

Current Topics

Reformation History

Some short time ago we had to record the fact that the *N.Z. Churchman*, an Auckland Anglican periodical established for the purpose of fighting the 'Romeward movement' in the Church of England, had ceased publication—at least until further notice. It is now announced that its anti-type, the Christchurch *Layman*—an enthusiastically High Church paper—has also issued its last number. We regret the demise of the Christchurch publication; for although its references to the Catholic Church were not always so kindly as we had reason—considering how much we have in common with our 'Anglo-Catholic' friends in matters of belief—to expect, the personality of the editor, which left its impress in a very marked way on every page, was always attractive and likeable. Even his amiable foible that the Church of England is the Catholic Church in New Zealand, and that everybody and everything else is in schism, one could be amused with without being offended at—and not the less so because the novel doctrine was proclaimed with the most whole-hearted earnestness and seriousness. In its valedictory number the *Layman* has a parting shot at the Rev. Robert Wood's overture anent the Reformation; and it scores a very palpable hit. It may be remembered that this virulent 'no-Popery' minister some time ago gave notice of an overture to the General Assembly, asking them to make arrangements for systematic teaching to Presbyterian children on the principles of the Reformation. Regarding which, the Christchurch paper makes some remarks; and its treatment of the subject is in the *Layman's* best style.

We quote the concluding portion of the article. 'He would be inhuman indeed,' says the *Layman*, 'who should suggest a scientific statement of the work of the Reformation in Scotland. For here we find the adoption of a new religion. Before the Reformation, Scotland had a good religion badly organised. After it she had a bad religion extremely well organised. With all its faults, the old religion was the religion of salvation. In its extreme form the new religion which Scotland adopted was a religion of damnation. With all its human corruption, the old religion did throw open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The new, with its doctrine of election, straitened God's Redemption, and narrowed His mercy till it applied only to a caste. The old religion, defiled and marred as it was, retained some traces of beauty and of joy. The new was as ugly as sin, and as joyless as the Inferno. The old religion, strongly conscious of the fact that the Son of God had deigned to take our nature upon Him, could find some excellence and hope in humanity. The new exulted in the thought of our total depravity. The old religion had retained enough of the Spirit of Christ and His saints to look with suspicion upon money grubbing. The new left men free only to get rich. There remains the fact that Scotsmen are generally better than their creed, and that must always be the worst thing one can say of any religion. They are better, because for the most part they have discreetly forgotten their heritage from the Reformation. We implore them not to call it to mind by a renewed study of Reformation principles.'

Missions to Non-Catholics

A little less than a year ago we ventured to prophesy that the missionary movement to non-Catholics—which has been so successful in America and which has now extended to England—would, sooner or later, spread even to New Zealand. That hour has not yet arrived; but it is coming nearer. A start has now been made in Australia—a start humble, modest, and unpretentious, but all the more likely on that account to be successful. The pioneer priest is Father A. O'Brien, an Australian priest who went specially to America to acquire a knowledge of the non-controversial spirit as well as the practical methods of the American

mission work. Father O'Brien has now returned to Australia; and has begun non-Catholic mission work in New South Wales. In a recent letter to the *Missionary*, of Washington, U.S.A., he tells of the reception his efforts have thus far met with.

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'On Passion Sunday, April 2,' he writes, 'the first non-Catholic mission ever given in Australia, was begun. The place, Geurie, is but a village, where Mass is celebrated only once a month. The good people seem to appreciate very much the opportunity afforded them for gaining a knowledge of those doctrinal points not usually treated during the year. The church was crowded the opening night, and was very well attended during the progress of the mission. The closing night again saw a crowded house. The local parson became very much interested in the work, attended the mission some of the evenings in a friendly spirit, and afterward came to the church to see me. This was significant of the striking way in which the non-controversial and purely expository character of this first Australian mission was emphasised. An ordinary effort would have set the parson over against us, but this mission was conducted in so friendly a spirit that it brought him with the crowd as a sympathetic listener. I feel that my efforts were appreciated and will in their own time produce fruit.'

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After describing very successful meetings at Narromine and Dubbo, Father O'Brien concludes: 'This, then, is the first venture of the non-Catholic missionary work in this great continent, and is the first tiny turn of what I hope may become a mighty wheel of power for good in this glorious land. I feel the time is ripe for such a movement. If my little single-handed efforts in these villages where, mind you, I'm well known, for I was an assistant priest here for some years, were appreciated by the people, what might not be expected of a thoroughly organised mission band in any of the dioceses? What might not be expected of a great continent-wide organisation with mission bands in every diocese, and a central Apostolic Mission House to train missionaries for the work? . . . I believe the success of the first experiment will commend the work to the Hierarchy. Exactly what form the movement will take or how it will be worked are questions that cannot be answered at this early part of the day. The Holy Father's words to me, "You will meet with difficulties," are very encouraging when encountering opposition. If it is the work of God, it will go ahead, and God will find the way to surmount all difficulties.'

How it Struck the King

The Press Association gave us, at the time, a fairly full account of the visit of the King and Queen to Ireland; and the detailed accounts in the Home files now to hand only serve to confirm and emphasise the cabled statements as to the heartiness and cordiality of the reception accorded to their Majesties. While the Irish Party, in accordance with precedent, observed an official attitude of reserve, they expressed the opinion—in a manifesto which has been already published in our columns—that the people would receive the King 'with the generosity and hospitality which are traditional with the Irish race'; and the anticipation was amply realised. 'The cordial welcome,' says the *Freeman's Journal*, 'given to the King and Queen, on Saturday, in the city, as well as at Kingstown, accorded well with the traditions of the Irish people for generosity and hospitality. The prediction of the Irish Party that the King would be received with the kindly feeling characteristic of the people was fully verified.' And this cordiality was maintained until the conclusion of the visit. As the King was about to leave the Irish shore, after cheers from the people and music from the bands, the boys of the Carriglea School sang 'Come Back to Erin,' with the following verse added:

'Come back to Erin, Mavoureen, Mavourneen,
Come back again to the Isle of the blest;
Come in the springtime with Home Rule, Mavourneen,
And Erin will clasp thee with love to her breast.'