

Catholic electors of Inangahua to concede such a system to them, is it at all likely that secularists in this Colony, or anywhere throughout Australia, would permit of such a plan. It was loudly condemned in America—in many instances, as an attempt to hand the schools over generally into the keeping of the Catholic Church. It was simply that the State took over, as its own, the Catholic schools referred to—those namely at Faribault and Stillwater, those schools still remaining in every respect as they were before, with the single exception that, within certain fixed hours, secular instruction only was given in them. Sir Robert Stout gave no hint of any desire to provide for any such arrangement during the Session that has just closed—but until such an offer has been made to the Catholics of these colonies, and they have rejected it, it is vain for journalists or public men in any position, to refer to the state of things in America, and hold it up as an example to Catholics in Australia or New Zealand. No doubt, during the coming elections, we shall find several candidates following the example set them by Sir Robert Stout at Cape Foulwind, and holding up to them the Faribault Plan, of which, also like Sir Robert Stout, they either know nothing, or desire to make a blind and a snare. Catholic electors, however, should remember, as we have said, that the state of things in America has no bearing whatever upon their position, and that no secularist in the colony has the slightest notion of making such a concession to them as the Faribault Plan. The *Register* goes on to explain the mind of certain American prelates—but, as his explanation differs altogether from what we have seen reported in American Catholic papers of the attitude of the American hierarchy, we suspect that here also he evolves the substance of his argument from his inner consciousness. It is well, meantime, to learn that so marked a moral improvement has taken place in South Australia since the more gentle methods of secularism were introduced there. As, however, we are not quite prepared to receive the climatic theory, and things elsewhere are decidedly otherwise, we claim a right to reserve our agreement.

It would seem that that strange belief, superstition, **A DANGEROUS** imposition—we know not what—commonly called **BOOK.** Spiritualism, is still exercising a considerable degree of influence in the world, and is even on the increase. Our attention has been particularly attracted to the matter by our accidentally coming across a book written on the subject some two years ago and of which a new addition has recently been published. We allude to the work entitled "There is no death," by Florence Marryat. We cannot quite determine what to think of this book. The writer is a lady, who, both as an authoress and an artist, has attained to high distinction, and who also occupies a good position in society. The idea of wilful deceit is quite impossible in connection with her. To invent such a narrative, moreover, though it might detract from this lady's moral character, must add very much to her literary reputation, high as that is already. But the marks of sincerity are evident. Evident is it also, that so far as it is possible without direct personal investigation for any one to receive as proved certain of the phenomena described, they must be so received. Others even with direct personal investigation, as it appears to us, must still leave a doubt in the mind. The chief note of the book, however, and its principal danger consist in its insidious anti-religious, anti-Catholic, tone. The authoress writes as a Catholic and believes, no doubt with sincerity, that the influences to which she has yielded herself are religious. The effect of the book, nevertheless, is to discredit the Catholic faith, and, chiefly, the teaching of the Church with regard to Purgatory. From this doctrine, while seeming to give it countenance, it takes away the penitential meaning, strips it of all awe and mystery, and brings it down to the level of the familiarity that traditionally breeds contempt. Prejudices against the Catholic Church and her institutions are also encouraged. As a set off against all this, we count as very slight the pretence of prayer and blessing, of religious advice, and of reverence for the crucifix and the sign of the cross, said to be made by some of the spirits. If the devil can assume the appearance of an angel of light, as the Scripture says he can, he can also, no doubt, assume the appearance and conduct of a devout Catholic. On the whole, therefore, we find in this book quite enough to remind us that the warning of Catholic theologians with respect to this invocation of the souls of the dead is well founded. The beings who make answer to the summons come for no good.—And is there not something revolting in the bare thought of seeing the soul of one you have loved and lost represented by a demon? Could a more outrageous insult be offered to either the living or the dead? If Spiritualism, therefore, be increasing, the spread of its influences is among the evils of the times. Catholics, at least, should have nothing to do with it.

