

## THE COMING ELECTIONS.

WITHIN a few months the writs for the new elections will be issued, and we shall, as usual, be surfeited with the addresses and speeches of candidates for Parliamentary honours. The customary apotheosis of the will of the people will take place, the ordinary amount of insincerity and hypocrisy will be displayed by those canvassing for popular favour, the various time-worn political hobbies will receive their inevitable airing, and doubtless some captivating programme will be promulgated by the chief of the Liberal party. It would be well for those who are not allied to either of the political parties—if parties strictly so-called can be accurately said to exist—to carefully consider the circumstances under which they will be asked to choose the men who, for three years, will be entrusted with the task of governing New Zealand, and to estimate the fitness and capacity of rival politicians, apart from their identification with mere theoretical abstractions which have little bearing on the practical politics of a young and progressive colony. That what is known as the Liberal party has done much good in the past cannot be questioned. Through the instrumentality of its gifted leader, Sir George Grey, it has educated the public mind on political questions to a very high degree, it has exposed and rectified many abuses, and has rendered the commission of wrong by political cabals—a thing at one time of no practical difficulty—a very hazardous proceeding. It has called attention to the silent growth of a great landed aristocracy, the existence of which in the future would be of course totally incompatible with the free spirit of our people, and as far as its brief tenure of power permitted, the Liberal Government endeavoured to make land bear its due share of the burdens of the State. Does this record of past achievements entitle the Liberals to ask the country now to place them once more in power? And if not, does the measure of the iniquities of the present Ministry necessitate the support of good men being given to the Liberals as to the lesser of two evils? These questions are interesting and possibly a little perplexing, but ought to be satisfactorily solved by electors before giving their votes to either party. Supposing the Liberals be successful in the elections, Sir George Grey will undoubtedly be the only possible Premier, and in such a contingency what use would this politician make of his power? Would he, against the almost certain opposition of some at least of his Ministerial colleagues, endeavour to carry out those advanced views which he has more than once given utterance to in his speeches throughout the colony? or would he permit his energy to be moderated, and his individuality sunk by cautious and unadventurous subordinates? Would he strive to make the Governor's office elective, to forfeit to the Crown the unearned increment of land, to abolish the Upper House, to abolish the representation of property, to introduce the American Civil Service system, to have judges and magistrates elected by the populace? All these things Sir George Grey has spoken of as desirable reforms, and as he must necessarily have been sincere, he would naturally, on his ascension to office, endeavour to have them introduced with the least possible delay. And yet, whether the Liberals have a majority or not, such projects will be and must ever be impracticably in this colony so long as the people retain their political perspicacity and good sense. The fantastic Utopias of a Blanqui or a Rochefort are not congenial to a colonial atmosphere, and the people of New Zealand—"moderate easy-going men" as the *Times* calls them—will be content in the future to have at least some reverence for English traditions, and even for English idiosyncracies. There is much good in Sir George Grey. He is a man of large sympathies and generous instincts. The narrow, arrogant selfishness of the pedant is not his—the small prejudices of petty minds do not dim his vision or warp his judgment; but he is alarmingly radical and empirical. It is much to be regretted that he taxes so much the goodwill and allegiance of his supporters. His expressions are frequently so unguarded, and his defence of extravagant theories is sometimes so injudiciously warm, that he necessarily alienates many friends and repels possible sympathisers. He would be of much benefit to a colonial Parliament, and might enjoy a prolonged lease of power if he would be less extreme and restrain somewhat his bellicose propensities. However much he may on occasions enthral the masses with his eloquence, he fails to attach to his party the really intelligent classes who are able to discriminate between rhetoric and argument. The shop-keeping classes he has estranged by his introduction, during the recent session, of a Bill to practically abolish the means of recovering small debts, and the lawyers and law students, many of whom were his friends, can no longer be reckoned such, in consequence of his foolish Law Practitioners and Law Advocates Bill. Still, perhaps, these are but the eccentricities that somebody finds "for idle hands to do," and that if Sir George Grey were head of the Government he would devote his energies to really practicable reforms, such, for instance, as the decentralisation of government, which a majority of the people admit is imperatively required. Sir George Grey's views on some points are either unformed, unsettled or self-contradictory; notably on the education question. It will be remembered that a few years ago he made a speech on the second reading of the present Education Act, in which he eulogised the voluntary principle, and stigmatised as a gross injustice the withholding of all assistance from bodies of colonists who undertook the education of their own children. Now he denounces these very principles which he formerly held. It would be rash to say Sir George Grey is a mere demagogue, that he flatters the majority and falls in with its views, however unjust they may be, for the purpose of preserving his popularity and chances of power, but unless the fact of a conversion from one set of opinions to another be vouchsafed as the explanation, it is difficult not to question his sincerity. I feel pretty confident that large numbers of colonists do not understand the bone of contention in this education struggle. They think the demand of the Catholics is that the teaching of their religion should be endowed with public money: that some invidious privilege should be given to Catholicism. The want of fairness exhibited by the Press on the question is notorious, and it is useless to expostulate against its misrepresentation of a matter so easily

understood. Those who most strenuously resist the claim of the Catholics are prepared to admit the fairness and expediency of the principle of voluntarism in hospitals and charitable institutions, and yet would not tolerate its extension to education. Surely the care of the sick and infirm and the alleviation of distress are just as important objects for State care as education. The State recognises that they are so, but finds that no evil is done; on the contrary, a signal advantage is gained by permitting voluntary associations of persons to conduct such institutions under the supervision of the State and partly assisted with State money.

