

well as any of the authorised Christian teachers of the day. Only think of the sort of coxes who first taught Christian doctrine, and you will see that the idea of its requiring any kind of peculiar qualification to do so is ridiculous. Any savage in the land is fully qualified to write a gospel if he only took it into his head to do so. "And considering the kind of men who first taught the Christian faith before it was reduced to a science, there seems no valid reason why he should not." So says our contemporary, whose thoughts, as it becomes a trusty henchman of our great Attorney-General, seem to run on "science." However, we are to know all about it next March. Te Whiti is then to publish his new religion, and whatever it may be, whether eclipsing Dr. Cumming, Mr. Spurgeon, His Grace of Canterbury, and the Pope, or not, of one thing we are certain, that it may be a great deal better, and cannot possibly be more degrading or mischievous to society than is secularism, the creed of the Grey Government.

OUR contemporary the *Otago Daily Times* published an article on Wednesday last on the Agar-Ellis mixed marriage case, which has lately been finally decided, and to which we referred some few months back, pointing out to our readers the impossibility of relying on the promises made by non-Catholics previous to their marriage with Catholics as to the faith in which their children should be educated. Our readers will recollect that Mr. Agar-Ellis, a member of the English untitled aristocracy had pledged his solemn word to Miss Stonor, whom he desired to marry, that all children born of their marriage should be brought up in the Catholic faith, and that on this condition the lady in question accepted and married him; that for some months he respected his word, but that afterwards, in a manner that even deprives him of the right to be considered so much as a gentleman, he broke his word, and charged his wife not to instruct his children as he had consented that she should instruct them, and in virtue of which consent he had prevailed on her to marry him. His wife, however, considered that he was bound by his promise, and we cannot conceive how she could be called upon to think otherwise, and continued to teach the children the tenets of her faith. Of this the *Daily Times* says:—"Having given general instructions to that effect, he appears to have been careless as to how they were carried out; while his wife, true to the instincts of her creed, was subtly imbuing them with her own doctrines." That is to say this lady, in acting on the word that had been solemnly pledged to her, and for which she had paid the price demanded of her, was acting subtly, with cunning, and in an underhand manner, when she determined on holding the right that had been conferred upon her, and that she was acting in this cunning and reprehensible manner according to the teaching of the creed professed by her. If we knew what the principles of the *Daily Times* really are, or if our contemporary did not veer round like the wind, and wag hither and thither,

"Comme la queue de notre chat,"

so that it is impossible to tell one day what opinions he may represent the next, and so that all we can discern in his columns is that coarseness has been replaced by feebleness, and that "God knows what," would be his most fitting motto, we should be the better able to deal with him. The sentence to which we refer would a little time ago, we know, have been an outrage on the principles which then ruled our contemporary's columns, for it would have been a slap in the face for "woman's rights" which tenet is held by the party that were then represented by the *Times*. However, it matters very little as to whether we can show that our contemporary is false to his principles or not. The sentence to which we refer hardly deserves criticism; it is stupid, slanderous, and ignorant to a degree, and therefore false to all true principles. Our contemporary makes another assertion which is almost equally stupid; it runs as follows:—"The beneficial lesson to be learned from the Agar-Ellis case is the avoidance of mixed marriages. Father Hennebery, when he took occasion to denounce them as he did some time ago, was not so wanting in worldly wisdom as many people imagined, had he only restrained his wrath within reasonable bounds." The one grain of common sense that remains in this is the condemnation it contains of mixed marriages; but it misrepresents Father Hennebery at the same time. Father Hennebery displayed no wrath whatever on the subject of mixed marriages. He taught his congregation the doctrine of the Catholic Church on the subject in moderate and plain language, and so they understood him. On the West Coast his teaching, it is true, was misinterpreted by a knot of bigots and interested persons, who, for reasons best known to themselves, though, perhaps, not quite hidden from others, were anxious to bring the mission into disrepute. But the missionary was not accountable for this; he had stated the simple truth, and had done so moderately and well. This has been abundantly testified too, and had not our contemporary been aware that any sneer at anything Catholic made by him, however mild, would pass with his readers for smartness, or however unfounded, would be accepted as just, he would not have ventured to make the allusion to which we refer.

