

ART. VI.—THE CHURCH OF ROME AND THE LAND WAR IN IRELAND.

THE correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal* gives an account of the interview of the Irish Bishops at Rome with the Pope :—

The audience of the Irish Bishops with Leo XIII. took place on Wednesday, Nov. 10, in the Vatican. The Pope having recovered from a temporary ailment, granted audience to six Prelates—viz., Archbishop Cashel, Bishops Limerick, Ross, Cloyne, Kerry, and Bishop-elect Kingston, Canada, late P.P. Dungarvan. His Holiness, after dwelling upon the manifold evils of the Church, pointed to his own position as a prisoner in the Vatican, subsisting on the alms of the faithful sent from different countries. Indeed his needs were supplied as by a miracle. Archbishop of Cashel, Dr. Cooke [he of the "*laborantem agricolam*" argument,] as chief spokesman, now presented their offering of *Peter's Pence*, offering at the same time their heartfelt acknowledgments for the promptitude and liberality displayed by his Holiness in sending a donation in aid of the distress of Ireland. After sundry complimentary interchanges, the Pope asked to be told something concerning the agitation now reigning in Ireland. The Bishops then explained that agitation was the usual mode by which the people expressed their demands for great reforms. The Pope then observed that he had two matters especially at heart—the one was the preservation of the faith in Ireland, the other was that the union between priests and people be carefully preserved, and that no revolutionary principles take root among the Irish Catholics. The Bishops then assured his Holiness that they only wanted by a legal and constitutional agitation to force the Government to change the laws by legislation, and thus to make substantial change in the relations between landlords and tenants, so disastrous in past ages to Ireland.

The offerings of Peter's Pence then ensued :—

Cashel	.	.	.	.	.	£2,766
Cloyne	.	.	.	.	.	1,065
Limerick	.	.	.	.	.	860
Kerry	.	.	.	.	.	400
Ross	.	.	.	.	.	360
Waterford	.	.	.	.	.	1,350
Down, &c.	.	.	.	.	.	300

£7,001

In addition to this the Bishop of Meath [Dr. Nulty, of whom more anon] brought £1,650, raising the Pence up to £8,651.

It was mentioned that in the districts where the agitation was remarkable, the attendance of the people at religious functions was not diminished, not even in Limerick on the day after the Parnell meeting.

If it be asked, what was the origin of the payment of Peter's Pence, and when was it actually imposed upon Ireland?—the learned author of "Fables respecting the Popes in the Middle Ages" finds positive internal evidence in the Donation of Constantine itself, strong enough to prove it to have been of Roman origin between 750 and 774 A.D., and adds that "to the best of his knowledge there are no Papal documents extant, with the exception of the one about Ireland, in which the payment of tribute is demanded of the whole realm on the strength of the donation of Constantine, and the Papal chair claimed possession of an island which the Romans themselves had never possessed and had scarcely known. This was done by Hadrian IV., an Englishman by birth, and at the desire of the English king, Henry II., the Pope conferred on him the dominion over the island of Ireland (1155), which, "like all Christian islands, undoubtedly belonged of right to St. Peter and the Roman Church. And, indeed, England has paid heavily enough for being an accessory to so great a fraud, and for sharing the fruits of such an imposition put forward by an intrusive Church. And the full measure of this retribution does not seem altogether exhausted as yet, nor the strong purpose to act in partnership with the Papal power in the government of Ireland. The infallibility of the Sovereign Pontiff is deeply concerned, as well as his supremacy, in this matter. This latter claim touches not alone doctrine, but also discipline. Faith and morals are the Pope's special concernment, and his rights as Universal Bishop entitle him (wherever the Bull *Pastor Aeternus* is promulgated, at least is accepted with allowance) to intervene in all human affairs, be they secular or be they sacred, all the world over. He is now Universal Bishop, and every Bishop and Priest is subject to the Pope directly, and may accordingly be dismissed without apology or any account being given—in fact, without appeal. And there is in this wide claim over human action, whether of priest or of layman, the "intrusion of an external authority between the ruler and the subjects;" and, in a word, "the Church of Rome has brought itself into direct and visible antagonism with civil allegiance throughout the world." With Papal supremacy and infallibility thus deeply concerned and thus vitally implicated, there need be no wonder felt that the Pope should make all the inquiries in his power, and issue his sovereign commands to his Irish agents and subjects on the engrossing theme of the relations of landlord and tenant in unhappy Ireland. Addressing "his venerable brother, Edward McCabe, Archbishop of Dublin, Primate of Ireland," the Pope writes to the following effect:—

