

opinion, as expressed also in the French and American papers, seems to be that an action for libel should be taken against the newspaper. Mr. Gladstone, meantime, continues ardent in his denunciation of the Coercion Act, which he declares will be the cause only of what is evil.

If Lord Salisbury, besides coercing Ireland, is obliged to support the Ameer in subduing his rebel subjects—with Russia, now reported to be sending her troops forward to the Afghan frontier, on the alert, and probably giving aid in secret to the rebels, if not openly taking part in the war—as it seems most probable, according to the latest accounts, that he must, he will evidently have his hands full. But we cannot honestly say we have any desire to see his Lordship's burden in any degree lightened. The policy pursued by him with respect to Ireland obliges Irishmen, however they may wish to live at peace and in harmony with their fellow subjects and to take part in the progress and welfare of the Empire generally, to turn their eyes abroad in search of the relief which it is vain for them to expect at home. They are not to blame if, as it is but human, the treatment of bitter enemies dealt out to them in some way infects them with a hostile spirit.

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### THE REV. MR. FAGAN ON KERRY—A PLEA FOR HOME RULE.

THIS gentleman, whose sympathies with Ireland are well-known, contributes to the *Contemporary Review* with the title we (*Nation*) have quoted above. At the outset Mr. Fagan explains his qualification to treat the subject on which he has undertaken to write.

"Early this winter I was a whole month in Kerry, not interviewing only, but living with people of all sorts. May I venture to state, as the net result of my observations, my belief that moonlighting is partly a survival of the old secret societies; that for the most part the Kerry peasants really cannot pay their rents; that in Kerry the League has always been weak and ill-organised, and that this accounts for the cruel way in which boycotting has there more than elsewhere, been used for private ends? I found, moreover (though I have been assured on the contrary), that in Kerry the vast majority, including nearly all the intellect that is not by fancied self-interest drawn the other way, goes in strongly for Home Rule. I satisfied myself, too, that in no part of the country have the tenants been 'spending all their money on meat, and drink, and dress'; that Communist ideas are unknown amongst them; and that their reverence for the Catholic Church is unabated. I noticed the widespread disappointment that through legal technicalities the Land Acts have often failed to give protection to those who most needed and deserved it. I saw that where a landlord treats his tenants as human beings he seldom fails to keep in touch with them; and I marked the old grievance, that, instead of having to deal with a sympathetic chief, the peasant too often finds himself at grips with the sharpest of chicaning lawyers, and that this is a sadly demoralising experience. I saw, too, what I had years ago seen in Donegal, men who had improved a barren mountain side, carrying up earth on their backs, bringing sea-sand and ore-weed a day's journey because no lime was to be had, turned out because, owing to this unexampled drop in prices, they had got behind in their rents. I heard their not unnatural murmurs and the equally natural complaints of the landlords, who, themselves sore pressed, often cannot, if they would, abate their claims unless helped by some sort of *tabula nova*."

On the question of rent in Kerry Mr. Fagan's opinion may be summed up in one short sentence which we take from his article:—"Rent really could not be paid." That sums up the situation in that part of Ireland at any rate. The following quotation will give our readers an idea of the way in which the reverend gentleman utilises Kerry as an argument for Home Rule:—

"There is nothing for it but to hasten on Home Rule. I entered Kerry thinking that the Home Rule question was less important than some others; I came back assured that Home Rule cannot wait. Ireland wants quiet; but, to quote a farmer's words, 'Things won't be quiet till we get our own Parliament men, who'll soon lay the lash on those blackguards' sides, and we shall cheer them on in doing it.' A Home Rule Government would at once get rid of moonlighting, at any rate. 'Ah! Mr. Parnell would stop all that kind of work, if only he got the chance.' 'Why?' 'Because he would have the people with him; and, now, it's a painful fact, but down here in Kerry, at any rate, lingers the old tradition, that there must be something right, something helpful to the popular cause, at the bottom of whatever the Government sets itself to put down. In our view it's an alien Government, remember; and till yesterday it could not possibly be just between man and man, because it took all its magistrates from one party. Your Castle machinery may forcibly drive

moonlighting under, but it will smoulder on; whereas a National Government would quickly quench it by removing the discontent on which it feeds.' The speaker was a parson with life-long experience of the people and their sympathies.

