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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

**COWARDLY
PEELERS.**

THE disposition of the loyalists of Ireland, the supporters *par excellence* of law and order, is well shown in the following extract from the Dublin *Express*, "The Tipperary boys" spoken of, we need hardly say, are the police. "What are the Queen's Ministers going to do with regard to the 'Tipperary boys' who have been shooting in Belfast? . . . No doubt they have been badly beaten by the unarmed lads of the streets of Belfast. That, however, was more or less an accident. Had the cowardly constabulary been backed up a few days earlier by the military they would have done the trick. They could have gone South boasting that they had crushed the Orangemen of the North. It would not have been true, but there would have been sufficient truth in it to justify in an elastic Celtic mind the proud boast; but now no human being can doubt that an apprentice boy of Belfast showed more courage than a dozen of the cowardly peelers who shot women and children in Shankill-road. . . The constabulary are not only a defeated but a disgraced body so far as Ulster is concerned." They were the finest body of men in the world, nevertheless, according to our loyalists when they were shooting little boys and bayonetting young girls in Connaught.—But that was done in the loyal cause, and as usual the end justifies the means.

**AN UNPLEASANT
DOUBT.**

THE *Times* in concluding an article on the relative strengths of the English and foreign navies as calculated from a Parliamentary return, speaks in a manner that, in view of the possibility of war, is hardly reassuring:—"It is very difficult "it says," to discover from the figures of this return whether the fighting navy of this country is in a condition which ought to satisfy the public, or which is capable of meeting all probable requirements in time of war. The difficulty is enhanced by the differences of opinion which prevail, even among those who must be described as competent authorities, which regard to the value of the broadside ships, and to the duties which they could be fairly expected to discharge. It seems certain that England would be far more than a match for any single adversary; and events which led to a coalition against her would be hardly likely to leave her without powerful allies. On the other hand, it may be doubted whether her preponderance over even a single adversary is sufficient when considered in relation to the vast extent and enormous coast line of the Empire, to the dependence of this country upon sea-borne supplies of food, and to the magnitude of the maritime commerce which it might become necessary to guard."

**A THREATEN-
ING SITUATION.**

STEPNIAK, the well-known writer on Russian affairs, has recently published a book in which he explains why the Government of the Czar threatens disturbance to the world. Discontent, he says, prevails throughout the empire, both noble and peasant having been ruined by the emancipation of the latter and made by its means the dependents of the money lenders. In the army also there is discontent and under a most dangerous form since it exists among the officers, who are unquestioningly obeyed by the soldiers. Many of these officers have of late years been sentenced to death as Nihilists, or to imprisonment, or banishment to Siberia. To divert the anger that exists and turn it into less dangerous channels the Government is under the necessity of placing before the nation the prospect of conquests in other places. Again, the traders of the towns including the money lenders are the only class who have benefited by the emancipation of the serfs, and the Government to recompense them for the support it has received from them as well as in hopes of replenishing the exhausted exchequer by their aid has established tariffs which are prohibitive. Russian manufactures, nevertheless, are not successful and even within the empire cannot compete with the product of certain German factories established, so as to evade the protective duties, across the frontier of Poland. To create markets, therefore, for these inferior manufactures is a crying need and the only way in which it can be satisfied is by the annexation of Eastern territories. Russia, says Stepiak, is "rather pushed from behind than rushing headlong after some long-determined purpose."

**SECULAR
MORALITY.**

NOWHERE more than in New England can we be furnished with evidence as to what secularism can perform when grafted on a Puritanical system, and we are especially interested in this matter in New Zealand generally and in Otago particularly whose antecedents are in a greater or less degree similar to those of New England. A writer in the New York *Sun* tells us, then, that bribery in elections is the rule without disguise, and he gives as a case in point the election for the mayoralty lately held in the city of Camden. At this election, he says, as much as 18 dols. was given for a vote, and negro electors were entertained all day with rum, tobacco, and the music of a fiddler, until they were marched to the polling booth at six dollars a head. A voter for sale is known in the slang of Camden as a "floater," and there is no cloak necessary in dealing with him, the bargain to be made is commonplace and openly acknowledged. But such is the state of society in a community that has passed like our own by an easy transition from the extreme of Puritanism to undiluted godlessness.

**A VAIN
UNDERTAKING.**

It seems that while England is engaged in the fortification of Herat and a line of defences by which she hopes to make her Indian frontier impregnable, folk in Persia are quietly laughing at her as throwing time and money away in literally building up false hopes. Russia, they say, is prepared to make use of quite another route if the occasion arises, and is actually busy constructing a road from Askabad to Meshed for that purpose. Are we destined in our day to see history once more repeat itself, and a line of British fortresses prove as ineffectual as did of old the great wall of China or that erected in Great Britain by the Emperor Hadrian?

NEW SCHOOLS

WHILE Ireland has been engaged in her political struggle and the minds of the people are much occupied in that, it is encouraging to see that her educational interests have not been neglected but that her bishops and priests especially have been ardently pursuing them. The report of the commissioners of national education recently published tells us that in the county Galway, for example, thirty-three school-houses capable of accommodating 3,300 children were built in 1884, in Mayo the number built in the same year being thirty-five with accommodation for 3,500 children. All these schools, we may add, are under the management of the parish priests who had interested themselves in bringing about their erection. It is evident, then, that the Irish Catholic clergy are vigilantly watching over the educational wants of their people.

**AN IMPERFECT
ILLUSTRATION.**

ANOTHER illustration of the Anglo-Saxon method of dealing with native tribes which we have lately heard set off against French methods, is supplied by the following paragraph:—"The New York *Tribune* calls attention to the serious difficulties which are arising in consequence of the high-handed treatment of the Leech Lake Indians by Congress. Several years ago Congress authorized the construction of the Leech Lake and Winnebago reservoir dams, making no provision for compensating the Indians whose lands would be destroyed by the resulting overflow. Attorney-General Devens stigmatised this step as unlawful and unconstitutional. Efforts have been made to obtain compensation for the distressed Indians, but the paltry sum which has been offered has been indignantly rejected. Although the Commission has recently reported that 26,000 dols. a year should be paid as compensation for the injury done and 10,000 dols. for destruction of personal property, nothing whatever has been done. It is now reported that the Leech Lake Indians are, through semi-starvation, becoming dangerous, and that they have begun to retaliate by burning the forests of Minnesota. They cannot catch fish as formerly, and the lands which once supplied them with rice are all under water. The people of Minneapolis and St. Paul are beginning to ask what would be the consequences to those cities of the cutting of the dams. Pressure is at length to be brought to bear on Congress. 'But for the agitation undertaken by the Minnesotans, however, there is no reason to believe that the Interior Department,' says the *Tribune*, 'would ever have succeeded in getting any compensation for the Chippenwas, and this is so palpable that it adds to the disgrace of the whole humiliating episode.'" The Anglo-Saxon method employed in this instance was, however not