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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

IN an article last week we pointed out that the TRUE STORY—story of Lady Wilde standing up in the Court at AN INTERESTING DUFFY'S trial for high treason, and exclaiming in CORRECTION. reference to the famous article *Jacta Alea Est*, "If there is any sedition in it, it was I who wrote the article," was not true. In a notice on the death of "Speranza," the *Dublin Freeman* repeated this story, which found insertion in Mr A. M. Sullivan's *New Ireland* and is very generally believed. In alluding to the mistake made by our contemporary we did not mention the name of the lady whose timely intervention saved Sir Chas. Gavan Duffy. The *Freeman's Journal*, however, received by the 'Frisco mail, corrects the error of a previous issue and gives a true account of a stirring episode. With pleasure we insert the interesting correction: "Of the many notable articles written during the Young Ireland period," says the *Freeman*, "perhaps the most famous was that written by Speranza (Lady Wilde) and published in the *Nation* of 29th July, 1848. That number of the paper was suppressed by the Government, but the powerful article which was its principal feature obtained full publicity subsequently in the trial of the *Nation's* editor, Mr C. Gavan Duffy, for high treason. The story of a dramatic incident connected with that time, viz, Lady Wilde's standing up in court and avowing the authorship of the famous article in the *Nation* bearing the above title, has often been told and is almost entirely believed in, but, in the interest of historical truth, we must give the actual facts as they are known to the man who, of all others alive, should know best what occurred. All modern writers, with one exception, have followed the story. Now for the actual facts. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, in Part II of his 'Young Ireland,' thus writes: 'But what had occurred was different; the two gifted women who had brought out the number of the *Nation* which was suppressed by the Government sat side by side in the gallery, and when the Solicitor-General, who was a relative of one of them, laboured to press home the article against her, the other, Margaret Callan, moved beyond control by his wilful lying, cried out: "You know well who the author is, and you are falsifying the facts." Her affection for her kinswoman, and her disgust at the malignity of the functionary who had defamed me at Clonmel, swept away all considerations of time and place, and she spoke, as she afterwards explained, because it would have stifled her to remain silent.'" We may add that the Margaret Callan mentioned by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy died about fourteen years ago in Melbourne where her husband formerly held the position of medical superintendent of Yarra Bend Asylum. Her daughter is married to Hon J. Gavan Duffy, now Victorian Postmaster-General. Her sister is one of the foundresses of our Dominican Convent. One of her sons is a much-respected Dunedin citizen—Mr J. B. Callan.

A METEOR was seen near Invercargill a few days ago travelling in a southerly direction. What became of it no one knows. Those of our readers who saw the flashing, rushing body, will take interest in an excerpt from a contemporary about a phenomenal occurrence right over Madrid about six weeks ago. "An aerolite burst in the heavens, and came crashing in fragments through the ether over an area of miles like a bomb of a tremendous size. The explosion occurred at twenty miles high, and travelled downwards, enveloped with a cloud of dust, and making a noise like artillery, and creating a panic like an earthquake. Many fainted, and some of the people thought it was significant of divine wrath. Many shops were closed, and the little King had to be assured by a learned professor that the aerolite did not mean any harm, having dissolved into a hot nothingness before reaching earth. Several small pieces of grey stone have been picked up in the capital." The bursting of the aerolite above Madrid recalls a similar phenomenon witnessed in France on April 26, 1803. A ball of fire was seen travelling at great speed through the sky. It burst above Laigle in the Orne at a great altitude, and the report was heard for nearly a hundred miles. It scattered a

show of stones over an area of six or seven miles. A Monsieur Biot estimated the number of meteoric stones that fell at eight or ten thousand.

ANGLICAN CLEERGYMEN SAY MASSES FOR THE DEAD. A PRETTY state of things for men who have subscribed to the 39 articles From such men "Good Lord deliver us." This is Anglican Bishop Ryle's answer to a request that he would "support a society of a hundred clergymen of the Church of England to promote continual Masses for the dead." Things are carried out with such fidelity to Catholic practices in many Ritualistic churches that visitors are not unfrequently deceived. We know a Catholic gentleman from New Zealand who was assisting at one of these so-called Masses and for some time on his knees before he discovered that he was in an Anglican Church. It is sad to think that "though so near, yet so far" may be said of many devout men and women in the Church of England. We fear that "thus far and no farther" means too often abuse of grace through worldly interests. Faith is a gift of God, and when the Sacred Heart draws, the inspiration must be steadily followed.

TRUTH ABOUT KRUGERSDORF. THE fight at Krugersdorp has been dreadfully exaggerated. It turns out that the number killed KRUGERSDORF, on both sides was only about fifteen. The Boers were under cover, and, though they shot at long range, could easily have annihilated the young fellows of the Chartered Company. Late accounts say that they spared them. So overcome were Jameson's men that when the "battle" was ended they threw themselves on the ground and slept.

ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE SEAL OF CONFESSION. ANOTHER instance of intolerance and of the inviolability of the seal of confession is reported from Canada. A priest of Montreal, Rev Father Gilles has been committed to the common gaol because he refused to give evidence which he could only disclose by being unfaithful to his sacred trust as confessor. We thought such a "committal impossible in the British Empire." However, facts are stubborn things. The good priest was actually imprisoned by order of the Court. We are quite sure there is not a respectable Protestant in New Zealand who would not cry "shame" on such a ruffianly proceeding. Many attacks are made on Catholic priests. One accusation, however, is never made, even by the most rabid bigots. Suspicion, in the faintest form, does not touch the seal of confession. History gives glorious examples of fidelity, but is silent when there is question of want of fidelity to a great duty.

H. A. C. S. WE have to thank the District Secretary, Bro P. Kearney, Auckland, for the annual report of the Hibernian Society. This excellent Society is in a flourishing condition. The funeral fund shows an increase of £174 12s 7d. Heavy calls made upon the management Fund have left it in debt £2, but, all things considered, it is "in very fair standing." The deep regret of members is expressed for the death of the Bishop of Auckland; kindly reference is made to the late secretary, Bro O'Shaughnessy of Christchurch; and a tribute of respect paid to Brother Joseph. Bros Kand, retiring president, and Nerheny, P.D.V., installed the officers, viz, Bro J. Smith, D.P.; Bro M. J. Sheehan, D.V.P.; Bro J. Flynn, D. Treasurer; Bro P. Kearney, D. Secretary; Bros C. Little and S. Tooman, auditors. The name of Brother Nerheny was placed on the merit roll, and a P.D.V. collar was voted to him. A feature of the meetings was the attendance of members of the local female branch. Sisters Little and Kane represented the Sancta Maria (Auckland), and Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (Dunedin) branches. Bro Kane exhorted the ladies "to impress on the minds of the members of these branches the advisability of extending the good work they have undertaken, and induce others to partake of the benefits and privileges which they themselves enjoy. What higher or holier object," said he, "can we have in life than to cherish a united love of holy faith and fond hope, an enduring charity and united action to minimise the attendant poverty, affliction, and sorrow of sickness of death."

COMPARE SIZE AND WEIGHT OF STICKS.

Smoke T. C. Williams' JUNO. Smoke.