

what contemptuous pity we are regarded by Australians, we might realise how we have fallen and how far the true spirit of freemen is from us. There will be many *sequin* Irishmen, temporisers, people who always ask how much will it cost, ready to throw cold water on any movement even if it is a movement for Ireland's sake. The Greymouth Hibernians are not of that kidney, and surely they will find all over New Zealand thousands of others to unite with them on the feast of St. Patrick in demanding Ireland's freedom, and in compelling our own wretched placemen to demand it. We are very far from holding that the latter care anything for small nations or that they are capable of feeling the shame of their insincerity; but we have no mind that they should involve the decent people whom they are supposed to represent in their own ignominy.

EPIDEMICS IN FORMER TIMES

QUARANTINE, ISOLATION, FUMIGATION KNOWN AND PRACTISED IN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES.

Common usage (says *Truth*) has it that, whenever an epidemic like the recent one visits a city, a district, or a country, and when a Board of Health or a similar arm of the government issues measures for the prevention and combating of the particular disease, some newspaper scribe or public official will issue a statement something like this: "With the wonderful accomplishments of modern science, and with a public vastly superior intellectually to the people of former ages, we are convinced of our ability to gain control of the disease within a comparatively short time. We recommend the prohibition of gatherings of all kinds, because of the danger of communication of the disease, which is greatest where crowds are present. We are confident that the public will observe the necessary rulings, will avoid gathering in crowds, will apply the best-known methods of prevention and cure and will stay at home as far as possible; we are far beyond the standards of those days when the people, startled by the havoc of an unknown disease, neglected the rudimentary demands of hygiene, and flocked to the churches or paraded the streets, flogging themselves, burning candles, and crying: 'From the pestilence, deliver us, O Lord!'"

We are not quoting from the document of any health official, but similar statements have been made in writing and on the platform; and the Catholic people, and Catholic cities and countries of former times are the target of the insinuation of ignorance and alleged improper behaviour during the frightful visitation of an epidemic. And yet these allegations are

far from being correct. A noted Austrian diplomat, who travelled from Italy to Spain in 1519, relates that on this journey some of the travellers desired to land at the island of Majorca. Having come from Naples, which was suspected of being infected with cholera, they were stopped from entering the harbor-town. They were, however, permitted to land at the end of the quai, and there to move about up to a line marked off by a stout rope. Here they could point from afar with sticks to the goods of the merchants and pedlars located there, and thus designate the objects they desired to purchase. Under the rope barrier stood a vessel, containing vinegar, into which the coins spent in payment were to be placed. Thereupon the goods purchased were pushed across the barrier by the merchants, who took the disinfected coins from the sterilising pot.

Isolation of cases, disinfection of persons, articles of clothing, and other goods were well known, and prohibitions of import were always employed in former times to prevent or minimise contagion. When the plague invaded Milan in 1575, serious efforts were made to isolate those affected with the disease. Before each of the six gates a separate village was built, consisting of hundreds of small wooden houses, and here the sick, the suspects, and the convalescents were cared for. Moreover, these three groups were carefully separated, and strict separation of the sexes was observed also. In the midst of each village stood a crucifix and an altar, at which Mass was celebrated daily. Each of these towns had its own administration, which executed the regulations with just rigor. It seems also that, as early as the thirteenth century, efforts were made in Italian cities to combat contagious diseases by isolation, inasmuch as we read that the stricken were cared for in the market places, where they were nursed especially by the Franciscans. The assumption of obligatory notification of cases of contagion and coercion in isolating all cases in the market-place seems not altogether unwarranted.

Disinfection and similar measures seem also to have been rigidly enforced in such critical times. We know that in the duchy of Franconia, in the eighteenth century, when news had come of the prevalence of the plague in Marseilles, strict precautions were ordered to be taken. A rigorous embargo was placed on the shipment into the country, of worn clothing, rags, and hair, as possible carriers of the contagion. When the pestilence approached closer to the borders, more rigorous measures were employed. Only such travellers and goods were admitted as came from sections known to be free from the disease. Guards were placed on all the roads leading to the borders, and entrance through other than the regular avenues was penalised. Travellers were obliged under oath to state whether or not they had passed through infected districts. It was furthermore provided that any village or hamlet

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