

proved by the test of their purses—as Catholics have proved—the reality of their ‘conscientious objections’ to the present secular State system of instruction, they will be entitled to be heard with respect. But the establishment and endowment of a State creed, on Protestant or any other lines, in New Zealand, will lead not to peace, but to more strenuous ‘unrest and agitation’ than ever. Catholics, Jews, and a large body of Protestants would (to use the words of an American humorist) be ‘weak in the knees, unsound in the heart, milk-white in the liver, and soft in the head’ if they would tamely submit to such an open and scandalous violation of the Constitution.

We need not quarrel with the statement that there is freedom from educational ‘unrest and agitation’ in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Scotland, England, and Canada. But the statement that this happy state of things is due to the reading of the Bible in the public schools is the merest clap-trap. It amounts to a complete misrepresentation of the conditions that exist in all or most of the countries named, and lures the incautious reader to inferences that are wholly unwarranted by facts. For instance: (1) in not one of the countries just mentioned is there such a scheme of Scripture-instruction in operation in the public schools as that which is advocated by our Bible-in-schools associations. (2) In the ‘Volks’ and ‘Real’ (public) schools of Germany, and in the schools of some of the other countries named above, the Protestant pastor, the Catholic priest, and the Jewish rabbi must personally impart the religious instruction there given to the members of their respective faiths. This, however, is an arrangement which our Bible-in-schools enthusiasts in New Zealand visit with an anathema maranatha: they want their new-laid religion crammed into young New Zealand as a State creed, by State officials, at the State’s expense. (3) Here is another vital matter which the Palmerston clergyman did not deem it wise to ‘tell in Gath.’ In every one of the countries mentioned above (Canada included, except as to its western part), the religious rights of minorities are duly protected and substantial subsidies are given to denominational schools. Whatever freedom from ‘unrest and agitation’ exists in those countries is due to this arrangement. But it is vitriol to the people who would introduce Bible-reading, and, with it, a new element of strife and discord, into the public schools of our Colony, that are frequented by children of every creed. And hence there is no mention—not a breath or hint—of all this in the communications addressed by the reverend secretary of the local Bible-in-schools association to our Palmerston contemporary. America is one of the several countries that are set up by him as models for New Zealand. Incidentally we may remark that it is not quite true that the Bible is read in the public schools in ‘nearly all the United States of America.’ Let that, however, pass. But this great country which is placed before us as a noble example of the results of Bible-reading in the public schools leads the world in its devotion to the Almighty Dollar, in the corruption of its public life, in the scandals of its divorce-mills and its callous destruction of family ties, in its evil habit of illegal and barbarous executions under Lynch-law; its officers and soldiers (according to General Miles’s official report) have rivalled in the Philippines the atrocities of the Bashi-Bazouks in Bulgaria; and over 40,000,000 (or nearly two-thirds) of its population never set foot inside a place of worship. Heaven preserve New Zealand from ever falling to the level of this ‘model’ of the ‘benefits’ of Bible-reading in public schools of mixed religion!

It ill becomes well-fed and comfortable non-Catholic clerics to rail at our Catholic schools and their work. These thoughtless and inconsistent critics talk shocked platitudes about the rank secularism of our public schools, and in the next breath they clamor to shuffle off from themselves, and on to civil servants, one of the most important duties of the Christian ministry—that of instructing youth unto justice. They serenely accept contributions from us Catholics for the education of their children in these same godless schools, and then heap abuse and misrepresentation upon us because we give them an example of earnestness and self-sacrifice by bringing up our little ones, at our own expense, in the love and fear of God. To put it mildly, this is an un-

manly form of attack. ‘The Romanists of New Zealand,’ says our Palmerston North enthusiast, ‘have a far larger percentage of criminals than the Protestants, who give their children the Bible.’ It would seem as if the good man cannot make a correct statement, even by mistake. His inference that there is no Scripture instruction in our schools is simply opposed to fact. Bible history, etc., is a part of their curriculum, and the Catholic faith, which is instilled into the minds of our children, is the living and magnificent embodiment of the whole Word of God. The assertion that Catholics are the most criminal portion of the population was merely lugged into the controversy. It had nothing to do with the issues under discussion, and was a mere exhibition of flagrant and uncalled-for insult. It is, moreover, a mere inference, and an inference which could never be made by a man who has a practical acquaintance with the elements of logic. Official statistics do not make the statement. It may be that Catholics—or persons describing themselves as Catholics—bulk more, proportionately, in the prison returns than the adherents of other creeds, although a sensible allowance must be made to cover the notorious habit that many misdemeanants and criminals have of giving themselves Irish aliases and falsely designating themselves Catholics. But to argue from the prison returns that Catholics are, therefore, more criminal than Protestants is a ‘non-sequitur’ of the most flagrant kind.

Our prison inmates are recruited, in New Zealand as elsewhere, mainly from the poorer or poorest class of the population. Your merchant or nabob fuddles himself with fire-water and makes his home a hell, but he does both in such a way that the police cannot interfere. The poor man drinks and brawls in the public eye. He also occasionally pilfers. He frequently goes to prison for lack of ability to pay a fine. And imprisonment is merely an episode in his career. But the great bulk of these people are by no means ‘criminals’ in the technical sense. Owing to their long history of persecution, repression, and systematic impoverishment by the operation of the Irish penal code and the land laws, New Zealand Catholics furnish more than their proportion of the poorest of our population. They may also supply a corresponding percentage of misdemeanants to our prison cells. But Catholics do not figure to the proportionate extent that the members of other denominations do in the records of ‘crime’ properly so-called—in murders, suicides, rapes, indecent assaults, burglary, wholesale swindling, infanticide, pre-natal murder, the grosser forms of juvenile depravity, the flagrant conjugal infidelity that comes out in our divorce-mills, and the scores of other grievous forms of moral obliquity. These, and not petty misdemeanors, are the true tests of comparative morality. And for our part, if the alternative were forced upon us, we should infinitely prefer to appear before the just Judge of the living and the dead with the record of some poor New Zealand Catholic street brawler, than to be weighted down with the gilded infamies of any one of the well-dressed slayers of the unborn innocent who have not come under the tongue-lash of the ungentle assailant of our faith in Palmerston North. We have so far exceeded the limits of our space that further consideration of his attack must be ‘hung up’ till next week.

On Mr. Andrew Carnegie’s arrival in Liverpool from the United States he was told the latest news, and thought the King’s visit to the Pope a very nice thing, as the Pope was a great and good man. He admired the King’s tactfulness, and said the nation ought to be proud of him. When told that some ultra-Protestants objected to the King’s visit Mr. Carnegie made a gesture of scorn, and said ‘Bah!’

Dr. Cornelius O’Doherty, who has just been selected, from amongst half a dozen candidates, by the Committee of the Manchester Corporation for the important position of Coroner of that city, the salary of which is £800 a year, is a County Clare man. He was born at Clonadrum, Miltown-Malbay, about 40 years ago. A distinguished student at the Royal University of Ireland, he succeeded in obtaining his medical degrees at the age of 21. Since then he has had a very lucrative private practice, most of the past nineteen years of his professional life being spent in Manchester.

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