

CRIME IN IRELAND AND ENGLAND.

THERE was a tacit understanding that the Coercion Act was merely designed for the temporary maintenance of order pending the fundamental settlement of the Irish land question. But it seems that Mr. Forster still insists on applying this harsh measure, and on keeping persons arrested on suspicion in jail. The pretext for a course which is not calculated to fortify the confidence of the Irish people in the good intentions of the Gladstone Government is the alleged prevalence of social disorder and agrarian violence. It is curious, in view of Mr. Forster's assertion, to compare the statistics of crime in Ireland and England which have been lately collected for the *Catholic World*.

There is an absurd impression current among English people that the Irish, as a Celtic race, are irresistibly impelled to violence and disorder. It was the existence of this deeprooted, but wholly indefensible prejudice, which enabled Mr. Forster to carry through his Coercion bill. Yet Mr. Gladstone himself in 1870 asked the House of Commons to investigate and determine in which province of Ireland the ratio of agrarian crime, to the number of ejections was highest. They would find, he said, that in Connaught, where the Celtic race largely predominated, the ratio of agrarian outrages to ejections was far lower than in Ulster, which has the largest infusion of non-Celtic blood. Equally preposterous is the notion that the influence of the Catholic Church fails to sensibly arrest the criminal impulses of the Irish people. With a view of testing the effect of confession upon morals, an extensive inquiry was instituted some years ago by Dr. Forbes, one of the Queen's physicians, in regard to the number of illegitimate children, in each of the four provinces of Ireland. It turned out that the proportion of children not born in wedlock coincided almost exactly with the relative prevalence of the Catholic and Protestant religions in each province, being large where the Protestant element was large, and small where it was small. A well-known Presbyterian organ, the *Scotsman*, has admitted that in respect of offences against purity, England was nearly twice, and Scotland almost three times, as bad as Ireland and that in Ireland itself the ratio of illegitimacy was largest in the north-eastern district, which comprised the semi-English and Scotch plantations of Ulster.

But, it may be said, admitting that Ireland is relatively free from transgressions of sexual morality, is not the case widely different with such crimes against the person as homicide and attempts to kill? We can answer this question by contrasting the criminal statistics of England and Ireland in regard to all those serious offences against the person which are punishable after trial by jury only. For this purpose the population of the last-named country should, of course, be compared with a proportionate fraction of the much denser population of England. We find, then, that of the crimes specified there were committed in 1878 in Ireland 2,886, and in England, for the same population, 4,189. This exhibit is bad enough for the latter nation, but Scotland is in a still less creditable condition, for here the judicial return, if we keep in view proportionate numbers would foot up 5,925. As for murders, there were but five in Ireland during 1880, whereas in England four were reported in a single day of that year. It is astonishing, indeed, to note how great a decrease has taken place in the crime of manslaughter in Ireland within the last half century. In 1833 there were recorded no less than 172 homicides. There were 176 in 1846, the year before the great famine. But by 1852 the number had declined to 69, and by 1858 to 36. In 1878 only five persons were found guilty of murder, and in 1879 but four. That so few murders were committed in 1880, when a third bad harvest had brought a large part of the country to the verge of famine, is a striking comment on the long-suffering spirit of the Irish.

The more the evidence supplied by criminal statistics is sifted, the more questionable appear the motives which prompted the Coercion act. It appears from a return presented to the House of Commons that in the thirteen months preceding January 31, 1881, the whole number of agrarian offences, including threatening notices, was but 987, whereas in the year 1870, when no Coercion act was demanded, the number of such outrages reached 1,359. It is known, moreover that at the very time Mr. Forster was proclaiming the inadequacy of the ordinary tribunals and urging the necessity of stringent coercion the reports of the Irish courts were remarkably satisfactory. At the summer assizes in 1880 the Judges in all parts of the country bore testimony to the comparative absence of crime. In Wexford there were only three cases to go before the Grand Jury; in Galway, the poorest and most disturbed county in the island, only four; in Wicklow, one; in Louth, two; in Donegal five; in the city of Cork, none. In North Tipperary, a district noted for the excitable temper of the people, Judge O'Brien vouchsafed for the fact that there were no agrarian outrages at all, and at Drogheda, Judge Fitzgibbon declared that the complete absence of crime was not in any way owing to the inability of the police authorities to detect offences. So much for the alleged frequency of crimes against human beings. As to the charge of cruelty to animals, which is one of the accusations most frequently brought against Ireland since the beginning of the land agitation, this can be easily disposed of. Sir Charles Dilke assigned as one reason for coercion that during the ten months preceding November 1880, forty-seven cattle had been killed or maimed in Ireland. Now in England during the year 1879 no less than 3,725 convictions for cruelty to animals were had, including such atrocities as pulling the tongues out of horses, burning cats alive, and pouring turpentine down dogs' throats.

