

# New Zealand Gazette

TWENTY-FIRST YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XXI—No. 32. DUNEDIN: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1893

PRICE 6D

## Current Topics

### AT HOME AND ABROAD.

"OH my prophetic soul, my uncle!" We cannot, IN HIS RIGHT PLACE. Robert Stout, but, as the would-be father of his country, he must acknowledge that we are, in some way or another, related to him. Did we not foresee and foretell the alliance that has secured Sir Robert's return? Here are our words, taken from the TABLET of November 10, and we do not find that we need improve upon them:—"We knew all along that the 'New Liberalism' of Sir Robert Stout was a very fanciful and novel sort of article. Of its nature we now find ample proof in the fact that Sir Robert has secured in his candidature for Wellington the fervent support of the Tory party. Our monopolist friends are 'cute' enough to recognise froth when they see it, and to know that the depths it conceals may be of a very different kind. Sir Robert, who can amuse the mob by empty visions while he works out quite different ends, is the very man they need. It is the sincerity of the present Government (that forms the object of their dread. Meaningless spouters are altogether to their taste." And it actually turns out that the whole Tory party united to put Sir Robert in. It is palpable. The Tory ticket won the day. Sir Robert went in at its head. There was not a ha'p'orth of shoddy in all the town, in fact, that was not twisted into the rope that gave him the haul up. Maguates that were descended from Adam, and that could, therefore, quarter the snake (in the grass) in their escutcheons, condescended for the nonce to stand shoulder to shoulder with honest fellows who did not know that they had ever had a grandfather. Of course, even while Sir Robert was whispering his *odi profanum vulgus* into the ears of his aristocratic friends the crowd that had not—and has not yet—found him out was active also in his support—and that accounts for his big majority. We have not much with which to accredit our Dunedin democrats, but, at least, they can occasionally smell a rat, and there is pawkiness enough among them to make them give it a wide berth. They knew better, for example, than to present Sir Robert with the requisition he came before them, some weeks ago, in search of. When moreover the figures announcing his victory were posted up in front of the *Daily Times* office on Tuesday night, the cheer by which they were greeted was not very enthusiastic. It seemed as much an expression of relief that he had got in for some where else, as a genuine note of triumph or rejoicing. But here, finally is Sir Robert Stout—our great popular leader, our perpetual spouter of Liberty Fraternity Equality—an *Egalité* in the right place—the hope of a sabocracy, and the reliance of "swells."

THE IGNORANCE OF NEW ZEALAND SECULARISTS. We alluded last week, in our reply to Mr Cohen, to a certain memorandum on the free school system, presented, by Royal command, in 1891, to the Imperial Parliament. We now return to this memorandum, which proves in a very striking way the complete ignorance of those good people of all classes who, in this colony, have identified themselves with the defence of the secular system. The author of the memorandum is Mr J. G. Fitch, one of Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors of Training Schools, and his inquiries were carried on with respect to the free school system in America, France, and Belgium. He is, we need hardly say, an unquestionable authority. Mr Fitch in several instances gives a flat contradiction to arguments that have been speciously put forward, and taken as authoritatively conclusive among ourselves. One of the principal, and most frequently urged of these arguments is, for example, that, to be national, the educational system must be secular. Mr Fitch, on the contrary, gives it, as the result of his investigations, that it is impossible for a purely secular system to become national. We quote him as follows:—"Where the State system absolutely excludes religious instruction from its purview, there grows up side by side with it, as in France, the United States, and till recently, in Belgium, a rival system outside of the public school organisation, and in part hostile to it, administered by religious bodies, maintained at their own cost and that of the parents,

and receiving neither aid nor supervision from public authorities. Experience seems to prove that, in such circumstances, the number of voluntary and denominational schools tends to increase, and the separation in feeling and interests between such schools and the common schools to become more marked, while the area of the State's influence over public education becomes *pro tanto* restricted. A secular system pure and simple, it would appear, is incapable of becoming a truly national system."

MORE OF THEIR IGNORANCE. OUR New Zealand secularists, again, have made up their minds and pronounced their *ipse dixit* that State aid to denominational schools means the destruction of the national system. Here, also Mr Fitch gives them a flat contradiction. Here is what he tells us on this point:—"On the other hand, where, as in the province of Quebec the public school system is essentially denominational, or where, as in Ontario, and since 1884 in Belgium, it is undenominational, but permits schools connected with the churches to become incorporated with it, and to receive public subsidy and inspection, or where, as in the other provinces of the Canadian Dominion, although the schools are unsectarian in character, the Scriptures are read and taught, and ministers of religion are permitted to give religious instruction to the children of their own congregations out of school hours, or where as in our own country, schools of different types are recognised as integral parts of the national system, and public aid is distributed on conditions which are practically acceptable to all the religious communities, private or separate schools hardly exist, or, if they exist, have a tendency to disappear; and the influence and usefulness of the State extend over the whole field of elementary education."

IGNORANCE SIMPLE OR COMPOUND? OUR conclusion is that, if our New Zealand secularists who have insisted on the arguments so flatly contradicted by Mr Fitch, are ignorant but well meaning, they will think good, now that the true state of the case has been authoritatively placed before them, to re-consider their position. It is not necessary; it is not even possible, according to Chief Inspector Fitch, that an education system, to be national, must be secular. It is not true, according to the same high authority, that the granting of State aid to denominational schools must break up the national system. On the contrary, it must consolidate and strengthen it. But if our secularist friends are malevolent as well as ignorant, we have nothing to hope from them. They will not re-consider their position. They will continue as before—but now without the excuse of ignorance—to urge their false plea—with the object, not of supporting or defending the education system, but of oppressing and harassing their Catholic fellow colonists. Is their ignorance, then, simple or compound? The answer is of some importance to us.

THE Right Rev Dr Nevill, in a letter to the *Otago Daily Times* takes our contemporary to task for the GRATIFICATION, consolation—expressed by him with joy—which he had received from the fact that, owing to the results of the elections, "the secularity of the children of the Colony was little likely to be interfered with." Dr Nevill argues mildly in favour of religious teaching and puts it to our contemporary as to whether his gratification at the continued exclusion of Christian teaching from the schools of the country is not "illogical and astonishing." But, as may be seen by reference to the quotations we give from the memorandum of Chief Inspector Fitch, it is more illogical than the *Daily Times* can be brought by the argument of the Bishop to acknowledge, for it is excited by a cause that tends, as Mr Fitch shows, to denationalise and weaken the secular system. We desire to give our contemporary all the credit he deserves. We would ascribe to him simple ignorance only, not that compound matter that would injure the secular system, or bite its nose to vex its face, for the discomfiture and injury of Catholics. It is to be regretted, meantime, that the compromise proposed by the Bishop should tend only in a very feeble and imperfect manner to the promotion of the righteousness in advocacy of whose pursuit his Lordship writes.