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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER. It is a curious and suggestive fact that two bodies among the human population of the earth, who are commonly supposed to be widely separated from each other, are now in motion with more or less virulent intentions. We allude to the anarchists and the Orangemen. It is still more curious and suggestive that the object aimed at by these two widely different or differently reputed sections of humanity, is one and the same. The anarchists of France and Spain are showing themselves particularly active with regard to the Catholic Church. It was in the churches of Paris that their outbreak commenced, and in Madrid and Cadiz Catholics engaged in Divine worship have been the special object of their attack. Under such circumstances it is suggestive, as we have said, to see a clerical mission from the North of Ireland going out to plead with the people of Great Britain to give their support to the threats that the Orangemen of their province have uttered against their Catholic fellow countrymen. Doubtless these pious missionaries would hold up their hands in horror at the idea of their deserving to be classed with the followers of Marx or Lassalle, or, still more, of Bakounine. Do they not enter upon their task with the word of the Gospel in their mouth, and morally supported by the sympathy of the Tory Prime Minister? Nevertheless their intention is that of calling out an expression of wrath, and of obtaining at least moral assistance in an outbreak against law and order. The anarchists with their bombs are more advanced and more direct—perhaps more courageous in their action, but the Orangemen are not less deadly in their threats and their intentions. Whether they will prove so bold in their performance remains to be seen, and we rather think they will not. The mission to Great Britain, however, goes out under less favourable circumstances than would have been the case some years ago. There was a time, prior that is to the memorable proceedings at Cleator Moor, when people in England and Scotland had seen nothing on their own side of the Irish sea which could give them any information as to the true nature of Orangeism. They were dependant for their knowledge of it on those one-sided stories that the organs of the party, and others favourable to it, published as to the attacks upon it made by Catholics. All the long course of outrage and insult that led to some excess on the part of a hot-headed Catholic mob was suppressed and a chastisement earned, if not deserved, by years of insolence and brutality was described as an unprovoked and aggressive outbreak. The memory, however, of Cleator Moor has hardly yet died away throughout Great Britain. There the Orangemen betrayed themselves and appeared in their true colours. Without any provocation whatever, and inspired by the virulent, undistinguishing, hatred that is their characteristic, they made a violent and indiscriminate attack on children, women, and defenceless men—on people who had come into their neighbourhood without giving them a thought or being aware perhaps of their existence—for the peaceful purposes of a pleasure-party. There was no difference of opinion throughout the country about the matter; the revelation was pronounced complete and the Press, without exception, declared that nothing of the kind must be tolerated. When these pious missionaries, therefore, go over to plead from English and Scotch platforms and pulpits for the support of the people of Great Britain in sustaining such a condition of things in Ulster—not, indeed, in all Ireland, for it would be an injustice to Protestants throughout the country not to acknowledge what we know to be the fact, that Orangeism has always been regarded by them, with very few exceptions, as the shame and opprobrium of their creed. These Protestants have long had the testimony that the doings at Cleator Moor placed within immediate reach of the people of Great Britain. When these pious missionaries go over to plead in such a cause, will not the memory of Cleator Moor be recalled to some sufficient purpose? Nay, has not Scotland had a more recent experience still, in connection with a Protestant contingent imported from the Orange head-quarters to replace some discontented Catholic labourers in Glasgow, but who had no sooner arrived

in the city than they set to and fought among themselves, disturbing the whole quarter of the town in which they were lodged? Preachers of the Gospel go over to Great Britain to back up with their pious exhortations the blood-thirsty threats made by men like these, that, if a measure is constitutionally carried which displeases them they will set the law at defiance, make common cause with anarchists, and run amuck throughout the country slaughtering everyone who is opposed to them. Can anything be more preposterous than this? Has the cry of "No-Popery" ever been more grossly or impudently raised? We have not erred, therefore, in the comparison we have made. Orangemen and anarchists are, in fact, at one. The Church is their object of attack and the methods they approve of or adopt are but little different. The anarchist, however, is the bolder of the two. He sets to work without giving a warning, by which he may hope to intimidate, and thus to save himself the danger of action. The Orangeman, if he can attain his object while he saves his skin infinitely prefers to do so. Indeed the chances are that the desire to save his skin will confine his action to such insolent threats. He makes known, however, what it is he would do if he durst—and this, as well as the companionship in which, to all intents and purposes, he exhibits himself, should be enough to inform the world as to his real nature.

OUR contemporary the *Otago Daily Times* gives us ANOTHER VIEW, the following:—"At the sitting of the Native Lands Court at Hastings on Tuesday a comical episode occurred. A female witness was asked why her mother was not giving evidence, as, the question being one of ancestry, the mother might be expected to know more. The witness naively replied that her mother was too old, that she was not accustomed to the ways of courts, and did not know how to tell lies!" But was it altogether a comical episode and only that? We fancy it would not be impossible to discover in it something also of a tragic element. Is this, indeed, what the enlightened civilisation, of which so much is boasted as distinguishing the Anglo-Saxon race, and which to have spread abroad over the face of the earth has gained for them so much renown, has conferred upon a less privileged people? The elder woman, adhering more closely to the practices of her savage fore-runners, has not acquired the art of telling lies. The true-born Briton brags that the less richly-endowed races are destined to die out before his advance. But what of the diseases by which they perish?—the vice, and fraud, and falsehood, with which he infects them? There may be more than one way, then, of looking at this episode which we quote. Even a laughing philosopher might, perhaps, consider it with tears in his eyes.

RUMOURS of the Faribault plan have at length REACHED DUNEDIN. We had been for some time looking for their arrival and their adaptation to the situation in New Zealand. To give the devil his due, however, as we always do, we find that the plan is fairly sketched. It consists in placing a Catholic school, conducted by Dominican nuns, at a place called Faribault, in the diocese of St Paul, under the State educational authorities, the school to be in all respects conducted like a Catholic school, except that direct religious instruction is not to be given within the hours over which the State has control—that is, within the ordinary school hours. The plan is, as yet, in an experimental stage, and nothing can be definitely pronounced concerning it. It has the approbation of Archbishop Ireland, in whose diocese it is being carried out, but it by no means commands the decided approval of all the Catholic authorities of the United States. Indeed, it has been very frankly and even severely criticised and a variance of opinion prevails with regard to it. As we ourselves know nothing independently concerning it, we have no opinion on the matter to offer. Archbishop Ireland is a prelate whom we highly esteem so far as we know of his Grace from the Catholic Press of the country, but American ecclesiastics not unfrequently strike us as somewhat exceeding in boldness. Probably, if we knew the circumstances in which they are placed, we should attain to a better understanding. The bare fact that Archbishop Ireland has authorised an experiment, therefore, does not necessarily make us confident of its success or