

when the Church happens to have to take the unpopular side—there is sure to be found at least one empty-headed individual who will plunge headlong into the discussion—to which he is in no sense a party—and, after making himself ridiculous over a column and a half of valuable space, wind up by signing himself 'A Good Catholic,' or 'A Practical Catholic,' or 'A Catholic Layman,' or some similarly honorable, but much-abused title. Our bright contemporary the *Ave Maria* has recently, under the heading quoted above, been dealing some hard but well-deserved blows on the perpetrators of this particular form of foolishness. After describing the various kinds of correspondents who make a nuisance of themselves by writing on subjects they know nothing about, our contemporary truly and aptly sums up thus:

'If there is one correspondent, however, who renders himself especially obnoxious by the obtrusive silliness with which he thrusts himself into a newspaper discussion, it is surely the shallow-brained critic who denounces some point of the Church's doctrine or discipline and then subscribes himself 'A Practical Catholic.'

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We have had amongst ourselves a disagreeable example of this 'obtrusive silliness' during the past week. After the disclosure in the Dr. Davies case—which was fully referred to in our columns last week—a 'Catholic Priest' thought it well, in a temperate and timely letter to the daily press, to draw public attention, and especially the attention of the Catholic community, to the serious moral aspect of the question involved. Whereupon a misguided individual, who signs himself 'Layman' and modestly 'claims to be as good a Catholic as the priest is,' writes craving the freedom on behalf of himself and several other Catholics to repudiate some of the sentiments expressed in the letter. After intimating, with quite an air of authority, that he considers the priest 'has overstepped the bounds of discretion by giving expression to some of the sentiments he did,' and further expressing the opinion that 'a stone has been cast at our fair Church by the publication of the letter, this self-appointed and self-satisfied censor concludes: 'His letter, if allowed to go without comment, and from a Catholic, too, would only tend to widen the sectarian rift that unfortunately does exist, and allow the false dogma that the laity dare not have the moral courage to differ from their priest should they hold contrary views.' It is true, no doubt, as the old Latin poet remarked, that it is pleasant to play the fool on occasion; but there are fortunately few Catholic laymen in this Colony who have so little sense of propriety as to imagine that a suitable time for playing the fool is when a priest is officially explaining the teaching of the Church on a gravely important question of faith and morals.

Running a Lie to Earth.

'To Protestantism,' wrote Cardinal Newman in one of his earlier Catholic works, 'false witness is the principle of propagation. . . . Taking things as they are, and judging of them by the long run, one may securely say that the anti-Catholic Tradition could not be kept alive, would die of exhaustion, without a continual supply of fable.' A striking illustration of the truth of these remarks and of their applicability to the Protestantism of to-day as much as to that of half a century ago, is furnished by the publication of a recent calumny—which has been going the round of the Protestant papers—against the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The charge made against the Sacred College—which is, as our readers know, one of the most important and most honored organisations in the Catholic Church—is that it has deliberately and grossly misrepresented the number of Catholics in Australasia with the express object of misleading and deceiving the public as to the progress of the Church in the part of the world referred to. The charge was first published in the *Irish Record*, thence it was copied into the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, and from there transferred to the columns of the *Irish Times*, in which paper it appeared in the following form:—

'The *Record* last week drew attention to some extraordinary statistics, which appear in the *Missiones Catholicæ* for 1901, and which are supplied by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. According to this document the Roman Catholic population of Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand has grown during the past five years from 3,008,399 to 4,507,980. But the Rev. John Dixon, of Balmain West, writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, produces figures from the census taken a year ago, showing that the whole population of Australia and New Zealand is only 4,555,803, and of these the Roman Catholics number 919,880. There is, therefore, a difference only of 3,591,100 souls between the statement sent in by the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical authorities and the official records published by the statisticians of the several States in Australia.—' *Church of Ireland Gazette*.'

After going the round of the Irish Protestant religious journals, the lie travelled to Australia, and was copied in several papers of the Commonwealth, finally appearing in the *Spectator* (the organ of the Methodists in Melbourne) with the added sarcastic comment: 'This is a very wonderful statement, and its marvel is increased by the fact that, counting all the population—men, women, and children—in those three

States, they only number 4,555,803. Therefore, if the figures of the Sacred Congregation were correct, all those people, excepting 47,823, would be Roman Catholics.'

