

even this is found impracticable, and in the country districts this provision is virtually a dead letter.

A member of the Synod, writing to the *Otago Daily Times*, made some statements—which certainly could not be substantiated—regarding the number of Catholic children in New South Wales who take advantage of the State system, the implication being that Catholics also accepted the system as satisfactory. As we showed last week, this is an utter misstatement of the position; and there never was a time—thanks to the recent introduction of some bitterly anti-Catholic supplementary readers—when Catholic feeling in New South Wales was more vehemently opposed to the system than it is to-day. Catholics cannot accept the system for the following reasons:—(1) Because it is the duty of the Church, not of the State, to teach religion. The State in New Zealand has undertaken a charming variety of contracts, from running railways to raising poultry. But we have yet to learn that it is the function of the State—above all in a mixed community—to set itself up as a Professor of Religion. Moreover, if the right of the State to impart religious instruction of one particular kind be recognised now, there will be nothing to prevent the State undertaking to give religious instruction of quite a different kind in the future. (2) We object to religion being taught by teachers who, in some instances, are absolute unbelievers. We have been personally informed by the Under-Secretary for Public Instruction in New South Wales that such cases occasion no difficulty, 'because the teachers in these circumstances teach religion in exactly the same way as they would teach ancient mythology regarding the classic gods and goddesses.' That is a degradation of Christianity to which Catholics, at least, will be in no way accessory. (3) The time devoted to definite dogmatic instruction under the system—one hour per week—is utterly inadequate for real religious education, the main essential for successful religious teaching—viz., systematic training and the presence of religious influences through and through the whole school life of the child—being absent. (4) The so-called conscience clause is hopelessly ineffective. A parent who desires to withdraw his children from all religious instruction must notify his wish in writing. In view of the large number of country districts in New South Wales in which no Catholic school is available, there must in the aggregate be a considerable number of Catholic children who are thus brought within the influence of non-Catholic teaching through the mere indolence of their parents in not complying with formalities. (5) The textbook used—the Irish National Board's Scripture lesson book—is, from its historical associations alone, specially objectionable, having been expressly designed, on the admission of Dr. Whately in a private letter to a friend, 'to undermine the vast fabric of the Catholic Church in Ireland,' and 'to wean the Irish from the abuses of Popery.' This significant and damaging admission was thus referred to by Sir John Gray, M.P., in a debate on the Education (Ireland) Act of 1870, in the House of Commons: 'To me as a Protestant, the fact developed in this episode is deeply painful, but it is part of the system, and the more fully it is known the better; and I think this House will admit that it furnishes abundant cause for Catholic distrust in the mixture, and for Catholic desire to have a free denominational system, which hypocrisy cannot betray or deceit undermine.'

For these reasons, Catholics have never accepted the New South Wales system in any part of Australia, and Catholics could not—for themselves—accept it in New Zealand. But we have no objection whatever to such a system being introduced to meet the wishes of Protestants so long as Catholics are not taxed for the maintenance of the system. In other words, we are quite willing that Protestants should have whatever system they desire, so long as we too are granted the only solution which we can conscientiously accept—viz., our own schools and payment for the secular instruction given; and if this latter feature were added to the Anglican programme Catholics would be able to heartily co-operate in trying to have that programme brought into effect. And, after all, why should not members of the Synod enlarge their programme in the way referred to? If they are prepared to 'consider the Catholic claim on its merits' after they have obtained what they wanted, why can they not consider it now? And having considered it, and found it just, why not embody it in any programme which is to go before the country as a permanent solution of the education difficulty? Such an arrangement would indeed be based on justice—justice to Protestants in the shape of the particular system which they unitedly desire, and justice to Catholics in the shape of payment for work done. If the religious bodies were to adopt such an objective, there would be a truly united movement, and a movement which might really accomplish something. But if the long-standing injustice to Catholics is to be perpetuated—if Catholic claims are to be ignored or postponed—Catholics must, of course, protest and oppose.

