

fortune and dishonor before him. Known as the father of a Christian, he must doubtless lose his office, the only resource of his old age.

'Ah, Cecilia!' he exclaimed, after this terrible outburst of anger had subsided, 'it is those Jews of Capena gate who have ruined you. I should have watched over you more carefully, and not permit you to keep company with that old Patronilla.'

'These last words were for me as a ray of light. I hurried away to follow the threads of this infamous web by which a father was robbed of his child, and I of the only treasure I had ever wished to possess. I know all, Eutrapeles. It is but too true, Cecilia is a Jewess. That old woman, Patronilla, has perverted her. She and a matron of high rank, Flavia Domitilla, the emperor's relation, have inveigled her into this superstition. And I, I am only Gurgus, the vespiilo; an odious being, forsaken and scoffed at, who has paid his shame ten thousand sestertii. O vengeance! O Furies! What shall I do, Eutrapeles?'

The question was asked in a tone of the deepest despondency. Eutrapeles seemed to reflect.

'Friend Gurgus,' he said at last, 'this is a very serious matter; but I shall come to your assistance, doubt it not. However, I shall require a few days of reflection. I see a means, but it must be used with prudence on account of Flavia Domitilla. We shall work things right. It is very late; go home, my friend, and leave me the care of your vengeance.'

The tone in which this was said was so earnest, so full of assurance, that Gurgus doubted not that he had found a powerful auxiliary. He allowed himself to be gently led out of the shop by the crafty barber, who, replying to his supplications by renewed promises of assistance, bade him good night, and closed the door upon him with great carelessness.

When Eutrapeles returned to the end of the shop where he and Gurgus had had the interesting conversation he had narrated, he found Regulus waiting.

'Well, my lord?' said he.

'By Hercules! Eutrapeles, this is wonderful luck. At the very start I am on the track of those Christians of whom I was speaking to you when the vespiilo came in, and who give so much uneasiness to the divine Domitian. This little girl will be very useful to us, we shall know everything through her.'

'You have your plan?'

'Certainly, Eutrapeles. Whilst listening to your conversation, certain ideas have suggested themselves to my mind. In the first place it is necessary that the vespiilo should get back his ten thousand sestertii, and that his claim against Cecilia should pass into my hands. I shall have a hold on him by this means, and by making him uneasy, besides, about his situation, I shall lead him to do what I please. To-morrow you will have the money—see that the transfer is made without delay. Ah, whilst I think of it, in order to remain free in our movements, we must use the name of a third party. I shall make him know to you in good time. As for the girl, we shall see what is to be done; I shall attend to it. With little care prudence and precision, your promise to the vespiilo will be fulfilled without giving yourself the least trouble. Good night.'

And Regulus, leaving the tavern, was soon lost in the darkness which filled the streets of Rome. As Eutrapeles closed his door, a hopeful smile illumined his features:

'Who knows,' he thought; 'but that this matter will result in securing for me the senatorial purple with which the divine Augustus rewarded my predecessor, Lucinius.'

CHAPTER II.—THE CRYP T OF LIBITINA'S WOODS.

Cecilius was an old freedman who had purchased his freedom with the patiently accumulated proceeds of his daily savings on the 'diarium' or ration of wheat, granted to the slaves by their masters.

He was nevertheless a Roman citizen, for he had stipulated the great manumission which conferred upon the freedman the same rights as his former owner enjoyed.

After passing forty years in bondage, Cecilius had found himself, at last, master of his own person, and at liberty to carve his own fortune; but, for a long time, his charge of condition had only brought him the misfortune and hard trials, which are the share of the weak in a society where public compassion—this Christian and modern virtue—did not exist.

In fact, the only assistance tendered disdainfully to the poor—not to console, but rather to debase them—still more and to keep them in perpetual dependence—consisted in the 'sportule' or the 'panarium,' that is, alms of a trifling amount, or rations of inferior food, ostentatiously distributed by the aemulators of the patrons to the tumultuous crowd of clients assembled at the door of their sumptuous mansions.

In his capacity of freedman, Cecilius remained the client of his former owner, and he had had to earn the 'sportule' by continual acts of obsequious meanness—the usual price of these parsimonious liberalitys. Such necessities cannot redeem the soul debased by slavery, and do not prepare man for the exercise of that dignity which he may need in certain circumstances of his life.

