

GOVERNMENT BOOKS.

The following just complaint is made by an Irish priest in a Dublin paper;—

A few days ago, when visiting a National school of which I am the manager, I found a class of little boys, all Catholics, engaged in reading a lesson "On the Ivy of Ireland." The title being attractive, and the lesson a very short one, I expressed a wish to have it read from the beginning. This was done. The first sentence gives these innocent children the delightful piece of information that Bacchus—who a little further on is called the "wine-god"—loved Ireland more than all the "other isles of the West!" What an honor to our native land that this nasty devil, whom Sullivan in the School Dictionary describes as the "god of drunkards," should have loved it! How thankful to the Education Commissioners should the rising generation be for conveying to them intelligence so glorious to old Ireland! In the second sentence the commissioners inform the children how Bacchus, having solemnly declared his undying affection for Ireland, "returned home to heaven." St. Paul teaches that drunkards go to hell. The Apostle must have been mistaken, say the commissioners, for they assign a place in heaven to Bacchus; and thus virtually teach that heaven is the destination of every true follower of "the god of drunkards." In the third sentence the pupils of our national schools are kindly told by their instructors, the commissioners, that Bacchus, before starting for heaven, wished, as "a memorial of his affection," to plant the vine in Ireland; but being informed on competent authority that the plant would not thrive amongst us, "the wine-god wept." What a stupid old scoundrel this pet divinity of the National Board must have been! Surely he ought to have known that, as far as his infernal interests were concerned, the failure of the vine-plant was a matter of little or no moment, as long as distilleries, breweries, public houses, gin palaces, and Sunday and Saturday evenings' tippling flourish throughout the land.

The last piece of information regarding Bacchus given by the commissioners to our young Irishers is, that just before going home to heaven, "he took from his thyrus a branch of ivy, planted it on the spot where his tears had fallen, and blessed it." Were I, as manager of a National school, to call there during the time of secular instruction and say a few words to the Catholic children on some of the leading truths of Christianity, on the Unity and Trinity of God, on the Incarnation and death of our Redeemer, or on the eternal rewards and punishments of the next life, what would happen? In a very short time I should be favoured with a scolding epistle from Marlborough-street, charging me with a violation of the rules of the National Board. But observe how the commissioners themselves act. They claim the privilege during the hours of secular instruction of talking to the children through their lesson books (and that without explanation, too) about "the assembled gods," and especially about Bacchus, "the wine-god," about his reigning in heaven, his wonderful affection for the people of Ireland, and the great blessings which by his prayers he has conferred on our country! All this is right and good in the estimation of the commissioners. You may be as eloquent as you like in praising "the god of drunkards," you may teach innocent children to hold him in veneration on account of his affection for the land of their birth and the wonderful blessings he showers down upon us from heaven, but take care not to breathe the name of Saint Patrick, and attempt not to remind your little hearers of the blessings for which we stand indebted to the apostle of Ireland.

As the name of the writer of the lesson "On the Ivy of Ireland" is not given, I think it but fair to give the commissioners themselves credit for the precious production.

ARCHBISHOP VAUGHAN ON THE INDIAN FAMINE.

(From the Sydney Freeman's Journal.)

It is too vast, too awful, when looked upon as a national calamity, to do much else than overwhelm the imagination. But take one single individual case of it and its surroundings, and your heart is pierced at once. Now allow me to present before your eyes a classical picture of such like distress, drawn by a master hand 600 years ago—by one of Carlisle's heroes, who is "world-great because he is world-deep." I refer to the poet Dante. I choose him because Carlisle tells us that Dante "seizes the very type of a thing; presents that and nothing else." Let us look on this type, which, being a type, will present to us the real essence of what famine or starvation means. In the thirty-third canto of his "Inferno," the poet draws one of the most marvellous—to me the most affecting—of those pictures of which the "Divina Commedia" is full. It occurred to me immediately I heard of the Indian famine; and that picture still in my mind lent an intensity to my sympathy with the sufferers in India which I think could scarcely have been produced by anything else. I will relate it briefly. A certain Count Ugolino was shut up with his two sons and two grand-children in a tower at Pisa by his enemy, Ruggieri. The cell in which Ugolino was confined had a small grating, which let in a scanty light. There was one door at the bottom of the tower, and only one. After Ugolino had been some months in confinement, Ruggieri determined to starve him and the four boys to death. He turned the key in the door, and threw it into the Arno, and left the prisoners to their cruel fate. Now, Dante, in his "Inferno," visits this Ugolino. Ugolino is represented as gnawing the skull of his enemy. After making some difficulty, Ugolino consents to give Dante a history of his sufferings. He says that after he had been some months in the tower with the four boys he fell into an "evil sleep," which hid the horrid future from him for a time. He seemed to see huntsmen and lean hungry dogs chasing a gaunt wolf and its whelps. At last the wolves seemed to him to get fatigued, and they slackened pace, and as they did so he saw the sharp tusks of the dogs gore their sides. Then awakening before dawn he heard the boys weeping in their sleep and crying for bread.

