

"Light lay the earth on Billy's breast
His chicken-heart's so tender;
But build a castle on his head,
His skull will prop it under."

It is a mercy, then, that there still remains a strong foundation whereon the British Constitution may be propped—or if a ponderously-pictured John Bull oppresses a loyal heart, that also fits in with the situation.

A DISCOVERY has been made in London of some infernal machines charged with dynamite, and left in the cloak room of a railway terminus. The clockwork intended to explode the dynamite, it is said, had gone out of order, and thus what would otherwise have been a very dangerous and harmful outrage was prevented. At the time we write nothing has been discovered as to the persons—the abandoned wretches, we may say—who were guilty of this action, but the mind of the public has, of course, turned to the Irish nationalist ranks and accredited them with the guilt. This was the course followed also with respect to the explosions in the underground railway, but nothing has occurred to confirm the suspicion, and, on the contrary, the American ambassador, Minister Lowell, has expressly declared there was no foundation whatever for it.—But, in the present instance, it appears to us there is, if possible, less reason to suspect Irishmen or Irish Americans, for, no doubt, ever since the affair on the underground railway, officials everywhere have been on the alert, and men of the well-known appearance of the parties in question could not escape observation. It must be remembered also that, in the case in which Wolff was arrested the other day, an explosion was imminent, with which no Irishman nor Irish American, would have had any connection whatever. The fact, moreover, that the infernal machines discovered are said to be of American manufacture, is of little significance, for an American-made machine might be in the hands of anyone,—and any party intending to commit an outrage, or pretending to have such an intention, might, and most probably would, obtain such a machine for the purpose. So much mischief, at least, the boastings of the miserable O'Donovan Rossa and the clique with whom he is connected have actually done, that they have made miscreants of all kinds acquainted with a ready means of committing crime, and furnished them with a cloak under which to shelter themselves. Nobody can doubt that there are in London crowds of criminals, who have no Irish or Irish American sympathies, but who are willing to avail themselves of any desperate means of working out their own ends—but, as we have said, it was a very unlikely time for any Irishman, or Irish American, to obtain admittance unnoticed to any part of a London terminus. The officials were certainly on their guard, and would have been chary about such a person's luggage.—The attempt, particularly since the machines failed to explode, and were opportunely discovered, seems much more like the outcome of a plot on the part of someone belonging to the railway—possibly someone desirous of seeing more hands employed about the station, and anxious to have special watchmen engaged—or discharged employees have before now been willing to wreak vengeance for their wrongs real or imaginary. There are, besides, many enemies of the Irish nationalists eager to seize upon any opportunity of prejudicing them still more bitterly in the public eyes, and in such an attempt an easy means of doing so would be found. Still, we are aware that there is a certain clique in America who at best are vicious fools, and whom at worst it would be hard to describe in any language we could use; who, if they be sincere, are fit for anything of whatever infamy—and if they be not sincere but have been bribed to brag and bluster, and make their boast of promiscuous murder, are still very deep-dyed scoundrels.—And therefore there is always the possibility that this attempt, or pretended attempt, we refer to may be the deed of some emissary of theirs. As to the attempt we need hardly condemn it—we should be sorry to believe that any of our readers would consider it necessary that we should deprecate an attempt to destroy innocent lives. We know of nothing that could justify or extenuate such an attempt—hardly even if the horrible hint given by the worthy radical Leatham the other day were acted upon, and Irish hills and vales filled with an unmerited carnage, hardly even if that were done would there be the slightest plea of extenuation for men who would wreak revenge upon people notably innocent—upon benevolent or harmless men, and women, and little children, but while no such action has been done, or probably ever will be done, an unmitigated execration only must be uttered against this deed. But horrible though such attempts are against the lives of people in London, there is something that they are still a greater crime against.—Fair fame is dearer than life, and a people's honour is more even to them than their national existence. And such crimes as this are committed against the honour of Ireland;—they hold the people up in the face of the world as a nation of murderers—a people who so long as they obtain their own ends are reckless as to the means used. The chief glory of the Irish people is to have resisted the oppression of ages for conscience sake, and here are men who would proclaim to the world that they are

void of conscience, and ready to sacrifice their souls for lives of comfort and worldly goods. These men are giving us a bad name everywhere throughout the civilized world and deserve our loudest reprobation and to be resisted with all our might. We hope, then, as we have reason to hope, it was no Irishman or Irish-American who attempted this deed.—We hope it may prove to be someone otherwise interested, or openly interested against Ireland, but whoever it proves to be, he is the enemy of Ireland, and of the Irish race in every part of the world, and his projects are accursed.

