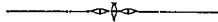


the wash-hand basin before every meal of the smallest amount. The College of Physicians recommended a very cheap and perhaps the most efficient disinfectant in its memorandum. It is made by dissolving half an ounce of corrosive sublimate and five grains of commercial aniline blue in three gallons of water, and adding thereto one fluid ounce of spirits of salt (hydrochloric acid). This forms a valuable disinfectant; but inasmuch as it is a virulent poison, it cannot well be used in the cleansing of cooking utensils.

The question of the public preventive treatment will bring under our notice the whole subjects of quarantine, inspection, and isolation, while some remarks must be made upon the vaccination against cholera, upon which so much work has lately been done both here and abroad, but particularly at the Institut Pasteur at Paris. These form too important a series of points to be disposed of summarily in the remaining space at our disposal, and they must, therefore, be reserved for another article.

E. SYMES THOMPSON.

WALTER S. LAZARUS-BARLOW.



ART. V.—THE CHURCH OF IRELAND AND HOME RULE.

A FEW months since the organist of a Roman Catholic village church in the south of Ireland resigned his situation and was received into the Church of Ireland. He stated, on being asked what had first made him think of taking such a step, that constant observation of the conduct and demeanour of the little flock who worshipped in the Protestant church of his village had convinced him that their faith must be better than his. It was their reverent, solemnized bearing when returning from their worship on Sunday which first impressed this young man, affording, as it did, a contrast to the noisy levity of the Roman Catholic congregation after Mass.

The anecdote illustrates fairly one function which in all parts of the country the Church of Ireland almost unconsciously discharges. It is a witness for truth and peace, for loyalty and order, even when, for many reasons, it fails to be an active instrument of conversion. A clergyman from the West told the writer the other day that he found in his distant mountainous parish that frequent surprised discussions were held among the Roman Catholic people on the question, "How is it that the Protestants are the steady and sober people, and

that all the bad boys are among the Catholics? It is quare any way, and them not having the true religion."

It was observed during the "Invincible" trials some years back by a Nationalist paper that it was very strange that there were none but Protestants in the jury-box; to which a Loyalist paper made retort that it was also strange that there were none but Roman Catholics in the dock.

English onlookers are occasionally scandalized by outbreaks of intolerance among some of the Protestants in the North. But few take notice of the mass of steady, God-fearing, hard-working, truthful people who, living their quiet lives in every parish in the Church of Ireland, and worshipping in little gatherings in hundreds of country churches, are a leaven of society, silently raising the general tone of morals.

A lady of high position in the South of Ireland, a strict Roman Catholic, expressed herself not long since in the rather remarkable words: "The Protestants of Ireland are the salt of the earth; and as for the Roman Catholics, with such priests and such newspapers, how can you expect them to be any better than they are?"

The lower orders also observe the contrast. "Do you think," wrote a poor Roman Catholic man to a friend lately, "that we haven't got our eyes on the Protestant parson of K——? It would do your heart good to see him going every Wednesday evening to his schoolhouse to gather together the few people who belong to him, to teach them and pray with them. But they love one another, and he cares for them more than ever our clergy do."

Even the Roman Catholic clergy can bear their testimony sometimes. Said a woman to her priest: "The parson is looking after Katie. She has taken up with the soldiers of late." "Oh, then," said Father ——, "she'll be all right. She'll be well looked after if Mr. —— is taking an interest in her."

I have referred to these few examples that the reader may reflect on this fact. The Church of Ireland extends the network of its wholesome influence absolutely over the whole country. In all the four provinces, through all the thirty-two counties, there is not an acre of land which is not in the parish of some incumbent of the Church, who is bound to look after the spiritual welfare of its inhabitants if they will receive his ministrations. The Irish Protestant Nonconformists never attempted such an arrangement. The Presbyterian and Wesleyan are in Ireland the most numerous of the Dissenting bodies; but they make no real attempt to occupy all the land. But the Church, continuing its parochial system from the pre-Reformation period, has never retired from any portion of

the surface of the island because of the fewness of members of the Church. The changes forced on us by Disestablishment have, indeed, compelled the aggregation of two, or even three, of the former parishes under one rector; but in nearly every case the old churches of these smaller parishes are still maintained, and the clergyman drives or walks long distances on Sundays to hold services in each. One clergyman of this diocese serves every Sunday two churches twenty miles apart.

