

Current Topics

Dr. Chapple and Home Rule

Dr. Chapple, formerly representative for Tuapeka in the New Zealand Parliament and now member for Stirlingshire in the House of Commons, is known here as an able but erratic individual, with a weakness for trying to keep 'sweet' with all parties. On the occasion of his first candidature for Tuapeka his devotion to the principle of being 'all things to all men' was so complete, and at the same time so skilfully carried out, that he succeeded in persuading both the Liquor Party and the Prohibitionists that he was their friend. Of course he was elected; but, equally of course, that sort of thing could not last. Some time later, the N.Z. Alliance Convention passed a resolution congratulating Dr. Chapple on his return as a Prohibitionist candidate. Then the cat was out of the bag; and when, at the next election, he again stood for the constituency, our somewhat too clever medico was 'turned down.' Apparently he is showing something of the same shiftiness in his Home politics, if we may judge by the severe remarks made by our contemporary, the Glasgow Catholic *Observer*. 'Dr. Chapple,' it says, 'the Antipodean importation who misrepresents Stirlingshire, apparently had not the courage to join Mr. Munro Ferguson in ratting from Home Rule on the exclusion-of-Ulster-counties amendment moved by Mr. Agar-Robartes last week. He abstained from voting. If the Irish electors of Stirlingshire who supported this man, and whose votes went a long way, if not the whole way, to secure his return, do right on the next opportunity, they will just stew him in his own sauce, and abstain from voting also. They have no use for an abstainer—in the division lobby.'

That South American 'Mission'

Some time ago we gave particulars of the determined appeal which was being made to the general public in England by the Anglican Bishop of the Falkland Islands for a cool £100,000, to assist him 'in the greatest missionary effort of the New Year.' The diocese of the Bishop of the Falkland Islands appears to include a very large portion of South America; and the missionary enterprise referred to was nothing more nor less than a project for capturing 'half the continent' for Protestantism. Dr. Blair put every iron in the fire in this enterprising effort to reach the pocket of the public. First he made a frank and open appeal to bigotry, and to the proselytising spirit. 'I would point out,' he said, 'that our chance among the natives is enormous.' 'I am sorry to say,' he added, with tears in his eyes, 'that the Church of Rome is in a very sad condition morally, socially, spiritually, and educationally.' That was a sufficiently comprehensive indictment; but nevertheless it fell flat. Then the Bishop adopted what seemed a sure and certain method of extracting the 'needful,' by putting his grand enterprise on a strictly business footing. The great mission, he pointed out, would be an invaluable 'trade puller.' 'My case was summed up very tersely,' he said, 'by the chairman of the London Chamber of Commerce at a meeting held at the Mansion House quite recently. He said: *'This is the finest commercial investment that traders of this country could make.'* Even this, however, failed to draw; and in a letter published in the *Times* on the 27th of July the Bishop announced that the money was not forthcoming, and that unless the public paid up in the course of the next few weeks he would resign his Bishopric. He asked 'earnest consideration' for this appeal, 'as empty-handed I dare not, I cannot, and I will not return.'

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In other words, the appeal to religious prejudice and to cupidity having failed, this episcopal beggar has now determined to play his last card—if bishops can be imagined playing cards—and see what can be accomplished by threats. Concerning which threat, the obvious comment is one which we venture to borrow

from American colloquialism. In a list of alleged happenings, in which, under the title of 'Latest Newspaper Tatlings,' he caricatures the so-called social items which appear in many American papers, Josh Billings records the following: 'The Rev. Nambly Pamby asked for a 4 thousand dollar hoist in his salary, or dismissal. The congregashun voted unanimus to let him went.' When a petulant Bishop threatens to resign because the country will not plank down £100,000 to help him in his proselytising schemes, the public may quite un-animously agree to 'let him went.'

The Snub Direct

As we explained in our leading columns a couple of weeks ago, the Christchurch Presbytery, at the instance of the Rev. R. Wood, adopted a 'petition,' for presentation to Parliament, against the *Ne Temere* decree; and that gentleman has circularised the various Presbyteries, asking them to take similar action. As already mentioned in our columns, the Dunedin Presbytery unanimously and emphatically declined to do anything of the kind, and gave an unmistakable hint that the whole *Ne Temere* foolishness might now very safely be allowed to drop. The Oamaru Presbytery have now followed suit; and have passed a resolution similar to that adopted by the Dunedin Presbytery. At their meeting last week the Oamaru Presbytery unanimously passed the following motion:—'That as the law of this Dominion as at present enacted is competent to deal with any civil disabilities or injustice the *Ne Temere* decree may inflict, this Presbytery recognises no need for additional legislation in the matter.' The mover (the Rev. Mr. Neave) said that he 'did not deny the right of the Roman Catholic Church to pass such a decree, because the right to make decrees was one of the fundamental claims that the Presbyterians made for themselves—the right of conscience. If they saw that the Church of Rome had inflicted any civil wrong by her decrees they knew that the road to action was on civil grounds, not religious. Let her have her right to make whatever laws she liked for her own people.' And this attitude was, as we have said, unanimously adopted by the Presbytery. That the decision of the Presbytery was approved by the community generally may be gathered from the comments of the local press. The *North Otago Times* of Thursday, in a short leader, thus voiced the viewpoint of the public: 'As a secular newspaper we have no concern with the polity of the Catholic Church. Like other churches it may be left free to manage its own affairs, and as long as it carries these out in conformity with the law it is not the place of the newspaper or the politician to interfere—indeed, to interfere would be an unwarranted piece of tyranny. If all the churches had taken the same sensible view of the position as the Oamaru Presbytery the *Ne Temere* decree would have created only a passing notice. It is a question that affects only the policy of the church, and whether it may be a wise or unwise law it is the church's own affair; there is one thing—it has the right to make it.'

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As our readers will remember, the whole subject of the *Ne Temere* decree was threshed out last year in a controversy between the Rev. R. Wood and the Editor of the *Tablet* which lasted well into three months. Apart from the refutation of sundry wild and glaring misstatements made by this reverend mischief-maker, our principal contentions were (1) that the *Ne Temere* decree in no way affected the legality of the marriages which it condemned, nor the civil status of the parties; (2) that the issue of the decree only involved the exercise on the part of the Catholic Church of a right in regard to marriage legislation which had been already claimed and exercised by other churches, and very notably by the Presbyterian Church; and (3) that as the Pope, in *Ne Temere*, was legislating exclusively for his own spiritual subjects, the decree was a purely domestic affair, in regard to which other religious bodies had neither right nor occasion to interfere. That is precisely the position now taken by the two influential Presbyteries above named; and their decision, so far as it goes, may be regarded as a