

THE EARTHQUAKE IN SICILY.

ROME, June 25th.

MOUNT ETNA is a most disastrous neighbour to the people who live in its vicinity. Although they are frequently driven from their homes by eruptions, their cities being wholly destroyed, as soon as the danger is past, and even before the lava is cool, they return to the same spots and begin again to rebuild their cities and to parcel out their lands once more. Scarcely has the late eruption ceased to be dangerous than the misery of the people on the slopes of Etna is greatly increased by an earthquake. The particulars of this disaster are furnished by a Dr. Vigo, who writes from Acireale, on the coast of Sicily and on the lower slopes of Etna. He paints the picture in the darkest colors. "Poor district of Acireale," he writes, "upon its lands the lava still smokes and the corpses of [the massacred of] Calatabiano are still warm!"

On the 17th June, a few minutes after 8 in the morning, this district was stricken by another sadder and more terrible disaster. An earthquake, which shook the land in every direction, brought death to several of the citizens, overthrew hundreds of houses, seriously damaged an extended tract of country, beautiful in its cultivation and rich in its productions, and produced fear and terror in the hearts of the people.

The terrible shock was keenly felt from Linguaglossa as far as Catania, a distance of twenty miles as the crow flies. The scene of destruction and death occurred over a space of five miles in length and over one in breadth. The spectacle presented along the surface of this tongue of land, lying between the eastern part of Etna and the sea, is indescribable; and the damage is incalculable. Eight populous villages—Pisano, Bongiaro, San Michele, Santa Venerina, Lincera superiore, Lincera inferiore, Guardia, and Santa Tecla—were comprised in this frightful disaster. In the city of Acireale, although no damage is recorded, the earthquake was sensibly felt. What terror strikes the minds of people at such moments may be more easily imagined than described, but no imagination can surpass the reality. The schools and public offices were closed; the people poured forth like a river into the streets and the piazzas, and gathered in groups, talking of the sensations they felt, and the fears they nourished.

In the public square stood the Senator Trombetta, holding in his hand a sheet of paper which he gave to be read to those who asked it. It was a telegram relating the disasters which had occurred. Many were afraid to look at it, and several of those who read hesitated to repeat its contents to their neighbours, especially to those who came from the district where the earthquake occurred. That telegram told of the destruction of human life, of the groans of the dying, of the cries of the wounded, and the fright of the survivors, and of the grief of those whose houses and property were destroyed.

A slight shock of earthquake on the evening of the 16th first warned the inhabitants of their danger. They watched all the night, keeping their houses open that they might escape at a moment's notice, and not going to bed. When morning came they left their homes and went into the fields. Twelve hours after the first shock came a second and stronger one, and this did all the mischief. Four large churches were thrown down; an extraordinary number of country residences, and many houses—their number is not yet known fell to the ground, burying beneath their ruins several persons who had neglected to escape. Ten or twelve were killed, and many severely wounded. One large village, Bongiaro, is wholly destroyed and is now only a heap of ruins. In other parts houses have disappeared, and those which remain are tottering, broken and damaged to such a degree that they are quite uninhabitable. The ground is full of crevices or openings; the boundary walls of fields and gardens have been carried away from their places, and in some instances no traces of the foundations are left. The earthquake was preceded by a frightful hurricane accompanied by lightning. The sky became obscured by a cloud of ashes or dust; a strange and deafening sound, frightful to listen to, was heard in the air; and, in a few seconds, trees and houses seemed to rise up into the air and then sink down again and disappear, or twist and break in a wild way. In fact, the phenomena attending this earthquake are peculiar as its effects are saddening. Hundreds of families are left without house or home; landmarks are destroyed, and the misery of the inhabitants is general. The authorities in the neighbourhood are making every effort to assist the sufferers, and subscriptions are being taken up all over the country.—*Pilot*.

Recently a countryman named Henegan was lucky enough to come across quite a heap of old silver coin. Some thirty or forty yards off the shore of Ballysokeery there is a small island—an ancient burial ground—called "King's Island," accessible on foot at low water. The man and his child were engaged in collecting seaweed on the island, and under the bank, quite close to some of the graves, they saw some coin. On further search being made, an old box was found, more than a foot square, quite full, about two stone weight. The coin are very thin and of various sizes, from a florin to a three-penny-piece. The inscription is legible on some of them, and dates of the 11th and 12th centuries appear. The words "David Rex Scotorum" can be read on some of them, and the monarch's head, with long hair and crown.

Over and above the consoling fact that the dead Prince went to Confession and Communion before starting for Zululand, and that his life had always been a clean and honest one, it is a pleasure to be able to record that the motive of his joining in the campaign was not military or political ambition, but merely a desire to do something, lest idleness should lead to mischief. The temptations of a gay life in London were thrusting themselves on him, and it was mainly to give them the slip and to turn his back on them that he went to Zululand. That being so, there is something surely of martyrdom about the tragic death he met by that dark ravine so many thousands of miles from those who loved him most.—*Catholic Times*.

