

CATHEDRAL FUND.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions towards the Cathedral Fund:—

Mr. M. Foley	£ s. d.	2 0 0
WEEKLY SUBSCRIPTIONS.		
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SEMINARY FUND.

The following sums have been received for this fund:—

Dunedin (in addition to £158 3s. already acknowledged)	£ s. d.	13 0 6
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Clyde and Alexandra	3 18 0	
Wakatipu (in addition to £28 6s. already acknowledged)	7 3 6	

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# The New Zealand Tablet.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 1881.

## THE IRISH LAND QUESTION.



THE present state of this question is most interesting, and gives every reason to anticipate an early and satisfactory settlement. The Royal Commission on the subject has sent in its report, long extracts from which appear in the *London Tablet* of 29th of January last. It appears that the Commission held sixty-five sittings, at sixty-one of which evidence was taken; they examined

upwards of seven hundred witnesses, of whom eighty were landowners, seventy land-agents, five hundred tenant farmers, besides several clergymen of different denominations, several officials, barristers, solicitors, land surveyors, and professional valuers. The Commissioners who signed this Report are Baron DOWSE, the O'CONNOR DON, and Mr. SHAW.

The Commissioners declare that "the gravity of the present occasion does, indeed, require that the remedy now to be proposed for an admitted grievance should be complete. We wish," they continue, "to place on record our decided opinion that unless the measure is a full and exhaustive one, going to the root of the whole matter, and settling it permanently, it would be better not to interfere with the question at all." They bear testimony to the general moderation of the tone of those who feel themselves aggrieved by the existing law, and to the almost complete absence of demands for measures of confiscation and of proposals tending to create antipathy between class and class, as is evidenced by the immense mass of evidence taken by them. This is very satisfactory and affords a crushing answer to the calumniators of the Irish people.

The Commissioners recommend the adoption of what is known as the three Fs—that is, Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, and Free Sale of the tenant's interests. In reference to these recommendations the *London Tablet* says—"This able and sympathetic Report must place the Irish Land Question in a new light before the British people. Every claim advocated on both sides, by landlord as well as tenant, is thoroughly sifted and discussed, both equitably and economically. We point to its recommendations with feelings of pardonable pride, as it scarcely contains one suggestion for the settlement of the Irish Land Question which has not been advocated by us for years. . . . The three Fs, the tentative creation of an occupying proprietary, reclamation of waste lands, and allotments for agricultural labourers, all are advocated."

In addition to this there are two very important pronouncements in reference to this question. One is a resolution passed by the Irish Bishops, under the presidency of the Archbishop of DUBLIN, on the 25th of January. In this resolution they declare that the present state of the Land Code of Ireland is intrinsically dangerous to the peace and happiness of the people, and that mutual confidence between various classes of society can never be finally established until the Land Code shall undergo a searching and thorough reform. The other is from the pen of the learned and able Bishop of ELPHIN. In his pastoral letter accompanying the publication of the letter of LEO XIII. Dr. GILLOOLY urges his flock to follow the POPE's advice, exhorts his people and priests to continue strict observance of the law, and to wait patiently for the Land Bill promised by Mr. GLADSTONE. But the conclusion of this weighty letter contains words of great significance. We cannot do better than transcribe them as we find them written. His Lordship says "Whilst we express this confidence in the peaceful disposition of our people, we feel it a duty to declare, that should the Government and Legislature fail to satisfy the just demands of the cultivators of the soil, they shall at once forfeit all further claim in restraining influences, which the hope of remedial legislation has hitherto induced a large section of the clergy to exercise in their favour."

From these may be caught a glimpse of the state of the question so far as Irish public opinion is concerned. One of the Commissioners, indeed—Mr. KAVANAGH, a high Conservative—has not joined his colleagues in signing the report, and has written one of his own, evidencing, it appears, great knowledge of the subject, and great ability. This we have not before us now, but the *London Tablet*, which will publish it in its next issue, says that it does not differ from that of his colleagues as much as it had expected. It would appear, then, that there is a consensus of opinion in Ireland in favour of the settlement of the question on the lines of the three F's. Such a settlement would, we are convinced, give peace, prosperity and contentment to Ireland: but we are equally convinced that nothing less will satisfy the people.

The responsibility now rests exclusively on the people of England and Scotland, and their representatives in Parliament. The Irish people of all classes, religions, and shades of opinion are in favour of the three F's at least, and were there a Parliament in College Green a law embodying their principle would be enacted in a week, so unanimous and clear is public opinion on the subject. But will the British Parliament, composed for the most part of landlords, let go the aristocratic grip of the land and root out landlord tyranny and avarice. It is to be hoped, in the interests of the Empire, that it will be so.

But we must confess we have misgivings on the point. When has the English Parliament ever passed a full measure of justice for Ireland on any question? Has it not invariably happened that measures which, on leaving the House of Commons, were pretty fair have been mutilated and grievously disfigured, nay, rendered worse than useless by the House of Lords? But this House may have at length learned that it is neither wise nor safe for three or four hundred English, Irish and Scotch landlords to refuse common justice to five millions of Irishmen.

THE Government of the United States have claimed the surrender by the British Government of Mr. Michael Boyton, who is an American citizen, and who was the first member of the Land League arrested under the Coercion Act. Mr. Boyton is also a distinguished engineer, and holds a foreign decoration conferred upon him for services performed abroad in the prosecution of his profession.

CLOUDS begin to gather once more on the European horizon. Not only is it almost certain that hostilities must immediately occur between Greece and Turkey, but it has already been announced that the accession of Czar Alexander III. must lead to a speedy settlement of the Eastern Question, and this can hardly be accomplished peacefully. The semi-official journal of the German Government, moreover, attacks M. Gambetta, and declares that his prominence in France betrays a warlike disposition on the part of that country—the truth being most probably that Bismarck judges the time close at hand for a fresh campaign.

MR. PARNELL is at present in Ireland, and it is said, his absence from his place in Parliament is occasioning surprise. We are, however, inclined to believe that the party he leads have sufficient confidence in him to judge that his movements are undertaken with due consideration and directed to some profitable end.

Mr. Gladstone announces the introduction of the Land Bill for April 7. On the following day the House will adjourn for the Easter recess. It