

and, that it behoves all New Zealand electors to vote 'yellow' unless they are prepared to wake up some fine Monday morning and find the wealth-holding six-sevenths of the population in the thrall of the other seventh that are not; as a body, so highly endowed with this world's goods.

Such is, in general substance, the preposterous fairy legend which wide-awake and intelligent New Zealanders are asked to swallow on the approach of each general election. Samivel Weller's suspicions were aroused by the curious coincidence of the disappearance of a litter of puppies, and the appearance of 'weal pies' upon the dinner-table at the inn. And the suspicions of the free and independent New Zealand voter might well be aroused by this curious coincidence: that these election-time 'discoveries' of Papal chuckleheadedness are generally made by an underground association, the members of which bind themselves by an oath, taken on bended knees and with the Bible in their hands, to do what lies in their power to so far deprive Catholics of the benefits of the Emancipation Act as to exclude them from parliament and municipal life. The legend about the scandalous predominance of 'Papishes' in our public service comes chiefly into evidence on the twelfth of July preceding the general elections. During the following September, sundry anonymous writers of letters to the press get 'onaisy in their minds' about the heavy dose of 'Popery' in the public service. Their anguish increases—and so does the direness of their prophecies of woe—as the election-day approaches. When it is over, they suffer a rather sudden recovery, and the distressful condition of the public service no longer rides them like a nightmare until the circling years bring another general election around. And then—*da capo!* This year the customary anonymous September lucubrations have been slightly anticipated. An article, said to be contributed by "Celt," appeared in the *Tapanui Courier*. It was the customary bit of post-July electioneering, differing from the ordinary run of such lucubrations only in its greater length and more intense ferocity. There is the clumsy pretence—which we have noticed in several other such productions and which will deceive no person of anything like normal mental acumen—to discuss the Home Rule question, which is dragged in apropos of nothing at all. The real and transparently evident drift and object of the article is to hound up local passion against Catholics, in view of the approaching elections. The article in question (which fills two long columns with quite a remarkably neat fit) is marked throughout by the bald illiteracy that the world expects as a matter of course in No-Popery fiction. It furnishes pathetic evidence of the unfitness of the writer to discuss the Home Rule issue, owing to his surprising ignorance of even the Tory side of the question. He merely asserts, in a very loud and angry voice, sundry shibboleths of the July platform and of the No-Popery 'penny dreadful.' Of course no attempt was made to substantiate any of his assertions by proof; and of fifty-three statements of his examined by us, the bulk of them are false, and the rest not true. Some of these statements will be touched upon in the course of this article. Others will probably be dealt with in due time in the columns of the *Tapanui Courier*.

We are willing to make the most generous allowances for the unconscious error and for the credulity which at times represent Catholics (so to speak) as a mixture of fool, knave, and demon, and trick their priesthood out with (figurative) horns and tail and cloven hoof. The delightful simplicity of the writer of the article in question—or his bold contempt for the intelligence of Tapanui readers—may be sufficiently gauged by his statement that the 'leading churchmen' of 'the Church of Rome' in Ireland 'worship the Pope and want a prince of their own body enthroned as King of Ireland.' We are likewise twice treated to a rehash of the bogus interview with Cardinal Logue in New York. But the outstanding feature of the article 'contributed by "Celt"' is the more than Mahomedan ferocity of its abuse of Irish Catholics, and especially of the Irish Catholic priesthood, who are treated to furies of rough invective, and made (of course without any attempt at proof) the cause of their country's poverty and discontent and unexampled decay. We think we can fairly claim to have waded through more of the 'literature' of the Orange lodges than, perhaps, any 'brother' of the order within the seas of Australasia. And with all our vast experience of that terrible stuff, we are free to confess that we have seldom come across anything marked by more deplorable mendacity, bitterness, and all uncharity than the pretended article on Home Rule that blistered two whole columns of the *Tapanui Courier*. Recognising the lengths to which

