

CARDINAL MORAN AND DR. RENWICK.

PROSELYTISM AT THE DEAF AND DUMB AND BLIND INSTITUTE.

At the conclusion of a concert given by the pupils of St. Mary's of the Suburbs, Macdonaldtown, on Saturday afternoon, in aid of the school funds, the Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney, who presided, took advantage of the occasion to make some remarks in support of his previous charges of proselytism in connection with the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind at Newtown. The Cardinal read letters received from different parts of the colonies, which he contended fully sustained him in his condemnation of the institute referred to as a place to which no Roman Catholic child could be sent without imperiling its religious faith.

The Cardinal said: I am confident that I interpret the sentiments and wishes of the ladies and gentlemen who have assisted with so much pleasure at this interesting concert, when I congratulate the good children of this school on the success which has attended all the proceedings of this afternoon. (Applause.) But the citizens of this district are to be no less congratulated on the success of this most agreeable entertainment, for it is a presage and a pledge to them that a convent of devoted sisters will very soon be established amongst them to impart a Christian education to their children and to diffuse around them the blessings of true charity. (Great applause.) It has been a most unpleasant duty to me during the past days to raise a voice of warning in regard to an institution which is situated in your immediate neighborhood, and which, like your future convent, should be a true home of charity, but which, through I know not what evil fate, has become a focus of Orange bigotry and a centre of anti-Catholic proselytism. ("Hear, hear," and applause.) When the institution for the deaf and dumb and the blind was begun some 24 years ago it professed to respect the religious convictions of the inmates, and many Catholics contributed to its funds. Suspicious appear to have been first aroused when a zealous priest, Father Cunningham, anxious to test the religious knowledge of one of the Catholic pupils in whom he took an interest, found to his astonishment that, instead of being instructed in her catechism, her mind was tainted with the most bitter prejudices against the religion of her fathers, and that the very name of the Blessed Virgin was distasteful to her. During the past years the influence of the proselytising spirit of the institution has gradually become more manifest, and there can no longer be any serious doubt that at present there is no freedom of conscience for Catholic children within its walls—"hear, hear"—and that the Catholic parents who send their children thither expose them to the certain risk of the loss of their faith. (Applause.) It is only a few days since the Bishop of Maitland, the Right Rev. Dr. Murray, who has long taken a particular interest in those destitute children, sent me the following statement, for the truthfulness and accuracy of which he vouches:—"There can be no doubt of the proselytism carried on in the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Newtown, Sydney. Protestantism is the only religion taught in the establishment, and all the pupils have to study the same Protestant catechism and receive the same religious instruction. The Catholic deaf mutes, as a matter of course, adopt the persuasion of their teachers and associates, being deprived of the means of learning any other. In the course of time they are prepared for Protestant confirmation and receive it unless their parents hear of it and interpose. Six of those Newtown pupils

tion and receive it unless their parents hear of it and interpose. Six of those Newtown pupils were subsequently received in Newcastle, and all made the same statements as here given. They also mention the horror they were led to have of their own religion by the misrepresentations and insults of their Protestant companions, and how they were ready and anxious to do anything to get rid of the name of Catholic. All this is particularly unfair in the case of the deaf and dumb, whose infirmity incapacitates them from learning and judging of these matters for themselves and from being disabused of their erroneous notions except by persons acquainted with their language and modes of expression. Of the Catholic pupils taught in Newtown some openly profess the Protestant religion, as in the following cases of late years:—Mrs. Morrow, nee Wright, of Darling-street, Sydney; Martha Jones, kept as a teacher in Newtown, and her sister Anne, at home in Clarence Town (both of these were baptised in the Catholic Church of Dungog); Margaret and Anna King, the former a servant in Newtown, the latter in Toowoomba, Queensland. Others go to no place of worship, whilst some few follow the practices of their Catholic parents, but for want of instruction cannot receive the Sacraments." My esteemed friend, the Bishop of Bathurst, has also been pleased to address to me the following letter, which of itself should suffice to set all controversy at rest in this matter:—"Bathurst, December 9, 1886. My dear Lord Cardinal,—There can be no gainsaying the fact that the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind Institution at Sydney has been an exclusively Protestant establishment, and that the Catholic children who were unfortunately enough to be sent there were systematically proselytised. Two glaring instances of its proselytising spirit have come directly under my own notice. There are two excellent Catholic girls in this diocese at present who spent some years in it, and who were being brought up Protestants and were taught to hate everything Catholic. I have seen one of these girls (a deaf mute) shortly after she left it, when she was 10 or 11 years old, spit upon the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary when written on a slate, and stamp her feet with rage at being asked to make the sign of the cross. This girl was afterwards educated at the Dominican Convent in Maitland and Newcastle and is now a fervent Catholic. The other girl is at present an inmate of the Catholic Orphanage here in Bathurst. She is blind, but all her other senses are perfect. She is very intelligent and is gifted with a prodigious memory. I was speaking to her only this morning, and in course of conversation she told me she was sent to the blind asylum when she was five years old and was nine years in it. Before she entered there she had learned the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Creed from her Catholic mother and said them often privately, but she was compelled to be present at Protestant prayers, to learn Protestant hymns, attend Protestant worship and go out to the Protestant Church (St. Stephen's) on Sundays. Once while she was there, and only once, a priest visited the asylum. When the secretary heard of this priest's visit he was not pleased and said the priest must not come there again. There were five or six other Catholic children there besides herself, and they, too, had to attend Protestant worship, and were brought up Protestants. When this girl came to the convent, some six or seven years ago, she was thoroughly Protestant in sentiment, although her tenacious memory still retained the Catholic prayers which her poor mother had taught her.—With profound respect, believe me to remain, my dear Lord Cardinal, your faithful servant, JOSEPH P. BYRNE. To his Eminence, Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney."