"PROTESTANT INCONSISTENCY."

THE Rev. Dr. Glancy, Catholic clergyman, Motherwell, had the following letter in the *Glasgow Herald*:—

"It is the fundamental principle of Protestantism that each man has the right to read the Bible for himself and to form his own judgment of its meaning. The true Protestant is not only allowed but is bound to exercise his own judgment as to the interpretation of the statements of Scripture, looking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who is the infallible teacher of all true believers, and who is promised to guide them to all truth.

"The Church of Rome, on the other hand, holds that 'in matters of faith and morals no one confiding in his own judgment shall dare to wrest the sacred Scriptures to his own sense of them, contrary to that which hath been held, and still is held, by Holy Mother Church, whose right it is to judge of the true meaning and interpretation of Holy Writ.'

"I see that sentence of suspension has been pronounced against the U.P. minister of Gourrock by his brethren of the Gourrock Presbytery. Now, had Mr. Macrae the privilege of being a Catholic I should be at no loss to understand the reasons of his suspension. He has wrested the Sacred Scriptures to his own sense of them contrary to that which has been held, and is still held, by Holy Mother Church. But as Mr. Macrae is unfortunately not a Catholic but a genuine Protestant, I confess I am altogether at a loss how to account for the proceedings which have been taken against him.

"Like a true Protestant Mr. Macrae has read his Bible for himself; surely no one blames him for that. Like a true Protestant he forms his own opinion concerning the sense of certain passages thereof. Still in his character of true Protestant Mr. Macrae disregards the opinions of most of his own concerning them. True, his opinions differ on some points from those held by Dr. Hutton and others of his rev. brethren; but like a true Protestant he sticks to his own opinions. He does not lose his right of private judgment because he differs from Dr. Hutton or any number of Dr. Huttons.

"And yet Mr. Macrae is suspended! What then becomes of the right of private judgment?

"If it be argued that Mr. Macrae is free to exercise his private judgment, provided he agrees with the 'Standards of the Church,' I ask in what does his right differ from mine, who also am free to use my private judgment provided I agree with the 'Standards of the Church.'

"The principle is exactly the same, the only difference being that in Mr. Macrae's case he must, under pain of being treated as a heretic, agree with the interpretation of certain Presbyterian ministers who compiled a Confession of Faith in the seventeenth century, whereas I must agree with the interpretation which has always been held, and is held by Holy Mother Church.

"There is not an argument used by the prosecutors of Mr. Macrae in defence of their proceeding against him which cannot be employed with a thousand times more force to justify the Catholic Church in her condemnation of Luther, Cranmer, and Knox, whose memories these same prosecutors hold in veneration.

"Mr. Macrae reads his Bible for himself, so did they. He interprets it for himself, so did they. His interpretation differs from the received interpretation of the time, so did theirs. He is judged by the Standards of the Church, so were they. Judged by these Standards, he is condemned, so were they. The only difference is that in one case the Standards are the Westminster Confession of Faith, and in the other the doctrine of the Universal Church.

"Luther set himself against the authority of the Universal Church, and he was a hero. David Macrae set himself against the authority of the Westminster Confession, and he is a heretic. Was I not right in heading this letter 'Protestant Inconsistency?'"

REVIVAL OF THE CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION.

THE festival of Corpus Christi was celebrated this year in Athenry with unusual pomp, a procession having been organized, during which the shops in the town were closed. Before the benediction had been given, the Very Rev. Father O'Brien, P.P., delivered an eloquent sermon, from the report of which in the *Tuam Herald* we take the following passages:—This is not the time to point with triumphant finger to the admirably constructed convents, the capacious colleges, the costly churches, which, within this very congregation have sprung up with a magic rapidity amongst us, and, like so many brilliant stars in that blue firmament, now stud the fair face of Ireland from shore to shore. But though I may not stay to boast of them, I may justly take pride in telling you that, as far as I know, it was in this diocese the splendid solemnity of Corpus Christi with its procession was revived after a suspension of nigh three centuries from the causes which I have so very feebly attempted to enumerate. Yes, it was indeed during my own time in the College of St. Jarlath, that, despite all the appealing menaces of fining and imprisoning laws wherewith they were threatened, the archbishop, with his clergy and the faithful people, disregarding every menace, had a public procession of the Blessed Sacrament on Corpus Christi, around the spacious circuit of the cathedral grounds. Since then, now some five-and-twenty years ago, not only has the Corpus Christi procession been continued on each recurring anniversary in Tuam, but it has been initiated and continued, in and around the churches of every respectable town in the diocese. Well, feeling that Athenry ought not to be, and actually is not, second to any parish in the county, or, I may say, in the province, either in the chaste decoration of her church or in the religious spirit of her people, my good co-operator and myself had concluded that the time had fully come when she should no longer lag behind—when she should advance to the fore-front, and celebrate this festival by the little beginning of a Corpus Christi procession such as you have witnessed with delighted hearts, to-day.