

Mr. Dillon was remonstrating, and even trying to hold the inspector and his men back by bodily force, he heard a fire opened from the windows of the upper story. He did not know it at the time, but the result of this was that two men were shot dead, and many others wounded. He, however, saw a man dragged into the barrack and beaten there in a very savage manner. Mr. Dillon declares that anything like the excitement shown by some of the policemen he had never before witnessed, and he is firmly persuaded that had it not been for his own exertions and remonstrances, the police-inspector would have formed his men outside and fired at random up and down the streets. The *Tribune's* correspondent describes the interview that took place afterwards, at Mr. Dillon's request, between Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Brunner, and himself, and the Resident Magistrate "a young man white with excitement." "It was" he says "a mixture of alternate fear, vacillation, and bravado on the part of the police officer and the magistrate in command, and after a few minutes it ended in the latter gentleman saying curtly that he had sent for the military. "And, in fact, the soldiers soon arrived. But the town was cleared by the exertions of the gentlemen who had come to address the meeting, and no work remained for them to do. The correspondent calls attention to the complete unlawfulness of the whole attack, the meeting not having been proclaimed, the Riot Act not being read, and the police acting without the command of their officers. Mr. Balfour, nevertheless, defended the action of the police in Parliament, evoking from Mr. Labouchere in reply the statement that the people had a perfect right to resist the attack. "When the police fired" he added, "there was no danger of any of them being attacked either inside or outside the barracks. The police behaved like wild beasts battering the people about without mercy." This, as we have said, gives a very different version of the matter from that conveyed here by the cable. But no doubt it is the true one.

WE perceive that Sir Robert Stout has taken advantage of his political dethronement, to make a grand reappearance on the Freethinking stage, where, as of old, he boasts great things of the system which he upholds. It is a universal system, he tells us, overstepping the bounds of all creeds and sects, and embracing in its sympathies, in marked contrast with every religious system, mankind as it exists in general. But yet we are inclined to doubt, as to whether Sir Robert, were he duly to consider the matter, might not find that Freethought itself is divided into sects and parties, to some of which as to the churches, it must be necessary to claim that their members only possess the full benefit of the light. Sir Robert Stout for example, will hardly admit that the disciple of Schopenhauer or Hartmann, whose creed is despair, can partake of the privileges of those favoured children of light, who attend upon his own ministry at the Lyceum, and who consequently are on the most ready and certain road of progress. Nor will he include among the benefactors of humanity as a whole, those who hold sacred the memory of those persecutors of religion at the close of the last century, who, according to the Freethinking historian of their epoch, guillotined by hundreds the men of whose opinions they disapproved, and imprisoned them by thousands. What Pope or what cardinal has done more than this?—even if for the sake of argument, we admit that Sir Robert Stout is justified in his assertion with respect to the persecutions conducted by Popes and cardinals, though we might perhaps bring forward the authority of another leader of Freethought to disprove the assertion. We allude to M. Reran, who declares in his autobiography that the tales that are told of the persecutions wrought by Popes and cardinals, would not have affected his allegiance to the Catholic Church, had other causes been wanting—from which we may gather, that, such as those persecution may have been, a Freethinking captain considers them still consistent with truth and enlightenment. They at least, had no effect in persuading him that the teaching of the Catholic Church was inconsistent with these, and the persecutions worked by the Church, therefore, if they ever existed, have received the indirect approbation of one of the chief Freethinkers of the day. That Sir Robert Stout is made to say that "history did not show that belief had ought to do with conduct," must we think, be due to the necessities of an extremely condensed report. It is so much at variance with truth that we cannot accept it as authentic. If history shows anything in the world, it shows that and it moreover, shows that such also was at all times the fountain, whence the qualities that, according to Sir Robert, constitute the moral man proceeded, that is, "a sacrifice for the truth, and deep sympathy for his fellow-men." Contemporary history, indeed, shows us as much, for it teaches us that in every country where belief is dying out, falsehood and sensuality, and all that is at variance with sympathy, and self-sacrifice, and truth, are strongly on the increase. As to the effects of reading the Bible, to which also Sir Robert Stout alluded in a slighting manner, we by no means belong to those who place an exaggerated value on them. The Bible subjected to the rights of private interpretation, according to our certain belief, is the Bible put to an improper use. But we do not use its effects

