

AMUSEMENTS.

FRIDAY night last being the opening night of the Fakir of Oolu, there was a marked falling off in the attendance at the Princess Theatre. This was the more to be regretted, inasmuch as the programme was one of more than ordinary excellence, consisting of "Woodcock's Little Game," and the "Critic," in both of which Mr. and Mrs. Hoskins took the leading characters. On Saturday evening, Dion Boucicault's sensational drama of "Formosa" was produced, and it is rarely the rather circumscribed limits of the theatre are made to accommodate such numbers as assembled on Saturday night. Every part of the house was crowded to more than inconvenience, the audience being both appreciative and demonstrative. "Formosa," like most of Boucicault's dramas, though faithfully portraying every-day life, abounds in striking and sensational situations, racy dialogue, and allows good scope for the scenic artist. The principal characters introduced are Major Joram, a man about town; Compton Kerr, an accomplished second-reel; Formosa, Mr. and Mrs. Bowker, Tom Boroughs; and Bob Sanders. The first-named character was undertaken by Mr. Hoskins, who, as the *blase* "man about town," who could not afford to go into debt because no one would trust him, was simply inimitable, his make-up, and bye-play being a study in itself. Miss Colville enacted the part of the repentant Formosa, and sustained the character with her usual ability. As the good-hearted waterman, Mr. Musgrave both looked and acted the character to life, while as his better-half, Mrs. Stoneham deserves the greatest praise. Mrs. Stoneham is always effective, but she was more than ordinarily so on Saturday night. Of late Mr. Keogh has not been overburdened with laudation, but to pass over his representation of Bob Sanders would be a manifest injustice. There are some characters in which Mr. Keogh excels, and we question if there could be many found who could sustain the character in which he appeared in this play with greater advantage. Mr. Booth was the hero, Tom Boroughs, and although we believe not originally cast for the character, he is to be congratulated upon his reading of the part, the Tom Boroughs of Mr. Booth being what the author intended he should be—wild and impulsive, yet with a heart uncorrupted and an honour unsullied. The insignificant part of Spooner, a half-witted, but good-natured sprig of the aristocracy, fell to the lot of Mr. Austin Power, and that he made as much of the character as was possible the repeated applause should testify. During the evening he, in conjunction with Miss Colville, was honoured with a call. It is somewhat strange that a gentleman, possessing undoubted ability, should be so seldom allotted other than subsidiary parts, as on each occasion of his being entrusted with those of importance, he proved equal to the occasion. On Monday evening His Excellency the Governor bestowed his patronage, and on that occasion "The Jealous Wife," and "The Serious Family" were reproduced. Owing, however, to the combined causes of a wet evening, and the indignation meeting of citizens in the Temperance Hall, the attendance was far from good. Both pieces have been presented so recently that it is unnecessary to criticise it, but we may say that those present seemed to thoroughly enjoy their eccentricities, a feeling which His Excellency and Lady Normanby appeared heartily to share.

The Queen's Theatre has been occupied during the week by the Fakir of Oolu, who combines in his entertainment the usual feats of sleight of hand, with other attractions which are new to a Dunedin audience. Principal amongst these is a prismatic fountain, which, by the skilful arrangement of lime lights, assumes a fairy appearance in the diversity and beauty of its variations. Another feature is the suspension of the entranced lady, and although a like performance was exhibited by Madame Cora, the number and picturesque of the positions assumed are not to be compared to the entertainment at the Queen's.

THE COMING CRISIS.

It seems to be a very general, or rather universal, opinion, both in the Press and in private society, that a tremendous crash, a bloody war, is approaching. Yet after all, the thunder clouds may clear off, and sovereigns and people settle their differences by arbitrators or other peaceable means. France, ultra-Protestants tell us, is eager for the fray, and will fight Germany on any pretence whatever. They say it will be a religious war, as religion has been at the bottom of all the great wars since Christianity was first introduced. I am come, says Christ, not to send peace but a sword on earth. One part of the family shall rise against the other, neighbour against neighbour, and this because of the Gospel of Christ. How, then, is Christ the Prince of Peace, the Messenger of the God of Love. The Jew and the infidel say he cannot be. If he were, these wars would not occur among his professed followers. But we must reflect that Christ came to put down injustice and to put down error—by the sword of the spirit, by moral suasion, if possible, but by physical force, if stern necessity should so require. Unjust men and the violent supporters of error cannot and must not be permitted to rule supreme in a world under the Government of a God of justice and truth. The powers that be, the civil and military powers, are ordained by God. They are his ministers and deputies. He has placed the sword of justice in their hands, to be used when necessary to defend the weak against the violence and injustice of the strong. Christ's own was an exceptional case. For his own wise ends God sometimes permits power to pass into the hands of bold, bad men for a time. But such a state of things does not last for any considerable period. For many years, for the last thirty years more especially, Europe has been, as regards its moral and religious condition, in a very bad way. Violent and unprincipled men have got possession of the reins of power, the people are being oppressed and corrupted, and often highly educated, as regards secular instruction, at the same time. The tendency of recent legislation has been to un-Christianise the people, to banish God as far as possible from every public place and institution under State control; to estab-

