

and (2) the question of culpability for the abandonment of the woman without leaving her any means of support. As regards the former, the *Outlook* presumably no longer questions the principle underlying the decree, since it has quoted with approval the *British Weekly's* endorsement of the Catholic doctrine, which that paper describes also as 'sound Protestant doctrine.' With regard to the second point, Mr. James Douglas himself says: 'It is fair to point out that the desertion is not defended or justified by the priests. . . . In the name of all that is reasonable, then, what is all the pother about? Sir William Robertson Nicholl is at least as brilliant a journalist as Mr. Douglas, and a much higher authority on questions of church doctrine and principles; and his statement of the necessity that is imposed upon all Christian churches of enforcing their interpretation of the law of Christ in regard to marriage sums the whole matter up in a nutshell: 'The situation is harsh, painful, and oppressive to the last degree, but from time to time it is realised. This is sound Protestant doctrine.'

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Our contemporary further quotes the brilliant journalist as saying: 'It is said that this case is not the only one. There have been others.' There have, indeed; and they are mostly all of a piece. Let us tell the very latest—and certainly not the least moving. The *Outlook* has probably seen it, but, for the sake of those who have not, we feel it a duty to place the facts upon record. The story has appeared in several of our Home exchanges, but we quote it as we find it told in a leaderette in the *Dunedin Evening Star*, 'In the two great Irish organs, the *Belfast News Letter* and the *Northern Whig*,' says the *Star*, 'there appeared a harrowing story. A correspondent wrote: "Yesterday there came into my possession the details of a cruel and heartless desertion of the victim of a so-called 'unhallowed union' by the partner who should have remained faithful to her for life. The poor mother, thinking that at least she should have her children to console her, was, however, not only abandoned by her natural protector, but robbed of her off-spring. I am in a position to say that the foul robbery of flesh and blood was perpetrated by a member of an Irish secret society. . . . No terms were dictated, because no terms would have been accepted; and the unfortunate creature was deprived of that which by all laws of Nature was nearest and dearest to her. But there is a bright side to the picture. I can say that the mother is in no state of destitution. She is being at present amply provided for by a well-known and respected elder of the Presbyterian Church, whose munificence cannot be praised too highly, and whose modesty has prevented the publication of his name." The story was repeated in *The Times*, was signed "Herbert Pym," and was dated from "65 University road, Belfast." From the *London Times* the story of "Roman Catholic intolerance and injustice" was copied into scores of provincial journals, and provoked much indignation. But the pathos of the story has been rudely destroyed, for, on being interviewed, Mr. Pym had to confess that his letter on "mixed marriages" was a joke pure and simple. The sole foundation for the story was that a neighbor's cat had a litter of unwanted kittens, which had been drowned.' We think we are safe in saying that, on the whole, little sympathy will be felt for the journals in question; for papers which are willing—without waiting for the least substantiation of the facts—to swallow, and pass on, any wild tale against 'Rome,' emphatically deserve to 'fall in.'

Discredited Statistics

The *Dannevirke Evening News* has in operation a 'Church column'—to which, as we learn from the heading, 'all the churches have been cordially invited to contribute.' Ideally, the establishment of such a column would seem to be an excellent thing; but from the way in which it is at present working, it is apparent that unless the editor lays down strict lines, confining the contributors to announcements or to the chronicling of actual happenings at home or abroad in connection with the particular denomination represented, and inhibiting them from using it for the purpose of attacking the doctrines or practices of other religious bodies, the 'Church column' will do more harm than good. In the issue of the *Evening News* for March 11, among the contributors are the Rev. Father Cahill, representing the Catholic Church, and the Rev. E. Robertshaw, writing on behalf of St. John's (Anglican) Church. The contribution of the former consisted of a reference to an actual happening—viz., the reception of a number of converts into the Catholic Church—taken from an Auckland Anglican paper, accompanied by a few brief introductory lines from the *N.Z. Tablet*. The Rev. E. Robertshaw, in his contribution, after a dissertation hitting at 'the ignorant people who ask, 'Are you saved,' turns to the opposite point of the compass, and drags in, apropos of nothing at all, a reference to Church communicants so that he may wind

