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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A WRITER, who signs himself "A Catholic," publishes in *United Ireland* an article on the Roman Curia and Cardinal Monaco. The Pope, he tells us, most probably knew little or nothing of the Decree which has created so great a sensation in connection with Irish affairs. His personal examination into the matter would involve his complete absorption in Irish business, to the neglect of that of the whole Catholic world outside of Ireland. The Pope, therefore had to take the word of a Congregation of Cardinals as to the evidence laid before them. And such, says the writer, is the rule, for, even were he of a strength beyond that of ordinary human nature, he could not attend to the mass of business dealt with by the Congregations of the Curia. But the Pope, on the contrary, is a feeble old man, concerning whose successor speculation is already rife. And Cardinal Monaco is spoken of as most likely to replace him. The business transacted at the Court of Rome is the business of the whole Catholic world, the writer tells us, and into it there enter several particulars that are of more importance from a religious point of view than the settlement of the Irish question. The officials, however, on whom the Pope necessarily relies, are by no means infallible, and we have a proof of this in the loss of the temporal power, which may be traced to their blundering. Many of them, nevertheless, place before all spiritual interests the recovery of the temporalities, and with this view set a high value on an intrigue with a powerful Government like that of England. Cardinal Monaco meantime, the author and promulgator of the Decree, is a man of great personal merit—falsely accused of being a miser, but, on the contrary, of bounteous charity, and particularly distinguished for his devotion to the poor during a certain outbreak of cholera. He is an unswerving supporter of the claims of the temporal power, but not inclined towards extreme measures for its recovery, believing that the present state of affairs is opposed to the will of God, and, therefore, cannot last. But the politics of the Curia are much tempered by worldliness. They raise a fog through which Ireland, for example, is seen as much smaller than it really is, and England, with its "Imperial race," looks unnaturally big. The Vatican statesmen are dazzled by the idea of forming an alliance with this great power, and visions of the temporal principality, formed in connection with it lead many Cardinals astray.

DANGEROUS CONDITIONS. THE *Nation* in an article on the Bishop of Limerick's letter, puts the position very forcibly before the world, and shows the danger that must follow on the enforcement of the Papal Decree.

Dr. O'Dwyer, it says, speaks of his readiness to undergo persecution, but the risk of persecution seems more clearly on the other side. More than 9,000 writs of eviction, involving the fate of some 32,000 people, are hanging over the heads of the tenants, and the hand of the landlord has been staid by fear of consequences. But if boycotting and the Plan of Campaign, the safeguards of the people against the landgrabber and certain starvation be put down, nothing remains except the resources of men driven to desperation—that is, bloodshed and the secret society. Verily, the alternative is one that a Catholic Bishop should weigh with due consideration before he accepted it. We do not expect a Catholic Bishop to find that comfort and support in the idea of the hangman, that so much sustain others who deal with Irish affairs.

WRONG DEFINITIONS. *United Ireland* of June 2nd, publishes the first portion of an article in which the Rev. E. O'Brien, P.P., V.F., Coleraine, explains that the Papal Decree has no bearing on the condition of things in Ireland.

Father O'Brien bases his argument on the Latin words *locator* and *conductor*, in which landlords and tenants are named by the decree. The word *locator*, he explains, is properly used only of owners who have an absolute and entire right to the property let by them, and

conductor is rightly applied only to those who hire what belongs completely to another and in whose ownership they have no claim or share, not in even the remotest degree. But all the world knows that the Irish landlord has not an absolute and entire right to the holding he lets to his tenant but that the tenant also has a vested right in it. If the landlord were to let the land as nature left it to him—and at the rent at which it was justly valued in such a state, he would be what is meant by the Latin term *locator*, and, under the same conditions, the tenant would be what is meant by the term *conductor*. But, as the case stands, the land is valued according to the improvements made in it by the tenant—and on this basis the rent is enforced. The decree, therefore, when it speaks of *locator* and *conductor* speaks of relations that do not exist in Ireland, and, consequently, its condemnation is null and void.

A LIVELY ANXIETY. EVEN to the remotest parts of the earth, it would seem, the *Times* and its correspondents understand the mind and attitude of all ecclesiastics towards the Irish question. Here we find a telegram from

the correspondent at Vienna, assuring his newspaper that Cardinal Moran's visit to Rome has nothing to do with Irish affairs, but is merely a visit of congratulation on the Sacerdotal Jubilee. This telegram, however, we quote for the curiosity of the thing, for we do not count ourselves more authorised than is the *Times'* correspondent at Vienna to inquire into the motives of his Eminence's visit.—But, as Mr. Healy has remarked in a speech lately delivered by him, there is no one more qualified than is Cardinal Moran to lay a true and convincing statement of Irish affairs before the Holy Father. His Eminence's decision particularly, as Bishop of Ossory, that the landlords were bound to make restitution, and to which Mr. Healy also adverted, should serve to throw a very effective light on the nature of the Plan of Campaign. It, moreover, certainly gives a very strong support to Father O'Brien's argument, quoted by us from *United Ireland*, in which he points out the unfitness of the Latin terms used in the Papal decree. Meantime, it serves further to show the anxiety felt by the enemies of the Irish cause when we find them alarmed lest Irish advocacy should be urged at the Vatican, for that is the meaning of this telegram—from a correspondent in a distant European capital respecting the movements of the Australian Cardinal. There is no part of the world where the enemies of Ireland are now at peace.

IRISH CATHOLICS BEWARE. IF we were in want of any further proofs that intrigue against the Irish cause had been going on in Rome, we should find it in the admission of the Roman correspondent of the *Times* that he is hand

in glove with a personage of great rank whom he has consulted as to a certain article published by the London *Tablet* in reply to the Dublin *Freeman*. He tells us besides that he knows the *Tablet's* article to be an authoritative utterance, whose writer has had exceptional opportunities of learning the interpretation of the Papal decree.—We see, therefore, the kind of communication in which high Roman officials are, and we also see the relationships maintained by writers for the *Tablet*. And yet the *Tablet* has had the audacity to deny point-blank that there had been any anti-Irish intriguing at Rome.—It is, meantime, especially well for us in these colonies to be warned that the *Tablet* and the *Times* are in league, for the *Times* is an advocate of the establishment of diplomatic relations between England and the Vatican, with especial reference to the appointment of colonial bishops, and it is important for us to learn how the oracle is worked. With the men who control the *Tablet* influencing the appointment of our bishops the prospects of the Irish Catholic population would be sombre indeed. There would not be a bishop in any colony who had not undertaken as a primary part of his duties to stamp out every vestige of Irish nationality—let the danger to religion be what it might. And, as we see, the combination of the *Tablet* and the *Times* is powerful, and stands well with high Roman officials. The correspondent to whom we allude speaks of the official personage to whom he had recourse on the occasion mentioned, as "one of the highest dignitaries of the Church in Rome." Let the Irish Catholics of the colonies, therefore, be on their guard.