

Dean Burke presided and made several very pointed remarks in his address. The election of office bearers resulted as follows:— President, Very Rev. Dean Burke; vice-presidents, Mr. T. P. Gilfedder and Rev. Bro. Walter; secretary and treasurer, Mr. O'Brien (Richmond Grove). A magazine club is to be formed in connection with the society. The chief feature of last meeting was a paper, 'The English Constitution: Its Rise and Development,' by Mr. T. P. Gilfedder, who dealt with the large subject in a masterly manner. The paper was criticised by Messrs. Morton, O'Brien, Eager, Dean Burke and others, and a vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Gilfedder for his able paper.

Mr. Thomas Kett has taken over the Hibernian Hotel, Invercargill, from Mrs. Hughes, and Mr. Leonard Smith, of Nightcaps, has taken over the Royal.

## A Challenge Not Accepted.

SOME time ago a public meeting was held in Nelson to protest against the transfer of some members of the police force in that town. The changes were the outcome of a departmental inquiry. Among the speakers at that meeting was the Protestant Bishop, who, in the course of his remarks, said, as reported in the *Colonist* of May 2, that somebody had sufficient influence to prevent the Government from acceding to a request for a public inquiry. 'If some person or body (said the Bishop) had sufficient power to carry their desire they might ask where that body was to be found. Perhaps the Salvation Army had power, or the Good Templars, but he was not satisfied that either had. He recognised that there was another body. It was a very unpleasant thing to have the fact brought home to them that some responsible body had sufficient influence with the Government to bring such power to bear that they could carry out their own will. They felt it ought not to be so, and that it was their business to try and make an alteration. They might be altogether wrong, but if that was the correct solution, then he said they were very closely concerned, because it was evident that some body existed able to secure its own ends when these were not in accordance with justice. It was evident that one denomination was represented out of all proportion to its numerical strength.'

The inference to be drawn from Bishop Mules's insinuations was pretty plain, and in reply thereto Dean Mahoney wrote in part as follows to the *Colonist*:—

'The insignificance of the calumniator is betimes magnified by reply; the helplessness of the victim degrades the aggressor, and the pettiness of the charge nigh disarms the defendant. But when against a section of the community is levelled a serious charge, blurted out in the intoxication of applause on a public platform, by one propped up in position and dignity above his fellows, that charge, owing to its enormity, and in justice to the accused and accuser, exacts convincing proofs. The accused court enquiry, and I, who am their local accredited representative would be a traitor to my people and their cause, were I to supinely allow such unbridled audacity to career unchecked. I therefore defy bishop or layman to substantiate the charge and to prove that I, directly or indirectly, covertly or openly, by letter or by word, brought any influence whatsoever to bear upon the disgracing, the removal, or the dismissal of any member or members of the Nelson Police Force. Should such a charge be proven, as an earnest of my good faith, I pledge my word to refund £125 presented to me by my beloved people, to be distributed to non-Catholic public charitable institutions in Nelson.'

To Dean Mahoney's challenge the Bishop of Nelson replied as follows:—

'Long and friendly intercourse with Dean Mahoney makes me deeply regret that his letter on Saturday last took quite the form it did. Not a word or syllable of mine can be shown to have any personal application to him or to any one or more, who might be named among his co-religionists, for many of whom I entertain a cordial regard, which will, I trust, never be diminished, nor fail to be returned by them. I deny any wish on my part and any tendency in what I have said to stir up needless strife or pander in any wise to popular prejudice. But I feel I should have been wrong were I to have shrunk from using the occasion that lately presented itself for reminding my fellow-citizens that there is at least one body of persons amongst us in New Zealand that is proved, by what seems to me incontrovertible evidence, to be exercising to a considerable extent undue political power in certain directions, a power out of all proportion to their numerical strength.'

Dean Mahoney having left the Colony on a trip to Europe, Father Clancy took the matter up in a letter to the *Colonist*, in which he said: 'As the Bishop of Nelson, from a public platform, had levelled a serious and definite charge against the Catholic body of having unjustly used their influence in the recent police debacle, Dean Mahoney, then the local representative of that body, challenged his Lordship for his proofs. The latter, with probably a keen perception of his powers, guards an ominous silence, and ignores the Dean's legitimate claim on this particular point, and launches upon the mes congenial to himself—friendship and personal bravery, as exemplified in his recent utterances. How a man can hope for amity whilst covering his friends with obloquy, and show his courage whilst attacking wantonly, is a little mystery which even a bishop could not explain; and since his courage sustained him in making a groundless charge, let us hope that the same virtue may inspire him to beat a less ignoble retreat. It is not a question of any one or more who might be named, as he would have us believe, but of each and every Catholic laboring under the charge of being an abettor of injustice, and calling on him for the proofs of the charge, or the withdrawal of the indictment. Till the Bishop accepts either alternative, his Lordship must be left poised on the horns of a dilemma exalted, if not unenviable.'

To that letter Bi-hop Mules replied as follows:— 'In his letter in your columns, Father Clancy has asserted that the Bishop of Nelson has, from a public platform, levelled a definite charge against the Roman Catholic body, of having unjustly used their influence in the recent police charges. Both local papers reported the Bishop's speech. I charge Father Clancy with making by his assertion, a charge against me publicly, which he will be unable to substantiate.'

