

which Dr. Cleary had pressed for and on which alone its position could be defended. Subsequent articles have not been one whit more enlightening; and on this crucial matter the *Post* has never got beyond the flat, feeble, irrelevant, and utterly evasive utterances to which we have referred. And now it has declared the controversy closed. The burden of proof rested throughout upon the *Post*, which had stood forth as the champion of the existing system. It had got itself into a difficulty; and the least that might reasonably have been expected from it was that it should fight its way out. Instead, it has escaped by the healthy but unheroic process of running away. On this point—the vital issue of the whole controversy—the honors all rest with Dr. Cleary.

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Apart from its failure to face the main issues, and from the fact that its 'argument' on sundry other matters which it irrelevantly introduced consisted of a mere succession of unproved assertions, there are other features of the discussion, as conducted on the *Post's* side, which those who have hitherto looked upon the Wellington paper as an honorable and reputable journal must find gravely disappointing. First, there is its culpable recklessness in the matter of quotations. Alleged quotations were given from Gladstone, Archbishop Temple, and others, which, in the mutilated form in which they appeared in the *Post*, seriously misrepresented the views of the authorities named. The *Post* had made no attempt to verify the citations given; but had taken them at second-hand—and perhaps at tenth-hand—from a crude and one-sided compilation included (as an appendix) in Professor MacKenzie's recent bitter and ultra-secularist pamphlet. The public have a right to expect—or rather to demand—better things from papers which set up to lead and mould public opinion on this great question. Then there is the ever-recurring resort to the most bare-faced and contemptible quibbling. Here is a sample specimen. Dr. Cleary had made the absolutely and literally truthful statement that religion had been 'banished, by Act of Parliament, from the school-training of children.' To which the *Post* replies: 'Religion has not been banished by the State from the school-training of children. The State declines either to teach religion itself or to subsidise the teaching of religion, but it has issued no edict against religion, and it has left every parent free to get such religious teaching for his child as he desires, and every sect free to administer it.' As applied to the working school hours of the State system this assertion is simply not true; and, consequently, as a reply to Dr. Cleary's statement, it is the merest quibble. Finally, the *Post* has added to its other offences against the canons of honorable argument a disreputable—and, we are bound to add, deliberate—misrepresentation of Dr. Cleary's position. Dr. Cleary has conducted many newspaper controversies in his time; but we doubt if ever before, at the hands of a paper of the standing and reputation of the *Evening Post*, he has met with such gross and wilful distortion of his clearly-expressed views as that which has been perpetrated by the Wellington paper. We give what is, perhaps, the most glaring specimen. Referring to the State's admitted incompetency to teach religion the *Post* said: 'What many fierce Protestant critics have dubbed as State atheism is approved by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Auckland.' And again, in the same connection, it said: 'The exclusion of religious teaching from the State schools is denounced by the Bible-in-schools Party as "godless," but this species of "godlessness" is approved by Dr. Cleary on a ground which we are glad to be able to share with him—viz., that the State has no right to teach religion.' Dr. Cleary does not approve of the State as a medium for conveying religious instruction to the children—and the *Post* represents him on that account as approving of 'State atheism' and of 'the "godlessness" of the State school system'! That is the logic of the kindergarten; or rather, it is not logic at all, but the veriest quibble—a quibble which Dr. Cleary has thoroughly exposed in the letter reproduced in our last issue.

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Altogether, the Wellington paper comes out of the controversy, not only worsted in argument, but seriously damaged in reputation and prestige. The writer's persistent avoidance of the real issues, the persistent procession of unproved assertions when the burden of proof was upon him, and his persistent and shameless misrepresentation of the clearly-expressed views and arguments of his opponent for the evident purpose of side-tracking the discussion into a mere wrangle on irrelevancies, have all failed of their purpose. Thanks to Dr. Cleary's rigid insistence on the issues, and nothing but the issues, the discussion is now right side up at last; and the *Post's* exhibition of helpless tactics has proved a grand and striking testimony to the unassailable strength of the Catholic position. Dr. Cleary has promised further pronouncements and exposures of the *Post's* misrepresentations; and he may be relied upon to keep his word.

