

DR. O'DWYER'S LETTER TO THE NATIONAL SCHOOL MANAGERS OF THE DIOCESE OF LIMERICK.

By Edward Thomas O'Dwyer.

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The Commissioners of National Education have issued for use in the schools which are subject to their jurisdiction, a pamphlet on 'Patriotism,' written by Mrs. May C. Starkie, the wife, I presume, of the Resident Commissioner. Dr. Starkie has been quite enough for us for many years without inflicting upon us the activities of an educational Mrs. Proudie, and I suggest that if Dr. Starkie finds himself unequal to the task of organizing the very elementary course of studies in the National Schools he should ask for an assistant or make way for someone more competent than he has proved to be; but it would be simply intolerable if the ladies of his family exercised a right of semi-official interference.

The pamphlet is in reality only a recruiting manifesto, and if any attempt is made to impose it upon the children the Commissioners will probably meet with unexpected opposition.

At this moment there is an angrier feeling in this country than I remember for many a day. Recent events in Dublin, the perfidy of the English Government on Home Rule, the dishonesty with which we were promised self-government as a consideration for supporting England in the war, so that our people were led to believe that in reality it was a war for Ireland, all that and a thousand other phases of the duplicity which has just been revealed in Parliament, have put the Irish people in a temper that will not brook the trifling of England's retainers, or accept lessons on Patriotism from them. Patriotism has been burned by centuries of wrong into the soul of Ireland. We drank in the love of Ireland with our mothers' milk. The whole history of our country is one lesson in Patriotism. The Yellow Ford, Benburb, The Curlew Mountain, Limerick, Fontenoy, these are

the memories that thrill the heart of every young Irishman, but the Commissioners of National Education have little to say upon these topics. Belgium, and Servia, and Montenegro, and Mesopotamia, and Timbuctoo are to be made to work in the minds of our little children, but they are not to think or speak about their own country, her wrongs and sufferings or her national rights.

There is not a word in this precious parliament about Grattan, or Emmet, or O'Connell, or Butt, or Parnell. The teacher who would speak of these within school hours would do so at the risk of dismissal, but they are to revert to the days of Whately, and teach their pupils to bless the goodness and the grace that made them happy English children.

I need not point out to you, gentlemen, the absurdity of this latest attempt at political proselytism or its great danger. There are plenty of boys and girls in the schools who would not stand it, and would probably express their appreciation of Mrs. Starkie's anxiety for their patriotism by suggesting that she might be more usefully employed in teaching her maternal grandparent the way of extracting, by inhibition, the semi-liquid matter of eggs.