

POLITICS AND RELIGION IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

Sir John Harvey, the Tory governor of this colony, is winning golden opinions from his political opponents, and from all sorts of people, indeed, who do not belong to that old official clique, by the exclusiveness and bigotry of which the peace of Newfoundland has been so long disturbed. One thing which has tended very much to give confidence in his administration, is the use he has made of the Government patronage, which in a small way affords an earnest of impartiality that has long been needed. The second office in the gift of his excellency has been that of the third stipendiary magistrate of St. John's (vacant since 1834). He has bestowed it on a Mr. Doyle, a Catholic, who for about eight years has been in the commission of the peace. This appointment has naturally given much satisfaction to the bulk of the population, but to the official clique it has furnished matter for indignant lamentation. We know not that greater praise could be given to the governor by some of the Tory prints, to the effect "that he is selling himself to the rabble instead of hemming himself about with those who would have made his government easy to him, whilst they might have conjointly promoted the public interests."—*Ledger*, Friday, March 4. A governor who really strives to do his duty, and resolutely refuses "to hem himself about with those who would make his government easy to him," is indeed a governor of a rare and right sort. The appointment above-mentioned may seem a small matter, but it is in reality a matter of some moment, when we consider the following facts:—It was stated by the late governor, Captain Prescott, in a despatch of the 10th December, 1836, that the whole population of the island is between 73,000 and 74,000, and the preponderance of Catholics over Protestants "amount to 1000." The Catholics themselves say that this gives an under-estimate of their numbers, which are nearer 45,000 than 38,000. However it is admitted that they form the majority. But how are the official favours of the government distributed between this majority and minority? Why, it is an odd circumstance, that in this Catholic colony there is not one Catholic on the supreme bench. There is not one Catholic clerk in all the courts in the island. There are but two Catholic officers of the customs. There is not one Catholic coroner. There is not one Catholic allowed to practice as barrister or attorney—not for want of qualified men. There was only one Catholic stipendiary magistrate out of the fourteen, until the recent nomination of Mr. Doyle. Out of the £20,000 paid to officials in the island, but £300 finds its way into Catholic pockets. Even this small breach in the exclusive system has been made since 1838. In that year out of 40 offices (with salaries ranging from £50 upwards) bestowed in three years by Captain Prescott, not one was bestowed on a Catholic.

But this is not all. The jury system is most egregiously tainted with the same spirit of exclusiveness. For the entire island—contrary to the practice of other colonies—there is but one sheriff, who is

one of the official clique, and holds his shrievalty as a permanent office during good behaviour. The nomination, therefore of juries is permanently in the hands of this one partisan. The House of Assembly has repeatedly passed a bill to treble the number of sheriffs, and to make the appointment annual, but in vain.—The bill has been as often disallowed.—The evil thus attempted to be remedied is not merely a nominal one. In the locality (St. John's) within the jurisdiction of the Central Circuit Court, there is a population of 20,000 souls; of these about 16,000 are Catholics, and 4000 Protestants. On the special jury panel of this court there are between 70 and 80 Protestants, whilst there are only nine effective Catholic names. The *Newfoundland Vindicator* (an excellent Catholic paper), from which we take these details, contains a list of all the special juries that have served in this court during the seven years ending the 1st January, 1841. From these lists it would appear, that in all that time there have been tried 52 special jury causes; the number of jurors being 928. Among those 928 jurors there were only 71 Catholics, while the Protestant jurors were 857! Several of the causes tried by these juries were political; the jurors were the political antagonists of the defendants, against whom they awarded heavy damages. The length to which this system was carried by the direct intervention of the crown officers, may be seen in the following affidavit sworn by eighteen persons, and filed in court in the year 1837, to lay the foundation for a change of venue in a cause arising out of the elections of 1836:—

The above defendants in this cause make oath and say, that the charge alleged, and upon which the present indictment has been founded, arises out of the circumstances of the election—the then successful candidates, John Kent, William Carson, and Patrick Morris, and a portion of the election committee of the said candidates, having had true bills returned against them by "a grand jury principally composed of two of the defeated candidates, and a portion of their committee," for attending a meeting for the purpose of canvassing the electors of River Head. Deponents further state, that this cause being evidently one arising from party feeling, and "the special jury panel being composed principally of persons in the interest of the defeated candidates," deponents consider it would not be conducive to the ends of justice, to have the trial thereof take place in St. John's; and when they reflect that all the defendants, with one exception, are Catholics, and that, besides the present representatives of this district and the members of their committee above alluded to, two Catholic priests are included in the indictments, they, deponents, "regard the striking out, by the crown, of every Catholic name from the special jury" that had been drawn in this cause, and the leaving the jury appointed for the trial exclusively Protestant, as justly calculated to remove that confidence in the impartiality of the tribunals of justice, which ought to sustain the accused.

