

outposts has—as General Sir William Butler long ago fairly warned him—reached the proportions of a fearful and deadly struggle which has taxed the utmost military resources of the Empire, threatened the existence of British rule in South Africa, and created a crisis in its history comparable only to that of the Indian Mutiny. In the circumstances the English Liberal Party, and many of those who, like them, strongly opposed the forcing on of this miserable war for the sake of a handful of capitalists mostly with German names, hold that a policy of 'scuttle' or surrender in South Africa now might prove the beginning of the break-down of the Empire, and that it therefore behoves the Government to 'see it through.' This opinion has found frank expression in many leading Catholic papers, as, for instance in the *Sydney Freeman's Journal* and, we believe, in all but two of the Catholic weeklies published in Australia. Of the possible alternatives before the British in South Africa, we may regard the following as the chief practical or working ones:—

1. A British conquest coupled with the 'wiping out' of the two Boer Republics from the map of South Africa. This was the purpose of the disgraceful Jameson raid. It has long been the open and undisguised object of the capitalist party in South Africa and of their organs in the Jingo Press in Great Britain. We are glad to feel that the general voice of the civilised world and of a sane and healthy section of the British public would be raised against the utter spoliation of the independence of a free people. We are aware that one or two Catholic papers favour such a course. But as for us, we are opposed to it with all our strength.

2. Another alternative is such an ending of the campaign—and may it be a speedy ending!—as will bring an honourable peace and preserve a safe measure of independence to the two Republics, with due guarantees as to armaments, etc., a full measure of civil and religious liberty for all citizens, and such provisions for future good understanding as the racial hate engendered by the present ill-starred campaign may still leave possible. Such is our personal wish with regard to the final issue of the campaign, and we believe it coincides with the views of vast numbers of our fellow-Catholics throughout the Empire.

3. There is another possible, though highly improbable, issue to the war: it is the final defeat of the British forces and the complete or almost complete subjugation of South Africa to the rule of the Boer. This we should regard as a great calamity for Catholic interests in South Africa. The matter has been recently dealt with by Cardinal Moran in an interview with a representative of the *Sydney Freeman's Journal*. His words will be all the more appropriate as they were spoken with direct reference to the calumnious attacks of the insignificant 'Christian' weekly which has furnished us with a text for this war-discourse. Cardinal Moran said: 'I have heard it said that I am such a deadly enemy of the Empire that I could rejoice in the defeat of her arms in South Africa. I can only say that so far from rejoicing in the overthrow of the Empire at the present day, especially in her colonial Governments, I would regard the decay of the Empire as one of the greatest blows that could befall the civilised world at the close of this nineteenth century. Viewing matters in a religious light, no one can rejoice in the triumph of the Boers, for they are the greatest enemies that the Catholic Church has at the present time. They retain all the bigotry and the fierce opposition to the Church that were shown by the old Huguenots of France and by the first Dutch followers of Calvinism. That is the reason why there is scarcely a single convert to Catholicism among them. A few distinguished South African Dutchmen have joined the Church, but comparatively few. From the time the Transvaal and Orange Free State were settled, the converts have been almost all from the Basutos and other natives; but among the Boers themselves the religion of the Catholic Church has scarcely made any progress, and no Catholic has been allowed to hold any office in the State higher than that of a policeman, and even that privilege was only accorded a year or two ago. They have no right to vote for the members of the Raad or Parliament. Am I likely to sympathise with men who, when the first priests landed in South Africa, refused to allow them to purchase their daily bread, and obliged them to go back to their ships—would not even allow them to land on Boer territory? Well, no matter who wins, that sort of tyranny must come to an end. If we have another United States in Africa corresponding to the United States of America, asserting their freedom, those restrictive laws against religion cannot possibly continue to exist at the present day; whilst, on the other hand, if the British arms are victorious, we will have a United South Africa, with all the freedom and the same institutions that we have in Canada at the present day and here in our Australia—that is to say, the Church will have perfect freedom to pursue her mission of enlightenment and beneficence. The opinion, indeed, of many of the best friends of religion in South Africa is that the triumph of the Boers in the present war would be a deadly blow to the progress of civilisation in South Africa.'

A FEW MORE REMINDERS.

We have just a few more brief reminders for the critics of the Catholic body. (1) No troops have fought more gallantly or suffered more severely in the present campaign than the Irish regiments, which are Catholic almost to a man. Mulhall's *Dictionary of Statistics* for 1899 is the authority for the statement—taken from the military returns—that Catholic Ireland, in proportion to her population, contributes 20 per cent more troops to the defence of the Empire than England, and 50 per cent more than Scotland. We have already published a very lengthy, though very incomplete, list of the Catholic officers now at the front. A further and still more lengthy instalment will appear shortly in our columns. (2) A large number of Catholic volunteers went to South Africa with the contingents from the various colonies of Australasia. From New South Wales so many left that Cardinal Moran sent a chaplain to accompany them. (3) In New Zealand the fund for the innocent victims of the war—the orphans and