Cecilius, a freedman and a citizen, had remained a slave at heart. To satisfy his selfish instincts, this man would have sacrificed if necessary, the dearest and most sacred objects of his affection; and to conquer the enjoyments of life, for which he thirsted, would not have stopped before an abject or guilty action.

The manner in which he had encouraged the hopes of Gurgus, and the loans he had obtained from him through the promise of his daughter's early consent, at a time when he was certain of her opposition to the match, have already induced the reader to form a poor opinion of his honesty.

Albert, a somewhat extraordinary circumstance had brought a sudden and important improvement in the freedman's affairs. He had saved the life of the consul Afranius Dexter, by protecting him

from the fury of one of his freedmen who attempted to murder him. The consul, in his gratitude gave him a wife, a dowry, and the lucrative office of scribe in Saturna's treasury.

Cecilia was born in the first year of this marriage, and her childhood had been much neglected. Her mother died while she was yet in her infancy, and her father, from his habits, his instincts and his character, was ill suited for the task of devotion and tender solicitude, imposed by a young girl's education.

But the gods, as certain friends of the family ingeniously remarked, had protected Cecilia. She was remarkable for her splendid beauty, and what is better, for the charms of her intellect, her candor, and those gifts which distinguish superior natures. With exquisite good sense and rare wisdom, she had promptly understood the necessities of the solitary life to which fate had condemned her, and she had provided for them without asking of her father, efforts and sacrifices of which she knew him incapable.

Thus, she had availed herself of every opportunity of acquiring instruction, and her education, due only to her own unaided efforts and perseverance, was so complete for a girl of her humble condition, as to cause astonishment.

To her care were due the comfort of her father's modest household, and the little enjoyments which Cecilius, ever miserly when useful expenses were concerned, and foolishly prodigal when he sought to gratify his desires, would have never tasted but for the tender solicitude of the amiable child.

Cecilia's poetical soul found great charm in the graceful fictions of mythology, and she took pleasure in participating in the ceremonies of certain feasts, and in mingling her pure voice with those of the young girls who, clad in white tunics and crowned with flowers, sang sacred hymns in the processions. But she could not understand the shameless indecency of those other ceremonies where all restraint was lost, and the gods were honored by the most licentious revels.

(To be Continued.)

THE LAND QUESTION OF IRELAND. (FROM THE TIMES SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.)

I have undertaken, at your request, to investigate and report upon a subject of great national importance. The Land System of Ireland—that is, the relations between the owners and occupiers of the soil in that country, and the social phenomena resulting from them—has for many years, as your readers know, attracted much general and painful attention. Half a century ago, when, during the period of distress that followed the war with France, Parliament considered the question for the first time, that system had definitively assumed a form that without exaggeration may be described as being melancholy and pernicious. Absenteeism with its numerous and complicated mischiefs, prevailed to an enormous extent; and throughout the island large tracts had fallen into the hands of needy and worthless landlords, who, unable to fulfil a single duty of property or to do anything to improve their estates, held the land in a kind of destructive mortmain, and thought only of extracting from it as much as it could yield to reckless improvidence. A considerable area, too, had come under the control of the Court of Chancery, and in many districts a gradation of interests was interposed between the owner and the cultivator of the soil which was aptly designated as a 'barbarous sub-infeudation' which confused rights, destroyed responsibility, checked industry, and led to many acts of injustice. Moreover, except in the province of Ulster, where for many generations a well-known usage had given the tenant a substantial interest in the land was, for the most part, held by a poor peasantry on precarious tenures; and even where leaseholds were not uncommon there were few signs of growing improvement. Above all, an immense and increasing breadth of the country was being rapidly covered by the dense swarms of a cottier population, who, trenching on the domain of legitimate husbandry, and clinging to wretchedness to their petty holdings—their squalid 'cabins and potato gardens'—spread over the land a huge mass of village—a multitudinous array of want and pauperism.

