxony, which counts thirty thousand inhabitants, petitioned the Saxon Ministry to be allowed to have Mass six times in the year. They waited nine months for an answer. Then the answer came. It was to the effect that the Ministry failed to see the need of a Catholic service in the town, and that the holding of such a service would disturb the religious peace. A priest who was staying for a few weeks at Heiligen-damm, a watering place in Mecklenburg-Schwerin, asked permission of the authorities to say Mass at the local