

struggle in order to lessen present misery and to stave off starvation is too great to admit of any relaxation of the efforts of the unfortunate dwellers in this part of the land. This is their condition when things are going well in the best of seasons. Should, however, sickness overtake the peasant, or should untoward weather blight his crops, then his fate is sealed indeed.

### VISIT TO AN EMIGRANT SHIP.

THE following is the article which Miss Charlotte G. O'Brien contributed to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, of the 6th May, and to which attention was directed by Mr. O'Donnell in the House of Commons on Monday night:—

The great bay of Queenstown was flooded with light and sunshine when we stepped on board the tender which takes the emigrants to the ship at the mouth of the harbour. I, coming from one of the chief emigrating counties of Ireland, had long wished to see for myself under what conditions the voyage was made, and also to observe the type shown by the emigrants when the individuals were unknown to me personally. The pier was crowded, mostly with young men and women, a few of the latter carrying young children. Each emigrant must bring on board a mattress, tins, and plate. At first, the bustle of departure, in a few instances the farewells, the buying of little pots of shamrocks for the love of the old land, and all the coming and going consequent on the moving of luggage, prevented my being able to judge of the individual faces. Once off, however, it became possible to distinguish. Sorrow brings out latent expression, and the evidences of fresh sorrow were on almost every face. Poverty was written in large letters there—ignorance, weakness, too, and indecision. A soft, gentle, innocent-looking flock, marked not with crime or even intemperance, but with a hopeless submission to daily want. They were faces needing to be hardened, welded, and ground; not dull, far from it, but inert, tremulous, long-suffering. Their needs are supplied by America. Whether for good or evil, for righteousness or for wickedness, the Irishman who comes home from America comes home a stronger being; and the strength and independence begotten of American thought is to-day springing like new blood through the veins of Ireland: but, looking on those poor, I thought of the words "sinless sorrow," and felt them true. I went down among the people, first attracted by a gentle-faced country man with wife and children. He was from Limerick, his story typical. His first cousin returned from America last year and spent two months with him, and at the end of this time he went back to America, without a word of promise or hope. One day this Spring a letter arrived; it contained emigration tickets for the whole family—father, mother, and two or three little ones. I saw another family a few days ago going at the expense (nearly \$80) of a nephew and sister. I spoke next to two hearty, merry girls from Dublin. Their bright grey eyes were full of hope and laughter, not, as in the cases of most here, dimmed with the tears of many days. They were sisters, going to Iowa, had paid their own way, and seemed full of confidence. Near them was a young fellow in a brilliant green and gold Land League tie. Only one really old man was on board, and I spoke to him. He was from Loughrea; his son was taking him out. I asked were the people better off than last year in his country. "No, nor so well; 'tis feared the Land League will fail." The deck of the ship seemed crowded, but in fact only 400 were there, a third of the full number the ship is supposed to carry. Thus far the emigrants. Now for their manner of life. I was shown the ship by a Government official, and I state nothing but what I myself saw. My seeing, which might be deceptive, was confirmed to me in all its worst particulars by this official, whose duty especially connects him with these emigrant ships.

It is not necessary to say that wherever the sacred foot of wealth trod there all was gold and silver, shining brass, cleanliness, comfort, and decency. We had come on board, however, to see the emigrants, and emigrants' quarters were determined to see. "They are very bad; you would not like to see them." But we insisted. First, then, we went down into a large dark hold. This was the quarter of the single men. A memory of the descriptions of slave-ships flashed across me, and below this place our guide showed us a deep hole. "I could not take you down; it is much worse than what you see." But my business was with the women's quarters, and we went on there. Between two decks, better lighted than the men's quarters, was a large space, open from one side of the ship to the other. From either side of a long central walk to the outer walls of the ship were slung two enormous hammocks, one suspended about three feet from the floor, the other above the lower one. What was going on in the two upper hammocks I could not see, but I presume they were the same as those below. I suppose each of these hammocks carries about one hundred persons. They were made of sail cloth, and being suspended all around from hooks, were perfectly flat. Narrow strips of sail cloth divide this great bed into berths. These strips of cloth when the mattresses were out formed divisions about eight inches high; when the mattresses are in it must be almost one level. Now in these beds lie hundreds of men and women. Any man who comes with a woman who is or calls herself his wife sleeps by right in the midst of hundreds of young women, who are compelled to live in his presence day and night; if they remove their clothes it is under his eyes—if they lie down to rest it is beside him. It is a shame even to speak of these things; but to destroy such an evil it is necessary to face it. Do not look on these abodes of misery now in daylight and open for inspection—they are empty, swept, and garnished; think that in the darkness of the night, the ship pitching in mid-ocean, a glimmering lamp or two makes visible to you this mass of moaning humanity. Look on that young mother with two or three helpless babes in the agonies of sea-sickness, unable to move but over the prostrate bodies of her fellow-sufferers. Look at this innocent girl-child—lying among dissolute men and abandoned women—half stupefied with suffocation and sea-sickness, amid the curses and groans of hundreds. And if she arise and flee to save her soul, whither shall she go? Again she must tread on the writhing bodies of men and women. But the picture is too horrible to be looked on—

the sounds too dreadful to be listened to. This is no brutal and impure dream; this is the truth, the living horror menacing the life, honour, and soul of hundreds and thousands of our fellow-countrywomen. The ship on which I saw these things, being supposed to carry in this manner 1000 steerage passengers, carried last year on one voyage 1775 emigrants.

