

before the first school session, (b) at the end of the first session, (c) before the second session, and (d) at the end of the second session, religious instruction may be given at present in State schools. These ample opportunities do not satisfy those whose great ambition is to Protestantise the State schools, to transfer from their own shoulders to the State the duty of giving religious instruction, and to lay the foundation of a State religion.

Varia

The February number of 'Evangelical Christendom' (a non-Catholic missionary organ) has been placed in our hands by an esteemed Northern friend. In tone and substance it is a refreshing contrast to another non-Catholic religious organ which reposes upon our desk, and which is a potent reminiscence of the old electioneering days, when rotten eggs were considered sound arguments. The missionary organ makes as a rule not unkindly reference to Catholics; the other speaks poniards, and every word stabs; and if (as Shakespeare said of a bitter tongue) its breath were as terrible as its language, it would infect the polar star. The missionary journal states (on the authority of 'the latest and most trustworthy statistics') that there are in the world 272,000,000 Catholics and 166,000,000 Protestants. 'The unhappy and lamentable divisions which exist amongst the Christians are', says one earnest writer in its columns, 'the chief hindrances to the members growing into the likeness of their Lord and Master'. In Madrid (according to another writer) four such incompatible foreign denominations as the Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Lutherans unite at times in public prayer. 'No better proof', says the writer, 'could be given of the absolute unity in faith and aims of these different denominations—an 'absolute unity in faith and aims' which (the writer hints) is far finer-spun and better-knit than 'the alleged uniformity of Roman Catholicism'! For the rest, we are interested in the information, given at first hand, that Catholic Poles are very refractory to Evangelical preaching, and that in Roumania 'the Roman Church has a huge propaganda, and is sweeping many into its net'.

The Wise

In the missionary journal mentioned in the last paragraph, there occurs a condemnatory reference to the use of incense and lighted candles in processions in Spain. It recalls to our mind the reply which an Anglican clergyman made some years ago when admonished to abandon these 'distinctly unwise' adjuncts to ceremonial, in deference to the 'opinion' of his archbishop. 'In the New Testament', wrote the clergyman in reply, 'only two classes of people are specially termed wise—the Wise Men, who offered incense ceremonially, and the Wise Virgins, who carried processional lights'.

'Distinctly unwise!' That deft reply is dynamite to the Evangelical, as it was to the archiepiscopal, 'opinion'.

Home Rule

Even Bismarck—the 'man of blood and iron'—declared in the German Imperial Parliament in 1879 that 'no real statesman desires to make combat a permanent institution'—ever since the Union, which (says Lécky) has left to the hapless western isle 'a legacy of enduring bitterness'. John Bright said shortly after the Great Famine:—

'You have toiled at this Irish difficulty session after session, and some of you have grown almost from boyhood to grey-headed old men since it first met you in your legislative career. And yet there is not in ancient or modern history a picture so humiliating as that which Ireland presents to the world at this moment'.

The picture is as true to-day as it was in the days of the coffin-ships, when the great tribune of the

British people spoke. Now at length an effort is about to be made to govern Ireland somewhat in accordance with Irish ideas, and to abandon the policy of combat and repression that has been pursued towards the Cinderella nation ever since the day when the Act of Union was carried 'by force and fraud'. 'No party', says last Saturday's Dunedin 'Evening Star', can hope to block a reform the failure to remedy which has ceased to be a duty, and is fast becoming a scandal. Men of all parties and creeds are agreed upon the necessity of change. Ireland to-day is a reflection alike upon the wisdom and common sense of the nation of which she forms a part. It has ever been so. England has never, whether under Catholic or Protestant domination, ruled her near neighbor successfully. The rollicking humor and defiance of the people was happily expressed in that famous ballad which in 1688 was roared forth at every camp fire and barrack the country over:

"Dare was an old prophecy found in a bog,
Lillibulero, bullen a-la,
Ireland shall be ruled by an ass and a dog,
Lillibulero, bullen a-la,
And now dis prophecy is come to pass,
Lillibulero, bullen a-la,
For Talbot's de dog and James is de ass,
Lillibulero, bullen a-la."

'And', adds our local evening contemporary, 'the dog and the ass are not yet expelled'.

In France

How times are changed! Only a few months ago the atheistic news agencies in Paris held possession of the submarine cable and made its atoms vibrate to the ends of the earth with gross and persistent misrepresentations of the real situations as between the Church and the Christ-hunters in France. Falsehood (as an eastern proverb has it) skips round the earth while truth is getting her shoes on. It was even so in the present case. But you cannot deceive all the people all the time. The great body of the secular press throughout the world now at length realises that the struggle in France is not a mere conflict of interests between Church and State, but a war of no-quarter which official atheism is waging against Christianity. The game is up. And so 'the cold chain of silence' has fallen on the atheistic strand in the French cable. And yet there is much—that is even sensational—to tell. A state approaching that of civil war exists, for instance, over wide regions of France. All Brittany, for instance, is 'up' against the seizure of its churches, seminaries, and ecclesiastical dwellings. At S. Anne d'Auray, over 20,000 persons assembled to defend their beloved shrine. It took 4000 armed soldiers to break down the barricades and seize the sacred edifice. In another town 150 persons were wounded—a record that resembles some of the 'great' battles of the South African war. Page after page of 'Le Nouvelliste de Bretagne' (a daily paper published at Rennes)—numerous copies of which are before us—is filled with reports of such great popular demonstrations against those who are 'hunting Christ' out of the country and seizing churches, and driving bishops and clergy out of their dwellings and students out of the seminaries at the point of the bayonet. But on these matters, the Paris cable agencies—so glib and voluble a few weeks ago—are now (at least as regards New Zealand) as silent as the Sphinx.

In Old Madrid

Christ-hunting is neither so easy nor so profitable a pastime for Freemason politicians south, as it is north, of the Pyrenees. Five Ministries went beneath the surface in a few months over an effort to penalise—some more, some less—the religious Orders. And last week came the brief but momentous announcement by cable from Madrid: 'The Spanish Conservatives triumphed at the elections.' In the last Parliament they

"MERIT is behind success." That's why "Hondai-Lanka" is so much used. It's tea with quality and flavor.

"DEED AYÉ! Twa spanefu's o' 'Cock o' the North' gang as faur as three o' maist ither teas!"