

## Those Penal Laws

'It is permissible,' says Dom Oswald Hunter Blair, O.S.B., in the *Glasgow Observer* of September 26, 'to express the opinion that the energies of Catholics, and of all liberal-minded people who sympathise with them in this matter, had much better be turned, not against those who would enforce "obsolete or obsolescent" laws, but in the direction of sweeping from the statute book of England the last relics of the penal provisions which still disgrace it. Catholics are still ineligible for some of the highest offices of State; they are insulted by being forbidden to present to livings, while Jews, atheists, even Buddhists and Mahomedans, have no such disabilities; they cannot bequeath property to Religious Orders of men, who have indeed no legal right to live or work in the United Kingdom at all; and at every fresh accession of a monarch to the throne of an empire which includes millions of their co-religionists, they have to listen to publicly-uttered blasphemies against the deepest and dearest mysteries of their faith. The events of the past few weeks should spur on every Catholic to work by every constitutional means for the abolition of these final vestiges of a bigoted and persecuting age.'

The same idea finds expression in the *London Tablet* of September 26. 'As long,' it says, 'as the penal clauses of the Emancipation Act were treated by the Government and the police as obsolete, there was no disposition on the part of Catholics to quarrel with their presence on the statute book. Now that the Prime Minister has publicly referred to them as though they formed part of the living law of the country, the whole situation is transformed. We have now an obvious and indeed an inevitable duty before us. We must take the field at once and never rest until we have won full liberty of public worship and the equality of all religions before the law. If in any instance the civil authorities are satisfied that, owing to the ignorance or brutality or bigotry of the neighborhood, a Catholic procession cannot be held without danger of disturbance, we shall of course, acquiesce. All we ask is for the fair treatment which is accorded to the members of every other religion, and the removal of legal disabilities aimed only at Catholics. Let us be judged as the rest of our countrymen are judged, and we are content.'

## A Wanganui War-whoop

Somebody has defined hell as a place where people mind their own business. Some people—like, for instance, the late Paul Pry—would find this earth a place of torment if, by some stroke of fortune, they were prevented from putting their fingers into other people's pies. Even in this advanced and enlightened Dominion there exists a No-Popery coterie—happily a small one—who have banded themselves together to 'reorganise' Catholics along the lines of the penal laws by excluding them, as far as lies in their power, from every office and employment in the gift of the State and of public bodies. On initiation, they, holding the Bible in their hands, take an oath or 'obligation,' binding themselves (among other things) to do what lies in their power to exclude Catholics, as such, from parliamentary and municipal life. The 'true blues' of the order cast longing looks at the condition of the British statute book before the passing of Catholic Emancipation, which was described as a 'fatal error' by the *Victorian Standard*, which, in its issue of April 30, 1897, described itself as 'the accredited organ of the [Orange] Institution in Victoria.' Even in this dawn of the twentieth century, there is, to the brethren, a very real meaning in the old ascendancy motto of their order, which laid down, as a condition of their 'loyalty' to the throne, the perpetual exclusion of Catholics—and of Dissenters of every brand—from the electors' roll, from Parliament, from the benches of justice, from the army and revenue, and from every branch and detail of the public service. The present-day oath of the brethren is an effort to turn back the hand of time and to subject Catholics to the disabilities which they formerly extended to Dissenters of every faith.

All this sufficiently explains an anonymous epistolary war-whoop which appeared in a recent issue of the *Wanganui Chronicle*. Men do not put on masks in order to tell the honest truth, or to advocate fair-play, or to champion 'honor-bright.' And, as Disraeli once remarked, the normally constituted man can have only feelings of contempt for the varlet who pelts you with mud as you pass by, and then takes refuge behind a dustbin of anonymity. But one cannot expect open-faced or straightforward attack from those who carry on their operations in the dark, like rats in a cellar. The Wanganui public were, for instance, informed that the whole public service is swarming with Catholics. Nobody, of course, believes this story, and, least of all, those who