What has the present Ministry done during its tenure of office to forfeit its claim to confidence at the forthcoming elections? This is a question which probably the Liberal leaders will find it difficult to satisfactorily answer. Possibly its sympathies have been with the large landed proprietors, and the political antecedents of some of its members may not be everything that is desirable, but it has done much good by its retrenchment policy, and its avoidance during a time of financial depression of exciting political topics. Its members for the most part have definite ideas on the education question, and seem to think that a dual system, which works so admirably in England, would not be injurious to the cause of education in this colony. I am not implying that Catholics should, as a body, give their adhesion to the Hall party or the Grey party, merely because of possible advantages to be gained in the matter of education, but all other things being equal, those who display less bigotry on this question should unquestionably be preferred. I have no hesitation in saying that if Liberal candidates should support Sir George Grey's ideas re the Upper House, the Governor, the profession of the law, &c., they should everywhere be opposed by Catholics, even if they gave some halting, ambiguous recognition of the justice of the Catholic educational claims.

Auckland, September 25, 1881.

W. J. N.

[We still hold that the Education question should be the crucial question for all Catholic electors. In comparison with this the "Upper House, the Governor, the profession of the law, &c.," are as nothing, and unworthy of consideration. No Catholic, however, should be satisfied with a candidate's "halting, ambiguous recognition" of his just claims, which would be merely an effort made to deceive him. Let him have a sincere and manly recognition of his claims or none at all.—ED. N. Z. TABLET.]

## THE TRUE LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE.

IN every great public question in which natural justice and humanity are at stake the Catholic clergy always lead. The last striking proof of this is seen in the great struggle for right and justice by the tenant farmers of Ireland against their unjust and grasping landlords. That was no Catholic or even religious question, but a question of natural justice and humanity. Yet we saw that the Catholic hierarchy and priests of Ireland, and notably the intrepid Archbishop Croke, like another Langton, ranged themselves in the front ranks of the people, fighting for their rights and for justice against a powerful and wealthy body of men, supported by a powerful, untruthful and unscrupulous English Press. Victory so far has attended on the standard under which Dr. Croke and his fellow bishops and priests fought. But the battle is not yet quite over. A kindred struggle will be carried into other countries in the empire. The influence of Mr. Parnell was great, but it would not have sufficed had it not been supported and strengthened by the power of the Church—a power above both the throne and Press. We Catholics in this colony have for the past ten years been engaged in an unequal struggle to obtain our educational rights from an unjust and intolerant Government and Press who claim to be "Liberals. Let them be just first, liberal afterwards. The clergy have been our guides and leaders in this great battle. As yet the enemy has prevailed. But do we despair of ultimate success? No. When did ever a just cause finally fail if supported by the Catholic clergy? Is it not recorded that for thirty years Catholics at home battled for Catholic emancipation in vain against Protestant bigots and tyrants in Parliament, pulpit and Press, and yet got it at last. The most able and eloquent Protestant statesmen were on our side. They and we, with the aid of Providence, prevailed at last. We will get our educational claims here too in good time, and by Protestant aid too. The present New Zealand education system will ere long go down by its own inherent vices fully more than from the opposition of Catholics, and of those religious and just-minded Protestants who, in common with Catholics, dislike it so much on account of its unfairness and its irreligious and therefore immoral tendency. I will venture to predict as much.

Auckland, September, 1881.

NORTH BRITON.

It is admitted that the "Royal Irish" received the greatest amount of approbation of all the regiments recently paraded before the Queen.

A convict was released from the Iowa penitentiary on a pardon forged by himself, which he sent to his wife for presentation to the warden.

A gold mine, the Havilah, just placed on the London market, is, according to the prospectus, mentioned in the Bible, reference being made to it in the eleventh and twelfth verses of the second chapter of Genesis. The passage in question reads as follows:—"The name of the first is Pison; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good."

A society for the Promotion of Marriage was started two years ago in Cincinnati. An inaugural picnic was given, and one of the ceremonies was the marriage of James McHugh and Belle Walker. The society died quietly soon afterward. Its memory has now been revived by the brutal murder of Mrs. McHugh by her husband.

"The gutter mud of to-day," says a medical writer, "with its deadly septic organisms, becomes the dust of to-morrow, and in respiration is deposited upon the mucous membrane of the respiratory passages of those who breathe it."