

It is just as well to reserve judgment on the Fiji story till the full facts of the case are laid before us, as, in all probability, they shortly will be.

Some Wholesale Destruction.

In the bad old days when the grievously misnamed 'Bluff King Hal' was king, and had broken with Rome and set himself up as Pope of Great Britain and Ireland, there was a time when a Bible in the English tongue was, for some people, a perilous possession. Tyndale's corrupt translation of the Bible was destroyed by order of Henry VIII., and in 1543 an Act of his Parliament forbade reading of the sacred volume in churches, or (as Hallam puts it) 'by yeomen, women, and other incapable persons.' An abstract of this Act reads as follows: 'There shall be no annotations or preambles in Bibles or New Testaments in English. The Bible shall not be read in English in any church. No women or artificers, prentices, journeymen, serving-men of the degree of yeomen or under, husbands or laborers, shall read the New Testament in English.'

This grey old world has probably never witnessed such a wild and whirling fury of wholesale destruction of Bibles and other literary treasures as that which was carried out by the early Reformers throughout Great Britain and Ireland in the sixteenth century. 'How many admirable manuscripts,' says the Anglican Bishop Collier, 'of the Fathers, Schoolmen, and commentators were destroyed by this means! What numbers of historians of all ages and countries! The Holy Scriptures themselves, much as these Gospellers pretended to regard them, underwent the fate of the rest.' The Protestant historian and divine, Fuller, thus describes the rampant vandalism of the period: 'What beautiful Bibles, rare Fathers, subtle schoolmen, useful historians (ancient, middle, modern)! what precious comments were here amongst them! what monuments of mathematics!—all massacred together, seeing every book with a cross was condemned for popish; with circles, for conjuring. Yea, I may say that then holy divinity was profaned, physic itself hurt, and a trespass—yea, a riot—committed on the law itself, and more particularly the history of former times then and there received a dangerous wound, whereof it halts at this day, and, without hope of a perfect cure, must go a cripple to the grave. . . . Yea—which is worse—many an ancient manuscript Bible cut to pieces to cover filthy pamphlets.' Bale, the Protestant Bishop of Ossory, was one of the professional vitriol-throwers of the Reforming party. His sermons and writings against the ancient faith were waterspouts and tornados of coarse abuse and vilification; but his gorge nevertheless rose when he contemplated the work of destruction of Biblical and other manuscript and printed treasures by his fellow-Reformers. 'A great number of them,' he wrote, 'which purchased these superstitious mansions [the monasteries], reserved, of those library books, some to scour the candlesticks, and some to rub their boots: some they sold to the grocers and soap-sellers, and some they sent over the sea to the book-binders, not in small numbers, but at times whole ships full, to the wondering of foreign nations. Yea, the universities of this realm are not all clear in this detestable fact.' The beautiful Book of Durham was subjected to 'barbarous desecration,' and a writer in the 'Letters of Eminent Persons' tell the following melancholy tale of the destruction of the great library of the Abbey of Malmesbury: 'An antiquarian who travelled through that town many years after the dissolution, relates that he saw broken windows patched up with remnants of the most valuable manuscripts on vellum, and that the bakers had not then consumed the stores they had accumulated in heating their ovens.' Ireland and Scotland suffered equally with England the destructive fury of the early Reformers.

In later days, when cooler thought and riper judgment ought to have taken the place of the strong passions that had stormed and raved during the first three quarters of the sixteenth century, stern steps were taken to penalise and destroy Catholic versions of the Bible. During Elizabeth's reign, and for two centuries afterwards, no Catholic Bible, nor any Catholic book whatever, could be printed in England. Hallam tells of the serious restraints that were placed upon the printing and sale of books in the days of Elizabeth. 'The Stationers' Company,' says he, 'founded in 1515, obtained its monopoly at the price of severe restrictions. The Star Chamber looked vigilantly at the dangerous engine it was compelled to tolerate. By the regulations it issued in 1585 no press was allowed to be used out of London, except one at Oxford, and another at Cambridge. Nothing was to be printed without allowance of the Council; extensive powers, both of seizing books and of breaking the presses, were given to the officers of the Crown.' The importation of 'Popish books' (Bibles included) was prohibited under terrible penalties. A Star Chamber decree of July 1, 1637, ordered that if any person other than those authorised should pursue the trade of printer, 'he shall be set in the pillory or whipped through the streets.' The Douay and