After enumerating certain reasons for entertaining paternal benevolence for the Catholics of Ireland, at the same time he unhesitatingly

declares that it is their duty to be carefully on their guard not to allow the fame of their sterling and hereditary probity to be lessened, and not to commit any rash act, whereby they may seem to have cast aside the obedience due to their lawful rulers, lest by a disregard of moderation, justice might be violated, or the cause, however right in itself, be forced by the influence of passion into the flame of sedition. Referring to his former expressions in June and November, he warns the Irish people to obey the Bishops, and in no instance deviate from the sacredness of duty. And while he ardently desires every good gift for the people of Ireland, he also adds that order should not be disturbed. This manner of thinking and acting he pronounces entirely conformable to the ordinances and laws of the Catholic Church, and equally conducive to the interests of Ireland; (that) Ireland may obtain what she wants much more safely and readily if only she adopts a course which the laws allow, and avoids giving causes of offence. And he closes with warning that the Archbishop and his colleagues direct their efforts to the end that the people of Ireland in the anxious condition of affairs do not transgress the bounds of equity and justice.

This letter was followed by another, in which "Edward, Archbishop of Dublin," gives his opinions on the subject, and from this a sentence or two may be taken to prove how far this prelate at least re-echoed the voice of his Infallible Master:—

An attempt may be made to distort the words of His Holiness, and to make it appear that the Holy See is hostile to the demand of the country for the repeal of harsh laws which have brought misery and crime among us for long generations. Is this the object of the letter of the Holy Father? Most certainly not. He knows the injuries inflicted on our people by the present land code, and he prays that these injuries may be speedily redressed by a change in the laws from which they flow; but whilst he blesses our determination to obtain justice for an oppressed tenantry, *there are in the agitation, as carried on, things which he cannot approve.* No better exponent of the Holy Father's views can be had than the Holy Father himself, who draws a *wide distinction between the end aimed at and some of the means employed to achieve that end.*

The people, he said, should be encouraged in doing what was right. In the present agitation, as carried on, there were certain things which he could not approve of. The people should be duly impressed with the duty of keeping always within the bounds of law.¹

We must now request the reader to take note of the limitations clearly laid down by the Sovereign Pontiff, both upon the objects to be sought and the means to be used by the Irish in their "agrarian difficulties." "Probity" was to be observed, which it is clear pointed to honesty in the payment of rents due, and

¹ The letter of the reigning Pontiff bears date January 2, and Archbishop M'Cabe's is dated January 9; and both were first published in Ireland in the *Freeman's Journal* of the 10th.

“moderation” was to be practised so as to avoid rash acts and rebellious or seditious movements against the constituted rulers, such as erecting unauthorized tribunals, using popular violence, or practising intimidation. They were also to obey their Bishops (on the assumption that these Bishops would advise them as above). And in fact they would have neither “luck nor grace” unless they proceeded in conformity with the regulations of the Catholic Church and the laws of their own country. All this was clearly against the Land League, just as Dr. McCabe had also previously denounced its immoral, irreligious, and illegal objects and methods of action. This manifesto of the Pope, however, met with scant respect, and even Archbishop McCabe’s pronouncement in re-echo was curtailed audaciously by some of his own curates in the public reading of it.

We must now give a brief account of a very different kind of document, which filled four pages of the *Freeman’s Journal* (the great organ of the Romano-Irish priests and hierarchy). Extensive citation from this document is needless, as the writer, in words beyond mistake, has committed himself to the principles and modes of procedure of the Land League, making only a reservation against deeds of violence and scandalous escapades, &c. &c. He eulogizes Mr. Parnell “for providing a thoroughly effective remedy (for the evils Mr. Gladstone could not cure, while he greatly stimulated them)—namely, a voluntary and peaceable combination of tenant farmers to obtain their just right, accompanied by a stern but discriminating ostracism of traitors.” That there is no overstrained interpretation in all this will be manifest from the comment of the *Freeman’s Journal*—that nothing can be bolder and firmer than the eulogy which the Bishop bestows on the Land League. The *Nation* even goes further; and to crown all, the chairman of the Land League exults in the adhesion of Bishop Nulty; and a Mr. Moore, at the Clara monster meeting, called, and not in vain, for a unanimous vote of thanks to the Right Rev. Dr. Nulty, of Meath, for “his magnificent advocacy of the principles of the Land League.” And to make it still more evident, not only that Dr. Nulty, but the great body of the Irish priests (if not also of the Bishops), concurred, we have now only to quote the *Irish Times’* report of words used by the reverend chairman of a meeting of the Central Committee of the Land League held in Dublin:—

The priests of the country are determined to take such decisive action that it would be impossible for the Government to pass them over and arrest other people, so that the Government must bear the responsibility, if they act thoroughly, if they are not cowards—as I believe they are—of arresting the priests in our country in the forefront of this battle. Then, having arrested us and put us in prison I say they will touch a chord in the Irish heart that has not yet vibrated

It will strike a new key when the Government arrests the priests of the country. We dare them to do their worst, and we say this because of our devotion to the Land League principles, and because we do not wish our people to suffer while we are safe. I say that, in speaking these words, I speak not only my own sentiments, but the sentiments of the priests of the whole country, who are heart and soul with this League movement, and are determined to stand or fall by it until such time as they have *planted the banners of victory upon the ruins of landlordism in this country.* (Applause.)

