

expound quite glibly—by “private judgment” of course—in accordance with the old pagan traditions—pointing out to me, for instance, the house of Jehovah, the grotto where the Saviour was born, the places in the forest that bear witness to Noah's work, etc. Such is their method of “interpreting” the Sacred Word! In 1894 part of the Macuata Province broke out in open rebellion against the Government. According to the Wesleyan Report, the Rev. W. Slade was in charge of that district (the Macuata circuit) when he wrote as follows in the Report for 1891: “The materials for report are of a more cheering character. . . . The Chiefs manifest a praiseworthy interest in Church affairs, the schools are well attended, and the position of ministers and teachers is satisfactory for all concerned. The youths of the villages are coming forward in greater numbers to be employed in Church duties, the quality of the educational work is improving, and the province generally gives evidence of progress” (Report, p. xxxv.). Such was the Rev. W. Slade's statement in 1891. Only three years later, in 1894,

#### A Rebellion

was in full swing in that Province. The rebels were Wesleyans to a man. Not a single Catholic was among them. The insurgents performed all their old pagan rites, and even fell back into savage practices which I do not care to describe. Bear in mind that all this took place only nine years ago, and after 50 years of the “wonderful success” of Methodist missionary effort. The rebellion of 1894 furnishes a curious confirmation of Mr. Duncan's speech in Melbourne as to skin-deep civilisation in Fiji. Does this furnish a reason why European Wesleyans will not worship with their Fijian co-religionists? And is it a sign of “wonderful success” that (as the Rev. Mr. Slade says) there is a danger that “the younger people” in Fiji may not “cling to their religion as their fathers have done”?

The Rev. Mr. Slade attacks “the unchristian rivalry of other religious organisations.” He uses the plural, but singles out “the Church of Rome” for a special flagellation. His attack upon the Catholic mission is unfair and unsupported by fact. Has he read the “Reminiscences” of Consul Pritchard? Or can it be possible that he is unacquainted with the story of missionary work in Fiji?—of the

#### Whippings, Fines, Etc.,

inflicted upon Catholic natives to compel them to abjure Catholicism and embrace the “true faith”? The Rev. Mr. Slade refers to the communal policy which was introduced in Fiji in 1875, and deprecates, among other things, the operation of “an ordinance for causing trouble.” And it is, in good faith, a disgraceful system. But he might have informed his hearers that it was passed with the concurrence of the Wesleyan leaders at a time when the Wesleyan mission and the Government were hand and glove. The missionaries had converted Fiji to Methodism through the chiefs, and the object of the new policy was to place all power in the hands of the chiefs. Fijian Catholics feel that the new laws and ordinances were specially directed against them. If, for instance, a Fijian in a Wesleyan town or district desired to become a Catholic he was deemed to “cause trouble,” and was fined in cash or hard labor. Rev. Mr. Slade also inveighs against the “very galling ordinance of disobedience.” It smote Catholics hardest and deepest. Native Catholics were, for instance, ordered by a non-Catholic chief to aid the Wesleyan cause with food or money. If they failed or refused to obey their chief they were fined two or four shillings, or fourteen days' hard work. A repetition of the “disobedience” cost them £1 or 30 days' labor. This power was given to the chiefs with the consent of the Wesleyan leaders. It is difficult, in the circumstances, to understand how the Rev. Mr. Slade could have the courage of talking, even to a New Zealand audience, of “unchristian rivalry” in the Fijian mission-field. It may interest your readers to know that the Rev. Mr. Langham, a Wesleyan missionary, was in the Legislative Council of the colony.

The Rev. Mr. Slade also complains of “the Fijian

#### Poll-tax

of 24s per head, from the age of 16 years.” This, by the way, is another of the disabilities inflicted upon the natives at a time when the government of the country was practically in the hands of the Wesleyan missionaries. But why does the Rev. Mr. Slade stop at the poll-tax? Let me give an example of how things work out for the hapless Fijian: The Lau Province counts a native population of 7000 souls. About 2000 of these are males above the age of 16 years, and, therefore, subject to the Government taxes. In 1894 they paid in taxation £2100. In the same year they paid £2400 in taxes to the Wesleyan Church (I use the word “taxes” because in the Fijian tongue the same expression—“na soli”—is used for levies made both for Government and religious purposes.) Bear this in mind: the officials gave orders for the payment of both “taxes” (or “soli”); and they do so to the present day. The Rev. Mr. Slade inveighs against the poll-tax, but he has not a word of condemnation for the more serious taxation which is extracted from the islanders for the purposes of the Methodist mission.

