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Current Topics.

AT HOME & ABROAD.



THE mantle of Pope IX. has certainly fallen upon the shoulders of Leo. XIII. Amongst the first acts of our Holy Father's reign has been the conferring of his blessing upon the Catholic Press. On 26th February last, M. Eugene Venillot wrote as follows to the *Univers* from Rome:—"I had the honour and the happiness of being received by His Holiness yesterday evening. Christ's Vicar has blessed our work and all those connected with it. He said that he knew and had long been a reader of the *Univers*, whose devotion to the Church he praised. He asked me about Louis Venillot, whose services he highly esteems. The Pope added that the religious Press, that is, like us, faithful to the teaching of the Holy See, had a noble part to play; that it must maintain firmly the rights of the Church. His Holiness concluded repeating that he blessed us all, and sent a special blessing to Louis Venillot." We recognise the claim of M. Louis Venillot to receive so great a reward for his long years of labour in upholding the Catholic cause in Europe, and it gives us great pleasure to see him thus fortified against the sneers and open attacks of his multitudinous enemies. He is one, indeed, who has encountered a large share of the vituperation of the Protestant and infidel newspapers, and his truly Catholic aspirations for the welfare of the Church have even been made the standard against which the anti-Catholic voice has especially declaimed. "It is the contemplation of the behaviour of the Christian subjects of Turkey," says the *Saturday Review*, "which has kept Europe in such a state of mind as to make it hope that the idea of a moderate Pope, and not the idea of M. Venillot, will prevail in the Catholic world." Europe must indeed be singularly acute if it can detect any connection between the behaviour of these Christians of the Greek Church and the See of Peter. Does it not know that Rome has no more bitter enemy or more rebellious child,—for all baptised Christians belong in some sort to the Pope as our late Holy Father informed the Emperor of Germany? But this drivel—and it is the merest disconnected drivel—is beside the question. What we have to do with is the fact that the great "Reviler" has been disappointed, and that a Pope, who does fulfil the idea of M. Venillot sits in the chair of the Fisherman, and has conferred his blessing on M. Venillot, and the *Univers*, and the Catholic Press. For ourselves we feel our courage renewed once more by the benediction of His Holiness, and we trust that we shall continue to be included in it by doing our utmost, in our limited sphere, towards maintaining at all times the rights of the Church.

"Oh! hoo I hate to hear a hash insist."

THERE is somewhere or other in Dunedin a certain club which is bent on deep discussion. We do not know where is its place of meeting, nor do we recognise the names of any of its members. But the Club must be in existence, for a contemporary furnishes us with long reports of its proceedings. We are not in the habit of perusing these reports regularly, for we desire to avoid the state of confusion arrived at by those unfortunate devils, who, Milton informs us, sat apart upon a hill and reasoned of all sorts of things which it was impossible for them to understand. Therefore we spare our limited intellect, and avoid placing ourselves in danger of going daft. We are not in a position then to criticise the proceedings of this club, and feel justified only in saying that, so far as we have followed its conversations, they by no means remind us of those out of which we have gathered our motto—the "Noctes Ambrosianæ." There is, however, one gentleman amongst the members of the club to which we refer in whom we ought to feel some interest. He is an Irishman and a Roman Catholic; both of which facts entitle him to our consideration. We know he is an Irishman because there is an O' before his name, and we know he is a Roman Catholic because he has plainly stated such to be the case. We need hardly enter into any very long argument to prove that the O' before a man's name at once points out his nature, characteristics, and race to be Irish, for, on all hands, it is admitted to have done so from the very earliest times. In fact we recognise one of the elders who attended on King Priam at the Skaean gate to have been Irish

because he was named O'Calet-m. Although, by the way, the Greek scribe who took down the name from Homer's dictation stupidly wrote the O' with a u instead of the apostrophe,—a mistake which was not detected by the poet, no doubt owing to his blindness, and which, therefore, has been continued to the present day. This elder, then, was Irish, made so by his O' which plainly shows that he was not a Trojan in the same way that the O' of Mr. O'Donnell, of whom we speak, shows that he is not to be mistaken for a Cockney. Of this Irish elder's religion we cannot certainly judge, for it is not distinctly mentioned that he was a Roman Catholic, but there is nothing in the world to prevent his having had very nearly as clear ideas on the creed in question as the Milesian of whom our contemporary reports. For if there were such things as Roman Catholic crows this gentleman might be hung up up to frighten them by the display of his ignorance and imbecility, just as at present he has been introduced to amuse the geese of other creeds, or no creeds, by the exhibition of his assumed knowledge. There is a Scotch gentleman, too, in the club, who is very short and very sharp, but the soul of reason, and he, to be sure, takes it out of Mr. O'Donnell at his will, and by a home thrust or two makes our Irish friend show to the assembly how very big a fool he is. We have, however, no intention of following the course of a discussion at the club: we desire to shun the megrim, and therefore we shall confine ourselves to an answer, which it strikes us is an obvious one to that stock argument, "Search the Scriptures," which we find last week advanced, to his discomfiture, against our Irish scarecrow. The Jews were told to search the Scriptures, not for the purpose of interpreting them at their will, but to find in them a certain definite meaning. The interpretation was given to them: it was that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, and that, and that only, was what it was lawful for them to discover by their search. The passage in question really is condemnatory of the Protestant position, for it proves that our Lord did what the Church now does,—i.e., declared the meaning of certain passages, and desired that those who read them should place such an interpretation on them. The Church recommends the faithful to study the Scriptures in this same sense to-day.

A CONTEMPORARY, amongst certain paragraphs culled from the news brought by the *Suez Mail*, gives us one which it heads "British Pluck." The "British pluck," however, exemplified, proves to be the gallant conduct of a number of men of that distinctly Irish Regiment, the Connaught Rangers, led on by Major Garrett Moore, a member of the ancient Irish family of O'Moore, and who hails from the banks of the Shannon. The paragraph runs thus:—"The 88th Regiment, the Connaught Rangers, were always hard hitters, and I never knew the enemy yet that was pleased at meeting either the 87th or the 88th Regiments when they came down to the charge with fixed bayonets, shouting 'Fagh-a-ballagh'—clear the road or clear the way. The following will prove how Irishmen can fight, as the Kaffirs are no chickens, and also that British soldiers will always succeed with the bayonet, if properly used. The small body of men of the 88th Regiment (only forty in number) engaged in the recent battle with the Gaika Kaffirs, near the Komgha, behaved splendidly, and maintained the prestige of the 88th as one of the best fighting regiments of the British army. They were confronted by a large number of Gaikas, variously estimated at from 600 to 1,000, who came out shouting, yelling, and brandishing their guns. Forming his small band into square, Major Moore told them to wait until the enemy were within a distance of 100 yards, when a volley from the Sniders did fearful execution, and caused the Kaffirs to halt, but only for a moment. Shouting, hooting, and yelling as only naked savages can do, they came on like a stone wall until within five yards distant of the small band of soldiers, when Major Moore gave the order, 'Men of the 88th, fire a volley and charge bayonets!' Quick as lightning the order was executed, the men of the 88th were in amongst the Gaikas, and handled the bayonets in fine style. The Kaffirs fought desperately, but Irish pluck was too much for them, and the result was that they turned and fled, leaving 100 dead on the field. Major Moor is a dashing officer. While attempting to save a mounted policeman named Guise, who was badly wounded at the time, he was attacked by two Kaffirs, and wounded through the arm with an assegai. He succeeded, however,