The consequences of this state of things were seen in widespread disorder and poverty, and in a complete disorganization of society. Except in a few favoured districts, agriculture was in a backward condition; the land bore on its face the marks of neglect and thriftlessness; even where nature was most kindly, industry seemed generally to languish. By the pressure of population on the undeveloped resources of the country, the rent of land was usually forced up to a point too high for the public good; it was regulated, as has been well said, by the competition of starvation, not of capital; and accordingly, the growth and accumulation of the national wealth were rigorously checked; and the occupier of the soil was too often the mere dependent serf of his landlord, kept in a lifelong state of hopeless penury. Owing to the general poverty of the peasantry, too, and the subdivision of holdings which was one of its effects, the improvements added to the soil were few; the landowner, from his peculiar position, was usually able to throw on the occupier the burden and cost of the few that were made; and he was too often tempted, on a change of tenancy, to appropriate these improvements to himself, and to confiscate, without an equivalent return, the hard-earned fruits of another's industry. Add to this, that from a variety of causes, ranging up to the historical past the salutary customs and charities of life which in a well-ordered state of society adorn the relation of landlord and tenant existed only in a few parts of the island, and that in by far the greater portion the classes connected with the land, and we can comprehend what elements of mischief were scattered profusely through the community.

The impediments, moreover, in national progress that necessarily followed from this state of things were by no means more formidable consequences. Society in Ireland during this period in the words of a singularly calm minded statesman, was generally directed towards a war of classes a fierce struggle for the means of subsistence. In several counties the unfortunate peasantry unable to bear the pressure of what seemed continually upon the increase, formed combinations to compel the reduction of rent and the settlement of wages—a wild endeavour to fix upon the soil a population it could not, in its actual condition, support within even an approach to comfort. In part, unconsciously to themselves, the small farmers and the mass of cottiers arrayed themselves into a set of Trades' Unions for the purpose of regulating property in land, so as by some means to get a livelihood out of it; and, like other Trades' Unions, they expressed their will by a system of terrorism and general outrage. The Whiteboy code confronted the law and overcame it in many districts; tribunals of vengeance and violence prescribed the conditions of landlord tenures, and agrarian crimes increased and multiplied, supported far and near by popular sympathy. The upper classes, angry and terrified, and backed by the whole power of the State, retaliated with no light vengeance; and repeated acts of coercion, special commissions to administer relentless justice, continual executions and

transportations, and law executed with unsparring severity were the inevitable and unceasing consequences. So threatening was this state of society that Sir George Lewis, as he surveyed it, wrote of it in this remarkable language:—'This system pervades the whole community; it acts the rich against the poor; it sets the poor against the rich; it constantly agitates the whole agricultural population in their most ordinary dealings; it causes sleepless nights and anxious days to those who do not individually feel the weight of its vengeance. It is not the banding together of a few outcasts who betake themselves to illegal courses and prey on the rest of the community, but the deliberate association of the peasantry, seeking by cruel outrage to insure themselves against the risk of other destitution and abandonment. Its influence, therefore, even when unseen, is general; it is, in fact, the expression of the wants and feelings of the general community.' So far as it is successful it is an abrogation of the existing government, for which it substitutes a dominion, beneficial apparently in its immediate consequences to the peasantry, but arbitrary, capricious, violent, unprincipled, and sanguinary, oppressive of the upper and corruptive of the lower classes, and, in the long run, most pernicious to the entire society.'

