

At that time it was necessary for a priest to obtain the sanction of the Home Government if he wished to proceed to a convict settlement. Father O'Flynn, sent in his application, but as the ship in which he was about to go was on the eve of sailing, and as no other would sail for several months, he took his passage, directing a friend to send the government sanction after him by the next mail. On his arrival in Sydney, the Catholics there, knowing the bitter prejudice which existed in the minds of the authorities against a Catholic priest, warned him to remain quiet and not appear in public. He did so, and in the meantime they sent several petitions to the governor stating their earnest wish and desire to have a priest amongst them, and requesting him to recognize one as soon as he should arrive. The liberal-minded governor gave them a severe snubbing for their pains, and told them very coolly that they were guilty of a piece of presumption and impertinence. Soon after the priest incautiously exposed himself, as he felt confident that the governor would not interfere with him. The police, however, laid hold of him, and he was put in prison as a common felon. He had committed no crime; he was a British subject, and could not be punished, so they served him in the same manner as John Company used to serve the young ladies who went to Calcutta long ago on spec—put him on board the next ship and transported him back again to England. This cruel and unfeeling act excited great bitterness and indignation against the governor in the minds of the Catholics, but they had to submit. The government did not then recognize the existence of such a being as a Catholic. Before leaving Sydney Father O'Flynn performed a beautiful act. Not knowing how many years might elapse before another priest could come amongst them, he left the Blessed Sacrament behind him in the house of a Catholic settler. And to that house, which contained a treasure infinitely superior to the Ark of the Covenant, all free Catholics went as often as they could, and nourished their faith in the presence of their God. The present Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Ullathorne, alludes to this in one of his sermons: "It is remarkably beautiful to contemplate these men of sorrow round the Bread of Life, bowed down before the Crucified; no voice but the silent one of faith; not a priest within ten thousand miles to offer them that pledge of pardon to repentance, whose near presence they see and feel."