

FATHER BURKE'S LECTURE ON "Ireland's Faith, the Triumph of the Age."

(From the New York Irish American.)

The following lecture was delivered by the Rev. Father Burke in the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, before a large and highly respectable audience. On the stage were some fifty or sixty of the clergy of New York as well as a number of those belonging to Brooklyn and New Jersey. The Very Rev. Dr. Starrs introduced the lecturer of the evening. He said:

Ladies and gentlemen: It affords me much pleasure to introduce to you this evening the Very Rev. Father Burke, although I scarcely think it necessary to do so, as he is so well known to all present. He has kindly consented to deliver a lecture this evening for the Institute of Mary, under the charge of the Sisters of Mercy; and the subject chosen by him is one that will be interesting to all—"Ireland's Faith, the Triumph of the Age" (applause).

The enthusiasm of the audience again broke out in applause as the great Dominican advanced to the foot-lights. When it had subsided, he proceeded to address them as follows:—

I have, at first, my friends, to tell you that I have been requested to invite your attention to the Fair which is going on amongst us, in Irving Hall, for the benefit of the "Home for the Poor and Aged." They tell me that it is not as successful as its friends would wish. I am sure that, in a large and great Catholic community like this, I have only to invite your attention to this noble and magnificent charity, to obtain for you a free and generous support.—The Fair will continue for the next week; and every one who goes leaves, of course, a little money behind; and he will get, at least the prayers of the aged and of the poor. I have also to announce to you that on Thursday evening I shall have again the honor of lecturing in this Academy, for the Catholic Protector, which has been burned, and which, of course, we must rebuild for our poor children. Here, again, I have been told that this lecture will be poorly attended. Well, my dear friends, if it is poorly attended, it may be good for my soul to receive a little humiliation—a humiliation which you, in your kindness, have hitherto spared me; but though it may be good for my soul, it will be very bad for the Protector, and the funds of the Protector (laughter and applause).

And, now, I approach the subject of this evening's lecture. I am reminded, at the very outset, that four years ago, I met a poor fellow in the county of Galway; he was going along the road, whistling, I think, the "Humors of Glynn" (laughter). He had a pipe in his mouth, and when he came up and saw the priest, he took the pipe out of his mouth, and with a guilty expression of countenance he put it behind his back. "What is the best news, your reverence?" "Well," said I, "the only news that I have to give you is that they are making an Act of Parliament in England, declaring that the Protestant Church has come to an end in this country, and it is no longer to be the established religion in Ireland." "Do you mean to tell me," said he, "that the English Parliament made that law?" "Yes; there is no doubt it," said I. "Well," said he, "by the piper that played before Moses, I never heard of the making any law for the Catholics of Ireland before, except coercion bills, pains and penalty bills, fines upon this, and taxation upon that, and transportation for the other thing; and I don't know," said he, "whether it was God or the devil that taught them now how to change" (laughter). And then the poor illiterate man made use of a remark that suggested to me the subject of this evening's lecture:—"Well, sir," said he, "it is a strange thing that they should have disestablished the Protestant Church. They are not making any row about it.—O'Connell is dead and in his grave; there is no arming now going on; no fighting in the country, and the boys all so quiet." Isn't it a strange thing, sir, said he, "that they should have made such a law?" He just touched the very soul and centre of the magnificence of this triumph when he spoke of the triumph of a peaceful people over the most bitter enemies that ever raised up against any nation on the face of the earth (applause).

"Ireland's Faith, the Triumph of the Age." This proposition means two things: first, that Ireland's faith has triumphed; and, second, that there is no victory which this age of ours celebrates that can be compared to the triumph of Ireland's Catholic faith (applause). That Ireland's faith has triumphed we behold in that singular act of legislation which, after three hundred years of penal law and persecution, has solemnly declared, countersigned by England's Minister and England's Queen, that they have tried in vain to rob Ireland of her Catholic faith by every means of bloodshed, persecution and confiscation; that they acknowledge themselves beaten, and have been obliged to lift up, over the green hills of Ireland, the sacred standard of religious liberty (tremendous applause). That this victory is unequalled by any of the triumphs of our age we shall see, if we only contemplate the things that pass around us. We live, my dear friends, in this nineteenth century, in an age of great victories and great defeats. Within the last few years the world has stood agape and astounded at the clash of arms, and the magnitude of the forces that were hurled against one another on so many ensanguined battle-fields.—The roar of artillery, like the thunder of heaven, has resounded amidst the hills and valleys of nearly every nation in Europe, and in your own great country of America. Great issues have come before the nations; great principles have been defended and attacked; great defeats have been recorded; and great was the exultation of those who conquered, in the moments of their victory. But, I ask you, are not all these vulgar and commonplace triumphs?—To-day, Bismarck, Prime Minister of Germany, waves his victorious sword over the prostrate form of the great and generous nation which he has succeeded in conquering. But, if he shouts out, "Victory! Fatherland for ever! Victory!" he must remember that he had to purchase that victory from old France at the cost of the best blood that flowed in the German veins (applause). He must remember that before he was able to cry out "Victory!" he was obliged to have twelve hundred thousand men at his back. It is easy to proclaim triumph with such a force; but the victory is commonplace and vulgar; it is a triumph of brute material force, such as the world has often witnessed, since the day that Cain shed his brother's blood down to this hour. France, in her turn, has had her glorious moments, when, flushed with victory, she unfurled her heroic standard over the fields of Lombardy and of Italy; but another day, in that moment of her triumph, lay the best and bravest of her sons in death. Here, in your own land, blood has been shed. A great question had to be decided, and could not be decided without the arbitrament of the sword. But who was the man in America, in the hour of your victory—where was the man, even while he was crying out the victory of the land, that was not generous enough to shed a tear over the brave and magnificent army which you had conquered (applause). In a word, the triumph of force over force is a commonplace thing that takes place every day. But it is only once in a generation—only once in an age, perhaps not even once—that we find a triumph of great principles—a triumph of a high, noble ideal, clasped to the mind and to the heart of a people, defended, through centuries of sorrow and of bloodshed, and at length crowned in that faithful people with the crown of an unblemished and unstained victory (tremendous applause).