These little bands of Church people, the remnants in some cases of flourishing communities, which emigration has reduced to the lowest point, are at once a difficult problem and an unflinching object of care of the Church. Take the case of the Church of —, diocese of Ardfert. The old gray building, with its octagonal tower, stands in an ancient burial-ground, where the graves of centuries have heaped the soil some feet above the level of the church floor. The walls are bare, but clean within. The old square pews would contain eighty or ninety people. But a dozen or fifteen make up the congregation: a couple of farmers and one or two children, three or four stalwart policemen and two or three old widows. There is seldom any singing; the offertory is a few pence. On a festival four or five communicate; £2 or £3 are raised for the sustentation fund. But the clergyman of the parish, who lives some eight miles away, gives up half his Sunday in ministering to this little flock, which cannot be deserted.

This is an example of the extreme cases of duty and difficulty. While these little flocks remain they must be shepherded, and their churches must not be suffered to fall to ruin.

In many other cases the little country church community, of some fifty to a hundred souls, scattered over a large district, with a resident clergyman at their head, is a distinct fact and force in the neighbourhood. Its settled and peaceful existence has been rendered possible by the protection of the equal and firmly administered laws of the United Kingdom. These communities do their part to pay their way, and to maintain their churches out of their own pockets, and, while conscious of the difficulties of their position, rejoice in the liberty of conscience secured to them under the existing laws.

Some will say, "What a pity these troublesome little bands exist! Would it not be as well if they were merged in the mass of their fellow-countrymen, and if their pastor sought some other more useful sphere of labour?" It was actually said to the writer by a well-known English authoress, "Why do you not in these remote places coalesce with the Roman Catholic Church, and have unity and peace?" *Coalesce*—what a beautiful, vague, senseless word!

But the little Protestant flocks do not at all see the reason why they should be extinguished, or should coalesce to produce an apparent smoothness on the surface of society. Nor would it be for the good of the country that they should be absorbed. The incidents which I quoted at the beginning of this article show that the leavening influence of the Protestant element on the society of country places is of real importance. Romanism never is so much on its guard as in the face of Protestantism. It has two sides: the all but Catholic, and the all but pagan. And in the presence of Protestantism the former side is predominant. The silent influence of the Church of Ireland in the land has scarcely been appraised at its true value. The Ten Commandments are read every Sunday at her Communion; they are not read at the Roman Mass. And the results during the week reflect this difference. The Church leavens the land with the influence of the Decalogue. Her members, as a rule, are truthful; they are characterized by industry and self-respect, which, even in the absence of spiritual religion, does a great deal to make the life straight. They do not hough cattle. They do not boycott. They do not burn hayricks. They do not shoot through bedroom windows at sleeping women and children. They do not threaten the life of those who pay their rent.

The relation between Protestant and Roman Catholic in the greater part of Ireland has been for many years past generally friendly. The relation between the educated and loyal portion of the Roman Catholic population and the members of the Church of Ireland has been of the most cordial kind. In fact, the large number of signatures of Roman Catholics to their petition against Home Rule attests the fact that even among members of that Church there is a large section loyal to England, and personally friendly to Protestants. And here I may add the remark that, but for the existence of acute social terrorism, the signatures to that petition in favour of the maintenance of the Union would have been doubled in number.¹

¹ As an illustration of the way in which freedom is destroyed in this country, I give verbatim a letter received on May 3 from a friend in reply to a request that he would obtain signatures to the Roman Catholic petition against Home Rule:

"MY DEAR ———,
"I am sorry I cannot help the petition in the way you suggest. The people are in too much dread, although many of them think little of Home Rule. I wonder there is no attempt made to stop, or at least expose, the efforts made to frighten Roman Catholics from signing against Home Rule, through the medium of the League rooms in the various districts.

But the friendly feeling between members of the Churches referred to above has not been owing to the influence of the priesthood. The influence of the priesthood is a factor which it is not my business here to describe at large. Much light has recently been thrown on the subject in connection with the General Election, Episcopal pastorals and illiterate voters.