retail it on the eve of general elections. The public will easily recall the unofficial census of religious beliefs of members of the public service made in 1901-2 by the *N.Z. Tablet*. The results, published in detail, man by man, and week by week, in the *Tablet*, sufficiently explain the universal repugnance to proof or investigation exhibited by those who spin this 'painful yarn.' For years, New South Wales rang—at election times, of course—with cries of the 'stuffing' of the public service by Catholics. So great, indeed, was the clamor that a committee of investigation was appointed by Parliament. The results, published in a Blue Book, are before us. They show that certain denominations were represented in the public service well in advance of their numerical proportion to the population of the State. The cream of the joke was this: that the particular denomination that headed all the others was precisely the one whose clergy (a few of them) had made the greatest clamor and hullabaloo about the overrunning of the service by 'Papistes.' As a matter of fact, the Catholics were represented in the public service of New South Wales well below their numerical percentage of the population, but by no means so far below it as they are in the Dominion of New Zealand. In the matter of relative salaries, the disproportion is much greater in New South Wales, and vastly greater in New Zealand. Our detailed investigations throughout New Zealand gave us very solid reasons for the conviction that there is at least one particular denomination represented in the public service, both in persons and in salaries, well beyond its relative strength in the population. But that denomination is not the Catholic; and we by no means suggest that it has achieved this success (assuming that our conviction is well grounded) by other than fair and honorable means. We have several times invited an official investigation into this recurrent electioneering story. We invite it once more. And once more we intimate our willingness to indicate lines of investigation into Orangeism in the public service that, if pursued, might, in our opinion, lead to interesting developments. So much by the way.

Here are a few shrieks from the *Wanganui Chronicle* which deserve the wider circulation of these columns as samples of the utter recklessness and ferocity of religious passion that exists in a small class in the Dominion: 'If matters go on as at present, we will' (sic—there North-east Ulster spoke) 'have to fight in the near future for our liberties as our fathers did in the olden time. . . . Rome is chief adviser to our Premier. His methods are Rome's methods. . . . Every vote cast for the present Government is a vote against Protestant liberties, free speech, and a free press.' And so on and on. Comment on such hysteria would be a form of sacrilege. One can only look on and wonder, as one looks and wonders at his first sight of that strange survival of a past epoch, the *moloch horridus* of Western Australia—which is hideous to look on, but slow and harmless, despite its warlike appearance.

## THE CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND

### MEMOIRS OF THE EARLY DAYS

(Contributed.)

In *A Short History of Some Dublin Parishes*, written by the Most Rev. Dr. Donnelly, Bishop of Canaan, for the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, the following brief but interesting facts appear with reference to the late Right Rev. Dr. Moran, first Bishop of Dunedin:—'When in 1849 the Very Rev. Andrew O'Connell, D.D., was appointed parish priest of Donnybrook, Irishtown, Ringsend, and Sandymount, in succession to the Ven. Dr. Finn, of the Church of St. Mary, Star of the Sea, his first care was to increase the clerical staff of the parish. To the three curates already in residence, he joined with another assistant, the Rev. P. Moran, fresh from Maynooth.' In mentioning one of two notable events occurring in 1856, namely, the elevation of one of the curates of the parish to the episcopal dignity, the author states: 'Dr. Moran, a native of the County Wicklow, after a distinguished course in Maynooth, served as curate in this parish for about seven years. He was now appointed by Papal Brief Vicar-Apostolic of Grahamstown in South Africa. During his career as curate he was noted for great zeal and devotion to duty, and took a deep interest in the Catholic Young Men's Societies just established by Dr. O'Brien, of Limerick. At the meetings of these societies he delivered several lectures on various subjects of interest, historical and otherwise. He was consecrated on Low Sunday, 1856, together with Dr. Walsh, the newly-appointed Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, in Carlow Cathedral, by his Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Cullen. He labored hard in his distant mission until 1869, when Dunedin, in New

If Prohibition tak's awa'  
Your Barley Bree an' a' that,

Jest drink the Hondai Lanka Tea,  
An' be a man for a' that.