

attitude throughout the trial was incorrect is a matter of notoriety, and the restrained but severe strictures passed on him by the *Age* are well deserved. From the beginning he took on himself to consider that Coningham (who had the daily advice of three lawyers) was not represented by counsel. On this ground he constituted himself an unbriefed advocate of the petitioner, and seemed, to the eye of the man in the street, to become far too warmly attached to the interests he was defending to keep his head clear for his duties as a judge.

THE 'MONITOR'

(Launceston) says in its issue of December 21:—

'It has often been the case, sad to say, that men of the most honorable and saintly character have had to answer false charges of this description. Vile persons for their own base and sordid purposes have often brought accusations against their fellow-creatures which they have afterwards retracted and for which from their deathbeds they have done their best to make reparation. Away back in the early centuries of Christian history such a charge was levelled against St. Athanasius, and the woman of that early period has had imitators more or less base in every century that has since passed. The vindication of St. Athanasius was full and complete, and so, too, we feel confident, will be the vindication of the accused in the present case.

'Consider the circumstances of this extraordinary suit. The petitioner was one Arthur Coningham, a cricketer and chemist. His wife, who before her marriage fell from virtue at the early age of 17, and who subsequently posed as a widow and wore widow's weeds in Brisbane, where her mother kept the barrack "canteen," alleged that the Rev. Dr. O'Haran, Administrator of St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, miscondacted himself with her at the cathedral and in the buildings adjacent thereto throughout a lengthened period, and under circumstances which rendered detection almost a matter of certainty. In a divorce case the respondent cannot be compelled to give evidence on behalf of the petitioner; but in this suit we find the wife a willing and most anxious witness to prove her own dishonor and her own shame. We often hear it laid down in our own courts of law that prostitutes, when asked to testify as to matters which do not concern chastity or honor, may be believed, but in this case we see a wife produced as a witness, and produced, too, by her husband, to tell in his interest and for his advantage the story of his alleged dishonor and of her own base shame. This is a circumstance that excites a grave suspicion. Most women with a grain of self-respect would, if they fall, shrink from a confession of their dishonor, and especially from a confession made in open court before crowded audience, and in reply to questions put by their husbands. And this is not all. The husband and wife occupied the same room even after the legal proceedings had commenced. He paid the bill for their board and lodging. They were apparently friendly. Nay, he even nursed and fondled the child that he sought by his divorce suit to brand with bastardy. Is that the conduct of a man who really believed in his wife's infidelity, and was anxious to secure divorce from her? Coningham and his wife were found upon very intimate terms before the court opened. When the case began, we find that the wife, instead of insisting as she legally could upon being silent as to her own shame, not only puts in no defence of condonation, which would be legally and properly open to her under the circumstances, but comes into court and unblushingly, at the request of her husband, tells a story which no self-respecting woman could relate. The whole thing stinks in the nostrils of all decent people. The husband pretends to be injured beyond the utmost value of all the pills he could sell during his lifetime, or the money he could make by bowling balls, and yet the only witness he calls to prove the wrong done to him is the wife of his bosom, who is ready to answer all his questions as to her own alleged dishonor—so ready indeed as to justify the presumption that question and answer were all arranged before the farce was gone through in court. Mr. Want, Q.C., the able counsel who conducted the defence plainly put it to the jury that the case was of black-mail.

'Upon the evidence the verdict should have gone in favor of Dr. O'Haran. The only witness for the petitioner was his wife. Her evidence was contradicted in nearly every particular, not merely by Dr. O'Haran, but by independent witnesses. She swore that Dr. O'Haran was with her on July 3 for three quarters of an hour whilst a procession was taking place in the Cathedral; that the sacristan, Langton, was showing her out when Dr. O'Haran left the church and came with her instead. Langton—who also swore that Mrs. Coningham tried to get at him over the case—declared her whole story regarding July 3 to be an absolute fabrication. His Eminence Cardinal Moran swore that on that particular night Dr. O'Haran was never absent for five or 10 minutes from his side during the devotions. Mrs. Coningham swore that on June 29 Dr. O'Haran was with her at St. Mary's between seven and eight o'clock, whilst four or five respectable witnesses, ladies and gentlemen, testified that on that very night, and during the hours named, Dr. O'Haran was with them at a small social party in a suburb some eight or ten miles outside of Sydney. It passes our comprehension to explain how any jury could after such contradiction believe one word the woman swore.'

CATHOLICS ON OATH.

A PROTEST.

