

The worst feature in this bad business was the manner in which the vile authors of this 'reign of terror at Rongahere' (as the *Dunedin Evening Star* termed it)—who appear to have been well known—were shielded by the local residents from the legal consequences of their savage persecution of a defenceless girl whose only crime was her profession of the Catholic faith. Through this cowardly or criminal conspiracy of silence, the direct authors of the Rongahere outrages were enabled to carry out to a successful issue, and with perfect impunity, a disreputable scheme which has fire-branded the district with an indelible disgrace. In the first hot fervor that followed the outrages on Miss Annett, the Otago Branch of the N.Z. Educational Institute unanimously carried the following resolution at its meeting of July 11, 1899:—

That this Branch of the N.Z.E.I. expresses its sympathy with Miss Annett in regard to the cowardly treatment she received on taking charge of the Rongahere school, and regrets that the police have so far been unable to trace the perpetrators of the act. The Branch also wishes teachers to know that they may always rely on the moral and financial support of the Institute when placed in positions requiring such support.

All this is very correct—and very pretty. It is also very cheap. And the Otago Branch of the N.Z.E.I., when it indulges in the luxury of sympathy, imitates John Gilpin's spouse when indulging in her rare holiday—it has a frugal mind. The 'financial support' so magniloquently promised to Miss Annett reached, a grand total of £3 19s 6d! Over £3 of this munificent cash sympathy were raised in the Lawrence district. The other six districts of Otago (including Dunedin) 'sympathised' to the extent of some fifteen shillings! Confidence in the earnestness of those noisy promises of 'financial support' led, as we are informed, to the rejection of proffered contributions from other sources. As to the 'moral support' which was to have buttressed up the outraged teacher's rights: it has not been of the value of a damaged jack-straw.

The gang of ruffians who drove Miss Annett from Rongahere have scored easily and all along the line. They have destroyed a large amount of Government property; they have inflicted a serious personal loss on their victim; they have compelled her removal from the district—this was the direct object of their cowardly and criminal persecution of the young lady; they have made the appointment of a Catholic teacher to Rongahere impossible until the bones of the present knot of bigots are six feet under ground; they have set a dangerous example to rampant intolerants elsewhere; and—through the disgraceful connivance or reticence of the local residents—they are now walking abroad as free men instead of being under lock and key in her Majesty's gaol with the broad arrow brand upon their backs. Briefly: the perpetrators of the series of outrages on Miss Annett succeeded far beyond their original aims. The Educational Institute has been, in view of its resolution of last year, singularly, not to say mysteriously, indifferent. At their last week's meetings an indolent discussion on the subject wagged its tongue lazily for a brief space. One educational luminary blamed Miss Annett for not having insured her effects—as if that affected the inherent rights or wrongs of the case, and as if he did not know that the little property that was her all were not safe enough from all ordinary accidents in sleepy Rongahere! And there the matter was tied up and bundled away and put to sleep or rot in a dusty pigeon-hole. The Rongahere business afforded the Institute a golden opportunity for protecting ill-used teachers. It has failed signally, not to say disgracefully, to rise to the height of its opportunity. And the moral of the whole wretched business is just this: there is no effective protection for Catholic teachers in districts where their co-religionists are few and far between and bigots and their sympathisers numerous or organised or energetic. In other words: the field of possible or workable appointments for Catholic teachers in Otago is in grave danger of being narrowed down—to what extent we know not. And for this the Educational Institute is, in its proper measure, responsible. The lesson will probably not be lost on those who, for any other unworthy motive, may desire the removal of teachers from their districts. We may appropriately close these desultory remarks with the following words from our issue of October 12, 1899: 'It is a good thing that we Catholics have a secular Press to remind us that we live under a Glorious Constitution and equal laws. But for such reminders there are times when we might forget—we might forget.'

THE CATHOLIC
PAPER.

