

HOW THE CHURCH IS SLANDERED.

A DUNEDIN CLERGYMAN HEARD IT FROM A MAN WHO READ IT SOME FIFTEEN YEARS AGO!

CATHOLICS are accustomed to hear themselves, their faith, and its ministers and practices slandered in all the moods and tenors by all the piebald varieties of no-Popery speakers and writers who fancy that the cause of the God of Truth is somehow served by the systematic propagation of falsehood. We have from time to time melancholy evidence of the phenomenal gullibility with which otherwise intelligent and respectable men swallow the most insane tales of the abysmal wickedness and hopeless chuckle-headedness of the Pope and the Catholic clergy. A further instance of this amazing credulity has just been furnished by the Rev. Mr. Gibb, a leading Presbyterian clergyman of Dunedin. In the course of a controversy with an Anglican clergyman (the Rev. W. Curzon-Siggers) he published in the *Otago Daily Times* the following extraordinary tale:—

'In the London *Times* some 15 years ago there was a leading article dealing with the case of a recently deceased clergyman of the Church of England. This gentleman had left amongst his papers a sealed packet with the words 'Inviolably Secret' written on the outside. His relatives consulted their solicitor, and learned that the packet must be opened. What did it contain? It contained two Papal briefs, one authorising his ordination as a priest of the Church of Rome, another giving his license to remain in the Church of England. The *Times* article asserted that the case was by no means solitary, that, indeed, there were some hundreds of Anglican ministers in a like condemnation. There is reason, you see, to be chary of rejecting statements like Dr. Horton's unless some better reason than your correspondent has indicated be forthcoming.'

EVIDENCE DEMANDED.

In the columns of the same paper we (Editor N.Z. TABLET) promptly challenged Rev. Mr. Gibb's absolute and positive statement that the alleged Papal briefs were actually issued. 'The Rev. Mr. Gibb (we wrote) has committed himself to the statement that the "Papal Briefs" referred to above were actually issued. The question here is one of sheer fact, to be decided by such evidence as may be elicited from the witnesses on either side. The official head of the Catholic Church stands, so to speak, in the dock, charged with what is, in effect, gross hypocrisy and double-dealing. As a representative of that Church I stigmatise the charge as wholly untrue. The whole burden of proving his statement now falls on the Rev. Mr. Gibb.' We very properly called for particulars of the alleged briefs—on which, of course, the whole controversy must turn—and the precise date of the leading article which, according to the Rev. Mr. Gibb, appeared in the *Times* of 'some fifteen years ago.' At the same time we intimated to our rev. opponent where in Dunedin the files of the *Times* from 1867 to the present day were open for inspection.

After a delay of several days the

REV. MR. GIBB'S REPLY

appeared. We publish the only part of it that had even an indirect reference to the question at issue:—

'SIR,—In your issue of Tuesday the Rev. Editor of the TABLET peremptorily requests me to prove the truth of my statement that the London *Times* some 15 years ago in a leading article referred to the case of an Anglican cleric who, by authorisation of the Pope, had been ordained a Roman priest, and by the same authority permitted to remain in the Church of England. The Rev. Editor reminds me of what the Scripture says about the daughters of the horse-leech, who cry "Give, give!" I must give the precise date of the *Times* article. I must also give "the name of the Pope referred to; the date of issue of the alleged briefs; the name, etc., of the clergyman to whom they are stated to have been issued; the full text of the alleged briefs. Why didn't the editor of the TABLET ask me to give also the age of the clergyman concerned, to state whether he was married or single, etc., etc.? Let it be said at once I am unable to supply your correspondent with the information he seeks, and I am certainly not going to wade through the files of the *Times* to discover the precise date of the article to which I referred. My authority for the statement which has awakened the ire of the editor of the TABLET is the Rev. D. Miller, minister of the Free Church of Scotland at Genoa, Italy. This gentleman, now on furlough in Dunedin, himself read the article in question, at the date of its publication. He has during the course of the 15 years that have since elapsed frequently had this matter before his mind,

and also frequently mentioned it to others, as he did to me. Mr. Miller is a man of unblemished honour, high attainments, and accurate scholarly habits. His word is sufficient warrant both for my belief that the *Times* article is a reality, and for the public use I made of it. I desire no further proof. If your correspondent wants more I would refer him to the files of the *Times*, to which he considerably calls my attention.'

To this we sent the following reply, which appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of last Monday:—

SIR,—From beginning to end the Rev. Mr. Gibb's reply to my letter is quite beside the point at issue.

