

LORD RIPON AND FREEMASONRY.

THE following letter appeared in the 'Scotsman' of Sept., 26th:—

"SIR,—With your kind permission I wish to make a few remarks on the first part of your leading article in the 'Scotsman' of September 21, on Lord Ripon and his connection with Freemasonry, reserving, perhaps, the second part, on the "Political Relations and Prospects of British Roman Catholics," for a future occasion. You made a statement anent Lord Ripon's conversion which I consider, from my point of view, unwarrantable, charging him, as it does, with the worst kind of mental dishonesty, of hypocrisy or dissimulation, or lying, for it comes to that to say that 'he treats as evil what he knows to be good, and condemns as guilty those whom he knows to be innocent.' Lord Ripon was a Freemason—he thought there was no harm in Freemasonry; he becomes a Catholic. Now the Catholic Church condemns Freemasonry, and in becoming a Catholic he must condemn it also. Not altogether because he sees any harm in it—well, perhaps not—but because the Church condemns it, and once you admit the infallibility of the Church, there is no great mental aberration in submitting your judgment, which you know may be wrong, to the judgment of the Church, which you know cannot be wrong. You err in judging Lord Ripon from your own stand-point—not from his. You say that the mental aberration is in acknowledging the Church's infallibility; but that is not the question. But what if Lord Ripon now condemns Freemasonry as bad because he believes it to be bad, although at one time he thought it was good? You say, indeed, that he still holds it to be good, but you do not pretend to give any reason for your assertion. It surely cannot be that he still holds it to be good because he formerly held it good. The same reason can be applied to his conversion itself; for at one time he held Protestantism to be good. Can any one imagine that he still holds it good, although as a Catholic he is bound to condemn it as evil? If he still holds it to be good, he is a greater fool than I take him to be in not sticking to it, when he gains nothing but loses all by condemning it.

"But why does the Catholic Church condemn Freemasonry? Because it is forbidden by the Third Commandment—'Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain.' The Catholic is taught in his Catechism that by this Commandment 'are bidden all false, rash, unlawful, and unnecessary oaths.' Freemasonry is founded on a rash oath. Therefore the Church condemns it. Therefore, although it does no other harm, one cannot become a member of the society which he cannot join without taking a rash oath, and therefore, *a pari*, one cannot continue in the society which compels others to take such an oath without becoming accessory to their sin, and therefore Lord Ripon was compelled in conscience to withdraw from Freemasonry. Was he wrong in joining Freemasonry first of all? I do not say he was, because he acted in good faith, but on becoming a Catholic he was taught that the oath he took was a rash oath, and so he now treats as evil what he knows to be evil. Does he 'condemn as guilty those whom he knows to be innocent?' He condemns no one, but trusts that other Freemasons are as innocent in the matter as he was himself when he acted in good faith and knew no better. Is it true that Freemasonry compels its members to take a rash oath? It compels them to take God to witness that they will observe something—when they do not know what that something is—and that is a rash oath, and sinful. I once said to a Freemason—Tell me what the oath is, tell me first what I must observe, and I will take it if I think it right. He said, No. Take the oath first, and we will tell you afterwards. A rash oath. I did not take it, and so am NOT A FREEMASON."

MONUMENT TO THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER.

WE are rejoiced to see that in Waterford, the loved city of his birth, there is a movement afoot for erecting a monument to Thomas Francis Meagher. Ireland cherishes with pride the memory of "the men of '48." They were rash; they were unwise; they indulged in dreams and phantasies; they disregarded the counsels of the great chief and tribune and statesmen who had led Ireland out of a more than Egyptian bondage. But if they loved Ireland not wisely, they loved her well. In the material world they effected nothing—in the mental world much. They wreathed the cause of Ireland with an evergreen garland of eloquence and song which will be green for all time, and which makes the cause that it encircles as deathless as itself. The men of '48 made the cause of Ireland a centre of interest to civilised Europe, and endowed it with a grace, a buoyancy, and a brilliancy which it never can lose. Ireland has by more than one conspicuous and public testimony shown that she does not forget what she owes to those children of hers, glorious in their very errors, to whom much is to be forgiven—*quia multum amaverunt*. A fine statue of O'Brien graces one of the best sites in the metropolis. Davis sleeps at St. Jerome, beneath one of the noblest of Hogan's marbles; and now Waterford is about to reproduce in marble or bronze the graceful form and open brow of the Irish Alcibiades. The career of Thomas Francis Meagher closed at an age when other men have only ripened into maturity. Greater men have sprung from the Irish earth—none more interesting and captivating. Heaven had tipped his lips with the golden fire of true eloquence, and hundreds will still recall the thrill with which they yielded to the irresistible eloquence of the wondrous boy who, a quarter of a century ago, blazed like a meteor across the Irish sky. Endowed with gifts which would have secured for him the proudest place ambition has ever coveted, Meagher gave to Ireland all he had to give—his eloquence, his fortune, his future, his liberty. For her, the idol of his generous heart—he stood in the dock, he dared the gallows, he trod the convictship, he died in far-off exile. In that land of exile he upheld the national honor—he maintained the high reputation of Ireland in the field and at the council-board. His career was not free from errors,

but time has obliterated their memory. Ireland only remembers the brilliancy of his genius, the depth of his patriotism, the tender love and devotion he always cherished for her.—'Freeman.'