A woman may well ask what right men have in their quarters at all; and women may well say if there is Government inspection by men and they condone this we have a right to ask that a staff of women inspectors, who would not condone such things, should be appointed to protect their own weak ones. This touches England almost more nearly than Ireland, for my countrymen hardly ever go singly, but in batches of from six to twelve, "neighbouring" boys and girls, who are well able to take care of themselves. Many, even as it is, do go down beneath the waves of temptation, and, seeing what they have to face on first going forth from their simple homes, it is no wonder. But Irishwomen are taught from the cradle to respect themselves. How deep a degradation they must feel on being compelled to live in the presence of men other than their own fathers and brothers those who know them best can best testify. Though I, as an Irishwoman, am conversant with uncomplaining misery, I never have been so deeply impressed by the long suffering of the silent multitude as in seeing what I then saw.

That the ships of some of these lines are not so abominable as that I saw is at least a comfort; but these things should not depend on the sense of right or money interests of shipowners. Governments protect and inspect property of various kinds. Should they not above all protect defenceless human beings, especially women and children? Women have a right to ask that the interests of women should be under the protection of women. Men have too often learned to condone and accustom themselves to terrible evils. Let these things come into the hands of women who are not hardened, who can see with their eyes and hear with their ears. I grieved to see the American flag—rightly dear to us Irish, even as the unseen flag that waves only in the hearts of a faithful people—floating over a whited sepulchre such as that beautiful boat, haunted by the memories of sin, full of ravening wickedness and all uncleanness.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Chamberlain, in answer to a question by Mr. O'Donnell, said:—

The circumstances to which reference is made in the question of the hon. member were brought to my attention some days before this letter was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* by the Chief Secretary of Ireland, and I at once made some preliminary inquiries into the matter. On the publication of Miss O'Brien's letter I communicated with the managers of the five lines of British steamships which take Irish emigrants from Liverpool and Queenstown, and I have now received from all these managers a most emphatic and categorical denial that any such circumstances as are related in the article could possibly have taken place with regard to their lines of steamships. I have, however, thought the matter of so much importance that I have directed Captain Grissel, the principal officer of the Board of Trade, to visit Queenstown and Liverpool to make special inquiries into the matter, and Mr. Gray, assistant in the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, who is now in Liverpool, has been instructed to make further inquiries. (Hear, hear.) I have asked Miss O'Brien to give me the names of the ships to which her letter referred, and to give me further particulars, which would enable me to make a more careful and thorough investigation into the matter. (Hear, hear.) I hope that, under the circumstances the House will think it right to suspend any definitive judgment on the standpoint which has been taken, and as soon as the correspondence has been completed I will lay it on the table. (Hear, hear.)

### LEO XIII AND THE TEMPORAL POWER.

THE *Osservatore Romano* of Monday, April 25, published the discourse of Leo XIII, delivered to the representatives of the various Catholic clubs and societies which constitute the Pian Federation for Catholic interests. Through many titles, and all of them glorious (said his Holiness), Rome belongs to the Roman Pontiff; God destined it for the guardianship of His supreme dignity and independence and for the free exercise of His spiritual power. For those reasons the rights which the Pontiff has over it are so sacred that no human force, no political reasons, no lapse of time can ever destroy or even diminish or weaken them; and we, upon whom it is now by Divine disposition incumbent to defend it, will assuredly, with the help of Heaven, never fail in the arduous task, even at the cost of the greatest sacrifices.

The *Times* says:—"These words, which are still a more forcible accentuation than ever of those which in Leo XIII's first utterances from the Pontifical throne distinctly foreshadowed the same determination, must fully convince everyone of the impossibility of his ever entering upon any compromise with the civil Government established in Rome as the capital of the Italian monarchy. Leo XIII spoke before the presidents and officials of the societies assembled in the hall of the Consistory, but all the long galleries and great chambers on the same floor with the hall of Consistory, and on the floor above were also crowded with the members of those societies, numbering from eight to ten thousands persons. It matters little whether, as the *Capitale* asserts, this crowd was gathered from highways and byways, that it included all whose material interests depend upon the Vatican, or that hundreds went there for the chance of seeing the Pope rather than from a sentiment of political fidelity, the important fact remains that from 8000 to 10,000 persons flocked into the Vatican on Sunday to pay homage to the Pope, and flocked out again as freely and as undisturbed as in the days when their spiritual sovereign was Pope and King. Ten years ago such a demonstration would have set Rome in a state of ferment. I need scarcely add that after the Pope had concluded his speech he passed through all the crowded rooms, imparting his benediction, and receiving from the thousands present that homage which is due from all Catholic people to their spiritual head.