lish society, in fact, upon Pagan principles; recognizing nothing but utility and a rough natural justice at times, and the power of money and numbers always. Even in England, a country once so famous for her saintly men and women, Christianity has of late received some cruel blows from the dominant party in her State. The sanctity of marriage has been invaded. That sacred bond by which, agreeable to the law of Christ, the wedded pair are knit together till death shall part them, has now been declared by the Legislature of England and of New Zealand to be something very like a mere compact of convenience, which may be dissolved when the parties get tired of each other's company and prefer a change of partners. Ireland, Catholic Ireland, has been spared the humiliation of having such a law placed on her statute book, even without the benefit of "Home Rule." The English Legislature knew well that such a law would be regarded with horror by Catholic Ireland, as sapping the very foundation of domestic purity, and offering an affront to Christianity and to every Catholic wife and husband in the country, not to speak of the young men and maidens. Should war break out and correspond to the magnitude of the preparations made for it, we shall probably see some strange changes in political and ecclesiastical affairs ere we are many years older. When robbers quarrel honest men have a chance to get their own. The Pope may possibly get back what of right belongs to him as one fruit of the next war. Even Bismarck himself, the master of so many legions, seems grievously troubled in his mind about the future Pope, more so than about the present one, who, in the ordinary course of nature, must ere long give place to a successor. Bismarck would fain concert with accomplices to bind the future Pope. The present one, with his constant *non possumus*, he finds quite unmanageable. The world is getting pretty well tired of popular rule or self-rule as at present practised. What is wanted is a strong and a just government in every country—a government with a conscience and a high sense of religious duty. In that case, the Pope must play a conspicuous part in every country, and if Catholics prove true to him, to their principles and themselves, they will form a great and powerful "estate" in every land the sun shines upon. If they prove false they merit oppression and contempt everywhere. We cannot expect peace, order, and justice till all the powers of Europe concert some measure or alliance among themselves, to restrain and punish unprincipled aggressors. The present selfish system of isolation will not pay. Mr Gladstone may have acted with the best intentions, but it is greatly owing to his influence and that of his party of Whig Radicals that the present terrible state of things in Europe exists. What Drs. Manning and Newman have said against him by way of reproach, is mildness itself, compared with what has been said against him by his former friend and predecessor, as leader of the Liberal party, Lord Russell, in his "Recollections" just published. He there represents Mr Gladstone as having reduced England to a mere shopkeeper's establishment, and lowered her in the eyes of the world by associating her with the worst of the European revolutionists. I do not give the words but the import of Lord Russell's reproaches, as I quote from memory. All the aristocrats, all men of property and respectability will come round to the Pope's side. The scum of Europe only will stand out against him. The Press know on which side their bread is buttered, and they too will come round to the right side ere long. The 'London Times' will lead them. After a little coquetting and shuffling they will wheel round, and write as well in favor of the Pope as ever they wrote against him.

THE LONDON PROTESTANT PRESS ON THE GLADSTONE AND NEWMAN CONTROVERSY.

THE 'Pall Mall Gazette' is one of the most talented of the Metropolitan journals. It is liberal even to the verge of rationalistic views in religious matters, and certainly no friend to the Catholic Church. Yet it has formally delivered judgment in favour of Dr. Newman. The bulk of Dr. Newman's countrymen entertain an admiration for his intellectual gifts, only second to their veneration for his moral and spiritual character. Englishmen, he further observes, would have believed on Dr Newman's simple assurance that there was nothing in the Vatican decrees inconsistent with the civil allegiance of Roman Catholics. But when that assurance is conveyed in such a document as his published letter to the Duke of Norfolk, marked with dignity, moderation, antique simplicity, transparent honesty and candor, it must carry conviction to every impartial mind. Had Mr Gladstone's celebrated Expostulation done no other service to the Church but elicit Dr Newman's pamphlet and the 'Pall Mall Gazette's' judgment upon it, we should have been thankful. But it will do more good yet.

The 'Pall Mall Gazette' further adds that Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet was instinct in every line with popular prejudice and passion; while Dr. Newman's letter breathes throughout a spirit of philosophic moderation. "In a word the statesman," he says "has written like a narrow-minded and bitter sectary; and the ecclesiastic has answered him like an enlightened statesman."

The impression made on the Protestant mind of England in favor of Catholic principles by this controversy, now that both sides have been put before them must be great beyond all reckoning.

It would be well for the Catholic press and non-official defenders of the Catholic cause generally, if they would copy in their writings or speeches the moderation, candour, and charity which mark Dr. Newman's letter to the Duke of Norfolk.

The bulk of Englishmen are reasonable and just in their sentiments in spite of their sordid prejudices against the Catholic religion. We must remember that these prejudices are not without excuse. In former ages when power was in the hand of English Catholics it was too often abused for the worst of ends—for purposes the most unjust and cruel. It is no good in answer to say that Protestants were as bad or worse. Protestants are now, and have long been in the ascendant; self-interest leads the press and others to conceal their past faults, and it is natural enough.