

## SOME ENGLISHMEN ON IRELAND.

SOME Englishmen are beginning to say bold things on the Irish question. A very short time ago such utterances as we quote below would have been impossible in England. They are not only possible but popular at present, thanks to the earnest Land League Agitation. Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P. for Manchester (brother of John Bright, Cabinet Minister), addressing a Workingmen's Club in Hulme, England, on December 11, made a powerful speech on Ireland, in which he dared to say many things for which Mr. Parnell and his colleagues would be convicted of "sedition." Mr. Bright said:—

Ireland has not been strong enough to successfully resort to force to obtain that justice which she has been denied to her peaceful demand. She has tried force again and again, but there has been no chance of successful rebellion in Ireland. I am not sure that it would not have been better if Ireland had been stronger both for attack and defence. The partnership betwixt the two countries would have been more equal, and I undertake to say that if Ireland had been in that position we should long ago have understood her wants and given her justice, and by this time, I believe, we might have had a united kingdom (cheers.) Then there is nothing left for Ireland but Parliamentary means of obtaining what she requires. But here again look at her difficulties. She sends members to a Parliament the most numerous House of Commons in the world. In that Parliament she has only a fractional proportion. She has, I admit, her full proportion, but it is only a fractional proportion of the representation—something less than one-sixth of the whole. Well, with less than one-sixth of the members of the House of Commons, unless she can make a great impression upon a large proportion of the remaining members of that House, you see how exceedingly difficult it is for her to press her claims and obtain those measures which she believes to be necessary for her. If I wanted to suggest to you the extreme difficulty that Ireland has found in getting such laws as she believes to be necessary for her, I would ask you to consider for a moment the difficulty that we in this country have had to get those reforms which have been necessary for us. We are on the spot; we are not separated by the sea, at a considerable distance; we have a large, a wealthy, and, comparatively speaking, an independent population; we have millions of men surrounding the very House of Parliament; and yet with all these advantages, it required that we should bring the country to the verge of a revolution before we could succeed in disestablishing Old Sarum and giving a very meagre degree of representation to Manchester and Birmingham (cheers). Again, to untax our food it took us an agitation of seven years. With a vast organisation, with abundant means, led by men of singular courage and ability (cheers); yet it took us all that time before we could enable the people of this country to supply themselves with food when our own harvests failed. Again, it has taken us—may I not say?—generations before we could obtain access to our own universities, or before we could bury our dead in our own national graveyards. Considering the enormous difficulties which we, on the spot, have had to obtain our reforms, it is to me even a marvellous thing that Ireland has accomplished so much. Bear in mind the things she has accomplished. I won't enumerate them; but there are a number of Acts of Parliament so conspicuous that few men can forget them. Ireland, however, has yet to accomplish what I consider to be the greatest and the most necessary reform of all. She has not yet earned the right to live, and that is the first essential in any State. She has not yet acquired the right to earn her bread by the sweat of her brow. She has not the security without which her industry must always be blighted and her people be depressed and famine-stricken. When I think of what Ireland has accomplished in face of the difficulties to which I have referred, I am bound to admit that there are moral and intellectual qualities on the part of that people for which it has not always the credit given to it. To maintain an unbroken struggle against the powerful aristocracy and the ignorance of the people of this country from generation to generation—never to let that struggle die—I say of the people doing that, that there must be qualities in it which we all of us are bound to admire (cheers). Ireland is not just now in a comfortable position. Some persons and a good many newspapers are going into hysterics about Ireland. The newspapers didn't say much when the 600,000 tenantry of Ireland, or the greater portion of them, were living from generation to generation in chronic misery; but when landlords are made uncomfortable the world wrings with their cries. I don't want the landlords to be uncomfortable (hear, hear); I don't want them to be in peril, and I don't want to see chronic, dumb suffering on the part of the millions of that country; but if I were to choose which side I should see in peril, I should say let it be the landlords—(cheers)—rather than the cultivators of the soil (hear, hear). I hope we have a Government that will relieve both landlord and tenant—(hear, hear)—so that both may live in peace and in comfort and in security. Let me ask you men of Lancashire how you would feel if you were at all in the position of those who work for their bread in Ireland. The difference betwixt us in Lancashire and them is wonderfully great. We are not subjected to much foreign competition so far as our own home market is concerned. We flood the world with our goods, the world does not send many goods to us, and although we have this power of filling distant markets with our goods, we have also the right to do everything at home which ingenuity and industry and enterprise can do in order to perfect our manufactures and to undersell the world. But take Ireland. Ireland, instead of competing with the world, is competed with by the world (hear, hear). There is not a country anywhere hardly that does not send its agricultural produce to this country, making the market price of agricultural produce as low as it can possibly be. The produce of Ireland—bacon, cheese, flour, animals alive and dead, everything that Ireland produces—is poured into this country in constant streams from the United States. And, bear in mind, those farmers in distant countries who compete with the produce of Ireland have every one of them the very best security for the fruits of their industry, from the fact that, as a rule, they own the lands they till—(cheers)—and