A WEEK or two ago we commented on a paragraph which we had seen in a Northern contemporary, and which referred to some

thing alleged to have taken place at a certain church in Dunedin, evidently Knox Church. We now find that there is no truth whatever in the matter alluded to, and hasten to express our regret at having been misled by a statement that, it seems, had no foundation. At the same time, perhaps, we may have furnished the opportunity for contradicting a report that otherwise might have gone the rounds unnoticed. A letter in our correspondence column will fully explain the matter.

Is brigandage to become an institution in the neighbouring colonies? It will add much to the romance of the bush if it be regularly established there, but we doubt as to whether the comfort of settlers will be much improved by it. In fact it is very little to the credit of the police of Victoria that the Kelly gang are still at large, and for any signs that we can discern to the contrary, that they bid fair to remain at large, and continue the scourge of the border. We were lately told that the desperadoes had been hemmed in, so that their capture was made sure of; and that it would be impossible for them to escape from the net drawn around them; but while this report was still current there came the intelligence that at a distance from the place in which they were supposed to be lurking they had crossed into New South Wales, and stuck up a bank, robbing it of £2000, and destroying valuable documents of various kinds. This wanton destruction speaks very badly of them, and goes far to contradict the pretence of their having been driven by the force of circumstances on a life of violence and bloodshed. It betrays an innate malice altogether at variance with the traditional spirit of the bold-hearted highway man, who only robbed the rich, and half atoned for his lawlessness by kind actions to those in need. Meantime it must be very pleasant, for the squatters particularly on the border, to know that so reckless, so swiftly-moving, and powerful a band of desperadoes are in their neighbourhood, and may at any time appear around the station. The intense quietude of the Australian bush must become much altered by such a change. We can fancy with low much trembling interest every advancing body of equestrians is watched, and how each range and stretch of tranquil forest becomes a menacing lair which the imagination peoples with the dreaded band. Such a state of things must be all the more unsatisfactory because of the contrast it affords to the peaceful life led of late years by settlers in those parts, who had long given up all thoughts of bushrangers. It is now a good many years since the Clarkes, the last men of the kind whom we remember to have heard of as frequenting the country alluded to, were captured. They had been settlers in fairly respectable circumstances, who seem to have taken to the bush more through the spirit of adventure than anything else, and their career was short. We remember to have received an account of an enterprise undertaken by them from one of the persons who were principally and most unwillingly concerned in it, and it was not without its amusing features. One evening, during the time they were out, it happened that the mistress of a bush public house, whose family had been absent during the day at races held in the neighbourhood, had just achieved the task of cooking for them a holiday supper and it was laid on the table in readiness. When, as the hungry party were about to commence proceedings, a man with his face blackened appeared at one of the windows, and presenting a revolver ordered them to bail up, to rise from the table and stand against the wall, with their faces towards it. This man was in a moment joined by three others, and as ladies only were present in the room his orders were promptly obeyed. A search of the house then commenced, but without much results, for almost all the money then under the roof was hidden away in one of the beds, and the Clarkes do not seem to have been well skilled in searching. Indeed they appear to have been singularly stupid for on their way to the inn in question they had passed in the bush a servant woman, who was carrying back from the racecourse the proceeds of the day's sale at a booth amounting to £40; and on her telling them she was "only a poor girl" on her way home from the races they did not in any way molest her, but let her carry her money safely in their rear to the inn, which she reached some time after they had gone away. The ladies continued with their faces to the wall, all the time the bushrangers were in the house, but when these had taken their departure, and the usual clatter of women's tongues set free at last had come off, the lady of the house proposed that they should now eat their supper and so comfort themselves for their fright. They accordingly sat down at the table, which was apparently untouched, but on lifting up the dish covers they were dismayed to find that the gang had carried off all their victuals, and, evidently as a trick, had covered up the dishes again. The party, therefore, were obliged to go supperless to bed. Meantime it is to be hoped that the present state of things will speedily come to an end. However excellent a shot a desperado may be it is a disgrace to the civilization of the country in which he finds himself that he is allowed to go long at large.

We do not as a rule lay any very great stress on conversions to the Catholic faith. If the converts are persons of any note, and on the part of whom any considerable change or movement would claim attention, or if any other circumstances make the matter more or less