The state of society was for many years the subject of anxious inquiries in Parliament; but statesmen, though appalled at the results, were able to devise no other remedy than an imperfect Poor Law and measures of coercion. A terrible visitation of Providence brought nearly to an end an order of things that threatened not only Ireland, but the Empire. The precocious root which had sustained the teeming and impoverished Irish peasantry, which, as has been said, was the material basis on which society in Ireland rested, perished during two consecutive seasons; and the nation, after an agonizing trial, went through a great and strange transformation. The masses of wretchedness that incubated the soil were lifted from it literally in millions, and having experienced a bitter ordeal, relieved by magnificent imperial charity, sought the Far West in the continuous waves of an emigration unparalleled in history. At the same time the whole system of property in Ireland was smitten by a sudden shock; embarrassed landlords were involved in ruin; the interests of middlemen, as the class of intermediate owners was called, became in most instances almost worthless. The letters in which the land was bound were thus in an extraordinary way loosened, and statesmanship happily lent its aid to promote a revolution ultimately fortunate. A Poor Law, stringent yet on the whole just, prevented poverty from re-settling on the soil and accelerated, as we believe wisely, the emigration of the cottier population. The estates of the insolvent landlords were sold and transferred to others by a summary process, and in this manner an immense area was thrown open to a new class of proprietors. At the same time many legislative efforts were made to simplify reform tenures and to attract capital and energy to the land; and the Imperial Exchequer contributed largely in loans for the improvement of landed property. The results, conjoined with the natural influence of the mild and impartial system of government which has now prevailed during many years, cannot be doubtful to a candid inquirer. The material wealth of Ireland has increased in a wonderful degree since the great famine. Several millions of acres, formerly waste, have been reclaimed and permanently enclosed, and throughout the whole country agriculture has made remarkable and successful progress. The worst phenomena of the old state of society have in a great degree vanished. What has been called landlordism is not felt to be universally an intolerable burden; there is no war of mere poverty against property. If agrarian confederacies still exist, they have lost much of their baleful activity. Above all, the condition of the poorer classes has passed through a very happy change; the cottier serf has in great measure been converted into the agricultural labourer, and by rate of wages has increased enormously. The by every conceivable economic test—amount of production, returns of industry, proportion between the burdens of land and its profits, remuneration to labour in its various forms, accumulation of all kinds of capital—the state of Ireland is one of hopeful prosperity compared with what it was in the last generation.

Notwithstanding, however, this decided progress, society in Ireland still exhibits not a few perplexing and alarming symptoms. Irish agriculture, as a rule is far behind that of England or Scotland; indeed, except in some fortunate spots, it is still very defective and backward. Absenteeism though diminished, still prevails to an extent detrimental to the country. Though embarrassed owners are more uncommon than they were, though middle men tenures have been broken up, it cannot be said that landed property rests generally upon a secure basis. The Landed Estates Acts have done much good, yet complaints are made that in some districts they have introduced a new class of proprietors, grasping, mischievous, and illiberal. The old dissections of religion and race keep the owners and occupiers of the soil asunder; time and change have done something, but not much, in bridging over the chasm between them. While the cottier peasantry have almost vanished, and the position of the agricultural labourer has been improved in a remarkable manner, the relations between the landlords and the better class of tenants have not been in proportion improved. It is said that five-sixths of the land of Ireland is still held by precarious tenures—yearly tenancies in a real sense at will—and that a growing disinclination exists to concede even short leasehold interests. Complaints are made, and that not only by trading agitators but by thinking men, that the pressure of rent is still excessive; that it does not allow the Irish farmer a fair and reasonable margin of profit. It is said, too, that the great mass of improvements which are added to the soil are the product of the industry of the tenant, and not of the outlay of the proprietor; that landlords have too often the power, and in some instances have shown the will, to appropriate these improvements to their own benefit by direct or indirect means; and that injustice, accordingly, is not seldom done, and agricultural progress is seriously impeded. It would appear, too, that there are few signs of an increasing growth of the kindly sentiments that should knit the landed classes together; indeed, according to some reports, there has been a tendency in an opposite direction. More than all, those foul confederacies of blood, so long the curse of Irish society, have never been completely dissolved, and of late, unhappily, have given proofs of continuing and even renewed vitality. Though agrarian outrages are few compared with what they were 30 years ago, several agrarian crimes of the very worst type have been perpetrated during the last 18 months; the spirit that fosters this wicked conspiracy, and that assures for it impunity and sympathy, survives in a great part of the nation; nor has it ceased with the cessation of the cause that formerly made it so fierce and intense—the extreme want of a half-starving peasantry. Nor must we forget that at this moment the Government will not intrust the immense majority of the occupiers of land in Ireland with firearms; that until the other day the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended throughout the whole island; that a Minister of the Crown not long ago admitted that if Fenianism had enjoyed a momentary triumph it would have obtained the support, as it had the goodwill of an unknown number of the agricultural classes.

