

A WORD FOR THE REV. LINDSAY MACKIE.

I do hope that Dr. Moran, the *Tablet*, and members of the Press generally will be merciful to the above named rev. gentleman, otherwise they may drive him to do something rash. He is my fellow-countryman, and I do not like to see him chastised too much. It is true he has committed a grievous fault against Roman Catholics, but it has been committed "under extenuating circumstances." It must be remembered that he is a Scotch Presbyterian; that he has sucked in with his mother's milk a belief that Papists, one and all of them, Jesuits more especially, are nothing else but Sons of Belial perfect "devils incarnate;" ready to tell any amount of lies, or shed any amount of blood, or commit any number of assassinations for Holy Church. We all know the force of early impressions—how they domineer over men's minds, blind their understanding, and too often blunt their conscience and moral sense. The recent establishment of a college for higher education in the Scotch Presbytery of Otago, and its being under the conduct of the terrible "Jesuits" must also have stirred his Presbyterian bile, and roused his anger. "Ira brevis furor est." Anger being a temporary madness, may account for some of Mr Mackie's recent eccentricities as a controversialist against "Papists." If that Jesuit College prove a success it will likely upset him altogether, and his friends must then look to him in case of accident. Be merciful then, ye critics, ye theologians, and spare my countryman. He has now been punished quite enough by you. It is possible his own conscience has punished him still more. Do not give him reason to exclaim, "My punishment is more than I can bear." Besides it is plain that the "dominic" under whom he studied in Bonnie Scotland has not drilled him so well in the use of the "ablative absolute" as his sarcastic critics, the editors of the *Otago Witness* and *Evening Star*, have been drilled. The dominic, therefore, more than the pupil in this case, deserves the "tawse." I only hope that he is fully aware now of the heinous nature of the offence he has committed, and that he is truly penitent, and will be more careful in future how he meddles with Jesuits or Catholic theologians of any kind. He must now see that it is a dangerous thing to assail them, and that he who does so must look well to his weapons and his armour ere he enter the lists to contend with them. While seeking to ruin the moral character of the Catholic priests, and through them the moral character of the Catholic Church and the entire body of Catholics everywhere, he has positively done them a great service. He has provoked Dr. Moran into the field. It must now clearly appear to every intelligent and fair-minded man, be his creed what it may, who has read the *Tablet* of late, that the horrid accusations which the Rev. Mr. Mackie has so confidently brought against the character of the Catholics, and which are so widely credited and so frequently repeated in public and in private, are as false as— I was going to say as false as hell: but that is not a pretty word, and some now don't believe in hell at all: I will therefore say as false as false can be. I will not say he has made them maliciously, knowing them to be false: but I will say he has made them rashly and in criminal ignorance. Being a scholar and professed teacher of Christian truth, it was his duty to make himself acquainted, and fully acquainted, with the tenets of the Catholic Church, as set forth and explained by her authorized teachers, and not as given in a mutilated form and misrepresented by her avowed enemies. The Roman Catholic is the most ancient Christian Church in existence. Even at this day her adherents form the great bulk of Christians. They are constantly increasing. She has given to the world in every age, and is still giving to the world eminent scholars, divines, philosophers, and statesmen. She has sent forth, and is still sending forth, many men and women in every condition of life remarkable above all other men and women for their Christian virtues; men and women some of whom have literally forsaken all that the world holds dear in order that they may devote themselves entirely to the service of God and his poor. It is a shame and a disgrace, therefore, to Mr. Mackie or any other man having any pretensions to be considered a man of letters, if he be ignorant of the real tenets of the Catholic Church. Yet how many Protestant clergymen and others are in that position? They know literally little or nothing of them, except what they gather casually from such writers as those in the *Southern Cross* and *Christian Record*. How little reliance is to be placed on the accuracy, the truth, the fairness, or candour of such writers, the readers of the *Tablet* need not now be told. A word to Mr. Mackie and I conclude. Know you not, Sir, that "good name in man and woman is the immediate jewel of their soul," and that every other possession in comparison with that is the veriest trash; no better than the mire beneath our feet. Yet, you have laboured, in ignorance let us hope, though certainly not in excusable ignorance, to rob Catholics of their good name. If the principles which you have so falsely, and so recklessly, and so persistently imputed to them were really held by them, as they are not, Roman Catholics would be unworthy of the respect and confidence of every other class in the community. All men might justly regard them with suspicion and aversion, not to say horror. They would deserve to be driven out from the society of Christian or civilized men to herd with the worst of savages. Even the worst of savages might, if they only knew your description of their principles, avoid their company. See then, Sir, what a dreadful crime you have committed against us, or, at least, done your best to perpetrate. Your conduct is all the more culpable, seeing you profess to be a teacher of the religion of Jesus Christ, which inculcates charity as the chief of Christian virtues. You have deeply scandalised His religion in the eyes of men. You have shown no charity to us. You have put the worst possible construction on the words of our teachers. You have cast suspicions when you can cast nothing worse on our character. We have recently seen a great crime committed in the City of Glasgow by men who, like you, professed a burning zeal for the Presbyterian religion, and, of course, a corresponding aversion or horror at the Catholic Church, her people, and her teaching. We are told by some of their indignant victims that these men have for years past been going about the streets clothed ostentatiously in the garb of a pharisaic sanctity, at the very time when they were engaged secretly in a fiendish, cold-blooded scheme of unparalleled villainy, which