I ask your readers to bear in mind what I have said regarding the thin

#### Veneer of Civilisation

which lies upon the Fiji native, his ready return, a few years ago, to pagan and savage practices, his superstitious use of the Bible, and the woful rate at which he is perishing off the face of the earth. I might—in connection with the supposed “elevation of women” in

Fiji—cite facts as to the low state of morals which is one of the root-causes of the rapid disappearance of this fine race. But I refrain. When a physician finds himself unable to check the progress of a deadly, but curable disease in a patient, he certainly has no right to oppose the calling in of another doctor. But this sensible course is just what the Rev. Mr. Slade strongly objects to. He objects to Catholic or other missionaries interfering with the Wesleyans' monopoly in Fiji. These came to the islands in 1844. The Catholic missionaries came eight years later, and (as already pointed out) they carried on their work amidst trials and dangers that made it indeed a “wonderful success” that Catholicism survived at all in Fiji. The Rev. Mr. Slade has words of commendation for Father Breheret, whose great age—he was nearly 90 years old—forbade the possibility of much missionary activity. He has only words of vitriol for Bishop Vidal, whose

#### “New System”

was simply to introduce young and active priests, Brothers, Sisters, and to set about building churches, schools, etc., at a merry rate. That was the head and front of Bishop Vidal's offending. It led, however, to restrictions being placed upon the Catholic missionaries. The only official grounds of complaint against our missionaries were, however, what are known as “the flag affair” and “the photo affair.” The “flag affair” was simply this: Bishop Vidal used to fly a flag on his boat when going from place to place. Sir J. B. Thurston, the then Governor—who was a strong friend of the Wesleyan missions—remonstrated with the Bishop for carrying the flag, on the plea that, not being a full-blown Bishop, but only a Vicar-Apostolic, he was not entitled to do so! *Risum teneatis amici!* “The photo affair” was this: A photograph of an alleged cannibal feast was published in a European Catholic magazine. And the Rev. Mr. Slade informed his audience that the magazine stated that it was “taken by a Marist Father.” As a matter of fact, no such statement was made. It was merely said to have been “communicated” by a Marist Father, which is quite a different thing. The photograph in question was taken by a photographer, purchased from him as a curiosity, and only Wesleyan natives figure in it. Much more might be said in reference to the Rev. Mr. Slade's address, but it is about time that I should draw this lengthy communication to a close.

## HOMEWARD BOUND

### FAREWELL TO MONSIGNOR MACKAY.

On Thursday of last week the Catholics of the Oamaru parish wished the Right Rev. Mgr. Mackay a pleasant journey to his native Scotland and a safe return to the scene of his successful labors. In the afternoon a very interesting farewell entertainment was given in his honor in St. Joseph's Hall by the pupils of the Dominican Nuns. Ball drill and sash drill were given in capital style, and there were two nicely played piano selections, and several well rendered and appropriate choruses, concluding with “Will ye no' come back again?” At its close Monsignor Mackay suitably thanked the teachers and the children in a happy little speech.

In the evening a farewell social was tendered to Monsignor Mackay by the parishioners. The hall was nicely decorated for the occasion with flowers, evergreens, and pictures. The chair was taken by Mr. T. O'Grady, and the hall was crowded to the doors by a representative gathering of the Catholics of Oamaru and district. The visiting clergy present on the occasion were Very Rev. Father O'Neill (Milton), Rev. Father Aubry (Waimate), and Rev. Father Cleary (Dunedin). Apologies for non-attendance were received from the Hon. T. Y. Duncan (Minister of Lands), the Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary, and Rev. Fathers Murphy, Regnault, Tubman, and Coffey.

The proceedings were opened by the chairman, who, in the course of a complimentary speech, referred in terms of warm admiration to the great energy and activity of their pastor. To these qualities, and to his great architectural knowledge they owed the erection of the magnificent row of buildings which were a credit not only to Oamaru, but to the whole Colony (applause). The onus of erecting the convent, the presbytery, and the basilica had rested on the shoulders of Monsignor Mackay, though his efforts had been nobly seconded by the parishioners. The parish had never been a poor one, and there was something upon which Monsignor Mackay could draw to carry on his work. The people of Oamaru had not alone erected those noble buildings, but they had also contributed according to their means for the erection of ecclesiastical edifices in Dunedin and elsewhere. Their guest had arrived in Oamaru about March thirteen years ago, and, though they were not usually given to criticising their friends, there were many among them who at first regarded him as being somewhat slow. But all would agree with him that he certainly had been very sure (applause). There was hardly a stone that he had not seen deposited on the basilica, and that building was a standing monument to his energy and architectural knowledge which the people of Oamaru did not fail to recognise (applause). Monsignor Mackay well deserved the mark of distinction they were giving him, and the attendance of his church people in force showed that they wished him a pleasant voyage, and he could promise him that on his return he would receive a right hearty welcome (applause).