

The Accession Oath.

DESPITE the distractions caused by the war the Catholics of South Africa have not lost sight of the question of petitioning for an alteration of the terms of the Accession Oath. Some time ago a meeting of our co-religionists was held in Capetown when resolutions protesting against the terms of the oath were passed. The Catholics of Natal have signed a petition asking for an alteration in the wording of the Royal declaration. Bishop Jellivet, in asking his flock to sign the petition, said:—We did not at first intend to move in this matter, fearing that our action might give occasion to a counter movement, and perhaps rouse a feeling of religious animosity in some quarters. We wish to be unobstructive—minding our own business, without meddling with other people's affairs. We love our little Colony of Natal. We are happy to live in a free country, as loyal subjects of his Majesty, surrounded by a population honorable and large-minded. But it seems there must be some exception to every rule: all are not generous and large-minded. A certain section of the community have thought fit to make the Royal Declaration a pretext for an unprovoked onslaught on our Holy Church, her doctrines, and ministers. They are trotting out often-refuted charges; they are misrepresenting our doctrines, distorting facts, forgetting that a half-truth is the most dangerous falsehood. They seem to take their historical data from books which were written by the bitterest enemies of our Church at a time when Catholics were gagged, and could not defend themselves. The ecclesiastical history of England, as written in those dark days, has been truly styled a conspiracy against truth. But thank God, we live in better times. The real history of those days is being written from original documents. The Public Record Offices are daily yielding their long-hushed testimony, and often the false witness is convicted by his own admission. *Habemus confidentem reum!* But the narrow-minded people to whom we allude simply ignore all this. They still believe or affect to believe, in Fox's lying 'Book of Martyrs,' and such vile productions. If you are astonished, my dear brethren, that men professing to be Christians

Could Have Deliberately Written such Calumnies,

in those dark days, your astonishment will be less when you consider that the same thing is being done even in our time. I will give only one instance of that diabolical perversity. There is an infamous book printed under the name of *Maria Monk*. It is from beginning to end a tissue of lies. The first publication of these atrocious calumnies against the priests and nuns of Montreal appeared in 1835, in a New York paper called the *Protestant Indicator*. It was at once condemned by the universal testimony of the Protestant Press of Montreal, and by the affidavits of persons of the highest character in that city: it was condemned by the mother of Maria Monk herself, who could not be induced by bribes to perjure herself and say that her daughter had been in a nunnery. Allow me to add to this my own testimony. I have known and conversed with the daughter of Maria Monk: she was received into the Catholic Church in Paris when I was there. She was so disgusted by the conduct of these infamous calumniators, who pretended to be religious Protestants, that she conceived a profound contempt for their religion, and ultimately became a Catholic. And what of the book? The book is still printed and re-printed, and circulated everywhere, even amongst the ignorant Boers who believe the foul stories and therefrom form their opinion of our Holy Church. I have mentioned this particular case in order to illustrate the manner in which history was written by such fanatics as Fox, such infidels as Hume; and is still written in our days by some enemies of the Catholic name. No wonder if simple people whose mind is fed on such pabulum, may easily be induced to sign anything against Catholics. But, thank God! the great majority of our

Protestant Fellow-Colonists are Men of Honor,

large minded and tolerant men, who can rise superior to their early prejudices. May we respectfully ask them to discontinue the spread of such vile literature in our colony. Now, let us come to the Royal Declaration. If intended to insult millions of his Majesty's subjects, or to travesty the faith of the immense majority of Christians of the Western and Eastern Churches and to put our King in a ridiculous position before the Christian world, then indeed the Declaration is well chosen. It does all this. Not only are Christians insulted, but they are calumniated. The King is made to declare that we adore the Blessed Virgin and the saints. Adoring means paying divine worship. It is only meant to honor the saints no Christian could blame us for honoring those whom God has so highly honored. The insinuation, then, is that we really adore the saints. Now this is a foul calumny: a Catholic who would adore the Blessed Virgin or the saints would cease to be a Catholic, and should be at once excommunicated. Every Catholic child knows that God alone is to be adored. Let me, then, tell these people who would put such a calumny on the lips of our King that they disgrace him before the Christian world. We know and profess that the most perfect of creatures is a mere nothing as compared with God, from whom is derived every good that is in His saints. It is an article of the Catholic creed that the difference between God and the Blessed Virgin is simply infinite, although the Blessed Virgin is the most exalted of God's creatures. The words of the Royal Declaration contain, therefore, a blasphemy, an insult, a calumny, and an

Outrage Hurl'd at the Majority of Christians.

