

# New Zealand Gazette

VOL. VII.—No. 336.

DUNEDIN : FRIDAY, SEPT. 26, 1879.

PRICE 6D

## Current Topics.

AT HOME & ABROAD



Are afraid, after all, it will turn out that human nature is pretty much the same thing throughout these colonies as it is on the other side of the Pacific. Strange to say, it would appear as if crime was about to follow in the wake of secularism in Australia just as it has done in America. We have frequently had occasion to remark upon the manner in which the one has paved the way for the other in the country

alluded to, but always, out of deference for the strong persuasions of many estimable gentlemen amongst our fellow-colonists, have we allowed that humanity within the sweep of these seas might possibly prove of more excellent and unbending quality than in the Great Republic. Still we find ourselves obliged to put two and two together, and when we find so staunch an advocate of secularism as our contemporary the *Evening Star* holding up horrified hands ament the crime in Melbourne, involuntarily we recollect that the secular system has now had ample time to show some of its effects, whether for good or whether for evil, there, and moreover that we might more especially have expected it to make manifest its excellence, were it possessed of such, in thinning the larrikin ranks. The *Evening Star*, however, informs us that it is otherwise. Here is what he says, "Crime in Melbourne is fearfully rife, and the Police Court records wear a sickening aspect. Larrikinism is on the increase, and no one is exempt from its attacks. Gangs of systematic plunderers infest the city, suicide is on the increase, and shocking cases crop up now and then in connection with the Chinese quarter of the town. One of the latest cases of larrikinism was a band of roughs taking forcible possession of an hotel, helping themselves liberally, destroying the property, and then nearly killed the landlady by striking her with a bottle. A shameful case of woman-assaulting is also on record. The poor creature was on her way to the hospital when a brute met her and beat her with his fists, and was only prevented from killing her with a knife by the timely appearance of a constable. Every week brings its tale of infanticide, and of young women decoyed away and ruined for life. The Chinese quarter is a blot upon Melbourne." The nurselings of secularism, then, are no improvement, to say the least of it, on those of the denominationalism we are told is finally defunct; but, to follow up the elegant comparison made the other day by our contemporary the *Daily Times* of the denominational system to a "dead dog," the vermin shaken off by the system that is now alive and vigorous are quite as loathsome as any that have ever been otherwise produced. This at the very least, and we have no doubt whatever that, if they have not already done so, they will become before many years elapse very many times more numerous. That such has been the case in America it is impossible to deny; for His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney, in a fourth pastoral issued by him, proves it by giving the following statistics. We have not as yet had time to receive the pastoral itself, but we clip the following from a report telegraphed to a Victorian contemporary: "Comparative ignorance, he says, is a misfortune that leads to crime; but instruction without thorough religious instruction and moral education is a calamity that tends directly to produce criminals of the very worst class. He takes six New England States—namely, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and contrasts them with six other States—namely, Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, and Georgia—to show the difference. Yet the inhabitants of all those States, he points out, came of the same English race, and held the same Protestant religion. They all had the Protestant Bible, and, in the main, the same manners and customs, but they disagreed on the one question of religion. The New England States adopted the system of public schools, but the Virginian States rejected it. Both systems had been in work for years, and the public schools, according to the last census, had advanced the States in which they existed far ahead of the other States in purely secular instruction. The States

in which the public schools' system was in force had a population of 2,666,000, and out of them only 8543 could neither read nor write. The States where the private schools existed had a population of 3,000,000, out of whom 262,000 were wholly illiterate. This, it was claimed, was a triumph of knowledge over ignorance, and was taken to show the light that public schools bring to the intelligence. But turn to statistics of another kind. The States that adopted the public schools' system had 2459 criminals in prison, while those States that adopted the other system had only 471. Thus the former had one native-born inhabitant out of every 1084 in gaol, while the latter had only one out of every 6670. Then the public schools' States had one suicide per annum to every 13,000, and the other States had only one suicide per annum to every 56,000. The former had one per annum who died of the effects of criminal lust to every 84,000; and the latter only one per annum to every 128,000. The public schools' States had one insane person to every 800; and the denominational States one to every 1280. Taking all the States together, not one of them approached Massachusetts as a breeder of criminal classes, although that State had far and away developed the public schools system to the greatest degree. The *Alta California*, one of the leading American newspapers, said that we must look for the cause of the general rowdiness, idleness, and viciousness of the rising generation nowhere but to the training it had been receiving. The prison reports of America stated that all the young criminals can read and write."

THERE are two gentlemen who, of their own accord have come prominently before the public in connection with the catastrophe at the Octagon, Dunedin, and from whose "tricks and manners" we learn that the ridiculous not only occasionally approaches the sublime, but may even issue from circumstances attending on the sad and horrible. One of these gentlemen is our old, and exceptionally high-spirited, acquaintance, Mr. Denniston, and the other is the peripatetic reporter of our contemporary the *Lyttelton Times*. Mr. Denniston, as we say, we know of old; he is a noble soul brimming over with a fine and continual indignation, and as hard to hold in as a three-year-old colt. But we look upon him as spoiled by his nationality and profession; instead of being a Scotchman and a lawyer he ought to hail from the county Tipperary and to head a faction with a shillelagh in his hand from Monday morning till Saturday night, and round again. It's face to face with three or four boys of the O'Ryan's, or the O'Kellys, or the O'Neils, or somebody else with a strong spice of the "devil" in them he should stand. It actually brings the tears to our eyes to see him pitted off against nothing better than a bit of a coroner, or a "peeler" or the likes of that; he's completely thrown away. The other gentleman tells us that he himself was once a warrior too; but we have only his word for it, and we think more of one stout blow dealt before our eyes in the street, than of all the reminiscences of warlike hours that could be written from this till doomsday. However, we will take his word for it, and when he tells us he has often faced the "music of the batteries" we will believe him. We will even believe he would rather do so again than again take the liberty he has taken; and it is certain he ought to do so, for it is a grievous impertinence of any man to consider that the fact of a young lady's having met a most deplorable accident and bereavement justifies him in patronizingly alluding to her personal appearance in the newspapers. Our ex-warrior, however, now that there is no fighting to engage his powers, has taken to journalism it seems, and it seems, moreover, he has elected himself a kind of censor of the Press in general, so that our stationary reporters had better mind their p's and q's or they will have all their shortcomings published to the world, and that in the choicest prose imaginable. That "centre of population more favourably situated" than Dunedin, (which we suppose is a military way of saying Christchurch,) will be forced to entertain a very poor opinion of them, if they do not look sharp. Our ex-warrior came down here "personally to institute inquiries," and he saw and heard no end of wonderful things that our good-for-nothing lot of reporters had never told him a word about. In the dark he saw a detective in a dark entry watching every movement he made—and that is a sure token of eyes trained by campaigning. He saw a mob of boys with their "irrepressible mirth silenced" and that is a contradiction in terms only to be swallowed in presence of a determined fire-eater, such as an ex-warrior is sure to be. And,