Rhemish versions of the Catholic Bible were printed in many Continental cities, smuggled into England by stealth, and secreted, along with other devotional books and with sacred vestments, etc., in the many cunning hiding-places that were common in old Catholic mansions in the country in these troublous and anxious days. When seized, they were burned, and their owners subjected to the fierce penalties of the penal code. Father Cornelius Nary, a learned Kildare priest, however, contrived to get printed in London, by stealth, in 1705, a translation of the New Testament which he had made. Some thirteen or fourteen years later a fresh impression seems to have been made in Dublin. But in both cases the name of the translator and of the printer, and the place and date, were carefully suppressed, in order to escape the terrible punishments of the penal laws. By the time that the eighteenth century had reached the midway of its course, the rigor of the laws against the printing, importation, and sale of Catholic Bibles and other books was so far abated that Bishop Challoner was able to get printed in London his revision of the old Rheims and Douay version of the Bible, which is the edition that, with certain alterations, is being issued in such great numbers and such varied shapes from the press of Great Britain, Ireland, and America to this day.

RETURN OF REV. FATHER CLEARY

AN ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME.

As briefly recorded in our last issue, the Rev. Father Cleary, editor of the 'N. Z. Tablet,' was, on Wednesday evening, entertained at a 'welcome-home' social in St. Joseph's Hall, Dunedin, when there was a crowded attendance. Among those present were his Lordship Bishop Verdon, Right Rev. Mgr. Mackay (Oamaru), Rev. Father Murphy, Adm. St. Joseph's Cathedral; Rev. Father Tubman (Timaru), Rev. Father O'Donnell (Gore), Rev. Father Coffey, Rev. Father Delaney (Rector, Holy Cross College), Rev. Father Howard, Rev. Father O'Malley, and Rev. Father P. O'Neill. Among the audience were several prominent members of the laity of the Cathedral and South Dunedin parishes, as well as visitors from other parts of the Colony.

The proceedings were of an informal character. The members of St. Joseph's Ladies' Club provided a generous supply of light refreshments, which were dispensed with their usual hospitality. In the early part of the evening musical selections, consisting of a pianoforte duet by Mrs. Dalton and Miss O'Brien, and songs by Miss Johnston and Mr. T. Hussey were contributed.

The Rev. Father Murphy formally welcomed Father Cleary, and extended to him a 'Cead mile faillte' on behalf of the priests and people, not alone of the Cathedral parish but of the whole diocese. It was, he said, about 12 months ago they had assembled in that same hall to mark their appreciation of the great work that had been done by Father Cleary since his arrival in Dunedin. On that occasion they had flattered themselves they had done very well, and their presence in such large numbers that evening showed how pleased they were at his return. During his stay at Home his absence from Dunedin was on many occasions very much felt. On behalf of himself and his brother priests he begged to tender Father Cleary a hearty welcome, and express their pleasure at his presence once again amongst them (applause).

Mr. J. B. Callan, speaking on behalf of the laity, said it was unnecessary for him to add anything to what had been said by Rev. Father Murphy, especially as the large assembly present was evidence of the manner in which Father Cleary was appreciated by them. He was very pleased to learn that Father Cleary had come back quite fit for his work, and had already entered into it with his usual energy and enthusiasm. In concluding his remarks, Mr. Callan extended a hearty welcome to Father Cleary on his return to Dunedin (applause).

Mr. Marlow said that during Father Cleary's residence in Dunedin he had done magnificent work, and he hoped that the Rev. Father would for many years enjoy the full possession of those faculties that enabled him to defend so successfully faith and fatherland (applause).

Monsignor Mackay said that not alone the people of Dunedin but the Catholics of the Colony were glad to have Father Cleary back again. Before he left on his trip the greatest sympathy was expressed for him in his (the speaker's) mission, and during his absence there were constant inquiries as to when he would return.

Mr. J. P. Armstrong, in a characteristically humorous speech, speaking as a Protestant, extended a hearty welcome to Father Cleary. He felt that Father Cleary's return was not alone a pleasure to the Catholic citizens, but to the whole community (applause).

His Lordship Bishop Verdon said that about 12 months ago he had given Father Cleary permission to take a much-needed and well-earned holiday. During his absence they had missed him very much. He was very glad that Father Cleary was back again to take charge of the 'Tablet.' During the time he had control of the paper he had done splendid work. It was not necessary to speak of that work, as they all knew with what enthusiasm he had thrown himself into it. They were all pleased to see that he had resumed control of the 'Tablet,' and he (his Lordship) had great pleasure in welcoming him back (applause).