

indefatigable secretary of the Dunedin Branch and his fellow officers, for taking upon themselves the grave responsibility of revising the Dunedin Branch Laws, and framing laws for Boards of Management, yet I fear their efforts must fail without the immediate co-operation of those branches wishing to form a district. Now I hope to be pardoned for suggesting that it is necessary for them, say at their next meeting, to give expression of their opinion by a resolution according to the District Board Laws, and forward the same to the secretary at Melbourne, who would, of course, send the required number of applications to the Executive Directory for approval. This seems to me the first step to be taken, and without which little can be done. I have read, with pleasure, the several able letters which appeared in your worthy paper on the subject, and I have no doubt the Society in this colony is prepared for the change. It is very well to discuss the subject; but this surely can be done without leaning so heavily on its Executive Directory, or its past or present officers, all of whom, without doubt, have rendered valuable services to the Society. After all nothing extraordinary has happened at the Annual Meeting except the placing of some of the right men in the wrong place. This is because the wheel goes round, and long may it continue so. Why should we be angry thereat? We can try our luck again, and pull together for the good cause for which we are united as brothers of a family, six thousand strong, and not like your Napier correspondent who, if things do not go right now, is going to retire from the profitless occupation. Of course, it is quite possible to pull too hard even for a good cause, and this, I fear, he has done. I say to him, "never despair; there is a good time coming."—I am, &c.,
Invercargill, August 12, 1876. JOHN MAHER.

CATHOLIC CHARITY.—THE HIBERNIANS. POLITICAL POWER OF CATHOLICS.

THE main strength of the Catholic Church lies, humanly speaking, in her educational and charitable establishments. This has ever been the case, and it is so now. It is against these institutions accordingly that the enemies of the Church ever persistently direct their attacks—either open and violent, or insidious. This was the policy of Henry VIII., as it is of Bismarck and Victor Emmanuel, and of every masterful tyrant, let his pretended religious creed be what it may. Of all tyrants inconstant and execrated Roman Catholics are the very worst. They add hypocrisy and cowardice to their other vices. They have not the courage to renounce the faith of the Church which they betray and persecute. The two Napoleons were the pretended friends of the Church. Well might she pray to be saved from such friends. But when the awful hour of death came to them, and the mystery of the grave was about to be revealed to them, inconsistent though their lives had been with the interests of the Church, they were then fain to avail themselves of her saving ministrations. They have now passed away as all the other enemies of the Church will go when the inevitable hour arrives. It becomes not us to ascend the judgment seat and pronounce their doom. They died in the faith of the Church, and we know that the greatest sinner may repent and be saved.

The Pope, in addressing a body of French pilgrims recently, who had come to Rome to pay him their homage and to receive his blessing, congratulated them on the visible signs of increasing faith and charity in France, as well as in other parts of the world, in spite of the many calamities which were falling on the Church. Faith and charity! These two divine virtues must ever go hand in hand. Without charity Catholics are nothing and their faith vain, or worse to them. The Catholic people in the United Kingdom and in the British colonies may well congratulate themselves on the visible signs of increasing faith and charity among them, in spite of all the efforts of the enemies of the Church to injure her by such acts as we see directed against her by Government and the Press of the colony. The revival of the Catholic faith in England has as a necessary consequence led to a revival of Catholic charity among the noble people of that great, glorious and free country. The leading Catholics, lay and clerical, there are making, as we see from the papers, great and successful efforts to establish schools and colleges worthy of the Catholic and English name, as also other charitable institutions. Faithful Catholic Ireland is literally covered with such monuments of Catholic faith and charity and public spirit. The Catholics of this colony are evidently resolved not to fall behind their co-religionists in other parts of the world in works of charity—comparatively few though we be in number, and slender though our means be. The schools Catholics have recently established in Dunedin and Wellington show what they can do and what they will yet do in the sacred cause of religion. While other denominations are standing at the door of the Government treasury cap in hand begging for the means to educate their children, without which they say their children must go uneducated, the Catholics, with a spirit which even their Protestant neighbours generally must admire and applaud, erect schools of their own, and provide them with first-class teachers out of their own means and without one penny from the public treasury. Surely this in itself is a visible triumph for the Catholic cause in this colony, and may well gratify our Holy Father Pope Pius when he comes to hear of it. A school may be regarded in one sense as a charitable institution. To instruct the young and train them in religious and virtuous habits is surely a great work of charity. But we want, and I hope in due time will see, other charitable institutions among us to provide for the corporal necessities of our destitute brethren in Christ, and of others not of the household of faith as well—for Catholic charity knows no distinction of creed, color or country.

