

assure you Sir Edward Carson and his men in buckram will be quite ready to take their share of the loaves and fishes. Speaking of another leaflet dealing with the criminal statistics of Ireland, Mr. Redmond said that Ireland to-day was freer from the more serious kinds of crime than were England, Scotland, and Wales. There had been for some years a steady decrease of crime in Ireland. In fact, comparatively speaking,

The Country was Crimeless,

and it was a disgraceful thing that a man in the leaflet should ask the English people to believe a whole series of falsehoods against the Irish people. Such arguments were in use by the lower and meaner type of their opponents. They were methods to which their more honorable opponents did not descend. The Irish Party wanted nothing but the truth. Ignorance about Ireland in this country had always been their great difficulty. The Irish cause was a great and just cause. Ireland in the past had suffered grievously, and Ireland in the past, naturally, as they would all admit, had had their souls filled with bitterness; but times had changed. Ireland had lived through the storm and was beginning to recover, and Irishmen, even the most bitter and prejudiced, were beginning to understand that the guilt of Irish misgovernment really never rested at the door of the mass of the people of England. Ireland to-day wanted peace with England, peace with the Empire. Irishmen and Englishmen desired to shake hands across the gulf of the past, with all its iniquities and miseries, to forget and forgive. Believe me, he concluded, the day that they do so, more will have been done for the glory and unity and stability of the Empire than has been done by the greatest British army that ever existed, or the most formidable British fleet that ever ploughed the waves. Those who come forward and endeavor to stand between the English and the Irish at this golden opportunity in their history, and endeavor to prevent the reconciliation of these races, are not merely, in my opinion, enemies to their own country, enemies to Ireland, enemies to the principle of freedom, but, I honestly believe, are enemies to the peace of the world and the welfare of the human race.

SECTARIANISM AND POLITICS

AN EFFECTIVE REPLY TO A FALSE STATEMENT

'It is injurious to religion as well as to politics to have sectarian bitterness introduced into the already heated atmosphere of political controversy.' Our contemporary, the *Evening Star* quotes the preceding sentence from the Christchurch *Press* of January 3, and then goes on in the course of a leading article to say: 'Needless to say, we are in full agreement with this remark, which, indeed, is of the nature of a truism; and our only regret or wonder is that our esteemed contemporary, in the special instance, should not have recked its own redo with more scrupulous care—or, we might even say, with a keener sense of humor. For the whole of the article in which the edifying truism appears is a singularly pointed attempt to introduce sectarian bitterness into the already heated atmosphere of political controversy. The matter has a particular interest for Dunedin people—as will perhaps best be gathered if we quote the *Press's* opening sentence.'

After quoting the opening remarks of the *Press* the *Star* goes on to say: 'After studying Father Coffey's letter and our contemporary's reply, in the light of our knowledge of the circumstances of the campaign in Dunedin West, we are constrained to compliment the Rev. Father on the cogency of his arguments; and if this is tantamount to condoling with the *Press* on the weakness of its position, well, the fault is not ours, and condolences should have some slight consolatory effect. . . . We sincerely wish that there had been a worthy response to the Rev. Father's appeal; but, alas and alack! the *Press* reiterates its statement that "in Dunedin there was an organised attempt to influence the Catholic vote in favor of the

Government candidates, as there was in other parts of the Colony.'" It is not unreasonable to suggest that we have an advantage over the editor of the *Press* as regards knowledge of the Dunedin contests; and, even in respect of that "reliable" Dunedin correspondent, it would be interesting to learn something of his identity, or at least of his credentials. We do not hesitate to declare that the allegations which our contemporary so persistently advances are, for the most part, unsubstantial and fantastic.'

The following incisive passage from Father Coffey's second letter is then quoted:—'It is a peculiar fact and one worthy of special notice that ministers of other denominations may turn their churches and meeting-places into political platforms, that they may stand outside polling booths on election days, may even go inside till put out by someone in charge, that they may go from door to door distributing tracts and asking votes for certain candidates, telling them "that God will be with them if they vote for Mr. So-and-so," that they may ride round in motor cars on the day of the election, rounding up the faithful and yet there is not one word in the papers in condemnation of such actions. But if a priest in the remotest corner of New Zealand lifts his voice or if some "reliable correspondent" assumes that he has lifted his voice, the Press Association are at once informed of the fact or assumed fact, and the public are treated to a howl about the "priest in politics."'

Commenting on this the *Star* says:—'That passage may well cause some searchings of heart in quarters which need not be too definitely particularised. In at least one of the Dunedin electorates, during the recent campaign, clerical and religious and semi-religious influence was brought to bear with a passionate persistency, as well as an invidious subtlety, which (if the paradox may be excused) had an element of downright diablerie. And in connection with this questionable sort of enterprise, though the Roman Catholics may not have been entirely idle, it is notorious that they could not hold a candle with some other denominations.'

FATHER COFFEY'S FURTHER DENIAL.

The following letter on the same subject appeared in the *Press* of January 10:—'Sir,—I am sorry you have not had manly courage enough to admit defeat. You were led by your "reliable correspondent" to make a false statement containing a most unjust and base insinuation against a body of your fellow-citizens. You now know that your statement is without foundation, in a word, that it is false from every aspect; and instead of honorably admitting you were deceived, you reiterate your statement without one solitary word of proof. Heretofore I have been led to expect different conduct from a respectable newspaper. To dispel further doubt on the subject under discussion, and to make the matter as clear as possible, I shall now give your statement in your own words, and shall give an emphatic denial to that statement under the different guises in which it has appeared.

'No. 1: "A Dunedin correspondent on whom we can rely, informs us that every Roman Catholic in Mr. Millar's constituency was seen on his behalf two days before the election." The above statement is absolutely false, in the only sense in which you could have used it. That is, that some organised attempt was made by the Catholic authorities to influence votes for Mr. Millar. If you can prove that your statement is true, and that I am wrong, you are at liberty to claim my £10, the offer of which is still open.

'Statement No. 2: "Doubtless the work was done by lay representatives of the Roman Catholic Church." The denial of this is contained in my answer to No. 1, but in order to place the matter beyond all possibility of doubt or dispute, I now state categorically and explicitly, that it is absolutely false to say or insinuate that any Catholic, clerical or lay, man or woman, was asked or authorised, directly or indirectly, by any Church authority or Church organisation, to visit one single Catholic voter, or to ask for one vote for Mr. Millar at the last election, either during the first or