

# New Zealand Tabbet


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## Current Topics

AT HOME & ABROAD.



OUR WORTHY anti-Catholic bigots of various parties and shades of opinion are once more brought prominently together,—those who “evangelically” detest the Pope, and those who have a morbid love for nastiness, and revel in unclean literature. “The calumnies which dogged the path of the late Cardinal Antonelli during his life have not retreated from the side of his grave, but have relentlessly pursued him beyond it, and, in consequence, we find in the columns of most of our contemporaries details picked from those of an unblushing conspiracy, which has been entered into in Rome, with the double object of affording a paltry triumph to the enemies of religion, and of filling the coffers of a greedy and abandoned woman. An accidental likeness, real or imaginary, between the features shown in the photographs of a child and those of his Eminence the deceased Cardinal, probably offered the first temptation to the plot; a second, and a more powerful one, was found in the ill-grounded belief that the Holy Father, in order to prevent a scandal, would buy off the woman who pretends to be Cardinal Antonelli’s daughter—a belief that has necessarily proved mistaken, for the Pope, although benevolent, is not weak. The plot once formed, however, was not allowed to lapse, because the expected effects were not produced upon His Holiness. In the subtlety of the Italian mind an ample instrument was found for inventing facts and proofs, and unprincipled people, careless of perjury, were abundantly at hand. Unfortunately for the conspirators, circumstances did not admit of a very probable story. The only show that could be made of the genuineness of the woman Lambertini’s claim was in making it out that she had been recognised all but publicly as the daughter of the Cardinal; and, in order to effect this, his Eminence has been represented in a character at variance, not only with that which he really bore, but still more so with that conferred upon him by his many detractors—a true one if the accusation were true. He was in reality singularly wise and provident; he was accused of being extremely wily and cunning, and he is now assumed to have been bungling and stupid to the verge of folly. A connection, such as that he is accredited with, must of necessity in his case have been hidden. Had it not been so in fact, it would have been not only trumpeted through Rome, but blazoned as well all over Europe. But it is pretended that there was hardly a shadow of concealment about it. Tamburlani, a member of the late Cardinal’s household, who has sold himself to the claimant, asserts that Loretta—Lambertini’s christian name—was in the habit of addressing the Cardinal by a term expressive of the relationship between them in the presence of his attendants, and that she was admitted to his apartments with all the freedom of a daughter. It has also been sworn by this man, who goes through his part of the farce with the readiness and unblushing effrontery of Sbrigani, that Antoinette Marconi, who it was intended should represent the mother of Loretta, until it was discovered that she had been too old at the time of this woman’s birth, was accustomed to declare in the antichamber at the Vatican the object of the visits they pretend she paid to the Cardinal, as well as the substance of the conversation she had had with his Eminence, and that it was thus he found out she was only the guardian instead of the mother of the girl. He said that she came out one day from the presence of his master much flurried, and complaining that his Eminence had slapped her check. The reason she gave for this was that she had proposed that the Cardinal should marry his daughter to a son of Garibaldi, when he bounced up indignant, hit her a blow in the face, and bade her mind her own business, for she was “neither the father nor the mother” of the damsel, “but only a *gouvernante*.” Further, they say that in the house of this *femme d’intrigue*—as the play books have it—a worthy domicile frequented by the gay Lotharios of the Italian military, *et hoc genus omne*—Loretta was wont to point to portraits and busts of the Cardinal which abounded there with “*Questo è papa mio*,” or “*Quello è papa mio*,” and that before a room-full of company. It really is a pity that there is no place for nicer handling of the matter, for the talent is decidedly not wanting. This piteous necessity for asserting a perfectly incredible publicity for the facts attempted to be proved,

and depending upon such a publicity for their proof, is most lamentable for the annals of intrigue. However, the times are favourable Italian tribunals are not inclined to be over-chary of the reputation of a Cardinal, living or dead. On the contrary, a delightful opportunity is now afforded of pelting the mud, that does not stain, at the memory of one high in the councils of the Pope. The conspirators will obtain all consideration, and their perjuries will pass for honest oaths. The memory of the great Cardinal, nevertheless, will remain as free from taint as was the course of his life, which was hardly less calumniated. Supposing, however, for the sake of argument, that the matter be admitted as true, and what follows? One individual the more is added to the great multitude of hypocrites and vicious. There is a drop more than we supposed in the ocean, and a grain of sand in addition to those we knew of on the shores of the sea. That is all. The Church still remains infallible, and the Holy Father is no more affected by unwitting contact with a traitor than was his forerunner, St. Peter, by the companionship of that apostle who was “a devil.” The latest allusion which we noticed to this affair was in the columns of the *Evening Star*, where it was stated, in effect, that the Pope had written to King Victor Emmanuel, begging him to put a stop to the trial. We have heard it said that the “moon is made of green cheese.” Were that luminary a papal institution, Scientists would speedily prove the assertion to be the truth beyond all controversy, and our contemporaries would be proud to ventilate it incessantly for the edification and enlightenment of their readers. In conclusion, we congratulate them on this charming *bonne-bouche*, the Antonelli scandal. May they derive from it all the profit it is capable of affording.

SLANG is subject to more frequent changes than is the language undefiled. It has indeed originated in whim, and therefore naturally alters its form without method or modification. The words, that in one generation were considered smart and funny, in the succeeding become dry and stale, and, for the use of persons who desire to be witty but lacking the faculty are obliged to supply its want by an affectation of humour in manner or expression, a continual invention of terms, more or less grotesque, goes on. No less fruitful seems to be the imagination that supplies to our anti-Catholic friends appellatives by which to distinguish the Catholic body. “Papist,” “Romanist,” “Ultramontane,” all have had their day, and have served in turn, many a time and oft, to give point to a drowsy discourse, or to simulate satire in the sentences of a dull writer. They have, however, suffered their eclipse. Like the words by which our fathers distinguished certain characters or qualities, but which we have replaced by terms, esteemed more racy, because of fresher origin, they have assumed a withered sound, and our journalists and speakers have coined an equivalent that for a time may seem brisk. The term is Clericalism, with its various modifications, and we simple Catholics are the Clericals of whom we hear so much. Let not anyone cry out upon the memory of his parents or otherwise manifest the pride and astonishment of M. Jourdain when he discovered that he had been speaking “prose” all his lifetime. The nick-name is new and smart, but we continue as if we had never been privileged to learn it. It, however, serves the purpose of our adversaries to make use of it. By doing so, notwithstanding Shakespeare’s cardinal error, too hackneyed for quotation, they contrive to cast an additional stigma on the Catholic party, and to imply that there is in them something plotting and mysterious that could not otherwise be conveyed. Nevertheless—we accept the term. The Holy Father has rebuked its repudiation. Our authority is the Paris correspondent of the *Times* who quotes from the *Univers*. For a man to declare himself a Catholic and deny that he is a “Clerical,” is an absurdity. “It is a contradiction,” exclaimed the Pope, “an absurdity. It is like saying I am a man, and I am not a man, for Clericalism means simply the Catholic religion.”

If we may judge by the reliance placed by English journalists on the influence of M. Thiers, prior to his death, in securing the future tranquility of France, the death of that statesman has occurred at a most momentous crisis. According to the tenor of articles in certain of the leading newspapers brought here by the last San Francisco mail, the peace of the country referred to was supposed to depend upon the prevalence of the moderate Republican party over the various other political sections of the community. The leadership of