The Rev. Fr. P. Moran, M.S.C., writes to the Rev. St. Mary's, Newcastle: "During the four years that I have had charge of the spiritual interests of the deaf mutes at Newcastle, I have

that I have had charge of the spiritual interests of the deaf mutes at Newcastle, I have become acquainted with two Catholic deaf-mute children who spent many years in the Institution for Deaf and Dumb and the Blind at Newtown. One of them, a young lady from Sydney, had imbibed in the Newtown Institution strong sentiments of dislike and aversion to the Roman Catholic religion. The other from Toowoomba, Queensland, at present an inmate of the Catholic Institution for Deaf-Mutes here, received similar impressions. During the five years which she spent in the Newtown Institution she had, she states, to use flesh meat every Friday or to go fasting. She received the same religious instruction as the Protestant children, studied from the same Protestant text-books and joined in the same prayers with them. As might have been expected from such training, she was ashamed of and averse to even the name of Catholic. When she was removed from Newtown she simply hated the religion of her parents and would not go to mass. These two young ladies are now, thanks to the religious instruction imparted by the good nuns and to the saintly example of their lives, sincere and fervent Catholics, but were it not for their good fortune in coming to the Catholic Institution for Deaf-mutes at Newcastle, they would, like so many other poor children proselytised at Newtown, be now professing Protestants. The devoted sister who has for several years presided over the instruction of the deaf-mute children in Newcastle, has also favored me with the following important memorandum:—

"The first and most important consideration regarding the deaf mutes is that by their infirmity they are debarred from acquiring any religious principles, either at home or at school, except such as may be instilled into their minds by their teachers. In the Newtown Institution for the Deaf and Dumb the headmaster and the entire staff of officials are members of the Church of England, and that alone would suggest the impossibility of any instruction being given to the pupils or any religious practice being observed except in accordance with the above persuasion. And such is the case. Six pupils, who had been from two to five years in Newtown, were received into the Newcastle institution at different times, and one and all had the same account to give. They received the same religious instruction as the Protestants, studied from the same books and joined in the same prayers, and had always to take flesh meat on Fridays. Any of the Catholic pupils who had the custom of making the sign of the cross at their first admission were soon jeered into dropping it. If the headmaster refrained from special deeds of proselytism, he could well afford to do so, as the work was well accomplished by the pupil teachers and all the others. The Catholics had to undergo a continual persecution of jeers and abuse of their religion until they had a horror of it and were anxious to be ranked amongst the favored Protestants. When they leave the institution they refuse to acknowledge them-

however, of giving instances to the pupils who have been proselytised in the past. I should, perhaps, point to the present Catholic inmates, who may justly be said to be at least in the first stage of preparation to renounce their faith. It is only a few days since the venerable dean of St. Benedict's wrote to me that "the Catholic children attend the Protestant Bible class and say they prefer it to learning the Catholic catechism; and there is one orphan girl who entered the institution in 1881 and is still registered as a Catholic, but never attends with the Catholic children at Holy Mass." These instances will suffice to show that I merely discharged the duty which I owe to my spiritual flock when I branded the Newtown Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind as a home of proselytism—"hear, hear"—and warned Catholic parents against sending their children to receive instruction within its unhallowed walls. (Applause.) The convent which you are about to erect shall never, I trust, be tainted by such bigotry—(applause)—but, like a heavenly fountain of refreshing waters, will dispense its blessings alike to all. (Prolonged applause.)

The Very Rev. Dr. O'Haran, the Rev. J. P. Fitzpatrick, the Rev. J. Doyle and the Rev. Father Moriarty assisted at the proceedings, which terminated about 5 o'clock.

selves Catholics and to follow the practices of Catholics." A magistrate residing in Murrumbidgee has written to me as late as yesterday: "In relation to your remarks published in this day's *Herald* about the Newtown Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind, I have at this moment in my employment a girl whose sister, an orphan, was in the institution for five years and came out a bigoted Protestant, although the girl with me and her family are all Catholics." This magistrate, I may remark is a Protestant. (Applause.) Instead however, of giving instances of the pupils who have been proselytised in the past