But the domination of Rome and her Bishops over the interests of the Protestant minority has under the firm rule of Britain been impossible.¹

We who live in remote places, where the Church population is but 3 or 4 per cent., are well accustomed to the arrogant tone and to the expression of conscious superiority exhibited by most Roman ecclesiastics even now. We watch the continual pressure onward, ever onward; the seizing of vantage ground, never again to be relinquished. We know how impossible it has become for the election to any secular office in which the clergy of Rome have a share to result but as they will. There has been under English law no possibility of worse aggressions.

But we know to what we owe the degree of freedom we have experienced. The position is just this: The preponderating weight of numbers, popularity, race, and ecclesiastical authority has been entirely on the side of the Roman Church. Legislation has long been in their favour. In remote districts our position of subordination is often acutely felt. There are, however, up to the present important compensations which go far to redress the balance.

Let us look at one or two of these, and then judge how far these compensations are likely to remain, if anything like the Home Rule Bill of 1893 should become law.

1. There is the presence of a landed gentry largely consisting of the members of the Church of Ireland. A resident Protes-

“Roman Catholics who are even suspected of signing a petition from this place were summoned before the League, and had much difficulty in clearing themselves; and the names on our petition were sent back to the parish priest for investigation. How can a poor Romanist express his candid views under such conditions?”

“Yours faithfully,
“_____.”

¹ As a *rule*, but not always. Only a few weeks ago a Protestant artisan from Enniskillen was turned out of his employment in County Louth because he refused to walk in procession to do honour to the cardinalate of Archbishop Logue. After a few days public opinion forced his employer to reinstate him, but his fellow-workmen refused to let him come back again, and he was thrown out of work. The comparative rarity of such acts of intolerance is, I am persuaded, more frequently caused by the self-restraint and the fear of giving offence on the part of Protestants, than by any real spirit of toleration on the other side.

tant landlord is in most cases a centre of enlightenment and civilization, a security to all his Protestant dependents and neighbours. His position and character usually command respect. His subscriptions to local charities and to the Church funds are a source of great strength. Whatever cuts off those supplies, whatever paralyzes his arm, whatever forces him to part with his property and to quit the country, will be a very serious blow to the Church. It is the opinion of the wisest that, whatever else may follow the enactment of the Home Rule Bill, the weakening of the present landed interest is certain to result. Already the Church has suffered enormous loss through the depreciation of land values; and it is believed that these losses will be as nothing compared with those which must follow were a Nationalist Parliament let loose on the Land Question.

2. There is the security of the incomes of the clergy which rests on the investments of their capital by the Representative Church Body. The clergy voluntarily commuted their annuities, and the Representative Church Body invested the money, together with the large sums voluntarily contributed by the laity, mainly in Irish railway securities, and in mortgages on land in Ireland. In 1893 the investments were approximately as follows: (1) In railway securities, £3,286,915; (2) in mortgages on land in Ireland, at a little over $4\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., £3,277,341; (3) other securities, £269,957; making in all, £6,834,214.

Whatever may be thought of the investments under the first and third heads—and it is a fact that even the threat of Home Rule seriously depreciated the value of banking and railway securities—the three and a quarter millions locked up in Irish land mortgages must be regarded as a very doubtful kind of property.

The Church receives for clerical stipends at present about £160,000 a year from annual subscriptions and about £300,000 of interest on investments. The Representative Body already reports a suspicious falling off in the latter item. In 1892 the deficit of interest on mortgage loans was only £676 6s. 10d.; in 1893 it has risen to £9,254 9s. 10d. What must we expect it to be when the Land Question has been for a few years in the crucible of an Irish Nationalist and strongly anti-landlord Parliament? What prospect is there that the landlord will any longer have the assistance of the law in enforcing the payment of even reduced rents?

Clerical incomes—and it is hoped the reader will not think the stability of the Church of Ireland is unduly placed on these—will as a matter of course suffer also if the local contributors, who provide about one half of them, decline in

numbers or in prosperity. And if at present in the poorer dioceses it is found to be a matter of difficulty and constant effort to collect the annual subscriptions, the difficulty must be aggravated incalculably by anything which impoverished or expatriated Protestant landlords, withdrew capital from the country, and weakened the relative position and the prosperity of the middle class of the Protestant community.