widows of the dead British soldiers—was considerably swelled by the contributions of the Catholic clergy and laity. (4) At a time when men, women, and children were scurrying off by train-loads to places of safety farther south, the Catholic Sisters of Nazareth, the Sisters of the Holy Family, the Dominican nuns, etc., of their own free will remained behind to tend and nurse the sick and wounded defenders of Mafeking, Kimberley, and Ladysmith, and to face the terrible risks of war, famine, and worse, in the midst of an uncivilised black population, in order to feed and tend the 700 to 800 orphans and old people—mostly British subjects—who are at this moment in Johannesburg. And the Mafeking correspondent of a London daily is responsible for the statement that the local nuns are perfectly reckless of shot or shell and are setting 'a splendid example' of bravery even to the fighting men. And these noble Sisters are doing their good work without fee or reward, but solely for Christ's dear sake. When our critics have gone to the front and done as much of the bleeding and the nursing as Catholics have done, then let them come back and fling the first stone at us—if they can. Till then, the golden silence and the modesty that become demerit would sit gracefully upon them. There is a commandment in the decalogue with which some of the so-called 'religious' papers have scarcely a nodding acquaintance. It runneth thus: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' Our Protestant friend in Wanganui would do well to get it framed and send it to the editor of the *Sydney weekly* to be suspended in his office. But, from the number of falsehoods contained in the article quoted by us, our Wanganui friend will probably have realised by this time that the eighth (Protestant ninth) commandment has been long ago *suspended* in that office.

THE SLATTERYS AT THAMES.

A DISMAL FAILURE.

THE PINK PAMPHLETS DO THEIR WORK,

(From a correspondent.)

THE Slatterys arrived here towards the end of last month, and the ex-priest was billed to lecture on Tuesday night, January 30. The lecture was announced by posters all over the town, handbills *galore*, and advertisements in the local papers. The Catholics of the Thames were prepared for the ex-priest and his companion, the sham ex-nun. On the Sunday previous they distributed at the church door 200 pamphlets exposing the Slatterys, and a reprint of the *Observer's* article on the adventurers was distributed at the door of the hall where the lecture was delivered on Tuesday evening. The Rev Dr. O'Callaghan, I understand, spoke strongly against them in the Anglican pulpit, and it is said that ministers of other denominations cautioned their people against patronising the lectures.

Preaching on January 28 at the second Mass at St. Francis's Church, Thames, upon the epistle of the day, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness,' etc., the Rev. Father Mahoney amongst other remarks said: 'One of the greatest crimes in the code of divine or human law is that of perjury, or bearing false witness. It is punished most severely by the law of the land because it is so hurtful and detestable in the sight of God and man. You are aware that quite a scare has been caused in the colonies lately on account of the possible outbreak of that most dreaded scourge, the bubonic plague. In Auckland the authorities are taking preventive measures by cleansing and purifying the city, so that if the plague should break out there the people being on their guard will prevent its spread. There is a remote possibility even that it might come here to the Thames, where I think that we could successfully cope with it by taking the same precautionary measures to avoid contagion. You are aware also that on next Tuesday we are to be visited with a veritable plague, a moral, or as I should rather say an immoral, plague, for as you have seen by the advertisements, that most pitiable of all God's creatures, a fallen priest, is coming to our peaceful community to spread among the citizens a plague of foul speech and obscene literature, to bear false witness against the Church of his birth and the faith of his fathers. And I feel most strongly on this matter, more strongly indeed than I can give expression to, for it is almost twenty years now, nearly a generation ago, in the happy days of youth I was a fellow student at St. Patrick's College of Thurles, in Ireland, with Joseph Slattery, and I little thought on that fateful day when he received the great grace of the Priesthood from our former Bishop, Dr. Croke, and I knelt before him, and his hand and voice were raised to give me his first blessing as a priest, that the next time I should come in contact with him would be at the other side of the world, in my native land, and that then his hand and voice should be raised to curse me and to vilify me and my brother priests all over the world, and to blaspheme all that we hold sacred and dear. But now, as this plague is coming among us, you have some means at hand of purifying the public opinion of the Thames, for the editor of the N.Z. TABLET has sent to Auckland and here a large number of pamphlets for distribution, giving a history of this man and his companion, and it is by circulating these pamphlets among your Protestant friends that the evil this unfortunate priest has come to spread will be rendered harmless.'

The result was that Slattery could not get any clergyman in the Thames to preside at his meeting, and notwithstanding that there was no counter-attraction on the night of his first lecture the audience numbered only 44, although the hall was capable of holding 500. The following afternoon Mrs. Slattery lectured before 30 females, and on the same evening Slattery's audience was less than 30. The local papers on the day after his first appearance gave him a couple of lines of notice, merely saying that he spoke before a very small audience, and after that ignored him altogether. The Slattery 'mission' to the Thames has been a dismal failure, due, no doubt, to the complete exposure of the unhappy couple's antecedents made by the TABLET, and also the high respect in which the priests and nuns of the district are held by all classes here.