The last argument to which those who defend coercion have recourse is the pretended impossibility of convicting criminals. It is true that Mr. Forster failed to get the verdict of a jury against Mr. Parnell and his coadjutors when they were tried for an alleged breach of the peace. Yet almost at the very time when that event occurred three charges of murder were being tried in English courts, and in each case the trial resulted in an acquittal. Why might not the Irish press with show of justice, have proclaimed on such evidence the miscarriage of English justice and the inefficiency of the ordinary tribunals

In view of facts like these, we can marvel at the bitter resentment provoked in Ireland by a coercion act, passed by a Legislature in which Irish members do not constitute one-fifth of the whole number—an act, too, which empowers an alien Governor to imprison men on suspicion, and deprives the Irish people of the writ of *habeas corpus*, the precious privilege which Englishmen would defend with their life's blood.—*N. Y. Sun*.

A BOER OUTRAGE.

MR. CHESSON, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, writes to the *Times*:—By the last mail from South Africa I received the statement of a native named Indabazimbi, which appears to me to have a direct bearing upon the question now at issue between the British Government and the Transvaal Volksraad. Indabazimbi states that about a year ago he lived on a farm in the Utrecht district belonging to one Isaac Meyer, and that, according to custom, he sent his son to work for that individual. When the war broke out the Meyer family moved farther into the Transvaal, taking the Kaffir boy with them as a herd. Indabazimbi himself accompanied them as driver during a portion of the journey, and then returned home. When the war was over, the Meyers sent for him that they might again have his services as driver; but the poor fellow on joining them found that his son had disappeared, and his place had been taken by another boy. He wished to go in search of the missing lad, or at least to take steps to offer a reward for his recovery; but neither then nor on his return to the farm was he able to obtain the necessary permission. Determined, if possible, to accomplish his object, he left for the interior on his own responsibility; but was constrained to abandon his quest when he was told that the Boers would be certain to shoot him for having no pass. On his return he learnt from one of his wives that several of the Meyer family had daily come to look for him, "telling them that it was now no longer 'sjamboking' (hogging with hide whips) but for shooting them." When Indabazimbi heard this he took alarm, and collecting all his goods, sought refuge on the Natal side of the Buffalo river. The incensed farmers pursued and attacked him, and carried off every article he possessed, including the waggon and oxen which he had borrowed from two relatives, and a large sum of money which, being apparently a thrifty and industrious man, he had saved. This outrage took place early in August, and a week later Indabazimbi made a statement of the facts at Hilldrop, Newcastle, Natal, in the presence of Messrs. H. Rider Haggard (of the Wyndham Club, St. James's Square), A. H. Cochrane, and J. H. Gay Roberts. Mr. Haggard, in sending me a copy of this statement, of which the above is an outline, informs me that another copy had been sent to Sir Evelyn Wood, Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, and that his Excellency has forwarded it to the British Resident at Pretoria. I hope that there will be a searching inquiry into this matter, and that if Indabazimbi's statement is established, his assailants will be compelled to restore him his property, and at the same time be made to understand that such acts, when committed in Natal, rendered the perpetrators of them amenable to British law.

Father Sheehy, who has been released from Kilmainham, reports the condition of the jail as conducive to blood-poisoning, and says the food is unfit for human use. In his first speech after release, he said: "I am precisely of the same mind now as I was before my arrest." What has England done by his imprisonment? Again proved her own malignant stupidity.—*Pilot*.

The *Osservatore Romano* announced the solemn retraction of the Abbe Persiani who had joined the Old Catholics.

John Stuart Mill said it was not Irish ideas about land that were peculiar, but English ideas, and the *New York Evening Post* (Carl Schurz's paper) says that on this subject (property in land) "the Irish are in the main stream of human tradition; it is the English who have gone up a little side creek."

London, Sept. 29.—The *Times* publishes the draft of the Scottish land bill prepared by the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, which provides for an adjustment of rents by arbitration, a revaluation of farms, and for power in the tenant to sell his holding. The *Times* says it is one of the most far-reaching measures on the land question ever yet submitted to Parliament. It makes the strictest provision relative to compensation for improvements.

A negro went home from a Georgia camp meeting in a state of ecstacy, declared that he was going to heaven by the way of a tall tree that grew in the dooryard, climbed to a height of seventy feet, and then undertook to fly the rest of the journey. The fall killed him.

According to present arrangements, the Empress of Austria will hunt next spring in county Meath, Ireland, and Summer Hill is being prepared for her Majesty's reception. The stud is located at present at Brownstown, on the Curragh.

The Jesuit Fathers have been expelled from their missions in Kabylia, in the southwest of Algeria. Their only offence was the gradual spread of the French language and the publication of two dictionaries of the Kabyl dialect. Their schools were so successful that five native pupils have passed with honor the examination for the military school of Saumur in France.

The *Western Watchman* says that "one of the greatest and best priests that ever wore a stole is now slowly dying of leprosy contracted during his ministrations on the sick" in Louisiana, where the old plague is spreading in certain parts of the State. Its authority is the State Board of Health.

Mr. J. Stewart, chief-engineer of the Livingstonia Mission settlement, has made a voyage in the "Hala," the little steamer which 300 African women carried upon their shoulders around Murchison's Falls, and which now navigates the beautiful Lake Nyassa.