

month or two ago, when Catholics from all parts of the kingdom, the Empire, and the Continent had assembled in London for the International Eucharistic Congress, we had a fresh illustration of the vitality of these laws which many had thought dead and buried. It was only necessary for a little horde of bigots to raise their voices in dissent and threatening for the Liberal Prime Minister of England to feel himself compelled, with the Act of 1829 in view, to declare that the 'legality' of the programme of the Congress was 'open to question,' and for the public procession of the Blessed Sacrament, which is a constant feature of such Congresses, to be maimed in the name of Protestant England and of the Act that was supposed to have freed us from the oppression of the Penal Laws. With such instances as these before us, and with the pain and the shame of the latest still rankling in our hearts, we are surely abundantly justified in pressing for a repeal of the enactments which lay us open to such attacks and brand us with such unjust and undeserved inferiority before the law. Our claim for equality is unassailable and incontrovertible, and equality is all that is asked for by Mr. Redmond in this Bill. 'Catholics,' he said, 'only ask for equality. It is their right, and they will be satisfied with nothing less.' At present we are free neither in theory nor in fact; we have borne the injustice for seventy-nine years, and the events we have recalled show that its removal is as urgent as it is long overdue.

Still longer overdue is the reform of the insulting language of the Declaration which our Sovereigns must make as a condition preliminary to their being allowed to ascend the throne. In that outrageous formula the Sovereign is required to deny Transubstantiation, and to declare that 'the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other Saint, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous.' These doctrines are of no political significance, and have no bearing on the proper exercise of the Royal power, whilst the statement that Catholics adore the Blessed Virgin or any other Saint is palpably untrue. The whole formula, which, as Lingard says, owes its origin to 'the perjuries of an impostor and the delusion of a nation,' is grossly insulting to British Catholics, besides being absolutely useless for its supposed purpose as a safeguard of the Protestant succession. And it is not only insulting, but, as the Catholics of South Africa have declared, 'it is an infringement of the religious equality to which we are entitled by the Constitution of the Commonwealth, and which we regard as our birthright.' The King rules over an Empire embracing men of many creeds, but out of all these the belief of Catholics alone is singled out for exceptional treatment and contemptuous and scurrilous repudiation. Since 1891 several attempts have been made by the Catholic Peers to get rid of this relic of barbarism, which Lord Salisbury did not hesitate to describe as 'a stain upon the Statute Book.' Mr. Redmond had, therefore, ample reason for including the reform of the Declaration by the deletion of its offensive language against Catholics in his Bill for the removal of our remaining disabilities. The justice of our claim that in a country of tolerance we should be spared intolerance and the cruel necessity of having to listen to needless insult from the steps of the throne has been recognised by all who have considered it. The Sovereign who is required to repudiate and insult our beliefs knows that, thanks to those beliefs, our loyalty has come intact out of the fire of centuries of penal legislation and statutory insult and oppression. It is therefore too much to expect that he can make such a Declaration seriously, insulting as it is both to him and to us. In fact, it is known that both the King and the heir to the throne would both gladly see the necessary alterations made which would spare them the painful ordeal thus laid upon them by the dead hand of the past. Nor can we suppose that the Government of the day would be unwilling to get rid of this *damnosa hereditas*, which must darken the dawn of every reign and arouse long rancors in the breasts of twelve millions of loyal subjects in the Empire. We shall soon know with certainty how Mr. Asquith and his colleagues stand in this matter. The welcome accorded to Mr. Redmond's Bill by two hundred and thirty-three members in the House of Commons, against the miserable minority of forty-eight who followed Mr. McArthur's lead into the lobby against it, should encourage the Government to tell Lord Braye, when he puts his direct question on the matter on Monday, that they are ready to facilitate, or even to bring in, a measure which will at once relieve Catholics of their remaining disabilities and clear the pages of the Statute Book of the outrageous language which has stained it so long. Good will, we feel sure, is not wanting; and where there is a will it should not be difficult on the part of those in power to find a way.

Messrs. Simon Brothers, George street, Dunedin, are showing a large stock of boots and shoes, at very low prices.

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NAZARETH HOUSE, CHRISTCHURCH

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE

(From our own correspondent.)

