

THE IRISH REVOLUTION.

(Philadelphia Public Ledger.)

THERE'S a homely old story about a man who never found the right time to mend his leaky roof. When it was raining he couldn't or wouldn't go out in the wet to mend it, and when the weather was dry, the holes in the thatch didn't make any difference. They were rather pleasant than otherwise. That is about the philosophy of the British Government in its way of looking at the Irish question. When there's agitation and disturbance and threatened revolt, resulting from long neglected suffering and wrong, the Government will not move in the direction of just and sufficient redress: they will not act under menace, although they cannot dispute the wrong or the reason for disturbance; and when there is no agitation, when the political and social skies are clear of dark clouds—then it makes no difference. The Irish roof may be patched some other time.

This is manifestly the view Lord Sherbrooke—he that used to be Mr. Lowe—takes of the way to deal with Ireland. He says: "The time for considering great and drastic changes is not well chosen amid scenes of heat and violence. Then is the time to stand by the laws as they are, and to see, as far as the power of Government goes, that they are respected and obeyed." That is the old cry and the new cry. The people suffer and forbear while forbearance is possible, and nothing is done. When longer forbearance is beyond the power of human nature, and they resist with what energy is within their reach, then "the time is not well-chosen"—then is the time for enforcing the laws as they are—the very laws which lead to the poverty, the suffering, the utter inability to make a living out of the land, the starvation, resistance and revolt. The Irish people have been noted for the patience with which they bear their miseries. As far back as the Devon Land Commission in 1843-45 it was shown that the destitute Irish numbered one-third of the entire population of the island. The land was held in large tracts by absolute owners—mostly English peers—who were neglectful of their properties in Ireland; and the effect of the land laws was declared by the Commission "to create a feeling of insecurity which directly checked industry." The people engaged in agriculture were "steeped in poverty and misery. Under all this they were so quiet and forbearing that the Commission felt obligated to pay homage to "the patient endurance which the labouring classes have generally exhibited under sufferings which are greater, we believe, than the people of any other country in Europe have to sustain. Then surely was one of the times for remedial legislation of the most favouring and comprehensive description; but except this patronizing pat on the back for their good behaviour under the worst suffering in Europe, the Irish people got nothing.

That was two years before the awful famine of 1847, and three years before the Young Ireland rising of 1848. It would have been easy then to do all that was asked. Mr. John Dillon, the father of the Mr. Dillon recently in this country with Mr. Parnell, formulated the requirements of Ireland in three words: "A revaluation of the land and perpetuity (that is fixity of tenure) for the tenant." That was repelled in '48 as asking too much, but it could be had almost for the asking now. So it is that the British Parliament has refused to learn. Now the necessities of the case have pushed the suffering people to demand, not only "fixity of tenure" and "fair rents" under a new valuation, but "free sale" of the lands themselves. Long deferred justice thus brings its own penalties.

Within the last thirty-two or three years there have been three famines and as many serious seasons of agitation, if not more. "Young Ireland" rose for redress of grievances in 1848, as the Land League does now, and the Fenian trouble was about midway between. The land question, with accompanying destitution among the peasantry, was involved in every one of these risings. None of the starvation periods, none of the threatened insurrections, growing out of an unendurable state of affairs, brought sufficient wisdom to the British Parliament. The Land Act of 1870 was something, but only a patch. It was all Mr. Gladstone could get at that time however. They were all warned then, and long before, that something deeper and broader would have to be done, if the roots and branches of Irish suffering were to be reached. And so Parliament and Ministries have blundered on to this time, neglecting justice when everything was tranquil, refusing to act during periods of disturbance, the Government expressing indignation when commotion and violence arose through its own neglects, until now there is but little more than a phantom of British rule in Ireland, except that which is backed by the presence of armed soldiery. The time to do justice is when people are suffering injustice. That is always in order.

THE CONNEMARA COLONISTS.

A LETTER FROM BISHOP IRELAND

BISHOP IRELAND'S letter printed below on the subject of the Connemara Colonists, whose condition has provoked considerable comment of late will be read with interest. The communication is addressed to the *Pioneer Press* of St. Paul, Minn., and is as follows:—

So much has been said of the Connemara colonists in Big Stone County that I beg leave to say a few words affecting my relations with these colonists.

The conclusion has no doubt forced itself upon the minds of your readers that whatever they may think of the reports sent abroad through the country asserting great destitution to exist in the Connemara settlement, these people are at best an improvident and worthless class of citizens, and it is, perhaps, asked how I was induced to bring such people to the State. The families that came to us were not the class we had bargained for. Both Father Nugent, who defrayed their expenses to Boston, and myself, who had the responsibility of taking them from the sea shore, had supposed that we would have as objects of our beneficence industrious, sober, hard-working people, who, though impoverished by the famine in Ireland,

were still of a mould to make their way successfully in the world, if only the opportunity were given to them. The parties in the West of Ireland whom Father Nugent requested to select families for the colony, sent us, for the most part, paupers, of long standing, totally demoralised and unmann'd by years of suffering, and unaccustomed to provide for their own wants. No one was more disappointed than I when, after some weeks of painful experience with my proteges, the truth dawned upon me that I had a mountain of trouble before me, when I had expected a mere mole hill.

