

intended for the gutter children, who, unless such a system should be established, would be utterly neglected. Has the result corresponded to the hopes expressed, and the promises held forth? Have the gutter children profited—or indeed been permitted to profit—by this free education? Echo answers. Are they not rather the children of well-to-do parents, who could easily pay for the education of their children, who have almost exclusively enjoyed all the advantages, such as they are, of this much-vaunted system. When, then, we take into account the very large number of school children, 22,515, on whom the Government expends nothing, and the fact that the most neglected portion of the community remains still the most neglected, does it not appear pretty plain that our system of public education is a huge monopoly designed not for the community or such, but for a portion of it, and for the maintenance of a class daily becoming more firmly rooted in invested interests. To maintain this free and godless system of education for the benefit of people who are well able to pay, as they ought, for the education of their own children, the entire community is taxed, even those, who, in obedience to principle and the dictates of right reason, discharge, at great sacrifices, their duties towards their children; the public finances are thrown into confusion; increased taxation made inevitable, and all public works threatened with utter extinction. The folly of maintaining such a system is so manifest, that it can only be accounted for in a way which we need not name.

OUR readers no doubt, as usual, will expect us to furnish them with the populations of the chief cities of the Colony as given by the census. Auckland and its suburbs come first with a total of 46,263; Dunedin, with its suburbs takes the second place, the total being 46,175, and showing a deficiency of 88 as compared with Auckland. As, however, the exodus from Auckland during the year has been very considerable while nothing of the kind has taken place with respect to Dunedin we may conclude that as a matter of fact our own city continues to rank first in the matter of population. The returns for Wellington are 25,945; for Christchurch and suburbs 33,651; and for Invercargill and suburbs 8,939.

"QUIDA" contributes one of her unpleasant stories to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. It deals with Catholic matters in the nightmare strain common to infidel or Protestant authors who meddle with them. Its chief point, however, and that on which the whole narrative hangs is the unflinching fidelity of a Catholic priest to the secrecy of the confessional. In spite of some errors as to the liberty allowed to a priest in speaking to his penitent outside the confessional, the testimony thus borne is very remarkable and goes to show the impression made on the non-Catholic mind by the unflinching fortitude referred to.

THE tithe war in Wales (says *Modern Society*) has brought to light the story of a plain-speaking farmer's wife, who, while in conversation with an exacting parson recently, made a practical proposition. Her family was large, and she was, like Lazarus' sister Martha, troubled about many things, so she urged the clergyman "to be fair and take the tenth child, as he used to take the tenth pig, and then things would not be so bad."

ONE of the most remarkable incidents of the Ulster Assizes (says the *Dublin Freeman*) was the appeal for mercy made by John Walker on behalf of William Kitchen. Walker had been a Catholic labourer in the employment of Messrs. Harland and Wolff, and Kitchen was one of a crowd of cowardly ruffians, in the same employment, who kicked and beat Walker and forced him to leave the premises, for no other offence than that of being a Catholic. Belfast was in a state of terrible excitement at the time, no doubt, and fanaticism held sway, but the assault was marked by the cruellest and most heartless savagery. Asked when in the witness box, if he had since returned to work on the island, Walker answered, "No nor never will;" but Walker, nevertheless, appealed to Judge Lawson to take a lenient view of Kitchen's case, because he had a respectable, quiet father. "Your observations do you credit," said his lordship, "but we have a duty to discharge." After this Kitchen pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. The sentence was a sharp one, and should operate as a warning; but the eminently Christian spirit of Walker should have a still more salutary effect, and would too, if there were in the breasts of the untutored wretches who at intervals turn Belfast into a pandemonium a single drop of the milk of human kindness.

