

## Current Topics

### The Press and the Delegates

On the whole the press of the Dominion have been more than cordial in their attitude towards the Irish delegates; and those papers, in particular, which really represent, not a section of the people, but the general body of democratic opinion in the country, have been especially explicit and emphatic in their endorsement of the Nationalist cause. One or two of the ultra-Conservative journals, however—notably the *Dominion* and the *Christchurch Press*—have damned the mission with faint praise, or, rather, they have damned it at large, without praise of any quality or degree. In this—as Conservative organs—they have simply been true to their traditions; and readers of the papers in question could hardly have expected anything better. One does not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles, nor blessings on a democratic movement from papers whose settled policy it is to oppose democracy. The *Dominion* does not see why funds are wanted; and it is oppressed with the thought of the financial burden which England may be called upon to bear in the first years of Home Rule—which feature of the proposals it regards as 'critical.' In all the long years during which Ireland was robbed by over-taxation to the tune of two and a half millions a year, the Conservative papers discovered nothing 'critical' in the situation—they apparently regarded the operation as a perfectly natural and proper one. The *Press*, on the strength of an alleged American utterance of Mr. Redmond which it has dug up from files dating back to 1908, professes to fear that the Nationalists are really aiming at separation. The columns of American papers—as the *Press* knows full well—is the last place in the world in which to look for a measured and accurate statement of the views and utterances of visitors to the Republic; and after his last mission—a few months ago—Mr. Redmond had to publicly repudiate some of the imaginative deliverances attributed to him. On this question of separation, Mr. M. Nolan, in a characteristically vigorous letter, puts the *Press* right in such complete and convincing fashion as to fully justify him in his demand for some sort of apology from the *Christchurch* paper. Mr. Redmond has explained so often recently in reasoned, deliberate, and authoritative articles that 'Ireland's demand is for full legislative and executive control of all purely Irish affairs, subject to the supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament,' that if there still remain any of the reading public who are not properly seized of the position the fact must be due either to want of goodwill or to congenital obtuseness. *Litera scripta manet*—Mr. Redmond's written statements remain, and the Irish Party will be bound by them. In the meantime, if—as we should be sorry to think—the *Press* and the *Dominion* hoped by their animadversions to arrest the flow of contributions to the New Zealand fund, it is satisfactory for us to reflect that they will be woefully disappointed. Few things stimulate interest and enthusiasm in any cause better than a little opposition. The Irishmen of New Zealand will resent being dictated to by papers who have no first-hand knowledge of the situation in Ireland, and who have little sympathy with her people. Wellington has answered the *Dominion's* strictures by a magnificent response to the delegates' appeal—the contribution on this occasion far eclipsing any of the city's previous efforts. If the *Press* only continues its narrow and illiberal criticism it will doubtless succeed in achieving a similar success for the *Christchurch* gathering.

### Is Popery Creeping In

Some two or three weeks ago a troubled Presbyterian cleric wrote to the *Otago Daily Times* all the way from Picton to voice the anxious query: 'Is Popery creeping into the Dunedin Presbytery?' The immediate occasion of the Picton brother's agitation was the fact that the Dunedin Presbytery had christened a newly-erected structure as 'St. Margaret's Residential College'—naming it after a Catholic saint who was canonised by the Pope of Rome, 'which,' said the perturbed Pictonite, 'is one of the greatest sins we can commit.' Certainly it was a sufficiently grave enormity; but it was a mere 'circumstance' compared to the way in which things seem to be moving in Presbyterian circles in the United States. There,

as we learn from the *Ave Maria*, the editor of the *United Presbyterian* recently published a leading article in praise and glorification of the Blessed Virgin! The article was entitled 'The Mother of Jesus.' 'Is this,' asks the editor, 'a startling subject for an editorial or a sermon in a Protestant newspaper or pulpit?' We leave it to Picton to answer; and without pausing for his reply we hurry on to give some extracts from this piece of Presbyterian 'Popery.'

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'... We set before ourselves for examples,' says the *United Presbyterian*, 'the virtues of other Bible characters. We study the character and extol the virtues of the disciples, prophets, saints, and early Christians. Sermons are filled with references to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (the mother of Zebedee's children), Simon's wife's mother, and many other women; but the Mother of Jesus is almost ignored in more than one Protestant pulpit. . . . Surely there is no reason why we should refuse or neglect to honor her who was and is "blessed among women." That which makes her character great is her faith, shown in her meekness, humility, quietness, fidelity, obedience, and love. . . . All these things, and His death itself, did not triumph over her faith. We find her in the upper room, with those who trusted Him, just after His Ascension. She must have heard Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, and witnessed the wonderful ingathering that followed; and that must have gone far to heal the hurt in her heart. She was the incarnation of all that is pure and sweet in womanhood and motherhood. "Blessed is she that believed!" Blessed also are ye that believe.'

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In respect to the statements regarding the way in which the name of Mary is tabooed in Protestant pulpits, the above is an absolutely true bill. We know whereof we affirm when we say that while many sermons are heard in Presbyterian churches on Ruth and Naomi, on Miriam, on the other Marys mentioned in the New Testament, on Doreas and Lydia, etc., the queen of womanhood, the august instrument of the Incarnation, is not deemed worthy of even a passing tribute. There, are, however, in more directions than one, welcome signs of a change. It is not so much that Popery is creeping in, as that mere no-Popery is dropping out. Long-standing prejudices are at least beginning to lose their hold; the bitterness of the older Calvinism is dying down; and the day is not very far distant when the unreasoning anti-Catholic declamation which was once so common will find its only exponents in antediluvians like our Picton friend, or in the discredited ranters of the Orange lodge.

### Mr Balfour on the Education Question

Mr. Balfour's views on the education question have always been broad and statesmanlike. He does make some attempt to lay a solid foundation by getting down to fundamental principles—in marked contrast to the pettifogging politicians in this part of the world who seem utterly unable, on this question, to rise to anything higher than a miserable policy of shallow expediency. Mr. Balfour was principal speaker the other day at the first of a series of meetings to be held throughout England in celebration of the centenary of the National Society 'for Promoting Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church'; and if he had set himself, *ex professo*, to state and vindicate Catholic principles and the Catholic attitude on the education question, he could hardly have succeeded better. He began by saying that he endorsed the plea made by the previous speaker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, for 'definite religious teaching.' 'It was folly,' continued Mr. Balfour, 'to divide education into secular and religious, as if they were two separate things. The founders of the National Society thought the education of a child was one thing—a single name for a bundle of influences that could not be dissociated. They rejected the idea that they could put into separate compartments those influences that were to act upon the religious convictions of children, and into another compartment "secular" learning.' What is this but an endorsement of the age-long attitude of the Catholic Church, as expressed, for example, in Dr. Cleary's work on *Secular Versus Religious Education*. 'The three great agencies in education,' says Dr. Cleary, 'are the home, the school, the church. In the vital matter of educating in religion and virtue, the Catholic Church has ever stood for the now scientifically accepted principle of unity and concentration; she has ever required harmony in the peda-