

RANDOM NOTES.

"A chief's among ye takin' notes,
And faith he'd prent 'em."

PERRIER I know; Pyke, I have heard of; but who is Carrick? I do not mean he erstwhile of the 'Mercury,' but the blatant orator who, in defiance of propriety and the rather loudly-expressed wishes of the Athenaeum meeting, was so anxious to inform the world that he was "an open and avowed Spiritualist." The fact, I dare say, is a matter of perfect indifference to those not of that ilk; and after the sorry exhibition of Friday evening, the Spiritualists are not to be envied the possession of their apostle. According to Sir Oracle, "the curse of Ireland was that it did not encourage free discussion, and fought over principles rather than argued them." Well, perhaps the charge is not without some truth, and it may be the national failing to fight for the pleasure, and enquire the cause afterwards; but, as a son of the unhappy soil, I can never be sufficiently grateful that Ireland does not encourage "free discussion" after the manner of the Scotch, *a la* Carrick. Eloquence is a powerful motor, but I question if even the oratory of a Carrick, when graced with accompanying yells and hisses, is an improvement on the Celtic mode of argument. That irate censor has declared that the curse of Ireland has been its willingness to fight for, rather than argue, its principles. True, most true; but while not so Hibernically inclined as some of my countrymen, I confess I deem it far more reputable to settle the difference after the recognised Irish fashion, than indulge in the "free discussion" after the Scotch style, of which Mr. Carrick claims to be the exponent. No doubt the favored few upon whose ear fell the dulcet utterances of Friday evening will be sufficiently grateful for the elucidation of the mystery; but as a pendant to such, for the edification of the orator and his audience, I would mention that, as a matter of fact, the curse of Scotland has been a notable deficiency of the combative element so much despised, and a more than sufficiency of patriots of the Carrick stamp.

We have it on the authority of that eminent Hibernian, Sir Boyle Roache, "that no man can be in two places at one time—barring he be a bird;" and perhaps it is the prevailing desire of the members of the Fourth Estate to execute their professional duties "like a bird," that has caused their peculiar hieroglyphics to be termed the winged art. Accommodating as this ubiquity may prove, it sometimes terminates in rather ludicrous results, as in the following instances:—Not long since the Mayor and Aldermen of a certain thriving town had determined to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of a deceased member of the Council, by following his remains to the grave in the official robes of state. The funeral was to have been almost of a public nature, and the programme was, of course, made known to the members of the Press in advance of the proceedings. The son of the honored departed, resident in a distant part of the country, had been communicated with, and the funeral only awaited his arrival. However, at the hour appointed for the starting of the melancholy procession, a telegram was received, stating his inability to reach town before next day, and the obsequies were consequently postponed to that time. This, however, was a part of the proceedings which was not communicated to the local journal, and the following morning the public were astonished to read a graphic account of the proceedings most flattering to the imagination of the writer. With minute particularity were the most telling points dilated upon: "How the grand and imposing appearance of the Mayor was only equalled by the evidences of sincere regret on the countenances of the Councillors; the feelings of reverential awe which seemed to pervade the minds of the masses assembled to view the procession," &c.; and nothing was lost sight of that could heighten the effect of the thrilling recital. Need I say that, when the funeral really did take place, the space allotted to its mention was extremely limited. But, to come nearer home. A case of this dual identity occurred a few days since, by which a gentleman was credited with reciting a certain piece at an entertainment with "pathos, feeling, and effect," of which the pathetic gentleman in question and the delighted audience had not the faintest remembrance. Be that as it may, however, he does not for a moment doubt but that the critic was correct; for was it not in the papers? and everyone knows that the Press, like the "cards, can't lie."

There are few who have not, at one time or other, smiled over the ludicrous effects of the substitution of one letter for another, such as that by which the "bonny bride" becomes the "boney bride;" but amusing, as they no doubt may be to the mass, to the persons more immediately interested they are scarcely so entertaining, and some allowance should be made for such if they fail to see the point. Such a case was that of the disconsolate husband who, upon the death of his wife, forwarded an advertisement to the Melbourne 'Argus,' announcing that "the friends of Mr. Blank were respectfully invited to follow the remains," &c., and found next morning that the careful printer had placed it under the head "Amusements." The writer of this article has a lively recollection of being paid a visit from a burly gentleman, whose profession itself was killing, brought about by circumstances which afforded a deal of amusement to all but the visitor and himself. The facts are these: The visitor was a Knight of the Cleaver, who firmly believed in puffing his wares, which he did in a style sure to attract attention to the cheapness of his mutton. On one occasion I had just received a most glowing advertisement, calling attention to the prices; and, as luck would have it, the same day a notice had been handed in by a squatter on whose run scab had broken out, who, in accordance with the law, published the fact. When the paper appeared in the evening, "Mutton! Mutton!! Mutton!!!" struck the eye; but as if an ominous ending to the boasted superiority so conspicuously vaunted, there followed—"I hereby give notice that all my sheep are affected with scab." "Was a good joke, and nobody relished it more keenly than I, until—next day. The appearance of that

butcher, as he stood before me, eyeing me with a professional gaze, as if he were eager to commence his daily avocations, wrought a material change in the aspect of the affair, and I thought I had "smole my last smile." That those lines are being read to-day has been entirely owing to my nationality and the effect of Blarney's spell; but from that hour I became painfully aware that jokes, no matter how good, fail to please everybody.