We gravely doubt if there is any quill-driver in all creation that gets quite so much of tar-and-feathers and of blanket-tossing and half-hanging as the editor of a Catholic paper. He has an amazing variety of tastes to cater for—from that of the young 'blood' who wants all the columns rammed, jammed, and crammed full of sport, sport, and evermore sport, up to that of the eager devotee who will have them loaded to the Plimsoll-mark with a form of piety that is too gently nothing more than mere tawdry and sentimental gush. We have met them all, and wrestled with

them in the spirit as patiently as we could. But our experience is by no means singular. Beyond the wide Pacific the Catholic editor meets them in battalions. The editor of the *Midland Review*, for instance, relieves his mind of the subject in the following terms: 'Frequently an editor is asked to resign because his opinions do not suit everybody, or because he does not give news enough to suit John Jones, stories enough to suit Miss Samantha Squint, poetry enough to please Mr. Peter Periphrastr. Jonadab Smuggs objects to the paper because it talks too much about Catholic matters; Ezekiel Smole writes in to say it is not Catholic enough. For all these reasons, although they do not agree with one another, Jones, Squint, Periphrastr, Smole, and Smuggs do agree that the editor ought to be retired, and then—"Off with his head. So much for Buckingham!"'

There are others, however, who know better the true scope and purpose of a Catholic paper, and—as stated by our Hawera correspondent in this issue—are highly appreciative, and that, too, in an eminently practical way, of the manner in which it maintains and improves the Catholic tone and spirit in every home to which it is a regular visitor. The *Milwaukee Catholic Citizen* suggests the use of the Catholic paper as a prophylactic against, or a remedy for, spinelessness or practical indifferentism in religion. It says: 'We know of no better means of bringing religion to those who fail to come to it than the silent missionary of the Press—the fifty-two-times-a-year visit of a Catholic paper, speaking to every member, young and old, and speaking by every device from the insinuated Catholicity of the story to the five minute sermon. No Catholic father or mother can better ensure the Catholicity of their children than by cultivating among them a taste for Catholic reading. It is difficult to induce them to read books, but this is the age of newspaper reading, and a good Catholic newspaper is a power for good at this time we live in that no one has as yet begun to realise.'

HOW SOME
THINGS HAVE
ALTERED

THE world keeps moving along. In some things the whirl and bustle of the motion is enough to frighten staid, old-fashioned people out of their wits. In other matters the rate of progress, if slower, is, on the whole, satisfactory. Witness, for instance, the change that has been wrought in public feeling during the last half-century regarding vagabond no-Popery lecturers. When the wretched Achilli was pouring out the torrent of his indecent rage against the Catholic Church in England, Cardinal Newman said of him: 'The Protestant world flocks to hear him.' When another itinerant lecturer with an Irish surname, roved and raved through England in 1867, denouncing the Catholic priesthood and the confessional in terms of coarse and brutal invective, he set the whole country by the ears from the Solway Firth to the Straits of Dover. At Wolverhampton, Wednesbury, Birmingham, and elsewhere, his unclean tirades led to desperate riots—in Birmingham they lasted for two or three days, and, says Molesworth, 'could only be paralleled by the Lord George Gordon disturbances in London during the last century.' Even the Government of the day was compelled to take notice of the wretched impostor, and he 'received from all quarters invitations to repeat his lectures, and encouragement to persevere in his mischievous career.' He stirred up the dirty waters of bigotry to their foulest and deepest depths. Thirty years later Slattery, Riordan, Widdows, and other vagrant impostors failed, with the utmost aid of the Orange Society, to do more than raise a slight ripple here and there on the calm surface of the social and public life of the country.

This liberal trend of decent public opinion was manifested in an altogether splendid manner in New Zealand. Advice received by the latest mail from Tasmania go to show that the wretched Slattery impostors were, at Hobart, refused the Town Hall (by unanimous vote of the Council), the Masonic Hall, the Tasmanian Hall, and the Mechanics' Institute. The local papers also decline to report his lectures, and the Pink Pamphlets—reprinted by the *Monitor*—are everywhere upon the tracks of the fraudulent pair. With the solitary exception of New Zealand, the public peace of every country visited by this wretched couple was more or less seriously disturbed, owing to the brutally insulting character of their posters and of the hand-bills distributed broadcast by them at every door. At Hobart Slattery declined, as usual, to answer questions put to him upon the platform, and a riot was narrowly averted by the prompt action of the police, who, on the first sign of danger to the public peace, cleared the hall of all its occupants, suppressed the meeting, and closed the doors, before the expriest's tirade of abuse had begun. This we learn from the *Mercury* of May 16-18. For his Orange supporters and the purient-minded Slattery and the sham nun will still, of course,

Weave fine cobwebs, fit for skull
That's empty when the moon is full;
Such as take lodgings in a head
That's to be let unfurnished.

E & SON,

House.

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