Under very favorable auspices generally, and more particularly as regards the weather, the foundation stone of the new Nazareth House, on the site of the Community's recently acquired property, 'The Grove,' Sydenham, was laid on Sunday afternoon last in the presence of an assembly of several thousand persons. With admirable forethought, a covered-in platform was erected by the contractors, Messrs. J. Smith and Son, for the accommodation and convenience of those directly participating in the function. The stone was blessed by his Lordship Bishop Grimes, who was attended by the principal diocesan clergy. Among the clergy present were the Very Rev. Dean Ginaty, V.G., Very Rev. Father Regnault, Provincial, Ven. Archbishop Le Menant des Chesnais (Temuka), Very Rev. Father O'Shea, V.G. (Wellington), Very Rev. Dean Carew (Greymouth), Very Rev. Dean O'Donnell (Ashburton), Very Rev. Father Price, Adm., Very Rev. Dr. Kennedy (Meane), Rev. Fathers Le Floch (Timaru), Bowers (Geraldine), Ainsworth (Hokitika), Lowham, Hills (Leeston), Tubman (Timaru), Richards (Hawarden), Bell, Creed (Kumara), O'Connor (Ross), Aubrey and Tymons (Waimate), Kerley (Timaru), Lee (Lincoln), Nouyoux (Ahauro), O'Hare, Hoare, Moloney, Cooney (Lyttelton), Taylor (Greymouth), Le Petit (Fairlie), McDonald (Temuka), Aherne (Ashburton), O'Dwyer (Greymouth), Hyland (Rangiora), Bonetto (Akaroa).

A guard of honor to the Governor was formed by members of the Hibernian Society.

His Lordship, having blessed the stone, addressed his remarks to 'his Excellency the Governor, Sir Joseph Ward, and the very reverend and dear Fathers and friends,' said that one and twenty years ago he paid his first visit to the West Coast of this island. Like every observant traveller, he was deeply impressed with the grandeur of the scenery on the way, the lofty mountains, the charming bush with its varied tints, the magnificent gorge, the copious rivers and streams, and, above all, with the cordial hospitality of the people, hospitality which had become a very household word. He visited most of the mining districts, and there it was that he was struck with the first discordant note. It was the painful sight of many aged and worn-out miners drawing near to the end of their long and laborious careers without the prospect of any comfortable homes, without any kind hand of friend or relation to soothe their declining years or to help them to prepare for the last long journey, from time to eternity. Then it was he conceived the idea of inaugurating some kind of institution such as that of which the foundation stone was to be laid by his Excellency that day. At that time the boon of old age pensions was not even on the distant horizon, and he resolved, if God spared him, to bring from Europe a band of devoted Sisters who would soothe the last days of aged and infirm miners and others in similar circumstances. He turned towards the Little Sisters of the Poor, who had a world-wide reputation for philanthropy, or, rather, charity. Sickness overtaking him, he was obliged to visit Europe sooner than he intended, and saw the founder of the Order, whose Sisters were then counted by thousands. She received him most graciously, and promised him in the near future to send a number of her spiritual children to New Zealand. Alas! death took her from her family, and hundreds who were willing to come out to this country were swept away by an epidemic, and so the negotiations fell to the ground. His attention was then directed to another institution—that of the Sisters of Nazareth. Their headquarters were then, as they were still, at Hammersmith, in London. He studied the objects and aims of their institute, and found their work was even more comprehensive than that, noble as it was, of the Little Sisters of the Poor. Besides the aged, the Sisters of Nazareth watched over the infirm, no matter what their age; they attended little orphans and waifs and strays, the blind and even the incurable. The head of the Order (who, he regretted to say, had been taken away from them by death during the last month) received him kindly, and promised she would do her best to establish a branch in Christchurch. It took years to bring negotiations to a successful issue, and only four years ago a devoted band of Sisters had left everything that was dear and near to them to come to New Zealand to devote themselves to suffering humanity. Their devotion was hailed with gratitude and delight, and the local press did all in its great power to help them further in their noble cause. Since their coming some 180 individuals had passed through their hands—thirty-three old men, fifty-four aged women, and eighty-seven dear little children. At present they had over eighty-seven in their care—many of them hopelessly paralysed, besides many blind and infirm and a great number of little children. At

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