Father Clancy's reply to the Bishop's letter appeared in the *Colonist* of May 8, and was as follows:—

'His Lordship the Bishop of Nelson asks me to substantiate my charges against him. I cordially accede to his request. Self-evident facts are recorded, not necessarily proven. Their proof lies in their general acceptance. The local papers state that the Bishop made the charge, and the faithful record of his utterance is found not only in the columns of these journals, but is printed in the memory and the heart of every man who applauded him when on the platform, of the correspondents who reported him, of gentlemen who surrounded him, of many distinguished members of his own flock, who not thinking it fit to attend the meeting, have read his meaning and expressed their sympathy to me and their disapproval of him. If further proof is wanting, it is found in the deep-seated resentment of every Catholic aggrieved clamoring for proofs or apology. I would remind his Lordship that it is not a personal affair concerning me alone, neither is it purely a local one. But to him, indeed, it is a personal matter, probably affecting him in more ways than one. How strange a coincidence, too, that his Lordship, now asking for proofs, stands alone, as he stood alone when he flung out the charge to fulfil his duty towards his fellow-citizens, as he tells us, and to attest his moral bravery! How grotesque a proceeding for the plaintiff, in the presence of judge, jury, and court, instead of proving his case, to call upon the defendant to prove that the indictment is on the charge sheet! 'Tis unique, Sir, in judicial procedure, void of decorum, and worthy of condign punishment to thus flout the dignity of the court. Should his Lordship fly from his present position, I fear he must deny himself the attribute of having the courage of his convictions.'

## The Pontificate of Leo XIII.

### The Oldest Bishop in the World.

So many facts and figures have lately been given concerning the age, and the duration of the Pontificate of Pope Leo XIII. (writes the Rome correspondent of the *New York Freeman's Journal*, under date March 19), that it is difficult to say anything new on the subject, but perhaps the following statistics will present a fresh view of the subject:—Giacchim Pecci, of the noble family of the Peccis of Sienna, was born at Carpineto of Anagni on March 2, 1810; he was created Doctor of Divinity and of Canon Law in 1830 and 1832; made a Domestic Prelate in 1837; ordained on December 31, 1837, appointed as Delegate Apostolic to Beneventum in 1838, and to Spoleto and Perugia in 1841; preconised Archbishop of Damietta on January 27, 1843; nominated Apostolic Nuncio to Brussels and Bishop of Perugia in 1846; created Cardinal priest of St Chrysogono on December 19, 1853; Camerlengo of Holy Church in 1876; and finally raised to the Pontificate on February 20, 1878, at the age of 68.

He is, therefore, now 92 years of age, 64 years a priest, 59 years a bishop, 49 years a Cardinal, and 24 a Pope. He is not only the oldest by far in the order of creation to the Cardinalate (Cardinal Oreglia, the present Dean of the Sacred College, was raised to the purple just 20 years after Cardinal Pecci), but he is also the oldest Bishop in Christendom. After him comes Monsignor Daniel Murphy, who was elected Bishop of Philadelphia (not the American See but another in partibus infidelium) in 1845, and who is at present Archbishop of Hobart in Australia. Leo XIII. and Mr. Murphy are the only two bishops living who were preconised by Gregory XVI. The next oldest among the bishops is Monsignor Joseph George Strommayer, who was born on February 4, 1815, and elected Bishop of Sirmio with residence at Diakover in Slavonia May 10, 1850.

Leo XIII. occupies the fourth place among Pontiffs who have reigned longest, according to the following list:—

St. Peter (from the year 33 to the year 68) ...	34	6	0
Pius IX. (1846-1878) ...	31	7	22
Pius VI. (1775-1779) ...	24	8	14
Leo XIII. (Feb. 20, 1878—March 20, 1902) ...	24	1	0
Adrian I. (771-795) ...	23	10	17
Pius VII. (1800-1823) ...	23	5	6
Alexander III. (1159-1181) ...	21	11	22
St. Sylvester I. (314-335) ...	21	10	27
St. Leo I. (440-461) ...	21	1	13
Urban VIII. (1623-1644) ...	20	11	21
St. Leo III. (795-816) ...	20	5	16
Clement XI. (1700-1721) ...	20	3	25

There were 18 Popes whose Pontificate lasted from 15 to 19 years; 47, from 10 to 15 years; 60, from 5 to 10; 75, from one to five years; 41, from one to 11 months, and 11 who reigned less than a month.

With regard to longevity, Pope Leo XIII. holds the third place among the Pontiffs.—St. Agathe (died 682) lived to be 107 years of age; Gregory IX. (1241), 98 years; Leo XIII. is now 92; Celestine III. (1198) died at 91 and also Gregory XIII (1417), and only one other Pope, John XXII. (1334) lived to be 90.

It is a very remarkable fact that all the long Pontificates above mentioned have been passed in dangerous and difficult times—St. Peter lived in constant anxiety, and ended his earthly life by mar-