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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

**TRUE TO HIMSELF.**

WE find that we were a little premature last week in accrediting Mr. Clifford Loyd with a desire to save the fair fame of England by putting an end to the excessive and more fully murderous methods of punishment employed in Egyptian gaols. The measure indeed, would not have been very remarkable for its humanity had it been adopted for such a purpose as that we allude to, and the use of the kourbash, as winked at by Mr. Clifford Loyd, might still have been sufficient for the needs of all ordinary torturers, but the fact is, as Sir P. Benson Maxwell explains in the *Times*, that the cessation of the more barbarous methods was not due by any means to Mr. Loyd, and the direct contrary was, in fact, the truth:—"The moment," writes Sir Benson Maxwell, "that Mr. Lloyd obtained the management of the gaols, he re-instated the kourbash, contrary to law, and contrary (as soon as I heard of it, in March) to my repeated protestations. I protested, not simply because it was in breach of the law, in my opinion unnecessary, and administered so as to leave the prisoners virtually at the uncontrolled discretion of mere subordinate gaol officials; but because I considered it a shame and a reproach to our country that the very moment an Englishman was trusted with authority, he should take up that implement of cruelty and torture which the Egyptian or Turk had just laid down, at the request of one who was an honour to his country for it, Lord Dufferin." It is not then, the abolition of the kourbash that is due to Mr. Clifford Loyd but its re-introduction, a matter that accords much more with the knowledge of that gentleman's character which we had obtained from his career in Ireland.—And, as we might have divined, the heavy, cutting, whip in question was applied on the authority of his wink for very slender reasons—insolence towards a gaoler or warden, or quarrelling among the prisoners, was so punished, and Sir Benson mentions an instance in which six men were flogged for sending a petition complaining of their "English treatment" direct to the Minister of the Interior rather than through the gaoler and the under-Secretary. Sir Benson Maxwell meantime who was the officer appointed by the Khedive was shut out from the prisons where it was his business to inquire into irregularities and unjust punishments, and Mr. Clifford Loyd made himself complete master there.—"Unfortunately," adds Sir Benson, "the evil which men do sometimes lingers after them. Mr. Loyd's methods have lingered in the gaols. Again, at the end of May, I found his deputy, Dr. Crookshank, ordering floggings in Cairo, by mere verbal orders, leaving no trace behind; and again I was met with a defiance of my authority to inquire into such doings. The gaoler had received the doctor's instructions to answer no question and show no papers to the Procureur-General (i.e. the writer). Only one step more was wanting in this downward spread of contumacy and disorder; that the gaoler himself should become his own legislator, and after wielding his kourbash at his pleasure on the Khedive's subjects within the prison walls, defy the authority of the Khedive's chief law officer. Nubar Pasha would have eradicated this spirit by the dismissal of the offender, but his arm was stayed. It was time that I withdrew from the scandalous scene of English lawlessness and licence. I placed my resignation in Nubar's hands and left Egypt." We find, then, that Mr. Clifford Loyd has thoroughly followed up his Irish methods with regard to Egypt, acting there with autocratic insolence and gross and brutal cruelty, publishing to the world a tale that exhibits him as a champion of mercy and humanity, for such is the usual course of the English official in Ireland.—Well have the Irish newspapers dubbed this hero "kourbash Loyd," and long may he live to enjoy, as he adorns, the title.

**DISCOVERED?**

THERE is at least one circumstance attendant on the present epidemic of cholera in Europe which has some hope attached to it. That is the existence of some possibility that the alleged discoveries of Dr. Koch, the German savant and devotee of science, may be so followed up as to result in a cure or a preventive for the fell disease in question. Dr. Koch pretends to have found the cause of the cholera in a microscopic

microbe, infinitesimally small, and, nevertheless, he has been able to observe, and consequently he advises that such water only shall be drunk as has been boiled, or is slightly mineral, or has come from places distant from the seat of infection. He also recommends that food of all kinds may be well cooked, that infected rooms may be closed and dried, and that dust may be preferred to damp. He does not, however, profess to have discovered a method of destroying the microbe, as he claims to be an observer only and not a healer, leaving to others the task of profiting by his observations in finding a cure. The immediate cause of the disease, he says, is the presence of the microbe in the great intestine, where it multiplies *ad infinitum*, and, among the effects of its presence, secretes a poison which causes a state of the body that produces cholera. It is, however, objected to Dr. Koch's theory that inoculation has not produced the cholera in the case of various animals that have been subjected to the operation in question, and hence it is denied by some doctors that the microbe is the source of the evil ascribed to it. For our own part, again, although we do not profess to be by any means an authority on the subject, the theory of the microbe appears to us of some inconsistency with the statement of Dr. Koch that the disease had probably been brought to Europe by an English merchant vessel, whose officers had falsified the log and hushed up the deaths that had occurred during the passage, for, supposing the microbe to exist in the ship, the cholera could hardly have ceased there even for a time, and so as to enable the officers to practise the very shameful deceit attributed to them; and the accusation, by the way, hardly speaks highly for the estimation in which British seamen are held by continental Europe. We are quite prepared to find, then, that the microbe discovered by Dr. Koch is a consequence or an accompaniment of the disease rather than its cause, although the hope still remains that he may succeed in fully proving his point, and so pave the way for the extermination of one of the most grievous scourges that have as yet afflicted the human race.

**REPARATION NEEDED.**

WHATEVER Ministry may eventually obtain the victory there is one matter in particular that it is to be hoped will not escape their notice, but to which their earnest attention may be directed without delay or prejudice. That is the late changes made in the management of the gaol at Dunedin, and which can hardly be looked upon as by any means satisfactory or such as should remain untouched. Towards the gaol at Dunedin, as it existed before the inquiry conducted by Messrs. Whiteford and Curtis—with the ardent assistance of the accomplished Captain Hume and the sanctified Mr. Torrance, especially called to the service of the prisoners, and separated by a strong lather of soft-soap for the work, there were various minds and none of them very favourable. There was the mind of the fashionable world as represented especially by the Inspector—to whom, as we know, there seemed to be a necessity for Italian nomenclature, kid gloves of the most delicate tints possible, and the goose-step performed in patent leather boots, or, as figuratively speaking, it might be practised, let us say, by a tip-top Polish gander. This mind could not bear to see the prison controlled and managed, however excellently, by a mere body of men who had gone so far through life satisfied with doing hard work in a conscientious and complete manner, and who, although they had deserved admirably of the Government and the public, failed in those elegant observances necessary to the delight of refined circles. None of the peculiar "sweetness and light" necessary to send the thieves and pick-pockets who had fulfilled their term out to qualify themselves for another term in the guise of dancing-masters or fashionable coiffeurs could be expected to flow from them, but thieves and pick-pockets must return from their presence to society qualified only to pursue their accustomed trade in their accustomed manner. There was, again, the pious mind that felt the need of more unctuous surroundings for the prisoners, and was resolved at any cost, and even at the expense of whosoever character it might be, to save them, without the aid, however, of the big drum, but fully capable of supplying in some other and equally effective way for the want of that vociferous instrument of salvation. And is not the salvation born of well-applied soft-soap calculated to prove as