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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

MR EARNSHAW has taken time by the forelock in addressing his constituents. The hon Member was evidently eager to vaunt his prowess, and take credit for his independence. His address,—which took place, by the way, at the City Hall on Wednesday evening, the 7th inst,—was merely a summary of the arguments generally advanced against the Government during the Session, and may be taken as delivered in support of the pretensions of Sir Robert Stout. Mr Earnshaw himself can hardly aspire to form and lead a party,—although there is no saying to what lengths a combination of conceit and impudence may not bring a man. The main point, moreover, was well kept in view by the speaker, as was evident from his flattery of the working classes. Take, for example, his declaration that, with shorter hours,—to wit Saturday as a whole holiday—top wages must be paid. Mr Earnshaw, we have little doubt, would declare for all wages and no work, if it suited his purpose. But what are we to understand from an incidental remark made by the speaker, that since he had become a member of Parliament, he had taken the Masonic oath—as sacred an oath, he explained, as it was possible for a man to take. Is this an obligation imposed upon the members of the party generally, or is it only binding on those of them who belong to the section that follows Sir Robert Stout? It seems, in any case, ominous that a Member of Parliament, speaking as such, should consider it necessary to proclaim himself a Mason. As to the sanctity of the oath—to what grade of Masonry did Mr Earnshaw allude? We may at least take it for granted that as yet he has not been admitted to Palladic honours. A man, nevertheless, who, like Mr Earnshaw, quotes the authority of the Gospel for a seditious act has evidently made a good beginning, and appears accountable even for some progress. The political tendency of the hon Member's speech, meantime, we may gather from the tone of the Opposition Press. Our contemporary the *Dunedin Star*, for instance, puts the speaker on the head in quite a fatherly manner. All the rowdiness of the meeting—which indeed was considerable—our contemporary attributes to the malice of a whisky-ring. There is not much, however, for Sir Robert Stout to plume himself on in the patent fact that even when seconded by so sympathetic and appropriate a lieutenant as Mr Earnshaw, the Opposition would prefer him to Mr Seddon. This, in short,—which we had already known—is all the information of any importance to be derived from Mr Earnshaw's address.

The American papers make kindly reference to the late Comte de Paris, who had taken part in the civil war, of which afterwards he wrote a history. In referring to a visit to the United States paid by him in connection with this work in 1890, the *Irish World* writes as follows:—"The most noteworthy thing in the nature of the Count, to those who did not know him, was his easy democracy and his freedom from affectation. When any one was presented to him who showed a disposition to greet him ceremoniously, with uncovered head, as "Your Royal Highness," the Count, with a pleasant smile, would promptly say: "Please put on your hat," and then would enter into talk just as any other everyday gentleman would. But he studiously avoided French politics. The visit of the Count of Paris to this country was closely watched by the French Republic, and his reception called for the exercise of much tact on the part of this Government and people. In welcoming him as a comrade of the Army of the Potomac and as a historian of that bitter war, in the dangers and privations of which he shared, a judicious care was necessary to avoid giving offence to a friendly republic over which his ancestors had reigned for centuries. This was somewhat difficult, but it was happily achieved."

The march of Coxe's Army, it appears, is not altogether a thing of the past. On the contrary, the intention is that it shall be repeated next month. Meantime, we learn from the *Catholic World* that an opportunity was taken, while the army was in camp at Hyattsville, near Washington, by the parish priest of the place, to give a mission

to the Catholics connected with the movement:—"The result of the mission was evidenced in many ways. The Catholics became quieted and more cheerful; the others got an idea of the faith and of its teachers altogether foreign to them. Some had mothers or wives whose hearts would be lightened to know the turn affairs had taken, and they were going to write it to their folks at once. Some said: "It beats the devil to think that joining Coxe's army was the means of bringing us to our duty. One who had not entered a church for thirteen years declared: "The Coxe move has done some good. I don't think I'd ever have seen a church's inside again but for it." Another, who had been away for twenty-four years, echoed the former's words; It puzzled some to think that they had travelled so far to go to confession. Out of the seventy Catholics in the army (at roll call 459 members were present) all, with the exception of two or three, made their peace with God, and these are not hopeless cases. Indeed, no Catholic was found who had entered the movement with unlawful intentions. Then, of these seventy Catholics about twenty-five returned to their homes. No word to the effect that they should do so was said to them; talk to this purpose would defeat itself. Another result of preaching was the formation of a first communion class in the camp."

Corea (says an exchange) has been evangelised by Catholic missionaries at the sacrifice of their blood. Until lately it was death for a foreigner to cross its border, but this ghastly fact did not deter Catholic bishops and priests from entering that land of martyrdom. Two Catholic bishops were executed. Innumerable priests laid down their lives for the faith; but as fast as one missionary fell another filled his place. In recent years the country has been opened by missionaries, and the Christian religion, in one form or another, has been steadily preached. The Catholics of Corea number 22,400, scattered among a population of over 10,000,000 infidels. There are fourteen churches and chapels, a seminary with thirty-three students, thirty-eight schools, and an orphanage with 370 pupils. The Catholic missionaries are making slow but steady progress. Mgr Mutel, the Vicar-Apostolic, has twenty-three missionary fathers and ten catechists. With regard to the missions in China, much uneasiness is felt. No doubt the viceroys, mandarins, and officials of every grade will make a show, at any rate, of protecting the missionaries; but Chinese fanaticism is dreadful, once it breaks out. The hated foreigner is looked upon as the transmitter of all the evils that befall the Celestial Empire. Hence his massacre is only a question of opportunity.

Kelly, too, we find, is still on the *qui vive*. Lively times are evidently still to come:—"General Ben Kelly, who led the famous army of unemployed to Washington, is back at his home in Oakland, and is going to recruit another army of 1,000 men there, at San Francisco and Los Angeles. He will lead them over the same route he took the others, except that he declares that they will ride in coaches all the way, and the people will have to feed them better than they did formerly. Kelly intends to start with his army some time in December. He states that he is doing this to rid the Pacific coast of a set of useless men and to distribute them throughout the East. He says also that he will interest himself in political matters as he goes through the country, with an eye to rendering assistance of one kind and another to the populists.

With regard to the Masonic obligations of at least a party, or a section, of our New Zealand legislators, let slip the other night by Mr Earnshaw—we find the following paragraph quoted from a contemporary, of some special interest:—"The number of Masons among the Ministries that have succeeded one another in France, is a most always the same. In the Freycinet Ministry, of the ten members, six were Masons; in the Ministry of Floquet six of the ten were Masons; in that of Ribot, seven of the ten were Masons and the same numbers in the Ministries of Dupuy and Porier. At present there are eleven members in the Cabinet of whom six are Freemasons. Thus half a million have more representatives in the government than thirty-six millions of Catholics." What the Masonic Government of France has been accountable for may well make us anxious for the results of a like state of things in New Zealand.

A correspondent has sent us the following paragraph translated by him from the *Semaine Religieuse du Puy*:—"If France be at pre-

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