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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

EMERSON wrote a golden motto which New Zealand Catholics would do well to paste in their hats: 'If there is anything great and good in store for you, it will not come at the first or second

STRIKE THE IRON.

call.' In connection with the one great and only Catholic question in New Zealand—the education question—Catholics seem to have been losing heart and sinking into a state of flabby carelessness and torpid inactivity. Of late the only sign of life and vitality shown has been in the solitary skirmish which the Very Rev. Father Cumming began and carried out in right plucky style and in the face of great odds with the North Canterbury Board of Education, over the inspection of the Catholic schools in their district. A telegram published in our last issue showed that the cause was won and the rights of the Catholic body recognised. We offer our hearty congratulations to our Canterbury friends, and a friendly hand-grip all round to the five members of the Board who voted straight for the Catholic claim.

This matter was dealt with in the N.Z. TABLET as far back as September 17, 1897. There now remain only three Education Boards opposed to the Catholic demand—those of Wellington, Auckland, and Taranaki. We pointed out that they were acting in opposition to the spirit of Section 98 of the Education Act, and against the intention of its framers. In a speech delivered in 1894, the Hon. C. C. Bowen, the author of the Education Act, said:—'He would hail with pleasure every kind of good school, public and private, that might be maintained in these islands, and he would like to see them so far publicly encouraged as to be allowed to claim as a right the advantages of State inspection should they see fit to ask for it, for the Education Act contemplated such encouragement.' The great need is legislation which will make it compulsory on the Boards to comply with the requests of the Catholic body for the State inspection of their schools. This should not be lost sight of. We have already recommended petitions to the House on the part of Catholics, after consultation with their natural leaders. Constant and persevering action is sure to win in the end. It may not, as Emerson said, come 'at the first or second call.' But it will come. The longer Catholics in the non-complying districts lie quietly down under the present state of things, the harder it will be for them to secure redress.

GROWING FAST.

THERE is a snap of life and the tingle of vigour about the Ritualistic movement in England. Catholics view the tendency with hopeful interest.

It is a feeling after the fullness of truth, akin to that of the imprisoned plant which creeps through chink and slit and cranny in search of the free air and the light of heaven. Thirty three years ago the Church Association was formed for the purpose of assisting the English bishops to suppress illegal practices within their dioceses. The Association has evidently had no appreciable effect on the growth of Ritualistic practices. The Association was sleepy and respectable and 'proper.' It did little beyond raising a mild ripple on the surface of English religious life. Some of the bishops, in fact, whom they wished to help, distinctly encouraged Ritualistic practices. There was more robust energy in Mr. Kensit. He raised tornados in sundry very 'High' churches in London. His performances once more focussed the public eye on the whole question of the rubrics, ornaments, and ceremonies of the Church of England. In his recent Memorial to the Upper House in Convocation, Mr. Kensit has made out the following list which is eloquent proof of how far our Anglican friends are retracing their steps once more towards Rome.

According to the London *Tablet* Mr. Kensit submits the following list of some ornaments and ceremonies which have already been declared by the Queen's Courts to be illegal:

Unlawful ornaments of the minister:

1. The Alb.
2. The Biretta.
3. The Chasuble.
4. The Cope.
5. The Dalmatic.
6. The Tunic of Tunicle.
7. The Maniple.

Unlawful ornaments of the church:

8. A Baldacchino.
9. Lighted Candles when not required for giving light.
10. A Stone Altar.
11. A Cross on or over or in apparent connection with the Communion Table.
12. A Crucifix.
13. Stations of the Cross.

Unlawful ceremonies:

14. Bowing down before or addressing worship to the consecrated elements.
15. The attendance of Acolytes.
16. Tolling of bell at Consecration.
17. Making the Sign of the Cross over the people.
18. Hiding the Manual Acts.
19. Elevation of the Elements.
20. The use of Incense.
21. Ceremonial mixing of Water with the Wine during Divine Service.
22. The use of Wafers in lieu of Bread 'usual to be eaten.'

The growth of these illegal practices is indicated by the following table:

	PARTICULARS.							
<i>Vestments:</i>	1882.	1884.	1886.	1888.	1890.	1892.	1894.	1897.
	336	396	509	599	797	1,029	1,370	1,632
<i>Incense:</i>	9	22	66	89	135	177	250	307
<i>Altar Lights:</i>	581	748	963	1,135	1,402	2,408	2,707	3,568
<i>Mixed Chalice:</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,111
<i>Hiding Manual Acts:</i>	1,662	2,054	2,433	2,690	3,138	3,918	5,037	5,964

Ritualism is undoubtedly in some ways a hindrance to Catholicism, in so far as it affords a final halting-place for many who would otherwise 'go over to Rome.' In other respects it is a decided help. It familiarises Protestants with Catholic doctrines, Catholic ritual, Catholic devotions and modes of thought. It has undoubtedly had its share in bringing into the unity of the true Fold the 1,311 persons in the archdiocese of Westminster, and the 1,050 in the diocese of Salford who, according to the London *Tablet*, were received into the Church during the course of last year.

A STUPID FALSEHOOD.

In a recent issue we dealt with the subject of the fierce rioting which broke out in the streets of a large number of cities in Italy. Barricades were set up in the streets, people murdered, shops and dwellings looted, troops and rioters shot down, king Demos ruled, a party of the reserves were called out, and half the country was in a state of siege. We have already dealt with the ruinous system of government which drove the impoverished and maddened people out to face the levelled rifle, the fixed bayonet, and the machine gun. We refer to it now once more, as the *Otago Daily Times* has reproduced a correspondence to the Melbourne *Argus* which insinuates that the Catholic party in Italy are, in some unstated way, at the bottom of these riots. The insinuation is grotesque to a degree. A leading English daily points out that the late outbreaks were received with great disfavour by the Papal authorities, and that the Pope and his Court have ever set their faces hard against any intrigue against the reigning dynasty. The London *Times* of May 16 quotes the following conclusive paragraph in point from the noted anti-Catholic Italian paper, the *Gazzetta di Venezia*:—

'Incendiaries are of every party, and they exist among the Clericals, but to think that rebellion, massacre, and the dissolution of order are pleasing to priests, Clericals, and Catholics is the idea of madmen or politicians of bad faith. Anti-national Clericalism is certainly a grave evil, but with regard to social matters it is a lesser evil for our Italy. This is why, in the revolutionary Babel created by the mad reforms of the political and administrative vote, we have always thought that with the "Reds," the destroyers of