

background, and playing contributory parts, Mahony appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* as Oliver Yorke, Esquire, editor of the posthumous papers of Father Prout.

Mahony seldom or ever lays claim to original authorship, but professes to be a simple translator or discoverer of lost manuscripts. Unlike the cases of McPherson and Ireland this ruse was persisted in as genuine humor.

The first paper, *An Apology for Lent*, contains the reasons given by Prout to Cresswell for observing the condition imposed on him by his aunt. He does not defend the observance of Lent because it was enjoined by the church, nor on any religious ground whatever, but supports the use of a fish diet on historical and literary authority and as being in accordance with the true principles of political economy. As illustrating the humor underlying this apology I will just mention here quoting an imaginary statute of Elizabeth, forbidding the use of "fleshe" on Wednesdays—in addition to the earlier law providing for similar abstinence on Saturday:—

"For the commoditie and benefit of this realme as well as to growe the navie, as in sparing and increase of fleshe vitual"

He adds

"I do not attach so much importance to the act of Her Royal successor, James I, who in 1619 issued a proclamation reminding his English subjects of the obligation of keeping Lent, because His Majesty's object is clearly ascertained to have been to encourage the traffic of his countrymen the Scotch, who had just then embarked largely in the herring trade, and for whom the thrifty Stuart was anxious to secure a monopoly in the British markets."

The victory of Cressy was mainly due, he alleges, to fifty tons of Yarmouth herring supplied to the English army before that memorable battle. He also facetiously claims that the "black broth" of Sparta was somewhat akin to a fish diet, and that certainly the "three hundred Spartans who stood at Thermopylæ were not a beef-steak club."