

"A LAND WITHOUT LAUGHTER."

(James Redpath's letter in the *Tribune*.)

THE Irish have been described by novelists and travellers as a light-hearted and rollicking people, full of fun and quick in repartee; a devil-may-care race of folks, equally ready to dance or to fight. I have not found them so. I found them in the West of Ireland a sad and despondent people; care-worn, broken-hearted, and shrouded in gloom. Never once in the hundreds of cabins that I entered—never once even did I see a merry eye or hear the sound of a merry voice. Old men and boys, old women and girls—young men and maidens—all of them without a solitary exception, were grave or haggard, and every household looked as if the plague of the first-born had smitten it that day. Rachael, weeping for her children, would have passed unnoticed among these warm-hearted peasantry, or if she had been noticed, they would only have said, "she is one of us." A home without a child is cheerless enough; but there is a whole region without a child's laugh in it. Cabins full of children—and no boisterous glee! No need to tell these youngsters to be quiet. The famine has tamed their restless spirits, and they crouch around the bit of peat fire without uttering a word. Often they do not look a second time at the stranger who comes into their cabin. I have seen so many sad sights in Ireland that it would be hard for me to choose the worst of them. But the one incident that made the deepest impression on my mind was a visit to the convent of the Sisters of Mercy at Westport, in county Mayo. The Reverend Mother, who founded it, I believe, and who now has charge of it, is a relative of Archbishop Cullen; and before the famine came, by her own zeal and the influence of her social connections, she had been able to build quite a handsome and solid institution. As the Sisters are the best teachers in the neighbourhood, the girls of the well-to-do citizens of Westport are taught at the convent. But it is also an industrial school, to which the waifs of society are sent by the Government. From the fees of the town children and the money paid by the Government, aided by the contributions of Catholic benevolence in Ireland and England, the convent has always been able to maintain itself well; and having inspected scores of similar institutions in our own country, supported both by public charity and the State, I can truthfully say, not from courtesy only, but knowledge, that the Westport Convent need fear no comparison with any industrial school in America. Everything is clean and wholesome and cheerful about it. But what recalled America to me when I visited it was not its order nor its tidiness, but the fact that the children in the Industrial School looked happy and smiled—that they were well-behaved little girls with laughing eyes, not the sad old women disguised as ragged girls, whom I had seen, with pink and chilblained feet, mute and shivering in the slippery and smoky cabins of the country. And yet these happy children, the only happy children I saw in the West—were either orphans or paupers or the cast-aways of the streets!

Can Americans conceive of a county, whose only happy children are in a public institution? If you can do so, then you see the West of Ireland in the Winter of 1860. Now, don't say "God pity them!" just pity them yourself first.

BRITISH LIBERALITY.

AMONGST the 553 members of Parliament elected by the constituencies of England and Scotland not a single Catholic is to be found. The fact is not due, as Lord Oranmore boasted the other night in the House of Lords, to any want of political fitness or social power amongst the English Catholics, who form, admittedly, a rich, powerful, and intelligent body. It is due solely to the degrading spirit of bigotry which sways the English masses. No matter how high the character of the Catholic candidate, no matter how perfectly his political opinions may accord with those whom he addresses in England he scarcely dares to show his face; and the men whose co-religionists Irish Catholics select with acclamation repay the compliment by ostracising from public life, with yells of hatred, every Catholic candidate bold enough to address them. Jews can find seats in England; Atheists, like Bradlaugh, are taken to the hearts of English constituencies; but for the co-religionists of those who teach such noble lessons of toleration and liberality in Ireland Englishmen have nothing but insult and ill-will. If English Protestants could effect it, the House of Commons would be guarded by as exclusive a spirit as the ancient Bandon borough—"Turk, Jew, or Atheist" might enter there, "but not a Papist."

But the latest exhibition of this detestable spirit is the furious outcry occasioned by the appointment of the Marquis of Ripon. Lord Ripon is admittedly fully qualified for the position conferred on him. The Governor-Generalship of India could hardly be entrusted to abler hands. He possesses all the qualification for the office which great capacity, distinguished ability, and long training could confer. But for one fact his appointment would have passed without comment, or been regarded with positive favour. But that one fact was, in the eyes of British bigotry, all important. Lord Ripon had become a Roman Catholic! He was one of "Rome's recruits." Yielding to conviction and obeying the calls of conscience, he had embraced the faith which England was once proud to profess. Enough and to spare to condemn him! Ten times more than enough to unloose the flood-gates of religious rancour and set the whole rabid crew of English bigots in full and furious action. Loud were the screams, dismal the yells, that arose from presbytery and conventicles, from meeting house and parsonage. Within a few days upwards of one hundred petitions were actually presented in Parliament, calling upon the Government to cancel the appointment of Lord Ripon, solely because he is a Catholic, and in both Houses of the Legislature the shrill cry of bigotry was upraised upon the subject. In vain it was pointed out that the Marquis of Ripon was sent to India simply as the best man for the post; in vain was the experience of other viceroys invoked to show "that there was probably no office under the

