

## Current Topics

### Dean Darby's Suggestion

Because it comes from a widely known and highly esteemed priest, and in the interests of free discussion, we print the letter from the Very Rev. Dean Darby suggesting the formation of a New Zealand Catholic Benefit Society; but we take the opportunity at the same time of registering our own respectful dissent from the proposal. Assuredly—in our humble judgment at least—the time is not ripe for such a movement. Its first and obvious effect—if the scheme were in any degree successful—would be to weaken the H.A.C.B. Society, an organisation which has drawn, and is drawing ever more and more, to its ranks the best and ablest and most representative of our Catholic laity, and which has a long and splendid record of practical usefulness. We cannot afford to lose, nor even to weaken, the fine spirit of devotion to faith and fatherland which is traditional with the H.A.C.B. Society, and which has been such a powerful factor in building up the Church in this as in other lands. The need of the hour, as we see the matter, is that Catholics should throw every atom of energy into bringing the two existing organisations—the H.A.C.B. Society and the N.Z. Catholic Federation—to the highest possible degree of strength. In regard to the latter—the Catholic Federation—Dean Darby has himself set an excellent example, and has already established a flourishing and powerful branch in his district. These two organisations—the H.A.C.B. Society and the Catholic Federation—have, we are persuaded, a great and important future before them if Catholics only give them the support they need.

### The Municipal Elections

The enlarged franchise now in operation, together with the movement in the direction of city and suburban amalgamation by which the large number of smaller local bodies have been, or are being, merged into one large central council, has resulted in a greatly quickened interest in our municipal elections, as evidenced by the exceptionally large number of eligible and, on the whole, highly qualified candidates who presented themselves at last week's contests, and also by the heavy poll recorded notwithstanding the almost antarctic severity of the weather. The elections for the Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards were specially noteworthy this year by reason of the fact that for the first time in the history of these elections some of our women citizens took the field as candidates. Of the two who stood in Dunedin one was Mrs. A. Jackson, a lady whose name is a household word in Catholic circles in this city, and whose public spirit, strong personality, untiring energy, and all round capacity are very widely known and recognised also outside the Catholic communion. There were six seats to be filled on the Board; and out of the twelve candidates who sought the suffrages of the citizens Mrs. Jackson was returned with a huge majority, polling 7088 votes, or nearly 1000 more than the highest of the men candidates. Mrs. Jackson has for years been actively associated with the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society; and her wide experience, sound judgment, and uncompromising decision of character will prove an undoubted source of strength to the newly constituted Board. Another exceedingly popular win was the triumphant return of Mr. J. J. Marlow at the top of the poll for the Caversham Ward in the City Council elections. Mr. Marlow is a type of layman of whom the Catholic body have reason to be genuinely proud. On all hands he is regarded as one of the ablest and most valuable men in the public life of his city; and during his now lengthy public career he has, by his straightforwardness, his consistency of character, and his thorough grasp of every subject with which he is called upon to deal, gradually turned even his enemies into friends and won the unstinted admiration of all classes of citizens. Mr. Marlow has already announced himself as a candidate for the Mayoralty next year; and his success on the present occasion is, we are safe in saying, an earnest of

the higher honors that are to come. Another Catholic candidate, Mr. A. J. Sullivan, an old and tried member of the Council, and one of the most solid and influential members of that body, has also once again been successful. Mr. John Carroll, who has proved himself a painstaking and thoroughly capable councillor, and Mr. T. J. Hussey, who was making his first appearance as a candidate for civic honors, were defeated by the narrowest possible margin. In regard to the latter, the opinion in well-informed circles is that a very little more of active work on the part of the candidate and his friends would have easily ensured his return. Mr. Hussey is just the sort of man to profit by the experience; and those who know his outstanding ability and fine fighting qualities will know that it is only a matter of time—and a very short time at that—when he will find a place at the council table. We have spoken only of the candidates whom we personally know. Throughout the Dominion many other Catholic candidates have achieved success in the late elections; and the fact is extremely gratifying, both as indicating the gradual breaking down of the spirit of bigotry and as showing also that the Catholic laity are taking their proper place and part in the public life of the community.

### The Church's Accusers

A recent issue of a French diocesan weekly quotes from that distinguished writer, F. Brunetiere, a pointed and pithy analysis of the kinds of people who go to make up the main body of the critics and accusers of the Church. We translate as follows:—

Who, then, are they who reproach religion with being too wearisome? Those who do not practise it.

Who are they who reproach the Church for exacting faith in her revealed doctrines? Those who believe in the worst fooleries, and in the most absurd superstitions.

Who are they who reproach the Church for not recognising the dignity of man? Those who claim the monkey for their father, chance for their master, pleasure for their law, annihilation for their end.

Who are they who upbraid the Church with being a religion of money? Those who despoil her of her goods with the utmost cynicism.

Who are they who accuse the Church of being intolerant? Those who cannot allow anyone to hold an opinion differing from their own.

Who are they who charge the Church with being an enemy to light? Those who, despising liberty, have closed Catholic schools, and driven out the nuns and the religious teachers.

Who are they who reproach the Church with being the enemy of the people? Those who, ignorant of history, are persecuting the charitable institutions established by religion (hospitals, crèches, workshops, etc., etc.).

Who are they who indulge with the utmost audacity in violent tirades against the Church and her teachings? Those who know nothing whatever of religion, or of what its precepts require.

We are not afraid, then, either of the number or of the fury of those who attack us, and dare, rather, to congratulate ourselves. They know what they are doing, and that we are what the world calls 'a force.' Their anger is aroused by the knowledge that they are able neither to slight, nor to despise, nor, above all, to ignore us.

We overawe them by our number, our doctrines, our ideas, the progress we are continually making, the fear they have that we shall achieve even greater things, by our confidence and our hopes. Out of reach, as we are, of their anger, it is their indifference that we have to dread.

Born under persecution, growing up amidst heresies, strengthened by controversies, if the Church had no longer adversaries we would need to despair of the promises of her Founder. But as long as struggle and opposition continue, she will live.

### Hurried Journalism

It is always dangerous for an editor or sub-editor to write in a hurry—it is so very easy to make a slip,

# Better Teeth

AT HOWEY WALKER'S,

Less Pain.

QUEEN STREET. AUCKLAND,

Less Expense.