has brought ruin and despair, and even death, into many and many a once comfortable and happy home. Yet your offence is, in a moral point of view, even greater than theirs; inasmuch as the good name of which you have sought to rob us all, is far more valuable than any amount of money, or money's worth, can possibly be. I do not impute your offence, nor that of the Glasgow bank directors, to your religion, directly. The Presbyterian religion, no less than the Catholic religion, denounces wilful falsehood or fraud. But the Reformation, as it has been falsely called, has seared, has hardened, the conscience of Scotchmen. Speaking of the Scottish "Reformers," an able historian remarks, "The mind is perfectly amazed at the sight of such deep and complicated injustice, treachery, hypocrisy, sedition, and forgery, as form the character of the men who subverted the Catholic Church in Scotland." Some of the peculiar views of these men are evidently yet ingrained in the nature of not a few of their modern admirers and followers even in New Zealand. Till the falsity called Scotch "Reformation" be undone, we cannot hope to see Scotchmen do justice to others or their lives in any relation of life. Happily it is now in process of being undone.

Auckland, April 16.

JOHN WOOD.

CATHOLIC PICNIC, SHAND'S TRACK.

HAVING been kindly invited by the Rev. Father Chervier to a picnic to be held at the above place on Easter Monday, I took my departure from Lyttelton in company with a number of ladies and gentlemen by the 6.40 a.m. train, and after a ride (an unpleasant one of twenty miles, which distance was negotiated in two hours, nine intermediate stations being stopped) we found ourselves at Lincoln where a number of vehicles were in waiting to convey pleasure-seekers from Southbridge, Leeston, Doyleston, Springton and Lyttelton to Shand's Track, the place selected to have the fête. On our arrival at the scene of festivities there was a very nice repast prepared for the visitors by Mrs. McCabe at the residence of the Rev. Father Chervier, to which ample justice was done, owing to a long ride in the country.

The locality chosen to hold the sports was a most appropriate one and reflected much credit upon the taste and judgment of the Committee. It was a large paddock adjoining the garden of the Rev. Father Chervier, the use of which was kindly given by him and admirably suited for the occasion. On entering there was presented a pleasing and picturesque aspect, flags of various sizes and colour were placed throughout, the most conspicuous being that grand old flag which floated out upon the breeze of heaven displaying embodied in its field of green the golden Harp of Erin. Little groups of picnickers were scattered promiscuously about, and from the unmistakable expressions of joy which were so plainly depicted on their faces, it was easy to conjecture that a day of more than ordinary amusement was anticipated, which I regret to say was not realized. The morning gave indications of a disagreeable day, and it was feared at first that the day would be a complete failure, and there were some thoughts of postponing the entertainment but this circumstance rendered highly unavoidable, if not altogether impossible: it was therefore resolved to carry the matter through, and Father Chervier, the indefatigable Chairman with his co-adjutors, set himself to work in order to effect this, displaying a good humour and unflinching spirit which under the circumstances were extremely deserving of praise.

The programme of sports was then gone into and embraced running, walking, and jumping matches for men and boys, with special contests for the young ladies and girls. Mr. Thomas King acted as starter and worked most energetically, appearing to be quite in his element.

The several events on the programme were keenly contested and the racing fair, the very liberal prizes offered by the Committee bringing together a large number of competitors.

Father Chervier who seemed to infuse a spirit of gaiety especially amongst the juveniles, led off the games with as much hilarity as the very youngest competitor. The three-legged race, for which there were a number of entries, created great amusement and elicited roars of laughter. During the intervals of each game refreshments were plentifully supplied. The luncheon, under the superintendence of Mrs. McCabe assisted by several ladies, was done ample justice to.

The weather unfortunately proved most disastrous, a persistent drizzle having set in about one o'clock, and continued during the afternoon, thus marring the enjoyment of the day to a considerable extent, and compelling the spectators, a great proportion of whom were women and children to take shelter in the Church, and the Rev. Father Chervier's house, the latter place being literally crammed. There the social teapot was brought into use—a good supply of hot water being constantly on hand—thanks to Mrs. McCabe's good management.

I had for some time understood that the Christchurch Hibernian Band was to have been in attendance, but for some cause unexplained (probably owing to their taking part in the Oddfellows' demonstration) they did not put in an appearance. The enlivening sounds of a band would have gone far towards counterbalancing the dismal effects of the weather. A pleasing feature in the days business was the thorough good order which reigned, and the absence of those unpleasantnesses which are incidental to large gatherings. Despite the threatening aspect of the weather the Rev. Father Binsfield, of Rangiora, drove twenty-eight miles in order to be present on the occasion.

At about 5.30 p.m. the Lyttelton visitors made a start for home, and all seemed thoroughly pleased with the kindness and attention received at Shand's Track, expressing a hope that they would soon again assemble at that vicinity.

LYTTELTONIAN.

The Spanish and Portuguese Bishops are issuing pastorals in favour of Peter's Pence.