No bloodshed in the moment of their triumph; no saddening recollections thronging around it; nothing, but an assertion of the power of God, and the hand of God making itself visible in the councils even of the nation that resisted Him for three hundred years (renewed applause).

And, my friends, such were the conditions of Ireland's victory; and such was the promise that God made. Among the titles of God,—which He takes to Himself,—there is that of King of Kings, and conqueror of Kings; but He also calls Himself the King of peace,—*Rei pacis*; a King who will assert His sovereignty but not with the sword; a King who will proclaim His triumph in His own time, and whom nothing can resist. When the triumph comes, the brows of the victor are crowned with the crown of peace. Such is the description given of the victories of God. My friends, what is the element which God Himself has declared shall be and must be, unto the end of time, the secret of a nation's faith, as well as a man's triumph? It is Divine Faith. "This," says St. John, "is the victory which overcometh the world,—our Faith." What does Faith mean? Faith is the virtue by which the intellect of man apprehends God, and beholds Him with the eye of the mind, not with the eye of the body. Faith is the Divine virtue by which the minds of men, or of nations, are put in relation, direct and immediate, with the eternal truth of God. The highest grace that God gives to any man or to any people is the faculty of rightly comprehending Him, by true faith; out of which grows the passion of love which puts that Faith and that God above all things. It is not every man nor is it every nation that receives this high grace. It is offered to all but it is not accepted by all. Nothing is more common than for men and nations to set up some distorted view of their own and say, "Lo! this is the voice of God," and to their own opinion they pin their faith. Nothing is more common than for men and nations, in hours of trial and difficulty, to change their faith,—to deny to-day that which they believed yesterday; to give up their faith; to say "We cannot cling to that form of divine knowledge that even God has given us; we cannot cling to it,—it is too dear a cost. We cannot afford to give up property, liberty and life,—everything in this world,—rather than lose that faith. No; they give it up, renounce it; and the world has seen, over and over again, the terrible spectacle of nations changing their faith and shaking off their God. But there is one race amongst the races, one nation amongst the nations that received, fifteen hundred years ago, this divine and high grace from God, that the minds of the people, keenly, clearly and almost instinctively grasped the divine truth of God; and that the heart of the nation was so warmed into life by that Faith, that the people, like one man, were prepared to suffer and to die, rather than to ever give it up or change it from what they had received (obeers). I say, one race amongst the races,—one nation amongst the nations; for I find that the Eastern nations, who received that Divine faith from the Apostles, forgot it,—changed it,—under the persecutions of the schismatic Greek Emperors, or under the terrible hand of Mohammed. I find that the civilized nations of Europe have, from time to time, thought very little, indeed, of changing that faith. Where, to-day, is the Catholic faith that was once the crown of England? Where, to-day, is the glorious faith that once reigned supreme in Prussia and Northern Germany? Where, to-day, is the Catholic faith that was once so dearly loved, and so excellently practiced in Scandinavia, in Sweden and in Norway? Where is it? It is amongst the traditions of the past. Its record tells the perversion of the peoples. But where, to-day, is the faith that, fifteen hundred years ago, Patrick preached in Ireland? It is in the mind and in the heart of the Irish race wherever they are all over the world (long-continued applause). It is there, as pure as it was when the message came from the lips of Ireland's Apostle; it is as pure now, in the Irish mind and heart, to-day, and as dear to the nation, as on the day when it was the crown of Ireland's glory,—as dear to the nation as it was on the day when it was the blood-stained treasure that she held with her agonizing and dying hands,—as dear to Ireland, to-day, and to her children, and as unchangeable and unchanged from the faith of the divine religion that St. Patrick preached to our fathers (tremendous cheers). Is not this a great grace? To apprehend so instinctively and keenly, to accept so joyfully and willingly, to hold so firmly and determinedly that knowledge of God which comes not by the evidence of the senses, though it comes by hearing:—that faith which is defined by St. Paul to be the argument of things that do not appear, and the substance of things that are not beheld. Ireland received that faith more than a thousand years before Columbus landed upon the shores of America. Ireland held that faith with the divine power of grace, and with the instinct of fidelity unexampled amongst nations. Ireland, more than any other country, has been put to the test of suffering, in order that she might be able not only to assert but to prove to the world, to the end of time, that God never had a more faithful people than the Irish race (cheers). To save their people, the nations of the East lost their ancient, Apostolic, Catholic faith under the persecutions of Arianism and the schismatic Greek Emperors, or under the heavy hand of Mohammed and his followers. But tell me, what was Henry the Eighth, of England? What was his daughter Elizabeth? What was James the First? What were the Charleses, First and Second? What was William, Prince of Orange, or the house of Hanover, but what the Arian schismatics and Greek Emperors were over the East? What was Oliver Cromwell? He was to Ireland what Mohammed was to Arabia. As terrible even as the sword of the false prophet was, it never was steeped like that of the villainous and caning hypocrite, who wet and stained his sword in the best blood of Ireland.