GENERAL NEWS.

Religious persecutions seems to have taken new life in Turkey. Not only is the observance of the Mahomedan ritual made obligatory on the Turks, but it has recently been decreed that Christians shall no longer live in the Turkish quarter of Constantinople. The police have ejected a great many Christians from Stamboul in a very brutal manner and without the least ceremony. They were turned out of their houses without warning, and their furniture thrown into the streets. It is to be observed that several German residents have been the victims of this highly disagreeable procedure. According to a decree published in 1840, the law prohibiting Christians living in the Turkish part of the city was repealed. M. Bismarck, who rejoices in persecuting Catholics and Protestants alike, does not seem to have deigned hitherto to inquire into this matter.

Whatever propriety there may be in the first part or the title selected for his newspaper, nobody can deny that Parson Talmage is very hard "at work" in it. The labor he must undergo in the production of his facts alone would suffice to weaken the most muscular of "Christians." He has just been obliged, in the conscientious performance of his arduous duties, to make Dr. Dollinger's friend, the Count Von Arnim, an "Ultramontane" and "a leader of the reactionary and Ultramontane movement." His congregation should give Mr Talmage some little time for needed relaxation. He will hardly be able to bear much longer the brunt of the manufacture of so many new "facts" as his emergencies seem to call for. So far as he is concerned, his readers still believe that the Jesuits burned Joan of Arc, and that Pope Pius IX. reigned a thousand or more years ago, and denied the immortality of the soul. And now he says that Von Arnim is "an Ultramontane!" Mr Bergh will be compelled to interfere soon in the interests of this overworked —.

The 'Germania' gives the following account of the manner in which the priests imprisoned at Newweid are treated. It must be remembered that their only crime is that of performing their priestly duties, and refusing to disobey the laws of the Church:— "On their arrival in prison each priest was closely searched. He was stripped of coat, waistcoat, and shoes, and minutely examined. They felt his breast, back, legs, even his toes. Then a door was opened for each of them, and he was left in solitary captivity. The cells are twelve feet by six, containing only a bench and a stool. A little semi-circular window lets in a scanty light through eighteen iron bars. In the day time there was not even a palliasse in the room; for the bed, consisting only of palliasse, straw pillow, sheet, and one blanket, was brought in at night and removed in the morning. Until the priests were permitted to board themselves, they were compelled to live on bread and water, with a little potato soup for dinner, and twice a week three or four ounces of meat. They could never see each other, and their hour's walk in the court yard was in solitude. Their reading was subject to the strictest scrutiny; three or four days each one of them was without books or paper, and two of them were deprived of their breviaries for three days. They were not only deprived of saying mass, but even from hearing it. Such is actually the treatment of those priests who will not break their oath to their Church and their Bishops. In spite of all, their courage and cheerfulness never fail.

Signor Rosa, whom the London 'Times' calls "a great archaeologist," and who has been commissioned by the Italian Government to superintend the excavations at present in progress in the Roman Colosseum, has been guilty of telling a great untruth. Signor Rosa was formerly a servant in the family of Prince Boghese. He quitted the service of the Borghese to enter that of Napoleon III., who appointed him superintendent of the excavations he had undertaken in the Palatine in the palace of the Cæsars. Up to 1870 he always pretended to be exceeding Catholic in his sympathies, and paid obsequious court to the different bishops and prelates. Since that unhappy date he has been the devoted friend and servant of King Victor Emmanuel and his Ministers, and has been raised by them to a very conspicuous position. The other day Cardinal de Bonnechose was in Rome, and visited the Colosseum. He had scarcely been in the building ten minutes before Signor Rosa came up to him, and politely offered to escort him around the buildings. But his Eminence, with equal civility, declined the honor. Rosa persisted, and at last, to get rid of him, the Cardinal turned round and said sharply, "Sir, you have, to the regret of the Christian world and myself, profaned the Colosseum. You have taken away the great cross and the stations before which we used to pray. I have the honor of saluting you." Signor Rosa, not in the least abashed, still persisted in following his Eminence, and took the opportunity to explain away the fact of his having removed the stations and cross, by assuring him that they were to be replaced immediately. The next day 'Fanfull' published an article dictated by Rosa, in which a very glowing description was made of the Cardinal's visits to the Colosseum in company of Rosa, and asserting his approval of all the profanations which that gentleman had been guilty of. His Eminence, in consequence, thought fit to contradict this falsehood, and explained the matter as above.

"In Canada," says the Independent, "the Roman Catholics are in the majority, and they have a vast amount of money invested in Church property. The Protestants of that Dominion are, therefore, by no means averse to taxing churches. 'It is to be trusted,' says the Montreal 'Witness,' 'that all Protestant bodies will be of one voice as to the righteousness of making churches and Church property bear their share of taxation.' Doubtless that is a just sentiment, but it is pitiful to think that our Protestants in the States would see its justice much more clearly than they do