up with the following attack on other Christian bodies: 'Therefore, any body of Christians who leave out the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are disobeying His Command. Any body of Christians who forbid the cup to the laity are also disobedient.' Thus, in this one short contribution, the Rev. E. Robertshaw has attacked the doctrines or practices of the extreme evangelicals (such as the Salvation Army), of the Quakers or Society of Friends, and of the Catholic Church. We submit that this not a fair or reasonable use to make of such a column. If Father Cahill retaliated—as he easily might, if he were disposed to be contentious—by pointing out in his portion of the column that a Church which contradicted itself could not possibly be a messenger of God; that a Church which does not know its own mind even on such a fundamental matter as the Holy Communion (one section affirming the Real Presence, the other emphatically repudiating it) could not be the true Church; that a Church which speaks to its people with two voices on such important subjects as baptismal regeneration, the priesthood, confession, the number of the Sacraments, etc., forfeits all claim to be considered a teaching Church; and that a Church which, with all these difficulties, contradictions, and dissensions within its own borders, gives itself airs and sets itself to put other churches right, only makes itself ridiculous—if Father Cahill, we say, or any of the other religious bodies who have been attacked by the vicar of St. John's, were to imitate that gentleman, and use the 'Church column' for such a purpose as this, there would be an end to all religious peace in the community. Each contributor should be compelled to stick religiously to statements affecting his own church; and any attempt to go beyond that, and animadvert on the doctrines or religious practices of other denominations, should be rigorously blue-pencilled.

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In addition to disfiguring his portion of the 'Church column' with these unpleasant allusions to the religious beliefs of his fellow-Christians, the Rev. Mr. Robertshaw rushes into print in the general columns of the paper, ostensibly to refer to Father Cahill's contribution, but in reality to make a general attack on the Catholic Church, ranging from allegations as to Catholic predominance in crime, down to comments on the Pope's decrees regarding Modernism and mixed marriages. The letter deals for the most part with statistics—of a kind. The Anglican vicar has been most unfortunate in his selection. His figures are not merely, like Hood's oyster, 'open to suspicion'—they are absolutely and hopelessly 'bad.' His first batch is taken from the *N.Z. Year Book* for 1907; and they are quoted to show that Catholics contribute more than their proportionate quota to the crime records of the Dominion. The best and most complete refutation of these figures is to be found in the fact that the very compilers of the *Year Book* have themselves become so entirely convinced of their inaccuracy and unreliableness that they have ceased to compile them, and have incontinently dropped them from the *Year Book* publication. The Rev. Mr. Robertshaw will search in vain, in the *Year Book* for 1910, for the old tables relating to the denominational returns of crime. The reasons which led the department to abandon these returns were explained in the *Wellington Evening Post* of January 12, from which we quote as follows: 'Inquiries made in the proper quarter to-day showed that the reason for dropping the table above referred to was that when investigations were made into the matter it was found that the information in the tables was unsound. Prisoners charged several times gave different religions. For example, John Jones would be a Catholic when convicted of one offence, and say a Primitive Methodist, an Anglican, or a Baptist on another occasion. The editor of the *Year Book* (Mr. W. M. Wright), on being seen with reference to the omission, said it was purely voluntary in the interest of accuracy. There was absolutely no influence of any kind brought to bear upon the matter. It was done in order to avoid anything leading to controversy that could not be supported by facts. The prison authorities recognise three religions—viz., Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. For reasons of their own, prisoners are known to change their religion according to circumstances, such as the strength of the religious body or bodies who include gaol-visiting in their institutional work, the faith of the master or gaoler, or even of the visiting justices. Prisoners seem to think, rightly or wrongly, that they will receive a certain amount of consideration on account of the faith they profess if it squares with that of persons official or non-official authorities or visitors.' Here we have the editor of the *Year Book* frankly acknowledging that 'when investigations were made into the matter,' the figures in the 'official' tables were found to be so incorrect and unreliable for purposes of comparison that—'purely in the interests of accuracy'—it was necessary that they should be dropped. Either the Rev. Mr. Robertshaw was aware that these figures had been officially condemned and abandoned, or he was not. If he did know, it was, of course, not honest on his part to put forward figures which he

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