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Long before the lie had reached Australia, however, the Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, was on its track, and had put the authors to shame—if it is possible to put such fabricators to shame—in a very forcible and pointed letter. After quoting the statement as it appeared in the *Irish Times*, and pointing out the obvious intention on the part of those who circulated it to discredit the Sacred Congregation, Dr. O'Dwyer continued:

'I trust you will allow me to inform your readers that the charge in question is, in plain language, a deliberate falsehood.'

'I have the book "*Missiones Catholicæ*" for 1901 before me. It contains no such statement as this which you quote.'

At page 587 it gives the number of Catholics in each diocese of Australia and Tasmania, and then at the foot of the column the total, which is 708,770.

It then adds: '*Incolæ in Australia et Tasmania sunt*,' 3,789,600.

At page 609 it gives the number of Catholics in each of the four dioceses of New Zealand, the total of which comes to 97,030, and the '*incolæ*' of these same four dioceses are given as 718,380. That is, the total number of Catholics in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, as given in the '*Missiones Catholicæ*' for 1901, is 805,800. How, then, did the *Record* or the *Church of Ireland Gazette* state that the number is given as 4,507,980? And all of you try to stir the indignation of true Protestants at 'the extraordinary statistics which appear in the '*Missiones Catholicæ*' for 1901, and which are supplied by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith?'

If you just add together the two numbers given above as representing the '*incolæ*' as distinguished from the '*Catholici*,' in the '*Missiones Catholicæ*' you will come upon an interesting coincidence.

'Incolæ in Australia and Tasmania ...	3,789,600
'Incolæ' in the four dioceses of New Zealand ...	718,380
Total ' <i>incolæ</i> ' ...	4,507,980

Now, this is the exact figure which the *Record* and *Church of Ireland Gazette* charge the Propaganda with giving as the number of Catholics. Can it be possible that these people did not know the meaning of the word '*incolæ*' (i.e. inhabitants)? On the very page from which they quote it is distinguished from '*Catholici*.' Yet unless on the plea of gross ignorance of this kind I can see no escape from the conclusion that these writers deliberately misrepresented the official statements of the organ of the Propaganda for the purpose of discrediting a most important institution in the Catholic Church.'

Dr. O'Dwyer's contradiction and refutation was published in the *Irish Times* two days after the calumny appeared in its columns, yet the Australian Protestant papers have copied the lie but have carefully refrained from giving publicity to the refutation. So it has been; so it ever will be. In the whole history of Protestantism true testimony has been insufficient for her purpose and now, as ever, it is only by wholesale unrestricted dependence on fable that the great anti-Catholic Tradition can be maintained.

A British General on Oliver Cromwell.

A few weeks ago an address, which has created a mild sensation in England, on 'The Cromwellian War in Ireland,' was delivered by General Sir William Butler, K.C.B., under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society in London. General Butler, it will be remembered, was the officer in command of the troops stationed in South Africa before the war broke out, and was recalled because he was outspoken enough to tell the British Government that in order to subdue the Boers an army would be required five times greater than that which the War Office authorities proposed. Sir William Butler is a student as well as a distinguished soldier, and is consequently specially qualified to appraise at its true value the work of a man whose only claim to greatness rests on his supposed soldierly qualities and military achievements. As to these latter Sir William Butler has formed his own opinion, and, as will be seen, he does not mince matters in giving expression to it.

Dealing first with the great Irish Rebellion the lecturer showed that spoliation planned in London was the real cause and explanation of the outbreak. He pointed out that long before an English soldier had set a foot in Ireland to suppress the rebellion of 1641 the edict of Confiscation had gone out from Parliament. Two million five hundred thousand acres were declared forfeited and offered as security to those who lent money to the Parliament. On this security a loan of a quarter of a million had been raised. And a body called adventurers had been formed in connection with these securities. In these days they would be called a joint stock company. Of this company Cromwell was a leading director,