

and Mosheim in their accounts of Pope Calixtus III. And I find the story told (of course without any reference whatsoever) in only two out of ten encyclopedias that I have consulted. (4) Your contributor's sole 'authorities' in point consist, not of serious works of history, but of an obscure French treatise by one Bouvard, and an out-of-date popular encyclopedia (Knight's, of 1861), which has about as much 'authority' in this matter as an old almanac.

Your contributor could not well have stumbled across more worthless 'authorities' than Knight and Bouvard. (1) He asserts that Pope Calixtus 'excommunicated' the comet of 1456. But Knight says he 'anathematised' it, and that, too, with a 'famous bull.' And an anathema differs greatly in its formalities, etc., from an excommunication. Again: (2) According to Knight's old publication the appearance of the 'anathematised' comet was 'simultaneous with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.' Now Constantinople was captured by the Turks in 1453, and the comet appeared 'simultaneously' three years later in 1456. There is a 'famous bull' here. But the person responsible for it is not Calixtus III., but the late Charles Knight. Bouvard is almost equally slipshod in his history: he represents the comet of 1456 as having been excommunicated (not anathematised) when the Turks 'had just captured Constantinople.' (3) Moreover, Knight's Encyclopedia (vol. iii. col. 65, ed. 1861) credits the 'famous bull' not to Calixtus the Third, but to Calixtus the Second, who died in 1124—332 years before the appearance of the comet which he is alleged by this great 'authority' to have anathematised! Verily, it must have been a 'famous bull.'

(4) Finally, your contributor favors 'original witnesses.' And his are beyond all doubt 'original,' but not in the sense that he probably intended. They lived some 400 years after the event for which they give such ludicrous and inconsistent testimony; they quote no authority whatsoever for their divergent statements, so that, as far as this discussion is concerned, the story rests upon their absolutely unsupported assertions; and they put themselves out of court by flying in the face of known historic fact and eating each other up like the 'famous' Kilkenny cats. For the purpose of proving his statement your contributor might as well have quoted the multiplication table or *Old Moore's Almanac*, or *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*.

This absurd story of the excommunicated comet is but one of a thousand false legends and evil tales that have combined to pile up a barrier of ridicule or contempt or distrust between creed and creed. In exposing its fatuity in your columns I conceive that I am, although in a very small way, aiding in the good work of creating a better understanding among the members of different religious bodies in our midst. I have therefore urged your contributor, still urge him, and will continue to do so; if necessary, until your editorial patience is exhausted, to pass over the mere second-hand or tenth-hand retailers of this comet legend, and (1) to quote the exact words of this 'famous bull' of excommunication, and (2) to give detailed references to some authoritative publication in which it may be found. Proof of his statement involves all this. If he succeeds, he will jump into sudden fame in the world of letters. But he will find that he has set himself an absolutely impossible task—one in which all the genuine authorities on the subject are hard against him.—I am, etc.,

EDITOR N.Z. TABLET.

May 25.

## INTERCOLONIAL.

A Melbourne correspondent estimates that £2000 will be Victoria's quota to the Dr. O'Haran indemnity fund.

On Wednesday evening of last week, in the Town Hall, Sydney, his Eminence Cardinal Moran made a presentation, on behalf of the Catholic ladies of the archdiocese, of a purse containing £750 to the Very Rev. Dr. O'Haran.

The high honor of Knight Commander of the Bath, conferred upon Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, the well-known surgeon, of Melbourne, in recognition of his services in the South African war, is unique so far as Australasia is concerned.

At a meeting held last week in Sydney Very Rev. Dr. O'Haran scathingly denounced the part played by the Orangemen during the recent case. He said that they were a contemptible crew, and but for their insidious union with blackmailers and conspirators should have been treated with contempt.

On May 5, the foundation stone of a new mortuary chapel in memory of the late Bishop Byrne was laid in the Catholic cemetery, Bathurst. The ceremony was performed by the Very Rev. Father Dunne, Administrator of the diocese, in the presence of a number of the clergy and a large gathering of the laity.

At the church of St. Patrick's College, Carlow, on St. Patrick's Day, Dr. Foley (Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin) ordained to minor orders Mr. Patrick Donoghue, of Perth diocese (W.A.), and to deaconship the Rev. Maurice Griffin, of the same diocese, and the Rev. Wm. Slattery, of Goulburn diocese (N.S.W.).

The Rome correspondent of the Sydney *Freeman's Journal* writes:—It is thought here that the appointment of a Coadjutor to the Cardinal-Archbishop of Sydney will not be made for some time to come. Meantime Mgr. Kelly, the Rector of the Irish College, did another genial act on St. Patrick's Day when he invited, in memory and affection, the French Cardinal in Curia, Cardinal Mathieu, to preside over the dinner feast at the Irish College. As usual, some of the guests were Australians, and one of them was a visitor back from work under the Southern Cross, the Very Rev. Canon Belton, of the Lateran.