honest fanaticism may drive some men, we nourish no unkindly personal feeling towards those convinced enthusiasts who openly pour waterspouts of abuse on 'Popery' from the July platform. But it is difficult to believe in the good-faith and 'honor-bright' of the assailant who attacks, like the armed burglar, with a mask upon his face, and who (as the Rev. Mr. Hewitson said recently in Dunedin) fires at you from behind a hedge of anonymity. From such Ishmaels, the character of no man and no woman is safe. Our Parliament has passed its verdict upon the anonymous accuser; our courts of justice (through Major Keddell) have denounced him; the Bruce County Council recently scourged him; the social usage of every Christian country ostracises him as a coward; nay, even the Emperor Trajan, who tortured and slaughtered Christians on a vast scale, yet had enough manliness in his pagan heart to refuse to tolerate, against his victims, the slings and arrows of the masked accuser. 'Literary roughs' is the epithet flung by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the genial Poet of the Breakfast Table, against the anonymous newspaper or lampoon accuser. And (says Dr. Maurice Francis Egan) 'it is understood in good society that a man who writes a letter which he is afraid to sign with his own name, would lie or steal.' And, adds he, 'I believe he would.' Dr. Parker (Congregationalist), of the City Temple (London), attributed anonymous accusations to 'either impudence or cowardice.' The great Tory statesman, Disraeli (Earl Beaconsfield) also had a fine contempt for the masked assailants that volley accusations in the newspaper press. 'We can only view with contemptuous levity,' said he, 'the mischievous varlet who pelts us with mud as we walk along, and then hides behind a dust-bin.'

Of the multitude of variegated and unproven assertions made in the article 'contributed by "Celt"' we have forwarded, for publication in the *Tapanui Courier*, a first communication dealing with the following: (1) The alleged undue preponderance of Catholics in the public service; (2) the statements that the 'Romish' Church and 'priestcraft' are the causes of Ireland's poverty and discontent and depopulation and decay; and (3) the question of crime in 'the most distressful country.' Other issues will be raised by us in due course, should a discussion ensue in the columns of the *Courier*.

(1) One of the enlivening 'wisdoms' of Sancho Panza runneth thus: 'Let every man take care what he talks, or how he writes, of other men, and not set down at random, hab-nab, higgledy-piggledy, whatever comes into his noddle.' Even the least reputable citizens—whether they wear or don't wear masks—are rightly expected, as a matter of elementary justice, to take the trouble of making careful and extended inquiries before making statements in a public print calculated to raise the red devil of sectarian distrust and hate among a peaceable, law-abiding, and God-fearing population composed of persons of many creeds who are living together in mutual esteem and good-will, in a pleasant and prosperous rural community. But the Masked Man of Tapanui unfortunately preferred to proper investigation the random, hab-nab, higgledy-piggledy method in its deplorable tirade. Our distinguished friend, Mark Twain, says in his *Joan of Arc*: 'There is no sense in forming an opinion when there is no evidence to form it on. If you build a person without bones in him, he may look fair enough to the eye, but he will be limber and cannot stand up; and I consider that evidence is the bones of an opinion.' Our excitable—not to say hysterical—Tapanui friend forgot to put the bones—that is, the evidence—into the sweeping opinions which he uttered about things and persons 'Romish,' in language that was so frequent and painful and free. For him, random and unsustainable assertion stands for evidence, and alleged gossip is 'confirmation strong as proof of Holy Writ.' His gratuitous assertions throughout in regard to the 'Romish' Church (he habitually uses the offensive theological slang 'Romish') are amply met by gratuitous denials and a call for proof. His statements in regard to the 'Romish' Church and the public service are, furthermore, dealt with in the following challenges: Let him furnish proof—to the satisfaction of a committee to be jointly chosen by him (or his representative) and us—of the following statements: (1) That the proportion of Catholic men in the police force is the result of 'religious influence' being 'brought to bear on State appointments'; and (2) 'that, to get place and quick promotion, a man must be a R.C.' We deny that these statements are true. If, however, they are proved to be true (within a reasonable period, to be determined by mutual arrangement), to the satisfaction of our mutually chosen tribunal, we will—as a penalty

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