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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

TURKISH
ATROCITIES,
A PRIEST
BURNED ALIVE.

HARROWING accounts of Turkish atrocities come daily to hand. A priest in Crete was mutilated by the loss of his nose and ears, then burnt alive over a fire made of sacred pictures. A number of churches, St. John Panagia, Prophet Elias, Archangelos, were desecrated and plundered. In

the district of Heracleo six villages were sacked and burned. Christian priests and people were slaughtered. One woman was slain after seeing both her children butchered on her knees. Ineffectual protest is made by humane individuals, but professedly Christian nations still allow the wretched Sultan to reign and degrade humanity. Truly the days of crusaders and Catholic Europe have passed away.

THE Right Rev. Dr. Ryle, Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, does not believe in confession. His Lordship recently denounced the practice which, according to the Anglican Vicar of St. Peter's Dock Church, is on the increase in London. Three

thousand two hundred and fifty "confessions" were heard in the parish of the latter last year as against 3126 during the previous year. Dr. Ryle, who is evidently ignorant or crassly heedless of the exhortations in the Book of Common Prayer, said recently in the course of a sermon at Liverpool:—"We have fallen on days when people thought the way to heaven was to go and confess their sins to a priest. He was not referring to Roman Catholics but to the mischievous habit of certain clergymen, and that in Liverpool, of encouraging young men and women, and even children, to confess to them, and of giving absolution after they had confessed. It was utterly contrary to the Word of God, he believed, and he was quite sure that it was not in accordance with the Prayer Book. Above all, there was the foolishness and silliness of it. It was amazing to him that men and women could think that it would do them any good to go and confess to a priest and get absolution." We often find among Anglicans themselves downright ignorance of what is clearly laid down in their official manual of prayers and ordinances. In the "Visitation of the Sick" it is prescribed "that the sick person shall be moved to make a special confession of his sins . . . after which the priest shall absolve him after this sort:—Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee these offences: And by His authority, committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." The point of death is not the only time at which confession and the seeking of absolution are recommended. Before the administration of Communion the minister gives the following warning:—"If there be any of you who cannot quiet his own conscience . . . let him come to me or to some other discreet or learned minister of God's Word and open his grief that . . . he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice." How is it that intelligent Anglicans "though so near" are "yet so far" from the Church of their fathers?

DR. RYLE, of Liverpool, does not believe in confession for those whom Prior Vaughan called the "home heathen." Mr. Louis Becke, the charming novelist, whose works on the "sweet islands of the Pacific" have attracted so much attention, is a believer in the practice of Confession for the thorough reclaiming of the "dark heathen." To a London *Chronicle* reporter he referred in the course of an interview to the missionary question:—"The islands are practically missionaries' colonies, are they not?" asked the interviewer. "Yes," sighed Mr Becke, "they are, unfortunately. I use the word unfortunately advisedly, for Christianity, especially

in Tonga, has changed a fine warlike race into a set of oily, groveling hypocrites. Of course there are missionaries and missionaries, and the individual in these elements is everything. The Roman Catholic priests do magnificent work and their system of confession more than anything else keeps the native converts in the right path." The "dark heathen" has learned much in the way of crime from the "white heathen." Human nature is much the same the world over. What is a good remedial agent abroad should be effective at home.

AKIN TO
CREMATION.

WE have in New Zealand enthusiasts in the matter of funeral reform—of "rational burial," as they term their fad. Without doubt money is uselessly squandered in the purchase of perishable wreaths. The pagan element, observable in the attempt to remove the gloom of the grave, and neutralise the sermon preached by death should be sedulously eliminated. Flowers are symbolical of joy and innocence, and are only rightly employed when children with the waters of baptism fresh on the brow, go, in the purity of untarnished soul, straight to the throne of God. Apart from the needless expenditure, modern customs are out of harmony with Christian feeling at the solemn hour. But misguided enthusiasts may go too far. The Sanitary Burial Association of London advocates a so-called reform which fringes on the practice of cremation. Cremation, as our readers are aware, is strongly advocated by continental enemies of the Catholic Church. Reduce the body to dust as soon as possible—away with Christian burial is their motto. The latter is not the aim of the sanitary burial associates. The former is their avowed object, as the "exhibition of sanitary coffins" at Great Russell street, Bloomsbury, shows. A large number of clergymen and doctors visited the gruesome show. "The coffins exhibited," (says a Home paper), "are of the ordinary size and shape, but are made of perishable material, and contain a specially-made powder, which acts as an immediate disinfectant and ultimate destroyer of the corpse. This method of burial, it is claimed, produces speedy dissolution of the body, and has been approved by the Church of England Burial Reform Association.

CARDINAL
NEWMAN ON
ANGLICAN
ORDERS.

WHAT did Cardinal Newman think about the question of the validity of Anglican Orders? He was a just adversary, and a man ever open to fair argument. His opinion should be of interest, at all events, just now when High Church Anglicans are so much disturbed by the unfavourable discussion of Leo XIII. This is what the great writer and thinker says of the Anglican Communion:—"As to its possession of episcopal succession from the time of the Apostles, it may have it, and if the Holy See ever so decided, I will believe it as being a decision of a higher judgment than my own; but for myself, I must have St. Philip's gift, who saw the sacerdotal character on the head of a gaily-attired youngster before I can by my own wit acquiesce in it." These words of a thoughtful writer whom Anglicans very generally admire, are specially interesting at the present moment.

HER Majesty Queen Victoria has entered upon the sixtieth year of her reign. It was intended to commemorate the event in a fitting manner on September 23, but at her Majesty's desire the celebration has been postponed. The Premier of this Colony has received intimation that while the Queen is much gratified to observe such general expressions of loyalty and affection towards her in regard to the fact that she will shortly have reigned for a longer period than any other British sovereign, it is her Majesty's wish that did she be spared to rule over her beloved subjects for such a period any recognition or celebration of that event should be reserved until she has actually completed a reign of sixty years. The sixtieth anniversary—an unique event in English history—will occur on June 21. Without doubt the celebration if her Majesty be spared, will be worthy of the occasion. Meantime congratulatory tele-

COMPARE SIZE AND WEIGHT OF STICKS.

Smoke T. R. Williams' JUNO. Smoke.