Our readers (says the West Australian *Record*) will be pleased to learn that it is not contemplated always to allow the mortal re-

mains of the late Bishop Salvado to rest, as at present, far from the scene of his heroic life. The tomb in Rome where they now lie is meant to be temporary only. As soon as the provisions of the Italian law can be complied with they will be brought to Western Australia for permanent interment at New Norcia. It will be generally recognised that the resting place of all that was mortal of the great missionary should repose among the surroundings that bear such glorious witness to his saintly memory.

Mr. W. H. Triggs, of the Christchurch *Press*, whilst in Melbourne got the views of some of the leaders of religious thought as to the outlook for the Commonwealth. The Archbishop of Melbourne wrote as follows:—'The religious and intellectual development of the Commonwealth during the current century will depend chiefly on the system of education adopted in the various States. If the education of youth be purely secular, or only veneered with the reading of some Scripture lessons in the schools, there is great reason to fear that both intellectually and morally the Commonwealth as a whole, while it advances in population and material prosperity, will decline in the essentials that exalt a nation.'

The commemoration of the golden jubilee of Sister Mary Francis took place at the Convent of Mercy, Perth, on May 5. High Mass was celebrated in the convent chapel by the Right Rev. Mgr. Bourke, V.G., the Rev. Father Martelli acting as deacon and the Rev. Father Keogh as subdeacon, the Rev. Father Smyth being also present. The sum of the services rendered to religion in Australia by the Sister Mary Francis may be calculated, so far as it is calculable, from the fact that it is over fifty years since, prior to her profession, she arrived in Perth from the famous house of her Order in Baggot street, Dublin. The sphere of the venerable Sister's works of charity and mercy has embraced, besides the city of Perth, Subiaco, Geraldton, York, and Guildford—where for ten years she filled the position of Mother Superior of her Community. Such a career in religion—as meritorious as it has been prolonged—needs no comment.

At St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, special services were held to commemorate the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament. At the Pontifical High Mass celebrated on Sunday, the Archbishop of Melbourne and Bishops Moore (Ballarat), Reville (Bendigo), Corbett (Sale), and Doyle (Lismore) were present. His Grace the Archbishop preached from the 8th chapter of Proverbs, 15th and 16th verses: 'By me kings reign, and lawgivers decree' just things. By me princes rule and the mighty decree justice. His Grace said that during the present week, with boundless enthusiasm, would be celebrated the political baptism of the Commonwealth of Australia. The object of that baptism would be to cleanse it from all stain of the differences and jealousies and the rivalries which almost every substantial change of Government brought with it. The sponsors of that baptism would be the representatives of the different states of the Commonwealth, who had come to promise that they would see to the strength and stability of that constitution which was the offspring of their political influence. And the minister of that baptism would be his Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York, who would dedicate the Commonwealth to the glory of God, and to the services of the people. As members of the Catholic Church, they would do their part to assist at the celebrations and in future times to prove themselves amongst the most loyal adherents and the most fervent supporters of all that would be needed to increase the strength and glory of United Australia. They would do that, not as a matter of material profit or political exigency, but because they believed, according to the tenets of their faith, that there was no authority except from God, and that those who were ordained were ordained by Him.

The following is the address of welcome presented to the Duke of Cornwall by the Catholic Hierarchy of Australia:—May it please Your Royal Highness,—We, the Catholic Hierarchy of the Commonwealth of Australia beg to offer your Royal Highness a most cordial welcome to our shores on an occasion which is unique in the history of Australia, and is made doubly memorable by the sacrifices which your visit involves. Even when personal and national affliction was most poignant, owing to the lamented death of the illustrious Queen, his Majesty the King graciously determined that the visit of your Royal Highness, which had been arranged in happier circumstances, should not be abandoned or even delayed. In that determination your Royal Highness readily acquiesced, thus giving a second and most practical proof of the lively interest you take in the life, prosperity and progress of Australia. We have a confident hope that the presence of your Royal Highness at the opening of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia will largely contribute to unite all the citizens of the Commonwealth in fraternal union amongst themselves, and in filial and loyal attachment to the mother country. While professing our allegiance to the throne, and our desire to cordially co-operate with our fellow citizens in making the visit of your Royal Highness and the Duchess of York as agreeable as possible, we desire to take this opportunity of giving expression to the relief which we, in common with every Catholic subject of his Majesty, nay, with the whole of Catholic Christendom, feel at the action which his Majesty's Government is taking to remove from the declaration demanded of the King, words which are grievously and needlessly offensive to millions of his Majesty's loyal Catholic subjects. In conclusion we desire to offer to your Royal Highness our deep great sympathy in a time of trial, and our gratitude for the interest which you have evinced in the welfare of these States now happily united in one great Commonwealth.

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