

New Zealand Gazette

VOL. XVI.—No. 10.

DUNEDIN: FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1888

PRICE 6D.

Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

WE give in another place the leading articles on the Papal decree published by the three principal national organs, namely *United Ireland*, the *Nation*, and the *Weekly Freeman*. Our readers will be thus able to see for themselves what was the impression produced in Ireland by the document referred to. At the time these articles were written, however, the Papal utterance had not been promulgated by the Irish bishops and had therefore come to the knowledge of the country in no authoritative manner and merely as a piece of news. The authoritative view taken of it by the hierarchy we have yet to learn—for we have only received as yet the imperfect and uncertain information sent by cable to this Colony, and more fully, but still more or less doubtfully, to the Australian Press. We accept in advance the decision of the Irish bishops, and anything we ourselves have to say on the subject before that reaches us, we say with all due reservations, and so that it may be taken for what it is worth. The anti-Irish Press, however, has not been concerned about waiting to hear the decision of the theologians principally interested and capable of making the right interpretation.—It has given the benefit of its light in a very determined manner and pronounced as to all the bearings of the decree with the utmost confidence. We may take the *London Times* as our first example. The *Times* is as authoritative on the matter as if he were not only an intimate adviser of the Pope's but a sharer as well in his Holiness' infallibility. He swears that the decree is to be accepted in its very letter and that no one but a bad Catholic can refuse to receive it as an infallible condemnation of the methods of the League. It is moreover somewhat suggestive to find that the *Times* does not look upon the authority of the Pope as only a thing to influence Catholics. He seems to acknowledge that it is of importance to the non-Catholic world also and, as his anti-Catholic principles are notorious, the admission made by him is notable. "Among Gladstonians," he says, "the Pope's assertion of the moral law will produce an equally unpleasant impression. They cannot escape from the fact that, on a broad question of ethics, the Pope, appealing to the universal conscience, condemns the practices which they first tolerated and then learned to defend." An appeal by the Pope, on questions of ethics, to the universal conscience, is, therefore, according to the *Times*, of high importance, and such as men who acknowledge no allegiance to the Pope cannot neglect without incurring uneasiness of mind. And surely this acknowledgment from the leading Protestant and anti-Papal organ of England is remarkable. Is there, indeed, some lurking suspicion in even extreme Protestant and anti-Papal quarters that the claims of the Pope are not altogether without grounds? The *Times* approves completely of Mgr. Persico's investigations and is ready to back up that prelate as the most prudent, the most penetrating, and the most exemplary of all ecclesiastics. Mgr. Persico could not by any means have made a mistake—and, if such an impossibility could have occurred, the Archbishop of Dublin at Rome must necessarily have set it right. The writer in the *Times*, in fact, might have been the traditional little bird that knows all about everything, for had he been hopping around the Pope's council chamber in such a character, he could not be more fully and accurately informed than he is. And the *Times*, again, who acknowledges the right of the Pope to consideration when he appeals on ethical points to the universal conscience, is also jealous as to the dignity of the Pope. He is quite overcome at its being hinted that any *quid pro quo* has been offered to his Holiness. But, unfortunately for his argument, he shows the cloven foot first, and then spoils his conclusions altogether by a contradictory slip. Having savagely condemned the suggestion that the Pope had been offered some equivalent by the Salisbury Government, as implicating his Holiness in crime and infamy, he continues thus:—"He (the Pope) at least, must be well aware of the necessary limitations of English action towards himself. In the first place, it would be quite impossible for this country to lend its sanction to any movement for the restoration of the temporal power. In the second, it is equally impossible for this country to take any step whatever in respect of the Pope that does not command the full assent and approval of the Italian Government." It seems, after all, that it is

rather the interests and prejudices of United Italy that are to be considered than the dignity of the Pope. The nature of the Pope's dignity in short, as the *Times* values it, is made evident in the following passage:—"From these two conditions there is no escaping, and if while they are observed and the Protestant feeling of this country is respected, there is any gratification which an English Government can offer the Pope, we may at least feel certain that it can involve no onerous liabilities." The Salisbury Government, in a word, would shrink from offending the dignity of the Pope by offering him any equivalent that would meet with the disapprobation of the Italian Government, but, if Holiness would accept anything not liable to such an objection, they would do their best to place it at his disposal. Under the circumstances, it is evident that the Pope may utter the old cry, "Defend me from my friends." If the sting of the article is not in its tail, meanwhile, we, at least, find there the explanation of the deep interest taken by the writer in the morality of the League's methods, and the true reason why he rejoices in the belief that the Pope has pronounced an infallible condemnation of those methods. Like all the party he represents, he is perfectly indifferent to the morality of the matter, except in so far as it bears on its political aspects, and, like them also, he only condemns the rapacity sanctioned by murder, of which he accuses the League, in order to support the rapacity sanctioned by murder which really exists and which is a very accurate definition of landlordism and the system of Government by which it has always been maintained. His conclusion is this:—"While the mortal blows dealt at the League by strong administration are thus followed up by the Pope's vigorous attack upon its moral position, Unionists are reminded in another quarter that their struggle is not by any means at an end. The Mid Lanark election cannot be regarded as possessing any particular diagnostic value. It is not the sort of constituency to which we should turn for a fair average opinion about Home Rule. Still we have to take note of the fact that the Gladstonian candidate has been returned with a slightly increased majority, and that the labour candidate polled in addition some six hundred votes. It is probable not that these could in any case have been secured for the Gladstonian; still, the position of the Unionist cause cannot be said to be improving in that particular constituency." Unless the power of the Papacy therefore, can be made use of to crush the movement, Home Rule must be victorious. Is it any wonder that the *Times* does all that irrepressible hatred and contempt will admit of to uphold the Papal decree as an infallible utterance?

LESSER
REPTILES.

WE have given the ideas of the principal organ of the Tories as to the Papal decree. But, since it is impossible for us to go regularly through the whole lot of Tory organs according to their various degrees, we shall content ourselves with one other example taken from an opposite extreme, that is the *Whitehall Review*, which appears to us to be about the lowest and most scurrilous organ of the party. Its editor is a Mr. Keith Angus, who informs the world in a notice published in the middle of his paper, that he alone is accountable for all that appears in its columns, and a pretty accountability it is. We conclude Mr. Keith Angus is a brother or near relative of that Father George Angus, who, on deserting the ministry of the Presbyterian Kirk for the priesthood of the Catholic Church, was apparently unable to free himself from the stock calumnies against the Church, entertained by him in his Evangelical days, and still continues to believe that the Church limits the decalogue to nine commandments, and that one of her axioms is, "The end justifies the means." Father Angus, at least, cuts out the commandment forbidding false witness, and practically proves that he thinks everything lawful whose end is the vilification of his Irish fellow-Catholics. If Mr. Keith Angus is not the brother or near relative of Father George, he deserves to be so. And, as Father George merits the place of gallows chaplain to the anti-Irish Government, Mr. Keith in like manner merits that of gallows undertaker. We can fancy the zest with which he would cut down the body of the executed patriot and dispose of it in the most ignominious way possible. His whole paper teems with allusions to the hangman, in which functionary he evidently takes a great delight. Mr. Keith Angus then tells us that Mgr. Persico together with Bishops O'Dwyer and Healy are to be thanked for the decree. He tells us respect-