Instead of abstract criticism we may give some facts, also some expressions of high legal authorities upon the several characteristic items of the Land League programme as played out in furtherance of the object which it aimed at securing.

And first of all, in reference to *the unwritten law* set up against the Law of the Queen, which displays itself in the emphatic condemnation and censure by which public opinion visited any one who had the rashness to run counter to the expressed wishes and desires of the whole community—it must be remembered that Mr. M. F. O'Flaherty, a Co. Galway gentleman, has given the following accurate description of the Land League laws, and the manner in which they are worked. He writes, *Daily Express*, March 21:—

That he believes it is correct to say that so far as the written rules of the Land League are in question they may be regarded as what is legal; but it is the *unwritten law* of this body which is really operative and effective, and this prescribes ostracism the most cruel against those who refuse to obey its orders, and higher degrees of punishment still for persistent contumacy against its edicts. Obedience, implicit obedience, is demanded from all, otherwise, the boasted cohesion and loyalty would have no basis to rest upon. Thus the well-to-do tenant—the man who is happy in his home and his relations with his landlord—must now, as a matter of absolute personal safety, stand side by side with the idle, the worthless, and the outcast, to try and help this class to force by threats and falsehood concessions from the landlord—who has ever been a loser by the connection.

The Prelate, however, says: "The assertion, therefore, of the tenants' claims *cannot* lean on crimes of lawlessness, but it must regard the perpetrators of these wicked deeds as its deadliest enemies." This is all very fine on paper, but, as a matter of fact, the assertion of these "claims" proceeded to such a pitch of intolerable lawlessness as to necessitate the passing, by a Liberal Ministry, of the Act for the Protection of Life and Property, also an Arms Act for Ireland. The Prelate again expatiates, in a sublime generalizing way, upon "public opinion," and pronounces it "just, discriminating, ubiquitous, active, vigilant, &c. It can never fail to discover and censure real offenders, and it can never punish any one unjustly, for a whole

community can never conspire or chastise with the censure of public opinion any one who does not really deserve it."

We now present from Mr. Serjeant Heron's speech at the State trials the following extract:—

What was the language of the placard at Bohola?—

"Traitors in the Camp!

"A year has now passed by since you pledged yourselves never to take a farm from which another had been evicted or surrendered because he was unable to pay the rent. Have you adhered to and supported that pledge? Banish the land sharks from the society of honest men. Leave their corn uncut, their potatoes undug, and themselves to wither under the people's curse along with the land-grabbers."

That placard was repeated at Miltown, and ended with "Look out for land sharks—God save Ireland!" If this was not a conspiracy the learned Serjeant did not know what it was. The traversers themselves admitted the conspiracy. Convict them on the evidence; acquit them if they could.¹

Mr. Forster has laid it down that the non-payment of rent was mainly due to the teachings of agitators, who were misleading the people. We give now the citation issued by a Land League Court, as a specimen of the unanimity of "public opinion":—

DEAR SIR,—After our meeting this day, the following resolution was unanimously adopted and carried:—Resolved that Mr. E. Kelly, of Knocknahilla, be written to by our secretary, calling on him to appear personally to give explanations to the enclosed statistical Complaint of Grievance, 16th Dec. 1880.

The Land League requires the personal attendance of all parties concerned, &c.

J. O'BRIEN, *Hon. Sec.*

The following resolution was unanimously carried:—"That Mr. Kelly be written to by our secretary to abide the decision of the League. Your personal attendance is required on 20th inst., to give your adhesion to the above resolution."

These men were tried at Ennis assizes, but got off free. As to co-operation, a well-known P.P. used these words as chairman of a large Sunday meeting:—

Although they had been charged by Judge Fitzgerald—(groans)—with crimes they had never committed, still it was their duty for their own conscience's sake never to be guilty of any crime, never to touch the

¹ Mr. Serjeant Heron read passages from the pastoral of Archbishop McCabe warning the people against committing crime of any description. He read that pastoral without note or commentary. Those sentiments the Archbishop had expressed in the canonical discharge of his duty, to be read from the altars throughout the country on a particular Sunday; and when his Grace's name was mentioned at the meetings there was a cry, "Away with him! away with him!! Down with him! down with him!"

hair of the head of any landlord, agent, or bailiff, but to maintain a passive resistance to all unjust laws. In the face of the Coercion Act, shun the land-grabber, avoid him as the Jews of old avoided the leper—(great cheering).