therefore there is no motive wanting to make those farmers produce the most at the very cheapest rate (hear, hear). But whilst Ireland is subject to this competition, she is destroyed by the fact that there is no sufficient motive to bring out the greatest produce from her fields, and a man hardly dare put a spade into the ground lest in another six months the landlord should come and tax him for the industry he has shown (hear, hear). It is a fortunate thing, in my opinion, that we have the present Government in power (hear, hear). So far as I learn from the speeches of our opponents—distinguished men like Lord Salisbury (hisses) and Sir Stafford Northcote (laughter)—they look with entire dislike upon any of those changes being made in Ireland, without which, I believe, there never can be peace. They look with dislike upon those changes, and they seem to have no remedy but that of force. No force in the world can beat down a people which has shown itself so indefatigable and so persevering as the Irish people (hear, hear). I believe that the Government will respond to our wishes; I believe they will carry measures which are likely to effect the object which we all of us wish to see effected in Ireland. In conclusion, let me simply say this, that we have the greatest possible interest in doing justice to Ireland, and in giving security to her industry we have every selfish interest that can be imagined. If you could gradually—it could only, of course, be a gradual work—build up Irish industry; if you could gradually come to such a point that you doubled the produce of her soil; if you made the people contented and secure, why, what a wonderful market you would open out for our own manufacturers! But there is a much higher motive than these material and selfish motives. We, Englishmen, if I understand us at all, wish to do our duty, whatever may be the result (hear, hear). We wish to show that everything that is in our power to do for the good of Ireland shall be done. We wish to stand well with foreign nations, but depend upon it the spectacle which we now exhibit is anything but creditable to us. So far as the great constituency of Manchester is concerned in this, I do not believe there are two opinions within it. I believe that when the House of Commons meets, and when the Government proposes its measures, supposing, as I believe it will be, that those measures are adequate to the occasion, they will have the unanimous support of the Liberal party of Manchester (cheers).

Sir Wilfred Lawson, M.P., addressing a crowded meeting at Carlisle, December 14, alluded to the Irish Question as follows:—With regard to the Irish question he asserted that in the first place it would be impossible to do any good to Ireland so long as we had a House of Lords (cheers). Four Irish bills have gone up to them last session, all admitted to be good for Ireland, but all of them were thrown out by the House of Lords. He hoped the government might succeed in the pacification of Ireland, but it looked to him, so serious was the situation, that this would be the last chance they would have in their lifetime of settling Ireland upon a basis of peace. We could not go on as we had been doing; things were getting too bad; it was a regular scandal to Europe and a danger to everybody concerned. We had tried to rule Ireland for 600 years and had totally failed; we had a rebellion there every eight or ten years, and two armies to keep up—one a military force and the other the constabulary—to keep these people in subjection. It was a heartrending state of things, and it could not much longer go on. If we cannot pacify these people we cannot go on insisting on holding an unwilling nation under our control, and if it came to a question of separation or subjugation then, far rather than see his fellow subjects in Ireland drenched in blood and crushed down by military, he for one would heartily go for separation by that country from England (cheers).

A Mr. Stephens, Attorney-at-law, Pretoria, has undertaken to put the Transvaal question in a previously unseen light. Introducing the light, he says:—"I cannot understand the argument that the Boers, or any other nation, by virtue of their occupation alone, have a prescriptive right to any country. In this Mother Earth of ours there are only so many square miles of ground, which not the greatest among us can add to or detract from one iota. We are all the children of the earth, in the sense that she it is that supports us, and from whom we are entitled to support, and it is as idle as it is useless for any body of men to seek to isolate themselves from their fellows, and to occupy vast tracts of land which they are unable to put to its best uses." That is a poser for the Boers, and Englishmen, too.—*Graaf Reinet Advertiser*.

The Paris *Univers* publishes a long letter from Sister Mary Francis Clare, of Kenmare, on the Irish question. She takes M. Molinari and a correspondent of the *Figaro* severely to task for giving their countrymen a one-sided account of the situation of Ireland. M. Molinari, who she understands cannot speak a word of English, would, of course, and did only trust to the landlords for his information. While Lord Lansdowne's agent, for instance, was denying to him that there was any distress in Ireland, her friends were feeding and clothing Lord Lansdowne's tenants. All voices, she says, are enrolled against the truth, things are exaggerated, and many things are reported which afterwards turn out to be inventions; and the fact is the landlords in Ireland are neither afraid of their tenants, their servants, nor the population. They only fear the truth. If it were known how they extort their rents from the unfortunate tenants, who are forced to submit to everything, because they are tied to the soil, there would be laws for the repression of land usurers, like money usurers.

A national convention of the Irish Land and Industrial League of the United States will be held at St. James' Hall, Buffalo, January 12 and 13. Representatives from nearly all the branches of the League, both in the United States and Canada, will be present at the convention. The chief objects of the League in this country are to support Parnell and assist the League in Ireland. As the latter end is best attained by furnishing the necessary aid, arrangements will be made at the convention to furnish such a sum as will materially assist the oppressed in Ireland.