

open competition, have filled the Ascendancy with a foreboding that has time and again found a voice. A few weeks ago, for instance, at the Meath Anglican Synod, the Rev. Dr. White said:—

'Nearly every position in banks, railways, the Civil Service, etc., were now only to be obtained by competitive examination. They had their National Schools, but they should remember the wonderful work done by the magnificent system conducted by the Christian Brothers throughout the country. They should note the fact that out of 37 exhibitions gained in the Junior Grade under the Intermediate Board, 36 were won by pupils taught in the schools of the Christian Brothers. This fact spoke in thunder tones to their Protestant fellow-countrymen, and should make them active in the field of education if they were not to be simply the hewers of wood and drawers of water.'

There still remain, as private preserves of the dominant creed, vast monopolies of public place and high influence, from which Catholics are almost as rigidly excluded as if they were Bashi-Bazouks or Hottentots. Belfast still remains the Mecca of Ascendancy. The motto of its Corporation is, 'No Papist need apply.' Not one of its officials belongs to the hated creed, and out of £12,357 10s. 6d paid to them in salaries and wages, not so much as the worth of a brass pin goes to a Catholic. It is, in all the circumstances of the country, instructive to see a prominent divine of the monopolist party rise in Synod and entreat his co-religionists (as the Dublin 'Freeman' puts it) 'to educate themselves, that they may compete on something like equal terms with the Catholics.' There probably never was a creed that so wasted its day and squandered its opportunities and misused its vast resources as the one that has so long been dominant in the Green Isle.

'Life's ever-shifting currents
Brave men put forth to try,
THEY wait beside the ebbing tide
Till darkness finds them dry.'

The favored creeds in Ireland hold to this hour a monopoly of the country's rich public educational endowments. Yet, educationally, they are content to sit and wait idly beside the ebbing tide, while their Catholic fellow-countrymen ate up and doing while it is called day. These—poor in everything but zeal and energy for the minds and souls and hearts of youth—have long maintained the educational supremacy of the country. And year by year that proud Ascendancy of cultivated and spiritualised intellect becomes more and more overwhelming. If, against such odds, Catholics score such educational triumphs, what would they not do, given equalities of opportunity?

'Walled-in by Priests'

The French Masonic and anticlerical press had only gibes and jeers for the sufferings of thousands of old and infirm women that—for no other crime than their free and life-long services to the afflicted poor—were driven out penniless and at the point of the bayonet to seek in foreign lands a home or grave. But those crocodile journalists and their foreign echoes have lately been shedding tears as big as gooseberries over the imaginary woes of five townspeople of Lourdes, in the far-off Pyrenees. The story (which was last week published for the second time in New Zealand) runneth thus:—

'M. Jean De Bonnefon, the well known writer on religious subjects, has made public an extraordinary story of a man, his wife, and three children being besieged by the priests at Lourdes for three years. M. Roubaud, an elderly man who lives at a house called "The Hermitage," on the hill known as Calvary, near Lourdes, was until three years ago, states M. De Bonnefon, on excellent terms with the priests. The latter owned most of the land surrounding M. Roubaud's house, and it is stated that he made a will transferring his property to them at his demise. Three years ago, at the age of seventy-two, M. Roubaud married. Since then three children have been born to him, and the advent of the first was the signal for a serious quarrel with the priests. They decided, says M. De Bonnefon,

on isolating M. Roubaud and so compelling him to capitulate. A wall six feet high and two feet thick was constructed round the house, to which, it was asserted, no right of way existed. The owner at once brought an action, and obtained a judgment in his favor, but the priests took the case to the Appeal Court, which quashed the previous decision and decided that no right of way existed. M. Roubaud and his family were consequently obliged to get what provisions they could from obliging tradesmen, who bring their goods to the foot of the wall, whence, by means of a ladder, M. Roubaud taken them to his own house. It is known, states M. De Bonnefon, that at several periods when M. Roubaud has been too ill to use the ladder his wife and family have remained without food for days at a time.'

Early in November this version of the story was published by Christchurch 'Truth,' which has of late been giving itself over-much to the snapping-up of more or less highly-spiced bits of French anticlerical romance. Last week it appeared in the columns of an Otago contemporary. 'Mr. Dooley,' who was much devoted to adventurous day-dreaming 'in front iv th' fire,' killed great multitudes of tigers from his rocking-chair. From a like source was derived the sensational element in the tragedy-comedy of M. Roubaud and his 'isolated' and 'walled-in' family. It was part and parcel of the systematic crusade of calumny against which the Catholic clergy of France have had to organise a League of Self-Defence. The frills of mock-turtle pathos and the gewgaws of 'priestly tyranny' were devised 'in front iv th' fire,' and tacked on to what was in itself a very prosaic and unromantic tale by the easy-chair fibsters of two savagely anticlerical French papers, the 'Petite Republique' and the 'Matin.' The patent incongruities and fantastic absurdities inherent to the Roubaud romance were sufficiently laid bare in our issue of November 16. We took steps to have the matter investigated on the spot. In this we were, happily, anticipated by the lengthy statements made on the subject by the Mayor of Lourdes (M. Lacaze) and by the special investigators of the Parisian daily, the 'Gaulois.'

Stripped of its wrappings of envenomed fable, the true story of the Roubaud affair, stated in summary terms, runs as follows:—

Calvary Hill, Lourdes, was bought as church property by the Bishop of Tarbes in 1870. In 1875 part of it was sold to M. Roubaud as a site for the Hermitage Hotel. In the 'acte de vente' (deed of sale) it was expressly stipulated that the vendor did not guarantee access through the episcopal grounds beyond three years. At the end of that time (in 1878) the priests of the Grotto (who were and still are the occupiers and guardians of the episcopal property) began to lay out a Way of the Cross on Calvary Hill. At Roubaud's request they allowed him the use of the path or private roadway in the Way of the Cross gardens. Roubaud (says the 'Gaulois') 'signed a document drawn up on stamped paper and duly registered, by which he acknowledged all the rights of the bishopric over said road, undertaking to fence it in himself, as soon as required to do so, and to give up the use of it, which had only been granted to him as a favor. So things remained till 1897.' In that year (1897) the diocesan authorities found it necessary to erect a fence across the entrance to this private path or road, together with a gate, which was locked at night. This was done in order to prevent 'scandalous scenes' (manifestations scandaleuses) on the part of an undesirable class that had begun to infest the gardens after dark. 'At the same time,' says the 'Gaulois,' 'M. Roubaud was warned that, under the terms of the document he had signed, the time had come to provide himself with some other way than that of the Calvary.' But M. Roubaud 'turned a deaf ear.' In reply to further friendly notifications, he expressed his determination to continue using the private road through the episcopal property.

ANYBODY'S TEA

With coupons, 2s.

TEA, with quality. 1s. 10d.

That's 'Cock o' the North, Hondai Lanka Tea