Mr. Justice Fitzgerald at Tralee explained the system thus:—

The general system he found pursued was that they had determined beforehand, and it was one of those remarkable signs of a wide-spread organization in this country, that they meet at a given point, armed and disguised, and the evicted tenant is apparently put by force into possession. . . . And the reinstated occupier is put in possession, and when asked to give it up, says, "I cannot give it up, because the Land Leaguers in the neighbourhood would come down on me."

Judge Barry, at Limerick Assizes, can only exclaim in a certain case:—

"Another of the discreditable scenes! Trial by jury all over Ireland is a farce and a mockery, and so in Limerick county too. And I, as a Limerick man, say with pain and humiliation that the parties who have come into the jury-box are either perfectly incapable of understanding evidence, or determined, while understanding it, to *violate their oaths and not act upon them.*"

Here is more of the coercion of the unwritten law, and "of public opinion more just and discriminating, than its public instructors—for, *a whole community can never conspire or chastise with the censure of public opinion anyone who does not really deserve it.*" So says Dr. Nulty.

The next case is that of James Walsh, charged with having conveyed a threatening message about giving up a farm. The defence was that the prisoner was obliged, at the risk of his life, to convey the message in obedience to the command of an armed party. Judge said this was no defence. Jury acquitted. Judge exclaims, "This out-climaxed all the extraordinary jury scenes in that court!"¹

And now we come to another feature—namely, mutual hostilities and downright insubordination among the higher ecclesiastics of the Roman Mission in Ireland. The most notable exhibition in this way relates to a letter which was sent to the

¹ The following exhibits an hyper-climax to the above out-climaxing exhibition. Mrs. and Miss Moore stand their trial for forcible possession of a house from which for non-payment of rent they had been ejected. They plead compulsion by a party of armed men, who assault and eject occupants, and compelled a man in occupation to entertain them with dance music on his fiddle. After a lively dance, the representatives then bind the man of the house and his wife together with ropes, swear him never to return, cut off some of his whiskers, which they hand as a trophy to Mrs. and Miss Moore, and then batter the poor ducks against the wall as a "memento mori," and depart. The jury acquitted; "for a whole community can never conspire or chastise with the censure of public opinion any one who does not really deserve it."

Pope—not in reply—but as an original independent opinion volunteered on the subject of the appointment of a Papal Legate in England.¹

Then came the battle over the ladies, in which Archbishop M'Cabe is an assailant and Archbishop Crooke a vigorous defendant. The language in both instances is very violent. The Eatanswill editors are outdone by the Irish Archbishops. Then we have the battle of the Cork priests. The Bishop rusticates them, and Archbishop Crooke intervenes in their behalf. The parishioners collect £250, and the matter is referred to Rome. And the last news is that Archbishop Crooke has had to apologize in writing.

Yet all this is but a small thing compared with the fact—which nothing but perverse contentiousness can deny—that the land war in Ireland is nothing short of a war of religion and race, and the extinction of the old Church of Ireland, by the expulsion and beggaring or levelling of the landlords, is the consummation that is so devoutly aimed at and pursued. And the sore and sad preliminary effects of this land war are already apparent in the western and southern dioceses of the Irish Church; in which the annual sustentation funds are in a state of deficit, and many of the clergy are noticed as liable to reductions upon their already slender stipends. The impoverishment of the landlord class, and their being in so many instances, along with their families, forced to leave their happy homes, must inevitably reduce the number of attendants upon the churches; and the voice of prayer and praise shall cease to be heard in our midst, lifted up to heaven in the sweet pure words of holy and classic harmony, in which saints and martyrs and men of God presented the highest aspirations of their souls with blessed acceptance before the throne of grace.

These are no alarmist tones—these are no promptings of cowardice nor visions of imagination. Unless England wants to lose Ireland, the loyal subjects of one class must not be despoiled and degraded to carry out the sham theories of land tenure which have proved impossible of realization elsewhere. Let justice be done all round, and neither the gentlemen nor Churchmen will repine at the results.

PHILIP DWYER.

¹ The atheist affair at Paris, and Mr. Parnell's intimacy with M. Rochefort and Victor Hugo, extracted from Archbishop M'Cabe a stinging censure in his Lenten instructions against "seeking allies from the ranks of impious infidels, who have plunged their own unhappy land into misery, and are sworn to destroy the foundations of all religions. Will Catholic Ireland tolerate such an indignity?"