are plainly more beneficial, than those obtained where Christianity has been wholly abjured. If, for instance, we compare England with herself, as she was when religion was at a low ebb and Bible-reading but little attended, to and as she is now, after many years of a revival of religion and much greater attention to the teaching of the Bible, we find a marked improvement in the morals of the people. But if, on the other hand, we take Freethinking France, and follow its course through the century during which Freethought has prevailed, the downward path is evident. "We must have the courage to recognise," says Count d'Haussenville in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April 1, 1887, "that serious crime, in spite of contrary appearances and superficial allegations, has increased in a very sensible manner in our country since the commencement of the century." Sir Robert Stout, then, is not very happy in his opinions. But least of all, perhaps, can he successfully sustain his assertion that Freethinkers occupy a sort of a universal position in which they differ from all the Churches. There are sects and divisions among Freethinkers, as there are among the creeds, and every Freethinker, as a matter of course, must consider the man who agrees with his own particular opinions the most enlightened and sympathise most with him. But what more do the Churches do that this? They, also, as Sir Robert Stout tells us Freethinkers do, desire to make all mankind partakers in the advantages they believe themselves to possess, and it is a gratuitous assertion, and, in some instances, a plain calumny to assert that their true sympathies in the matter do not include all mankind without distinction of creed or nation. But to implant a love of truth and a universal sympathy for mankind, as Sir Robert Stout tells us, should be the task for Freethinkers to perform, without a certain standard of truth and sympathy, is an impossible task that no man need undertake. And, as yet, among the disputes and variances of the Freethinking schools no settled standard can be discerned.

### ENGLAND'S TREATMENT OF IRELAND.

(A paper read before the Irish National League at Wanganui, by Mr. W. BUNTING.)

"We've wept till our faces are pale and wan.  
We've knelt to a throne till our strength is gone;  
We've prayed to our masters, but one by one  
They laughed to scorn our suffering land;  
And sent forth their minions with cannon and steel,  
Swearing with fierce unholy zeal  
To trample us down with an iron heel  
If we dared but to murmur our just demand."

—LADY WILDE.

"The history of Ireland's unhappy connection with England," says a distinguished American writer, Mr. James K. Paulding, "exhibits from first to last a detail of the most persevering, galling, grinding, insulting, and systematic oppression to be found anywhere, except among the *helots* of Sparta. There is not a national feeling that has not been insulted and trodden under foot; a national right that has not been withheld, until fear forced it from the grasp of England; or a dear or ancient prejudice that has not been violated in that abused country. As Christians the people of Ireland have been denied, under penalties and disqualifications, the exercise of the rites of the Catholic religion, venerable for its antiquity, admirable for its unity, and consecrated by the belief of some of the best men that ever breathed. As men they have been deprived of the common rights of British subjects, under the pretext that they were incapable of enjoying them, which pretext they had no other foundation for than resistance of oppression, only the more severe by being sanctioned by the laws! England first denied them the means of improvement, and then insulted them with the imputation of barbarism." Anyone who reads the history of Ireland will be powerfully struck with the one all-prominent fact of "*Ireland's indestructible vitality*." Under circumstances where any other people would have succumbed for ever, where any other nation would have resigned itself to subjugation and accepted death, the Irish nation scorns to yield, and refuses to die. It survived the four centuries of war from the second to the eighth Henry of England. It survived the exterminations of Elizabeth by which Froude has been so profoundly appalled. It survived the butcheries of Cromwell and the merciless persecution of the penal times, and the bloody policy of '98. Confiscations such as are to be found in the history of no other country in Europe, again and again tore up society by the roots in Ireland, trampling the noble and the gentle into poverty and obscurity. The mind was sought to be quenched, the intellect extinguished, the manners debased and brutified. "The perverted ingenuity of man" could no further go in the untiring endeavour to kill all our aspirations for freedom, and all instincts of nationality in the Irish breast, yet this indestructible nation has risen under the blows of her murderous persecutors, triumphant and immortal. She has survived even England's most deadly blow, designed to be the final stroke—the Union—as she will assuredly survive the "Manitoba and manacles" policy of the Salisbury Government of to-day.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century the Irish abroad, "Ireland in Exile," are first heard of as a distinct political element. The new power thus born into the world was fated to perform a great and marvellous part in the designs of Providence. It has endured through the shock of centuries, has outlived the rise and fall of dynasties and states, has grown into gigantic size and shape; and in the influences it exercises at this moment on the course and policy of England, affords, perhaps, the most remarkable illustration recorded outside Holy Writ, of the inevitability of retributive justice.