

opprobrium. In India and in the Sudan it has become a recognised principle of British policy to do nothing that would interfere with the religion of the conquered races or that would hurt their religious feelings. In England itself Quakers and Shakers, atheists and agnostics, Buddhists and Shintoists, and the hundreds of other sects enumerated in *Whitaker*, are allowed to live and flourish in full freedom and with absolute immunity from anything in the shape of public insult from the throne. Catholics alone have to suffer the shame of a public abjuration by their own sovereign of their most cherished religious practices and beliefs.

The Declaration is an insult in the second place to the sovereign himself. The representatives of the nation apparently will not take his simple word. He must be compelled to heap phrase upon phrase to satisfy his subjects that he is not equivocating or evading. And finally the oath is an insult to many of the other crowned heads with whom the English sovereign is allied, and to the hundreds of millions of all nations who kneel in fervent adoration before that great Sacrament which is here so vilely and impiously stigmatised. As we have shown, the declaration had its origin in the old Puritan days, when religious bigotry was at its fiercest. It is grotesque and out of place in the present day, when religious freedom and tolerance are happily the universal rule. It is, as Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN once said in the House of Commons, a 'relic of barbarism'; or as a celebrated writer still more expressively phrased it:— 'It is a satire on the times; it is a disgrace to the British nation; it ought to be destroyed by the hand of the common hangman.'

As might naturally be expected, there have not been wanting formal and weighty protests against the stigma and indignity thus placed upon Catholics. Thus, when Queen VICTORIA was about to take the Declaration, the great historian, Dr. LINGARD, wrote as follows to the Lord Chancellor of the day:—

It will not be denied that before a man may safely and consistently affix the stigma of superstition and idolatry on any Church, it is incumbent on him to make the doctrine and worship of that Church the subjects of his study; to be satisfied in his own mind that he understands them correctly, and not merely as they have been misrepresented by their adversaries; and to weigh with impartiality the texts and arguments by which they may be assailed and defended. But who can expect all this from a young woman of eighteen?

'Or,' we may safely add, 'from the probable successor of our present Queen.' Even more noteworthy, as coming from a Protestant, are the words of Lord KIMBERLEY, an ex-Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. In a speech in the House of Lords on the subject of Catholic disabilities, referring to this Declaration he said:—

He had himself been called upon to make that Declaration before the Irish Privy Council, in the presence of a large number of persons of the Roman Catholic faith; and he must say he had never in his life made a declaration with more pain than when he was required, before men holding high office, and for whom he had the greatest respect, to declare the tenets of their religion to be superstitious and idolatrous.

If it is recognised as offensive to Catholics for the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to make the Declaration, how much more offensive must it be for the Sovereign himself to do so?

The bigots, like the poor, we shall, no doubt, have always with us. It is therefore possible that there may be a few of those afflicted with the 'no-Popery' mania who are prepared to defend even the barbarous anachronism of the coronation oath. If such there be, we are persuaded that they will be very few, and that they will be both in numbers and intelligence utterly insignificant. The trend of feeling is now all the other way about. Slowly but surely the grinding disabilities of Catholics in England have been removed. And this odious Declaration is doomed to go the way of all the rest. Only, our Catholic leaders must not be content with merely writing ably on this subject. The agitation, to be effective, must take definite and organised shape. The initiative may be taken in England, but there is no reason why Catholic feeling should not make itself heard from every colony and dependency under British rule. One way in which this could be done would be by the presentation to the House of Commons of a petition signed on behalf of Catholic subjects by all the Catholic

Bishops throughout the British Empire. That would be a simple and feasible, yet dignified and effective, way of giving expression to united Catholic feeling on the subject. But whatever form the agitation may take, no time should be lost. The time is indeed ripe for the desired change. The dawn of another century is upon us, and for English-speaking Catholics the coming century could not be more happily ushered in than by the news that this 'relic of barbarism,' this inglorious monument to Puritan bigotry and injustice, had been once and for ever swept away.

Diocesan News.

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

May 20.

OPENING AND BLESSING OF A NEW CHURCH AT PETONE.