THE tithe bailiffs (says the *Dublin Freeman* of Dec 24.) are having a hot time of it in Wales. A body of them went down from London a few days ago to Whitford, and they have got much more than they had bargained for. As one correspondent puts it, "their experiences throughout have been of a very unique character." First the shopkeepers refused to supply them with food, and then the farmers whose property they seized agreed upon a kind of plan of

campaign by which the obnoxious visitors were permitted to enjoy neither food nor shelter. A severe snowstorm was turned to useful purposes, and the fleeing bailiffs were remorselessly snowballed. Two of their number who had taken shelter in a shed were screwed up in their quarters, and their condition inside appears to have rendered a three miles' tramp through slush and snow infinitely preferable. Two others passed their first night on a bare barn floor exposed to the bitterness of a terrible storm, and one of them said he would not pass such another night for £5—no mean or unmistakable avowal from a bailiff. Other principles of torture were duly put into operation against the agents of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and we have real pleasure in recording the fact that tithe collecting in Wales has become even more trying to the system than rackrenting in another country not far remote.

A SCOTCH correspondent who writes to the *London Daily News* from Banda Oriental speaks, among the rest, as follows:—"Singula, enough the Irish, of whom there are upwards of 30,000 in the country, are the most successful settlers. To them is due the great development of sheep-farming, which is making the country rival Australia and New Zealand in the production of wool. The Irish 'Estancieros' are estimated to possess about 50,000,000 sheep, besides great herds of cattle; and they are the chief landed proprietors in the province. Buenos Ayres, where the most flourishing English educational establishments are maintained by them, and they are noted for their hospitality to strangers. In short, they are admirable in all the relations of life; and Irish housemaids, who abound in the city, are remarkable for their uniform morality, honesty, and good temper. But this by the way, and in vindication of the Irish race, which partisan politicians during the late electoral campaign at home slandered in the most shameless manner."

A REPORT is now current to the effect that M. Paul Bert, who was the chief instrument in preventing a priest from gaining access to the death-bed of the unhappy Gambetta, was himself glad to obtain the ministrations of the Catholic Church, when he lay dying the other day in Tonquin. Such reports however, should only be received with reservations, as they not unfrequently arise only from the charitable desires of people whose wisdom does not equal their worth in other respects. The report, for instance, recently spread abroad concerning the conversion of Manlio Garibaldi proves to have had such an unfortunate origin, and has been made use of by the enemies of religion to do as much harm as possible.—It is, nevertheless, rather a striking truth that the death of M. Paul Bert, the arch-enemy of Catholic education—occurred on the very day on which the final Act for the exclusion of religious teaching from French schools was passed.

ANOTHER strong supporter of Garibaldi's has recommended that the Government of King Humbert, for its own sake, should seek a reconciliation with the Pope. The gentleman referred to is the Signor Achille Fazzari, who writes from Calabria to a deputy of the Italian Chamber, recommending a complete and loyal agreement with the Vatican. He recommends, moreover, that all needful concessions may be made. Because, says he, whatever is conceded will not be sufficient compared with the moral and material advantages to be gained by it.

PREPARATIONS for the celebration of the Pope's approaching jubilee continue to be made in all parts of the Catholic world. Spain especially takes a leading position in the matter, and a very large sum of money has already been collected there, while abundant gifts are being made ready for the exhibition to be held on the great occasion at the Vatican. In every country, however, even remote Patagonia, and central Africa, Catholics are bestirring themselves to prove their allegiance to the Holy Father, and give him a practical proof of their veneration and love.

THE vitality and growth of the Catholic faith in Switzerland has of late received an eloquent illustration in the erection of several fine churches in the Protestant cantons. The Catholic faith, indeed, may be said to be the only form of Christianity that truly survives in the country alluded to, for Old Catholicism, notwithstanding the hopes based upon it, was blighted there in its birth, and Protestantism as a religion is dying out.

THE *Athenæum* of November 27, in reviewing the ninth volume of Gairdner's "Letters and Papers of the reign of Henry VIII.," says a striking word or two as to the character of the men who defamed the monasteries. "Seldom in the world's history (it says), has a tyrant found baser instruments for his basest designs than Henry found for carrying out the visitation of the English monasteries. That any monastery in England contained half a dozen such wretches as the more prominent of the visitors who came to despoil them is almost inconceivable. It is a sickening story. The reader of this volume as he turns over page after page is in danger of disbelieving everything that these men report, in his indignation at the audacious and manifest lying which characterizes their reports. The men were not one whit better than common informers, and they never thought it worth while to deal with any but common informers. Runaway monks of blasted character, rogues who were on the lookout for a share of the spoil, fellows who were