

Our Fiji correspondent—whose able contributions to our columns have been the subject of complimentary notice in Fiji and in the pages of our foreign exchanges—in a letter received by us a few days ago, places it beyond all doubt that the Methodist Commission in Fiji was merely a sectarian committee for a sectarian purpose, and that its investigation into the local controversies was in reality, as described by us, a 'comedy of inquiry.' The Commission's report, for instance, dealt at some length with the motives that led to the conversion of some 1500 to 2000 of the Namosi people from Methodism to the Catholic faith. We do not suppose that the members of the Commission are, or claim to be, thought-readers, like Stuart Cumberland or Irving Bishop. Their obvious and only proper course was to have proceeded to Namosi and taken evidence at first hand from the parties interested. But what are the facts? 'Not one member of the Commission,' writes our well-informed correspondent, 'nor anybody for them, went to Namosi. They had no conversation, no communication of any kind with these people or their chiefs. The members of the Commission did not so much as see one of them, and their nearest approach to Namosi was Suva—twenty miles from the Namosi province. This will give you some idea of this farcical "inquiry" and of the value which attaches to the positive and dogmatic statements that appear in the report of the Commission.'

Petty Persecution

The enemies of religion in France are feeding fat the ancient grudge they have against the Catholic faith. The petty persecution of officials who dare to practise their religion or show any sympathy with its ministers or institutions, goes on apace. Here are a few instances in point taken from 'Le Pelerin' (Paris) of May 17: M. Louis Dimier, professor of philosophy in the Lycee of Valenciennes, has been placed under six months' suspension from pay and duty for 'having paid a visit of simple courtesy to the Marist Fathers.' M. Trouillot has met with a somewhat similar penalty and has thrown up his position in disgust. M. Frederic Clement, a judge at Seves, a Republican in politics and a Protestant in religion, has been removed from office for having 'criticised the acts of the Government'—his criticism consisting of a letter to the authorities expressing his strong disapproval of the war against liberty of conscience, of teaching, and of association.

England and the Pope

The closing lines of Justin McCarthy's biography of Leo XIII. run as follow: 'As a great leader of men, endowed with unrivalled influence, he made it his task to maintain peace among his neighbors. Better praise no man could have earned; a better life no man could have lived.' France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, owe much to his peace-giving interventions in grave and critical emergencies, and the nations recognise and reverence his work as a statesman and philanthropist. It is a hopeful sign of the times when such a paper as the London 'Saturday Review' could take occasion, from the recent visit of King Edward to the Pope, to suggest a permanent British Legation to the Holy See. 'Prussia,' says the 'Saturday Review,' 'not a Roman Catholic country, has an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; Russia a Minister resident; England and the United States alone among the Great Powers remain without an accredited representative to the Holy See. The Vatican is a school of the subtlest, the most intellectual of all the diplomacies, and contact with it could not fail to be of service to our secretaries. That, however, is less important than the fact that the Holy See is the finest source of information in the world, and it would be absurd that we should cut ourselves off from that source for fear of the prejudices of a few extremists. The Roman question is as acute as ever; it is a question of world-wide importance; our present embassy in Rome is not in a position to keep us fully posted in all its phases. It is to the interest of every country to see this question solved; and how can we make our influence felt at the Vatican if we have no accredited representative to the Pope? The presence of England and the United States at the Holy See might, in course of time, do much to modify a situation which is impossible to both Pope and King.'

The returns for last season's harvest in the Colony are now available. The actual yields are considerably heavier than was estimated—as, for instance, wheat was estimated at 28 bushels per acre and returning actually 38.37; oats estimated at 35 bushels and returning 45; and barley estimated at 37 and returning 48.69 bushels per acre.