This train of phenomena, which never ceased to attract the attention of thinking persons has now forced itself into public notice. The Irish Land Question has become a subject of wide national interest, and will take up a great deal of the time of Parliament in the next Session. As might have been expected, as it is viewed in different aspects by different interests, opinion respecting it varies considerably; but there is a general conviction that some change is

required, and violent measures have been put forward as the only solution of the problem. Men of all parties have admitted the necessity of a reform of evident justice—the securing the Irish tenant compensation for the improvements he may have annexed to the soil; but several Bills introduced with this object have, for different reasons, proved unsuccessful. Meanwhile, even the most practical statesmen allow that the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland are not in a satisfactory state, and reforms of a very radical kind have been advocated by a not contemptible party. It is urged that the ordinary rights of ownership in land in Ireland must be largely modified in order to protect the rights of the occupiers, and that, in the interest of the whole community, the Irish farmer should be assured a firmer hold than he has on the soil. It is said that as Irish society is irreconcilable with the public good; that it places his tenant in a state of mere dependence; that rack rents, precarious tenures, discontent, hatred, injustice, and crime are the miserable but inevitable results; and that Ireland can have neither prosperity nor peace until the occupying tenantry shall have obtained a more durable interest in the land than they are likely to have as things now are. Schemes, accordingly, of the most revolutionary character, amounting in substance to a transfer of the soil from the landlord to the tenant, subject to a quit rent, have been propounded by men of no small reputation in economic science, and are known to find favour in the eyes of some at least of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Even statesmen of the highest distinction, and conscious of their great responsibility, seem to think that the landed system of Ireland must be changed in some way that shall augment the interest of the occupier in his holding, though with the exception of Mr. Bright, perhaps, their language has hitherto been vague and undefined.

This, therefore, is the Irish Land Question, which I have undertaken to examine for you in its phenomena, and, if possible, its causes, not merely in books but by my own inquiry; nor should I have accomplished your object, were I not to review the principles, at least of the measures considered applicable to it. I approach the task with sincere distrust in my own power to perform it well, yet I hope that I may be able to throw some degree of light on this important subject; for, in the first place, my principal business will be to collect and record facts—which must be useful to inform opinion, and I write with no intention to report you to find out the truth and not to accuse me to see evidence wrongly; and, especially I have a settled conviction that, as the still existing evils of Ireland may be traced to a variety of causes and second to the remote past, so it is idle to imagine that they can all be removed by any single or sudden panacea.

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

Captain Seymour, the Conservative candidate, has been returned for the county of Antrim, his majority over the Liberal candidate, Sir Shafto Adair, being 2,889.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?—There seems to be special difficulty in selecting a name for the disestablished Church. 'The Free Church,' 'Protestant Episcopal Church,' 'Irish Church,' 'The Church of Ireland,' have all their advocates, but the last is the favorite. There is one slight hitch, however; it never was the Church of Ireland, and with God's help it never shall be.

Information Wanted of Mary Scott, who left Ballina, county Mayo, Ireland, 15 years ago, for Canada West. When last heard from she was in North Crosby, Newboro', Canada West, America, about ten months ago. Any information concerning her will be thankfully received by her sister, Sarah Reardon, 20, Church-lane, Leeds, Yorkshire, England.

At Tubbrunnath, near Sligo, 25 men attacked the house of a man named Ward, and took arms from it. Six of them have been arrested. Some had been in custody as supposed Fenians.

A rumour that Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright intend to pay Ireland a visit during the Autumn has gone the rounds of the papers, their alleged object being to acquaint themselves by personal observation with the condition of the country before bringing in their proposed Land Bill.

It is said that Mr. Lowe is about to visit Ireland. His visit has reference, primarily, to the question of the Railways, which is to be discussed next session; but during his visit Mr. Lowe will no doubt obtain information which will be of value on other questions.

THE FUTURE OF IRISH PROTESTANTISM.—Our excellent contemporary, the 'Catholic World,' well says:—'Protestantism in Ireland is dead, and neither Prime Bishops nor his episcopal brethren can reanimate its dry bones. Whatever plans may be proposed by wiseacres for the restoration of its life must fail. It is a law of nature that the sap does not return to a withered branch. The instant Protestantism is cast off from the State that moment it is cut off from the source of its vitality. And let the Protestant Bishops do what they like they will find themselves playing out an ecclesiastical comedy of 'All in the Wrong.'

DROGGEDA, Aug 23.—An open air meeting, attended by twenty thousand persons, was held here today in favor of granting amnesty to Fenians. Bands played popular Fenian airs, and enthusiastic speeches were made. The resolutions adopted declare that a further detention of Fenian prisoners is unwise, unpolitic and unjust.