The object of the Royal Declaration, they say, is only to secure the Protestant succession to the English throne. But this is precisely what the Declaration does not do. It does not say that the King must be a Protestant, for that matter he may be a Mahometan, a Jew, or an Infidel. Why should not the King simply declare that

he is a member of the Protestant Church of England as by law established? Such a form of Royal Declaration would secure the Protestant succession, and no Catholic would object to it. We Catholics are in duty bound to be loyal to our King. We, moreover, wish that no obstacle be interposed between him and us having a tendency to lessen our love and respect for him. Can those who insist on maintaining the present form of Declaration sincerely say that they are acting as loyal subjects of his Majesty, while they are turning away from him the affection and respect of millions of his otherwise loyal subjects. For these reasons we advise you, dear brethren, to sign a petition praying for an alteration in the Royal Declaration or Coronation Oath.

Decimal Coinage.

No one (says the *Melbourne Advocate*) will wish to deprive the Commonwealth of the credit of a careful performance of its duty. The report it has presented to the House of Representatives concisely states the current recommendations of the advocates of decimal coinage. It also recognises some of the immense practical difficulties which those upholders of theoretical perfection occasionally overlook, as may be seen by noting its last three clauses. These recommend (1) that the State Government be asked to co-operate by having the new system taught in the public schools and by issuing text-books, tables, sums, and simple problems—rather a big order to begin with; (2) that at least two years before the change the Commonwealth Parliament shall pass legislation making the payment of debts and fulfilment of contracts in the new money legal, and providing for the nearest equivalents between the decimal and the old coinage; (3) that the Commonwealth also bring about the adoption of the metrical system of weights and measures, without which the full benefit of the change in the coinage will not be experienced.

The committee itself had a difficulty to encounter, which was voiced by the chairman at one of the later meetings. That was, as he said, the fact that 'a large proportion of the witnesses came not so much to testify to the practical utility of the system as to give the committee their views on the subject.' Several times he had to stop the delivery of what were practically essays on the advantages of a decimal system. It is not likely that the labors of the committee will lead to early action. Similar committees have sat again and again in Great Britain, and have admitted the value of the decimal system, but the insurmountable obstacles in the way have nullified their labors. The penny and the pound are indissolubly blended with British trade and British tradition. The third recommendation of the committee interferes with both. The penny will disappear in favor of a coin of four cents value, which will represent the two hundred and fiftieth part of a sovereign, instead of the two hundred and fortieth part; while the sovereign will consist of a thousand so-called cents, each one twenty-fifth part less than our present farthing.

This recommendation alone shows the impracticability of the scheme, which recognises the immense difficulty of parting with the sovereign, and in trying to retain it blunders into a far worse muddle. For the new cent—the 1000th of £1—has no equivalent anywhere in the world. The American cent has the value of an English halfpenny, the Continental centime is the fifth part of the Continental sou, which is also equivalent to an English halfpenny. The Canadian cent is fixed by law at the value of an English halfpenny in its relation to the silver coinage—2½ for 1s, 48 for 1 florin, 60 for half a crown, and 100 for the dollar—which is recognised, as in America, at somewhat over the fifth of a sovereign. Though, for convenience of nomenclature in ordinary speech, we divide any number of dollars by five to get an equivalent in sovereigns; yet in practice the British sovereign is worth only 4 dollars 86½ cents in Canada, and the same in the United States. Canada's adoption of decimal coinage goes no further than the dollar; all the rest of her coins are those of England, where all her coins are struck. America, again, has never adopted the metrical system of weights and measures, albeit she uses the cental of 100lbs instead of the cwt of 112lbs.

The truth is, the subject bristles with trouble the moment the theories begin to be applied. The newspaper proprietors, the bakers, and the Postal Department, for instance, will each have to give 250 penny papers, penny loaves, and penny postage stamps for a sovereign instead of 240. The baker can get even by making his loaves less, but what will the other two do? And that same consequence of great loss to two persons without any advantage to the third has been the logical outcome of every plan submitted up to date for altering the present system of Imperial coinage. If the world were to be made over again, no doubt the decimal system would have a good chance of adoption. Under present circumstances, the game is not worth the candle, for the trouble would outweigh the profit.

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