

# New Zealand Gazette

NINETEENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XIX.—No. 28.

DUNEDIN: FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 1891.

PRICE 6D.

## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A GLORIOUS CAREER.

OUR contemporary the *Ave Maria*, a publication in which we find an abundance of good things, has recently given us a sketch of the life of the late General de Sonis, Carlyle, who has compared French

glory to burnt straw, which, as we know, blazes brightly for a moment but leaves behind ashes, approaching as nearly as possible to nothing. Something more, nevertheless, is the glory of the country that has produced St. Louis and Joan of Arc, and which in every walk of life has given to the world men whose brilliant genius was enriched by all that a sublime spirit of Christianity could bestow upon it. Nay, as it was in the past, so it continues to the present day. If, for example, the French world of art two hundred years ago was elevated and almost sanctified by the genius of Racine, to-day that of Gounod no less confers a halo on it. If the poetry of the one touched the more sacred feelings and awoke the enthusiasm of the soul, the music of the other is not wanting in its effect. Different though the works may be, the identity of the spirit that inspired "Athalie" and "Faust" is clearly discernible. The martial spirit of the past also survives in France. In our own time Charette and De Sonis have brought before us evidence of what those crusaders were who truly entered into the sentiment of their great mission. And even a more trying part was played by the noble soldier of our own degenerate days, who in every movement of his calling showed himself first of all the faithful son of Holy Church. De Sonis was a devout Catholic in everything, a spiritual father to his soldiers, and the protector of their faith. He was, nevertheless, in every thought a soldier—strict and rigorous in the enforcement of discipline and the fulfilment of duty, and lion-like in bravery on the field of battle.—There is nothing more sublimely pathetic in the history of war than his lying cruelly wounded all the length of a freezing night on the disastrous field of Loigny—while he held converse with heaven, and hardly felt his suffering in resignation to the will of God. There also a young soldier of his corps dragged himself to his side that he might have the consolation of his presence in his dying moments.—But to the shame of France, the hour was to come when her heroic son, mutilated in her service as he was, and notwithstanding all his glorious record, felt that his duty called on him to relinquish his command, and retire to end his days in poverty, rather than take part in the task required of him—that is, the expulsion of the religious orders? French glory, then, is not, as the sour-minded scoffer, Carlyle, called it, merely like the blaze of burnt straw. It is real and continuous. It is not only where the body of De Sonis rests, under the banner of the Sacred Heart—under which also he fought at Loigny, unsuccessfully, indeed, so far as this world is concerned, but we doubt not, in respect of a better world, with infinite gain, that the proofs of its genuineness may be seen. In the eye of God, we may be convinced, they are frequent and clear enough to merit for the race, in spite of all its shortcomings and all its unworthy sons, a further period of the career that crowned their land with honour, and conferred countless blessings on the world.

THE consequences that have ensued on the lynch-Self-convicted. ing in New Orleans of the Italians acquitted of the murder of Detective Hennessy throw a vivid light on the existing condition of things. We have been told, indeed, that the secret societies in Italy had threatened the life of the King unless stern methods towards America were adopted. Before we heard this message, however, we had already formed conclusions, and, indeed, we think that this message is very doubtful. There was, in fact, no necessity to threaten the life of King Humbert, or to take any special measures to bring pressure to bear on the Italian Government. The Government, from the first moment that United Italy became an accomplished fact, has been in subjection to the secret societies, whose members form its members, and whose creature it is and has always been. The action of the Italian Government, in fact, represents that of the secret societies, who are enraged at being baffled in their attempt to extend their system throughout the United

States. We do not say that lynch law is a desirable expression of justice. The case in New Orleans, however, is a pressing and extreme one. A society that had been the scourge of Italy had arrived in the city. A police officer of proved ability and everywhere respected for his high integrity, had discovered its existence and obtained an acquaintance with its movements—had, indeed, if we recollect aright, given some information regarding it—and to rid themselves of the embarrassment caused by his watchfulness, as well, most probably, as to deter others from taking up his task, they shot him, daringly, in the open street, and under the light of day. We have not, as yet, had time to receive details, but we have reason to assume that the guilt of the men arrested for the crime and placed on their trial was palpable, and, nevertheless, they were acquitted. The jury was evidently suspected of foul play, whether, which, however, seems improbable, they were regarded as packed, or whether it was suspected that they were bribed, or whether, what seems to us the more probable supposition, it was believed that they were afraid. And it must be admitted that there were grounds for fear. Their doings since the men were lynched, show us the temper of the Italians, and their determination and daring had been proved in the case of the murdered officer. What, then, were the people of New Orleans, or, indeed of the whole United States to do. Were they to connive at the establishment of the Mafia among them, and to permit that assassination and brigandage should become part of the institutions of the country? Desperate cases call for desperate remedies, and, if ever there was a desperate case, that in question was so. As to the blustering tone assumed by the Italian Government, the Americans will certainly know how to deal with that. No possibility of anything in the shape of war between the countries, of course, exists. So clearly evident is this, indeed, that the action of the Italian Government, as we have said, betrays their motives. They have acted absurdly and rashly under the influence of the secret societies, whose members, notwithstanding all their secrecy and plotting are commonly foolish and miscalculating men. The importance of the matter is, in short, the proof it affords of the manner in which the Italian Government is controlled. Americans will certainly hold their own, and will not submit to the domination or even the existence of the Mafia within their confines. But it is well that the Italian Government has spoken out and shown beyond all power of dispute what is its real character.

WELL, the *Lyttelton Times* ought to know, we suppose—and according to the *Lyttelton Times*, the Minister of Education is a complete Solon. It would not do for us to say a Solomon, because Solomon was

more or less associated with religion, and the Minister has nothing and will have nothing to do with that. Solon will do, then, for our illustration—he having been a very wise old heathen, indeed. Mr. Reeves, of course, has not as yet got the age, but he has the other qualities, and that will suffice for the present. And, after all, is it not something to see that, in spite of the proverb, an old head can be found on young shoulders? But Mr. Reeves contradicts more than one proverb. No man, they say, is a hero to his valet de chambre. If Mr. Reeves is not a hero to the *Lyttelton Times* he is nothing. And as a specimen of the appreciation placed by our contemporary on Mr. Reeves, let us take the following. Our readers will perceive the tribute paid to the delicate wit of our precocious Solon. Referring to an address recently made by him our contemporary writes as follows:—"Without dealing in detail with the many points raised by the address, we must compliment Mr. Reeves on the clear and straight-out declarations made as to the maintenance of the present system unimpaired. Speaking on his own behalf, and on that of the Government, he has declared explicitly that the system is to remain a secular one. As he facetiously remarked, those who oppose the system on grounds connected with another world must be regarded as honourable antagonists, but he could only salute them and pass by."—Admirable, indeed, is the airy manner in which our Minister dismisses the prejudices of people who are "slow" enough to think of another world. The smartest corner-boy of the period, in fact, could hardly make a more showy display of "cheek." It is not, moreover, always the sage who takes a short way of surmounting the religious difficulty of the moment. When a question arose, for example, as to removing a re-