3. Besides these financial securities, which have been enjoyed under the united Parliament and equal laws, the weaker communities of Protestants in the South and West have been strengthened, and their position, though one of subordination, has been rendered stable from the existence of a general orderliness and quietness, which, except for agrarian outrages, have been secured under a firm Government making its presence and strength everywhere felt. I do not say that the Roman Catholic is kept from molesting his Protestant neighbour by the presence of a policeman with a baton or revolver. Far from it. Quietness and peace, as a rule, prevail between neighbours in the country so long as no agrarian dispute is in question. But I do maintain that the ubiquitous force of the Royal Irish Constabulary has been, as an expression of England's resolution, a silent influence on the side of order and of the protection of the weak. Withdrawn from the country, as provided for by the Bill, and supplanted by a local police, one knows not of what complexion, and under what direction, things might be very seriously altered. The impartiality of the existing royal force is an acknowledged source of social security.

A Protestant shopkeeper, unpopular, perhaps, because he would not sell scapulars or rosaries, or because he employed only Protestant apprentices; an artisan, unpopular because he refused to illuminate his cottage on an occasion of popular rejoicing, or sing in a chorus at a concert for the funds of a convent, or give a subscription to present a crosier to a favourite parish priest on his elevation to the episcopate, may now feel reasonably secure against molestation. The security would be removed with the removal of the Royal Irish Constabulary. What would then have become of the resolution of English law that every citizen must be left free liberty to exercise his religious and social rights?

4. I will refer lastly to the present condition of the Protestant minority in workhouses and hospitals, as illustrating the degree of security which exists now, and which would probably disappear with the coming of Home Rule.

The wards of a country hospital, the rooms of a workhouse in the West, are occupied by a number of poor or suffering people, in the proportion, perhaps, of ninety-eight, Roman

Catholics to two Protestants. These 2 per cent. have under existing laws theoretically perfect protection. The Boards of Guardians still have *ex-officio* members, many of whom are members of the Church, and there is a Church of Ireland chaplain. Even so, the position of a sick man or woman in these institutions, if sincere and hearty in the reformed faith, is far from agreeable. Pictures of the saints, plaster casts of the Madonna, with candles or flowers offered before them, meet his eye at every turn. The rosary is openly said every evening, whether it is painful to him to listen to it or no. He is simply ignored. The nuns are very kind as long as he keeps all his religious sentiments absolutely hidden. But there is really no provision for safeguarding his faith. I do not say there is open aggression; it is not common. But that it would be much pleasanter for him were he one of the majority is not to be doubted. Under a new *régime*, with no more *ex-officio* Guardians, with Rome supreme and her clergy triumphant, it will be no wonder if in workhouses and hospitals many defections occur.

And I may add under this head that the danger will be considerable, both within and without such public institutions, that the Church may lose some of those nominal members who cling to her, as they will to any popular Church, when her position in any part of the country becomes difficult. What if, in some distant village, there is but one Protestant shopkeeper, and that he foresees an access of popularity and cash if he goes with the majority? There are, unhappily, even now, weak-minded Churchmen who, in making mixed marriages, heedlessly sign any paper which may be handed them by the ever-watchful priest to sign, and who afterwards find that they have hopelessly enmeshed themselves and their children after them. These are now the grief and trouble of their clergy. This bad tendency even now exists, but it is sure to be aggravated if the result of legislation be to emphasize yet further the strength of the majority in the distant parts of the country.

Nor should the Church be too hardly judged for confessing the occasional weakness of its hold over such as these. The pressure which will be brought to bear on the weak-minded and the isolated to go with the stream must be duly estimated. The critic must not too hastily condemn us for expressing fears of defections under Home Rule. Consider the point. It is one peculiar to Ireland. It is the fixed principle of Rome to require religious qualifications to secular offices, and to use worldly pressure to procure conformity. The tendency will not grow less when the Roman ecclesiastic increases his influence in Parliament and in civil appointments in town

and country. The candidate who is a Churchman will be handicapped by his religious profession. If he is steadfast in his faith he will be inclined to seek employment in other countries; if he is weak he will yield in not a few cases. Under either alternative the Church will be the loser.