## Notes

### Fra Angelico Up-to-date

Apropos of amusing blunders—to which we have referred elsewhere in this issue—the *Catholic Universe* is responsible for a story which, if not absolutely historical, is certainly *ben trovato*. It is about an English newspaper scribe, who, in describing a new church, indited the following explanatory note for the instruction of his readers:—'The stained glass windows are Fra & Jelico's angels. Fra is, perhaps, the greatest living painter of angels; and his partner, Jelico, has no peer in the background work.' The *Universe* thinks that the writer of the above note must be a relative of the local art-lover who 'admires Sistine's Madonnas.'

### The Retort Sarcastic

The *Mexican Herald* hoses with effective ridicule the Pharisaism of the United States in ostentatiously sending missionaries to Mexico while neglecting the needs of the home land. Imitating the familiar cant of missionary literature, the Mexican paper says:—'The Mexican Society for Foreign Missions is going to send its earnest workers into those neglected fields of the northern republic where the muckraking magazines are published, and also where their readers live. "Redlight" districts in the cities demand attention, and also rural lynching regions. In two New England States high officials tell of diminishing church attendance, and in one cultured city women have been murdered in their homes by an educated villain melodramatically gotten up in slouch hat and black mask. In a bigger city a sweet little girl of fifteen, trying to earn her living, is lured to a den, her bones broken and her body partly burned. "Barbarous Mexico" blushes as she reads of these and other horrors, but declines to call names, and will content herself with zealous missionary endeavor.'

## DIocese OF DUNEDIN

The Rev. Father Holbrook, Adm. St. Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland, has been on a brief visit to Dunedin.

The Rev. Dr. Cleary, in the course of a private letter, written on May 18, states that he had been for the previous three weeks enjoying country life in his native Wexford, and that he was in excellent health.

The members of St. Joseph's Ladies' Club have for some time past been rehearsing two short plays, which will be given in St. Joseph's Hall on July 6. In past years the ladies have been most successful in this form of entertainment, and it is certain that next Wednesday evening's programme will reach the high level of excellence that has always been a feature of these performances.

A very successful euchre tournament, to assist in furnishing the St. Clair, Mornington, and Roslyn stall at the forthcoming bazaar, was held in St. Joseph's Hall on Friday evening. Among those present were several members of the crew of the French barque Marie, the visitors being accompanied by Bro. Raymond Ward, of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. During the evening Miss Lawlor contributed a vocal solo, Rev. Brother Brady recitations, and Messrs. Fogarty a vocal trio. The lady's prize was won by Miss C. Hughes, and the gentleman's by Mr. T. Sontag. Light refreshments were dispensed by a committee of ladies presided over by Mesdames C. A. Shiel, Powell, and Sullivan.

There was a large attendance of the various clubs connected with St. Joseph's Hall on Monday evening, when a reading of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' was given by members chosen from St. Joseph's Ladies' Club and the Men's Club. Those taking part were Misses Bryant, Hannagan, and Power, Messrs. J. B. Callan, jun., T. Deehan, E. W. Spain, T. P. Laffey, M. Rossbotham, E. Hogue, L. Coughlan, and J. Dunne. The readers acquitted themselves in a manner highly creditable to them, Mr. Callan in particular being prominent with a very fine interpretation of the character of Hamlet. At the conclusion of the reading Messrs. Hally and Hussey and Rev. Father Coffey, who presided, complimented the performers on the success of the reading, and thanked Mr. Callan for the excellent manner in which he had prepared it for public recital.

On Sunday next a special collection will be made at St. Joseph's Cathedral, the Sacred Heart Church (North-east-Valley), and St. Patrick's Basilica (South Dunedin) in aid of the funds of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. It is hardly necessary to remind our readers of the good work which is being done by the members of this admirable society. They visit the sick, assist the poor and needy, look after destitute children, and perform other works of charity in the most unostentatious manner. They devote their time to the work, and their only recompense for their self-sacrificing labors is the knowledge that they are doing good. Those who cannot engage in such meritorious work can at least have a part in it by contributing to the funds,

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