

detail would be like flogging the proverbial dead horse. It is unnecessary to say that there was, in Bishop Brodie's action, no question of 'intimidation' or of any violation of the 'freedom of the press.' No one objected to the *Press* airing its anti-Home Rule views or to legitimate criticism of the objects of the Dublin distress meeting. But when the paper went on to suggest that the Bishop of Christchurch, and, inferentially, the Bishops and Archbishops of Australasia, were so stupid as to be reckless, or of such questionable loyalty as to be indifferent, in regard to the manner in which the funds raised were to be applied, it passed the bounds of fair and reasonable criticism, and invited, and fully merited, the castigation which it has received. There was, we repeat, no question of intimidation. The *Press* is perfectly free—within the limits of our very imperfect law of libel—to think and say what it pleases about Catholics; and Catholics—like every other section of the community—are perfectly free to support whatever paper they choose. And that, as the American colloquialism has it, is all there is to it. Christchurch is very liberally supplied with papers, and the individual paper is more dependent upon the public than the public is upon the paper. It is well for the Christchurch papers to realise the fact, for therein lies the best security which the public can have for fair and reasonable and courteous criticism of public men and public affairs. As regards the 'freedom of the press': we do not believe, as so many of the *Press* followers seem to do, that the great principle of the 'freedom of the press' is sufficient justification for the publication of vile abuse of any body of people—especially of Catholics. In the right understanding of the word 'freedom' we shall ever defend the proper freedom of the press as of the subject. But we are not in favor of free insult, free slander-mongering, and free mischief-making. Freedom is one thing. License is another. The honest man seeks the one; the other kind the other. And the *Press* can place itself in whichever category it pleases.

AN EDITORIAL RESIGNATION

It is now well over twelve months since Mr. J. A. Scott, who succeeded to the editorship of the *N.Z. Tablet* on Dr. Cleary's elevation to the episcopate, asked the Directors, on the ground of continued unsatisfactory health, to accept his resignation of the position. The Directors, with a generous kindness which he will ever gratefully remember, deferred acceptance of the resignation, voted Mr. Scott an increase in remuneration, and granted him three months' leave of absence on full pay. On his return, Mr. Scott still felt unable, owing to recurrent and intractable insomnia, to take up the whole duties of the editorship, and for the past few months, by arrangement with the Directors, he has resided at Christchurch and supplied the editorial matter from there. Such an arrangement could in the nature of things be only temporary, and was adopted in order to give Mr. Scott time to further consider the position. He has now definitely intimated that for some considerable time to come he could not again take up the work of editor, and the Directors, 'with great regret,' have accepted the decision, and applications for the vacancy are being advertised for in this issue, and also in the Australian Catholic papers. It will probably be three or four months before the position can be filled, and until then the existing arrangement whereby Mr. Scott supplies all the editorial writing will be continued. After a period of rest from editorial work Mr. Scott will doubtless find his way into the firing line again, and so far as Catholic journalism is concerned it is for him a case of *au revoir* but not *good-bye*. In the meantime he is deeply grateful to the readers of the *Tablet* for their multiplied words of encouragement and appreciation, and for their splendid loyalty to him and to the paper throughout the strenuous and trying period during which he has been in charge.

Notes

A Director's Protest

The following letter from Sir George Clifford, a member of the Board of Directors of the Christchurch *Press*, appeared in that paper on the day on which 'the Bishop and the *Press*' correspondence was somewhat significantly declared closed:—

'Sir,—I am somewhat embarrassed by the fact that I am a director of the Christchurch Press Company, and sincerely convinced of the great value of that organ in its advocacy of moderate views. I also happen to be a Catholic, and as one of that body naturally resent the tone in which some recent events have been treated. Unfortunately, I was absent from town when the trouble arose, and thus prevented from expressing my opinion at the time. I am unable to agree with the views either of Bishop Brodie or of the editor of the *Press*, but I have consistently held that in such a community as ours care should be taken to avoid needless offence to any religious body. In fact, some years ago I strongly protested against articles holding up to ridicule—good-humored though it was—the proceedings of the ministers of another creed. There was, I consider, no occasion for the article commenting on the proposal to raise funds for the distressed poor of Dublin, and both the proposal and the article might well have been left silently to their fate.

What I now feel bound to protest against is the discourteous tone adopted towards the local head of the Catholic Church, so calculated to offend members of that body who, like myself, felt little interest in the controversy. Headlines such as "Bishop Brodie's Outburst" and the sword-thrusts of anonymous correspondents could very wisely have been omitted from your columns. I wish to make sure that the *Press* should avoid any approach to disturbance on our part of the tranquil harmony in which members of all denominations usually pursue their various good works. I am also confident that the good influence of the general policy of the *Press* is more important than the ephemeral trouble of the moment, and should not be imperilled by such controversies as the present.—Yours, etc.,

GEORGE CLIFFORD.

Press Comment on the 'Press'

The Christchurch *Sun*—the leading evening paper in Christchurch—has some scathing comment on the humbug indulged in by the *Press* on the empty catchcry of the 'freedom of the press.' Says our contemporary in part:—'. . . The public is now hearing little or nothing about the original subject in dispute, but is being treated to a lot of cant about the privileges of newspapers. There was a time, no doubt, when the "freedom of the press," or, in other words, the right of public discussion within reasonable bounds, was a cause to champion, and a matter of public importance. As a matter of fact and law a newspaper has no more freedom to comment on public affairs, to criticise individuals, and publish statements about them than anyone else; no special privileges or rights are enjoyed, nor have ever been enjoyed, by newspapers in this matter over the rest of the community. And in these days when newspapers are in the main, commercial concerns, owned by public companies, and so dominated by commercial instincts that they form themselves into trusts for the purpose of creating and maintaining valuable monopolies, any suggestion that the "freedom of the press" is a subject to cause the public the slightest concern is absurd and ridiculous to the last degree. Many years ago when political power was concentrated in the hands of small groups of men, answerable only to the King, and in later times to very restricted constituencies, the citizen who ventured to criticise public affairs in print needed all the moral and material support he could gain from those who sympathised with the views he expressed. The journalist of a century ago was invariably poor, and his publication if not actually