The disgraceful efforts made to influence the jury in the Sydney divorce case by a shocking misrepresentation of the Catholic doctrine of absolution, elicited the following protest from the priests of the city and suburbs in meeting assembled:—

'We, the priests of the city of Sydney and suburbs, in public meeting assembled, do hereby protest against the foul calumnies

and vile insinuations regarding Catholic doctrines and practices which have been reported in the public Press of the colony within the past few weeks.

'1. We earnestly protest against the false and malicious insinuation that Catholics, who confess their sins to a priest in the sacred tribunal of penance, and who receive absolution, may afterwards, in a court of justice, truly swear they never committed these sins. This charge we declare to be utterly false and defamatory, and in flagrant opposition to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church teaches that, though God in His great mercy, forgives the sinner when he sincerely repents still for all time it will be true to say he had committed that sinful act; and to swear he had not committed it, because God had pardoned him, would be a disgraceful act of perjury and a heinous crime.

'2. We, also, emphatically protest against the vile and slanderous insinuation that, whereas non-Christians are to be believed when testifying on oath, no such credence is to be given to the sworn testimony of Catholics when the reputation of their priests, or the interests of their Church, are in question. This dastardly insult we regard as a shameful libel on the honor and veracity of our Catholic people.

'While deeming it our duty to make this solemn protest, we willingly bear testimony to the kindly feeling manifested by the great majority of our non-Catholic fellow-colonists, in reference to the above insinuations. Signed on behalf of the clergy,

'J. J. CARROLL, V.G.'

Diocesan News.

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

January 12.

The retreat of the Sisters of Mercy was closed on Thursday. Bro. Mark has for some time been in indifferent health and is going to spend a short holiday in Australia.

Father Ainsworth is due from the West Coast next week. He and Father Lane leave for Home via Sydney on February 2.

For the repose of the soul of the late Professor Clarke a Solemn Requiem Mass is to be celebrated in St Mary's Church, Guilford Terrace, on Monday next.

The Rev. Father McCarthy, inspector of Catholic schools in the archdiocese of Melbourne, is visiting this Colony. He proceeds shortly to Christchurch.

Father Chervier has so far recovered from his recent very serious illness as to be able to travel. He is now visiting Blenheim, accompanied by Father James Goggan.

It is definitely decided that the foundation stone of the new Cathedral will be laid by Cardinal Moran on February 3. His Eminence is expected to leave Sydney on the 26th inst, and is due here on the 31st.

The Women's Branch of the I.A.C.B.S. has lost the services of its energetic and popular secretary, Miss N. Dwyer, who is leaving Wellington. At the last meeting of the Society her resignation was accepted with regret.

Bro. John, Provincial of the Marist Brothers in Australasia for the past 26 years, has been appointed Brother-assistant at the head house of the Order in Lyons. He leaves shortly to take up his new duties.

The Ven. Archdeacon Devoy left London for Ireland in the early part of December. He writes that he and Dean Carew are well and that during their stay in London they met many New Zealand friends who are holding their own in the great metropolis. He was looking forward with pleasure to his visit to the Old Land, where he intended spending three or four months.

The Sacred Heart Church at Thorndon is assuming a finished appearance, and the contractor confidently expects to have the building completed by the opening day. The difficulty of procuring dry kauri in lengths suitable for the seats is causing Mr. Haughey, the sub-contractor, some anxiety, but he, too, is confident that the opening day will find him ready. The choirs of the three churches, combined for the occasion, are assiduously working at Haydn's Imperial Mass, and the rehearsals show that they are determined to do their part in a manner befitting the ceremony.

DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH.

(From our own correspondent.)

January 14.

The health of the Very Rev. Dean Chervier, S.M., of Leeston, has so far improved as to enable him, accompanied by the Rev. Father Goggan, to go to Blenheim for a change. In their absence the Very Rev. Father Ginaty officiated at Leeston on Sunday.

The Very Rev. Father Le Menant des Chesnais, S.M., V.G., is conducting a retreat for the Sisters of Mercy at Lyttelton. The Sisters of Our Lady of Missions commenced their annual retreat at the convent, Barbadoes street, on Friday last. It is being conducted by the Rev. Father Henry, M.S.H. The Rev. Dr. Kennedy, S.M., it is understood, is acting in a similar capacity at Mount Magdala.

Mr. Kilburn Heron, of Melbourne, sang the tenor solos in the 'Agnus Dei' and Sanctus of Gounod's Messe Solennelle in the Pro-Cathedral at High Mass on Sunday. At the offertory he gave a very fine rendering of 'Cujus Animam' from Rossini's 'Stabat Mater.' There was a crowded congregation at Vespers in the evening when the Rev. Father Henry, M.S.H., preached an impressive discourse