THE news that Russia has joined in the alliance between Germany, Austria, and Italy, should have some significance. But as to what the true significance of the union may be it is, perhaps, unknown

without the inmost diplomatic circles, and all that we of the outer world have to rely upon is speculation. There are, however, abundant grounds for speculation, and it is impossible to refrain from venturing to some degree upon it. May we not, for example, conjecture that the hint uttered by a correspondent of the *Times* to the King of Roumania, as to Mr. Gladstone's interview at Copenhagen with the Czar, may have been founded on fact, and that his Imperial Majesty had actually been given to understand that England would no longer interfere with any sinister designs he might entertain towards Turkey? An understanding with Germany and Austria might still be necessary, and into it there might perhaps enter the completion of Austrian affairs in the South, and the rectification of the German frontiers on the side of Poland;—the rectification of frontiers was, as well as we recollect, the correct expression under the Third Empire. The alliance, for aught we know to the contrary, may have been made with a view to some such arrangements as these, and, if the matter is to be shaped in such a way, it is better at any rate that it should be accomplished by peaceful, or comparatively peaceful methods,—for Turkey might still have some slight ineffectual objection to urge by force of arms. Or has the alliance been formed rather with a view towards the repression of the growing powers of anarchy, and is it within the bounds of possibility, as we have often thought it might be, that the democratic spirit of the age may at length be encountered by a fierce attempt to restore despotism? If this could be done, it should be by the strength of great armies surrendering themselves in passive obedience to their leaders,—and herein, perhaps, there lies the impossibility of the project. It does not lie in the disposition of such a man as Prince Bismarck, for instance, who is a despot at heart, and only going with the more liberal spirit of the times so far as he is unable to avoid it. Nor can it lie in that of an Emperor of Russia, the inheritor of the traditional tyranny of ages, and stung to extremes by the abnormal dangers of his position. The question, then, is as to how far the armies would be content to be made the instrument of despotism. Could it be made to the advantage of the ranks to become such instruments, or would they also prove so imbued with the democratic notions of the masses as to be unsuited to the required task? It must be remembered that when the French soldiers fraternised with the people the success of revolution was assured, and if the soldiers sided against the populace in the outbreak of the Commune, the case was exceptional and such as forms no basis of judgment. But however the matter may be, in the meantime, the alliance to which we allude must have some special and important ends, and it will be interesting to watch the development of events.

A Catholic priest was attacked at six o'clock on Monday morning, Jan. 7, in the Place de la Madeleine, Paris. He received several violent blows, and his condition is serious.

A correspondent of *The Catholic Review* writes: "In the January number of the *North American Review*, Governor Murray, of Utah, insists on the injustice of the people being taxed for Mormon schools to which they cannot send their children. This is exactly the complaint of Catholics with regard to the Protestant majority in this country generally and the public schools. The illustration might be made use of our writers and speakers, and therefore I venture to call attention to it."

We find the following in the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—In view of the estimates which are frequently formed of the voting strength of the Irish element in English politics it may be interesting to note that at the last census the natives of Ireland who were present in England and Wales numbered 562,374, being in the proportion of 21.65 to 1,000 of the entire population. The number is not an increasing quantity, for in 1861 it was 601,634, and at each census since it has fallen gradually. These figures show that relatively to the whole population of the country the Irish element is not formidable, but its unequal division over the country concentrates its strength in certain districts. In the agricultural counties the number of Irish is insignificant, but in the manufacturing and mining counties and boroughs they form a large proportion of the population. Thus, in Liverpool they are reckoned at 12.8 per cent.; in Birkenhead 8.8; in St. Helen's 8.5; in Manchester 7.5; in Salford 7.4; in Lancashire 6.1; in Cumberland 5.6 per cent., and so on. To these figures must be added the descendants of Irish emigrants, whose sympathies are thrown into the scale of their people, so that altogether they must form no inconsiderable voting power in the constituencies in which they congregate.