

'Oh,' said the free and independent elector, 'I am tired of hearing him called the Just.' Calumny is the natural corollary of envy. And the Athenian Philistine of Aristide's day has his counterpart in the knot of Orange clerical fanatics who have lately been spending their over-abundant leisure in the ignoble occupation of harrying pious and noble-hearted women, whose virtues they are tired of hearing praised, and the lachets of whose shoes they are not worthy to loose.

'Awl kinds of bores,' says the Philosopher of the Sandwich Islands, 'are a nuisance, but it is better to be bored with a two-inch auger than a gimblet.' Disraeli would even tolerate an anonymous scribbler if he displayed intellectual power. The only power displayed by the 'yellow' anti-convent brigade in Victoria and New South Wales is wind power. They are men of neglected education—mere mental 'gimblets' and far from being fair samples of the Protestant clergy. And their moral principles and their social antecedents may be sufficiently judged by the total lack of shame with which they receive the prompt, public, and overwhelming exposures that (as our news columns have lately shown) have in every case followed their evil tales. 'If,' said Father Yorke in his demolition of Dr. Wendte, 'there were anything which would knit "papistry" into my bones, it is the methods used by those who assail us. They cannot meet us with the truth. They dare not let their congregation see the Church as she is—the King's daughter, without spot or blemish. Like Cinderella, they hurry her into the kitchen, and make her sit among the ashes, and defile her face with grime. But all in vain. Her beauty cannot be hid. Maltreat her how they will, the true heart discerns her comeliness. Sick and tired of systems and theories and half-truths and equivocations, the souls of the people look toward the mountain whence their help is to come. Let them once see the Church in her reality, no power on earth can keep them from joining themselves unto her.' And so they seek with the din of clamorous calumny to close the eyes and harden the hearts of the diminishing flocks in their conventicles, lest these should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts, and turn to the faith of their fathers.

## A SUGGESTED FORWARD MOVEMENT ON THE EDUCATION QUESTION

To the Editor.

Sir,—This is the day of 'forward movements,' and it has occurred to me that a suggestion in the direction of a forward movement on the question which most vitally affects Catholic interests in this Colony might not be inopportune. I offer the suggestion with the greatest diffidence, and would hesitate to face the criticism, and possibly ridicule, with which my proposal may be received, did I not feel that if it served no other purpose the suggestion would at least promote discussion and help to make the education question a live one for our people.

My suggestion is that it would be a step in the right direction and might help to clear the way for a settlement of this great question if our Church authorities would consider the advisableness of approaching the official representatives of all the other religious denominations who are seeking some measure of religious education, with a view to the setting up of a Representative Religious Education Committee. It would be the work of this Committee to hold conferences, thresh out the whole situation, and in due time bring down a report on the possibility or otherwise of a mutual understanding being arrived at, and some measure of common action agreed upon.

To show that the proposal, whether it be advisable or not, is at least entirely feasible and practicable, let me outline the details of a possible method of procedure:—

Two representatives of the Catholic Church—from the members of the clergy—might be appointed

either in each of the four centres by the respective Bishops, or two might be appointed for the whole Colony, and these would act as a deputation to wait on the annual general Synods of (say) the Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Baptist Churches. They would lay the whole case before these bodies—dwelling especially on the urgency of the need for religious education to stem the growing tide of rationalism and agnosticism—and would ask each Synod to appoint (say) four representatives on the Religious Education Committee. The Catholic body would also be represented on this Committee by four members—say two Bishops and two priests—and meetings would be held at a time and place agreed upon. Two or three meetings would be sufficient to show whether there was any prospect of an agreement being arrived at, and half a dozen would be all that would be required to elaborate any scheme that might be agreed upon. The members would then report to their respective Synods, and if any agreement were arrived at, the committee might be reappointed as a permanent body for the purpose of devising means for promoting the cause of religious education, such as lectures, distribution of literature, holding religious education demonstrations, etc. Of course it is understood that the foregoing details might be modified to any extent, and are only put forward as illustrations for the purpose of showing at least one way in which my suggestion may be given effect to.

The first impulse of most of your readers will be to dismiss the proposal at once as visionary and useless, if not actually ridiculous. I would plead with such to give the matter a second thought and to ask themselves in all seriousness whether some movement of the kind might not, after all, be an improvement on the existing condition of things. For myself, I have long held the fixed conviction that we will never make any real headway on the Education Question until we gain the ear of the non-Catholic public and make recruits from outside our own ranks. I can quite understand how, after their experience of the past, even those who are perfectly friendly to my suggestion may turn reluctantly away with a 'Cui bono'—what will be the good of it all? I reply that, at the very worst—assuming that the proposed Committee is unable to arrive at any measure of agreement whatever—the fact that our delegates go to approach the various Synods, the speeches made by them, and the subsequent discussions, will all be reported in full, and the result will be that the Education Question will receive an immediate access of interest and vitality. In these days, at a time when the question seems almost moribund, that is itself no small gain.

I may be asked: What could there be for such a Committee to discuss so far as the Catholic position is concerned—in what respect could there be any give-and-take under that head? I quite recognise, of course, that there could be no compromise whatever on the essential principles governing the Catholic position, but yet I believe there might be found ample matter for discussion. It would be premature at this stage to give all the details which occur to one's mind, but I may say that—speaking simply for myself—I believe it would be well worth the Church's while to make concessions on the lines of Mr. Ballour's Bill of (I think) 1902, if by so doing the question could be settled and the Government capitation obtained. My idea regarding the procedure of the suggested conference is this: that each of the bodies represented should submit a written statement of its demands; that the others should say what they accept, what they cannot accept, and what they can accept conditionally; and that all the delegates should then earnestly consider how far they can comply with the conditions required by the others. The two outstanding facts of the present situation are: first, that non-Catholics cannot obtain what they want without the aid of Catholics, because the public conscience would never consent to grant demands which, if Catholic claims were ignored, would aggravate to an outrageous degree the injustice inflicted on the Catholic body; and second, that Catholics clearly cannot hope to secure redress without the aid of non-Catholics. These two facts would be kept steadily in view by the respective parties in trying to arrive at a 'modus vivendi.' So far as Catholics are concerned, whatever they may personally think of the various non-Catholic programmes, they have no interest in opposing them so long as justice is done to themselves, and they could with perfect consistency and sincerity offer to support other bodies in their demand for a measure of religious instruction on condition that the other bodies included in any proposed Bill provision for satisfying the Catholic claims.

Whatever may be thought of the probable uselessness of my proposal, at least it can be said for it that it is simple, definite, feasible—that it cannot

"A SORROWFUL heart is drouthy; but a cup o' genuine 'Cock o' the North' will quenoh any."

"A toom haun is nae lure for a hawk," but a cup o' Hondal-Lanka's a temptation for anybody!