Our readers will now be able to understand how it is that an honest governor like Sir John Harvey, who shows symptoms of an intention to break up this most unjust system of exclusion, is greeted with a storm of malignant disapprobation when he ventures to place a second Catholic stipendiary magistrate (out of 14) on the police bench. For our parts we hail this beginning of better things; and we congratulate our fellow Catholics in Newfoundland, that they have at length the happiness of living under a governor whom their enemies abuse, and in whom they can have trust and confidence.

While on the subject of Newfoundland, we will venture to subjoin an article from a recent number of the *Dublin Morning Register*, on the labours of the Right Rev. Vicar-apostolic of this Island. It is written by one who knows the bishop well, and though it contains few facts which are not already known to our readers, it, will, we think, prove not without interest:—

Among the many virtuous triumphs recently achieved by the unostentatious labours of the catholic ministry, there are few more interesting than those which have engaged the zeal of the Right Rev. Doctor Fleming and his priesthood on the bleak shores of Newfoundland. The island of Newfoundland was, at no very remote period, considered uninhabitable; but the fishery on its coast afforded a profitable speculation to hardy adventurers, and the Irish labourers were among the first to seek shelter there from the more intolerable hardships of their own country. The labour they undertook, and the difficulties they encountered, were almost insurmountable; but those early exiles, by unwearied exertions and continuous industry, erected for themselves comfortable and happy homes in this distant and ungenial clime. We need not add that they preserved the faith of their fathers: with the same fidelity which has ever distinguished the Irish race, no matter in what country, and kept inviolate the religion of home with them, even when deprived of its practical advantages and soothing consolations.

But the Irish priesthood were not slow to share the difficulties and perils of their countrymen. Unaided by the friends of any society, and unassisted by the inspiring agencies and sympathies which, in later times, have cheered the labour of distant missionaries, they embarked their fates and fortunes with their struggling fellow-countrymen.

But what has particularly attracted our attention to this colony is a fact of which we have been just informed. It is this.—The *Sir Walter Scott*—a vessel of great power and burthen—leaves Kingston-harbour to-day for St. John's, Newfoundland. She has been chartered by Dr. Fleming, and her cargo consists of carved Irish granite, which is to be used in building and ornamenting the cathedral church of St. John's. This church is now in a state of great forwardness, and we understand that there are but very few Catholic temples in the old or new world, in which, when completed, it may not compete in grandeur of design and architec-

tural beauty; and when we consider that its materials are entirely Irish, worked and prepared at the breadth of the Atlantic from the spot; when we consider what time and toil it must have cost under such startling disadvantages to erect so magnificent a building on this not-long-since desolate shore—we may fairly conclude that no task is too mighty for true piety and disinterested zeal.

Of the labours which Dr. Fleming has undergone in this great undertaking, we understand eight voyages across the Atlantic are but a small portion. His reward—none other could compensate him—consists in the consciousness of having well fulfilled the functions of his high ministry, and in the blessings of his people.—But, while there are millions to bless, there were not wanting some to revile him. He has had to struggle with the vile efforts of envious bigotry; but when was ever so much good effected without exciting the malice of the mean minded? and in these times one can scarcely be sure he has done well until assailed by those who drive the infamous trade of religious calumny.

NEW ZEALAND.

Martyrdom of a Catholic Missionary.

We have been favoured with a letter from a highly-respectable correspondent in New Zealand, which gives an account of the martyrdom of the Rev. Pierce Chanel, a missionary stationed at Fortuna, near the Wallis Islands, after more than three years' hard labour in the Christian cause. The following is a literal translation of the letter of the Rev. F. Battalion to the Lord Bishop, giving an account of the death of his clergyman:—"It is a long while since the natives projected secretly to put to death the Rev. Father Chanel. The commencement of the conversion of the king's son made the people afraid of a general conversion; and it was thought that the surest way to hinder this event was to take away the life of the rev. father. With this view they approached his house, on the 28th of April, carrying spears and clubs. The priest was alone; they enter; one of them struck his head very hard with a club. M. Chanel, nearly stunned, sat down in the middle of the room; with one hand he held a book, which he read, and with the other he wiped off the blood, which overflowed his face. The natives strike him on the back with their sticks; one of them thrust a bayonet through his shoulder, which it is said pierced him quite through. It is said, also, that M. Chanel himself pulled out the bayonet. The multitude then began to plunder the house, leaving the good father in agony from his wounds. At last one of the troop (perhaps from compassion) seized an adze, and struck his head, which he cleaved in two parts, one of which fell to the ground. The king, who was not far distant, then arrived, and washed the body of the martyr, anointed it with oil, and enveloped it in two pieces of tapa. He then buried it near the house. Providence had ordered it that the priest's servant was not at home that day; he was at a little distance, and he met with a ship which transported him to the Wallis Island."

Our esteemed correspondent also states that a solemn meeting had taken place between the Catholic and Protestant missionaries at Kororika, which ended in the complete triumph of the Catholic cause, in the presence of a numerous congregation of natives and white people.