

SENATOR JONES ON THE IRISH SITUATION.

WHILE staying in New York the senator was interviewed by a reporter of the *New York Herald* :—

"Yes, I have been in Ireland. For the first time since I was a child I went back to see my old home in Balbriggan, a fine little town about twelve miles from Dublin. I found Ireland far more beautiful than my early recollections led me to expect."

"And its people?"

"I found among them a strong, deep, and seemingly unquestionable desire for local self-government, such as the Canadian people have. The feeling is thoroughly national, and, whatever differences may exist as to minor political matters, I believe that Ireland is eager for Home Rule. The people talk earnestly about their plans, and I failed to see any evidence of disorder in the portion of the country which I visited. There was no more lawlessness or crime than in other countries."

"Was there any great destitution among the people?"

"To tell the truth, I did not go to the section where the suffering was said to be greatest. But when I was in Dublin the late Father Tom Burke left his sick bed to address a meeting in the cause of charity, and I took this last occasion to hear the famous patriot-priest of whom I had read so much. The assembly was a very large one; but I could not judge of Father Burke's oratory, for he was very sick and only spoke a few earnest words, full of tenderness and feeling. He declared that in the Western portion of Ireland in one district there were 5,000 little children dying of hunger. Father Burke appealed for money with which to buy bread and clothes for the helpless little ones. This I considered the highest evidence that the suffering in some parts of the island was as great as it has been represented. When I was banqueted by the Lord Mayor and citizens of Dublin I said in a brief speech that if there were 5,000 children on the verge of the grave in a single district there must be a proportionate amount of destitution among the adults. By the way, Lord Wolseley was banqueted in the Rotunda of Dublin on the very night that I was honoured in the Mansion House. The *Freeman's Journal* commented extensively on the two banquets, and quoted the words of Lord Wolseley, who said in his speech that the Irish soldiers, like the Irish people, could not be governed by the cold discipline of the English, but must have leaders of their own. The words had a strange ring, coming as they did from the lips of a distinguished general. The *London Times* said the reception to me was intended as a political move to detract from the meeting to Lord Wolseley. I do not think that it had any political significance, and the fact that the two affairs took place on the one night was merely a coincidence."

"Do the people seem to rely generally upon Parnell?"

"Yes, decidedly. They seem to think that a deal of good has been wrought by the Land Act, and that it can be altered so as to accomplish much more. The people think that the country can easily be developed if the Government will give it a fair chance. This view was held by the most thoughtful men I met. Everywhere it was said that the distribution of taxes in Ireland was not just when compared with taxation in other parts of the Empire, and that there was much need of reform in this direction before the country could prosper. I don't believe that any Protestant leader ever had the confidence of the Catholic people as completely as Parnell. There are a few who disagree with him, but the great mass of the people are with him heart and soul. They like his moderation and conservatism. Even men who dare not sympathise with him openly support him secretly."

"What was the most prominent feature in Irish politics that you noticed?"

"The most striking thing to me was the fact that the religious differences which formerly divided the Irish people from top to bottom are being thrown at one side, and Protestant and Catholic are joining hands."

"How about the exportation of the peasantry to America? Is there really any feeling on the subject?"

"There is a very strong feeling against what is called 'assisted emigration.' The idea of exporting to America, by means of Governmental aid, people who can be classed as paupers, offends the pride of the Irish, and they talk very freely against it. The popular feeling is that the poor peasants should not go to America, but stay at home and help to work out their country's redemption."

"Did you observe any general sympathy for the men who were recently hanged in Ireland?"

"No. I found that the people themselves detest any form of crime just as much as we do here. The Irish people think that crimes committed in the name of Ireland have done the country's cause great injury."

"What were the chief points of difference between Ireland and America that you noticed?"

"Well, the people there claim that they do not reap the full fruits of their labour, and that if they did they would be as prosperous as our people are. They contend that under the political system by which they are ruled the country is unable to contain within itself the wealth which is created by the tillers of the land; that the growth of industry is checked by oppressive laws; that, although Irishmen labour hard and skilfully, the bulk of the country's subsistence goes into England and nothing comes back. Another difference between the two countries is the great display of military force which met my eye at every little railway station. There was always a number of constabulary carrying sidearms and sometimes carbines."

"What did you see personally as to the depressed state of Ireland?"

"Well, I'll tell you one thing. I saw south of Dublin immense tracts of magnificent farming lands which had apparently been cultivated once, but are now used as pasture. The fences were down and the fertile fields were abandoned to nature and the cattle which grazed upon them. I wondered how the people along that

section could support themselves when so little of the land was devoted to the cultivation of breadstuffs. I was told that this was the direct result of the evictions of tenants by landlords. I really cannot see how it is that Ireland cannot support a larger population when so much of the finest farming land I ever saw is lying waste and almost useless."