Poor Dr. Bakewell has come to the front again, and now as ever he has a grievance, and one with which I can heartily sympathise. The worthy medico, in addressing the members of the Athenaeum, has been saying something very brilliant and witty; but the stupid reporters did not see it, and gave as sober earnest, what its author in writing to the 'Guardian' characterises, as his "his poor little joke." Quite right Doctor, and I as one can testify to the wisdom of the explanation being given; as although I have not yet quite caught the point, I will give you credit for intention. However, if the public will accept the Doctor's word as to it being a joke, there can be no question as to its poorness.

THE ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY.

THE presentation of Verdi's grand composition "Il Trovatore," secured an excellent attendance at the Princess Theatre on Tuesday evening, and to say that it was an unqualified success in every sense of the term would scarcely be doing justice to the performance. There are few operas with the music of which the public are more conversant, but it is also one which is a most trying test to the combined strength of a company, the burden having to be borne by all the characters introduced. Bearing that fact in mind, then, the audience were agreeably surprised at the possession of talent by members of the troupe far in excess of what they had been accredited with. In the trying character of Leonora, it is needless to say Miss May's conception of the part was faultless, and in the prison scene, the terrible anguish caused by the tolling of the death knell and the chanting of the "Miserere" was most natural and touchingly effective. As Manrico Mr. Hallam was never seen to better advantage, the plaintive music being giving with pathos and feeling, to which his very excellent representation of the character gave an additional charm. As the Count di Luna Mr. Templeton was quite at home, and it is a further proof of the manifest injustice of casting him for characters beyond his range. His rendering of "The Tempest of the Heart," was rapturously applauded, and on repeating it, to our mind he excelled his first essay. Miss Florence Howe, as the Gipsy Azucena, quite took the audience by surprise, as from the very trying nature of the character, both as to the acting and music, an impression was prevalent, that she would be found scarcely equal to the occasion, but the fallacy of the conjecture, was most unmistakably admitted by the enthusiastic applause accorded to her during the evening. All the minor characters were played with equal care and attention, and the manner in which every minute particular which would add to the scenic effect had been attended to, proved that the management spares no pains to give a truthful and effective representation of the operas produced. Taken as a whole "Il Trovatore" has been the most successful piece put forward by the company, and that the public can appreciate it at its worth, the loud and frequent enthusiastic expressions of satisfaction would give ample proof. On Wednesday night Balfe's "Bohemian Girl" was reproduced, with Mr. Rainford—who was received with a perfect ovation on his appearance—as Count Arnheim.

REMARKS ON THE PROGRESS OF TOLERATION AT HOME AND IN THESE COLONIES.

FREEMASONS AND CATHOLICS.

SIR, (to the Auckland 'Herald,' per favor NEW ZEALAND TABLET)—You very justly remark upon the dignified and becoming part the Masonic body in England have acted on the, to them trying, occasion of the retirement of the Marquis of Ripon from the craft, consequent on his entering the Roman Catholic Church. The "brethren" in this colony seem to have received the news of the important event with a like edifying equanimity and resignation. They have not given expression to anything indicative of ill feeling towards their late distinguished Grand-master; on the other hand the Catholic body have not shown any unseemly feelings of exultation or triumph on their side. It seems to be felt by both sides that the occasion is far too grave for any display of rude party feeling. The amiable character and unobtrusive habits of the Marquis as a man, and an English nobleman, altogether irrespective of his present or former religion, seem to have forbidden the display of any strong feeling either on the Masonic or Catholic side. In many most important particulars the noble Marquis is the same now as he was before—a devout Christian and high principled English peer, ready to serve his Queen in any civil office to which she may be pleased to appoint him, and anxious to do justice to all his fellow subjects to whatever religious denomination they may belong. His respect for the rights of conscience will not be diminished but if possible increased by his recent change of creed.

You also take an opportunity with reference to this subject to advert to the happy absence of all ill blood between the Catholic and Protestant portions of our society here, a state of things which forms so marked a contrast to that existing in some other parts of the world. This is a matter upon which we may all heartily congratulate ourselves, and the Auckland Press contributed, I think, in no small degree to this gratifying and, I may say, increasing harmony. Scarcely a week, indeed, passes without the Protestant Press and community in these colonies doing some graceful and liberal act toward their Roman Catholic neighbours. One very remarkable instance of this kind occurred very recently in Brisbane,