

# New Zealand Gazette

TWENTIETH YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XX.—No. 33.

DUNEDIN: FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 1892.

PRICE 6D.

## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

PREPARATIONS, we understand, are being initiated in Auckland for the reception of the Most Rev Dr RETURN OF THE Luck on his return from Europe. This is as it BISHOP OF ought to be, and nothing else could possibly be AUCKLAND. expected. The manner in which a Catholic community treat their Bishop is a sure index of their faith and fervour, and we are well aware that the Catholics of Auckland fall in neither. The responsible and important position occupied by the Bishop of Auckland has been recognised in the old countries. In Italy his Lordship was most kindly welcomed, and great interest was manifested in his mission. He had many details of the work among his Maori flock to relate to Italian congregations, and they were fully appreciated by his hearers. Undoubtedly the twofold duty that devolves upon the Bishop of Auckland of providing for the wants of two different populations—the great majority of the Maori population being natives of his Lordship's diocese—makes the position filled by him additionally difficult, and calls on his flock to respond with even more than the accustomed docility and zeal to his efforts for their benefit. The Bishop of Auckland has done a great deal to deserve the gratitude and support of his people. Under his wise and devoted rule religion has made notable progress in his diocese. New life has been infused into the Maori missions; Catholic schools have been placed on a better and more permanent footing, the Mariast Brothers being introduced to teach the boys; and the work of church building and the establishment of missions among the European population has prospered. The Bishop will, moreover, return from a protracted tour, involving many difficult and fatiguing duties, all undertaken in the interests of his people. It is, therefore, only becoming on the part of his Lordship's people, and worthy of them as Catholics, that they should receive him in a manner that will assure him of their gratitude for the past and of their co-operation for the future. But all this is a matter of course, where the Catholics of Auckland are concerned. They are certainly not going to fall behind in their performance of a duty of this kind, or to leave anything unfulfilled to rejoice the heart of their good and devoted Bishop, and to do credit to themselves. We may certainly expect that the return of the Most Rev Dr Luck will be the occasion of a reception which we shall be glad to report as another mark of Catholic fidelity and generosity, and of the zeal and affection for their bishops and priests that distinguishes a truly Catholic people, and for which in particular Irish Catholics, who form in Auckland also the bulk of the Catholic population, have always been famous. The preparations so auspiciously begun, therefore, are sure to result in a brilliant success.

MR W. F. LORD, a friend and would-be adviser of UNFORTUNATE the Italian Government, who writes in one of the ITALY. London reviews for March, gives anything rather than a favourable account of things in the kingdom alluded to under its much-vaunted condition of unity. He writes to contradict the proud saying put forward by Italians in proverbial form, to the effect that they could manage their own affairs—" *Italia fara da se.*" He says it is most notable that Italy cannot manage her own affairs, and he proposes for her a system of foreign management. But how would this serve to free her from the greater proportion of disease that falls to her lot? and, perhaps, it is not for nothing that the hand of God is thus heavy upon her. Her population, the writer tells us, is about equal to that of England and Wales. Her proportional death rate is, scarlet fever, 2 to 1; diphtheria, 3½ to 1; typhoid fever, 5 to 1; malarial fever, 100 to 1; cholera, 7 to 1; small pox, 32 to 1. As an instance of the evils arising from the employment of too many officials at low wages, the writer gives a case in which a gentleman of benevolent disposition found that a neighbour of his had so removed the boundary marks of his estate as to deprive him of a considerable portion of his land. He immediately took law proceedings. The consequence, however, was a visit from the pretore, who fell at his feet and with tears besought him to desist. "My pay," he pleaded, "is £44 a year; it is not much, but it is all

I have to live on. For the love of mercy withdraw your suit. Your case is so clearly established that I cannot but decide in your favour. What will happen? Your adversary has retained X, who is a Deputy. He will go straight to the Minister of Justice and get me discharged? I shall be ruined." Mr Lord compares this to a scene in the *Arabian Nights*, and indeed it would seem more suitable to Turkish rule in a less enlightened century than to that of one of the progressive countries of the world at the present day. But the dishonesty so naively confessed is the most significant point about the matter. What magistrates, what Deputies, what Ministers, are those who conduct the affairs of Italy, emancipated from the control or influence of the Church. But Mr Lord describes a general state of confusion in which dishonesty has everywhere, from the highest places to the lowest, a principal part. His proposal is that a remedy should be sought in the appointment of a German administrator to direct the Minister of Finance, otherwise he hopes for no amelioration. And this is the condition of things, as described, moreover, by a friendly pen, that has ensued on the expulsion and persecution of religion.— Even Austrian rule seems almost justified by the event.

A SHABBY  
DODGE

FANCY any journalist remembering, after a lapse of weeks or even of months, a typographical error which had occurred in the columns of a contemporary. The head must needs be pretty empty in which such rubbish can find a resting place. But let us, for the credit of journalism, explain that it is not the stupidity of the TABLET's reader that our "Nemo" so much recalls as his own astounding sharpness and cleverness in perceiving the error. He actually knew when he saw the word "rabid," spelt with two "b's" that it was wrong, and he made a brilliant point of his discovery in a note. We made him a present of his cheap joke at the time, not considering ourselves very generous in doing so, and we again give him free permission to lay it up for service when his wit fails him on future occasions, as is likely to be not unfrequently the case. A fool, however, can often be spiteful as well as foolish, and we find that this "Nemo" is employed to play a spiteful trick. They have made his agreeable sentences an echo of the dirty little device recently made use of by the Rev A. R. Fitchett in the *Otago Daily Times*. Evidently acting on the accusation brought by the late Canon Kingsley against Cardinal Newman, to the effect that, in preaching at Oxford, the Cardinal—or Dr Newman as he then was—had been in the habit of constructing a whole sermon for the conveyance to his hearers of one little barbed point, the Rev A. R. Fitchett wrote a whole letter to the *Otago Daily Times*, advocating the concession of their educational claims to Catholics, in order to have an opportunity of publishing the falsehood that he had it on good authority that the Catholic schools could not bear the test of Government inspection. There was not a word of truth in the statement. The Rev A. R. Fitchett had nothing of the kind on good authority, and the schools, as the public of Dunedin and of the colony have themselves seen, are at least quite on a level with the Government institutions. But the rev gentleman had his own reasons, of which, perhaps, we are not quite ignorant, for his mis-statement, and he made it without scruple. This "Nemo," then, has been induced to repeat the false statement made by the Rev A. R. Fitchett, and to give it the additional circulation commanded by the columns of the *Star*. He uses the typographical error, by which the word "rabid" was spelled some months ago in our columns with two "b's," in forming a peg to hang his quotation on. A fool, as we see, can be spiteful in his folly. Is "Nemo" quite sure that any error of spelling or grammar, or anything else, at which a petty pedant or literary snob of a smaller type can cavil, occurring in the TABLET is to be attributed to the influence of Catholic echo? A little better information, perhaps, might reveal to him quite a different state of affairs, and one not altogether independent of secular education. We are told, however, that a fool should be answered according to his folly. It is rather the designing spite of the Rev A. R. Fitchett than the folly of "Nemo" that we have kept in view in this reply.

MR ARTHUR SYMONS, who reviews, in the *Fort-*  
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nightly *Review* for March, the novels of J. K. Huysmans speaks a word or two that is very suggestive as to the temper of the times. In writing of *La Bas*, one of the novels in question, "It is," he says "a study of Catholicism,