

New Zealand Gazette

VOL. XI.—No. 2.

DUNEDIN: FRIDAY, MAY 4, 1883.

PRICE 6D.

Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Now that we have at last received a full report of MR. FORSTER'S CONSISTENCY. Mr. Parnell's speech in reply to Mr. Forster, and which will be found in another place, we are confirmed in our opinion that even the most fervid condemnation of the outrages he could have made would have fallen flat and cold on the ears of prejudiced England. The speech is as powerful and effective as the manner in which it was delivered was dignified, and full of a wonderful self-command under the strongest provocation—Mr. Forster even having so far forgotten himself as to mimic the tones of some of the Irish speakers. But yet we know how the speech was received, and treated, and in the very same way would any utterance on the part of the speaker have been treated—with a bullying shout, whose loudness would have given it all its value. And not only did Mr. Parnell completely refute Mr. Forster's charges, Mr. Justin M'Carthy also made a reply, and, with a chapter of contemporary history, turned the tables on the maligner, and showed him to be, at least, in appearance, what even in appearance Mr. Parnell was not—a sympathiser and patron of assassins and men of violence. He recalled to the memory of the House how in 1864 Mr. Forster had defended Mazzini, the advocate of assassination, and an accomplice in it more than once: "But on that occasion," said Mr. M'Carthy, "the right hon. member for Bradford stood up for his friend (the member for Halifax), and what did he say in reference to Mazzini, from whose letter called 'The Theory of the Dagger' a number of extracts were read in the hearing of the right hon. gentleman. The right hon. gentleman rose in his place and said, 'The hon. and learned gentleman has brought a charge against an absent man, Signor Mazzini, who, whatever his faults, is a man of high character.' Whatever his faults—what though he did bless the knife of one man and the dagger of the other, and a system of guerilla warfare which removed Count Rossi—yet, whatever his faults, he was a man of high character. The Present Prime Minister did not agree with the right hon. gentleman in his estimate of Mazzini, for he said that 'these satellites of Mazzini make common cause with assassins.' Four days afterwards, when the question was raised again, the right hon. gentleman said, 'I should not be ashamed of being the friend of Mazzini; I am not ashamed of being his acquaintance.'" Mr. M'Carthy, nevertheless, did not accuse Mr. Forster of sympathising through Mazzini with assassination; he recalled the incident only to remind him that he owed the same indulgence towards others which he had himself expected to receive. There were other occurrences also which Mr. M'Carthy called to mind, and which abundantly showed that Mr. Forster and his friends were by no means the men to lay to the account of any leader of a party deeds of violence committed by even members of that party—still less, by wild men striking out for themselves a path abhorrent from all the plans of the party. But Mr. M'Carthy's convincing argument produced no better an effect than Mr. Parnell's powerful reply, it also fell upon the ears of men who had prejudged the cause, and who were not to be convinced by anything that could be said to them. Mr. Parnell, with the knowledge that it must be so, was fully justified in declaring that it was the good opinion of Ireland only he sought, and he would have stultified himself if, knowing the disposition in question, he had made a display of feeling.—And, indeed, who but an insincere man and a trained actor could have stood forth and made such a display in presence of all the coldly critical and immovable world assembled expressly to hear and condemn him?

THREE LETTERS.

BUT it would appear that Mr. Forster, and the Press that supported him, went too far in their arraignment of Mr. Parnell, so that even in England their motives were discerned, and their arguments valued at their proper worth, by men not carried away altogether by their prejudices.—And, indeed, the arguments of the newspapers, particularly, appear to us shallow and even childish to a degree, and, judged by them, the cause they were written to support seems but a

poor one. We find, then, three letters especially, written by Englishmen in the London papers, and which are most significant.—Mr. T. Thornton Hoskins, for example, writing from the Reform Club to the *Echo*, asserts that there are immense numbers of Englishmen who cordially share the views of that paper as to the "shocking manner in which Ireland is misgoverned by an assemblage of what Irishmen consider alien and repulsive foreigners," and he predicts that there will never be peace in Ireland until a legislative council, vested with power over all but strictly Imperial concerns, is established there. Another of this gentleman's conclusions would, we have no doubt, be agreeable, for instance, to the tastes of that veteran legislator, the O'Gorman Mahon, but Mr. Forster, in whose favour the writer more particularly arrives at it would hardly find it in accordance with his principles, and we are convinced that under no circumstances could an aggrieved opponent ever have had a slap of the kind at him.—It is that it would be desirable to renew the practice of duelling so that parliamentary libellers might meet with their deserts. The practice, adds the correspondent, is "in itself susceptible of careful regulation, and under certain conditions morally and religiously defensible."—We have ourselves, however, no desire to see Mr. Parnell returning to his coffee after having left "Old Buckshot" kicking on the sward—we hope, in fact, the venerable gentleman may survive to witness a state of things that will be a more severe punishment for him than even a charge about his skin of his own remedy would be—that is, Mr. Parnell treated by England herself as the great man he most undoubtedly is, and which it only needs the complete success that he is now hastening towards to make apparent even to his worst enemy. A second letter is that addressed by Mr. E. S. Beesly to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and in which the writer approves of Mr. Parnell's parliamentary proceedings, and, while himself advocating the dissolution of the Union, vindicates his irreconcilable attitude, and that to which he has stimulated his fellow-countrymen, as the most effective means of bringing round Englishmen to see that the Union had better be rescinded in the interest of both islands. To Mr. Parnell's character the writer testifies as follows:—"I for one hold that he is an honourable and patriotic man, who has rendered to his country more solid and more splendid services than any Irishman before him. I believe him to be worthy of the trust and devotion that Ireland so heartily gives him. She was long the sport of knaves masquerading as patriots. It is to her eternal honour that she did not sink into a cynical disbelief in the possibility of public virtue, but knew and accepted an honest leader when he stood forward." His conclusion is, that the gratification arising from an exhibition of rabid hatred by Mr. Parnell's enemies is dearly purchased at the increase of his popularity among the Irish people. The most important of the three letters, however, is that which appeared in the *Daily News*, not only because it bears the well known signature of Mr. Boyd Kinnear, but also from its contents. The writer very tellingly criticises the wisdom of Mr. Forster's Coercion Act, under which, he says, the Chief Secretary, with power to imprison for two years anyone suspected by his police, was himself six times signalled in the streets of Dublin by men whose purpose was to murder him, and not one of whom was suspected by the police. The conspiracy of murder, he adds, was actually the fruit of the Coercion Act, it not having come into being until Mr. Parnell and Mr. Dillon had been arrested. "Can more striking proof be conceived" he asks, "that unconstitutional and arbitrary government is not a resource or civilisation—that, on the contrary, it is a weapon of barbarism, and creates the savagery it professes to curb?" His conclusion is excessively pregnant and forcible; it is as follows:—"If there is one thing more than another through the dismal story it is that it was the application of the Act to purposes of repression of fair criticism that led to the conspiracy which culminated in the Phoenix Park murders of Mr. Forster's subordinate and his successor. There is one thing that ought to be said, though it is hard to say without being misunderstood. Detestable as was the deed, infinite as our grief, heightened, if it were possible, by the knowledge now gained that one of the victims fell because he would not save his life by abandoning the other, and by the words of divine forgiveness that seem to come to us from his grave by the lips of one who alone is entitled to forgive, let us for our own sakes not forget that these fell assassins were moved by no vulgar or selfish purpose. Their act could bring them no reward, it