Crown the holder of which had less to do with religious questions connected with either the Protestant or Roman Catholic Church than the Viceroy of India." The cry of alarm would not be hushed, the horrible spectacle of a Catholic occupant of the Government House at Calcutta could not be endured. Equally fruitless was it to remind the wretched fanatics who howled and raved against the appointment that out of the 300,000,000 inhabitants of British India there are but 2,000,000 Christians, and of these actually 1,900,000 are Catholics. With nineteen Catholics to every single Protestant in India, the appointment of a Catholic governor would, even on religious grounds, be more than justified. But English zealotry cares nothing for argument, or reason, or justice. Its hateful spirit is not to be laid by such weapons. At the present moment furious bigotry, blind and besotted, is in full ascendancy; and all England, to say nothing of semi-infidel and greatly immoral Scotland, is seething with excitement over this concession to "priestcraft and Popery." The storm is still rising as we write; and it is a well recognised fact in political circles that a damaging blow has been inflicted upon the Government, and that their strength has been dangerously impaired by the simple fact that they have ventured, in consideration of his merits as a statesman, to confer office on a Catholic nobleman.

All this is very discouraging and very disgusting, but we fear there is no remedy for the disorder. The boasted lovers of liberty, enlightenment, and progress are determined on exhibiting themselves to the world in the character of malevolent and insensate bigots. They know the part and love it well, and not all the obloquy of Europe will prevent them from playing it out. They are resolved on showing us that the spirit of fanaticism and persecution still rules them, and that they are as wickedly intolerant now as they were in the days of Elizabeth or of Cromwell. A disposition such as this is not changed by precept or example. Rougher means are necessary to chasten it, and it may be that the Nemeis which so often humbles the proud and the arrogant will one day, and ere long, deal in fitting fashion with the hard hearts and distempered passions that inspire this last development of the "No Popery" rage in England.—*Nation*.

THE HEROISM OF A PRIEST.

THE accounts given in the daily papers of the heroic part played by the Very Rev. M. Gibney, V.G., in connection with the attack on the outlaws at Glenrowan, is very honourable to the reverend gentleman himself, and reflects the highest credit on the Catholic priesthood. Yet those accounts fall short of the truth. Dr. Gibney, actuated by a high sense of duty, incurred a risk of life which no worldly temptation could have impelled him to take, and for which no temporal recognition could adequately reward him. We have now received the true story of that act of his, which so nobly illustrates the devotion by which the priest of God is actuated when he has reason to hope that a soul in peril may be saved. In the public reports there are some errors, which are not unimportant, inasmuch as they detract from the merit of Father Gibney's act. But instead of referring particularly to these—for which indeed we have no room in this edition—we shall give the correct statement of the case.

Father Gibney was travelling from Kilmore, en route for Albury, on a mission of mercy, when he heard of the Kelly affair. Perceiving at once that it might be possible for a Catholic clergyman to render a spiritual service at the dreadful encounter, he turned aside, on this more urgent work of mercy, to the scene of the dreadful tragedy. And rejoice he must that he did so, for he was the means of saving the unfortunate man, Cherry, from being burnt alive.

There were about 500 people on the ground when Father Gibney arrived there, and the prevailing impression amongst them was that, when the reverend gentleman advanced to the burning building, the outlaws were still alive, together with the wounded man Cherry. There seemed to be no escape for the outlaws with their lives. Die they should by fire inside or outside, and as to the horrible fate that awaited Cherry, there could be no doubt about that. It was then that Father Gibney dared all to save them, for he must have known that he imperilled his life in the attempt. There was not a man in that crowd willing to accompany him. Not for £10,000 would any man, we believe, have done so; and this is no wonder, for assuredly not the very highest offer of the kind would have been the least temptation to the brave priest to do as he did. As other accounts state, when the crowd perceived his determination, they clapped their hands in admiration of his courage. Passing through the house, the heat he had to endure was intense, and the smoke blinding, yet he made his way out through an opposite door at the back, and, as he emerged safe, the people cheered him loudly. Having announced that the outlaws were dead inside, some people ran towards him, and then—but not till then—did the police enter. They did not enter "at his heels," as has been stated, and that they did not Inspector Sadleir can testify.

The two outlaws, Kelly and Hart, were lying side by side on their backs—with bags for pillows, in such a position as proved to demonstration that each had died by his own hand. Byrne, who was shot from without, lay in that straggling position which plainly indicated that he had had no hand in his own death.—*Advocate*.

Kereopa drives a buggy, on the side of which his name is painted in gold letters.

At Maco, South Australia, three companies of Chinese fought the Europeans for four days, revolvers being used.

M. Larcher, a French colonist from New Caledonia, has taken up a block in the Kaipara district, for the purposes of vine culture and the manufacture of wine.

A miner from the Lake Mapourika district reports that Cunningham and party struck payable gold.

The new rush to Long Valley, Lake Hawea continues to attract attention.

The town of Ngapara is making rapid strides.