

no longer the 'Old Aunt Sally'—to be fired at with impunity by all and sundry—which she once was in the pulpits and press of the Colony. It is not the least of the services which Father CLEARY has rendered to the Catholic community in New Zealand that he has raised religious controversy to a higher and more serious plane, and put an end once and for all to the theological wasp-stings and mosquito bites with which Catholics used to be pestered in the days gone by.

Notes

Some Records.

This is how the American *Journal of Education* chalks up some of the exploits that go to the credit of A.D. 1901, the opening year of the twentieth century: 'No submarine boat had ever been a success until the Holland boat Fulton made her descent the first week in December. No balloon had ever been controllable until Santos-Dumont rounded the Eiffel tower in November. No automobile had ever travelled a mile in a minute until Henry Fournier and Foxhall Keene did it last summer, and not even experts had travelled a mile in less than 55 seconds until November. No horse had ever trotted a mile in less than two minutes and three seconds until Crescens did it last summer. No commercial use had been made of wireless telegraphy until it was used to furnish news of the international yacht race last September. No ship 700 feet long ever cruised the seas until the Celtic was launched in 1901.'

Some Noble Legislators.

The London correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times* is evidently not one of those who obey the injunction to speak respectfully of those who are in authority over us. In one of his letters he recently referred, in a manner which must be thought unbecomingly flippant, to a noble lord who had appeared in some theatricals at a lordly mansion. The papers contained long accounts of the exploit, the 'object being apparently to show how many diamonds and other gems a silly bounder who happened to be a peer of the realm could crowd upon his insane person, and how absurd an appearance he could possibly complete without making the spectators absolutely ill.' He proceeds to remark (indignantly): 'Yet this effeminate simpleton is one of our hereditary legislators, and his vote in the House of Lords is as good as that of Lord Salisbury, or Lord Rosebery, or Lord Roberts, or the Archbishop of Canterbury! Surely one of these days we shall muster up courage to purge our Upper House of such imbeciles, as well as other peers who have demonstrated their utter unfitness for so important a public trust.' Such language comes with the startling effect of the morning shower when the temperature outside is minus 20. The bracing effect comes afterwards when we imagine we see the beginning of the growth of a suspicion that birth does not necessarily confer brains, and that a decision of even so august a body as the House of Lords, arrived at with the assistance of the member referred to, may not be received with becoming meekness.

The Crimes Act.

Cablegrams during the week have informed us of the alleged intention of the British Government to enforce the Crimes Act in some districts of Ireland. It would appear from sources that are absolutely reliable that there is as little justification in the state of Ireland for the enforcement of that extreme measure as there would be for the declaration of martial law in New Zealand. Quite recently in the House of Commons Mr J. Redmond quoted some figures, which were not gainsaid by the Government, and which showed that according to the most recent statistics the condition of Ireland was peaceful. He said that there was not to-day in Europe, nor in the world, any country where crime was less than in Ireland, and so far as the United Kingdom was concerned, Ireland stood far above in this respect England, Scotland, or Wales. For the year 1901 there were recorded in Scotland 339 indictable offences to every 100,000 of the population. In England the number was 239, and in Ireland only 201 per 100,000. Furthermore, in the crimeless country of Ireland double the amount was spent, in proportion to the population, on police compared with what was spent in England. Mayo and Roscommon are the theatres of the Government's coercive energy. In the former there is a population of 233,000, and the total number of indictable offences last year was 193; while in Cumberland police district, with the same population, there were 283; and in Monmouthshire 580. In the county of Roscommon there is a population of 103,000, and the total number of indictable offences was 92; while in Brighton the number was 252. As a matter of fact, agrarian crime has practically disappeared from Ireland. Even the figures quoted include offences which in other

parts of the Kingdom are not considered crimes at all. It is, therefore, very evident that if the Government intend to enforce the Crimes Act, the condition of Ireland affords no pretext for the step.

In Lighter Vein

(By 'QUIP'.)

* * Correspondence, newspaper cuttings, etc., intended for this department should be addressed 'QUIP', N.Z. TABLET Office, Dunedin, and should reach this office on or before Monday morning.

'THERE'S nothing like a little judicious levity.'

R. L. STEVENSON.

A Reform.

The War Office has at last allowed itself to be influenced by public opinion, and has determined to go in for reform. To give an idea of what it can do when it means business, it has issued an order (so the cablegrams tell us) permitting the soldiers to wear spectacles. Spectacles are as much out of place on a man who wears a padded chest and a spiked helmet as a Geisha hair frame would be on a man with a bald head. Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction. And when the idea is fully developed and carried out in its entirety, we shall be able to put an army in the field so thoroughly 'made up' in every respect that a vaudeville soubrette won't be a circumstance in comparison. After a while the soldiers will be allowed to wear glass eyes. Then wooden arms and wooden legs. And then, if the present go-ahead people remain in office, wooden heads and bodies stuffed with sawdust. That would be something like a reformed army. It would be a great improvement upon the armies of former times, when every soldier who wanted to go to battle had to have himself measured for a suit at the foundry. It would be an improvement upon the armies of the present day, when the soldiers fall down as soon as they are shot. Our reformed soldiers won't do that, not even if they are shot through the sawdust, or in the head, or in the glomming, or anywhere. They would simply have to be tied to a paling fence—put on 'picket' duty, as it were—and they would stick to their posts as long as there was a tag of rope to hold them. Imagine the moral effect that would have upon the enemy. But apart from that, the money it would save in the Ambulance and Commissariat Departments should recommend the idea to the public, and stop would-be funny fellows from being sarcastic at the War Office over this spectacle business.

Sofa Cushions.

The following advertisement appeared lately in a Chicago paper:—'Ladies wanted to work on sofa pillows. Materials furnished. Steady work guaranteed. Experience unnecessary. Apply X.Y.Z.' Working on sofa pillows is nothing like working on an empty stomach, though both may be kinds of cruel work. You will notice in the above advertisement that experience is unnecessary. Anyone can make a sofa cushion, especially of the kind that is fashionable at present—one of those that has an affair like a bed valance tacked around the edge. This is its genesis. You start off with the idea of making a blouse. You study the brown paper plans and specifications; buy the rag, and begin. If, when you are two-thirds finished, you discover that you have not enough stuff left, or that you have erred in laying the foundation, you say to yourself that you think you will make a toque or something out of it. If you are not able to do this, you just fill the affair with feathers, and you have a sofa cushion.

*

I should like to know why it is that these cushions are allowed to lead the aimless life that they do, sprawling about on sofas, evidently only to be looked at. You dare not rest your weary head upon them, because the 'kerocene' work, and the bead work, and the other filigree work in high relief will pain your ear unto distraction. And don't imagine that the other side is any better. It may be a little less corrugated. You may be able to rest a while. But when you awake you will, most likely, have a view on the Wanganui River in oils, or a green leaf and the major part of a tiger-lily beautifying your cheek. According to Dooley, General Sherman said that 'th' on'y good Indyun is a dead Indyun.' The only good sofa cushion is a cushion that hasn't been made yet.

Quip

The Railway authorities notify that certain alterations in and additions to the ordinary train service will be made in connection with the Easter holidays. Full particulars will be found elsewhere in this issue...