I had for the last four years been instrumental in bringing Irish colonists to the State, and had noticed their pride of character, their anxiety to work and to be independent, their rapid success amid great difficulties. I had presumed that no families could come to me from Ireland devoid of all these noble qualities.

Still, I did not allow myself to be discouraged. I avow I sincerely loved the new colonists. They were Irishmen, and if they were demoralised and improvident, their defects were no faults of the race, but the unfortunate fruits of oppression and suffering. Driven by dire necessity, as the Connemara people had been, into the wild mountains of Galway, where the earth was sterile, where industry was unknown, they could not but be what I found them, and, indeed, when I read their sad story I only wonder that they are not a thousand times worse. Then, too, I had, as I yet have, sufficient faith in the Irish race to believe that, with due discipline, the worst specimens can be easily fashioned into noblest manhood.

My plan in dealing with the Connemara settlers—Father Ryan of Graceville carrying out exactly my regulations—was to supply them for the winter with the necessaries of life, and make them provide themselves whatever else they might desire. The ultimate object of all my actions towards them was to make them work and become self-supporting. They have since their arrival shown an unwillingness to work. During the busy harvest season many of them loitered around the prairies, and all this under the avowed pretext that Bishop Ireland would support them, whether they worked or not. Some of them have even gone so far as to invite their children home from St. Paul, where they have been earning high wages, telling them that living was free in Big Stone County. It would have been folly, under these circumstances, to do more for them than I did. Each family was furnished with a warm shanty, a cow, wood, potatoes and corn meal. Having read all the reports that have come down from Morris and Graceville, and having taken information from other sources, I am at this moment satisfied that these settlers have not been destitute of the above-mentioned necessaries. There may have been a scarcity of wood in the early part of the season, when, owing to the sudden and unexpected blockading of the road by snow it was impossible for the richest settler to have an abundance of firewood.

Mr. Hutchins tells of "small quantities" of firewood at each shanty. The wood was there; it did not matter that the quantity at some shanties was small, as I had two teams constantly circulating over the prairie and dropping more or less wood at every door. Indeed, there has been a strong feeling aroused in Graceville against the railroad and myself, because when old and well-to-do settlers could not receive from the railroad all the wood they desired, carloads would be sure to arrive regularly for the Connemaras. Then the pile may often have been larger than what Mr. Hutchins saw—sorry I am to say that our Connemaras are artful in begging. At a shanty, where once the owner had claimed that he had no wood, a neighbour, Mr. McBredy, afterwards accidentally stumbled upon a half-cord covered with snow; and at another, where only one piece was visible, the Morris investigators, as Mr. Hodges admitted before the Chamber of Commerce, after a slight search, found several sticks hidden away in the garret. There was meal found in every shanty, so much of it, indeed, in some shanties that the good women were feeding it to the cows. And if the potatoes were frozen it was the fault of the people themselves. A part of the potatoes which I sent to Graceville were frozen in the cars. The sound ones only were delivered to the Connemaras, who let them freeze after they had received them.

I was all the time well aware of the supplies at the disposal of the settlers, and I was aware, too, of the large sums of money being sent to them by their children, with which they were making purchases at the stores. I am not afraid to say that the boys and girls, some ninety of them, who have been working in St. Paul and elsewhere in Minnesota, have sent home to their parents in Big Stone County from 1,500dols. to 2,000dols. The appearance of misery in the shanties, the complaints of the inmates, could not alarm me, as I know well the habits of the people. With all these facts fixed in my mind, I claim to-day that I was fully justified in denying, through the St. Paul and Chicago papers, the statements made to the public by Mr. Hutchins and his friends.

I do not, however, accuse Mr. Hutchins and the Board of Trade of Morris, of wilful misrepresentations. They have been, in a great measure, imposed upon by the tricks and falsehoods of the Connemara people. I will allude but to one delicate lie told by these people—as it is one that I myself know about. It was said that Father Ryan, one day, tore up an order for meal. I gave the order, telling the man he should work out the value of the meal, at the rate of one dollar per day. At the store he found that meal would in a few days be cheaper, and he refused to take the meal on the day that the order had been given. The order was then torn up by Father Ryan, who considered it of no further use. However, I do blame Mr. Hutchins and his friends for not pushing their investigations beyond mere appearances—for not giving a hearing to the other side. It looks as if they were in a hurry to make out a case, and desired only a one-sided report. Some months ago I had cautioned, through Mr. Munroe, the people of Morris against the impositions which the colonists would be likely to practice upon them. I blame them, too, for not quietly telling me of the supposed need of provisions, without sending the news to the four corners of the earth, to the great detriment of the whole State of Minnesota. They surely had no reason to fancy that I would not be most anxious to relieve all suffering. Here again it looks as if only loud charity suits Mr Hutchins, or as