Notes

The McCann Case

Although bombarded by correspondence in reference to the views it has expressed on the Belfast marriage case, the *British Weekly* keeps its head cool, and stands manfully to its guns. 'There was in the beginning,' it says, in reply to its critics, 'a tendency to take up a wholly indefensible position—namely, that the civil law of marriage ought in all circumstances to override the Christian law. This can never be. It is the most crouching and grovelling form of Erastianism known to us to say that the Church is not entitled to protest against an unscriptural marriage law, if such a law exists. Such a law may very well come to exist if things in this country are moving as they have been moving for the last twenty years. The Church must then protest in the name of Christ and in the name of religious liberty. There is no religious liberty where such protest is not allowed.'

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And then it goes on to point out that the whole case ought to be judged upon sworn evidence, given and tested in court, and not on hearsay; and inferentially it indicates that it has little confidence in the Orange version of the facts. 'It is not,' it sanely remarks, 'a case that can ever be settled by newspaper controversy. As we understand, Mrs. McCann, while firmly maintaining that her marriage was broken and her home desolated through the interference of a priest, does not know the name of the priest, and has not been able to identify him, although she would know him if she saw him. No fewer than three different correspondents tell us that the name of the priest is well known, and they have given us the name. Writing evidently without collusion, they each name the priest, and their witness agrees. If we understand rightly, the Roman Catholics ask that the priest should be publicly named so that he may commence an action for libel in which all the facts will be brought out. We humbly submit that this is the only satisfactory solution of the difficulty. At any rate, it is in a court of law where evidence can be taken, and where statements can be sifted that the truth is most likely to be arrived at. For ourselves, we most respectfully decline the impassioned request of one correspondent that we should print the name of the priest.'

A Non-Catholic Protest

A non-Catholic journal of New York, the *Christian Work and Evangelist*, paints a vivid picture of the probable future of America if the increase of divorce continues at the present rate. 'We see nothing but free love,' it remarks, 'if the increase in the ratio of divorces to marriages goes on during the next thirty years as it has during the last thirty. Divorce at present is increasing two and a-half times as fast as our population. In 1906 the increase had risen to that point where it was one divorce for every twelve marriages. We presume the percentage is much higher now. It is much higher than this in some States, where it can be had for the mere asking, as in California. There it is one to every six. One can see the incredible increase in twenty years when one remembers that in 1880 the percentage was only 38 for 100,000 population, whereas in 1909 it was 73. When one subtracts the great Roman Catholic population, one realises at once that these figures are really much higher.'

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'There is no sign of this abating, but it rushes on with ever-increasing speed. It becomes easier every year. It is already so easy that many men and women are no longer stopping to consider whether they are fit for each other or not, whether they wish to live together always or not, but rush into marriage as lightly as in Paris two members of the Latin Quartier go and live together for a while. Everybody knows that two-thirds of the required causes—"cruelty," "desertion," "non-support," etc.—are nothing but pretexts often agreed upon by both parties.' To which the *Ave Maria* adds the natural comment: 'Apparently, the only hope for the country is to make "the great Catholic population" still greater, or to take a leaf from its book and prohibit divorce absolutely.'

Rev. Father Battle, of Wardell, was entertained at a conversazione, and presented with a purse of sovereigns prior to his departure for another parish.

A telegram from Perth (W.A.) announces the death at New Noreia aboriginal mission station of Father Martinez, a Benedictine, who came from Spain with Bishop Salvado, founder of the mission, 56 years ago. He was 79 years of age.

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52 CASHEL STREET, CHRISTCHURCH. } and opposite } Headstones, Cross Monuments, Etc., in Granite,
Drill Shed. } Marble, and other Stones.