EVADING THE LAW.

(From the *Trapeza Times*.)

THE correspondence between Bishop Moran and the Minister of Education, which we publish in another column, opens up, in a very serious manner, the question of religious instruction in the State schools. The Bishop directs the attention of the Minister to the action of the School Committee at Milton in authorising the District High School to be opened by reading the Bible and the Lord's prayer, and also to the fact that the school-work in the Dunedin High School "is daily commenced with prayer, at which all are practically compelled to assist." Dr. Hislop (the Secretary for Education) replies "by direction of the Minister of Education" that the power of dealing with such matters "is conferred by Parliament upon the local authorities charged, respectively, with the administration" of the Education Act and the Otago Boys' and Girls' Schools Act, and that the Legislature has given the Minister of Education no authority to interfere." If this dictum is to be accepted, Education Boards and School Committees may do pretty much as they please, and can set the spirit and even the letter of the Education Act at defiance. An injunction of the Supreme Court might, we presume, be obtained to enforce the law, otherwise their power to ignore it would seem to be absolute. The Minister of Education is appointed under the Act of 1877, and it is therein enacted that "the Minister shall have the control and direction of the Department of Education as constituted under part I. of this Act, and the officers of that Department, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, shall generally administer the Act." This authority of general administration clearly applies to the taking care that its provisions are faithfully carried out by the Education Boards and School Committees, as well as by the department officers, and it is the plain duty of the Minister, especially, to guard against any interference with the secular principle, which is, we may say, the basis of the established system. In regard to the particular cases cited by Bishop Moran, we believe we are correct in stating that the attendance of the pupils at the religious exercises with which the schools are opened is not compulsory; the Dunedin High School, moreover, is not subject to the provisions of the Education Act, and Dr. Hislop is probably right in asserting that the Minister has no authority to interfere directly with that institution. The Milton school is, however, a State school, and being so, the conduct thereof is clearly subject to the administration of the Minister of Education. Very shortly after the Education Act came into force, the very same question was raised relative to instruction other than secular being given in the Sydenham School (Canterbury), where the attendance as in the case of the Milton School was voluntary on the part of teacher and scholars, and the time precedent to the commencement of school work. Dr. Hislop, on this occasion, under date October 1st, 1878, by direction of the then Minister, wrote to the Secretary of the Education Board, Christchurch, on the subject, and we quote from this letter the following pertinent remarks:—"The 'four' hours [section 84 of the Education Act] are here mentioned as the minimum length of time during which a public school is to be kept open each day; but if a Board or School Committee officially direct that any school shall be kept open for a longer period each day than four hours, then the requirements of the Act as to the character of the teaching applies as much to the whole of this longer period as it does to the minimum period of 'four' hours. In other words, the requirements of the Act as to the character of the instruction to be given in a public school applies to the whole of the time during which a public school is kept open, whether that time extend to the minimum 'four hours' or to any longer period. . . . The practice followed in the Colombo-street school is simply an evasion of the law of the Colony as laid down in the Education Act, 1877." Will it be asserted for one moment that the Minister of Education has no power to interfere where there is a distinct evasion of the law as the practice at the Milton High School has been thus officially declared to be; or that it is not his plain duty to act in the first place as his predecessor did in the case of Colombo-street school at Sydenham, and point out to the Education Board the illegality of proceedings which receive their sanction generally throughout Otago? Whether or not religious instruction should be entirely excluded from the curriculum of the State schools is a question it is not to our present purpose to discuss. The Education Act rightly or wrongly absolutely prohibits any instruction other than secular being given, and the Minister of Education is entirely in the wrong in endeavouring to divest himself of responsibility in the matter, and it is an absolute absurdity to express through the mouth of the Secretary of Education that Education Boards and School Committees may evade and defy the law at their own will, pleasure, caprice or prejudice.

General Grant never travels on Sunday when he can help it, says a floating newspaper item. It is a good trait. Also, he never pays fare when he can help it, which is a good trait. General Grant is both good and wise, when he travels. Let him be encouraged to travel long and far.—*Pilot*.

At the burial of Dr. Strain, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Edinburgh, a pageant was witnessed such as Scotland had not seen since the Reformation. There were 150 priests, and a multitude of Franciscans, Benedictines, Redemptorists, Vincentians, acolytes and uns made up a grand picture.

The *Liverpool Catholic Times* says: We regret to have to announce the death from cholera of the Rev. Father Patrick Duggan, O. S. F., resident at Cairo, who was recently appointed acting military chaplain. May he rest in peace!