

## A WELLINGTON ADDRESS

### 'SIGNED BY 200 CATHOLICS'

Some months ago we received from Wellington a belated copy of an address to a 'Rev. and dear Father' whose name did not appear thereon, but who, we learned later on, was the Rev. Father Hays, who is a prominent worker in the cause of temperance in England. The copy sent to us was on strongly prohibition lines, was couched in stilted schoolboy English, dated December 10, 1902, contained no signatures, and concluded with the statement that it was 'signed by 200 Catholics.' It contained the following extraordinary paragraph:—

'We are all the more anxious for our fellow Catholic colonists when we recognise our Catholic proportion of the population is one in seven, while unfortunately in the police and gaol statistics we regret the figures read one in every 2.50 of the drunkards of New Zealand.'

If the framer, or framers, of that address ever took the trouble to glance at the criminal statistics of the Colony they would have been aware of the following facts: (1) Our 'police statistics' make no reference whatever to the religious beliefs of accused or convicted persons. (2) The

#### 'Gaol Statistics'

could not, neither do they profess to, enumerate 'the drunkards of New Zealand'—they only set forth that exceedingly small percentage of 'the drunkards of New Zealand' who, being of the poorer and poorest classes, take their too copious cups in public, get 'run in' and convicted, and being unable to pay a fine, are lodged in durance vile. It is quite safe to say that our 'gaol statistics' do not represent the two-hundredth part of 'the drunkards of New Zealand.' Moreover (3) the one roystering toper who is put under lock and key fifteen or twenty times in the course of a year counts in our gaol statistics as fifteen or twenty drunkards—one for each conviction that ends in imprisonment. (4) Our 'police and gaol statistics' do not furnish the smallest ground either in fact or reason for supposing that Catholics are more intemperate than the corresponding classes of other denominations, while in the matter of graver crime they can confidently challenge comparison with their fellow-colonists of other creeds. We have dealt with this whole subject of comparative crime so recently and exhaustively that there is no need for further enlarging upon the subject at the present time.

We thought, and think, too much of Wellington Catholics to lightly accept the statement that two hundred of them set their hands, at least knowingly, to that clumsy and disgraceful calumny on their co-religionists throughout New Zealand. At any rate, we were not prepared to accept the statement without sufficient evidence. And none was offered either directly to us or to our Wellington representative, with whom the party who forwarded the address was at one time in communication. In addition to the lack of signatures and the addressee's name, a further

#### Element of Suspicion

was furnished by the complete absence of any names or indications of the committee or officials (if any) associated with the address. Moreover what seemed to have been once a name written on the back of the document appeared to have been carefully crossed out by sweeping lines so as to be absolutely and completely undecipherable. The communication, so far as its 'face value' was concerned, was, in point of fact, anonymous. The suspicious-looking and slanderous document was not, of course, published by us.

Nearly two months later we received a communication (signed with the most faultless legibility) from the sender peremptorily requiring publication of the document. A brief and courteous reply declining publication elicited from him an exceedingly violent and abusive communication, which, we were informed was sent by the direction of his 'committee.' We were further informed that the calumnious address to Father Hays was 'confined to the signatures of Catholic adherents.' It was subsequently published in a prohibitionist organ with the bald statement that it had been refused insertion in the 'N.Z. Tablet.'

Careful inquiries conducted by clergy and laity on our behalf in Wellington failed to elicit any information as to the mode of election, personnel, or existence of this alleged 'committee.'

#### The '200 Catholics'

who are alleged to have signed the document have not yet been discovered. We are in a position to authoritatively state that no practical Catholic had anything to do with drawing up or procuring signatures for this libel on our New Zealand co-religionists. So far as careful inquiries went, they elicited the fact that eight practical Catholics appended

their signatures to the address. The following

Address to Father Hays

explains itself:—

Wellington, June 2..., 1903.

'The Rev. Father Hays.

'Dear Rev. Father,

'We, the undersigned, were signatories to the address sent to you from Wellington and dated December 10th, 1902, and alleged to have been signed by two hundred Catholics. We appended our signatures to the document thinking that it was a complimentary address to you; but we have been greatly pained to learn, from its recent publication in a New Zealand paper, that it contained the following paragraph, which we did not notice at the time of signing:—

"We are all the more anxious for our fellow Catholic colonists, when we recognise our Catholic proportion of the population is one in seven, while unfortunately in the police and gaol statistics we regret to state the figures read one in every 2.50 of the drunkards of New Zealand."

'We beg to emphatically repudiate and reprobate this calumnious reflection on the members of our faith in this Colony. The assertion that "the police and gaol statistics" make or justify the statement quoted above is quite untrue; and we are confident that not one practical Catholic in Wellington would have set his or her name to the address if it had been known that it contained this gratuitous slander on our co-religionists throughout New Zealand.

'We are in full accord with every effort which you have made, or may in future make, in the cause of true temperance reform and beg to remain, faithfully yours.'

Here follow seven signatures, and underneath them the statement: 'So far as we know, with one exception, the signatures represent

#### All the Practical Catholics

who signed the address dated December 10th, 1902.' The exception is stated to have been at the time absent from Wellington, and the signatories explain that, had he been present, he would, no doubt, have joined with them in repudiating the slander condemned by them above).

A reply to this address has just been received from Father Hays. It was written at Holyrood Hall, Market Rasen, Lancashire, and bears date August 11. 'It is quite true,' says he 'I have received addresses from several towns in New Zealand, and was particularly struck with the passages in the Wellington address to which you have referred. However, I am now very glad to have your letter and the second address which you enclose, and beg you to kindly convey my gratitude to those who have signed their names.' The remainder of Father Hays' letter refers to his temperance work in England, and has no further bearing on the subject of the addresses from Wellington.

## EMPIRE OF THE POPE

In his work, 'Pope Leo XIII.,' Mr. Justin McCarthy, the well-known historian, writes as follows with regard to the Empire of the Pope:—

'I should like to ask my readers to consider for a few moments what is really the Empire of the Pope. I wish them to consider this question in an impartial mind, and altogether aloof from any argument as to what the Empire of the Pope ought to be. Let us look at hard and undeniable facts. There are those, perhaps, who still regard the Pope as anti-Christ. I do not in the least care to stickle about phrases. Let us assume for the moment that the Pope is anti-Christ—and let us go on to consider what the Empire of anti-Christ is. The importance of the study will be all the same, whether it be Pope or anti-Christ—or, indeed, more properly speaking, the study will have all the greater importance and portentousness if we placidly assume that the Pope is anti-Christ.

'We talk of great Empires—of England, with her drumtaps following each other round the orb of the earth. We talk of Russia; of Germany, of France. May I point out to my readers that

#### The Empire of the Papacy

is much greater than any of these? What hold has the English Sovereign over Russia or Germany? What hold has the German Emperor over England? What hold has the Czar, except for occasional political alliance and fantasies, over France? What hold has any of these Powers—what hold have all of them combined—over the great republic of America? Except as a matter of news in the daily papers, the people of the United States do not care, and have no need to care, three straws about what England and France and Germany and Russia are doing. But the Papacy is an influence everywhere, and