SERIOUS ILLNESS OF THE POPE

WORLD-WIDE SYMPATHY

The disquieting news regarding the Holy Father's health, which was cabled to the colonies on Monday, stating that his Holiness had two fainting fits, the result of over-fatigue, did not cause a great deal of anxiety, as messages of a similar purport have been sent out from time to time by the press agencies in Rome without sufficient cause. However, when the news of the Holy Father's dangerous condition was confirmed by messages received here on Tuesday the greatest anxiety was felt for the venerable Pontiff, whose long and glorious reign has been so fruitful of blessings to the Church. The following cable news appeared in Tuesday's papers:—

The Pope passed a restless night. A second fainting fit occurred this morning and lasted half an hour. A later improvement dispelled the idea of immediate danger. The newspaper 'Tribune' states that the Pope is suffering from intestinal disorders, complicated by hemorrhoidal symptoms.

Doctors Laponni and Mazzoni, the Pope's physicians, admit that he is suffering from senile pulmonary hepatisation. Bulletins issued late on Sunday evening announced that his weakness had slightly increased. The pulmonary condition was unchanged, but the breathing was somewhat rapid. The pulse, while weaker, was not irregular. The temperature was below the normal. The patient was conscious.

When acquainted on Sunday afternoon with the gravity of his condition his Holiness calmly expressed a desire for the administration of the last sacraments. In the evening the Pope's sacristan, in the presence of 16 Cardinals and many dignitaries of the Church, administered the viaticum. The Pope's responses were audible, though he was too feeble to address the Cardinals. Many wept and kissed his hands. One whispered, 'Our prayers will save you.' The Pope replied, 'I am going to eternity.'

The physicians think the disease does not exhibit a tendency to spread beyond the two centres of the lungs, where it is localised. There is some hope he will linger a few days, with the assistance of the oxygen treatment and other stimulants.

Leo XIII. was in his usual health until Friday afternoon, except for a slight attack of dysentery and depression. Dr. Laponni advised a drive in the gardens. The Pope complained of illness while out, and returned and went to bed. Dr. Mazzoni was summoned on Saturday, and agreed that the Pope's condition was serious, but that there were no immediately alarming symptoms. On Sunday heart weakness caused fears of a sudden stoppage. While generally conscious, the Pope has long lapses of stupor.

The Pope exhibited remarkable mental clearness while making his final spiritual and temporal depositions. King Emmanuel is receiving frequent reports of the Pope's condition. Profound sympathy is expressed throughout Europe.

The following messages appeared in Wednesday's papers:—

The Pope took soup twice during Sunday night. Towards dawn he was placed in an arm chair, where he was reclining when at half-past eight the doctors visited him. The latest bulletin states that he had spent a less restless night, though he had had but little sleep. The pulse is weak, but not intermittent, and the temperature below normal. A Papal official stated that the Pope was engaged writing some time at his desk during the morning.

Dr. Mazzoni declares that the hour of fatal termination depends upon the rapidity wherewith the lung hardens. The Pope's life would go out like a lamp the oil of which had run dry.

The Pope showed a slight improvement on Monday as a result of stimulants. He took a little food, sat in an arm chair in order to assist his breathing, and attended to business, in defiance of his physicians' injunction, declaring that he wished to be in harness. He said he could die happy since he had obeyed his conscience and striven for the Church's welfare. His Holiness dictated a poetic invocation to the Redeemer and Virgin and a farewell to all Christians. Towards evening accentuated symptoms of general depression appeared, and the respirations became more frequent and superficial. The pulse became weak and at times imperceptible. The intellect is unimpaired.

King Edward and most rulers telegraphed to the Vatican for news of the Pope. Messages of inquiry and sympathy have been received from all parts of the world.

At 3 p.m. to-day (Wednesday) just as we are going to press the news is that there has been practically no change in the condition of his Holiness.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

On Sunday last there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from the last Mass until Vespers at St. Joseph's Cathedral. In the evening the children of the parish schools and the members of the Sacred Heart Society took part in the procession around the interior of the church.

The State school at Wrey's Bush, which had to be closed in consequence of the success attending the Cath-

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