TREASURE-TROVS.—Last evening, as a number of workmen were engaged in pulling down some portion of an old house in Roache's-street, Limerick, one of them suddenly struck his shovel against something that gave a sonorous sound. The man had the coolness to keep the matter to himself, and afterwards took a quiet opportunity of examining the spot, when he discovered wrapped in a partially decayed cloth a number of large gold coins, which turned out to be Spanish doubloons of a very ancient date. The man took the first opportunity of making away with his treasure but the matter got abroad and he was arrested in Cork, with the greater portion of it in his possession. The value of the gold is nearly £100 sterling.—Correspondent of the Express.

The 'Weekly Register' says it is reported that one of the seats at Cork will immediately become vacant by the Church Disestablishment Act. Mr. George Alexander Hamilton has been appointed one of the three commissioners to carry the disendowing clauses of the Act into effect. This renders the permanent Under-Secretaryship of the Treasury vacant and it is reported that the vacancy will be filled by Mr. Maguire. The hon. gentleman sat for Duergarvan from July 1852, till July 1866, when he was elected for the city of Cork. The name of Mr. Massey is mentioned as his probable successor in the representation of Cork.

THE DISESTABLISHED CHURCH.—Already the confusion of Babel has fallen on that Church that had cash alone, or, as the Americans would say, 'the almighty dollar' has preserved amongst us so long. 'Twenty-one noblemen and Members of Parliament, 658 magistrates and other gentlemen, and 90 clerical delegates' of the late Church Conference have addressed the Episcopal Bench, requesting their lordships to reassemble the Conference for the purpose of considering the course to be taken in the altered fortunes of the Church. The Bishops, foreseeing that such a conference without authority to guide it must precipitate the whole Church and its doctrines into chaos, decline; but do so in a hesitating, faltering manner, concluding their reply as follows in words that are ominous of the rapid declension of

the Protestant Church into a confused form of Presbyterianism:—'No future arrangement would be satisfactory which did not in like manner maintain the equal rights of both clergy and laity to their full share in the representation of the Church; and in any steps which we may take it will be a chief aim with us to combine this necessary condition with the maintenance of the links which bind the present of the Church to its future and its past.—We remain, faithfully yours, M. G. Armagh, R. O. Dublin.' The whole body of Bishops are now openly called seceders. They have reassembled at the Hilton Hotel, possibly to reconsider. Their proceedings have not yet been made public, but whatever be their decision, the end cannot be far off.—Tablet.

PROTESTANT DEMONSTRATION.—A great Protestant demonstration was held at Hilton Park, near Clones, on Saturday, to consider certain matters in connection with the administration of justice in the country, and to devise measures for the safety and welfare of the Protestant churches in this country. It was estimated that there were from 25,000 to 30,000 persons present, chiefly Orangemen from the counties of Monaghan, Fermanagh, Cavan, and Armagh. Flags and banners of the favourite hues were everywhere displayed, and there were over 100 lodges represented. There was no disturbance of any kind. John Madden, J.P., D. L., occupied the chair. Colonel Madden read letters of apology from Lord Enniskillen and others. He also read a letter from Captain Archdall, M.P., District Master of Lisnasally, declining to attend, as he did not see the practical use of such a meeting at present—that the reorganization of the Church ought to be their first object. Several speakers addressed the meeting in forcible language, and resolutions were proposed condemning the government for the dismissal of Captain Cooke as High Sheriff of Monaghan, protesting against the Party Processions' Act, the Irish Church Bill, and promising to support the Protestant Church.—Saunders.

Some suggestions for the settlement of the Irish land question have been drawn up by Mr. Blake, the member for Waterford, and issued in the form of a circular. Mr. Blake states that his plan aims at being self-acting, simple, and inexpensive. It proposes that valuers appointed by an order of the General Valuation Office should as soon as possible after the passing of the act, inspect each yearly holding, and deliver to the landlord and tenant a certificate containing particulars as to land under pasture, land under tillage, mountain land and bog. The probable cost of putting into order by manuring, draining, &c. The present average value per acre, particulars as to state of house and out-buildings, with the outlay necessary to put them into good order. Certificate should also state amount of ground yearly cess for the last twelve months, poor rate for ditto; the average price of millers' wheat, oats, and barley for the last twelve months; also the average price of butter, beef, and mutton at the nearest market town. Whenever the tenancy terminates by eviction or surrender a valuator is to give certificate of the then condition of the farm, and, assuming that improvements had taken place calculated to enhance the letting value of the land to the extent of 10s per acre on an average. The valuation would award, say for example, for improvements in house, out-offices, &c., £50 for ten years of the increased letting value of the land at 10s per acre £250. This total of £300 will become payable to the tenant after deducting any rent due, the valuator giving the landlord benefit of the circumstances which increased the value of the farm independent of the action of the tenant. Mr. Blake's paper is similar to one presented by him in 1865 to the select committee on the tenure of land.

