

# New Zealand Herald

VOL. XI.—No. 30

DUNEDIN: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1883.

PRICE 6D.

## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

LUTHERAN INFLUENCES IN SCOTLAND.

THERE was also a Luther celebration at Invercargill last week, where ditto and ditto repeated were the order of the day. But still, there was a little variation from the course of verbiage as reported of the meeting at Knox Church, one or two of the speakers departing somewhat from the track followed there.—One speaker, for example, told his hearers how the Pope came over with William the Conqueror, and another devoted the minutes allotted to him to the consideration of the Reformation in Scotland. We do not suppose there is any need for us to remark on the speech of the rev. gentleman, who placed the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity after the Norman conquest. Such feats of historical conjuring, are, no doubt, admirable in their way, but they hardly require exposure. We shall, however, give a moment's consideration to that most edifying work the Scotch Reformation. Mr. Denniston, the speaker, then, of course, had nothing newer with which to introduce his oration than the repetition of the supposed evils that overspread the country prior to the great work of Knox—as he considers the Reformation to have been. Nevertheless, says Buckle (Vol. II, p. 75), "The really important part of his life in regard to Scotland was in and after 1559, when the triumph of Protestantism was already secure, and when he reaped the benefit of what had been effected during his long absence from his own country."—For Godly Master Knox had a very high estimation of the value of his own person, and knew how to keep out of harm's way whenever any danger threatened. But even if it were true, as Mr. Denniston says, that the Scotch ecclesiastics at the time of this outbreak owned more than half the wealth of the country, and shared largely in the highest honours of the State,—what of that? So much the better for the happiness of the country. Tytler tells us that the tenantry of the churchmen were exempt from burdens that those of the barons had to bear and adds that the good effect of this was seen in their happier condition and the better cultivation of their lands. He tells us also that the clergy were the great agricultural improvers of the country, that it was owing to them the fisheries were developed—and that, as "in all the other arts and employments which contributed to increase the comfort and luxury of life, the clergy appear to have led the way," so they were the chief in naval and commercial enterprise.—Had they not a right to share largely in the wealth they had taken a chief part in acquiring for the nation, and of which they made so good a use? Had they not a right to share in the honours of a State they had civilised and enriched? But as to their rivals the nobles, they who would have owned all the property and the honours of the country before the Reformation had the clergy not been there.—let the use they made of this property and these honours when they obtained them on the banishment and destruction of the clergy answer for what the wrong was that was done in keeping them from the possession of these things before the Reformation,—and leaving these things in the hands of those who employed them for the good of the country and the use of the people, to whom, indeed, the clergy themselves in great part belonged. Let the use the Scotch nobles made of the wealth they wrested from the clergy be answered for even to-day,—and an eloquent answer may be found in many a miserable town-close and many a desolate tract of country; it may, again, be profitably read in the evidence lately given before the Royal Commission, on the condition of the Highland crofters. The clergy who lived at the time of the Reformation were belied by the men who robbed them, and who justified their robberies by lying, having no other means to justify them. But Mr. Denniston says that the Reformation in Scotland was a movement of the people. The historians Buckle and Lecky, on the contrary, say that it was the triumph of the aristocracy over the sovereigns and Catholic clergy, and which resulted in the overthrow of the Church.—It was the ministers who brought it down among the people, when they had quarrelled with the nobles.—Nor did civil and religious liberty come of the Reformation in Scotland.—A narrow tyranny in matters both civil and religious came of it—and a spirit

of persecution, with its due fruits, filled the land.—What followed was worthy of Knox the "great apostle of murder," as Lecky calls him, and of his true spiritual children the Covenanters.—The Covenanters, although they fought for their own religious freedom, such as it was, were the stern persecutors of others, and engaged themselves without respect of persons to extirpate "Popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be contrary to sound doctrine."—The civil and religious liberty they professed and practised had many notable illustrations.—It was, for instance, well illustrated after the battle of Philiphaugh as it had previously been at Aberdeen when they pillaged that unfortunate town and the surrounding country, and imposed heavy fines on the community in general and on individuals in particular.—Their spirit was well illustrated, and the enlightenment and freedom that followed in their wake were well shown when, again, in the same town their heavy hand was laid on learning. "The university," as Robert Chambers tells us, "sustained a visitation from the Presbyterian assembly of 1640, and was thenceforth much changed. 'The Assembly's errand,' says Gordon of Rothiemay, 'Was thoroughly done; these eminent divines of Aberdeen either dead, deposed, or banished; in whom fell more learning than was left in all Scotland beside at that time. Nor has that city nor any city in Scotland, ever since seen so many learned divines and scholars at one time together as were immediately before this in Aberdeen. From that time forwards, learning began to be discountenanced; and such as were knowing in antiquity and in the writings of the fathers, were had in suspicion as men who smelled of Popery; and he was most esteemed of, who affected novelism and singularity most; and the very form of preaching as well as the materials, was changed for the most part. Learning was nicknamed human learning, and some ministers so far cried it down in their pulpits, as they were heard to say—Down doctrine, and up Christ.'—So much for the civil and religious liberty that followed in the footsteps of the Covenanters.—Verily they were, as Mr. Denniston claims for them, most worthy to assist the Puritans of England in establishing the peculiar freedom that obtained under the rule of Cromwell, and which it is unnecessary that we should describe.—Most worthy were they, also, to aid in begetting that Protestantism which, as Mr. Denniston again asserts, placed William III. on the throne, and under him was crowned in Scotland by the massacre of Glencoe and the ruinous betrayal of the Darien scheme, as it was elsewhere by the initiation of the most infamous code of penal laws that ever disgraced Europe.—The civil and religious liberty, finally, introduced by the Scotch Reformation, and of which even in New Zealand to-day we see the marks in the plunder of Catholics to support Presbyterian and godless schools—had its fitting issue in the state of things described on the civil side by Lord Cockburn, as existent in Scotland more than two hundred years after the Reformation, when, he says, there was "no popular representation, no emancipated burghs, and no effective rival of the Established Church, no independent Press, no free public meetings, and no better trial by jury, even in the political cases (except high treason), than what was consistent with the circumstances; that the jurors were not sent into court under any impartial rule, and that, when in court, those who were to try the case were named by the presiding judge."—The religious side of the picture we obtain from Buckle, who says: "A people in many respects very advanced, and holding upon political questions advanced views, do upon all religious subjects, display a littleness of mind, an illiberality of sentiment, a heat of temper, and a love of persecuting others, which shows that the Protestantism of which they boast has done them no good, and that it has been unable to free them from prejudices which make them the laughing-stock of Europe, and which have turned the very name of the Scotch Kirk into a byword and a reproach among educated men."—But to the gentlemen who celebrated the Luther centenary at Invercargill, as to those at Dunedin, the Scotch Kirk was neither a byword nor a reproach, and, since they were all educated men, how did that come to pass?

CAREY'S MURDER.

THE trial of O'Donnell for the murder of James Carey is among the leading topics of the moment. —And in the interests of the informer's profession, supposing, moreover, that Ireland is to be governed in the future as she has been in the past, it would be desirable that