The above may seem a pessimistic view of things. I cannot help that. There is not a line written above which does not seem to be warranted by experience. In a ministry of over thirty years, abundant opportunity has been offered of studying the wonderful system with which we are confronted in this country. This experience does not teach one to trust Rome or to think her system straightforward. If I have had cause to grieve over some half-dozen defections to Rome I can honestly say that in none of these cases was there reason to suppose honest conviction to have been the cause of the change. The element of truth and honour seemed wanting in each case. Do not expect candour in controversy or toleration in conduct from that organized foe of the Church of Ireland. Do not look there for the spirit of liberty. And what is to prevent the two chambers of which our proposed Irish Legislature is to be composed being largely manned by Roman Catholic ecclesiastics? Is there any safeguard in Mr. Gladstone's Bill against such a contingency?

Let me take, ere I close, a somewhat wider view of the past and future. There were days of Church intolerance on our side in Ireland. The pamphlets of the time of the Revolution, preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, throw a painful light on the spirit and acts of the Established Church at that epoch. We confess it. The penal laws were a crime; they were worse, they were a mistake. Under them the sympathies of most Irishmen went solid with the oppressed clergy, the clergy of the Italian mission, introduced in the seventeenth century, when those of the old Irish succession adopted the Reformation. It is doubtful whether the Church of Ireland ever repented sufficiently for the intolerance of those bad days. It was, however, rather the act of the State than of the Church. But undoubtedly those were the days of religious intolerance, and the Church did not expostulate. Penal laws were the bad fruits borne by the tree of half-belief. Trust in God and trust in truth must have been at a low ebb when it was sought thus to convert the Dissenter and the Papist.

But steadily the demands of the oppressed, seconded by the enlightening conscience of England and the growth of the spirit of liberty, have removed all religious and social disabilities; and the Irish Roman Catholic stands absolutely on

a level in the eyes of the law with his Protestant fellow-countryman. A Parliament in which parties are fairly balanced still rules the land. But now an accidental majority, wholly due to Ireland, dictated to by a leader of extraordinary if strangely perverted gifts, threatens, this year or next, to throw the balance of power entirely into the hands of a party which, whether viewed in the light of its ecclesiastical or its social aims, Irish Churchmen must regard with the extreme of distrust.

The changed position of the Church anticipated above will of course be felt mainly in her outlying dioceses, of which this article exclusively treats. Where she has the strength of numbers, she will be well able to resist adverse circumstances.

Will these changes, if they come, destroy the Church in the South and West? It has been sometimes rashly averred of late on platforms that they will. The forecast is not a worthy one. A Church may suffer and yet be strong. The faith which rests on the Arm of the Lord may be strengthened in adversity. And times of social distress may purify her. More ripeness may be given by the frost to the grain than what it might have gained by the summer-heat of prosperity. The Church of Rome in Ireland not only survived through, but was strengthened by, adversity. We have no desire to court further humiliations, but we were never better organized to meet them than now; and even if further distressed by Acts of Parliament, we need not tremble for our Church's life. We have survived more than sixty years of adverse Acts of Parliament, from the Act of 1832, which hacked at the Episcopal Bench, to that of 1869, which cut down the upas-tree. But the Church has undoubtedly been gaining in spirituality, in energy, in private liberality, in her support of missions, in the freedom of discussion in her synods, and even in her relative numbers as compared with the Church of Rome.

And therefore, even should the dangers arrive which now threaten in the form of a legislation going far beyond any that has preceded, and placing the balance of power permanently in hands traditionally hostile to her, her humble, faithful watchwords must be, "Sursum Corda" and "They be more that be with us than all that be against us."

If she is destined to lose some few of the least spiritual of her own members, who may prefer gain to godliness, it is not to be doubted that, purified by adversity, she will gather to her side, to worship with her in her services of Scriptural and Catholic purity, not a few of the most spiritual and thoughtful of those who now feel their allegiance to their Church sorely strained by the political ecclesiasticism of Rome.

A DIGNITARY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.