THE LAND QUESTION.—The Pall Mall Gazette says that to turn the Irish landlord into the mere owner of a rent-charge would be confiscation. Of course it would, without fair compensation for possible increase of value; but that granted, what moral right has the owner of land to more than he would get from letting anything else, say a house or machinery or money? His right of dictating how his tenant shall vote or act in any way is pure oppression, and so is his claim to social deference on account of his landlordism; and what else would he lose? Supposing the most extreme reform adopted, a perpetual settlement, the landlord would be on his estate just what the Duke of Portland is on his London property, and where is the baronetship of that position? While the leases run the Duke has no 'power' except to exact his rent, but his position is none the worse for that. In many respects, the Irish landlord would be much better off than he is for he would get his money to the day, and he would not get shot.—Spectator.

About fourteen months ago, when the question of the Irish Church was still comparatively new, Master Fitzgibbon, the Receiver Master in Chancery, published a book called 'Ireland in 1868,' which attracted a good deal of attention, partly from the fact that the author had never previously taken a part in politics, and partly because of the bitterness which he infused into the discussion of the subject. Now that the Land difficulty has usurped the place which the Church question lately occupied, Master Fitzgibbon has once more seized his pen, and, in a pamphlet of some eighty pages, attempts to solve it. He is himself a landowner, and as Receiver Master he manages some 400 estates, on which there are more than 20,000 tenants. If his solution does not succeed it will be for want of experience in the author. His idea is that the real want of Ireland is an industrious and improving tenantry; and he argues that Irish tenants will not improve their holdings so long as they fear that the landlord will raise the rent. To meet this difficulty he would enact that any tenant having less than an interest for seven years may undertake in writing within three to improve the value of his land by a substantial percentage and upon a specified plan. An inspector should then examine the farm and, if he approve the proposal, give a certificate which would protect the tenant from eviction during the execution of the works. Upon their completion a further certificate should be granted, which would give a parliamentary term to the tenant proportionate to the value of his improvements. If he added 25 per cent. to the agricultural value of the farm he should have a thirty years' term at the old rent, and so on. This is the substance of the solution which Master Fitzgibbon proposes.

'RELIGIOUS' AND 'PARTY' EXPRESSIONS.—There is a curious law in Ireland providing for the punishment of those who indulge in 'party expressions' as are calculated to lead to a breach of the peace. Acts for violation of this law are very common. The magistrates seem to apportion even-handed justice to Catholic and Protestant alike, and the trials are often very amusing. Under the head of 'Manifestations of Religious Feeling,' the Belfast Whig gives, in its pulpit report the following cases:—Bernard Ward was arrested for saying that he was 'a Papist to the backbone' and 'kicking a policeman on the shins; he was fined 40s and costs for this indecent avowal of his religious faith and sent to jail for 14 days for the assault. Henry McCool was arrested for 'blessing the Pope' in Smithfield market. On his way to the station-house he changed his mind and cursed the Pope. This should have made it even; but the magistrate fined 20s alike for the blessing and the curse. Catherine Ward, who only 'curse the Pope,' was fined 40s. William Crowley, a good Papist, and a Cork man, was fined in the same amount. David Hill, William Eysbury, Joseph Kilpatrick, and William Brown came before the police station, and the first two shouted, 'To hell with the Pope!' They were arrested and the other two then made use of the same expression, and were also arrested. 'Why did you curse the Pope?' asked the magistrate. 'It just come into our heads,' said the prisoners; and the magistrate sent them to jail for a fortnight to give them time to get it out of their heads. The revenue thus derived from these manifestations of religious zeal is said to amount to a considerable sum in the course of a year.