

Current Topics

The Education Question

On the next page will be found the first of two articles contributed to the *Otago Daily Times* on 'The Catholic Claim (in education): What it is.' The twelfth and final article of the series will be reprinted in our next issue.

A Shocking Scandal

A few weeks ago Cardinal Moran was publicly taken to task by the Lord Mayor of Sydney for insisting on sending the Catholic contributions to the Italian Disaster Fund direct to the Archbishop of Messina, and for declining to 'pool' them with the contributions from other sources and send them through the regular channels of officialdom and red tape. The Cardinal hinted that he had good reason for his attitude. But the Lord Mayor, in a letter the purport of which was cabled all over the English-speaking world, expressed his 'deep pain' at the Cardinal's perverseness and bad taste, and metaphorically washed his hands clean of St. Mary's and all its works and ways. The Lord Mayor spoke in his haste—and spoke too soon. His Eminence has not had long to wait for a complete, though painful, vindication of his wise caution. In fact, it may be said that his justification has been coming in at the rate of a mile a minute. English papers to hand show that—partly from the presence of too many officials; and partly from endless divisions of authority—there have been much delay and great confusion in the distribution of relief—precious food in enormous quantities, and clothing, etc., lying for long periods on the wharves or in the depots, unused, while the poor, stricken people were agonising or dying with hunger and exposure.

But that is not all. The London correspondent of the *Dublin Freeman*, speaking on high authority, declares that a portion of the relief funds are being used in a way which every fair-minded man will admit constitutes a grave and shocking scandal. Wiring from London on Wednesday, February 3, the correspondent says: 'Information has reached me from a most reliable source as to certain of the methods which are being employed in the relief of the Italian earthquake victims which should give cause for reflection to all subscribers to the relief funds, but especially to Catholics. When a similar disaster occurred on the Riviera some twenty years ago, a discreditable attempt was made on the part of certain English pseudo-philanthropic organisations to utilise the helplessness and destitution of the children who had been rendered orphans in order to estrange them from the Catholic faith in which they had been born and bred. Evidence has come to hand which makes it apparent that the same evil influences are at work now in Calabria and Sicily, but on a much larger scale. Committees organised through English Protestant and Waldensian channels are busily engaged in this nefarious process of soul-trafficking under the guise of charity. Fifty Catholic orphans have just been handed over to a Waldensian proselytising society to be brought up as Protestants, and those at the head of this organisation are doing all in their power to frustrate the efforts of the Pope and the Catholic clergy on the spot. Through the instrumentality of his Holiness, a committee of prominent Catholics was formed in Paris, which took upon itself the special duty of providing for the physical and spiritual welfare of the children who had been made orphans by this terrible calamity. The Italian Government have placed every obstacle in the way of this committee, basing their opposition on an old law which was passed for the protection of children who were taken out of the country to act as aids to Italian organ-grinders and street showmen in their mendicancy. The result is that the children are being handed over wholesale to an organisation bearing the honored name of "Regina Elena," but at the head of which is the Jew, Signor Nathan, the Syndic of Rome, who is intensely anti-Catholic. A great deal of mischief has already been done, but the further efforts of the proselytisers may perhaps be in some degree frustrated by publicity.' The correspondent adds: 'The moral to be drawn by would-be Irish subscribers to the funds for the relief of the sufferers is that they should not send a penny without assuring themselves that it will go to the Pope's fund, which is really the only one free from all interested motives.'

What do Catholics Want?

Catholic principles on the education question are old, and have been many times set forth. But there is no limit to the variety of terms in which they may be expressed. And a new statement of the old principles often carries

with it a special freshness, cogency, and persuasiveness all its own. This is notably the case with the very admirable, pithy, thumb-nail sketch of the present position of Catholics in Australia given by Coadjutor-Archbishop Kelly, of Sydney, at the Irish National Foresters' gathering on a recent Sunday. In view of the exhaustive discussion now being carried on in the columns of the *Otago Daily Times* regarding the Catholic claim, the Archbishop's words are particularly apposite—and they hit the nail squarely on the head.

'As Catholics,' said his Grace, 'we have no desire for ascendancy in Australia, but we claim equality and fair play. Our Catholicity is a matter between God, ourselves, and our ancestors. We pay our taxes, and are subject to the laws. The tax collector does not ask whether we are Catholics, but whether we have rateable property. The tax distributor should be guided in the same way when there is any allocation of public money for schools, for example. We say in the hearing of the world it is a shame, an injustice, to differentiate between school and school except on educational grounds. Such a law is essentially unjust, and injustice will work the decay and the ruin of the country whose leaders make such laws. They might say they would give nothing to education, but once they did give public money for the purpose they must not exclude schools in which their standard of secular instruction was complied with. No, the State should say, "Teach our standards, teach our arithmetic, teach our other branches, submit to our inspection as to the secular branches, and you are as entitled to your share of every public allocation as any other body of citizens in Australia." We may not be heard. We may be answered back in fallacies, but the time of fallacy must end. From what I know of the bush—I don't know so much of the city—we have intelligent citizens in Australia, who are indignant with any clique that would monopolise the patronage of Parliament, and exclude any school from the assistance of the State on the grounds that it was subject to ecclesiastical authority. Catholic schools are subject to the authority of the State so far as its authority can go, but the State's authority cannot touch the soul. The State's authority wants improved commerce and an enlightened democracy. It has given votes, and it wants the voters to use their franchise intelligently. Its reasonable wishes will be obeyed by the managers of the Catholic schools, who hold the schools in the name of God, and of parental rights. There should not be a monopoly for sectarianism or for irreligion. Australia wants her children well trained in secular and religious knowledge; Catholics feel bound in conscience to secure this at any cost; in our schools we prepare the children not for this world alone, but for the next. This is the best inheritance of our children. Their necessity dictates our duty—our parental duty establishes our civic right.'

The Rabbi and the Sects

Shakespeare readers will remember how, in the *Merchant of Venice*, Antonio, although

'The kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies,'

goes out of his way to heap insults and outrages on Shylock—not merely because Shylock is an usurer, but because he is a Jew. The latter complains:

'Signior Antonio, many a time and oft,
In the Rialto, you have rated me...
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine...
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold.'

Whereupon Antonio answers:

'I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends...
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayest with better face
Exact the penalty.'

Times have changed since then, and the Jew to-day is in serious danger of being inconvenienced by the over-friendliness of at least certain types of Christian. It may not be generally known that amidst the multitude and multiplicity of 'missionary' organisations established by well-meaning but sometimes over-zealous religionists in Christian London, there is one—the Society for the Pro-

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