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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

LORD DENBIGH, as we see from the report given by the London *Tablet* of a speech made in the House of Lords by his Lordship on the Crimes Bill, is also one of those who may be looked upon as the most sincere friends of the Irish people. There are a number of good folk who might be mistaken by the uninitiated or the prejudiced as unfriendly to Ireland, but these who know better can tell us, as they constantly do, that these good folk are Ireland's best friends. They say the prettiest things imaginable concerning the Irish people. They acknowledge their sufferings in the past, their steadfastness to the faith, their amiable nature, and predict for them the brightest possible future. But the Ireland and the Irish people they allude to are not exactly those that really exist, but those that may come into existence by-and-by when the conditions proposed either openly or in secret by these good folk have been brought into play. Lord Denbigh is one of these good folk, and they are numerous among the party to which he belongs. The Duke of Norfolk is one of them, and so, most probably, is the Bishop of Salford, and many others. There is, perhaps, no determined enemy of the Irish race among this tribe from whose lips some pretty remark relating to the Irish people might not be quoted. Lord Denbigh, nevertheless, would like to see a little change worked among the Irish people. Interesting though they be, according to his Lordship, and steadfast to the letter of the Catholic faith, for of its spirit, it would seem, they know very little, they are a people, says he, who need to be restrained by the provisions of a Coercion Act, as ordinary people need to be controlled by the provisions of the Decalogue. But they are a people nevertheless, more sinned against than sinning. They are the victims of emissaries from their countrymen in America who persuade them that by repudiating their debts they can recover the lands of which their forefathers were cruelly despoiled. And none is more ready to acknowledge the cruelty in question than Lord Denbigh himself, who, like all his party, dearly loves in his heart the poor Irish Catholic, and would deliver him from the deceiver, whether he will or no. There are, it seems, even a number of the Irish Bishops and superior clergy whom his Lordship is able conscientiously to exclude from that charge lately brought rather recklessly against their whole body of conniving with assassination and murder. But he has lately made personal enquiries and has found that there is quite a large body of these ecclesiastics who, in their connivance, are the slaves rather than the leaders of a criminal population, and who would gladly receive assistance from without. Some slight addition, however, as his Lordship thinks, might be made to coercion. He would have the Coercion Act amended by one in favour of Catholic Education. He would educate the people to bear their sufferings more patiently and to give the landlord all his rapacious demands without the least remonstrance. Catholic education in Ireland as administered by Lord Denbigh and his clique, in short, would be a most conservative measure, and Lord Denbigh is able to quote passages from the Encyclicals of the Pope that bear out all his views, just as if he were an Evangelical parson quoting from the Bible in support of his private interpretation. Lord Denbigh, by means of education, would make "Catholic Irishmen," and not "Irish Catholics," and there is a great difference between the two. The difference, moreover, is one that it is most important for us to learn in colonies where Lord Denbigh's Catholicism is now in the ascendant, and the plans his Lordship lays down are likely to be closely followed up. But here is the passage in which, according to the *Tablet's* report Lord Denbigh drew his distinction:—"He drew great distinction between an Irish Catholic and a Catholic Irishman. The first would square his religion to his politics: it was an accident of his birth. The other had his religion as his guide and the principle of his actions, and his politics must not transgress it." The Catholic Irishman would, in short, be an Irishman, if he could be called so, who would be spiritually terrorised into submission to any ill-treatment that a hostile government might impose on him. But Lord Denbigh does not see what Irishmen have to do at all with politics. They should be forced to give them up altogether. he

thinks, as matters most harmful to them. The Irish people, he thinks, have a natural taste for oppression, and politics simply play the mischief with them.—"There was no people on the face of the earth," said his Lordship, "that more valued a strong Government than the Irish if it were just. . . . The Irish nature, when not excited by drink or politics was a generous, kind, and sympathetic one." The stage Irishman is bad enough. It might be thought that when that blustering, blundering, coarse, though humorous and ridiculous, fool had been represented as typical of the nation the extreme insult had been reached. But it remained for those English Catholics of whom Lord Denbigh is a mouthpiece, and whom, with the exception of a very small minority, lay and clerical, he thoroughly represents, to invent and celebrate the Catholic criminal, steadfast through ages of persecution to the faith, and yet worse than a renegade or heathen, a robber, a scoundrel and an idiot, riotous and morally drunken, if claiming to manage his own affairs, but crouching willingly under the iron hand of oppression and like the traditional whipped hound turning to lick it. This is the picture of the Irishman that Lord Denbigh gives to the House of Lords, and which the Bishop of Salford publishes to the world in his journal the *London Tablet*. But Lord Denbigh and the Bishop of Salford, like others that we know of, have still much that is kind and sympathetic to say of the Irish people—when it suits their purpose.

The following article from the *Evening Bell* PROTESTANT was telegraphed to the *Dunedin Evening Herald* OPINION. on Thursday, the 15th inst. by its Auckland correspondent:—"Every man that has a respect

for true manliness of character, wherever found, will be gratified to learn that a movement is actively on foot for the presentation of a testimonial to the Right Reverend Dr. Moran, Catholic Bishop of Dunedin. In the days of weak-kneed principle, and when time-serving is so commonly made the 'Open Sesame' to success, there is something invigorating in contemplating the character of a man of staunch and unwavering adherence to conviction; and probably there is not in all New Zealand another man who has exhibited this character so consistently as the able and eloquent Catholic Bishop of Dunedin. It does not require that we should agree with all the principles that a man holds to admire his holding them firmly, and there are thousands of Protestants in this Colony who differ in matters of faith from Dr. Moran as wide as the poles asunder, who chivalrously give the meed of praise to the Romish prelate, who through good report or bad report stands up for his convictions—in preference to men who have their convictions on them as loosely as their clothes, and can put on or put off to order. Dr. Moran occupies a position that would have been peculiarly tempting to a man of softer nature. He has been long at the head of a church in his district, the proportion of which is alien in race as well as in creed, and a very large population of whom are influenced by an instinctive and ignorant bigotry that prompts them to hate his church and to regard his race as inferior. In such circumstances a man of different fibre would have sought by sycophancy to ingratiate himself with the dominant numbers by humbly insinuating himself into their good graces, making concessions to their prejudices, and winning their confidence by passing in their estimation as "not a bit like a Catholic." But Dr. Moran is proud of his religion, and he is proud of his race, and he never once attempts to veil his pride in either; and we do not hesitate to say with every Englishman and Scotchman in the district, who is a true man, the Catholic prelate is honoured for it. Dr. Moran, as the greatest and ablest, and most distinguished defender of the interests of the Catholic faith in New Zealand, has only too good reason for resentment at the injustice with which it is treated, and he does not conceal his resentment. In the matter of education we do to the Catholics of New Zealand what the Governments of France and Belgium—two countries in which our co-religionists are in an insignificant minority—never dream of doing to Protestants. We force from them taxes which we apply to a system of education in which they cannot and will not share, except in violation of creed and conscience, and while we make a proud boast of liberty of conscience, we say that it is *we* and not *they* that should be the judges of what their consciences should accept. Disguise it as we may, there is a wanton and disgraceful outrage perpetrated on the Catholics of New Zealand, and Dr. Moran has not ceased to denounce the wrong as a freeman and