The issue raised by me was a positive and direct statement made by the Rev. Mr. Gibb that a certain Anglican clergyman had received 'two Papal briefs, one authorising his ordination as a priest of the Church of Rome, another giving his license to remain in the Church of England.' The Rev. Mr. Gibb does not say that this is 'alleged' or 'stated' or 'asserted' by somebody else. His statement is absolute, positive, dead-sure. I took it just as it stood, and challenged it. There is no other issue between us and I did not 'request,' either 'peremptorily' or otherwise, 'proof' of any other assertion. I called for barely such evidence as was necessary to establish his case.

I was entitled to assume that when a clergyman of his high standing in the community makes so serious an accusation, he was ready with his proofs. But he is not even yet ready. Worse still, he has not in his possession one shred of evidence in support of his specific charge. The whole issue between us must finally turn on the alleged Papal briefs. It now appears from his letter that he never saw a line of them, whether in print or otherwise. He positively asserted that the London *Times* had a leading article on the subject 'some 15 years ago.' He now admits that he never saw so much as a line, point, or dot of this alleged article. He tells us that he heard of it from another Presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Miller, who alleges that he saw it 'some 15 years ago.' In other words, the Rev. Mr. Gibb's charge resolves itself into a bit of mere hearsay. Such are the worthless grounds on which he accuses the official head of the vast majority of Christian people of a shocking charge of shameless duplicity—and of duplicity, too, which involves the violation of two well-known principles of action which the Catholic Church has rigorously maintained down the course of ages. I refer (a) to her legislation on Holy Orders, which may not be conferred on persons in heresy and schism; and (b) to her rigorous prohibition of communication with members of other religious denominations in their worship. By itself alone this dual legislation creates the strongest possible *a priori* presumption of the falsehood of the Rev. Mr. Gibb's story of the alleged Papal briefs. It will take something far more cogent than surmise, or hearsay 'some 15 years' old, or misunderstood, misapplied, or garbled quotations, to establish such a charge.

Catholics are accustomed to have the gravest charges flung at them by the smaller fry of irresponsible controversialists on no evidence, or the flimsiest substitutes for evidence. We were entitled to expect better things from one who occupies so high and honourable a position in his church as the Rev. Mr. Gibb. In view of his own melancholy admissions, it is useless, just at the present moment, to push my strict right to particulars of the crucial point of the whole matter—the alleged Papal briefs. For the moment, therefore, I content myself with once more requesting him to furnish me with the precise date of the alleged leading article in the *Times*. It may, if really published, furnish sufficient details in point. To the *Times*, then, let us go. I have no doubt that the Rev. Mr. Miller is a man of high integrity. But this is not a question of personal integrity. It is not even altogether a question of reliability or non-reliability of memory. Scaliger had a phenomenal memory: but it played him queer tricks at times. Even if the Rev. Mr. Miller had the memory of a Mezzofanti I should be in no way bound to accept his statement as final in this matter until he furnished me with the precise date, etc. The Rev. Mr. Gibb has made a definite charge affecting the church of which I am a member. The whole burden of proving his charge falls on him. I shall take nothing for granted, and grant nothing but what he proves. I am entitled to know at first and not at second hand if and when the *Times* did really commit itself editorially (as stated) 'some 15 years ago' to the precise story retailed by the Rev. Mr. Gibb. Your readers will duly note his marked unwillingness to furnish me with any but vague and second hand references. If the *Times* really referred to the matter at all—which yet remains to be shown—it may, perhaps, also tell us why so deadly a controversial weapon, as these Papal briefs would be (if genuine), has been allowed to rust in its scabbard for the past 15 years.

Incipient Consumption and Chronic Coughs

Cured by Townend's Cinnamon Cure.

Oil of Cinnamon has always been an important factor in the treatment of Consumption and Tubercular Diseases. TOWNEND'S CELEBRATED CINNAMON CURE is prepared from the QUINTESSENCE OF CINNAMON, and its impellent action upon the bacilli of Consumption is the most potent yet attained. The successful treatment of Incipient Consumption and Chronic Coughs by this remedy has aroused much interest in pathological circles. Ordinary Coughs and Colds quickly succumb to this powerful remedy.

MRS. A. NORRIS resides at Tukikeramea, Ohaupo. Her statement is:—'My son is taking the second bottle of CINNAMON CURE, and it does him more good than anything he ever had for his cough. I can't find words to express my thanks for this improvement. He is very much better and sleeps well at night. I hope the great value of this remedy will be known everywhere.'

TOWNEND'S CELEBRATED CINNAMON CURE is obtainable everywhere. Price 2s 6d.

Sole Proprietors and Manufacturers: LOASBY'S WAHOO MFR. CO., LD.

Wholesale Agents: KEMPTHORNE, PROSSER & CO'S N.Z. DRUG CO., LD.