I noticed the formation of a St. Vincent's Society in Christchurch. Is it dead, or is it alive and active? The Hibernian Society professes to have in view among other objects to promote

the improvement, religious, moral, intellectual and social of their co-religionists, and thus to add to the credit, importance, and political power of the Catholic body generally. Would it be pertinent to ask what they are doing, or attempting, or proposing to do in that direction? It would be unreasonable to expect much from that Society in this way at present while it is yet almost in its infancy; but it is rapidly growing in strength, and should now show some signs of attempting to do something, however little, in its corporate capacity, for the progress of education, religion and morality among Catholics,—more especially as it induces men to join its ranks in the hope that it will fulfil its promise to aid the Catholic cause in that way. The very practice of the members going publicly in a body to receive Holy Communion once in the year at least would be to some extent a fulfilment of that object, if regularly observed by all. The practice is observed by some or by many, I believe, in the different branches; but whether it be a general and regular practice I cannot state. Perhaps you or some "Hibernian" may be able to tell your readers how the case stands. The Society is professedly non-political, and properly so; yet, if it promote unity, education, religion and morality among Catholics, it will assuredly advance their political power in the state. Political corruption and venality are rife in this country among high and low; and in the Press more especially, if we may credit certain orators and newspapers. I think we may say that the *TABLET* is pure and incorruptible in that respect. But of the political morality and independence of a large portion of the Catholic people in this colony at present, I fear we may say they are no higher than they should be. Under such circumstances it could not be expected that the Catholic party as such would possess much power; or if they did possess it that they would make a good use of it. All history and experience go to show that political power in the hands of worldly-minded, irreligious, or immoral Catholics is a public curse. The less they have of it the better for the people. Until Catholics generally become conspicuous for their fidelity to their God and his Church, I hope they never will possess much political power.

One thing may be said in favor of the political conduct of New Zealand Catholics. They stand firm as the adamant rock to support the clerical party in any political or public question directly affecting the interests of the Church. The exceptions to this are so few that it is hardly worth noticing them. The Roman Catholic Church is often reproached by her nervous enemies with aiming at a universal supremacy. The charge is quite true in this sense, that she wishes justice to triumph over injustice, religion to triumph over irreligion, and truth over error everywhere. It is as the teacher and patron of justice, religion, and truth, that she wishes to be supreme, and will be satisfied with nothing short of supremacy. The weapons of her warfare are spiritual not carnal. She seeks to gain and to uphold supremacy through the sound teaching of her zealous pastors and accomplished schoolmasters, and by the virtues of her faithful children. If some Catholics have played the part of cruel tyrants and persecutors, and sought supremacy for the Catholic Church by carnal weapons, by fire and sword, the dungeon, the rack, and the gibbet, as doubtless some have done, it was not in obedience to the tenets of their religion they did so, but in direct violation of them, and to gratify their own evil passions, their avarice, lust, ambition, or revenge. The Bishop of Rome, and visible head of Christ's Church on earth, may be said to be the representative of all Christian virtues, public or private. Can we expect loyalty, justice, religion, truth, or moral purity to prevail among the people, while he is virtually a prisoner in the hands of his enemies, and subjected to their scoffs and insults? Under such a state of things what else can be expected, but the supremacy of corruption public and private—a corruption which must taint many Catholics themselves, and which it is beyond the power of the press or any Parliament to cure. It may be said Catholics here support their own pastors and schools, and find that a heavy burden; in some cases almost too heavy for their means. It may be so; but consider how many Catholic pence, how many Catholic shillings, and even sovereigns here, are spent in the course of the year on mere luxuries and superfluities. If we, as a body, give nothing then to the Peter Pence, it is not for the want of the means, but for want of the will and the heart that we refuse. The same may be said of the Propagation Society. The pious and generous contributors to the funds of that society in Europe and America, must form but a mean opinion of the Catholic laity of the diocese of Auckland, when they see us, year after year, taking large sums of money from them, while we, even the rich among us, contribute little or nothing to the funds of their association. The Catholic household, it is reckoned, numbers some two hundred million members. A penny a head per annum from each would amount to a large sum. I think the Hibernians would do something to reflect honor on themselves, if, with permission of their superiors, they were to take the Peter Pence or Propagation Society, or both, under their wing. The Hibernians are a large and respectable body of Catholic men, and ought to be an influential one. They should not confine their deliberations to their mere pecuniary interests.

Before concluding, I will notice a letter from an Auckland correspondent on the anniversary of the present Pope's accession to the primacy of the Church. It did credit to the writer's filial piety. If often occurs to me that it would be creditable and profitable to us, and cost us very little, if we had a Peter's Pence Association here. Originally, this association was organised in England during the Saxon reign, if I mistake not. The small sum of one penny a year was collected from every householder, and remitted to Rome. If the same thing were done here, would it be very burdensome to us? The amount collected and remitted is nothing compared with the feeling of spiritual loyalty to the Holy See which it publicly indicates. Would it be going too far to say that, as a general rule, Catholics everywhere are religious and irreligious, moral or immoral, politically strong or politically weak, just in