At length they awoke, and the hour approached when they were accustomed to have food brought to them, but the dream made each of them have his misgivings whether they would get any food at all, and whilst thus in suspense Ugolino heard the key turn in the lock of the door at the bottom of the tower. He knew what that noise meant. Without a word he looked fixedly on the faces of the boys; he says he did not weep, for he felt his heart turned to stone within him. All the children burst into tears, and little Anselmo cried and said, "Tuguardi si Padre; che hai?"—"Thou lookest so, Father; what ails thee?" But Ugolino shed no tear; nor did he speak a word that day or next night, till "un poco di raggio," a faint gleam lit up the cell through the grating, and then he says he saw his own countenance reflected in those of the four boys. "Ambo le mani per dolor mi morsi"—"I bit both my hands with anguish," says he, and the children thinking he did it out of hunger, at once rose up and said—

"Father, we should grieve
Far less if thou wouldst eat of us; thou gavest
These weeds of miserable flesh we wear;
And do thou strip them off from us again!"

Then not to make them sadder, Ugolino repressed his agony, and kept his spirit down. "That day and the next," he says, "we all were silent. Ah, obdurate earth, why open'st not upon us?" When the fourth day came Gaddo, one of the boys, flung himself outstretched at his father's feet, and cried "Padre mio, perche non m'aiuti?"—"O father mine, why dost thou not help me?" and so he died. And between the fifth and the sixth day, Ugolino saw the other three fall dead one by one till, finally, he himself lost his eyesight through grief and starvation, and groped over them, and for three days called aloud for them who were dead. Then he adds, what is so terrible—"Pascia, piu che l' dolor, pote il digiuno."—"Then fasting got the mastery of grief." Such is the type reproduced a thousand times over at this very hour amongst our Indian fellow-creatures and fellow-subjects. They require no *Torre della fame*—no Tower of Famine—to be locked up in. The earth itself is locked up by the burning sun and the iron drought. And thousands on thousands of fathers and mothers and little children are being cut off by famine and disease, whilst thousands of hearts are being broken and brains maddened by the still more frightful agony of seeing loved ones sinking inch by inch into the relentless grave, where horror is breathing from the silent ground. (Cheers.) There are thousands of Ugolinos this moment in India. Let us come to their assistance; let us help their drooping starving children. The fatherhood of God, the master-ship of Christ, the providential order of the world, and the cry of the natural heart of every man and woman urge us to this. (Hear, hear.) Let us multiply the sentiment of compassion and of mercy. The Empire is powerful, let it be merciful too; let us show compassion—

"Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your Empire, that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too!"

(Cheers.) And in furtherance of this desire, and as one of the most practical ways of carrying it into effect, I have the honour to move—
"That a fund for the relief of the sufferers be now formed, to be called the 'Indian Famine Relief Fund.'" (Continued applause.)

VERY REV. WILLIAM QUIN, V. G. ON
PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.

In announcing the opening of the Parochial Schools in St Patrick's Pro-Cathedral, New York, on Sunday, September 2d, Very Rev. Father Quin referred to the great advantage of religious instruction over mere secular instruction. "Secular instruction without religion," said the venerable Vicar-General, "is very pernicious and very dangerous, if we look to the great crimes that are being committed, and that are threatening the business and commercial interests of the country, we will find that they are by no means committed by ignorant or illiterate men. It may be said that some who have received both a religious and a secular education commit such crimes, but the cases are very few. The time may yet come when men will see the necessity of combining both, and give to each denomination a portion, at least, of what all alike have now to pay for. Until then—if the time ever comes—Catholics will have to provide for the education of their children. Schools for such as cannot attend on week days, will be open on Sundays, both in the forenoon and in the afternoon. The schools are inadequate to the wants of the parish, but at the present time a new one cannot be built."

People, said he, would be surprised to see the number of Catholic children in the various institutions of the city. In the male portion of the Catholic Protectory alone are over fifteen hundred boys, and in the female seven hundred girls. It is remarkable how bright, obedient and willing to work these children are when they go there. What, then, can be the matter with them? It must certainly be the fault of the parents who have neglected them. He took pains to inquire the proportion of those committed by the various police justices who have attended the public schools with those who have attended the parochial schools, and found that in the institution not more than three out of the vast number attended the latter. That surely was indicative. He was informed on good authority that three-fourths of those in the House of Refuge were children of Catholic parentage. The priests have done all in their power to try to induce those children who attend the public schools to come to religious instruction, but they have failed for the reason that the children, when dismissed, are too tired out after studying their lessons and being confined so long do not feel like studying their catechism. From the numbers daily committed by the police justices the Catholic Protectory could not afford the requisite accommodation. To obviate the difficulty, two very worthy and competent men are employed to visit every section of this State, in order to find out proper homes for the boys, so as to make room for others. Two others are employed to go around the city, in order to find out if the parent or parents of those committed to the institution are able to bear any of the expenses incurred in the care and education of their children.