THE new Catholic Church at Petone was opened by His Grace Archbishop Redwood on Sunday last, and dedicated to the Sacred Heart. The church, which is situated in Britannia street, and is in the Gothic style of architecture, cost about £900, and provides accommodation for about 200. In spite of the inclement weather a large contingent of visitors journeyed from town, and the church was well filled. On the arrival of His Grace, who was accompanied by the Ven. Archdeacon Devoy and the Very Rev. Father Lewis, the following address, read by the Very Rev. Father Lane, was presented to him:—

We, the undersigned, on behalf of the Catholics of Petone, avail ourselves of the golden opportunity on this very auspicious day, to tender to your Grace, a most cordial and genuine welcome. Your Grace's advent amongst us fills us with sentiments of profound joy. It is for us an exceedingly great blessing and privilege to have our spiritual shepherd, pastor, and Prince of the Church in New Zealand with us on this very important event—namely, the opening and blessing of our first new Catholic Church in this rising and progressive suburb of Your Grace's Archdiocese. We feel a laudable pride and sentiment of satisfaction in being co-operators and humble factors in raising this nice, handsome, and stately edifice for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; and the mutual and pleasurable inward gratification of happiness excited, at witnessing the ceremonies, can be better felt and experienced than expressed in words. May they leave an indelible mark for good in our minds and hearts, and may this day also open a new epoch and new era in Christian progress and enlightenment in the important borough of Petone. We know it has been your Grace's long, earnest and yearning desire to see a church in Petone. We rejoice that this burning and zealous wish has been realised. We offer our warmest congratulations on the holding of your first 'Provincial Council' on this happy occurrence of your Grace's Episcopal Silver Jubilee. We express our thanks and satisfaction for the precious gift of the Baptismal font to our new church—a dear relic of your beloved cathedral. In conclusion, accept our best thanks for the holy ceremonies of the day. We beg your Grace's blessing on ourselves, our homes, and our parish, and most respectfully and obediently subscribe ourselves. J. J. Lane, J. Gaynor, J. Donovan, P. Cairns, T. Silva, B. Murphy, G. Brown, L. Harrington, D. McGill.

In his reply, his Grace congratulated Father Lane and his parishioners on the possession of such a fine church. It was a credit to the district. He had long wished to see a Catholic church erected in Petone, and at last his wish had been realised. He expressed his pleasure at being present, and regretted that the inclemency of the weather had prevented many from attending. His Grace then proceeded to bless the church, and as it was raining very heavily gave special permission to the congregation to remain inside the building during the ceremony. High Mass was celebrated by the Very Rev. Dean M'Kenna, assisted by the Rev. Father Bower as deacon, and the Rev. Father O'Sullivan sub-deacon. The Rev. Father Maples was master of ceremonies, and Farmer's 'Mass in B' was sung by St. Joseph's choir, under Mr. McCardell, the soloists being Misses Hickling and Rigg, and Messrs. Rowe and Girling-Butcher. As an offertory, 'Veni Creator' was admirably sung by Mr. Rowe. His Grace preached an eloquent sermon on the text, 'O Lord I am Thy servant, give me understanding that I may know Thy commandments.' At its conclusion he congratulated the architects and builders of the church on the success which had attended their efforts. The Catholics of Petone were, he said, under a debt of gratitude to the Venerable Archdeacon Devoy and the Very Rev. Father Lewis, each of whom had donated a set of vestments, to Mr. Raymond Power Collins of Wellington, for the lovely altar which he had designed and presented, to Mrs. Collins for a complete set of altar linen, and to the Misses Collins for the very artistic paintings on the altar. At Vespers his Grace again preached, and exhorted the congregation to have a fervent love of the Sacred Heart. If they were devoted to that Heart their salvation would be practically assured. He concluded by asking them to resolve to join the Society of the Sacred Heart to be founded during the mission which he and Father Ainsworth intended holding shortly in Petone. If they corresponded, endless graces and blessings would be showered on them and their families. The offertories during the day amounted to £120.