ODDS AND ENDS. ONE of the most remarkable meetings in support of Home Rule was that held in Brisbane on September 11, and at which 3,000 people were present. Our contemporary, the *Australian*, notes it as a strange coincidence that the meeting took place on the evening of the day on which the news of the rejection of the Bill by the Lords had been received. The meeting, as we learn from our contemporary, was fully

representative of Australia, as well as of the three kingdoms, and on the platform were several members of the Legislature, and many citizens, representative not only of social, religious and national distinctions, but even of divergent local political views as well. The first resolution was moved by the Attorney General of the Colony. It ran as follows:—"That in view of the undoubted advantages which local autonomy has conferred upon the Australian colonies, this meeting of citizens of Brisbane regards with satisfaction the probability of the speedy realisation of Home Rule for Ireland, and asserts its belief that the extension of the principle of self-government to Ireland so far from tending towards the disintegration of the British Empire will in reality be an effectual means for its consolidation." Resolutions were also passed pledging the meeting to give practical assistance to the Home Rule party in co-operating with Mr Gladstone in his efforts to carry his Bill to a successful issue, and congratulating the Liberal and Home Rule parties on the victory achieved by them. The rejection of the Bill by the Lords seemed to be taken by the meeting as a matter of course and of very little consequence.

A Jesuit missionary, writing in the *South African Catholic Magazine*, gives a deplorable account of the Mashonas. He depicts them as of miserable physique, indolent, dirty in their habits, hypocritical and selfish, liars and thieves. Nor does the good father seem to have much hope as to the success of missionary work among them. After the experience of two years passed in their country, he says they must first be humanised:—"It will not be a bad result," he adds, "if, even after years, adult baptisms can still be counted on the fingers."

The Auckland Presbytery seem to have their hands pretty full with the case of a certain minister who has adopted the tenets of the Theosophists. The rev gentleman does not appear inclined to follow the advice given in the old lines.

"It is well to be off with the old love
Before you are on with the new."

He evidently proposes to improve matters by bringing in the new to amend the short-comings of the old. He asks a few awkward questions with regard to the Confession of Faith—which, however, we leave to be answered by those whom the matter may concern. We find, meantime, in one of the London reviews, a reply made by Professor Max Muller to the objections brought by Mr Sinnett against his article on Madame Blavatsky, and in which the writer makes his views as to the system in question very plain. He declares that, although he has been able, for example, to fathom the mysteries of German philosophy, even that of Hegel, Mr Sinnett has proved too deep for him. He nevertheless, gives us to understand how he estimates the depth referred to by the language he uses incidentally in dealing with the recondite doctrine. In fact, he does not hesitate to condemn it openly as "twaddle." From the telegraphic summary of the arguments of the minister at Auckland, we should say that, however they may bear on the Westminster Confession, they are pretty much of the same kind.

We should really like to know the details of the composition of such cablegrams as this:—"Owing to the action of the House of Lords in rejecting the Home Rule Bill, the Clan-na-Gael Society is being reorganised. Patrick Egan and Ford are also busily engaged reviving secret societies in America." What is it, we should like to know, that suggests such paragraphs. They at least show some degree of ingenuity in their author, unless, of course, that deponent like Mr Stead in his telepathic experiments, takes up a pen and lets his hand go that it may frame such sentences as its uncontrolled vagary directs. There may, no doubt, be some suspicion as to who is at the other end of the pen, but that does not seem of much consequence. Whether the Father of Lies, writes himself or employs an amanuensis can't make any very great difference. At any rate his inspiration is manifest in such cablegrams as that we have quoted.

At the annual conference of Catholic young men's societies, held the other day at Carlisle, Lord Brayne told a few plain truths with regard to the state of Catholicism in England, which, although not very pleasant to listen to, are, nevertheless, useful to know. The speaker referred to the view of the matter commonly taken as much too sanguine. For his part, he said, he lamented that the so-called Catholic reaction had taken place in the University of Oxford, instead of in the heart of the great, powerful, and influential middle classes of the country. The greater portion of the higher society of the country, he added, was saturated by rationalism and infidelity—the middle classes still remaining, to a great extent, under the influence of Wesley. As for the agricultural classes, they are swayed by Calvinistic Protestantism. Lord Brayne quoted as true the words that Cardinal Newman, a few years before his death had written to him:—"Englishmen prefer Mohammedanism to Popery." He went on to calculate the number of Catholics in England and Wales—the population in 1891 being slightly over twenty-nine millions. The approximate estimate of the Catholic population he stated at something like two millions. "Where now," he asked, "is the boast that England had determined to return to the bosom of the ancient Church?"

The Legislative Council has found in the *Sydney Morning Herald* a friend of the class from whom people may pray to be defended.