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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE NEW GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND. THE appointment just announced of Mr. Henry Blake to the Governorship of Queensland is one against which all Irish colonists have a right to protest. All the claim that Mr. Blake has on the Government for promotion, on account of services rendered, is that which he may urge from the faithfulness with which, some few years ago, he discharged his duties towards Dublin Castle. Mr. Blake, as our readers may probably remember, was the functionary who shared with Mr. Clifford Lloyd the glories of the Castle's campaign against the Land League. Mr. Blake's career otherwise, as is also well known, has been rather a romantic one, although, as commonly happens in cases of the kind, some exaggeration has occasionally entered into the accounts given of the matter. It is not true, for example, that Mr. Blake ever endured the terrible disgrace of serving behind a counter of any kind, either in Dublin or any where else, as we have now and then seen it thrown in his face, even in quarters where we might hardly have expected to find a reproach uttered against any honest branch of labour. So far as that goes, Mr. Blake's record is unexceptionable, and he may boast with any evictor of them all that he is, as the old song says, a gentleman born who scorns a trade. Mr. Blake, by birth and education is a member of the landlord caste, and in dragooning the Irish people after the requirements of the Castle, he was but performing a congenial task. He is a member of a respectable family belonging to the West of Ireland, who, before the Encumbered Estates Court sold them out, were the Blakes of Corbally, in the County Galway. His father was either a Stipendiary Magistrate or a County Inspector of Police, we forget which, and he was brought up amid all the surroundings of Irish gentility. The legend which has led to his being associated with counter-skipping in Dublin has its basis in the fact that in his early youth, being left with his mother and sisters slenderly provided for, he held a situation in either a Bank or the General Post Office in that city, either position being acknowledged that of a gentleman, according to the old-fashioned views prevailing there in genteel circles, and not placing any obstacle in the way of its holder's social standing. Thence Mr. Blake entered the Constabulary as a sub-inspector, passing the competitive examination necessary for the office with *eclat*. It was, however, his brilliant social qualities that led to his chief luck in life. He was very musical, possessed of a beautiful voice, and a charming singer, and his talents as an actor on the amateur stage were of a high order, and it was while taking part in private theatricals that he was brought within reach of his fortune. This took the delightful shape of a young lady, the younger daughter of the late Mr. Bernal Osborne, and the only sister of the present Duchess of St. Albans, whom, after the usual sentimental occurrences had taken place, denunciations by an angry father, vows of undying fidelity from a fondly-attached young lady, and the protection and advocacy of the pride of the family, her Grace of St. Albans, he married. The young lady was considered to have made a *mesalliance*—but the grounds of this assertion are not so very clear, as according to even the most exacting notions, a member of the respectable Irish middle-classes could hardly be looked upon as of baser blood than the daughter of a man who by near descent was a German Jew, owing his Irish estates to marriage with an heiress only. We believe Mr. Blake to be personally a gentleman of many excellent qualities, agreeable and talented, and in many respects deserving of esteem—and, further, so far as he was personally concerned, we have seen that in serving the Castle he was but carrying out the traditions to which he had been born, in which he had been educated, and which were those of his caste. We have written thus fully on this matter because, in the first place, we have seen Mr. Blake frequently alluded to in quarters where better should be known as having been promoted from very low beginnings—as if any honest calling were low, or as if it was a disgrace to any man honourably to rise in life, and, in the second place, because we should be unwilling to enter a decided protest without making the case fully understood. Did Mr. Blake come to Queensland merely as the brother-in-law of the Duchess of St. Albans, and as the husband of a lady for whom it was thought fit to make pro-

vision in the highest ranks of society, we should have nothing to say against it. He is, we believe, qualified to fill the not very responsible position of a colonial governor with sufficient credit. But coming, as he does, so rewarded for a faithful career in the service of Dublin Castle, and recompensed for having aided in dragooning the Irish people, the appointment, we protest, is a most unfit one. It is an outrage on the Irish settlers of the colony of Queensland, who are taxed to pay the Governor's salary, and the Irish colonists generally it is a wanton offence.

"YOUR Majesty, my conscience is clear." Such A BRAVE REPLY, was the answer made on another day by Mgr. Strossmayer, Bishop of Plockova, when the Emperor of Austria reproved him, and the answer was certainly a noble one. His Majesty's anger had been aroused against the Bishop because he had addressed a message to the patriarchs of the Russian Church, engaged in celebrating the ninth century of their country's conversion to Christianity, praying that God might bless Russia and help her in the true belief so that she might accomplish the great mission entrusted to her. That the Bishop's prayer was a good one we may well believe, for that Russia has a mission who can doubt. A country whose population increases at the rate of a million a year, and which must necessarily over-run a great portion of the earth's surface—much of it already occupied to some extent by non-Christian peoples, is certainly destined to exercise an influence of no light kind for good or evil. And what a hopeful thing it would be for the world were it guided by the truth. Bishop Strossmayer, however, is known to be particularly sanguine as to the re-union of the Eastern Church, now lost in schism, with the Church of Rome. To forward this re-union he has devoted his life, and has obtained from the Pope concessions which he considers likely to promote such an end. Who can wonder, therefore if the Bishop judged it opportune to avail himself of what he might reasonably believe to be a favourable occasion for appealing to the Russian hierarchy, and making an impression that might pave the way for better things. We are not, perhaps, in a position to form a just judgment as to the circumstances on which the Bishop builds his hopes. He deals with things of which he must have an accurate knowledge, and which he views as an eye-witness. But, at the same time, we know how easy it is for men to deceive themselves even as to things with which they are intimately acquainted, and to be led away from the understanding of evident facts by their desires and aspirations. Long accustomed as we have been to hear from credible and undoubted authorities of the degradation of the Russo-Greek Church, and certain as we are, if it were only from what has been done over and over again among the Catholic populations of the Empire of its extreme spirit of anti-Catholic bigotry and hatred, it is impossible for us to look upon its union with Rome as within the range of practical movements—that is leaving miraculous intervention out of the question. Although the Russo-Greek Church, in fact, possesses true Orders, and is on many points much sounder in doctrine than the Church of England, there would seem to be greater difficulties in the way of her submission to Rome than those which oppose themselves to the submission of the English Church. But whatever may be the value of Mgr. Strossmayer's confidence in this matter, no one can doubt his noble and fearless sincerity. "You do not seem to be aware of what a culpable step you have taken against the Church and the State," said the Emperor Francis Joseph to him, referring to the message spoken of. "Your Majesty, my conscience is clear," was the Bishop's reply.

CURIOUS CONSIDERATIONS.

THAT the murders at Whitechapel, London, by which five unfortunate women of the abandoned class have each in turn come to a terrible end, have anything to say to the manner in which the navigation of the period is conducted would be an assertion for which a lunatic only might seem accountable. And yet we find certain statements made that in some degree bring the consideration of both these matters at the same time before us. In connection with the Whitechapel murders the *Morning Post*, a high Conservative organ, and the newspaper which of all others has always been that of the aristocratic world of England, summarises in a very telling way the condition, as it says, of thousands and tens of thousands of our low creatures. Referring to the house where one of the murders was committed it speaks thus, "There is a continual coming and