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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

WE see that although certain of our Catholic contemporaries admit, that if the proposals made by the Rev. Father Belaney, for the control of the Irish Church according to English ideas were carried out, it would be a very bad thing, they express a confidence that such will not be done. Father Belaney, we are given to understand, is an insignificant person whose denunciations and proposals may be taken for what they are worth, and who is not likely to obtain a serious hearing at Rome. Father Belaney, nevertheless, has obtained a hearing in England. The *London Times* has given marked prominence to his lucubrations, and others of the London newspapers have done the same. We are not disposed to contradict those of our contemporaries, who, perhaps better informed than we are, make little of this writer, so far as he himself is concerned, but we would venture to remind them, that, insignificant as he may be personally, taken in connection with the circumstances of the situation, his appearance on the scene cannot be looked upon as unimportant. He only repeats, in fact, what was officially proposed by Cardinal Quarantotti, in the days of O'Connell; what was semi-officially proposed by Sir George Errington in our own days; what has been openly advocated by the Bishop of Salford, and what has been supported by the *London Tablet*. The importance of Father Belaney's utterances are that they show us how determined the perseverance is, and how from generation to generation, and from year to year, the party who desire to obtain the complete mastery of the Irish Church adhere to their designs. Father Belaney is certainly a spokesman of theirs, whether he speaks with their direct authority or without it—and we do not see that he has been disowned by them. When Cardinal Quarantotti proposed that the right of veto should be exercised over the appointment of the Irish bishops by the English Government, O'Connell sternly and vehemently opposed the proposal. When Sir George Errington attempted to influence the Holy See, the Irish people indignantly protested through their national press, and in both instances the resistance made was effectual. Why, therefore, should the Irish Catholics of the colonies be expected to keep silence under similar circumstances, or why should their remonstrance be in vain? But it is not only the publications of Father Belaney, that have given us a public warning. We published last week a paragraph from the *London Weekly Register*, in which a statement is made to the effect that Mgr. Ruffo Scilla, on his return from London to Rome, had advised the appointment of an English representative at the Vatican with especial regard to Catholic affairs in the colonies. Father Belaney, therefore, personally insignificant as he may be, hardly spoke at random when he alluded, as he did in his second pamphlet, quoted by the *London Times*, to the unfortunate manner in which the appointment of colonial bishops was influenced by the bishops in Ireland. But if the Catholic Church in these colonies were placed under the supervision of an English Government official at Rome, it would occupy a very strange and anomalous position. Among all the religious bodies in the colonies its adherents would alone, as the members of a Church, be dependent on and subject to any Government. Nay, as a religious body they would be less free and less independent of the Imperial Government than they would be as members of the body politic. They would derive from such a measure a character inferior to that of their fellow-colonists, and would bear a particular stigma and mark of inferiority and distrust. And we may be persuaded that their religious position could not be without exercising a deteriorating influence over their civil standing. The principle of a State Church would be established to their prejudice and they would have all the disadvantages of such an establishment without any of its advantages. Our contention is, therefore, that it is incumbent on colonial Catholics to resist such a proposal. There would be nothing unusual in their doing so, and nothing unrecognised in their claiming such a right. O'Connell, who vehemently and successfully resisted the proposal of Cardinal Quarantotti, when he was dying left his heart to Rome, and, as he had lived, died a faithful son of the Catholic Church. The nationalists who lately resisted the mission of Sir George

Errington incurred no rebuke, but, on the contrary, saw their resistance approved in the appointment of Dr. Walsh to the archbishopric of Dublin. Protest in cases of this kind is customary and regular, and can only be neglected at the risk of its being understood that such a neglect is tantamount to voluntary acceptance and acquiescence. However contemptible Father Belaney may be, then, or however wanting in authority his proposals, so far as he is personally concerned, since the considerations he has made known are evidently gaining attention in high official quarters, and since they narrowly concern the interests of colonial Catholics, not only spiritually but materially as well, it is hardly out of place for colonial Catholics to deal with them, and, as we have seen, there is abundant precedent of an unexceptionable kind for their doing so without incurring rebuke and with complete success.

AMONG the special recommendations which the Holy Father has made for the benefit of the Catholic people and the growth and strengthening of religion has been that Catholic Societies should obtain their adherence and support. Indeed a particular reason may be seen for this in the present day from the fact that it is by means of anti-Catholic societies that so much harm is done to religion, and the world becomes daily more and more wicked and disturbed. The strength that lies in union is, besides, proverbial, and men when united for a good purpose may legitimately hope for the best results. But, in any case, what the Pope recommends is most deserving of attention, and the advice he gives cannot be neglected with impunity. Catholic societies, meantime, are numerous, and each and all of them have much to recommend them, so that there need be no difficulty to any man who desires it in becoming a member of one or other of them with a well-grounded hope of reaping his full share of the benefits to be obtained. There is, however, already established in this colony a society which, above all others, seems most suited to the needs of the Catholic people, and which, by the excellent results already produced by it, gives a certain promise of fulfilling all that can be demanded of an organisation of the kind. We need not say that we allude to the H.A.C.B.S., now for many years established among us, and possessing a record which should recommend it to Catholic colonists without exception. Other societies, there are no doubt, and we would deprecate none of them, but when one society in particular has been long established, when it has fulfilled every end for which it was instituted, and evidently only needs further extension and a fuller membership to ensure a fuller measure of success, the substitution of any other for it would seem not only superfluous but mischievous. If strength lies in union, and nobody will be disposed to deny that such is the case, one society is certainly to be preferred to many, for there is nothing that draws men so much together as a common membership, and anything which might tend to diminish this is to be deprecated. Fuller fruits may be looked for and greater efforts may be successfully carried out when such a state of things prevails. The spirit of brotherhood becomes more marked and active, and the effects of co-operation are more useful and more apparent. While, therefore, we are anxious to see the recommendation of the Holy Father universally adopted by the Catholics of the Colony, we would deprecate any division of forces. Nothing can be possibly gained by such a step, and the probabilities are that much must be lost by it. The bond of union afforded by the membership of the Catholic Church is no doubt considerable. Of itself it should be all sufficient, and, if it fails, weak human nature is accountable for the failure. But the Catholic societies supply what human nature needs to aid it and to make the bonds of Catholicism bind more effectually. The Church, indeed, is all things to all men. With the Hebrew she is a Hebrew and with the Greek a Greek. We have heard it thrown in the faces of Irish Catholics, for example, that they desired to have an Irish Pope.—And in a certain sense the accusation was true, as the desire was legitimate. The Irish Catholic desires to find in the Pope a father who in dealing with his Irish children can be Irish in spirit—as the English Catholic would have him English in spirit, or the French Catholic French in spirit, or the Italian Italian in spirit. The Pope should be all things to all men—the common father of all; sympathising even in the infirmities of his children, and, much more, in those sentiments that, like patriotism do them honour. When Irishmen, therefore, expect their Pope to be, in dealing with them, Irish in heart, they expect nothing that is extravagant or strange, and they would disrespect the Pope, and take