"Bring in Home Rule, then, since it neither means separation, nor the beggaring of Ireland, nor the persecution of Protestants, nor the establishment of a Rome-ruled State. You believe in Bentham—here is a clear case of the greatest happiness for the greatest number. You have never yet believed that we Irish were the best judges of our own needs; in Church, in education, it has always been the same. You've insisted on giving us *what you, from your wholly wrong point of view, judged to be best for us*. Change your plan at last. Have a little faith in us. Believe that behind all this agitation there is a reserve force—the quiet tenacity with which people hold what they are assured is right.

"And let Mr. Gladstone bring it in; for the immense faith in him, the deep love of him, in all those Kerry peasants' minds no one can measure who has not been among them.

"Ah, but the land question must first be settled, or the landlords will be robbed wholesale; and to settle the land question will take time."

"Yes; and surely that's a reason for first bringing in Home Rule, and so putting an end to this wretched demoralising deadlock. Leave the land question to a Commission of mixed English and Irish lawyers and practical men, in whose impartiality both sides will have confidence. The Commission now sitting is only one of inquiry. It has (we hear) been learning strange truths, as the Bessborough Commission did before it; and what it has learned might well be the basis of future action. Meanwhile, let Government adopt something like Mr. Dillon's Plan of Campaign, and let it make such an arrangement with the mortgagees as shall enable the landlords to await a final settlement.

"The all-important thing is to stamp out that lawlessness which now burns so fiercely because it feeds on the unsatisfied national sentiment.

"I appeal to educated Englishmen—to men like my old London schoolmates and Oxford fellow-students: fling aside party and small personal interests. Ireland has too long been a Parliamentary shuttlecock. That mode of government (or rather non-government) is for her an ignominy; for England it is not only a scandal, but a fatal weakness. Have faith in Ireland's professions; do there what you have done with such admirable results in Canada; and henceforth we shall have a contented Ireland, all parties being contented because each will fit into its natural place; and a contented Ireland, remember, means a strong United Kingdom. Once believe that we are in earnest, that we have given pledges of sincerity—all of us; not the poor fellows only who have been for four years out in the cold. Ask yourselves how it is possible to govern successfully when the state of things is such that a newly appointed Government officer could tell me: 'We found at once that the Castle system is quite rotten.'"

### SNUG BERTHS.

(From *Modern Society*.)

NEXT to a snug berth in a Government Office there is nothing equal to a comfortable post in one of the many religious societies in London. There is, for instance, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the cost of conducting which, in office expenses, salaries, and travelling is something enormous. The annual report is very instructive, and benevolent old ladies would do well to make a full inquiry into the mode of conducting the business of the society before giving so freely to an object with which so much sentiment is mixed up, in order to work upon their sympathy. Highly-paid officials, of course, have an interest in keeping up the enormous income absorbed every year by a society, and the amount of money expended in this instance certainly seems out of all proportion to the work done by the managers and their agents. Their mission is to flood the world with Bibles in various languages, and they are circulated broadcast at the lowest possible price, and given away to people who do not value them. It is about as much use trying to convert the world in this way, as it would be to send a ship-load of swords to a country it was intended to conquer. Not long ago, in the town of Kendal, there was an old woman who kept a shop, and she had a Bible and Testament on her counter for wrapping up her tobacco and snuff respectively, a leaf out of one or the other being exactly the size she wanted. This is spreading the "Word" with a vengeance. The day is past when Bibliolatry was everything, and when the possession of a Bible in a house, even if not read, was looked upon as a sort of talisman by the ignorant, and kept in a conspicuous place, as a charm to frighten the Devil away. There is another society called the Prayer Book and Homily Society, which few people know anything about, but it has a lot of money to dispose of, and, of course, must present an annual report to some one. If there are trustees of these institutions it is high time they investigated the management more closely, and endeavoured to ascertain if the expenditure of the funds does anybody any good besides the persons whose luck has pitchforked them into the cosy places in the offices of the charity. It is positively sickening to see several institutions established for the promotion of the same idea, when one executive might carry on the work of the lot much more economically. But, then, what would become of the friends and relations of those who have the power of finding easy, respectable, and lucrative posts for them?

Mr. E. R. Bradshaw, Jetty and Crawford streets, Dunedin, offers the highest prices in the market for rabbitskins.

Mrs. Macpherson, who was lately a teacher in the Edinburgh School of Cookery, and to whose resumption of classes in Dunedin we referred in a recent issue, opens her course of lessons in the Odd-fellows' Hall, Rattray street, on Monday next 26th inst.