But God has said that whoever the faith is, that faith must triumph. All we have to do is to look at it for a moment, and behold the necessity of God's justice being vindicated in His word. To attempt to force a man's belief,—to attempt to impose upon his belief at the point of the sword,—to attempt to drive dogmas of faith down his throat by the force of the bayonet's point,—this is the most extraordinary delusion that ever entered into the minds of men or of nations. There is only one sword that can reach the soul of man; and that is the sword of the spirit, which is the divine Word of God. There is only one power that can induce a man to bend his mind unto moral belief in Christ, His Saviour; and that one power is the power of Divine Grace, coming down from Heaven, flowing forth from the lips of some Apostolic preacher, falling upon the ear of the listener, and penetrating into his heart, moulding his spirit through that agency of faith, and not through the power that presumes or appears with the arms of the flesh. With coercion bills, penal laws, or any other agency to bind or to force the faith of a people, is simply a "delusion, a mockery, and a snare" (applause). There is as much difference, therefore, between that which is attacked, namely,—faith, and the weapons by which it is attacked, namely,—the weapons of persecution, as there is between spirit and matter, as there is between eternity and time, as there is between Heaven and earth, as there is between God and the devil. And yet, strange to say, for three hundred years, the wisdom of England,—that wise, highly civilized nation,—labored to effect this diabolical miracle! This power of England was concentrated upon this one object. Three hundred years, now, though that had been waged for four hundred years before, on the question of Ireland's nationality, was renewed upon a different battlefield. For four hundred years our fathers had stood and fought for Ireland's freedom and for Ireland's native empire (loud cheers). They fought with divided

hearts, and with divided councils. With a weak and faltering arm did they deal the National blow. Heroes fell; and the nation wept over her lost children, the bitter tears of disappointment and regret. Never, during these four hundred years, never was Ireland united. It is a sad and humiliating fact, but I am obliged to confess it. Only that I love my country so dearly; only that I am so proud of my nation and of my blood,—only that I know well that these are your feelings also, I would not say that word (applause). Next to God every man must love his native land (renewed cheering). Next to the blow which he is prepared to deal in defence of his sacred altar,—next in energy, next in force and determination, should be the blow he deals in defence of the sacred liberties of his country (thunder of applause). God teaches us, by a natural instinct, to love the land that bore us; and religion hallows the virtue of patriotism; for the last of Ireland's Saints was the only man whose clarion voice was heard from end to end of Old Ireland, crying:—"Arm! arm! ye men of Erin! Come with me, and let us drive the invader from our soil!" [great cheering again and again renewed]. When he failed, his Irish heart broke within him, to see that the cause was lost. And the Catholic Church canonized him for his virtues, amongst which was his glorious patriotism (renewed applause). Yet I blush to say,—dear as the cause was, important as the cause was,—it was never able, during the four hundred years of the first English invasion,—it was never able to rally and unite the hearts and hands of all Irishmen. But, after four hundred years of unavailing contest, when the nation seemed to be heart-broken, when the National arm seemed to be paralyzed by stroke after stroke of disaster; when Ireland seemed to have lost, or began to lose even her faith in her nationality,—the English King, fortunately for us, fortunately for our history, fortunately for the dignity of our National cause,—the King of England called upon Ireland to give up her Catholic faith. He called upon a nation that he had almost conquered. He called upon a people that he had almost seen divided. He called upon a people that seemed to be incapable of rallying one man even in defence of their liberties. He said to them: "You must renounce your Catholic religion. You must forget Patrick's Gospel, and Patrick's name. You must anathematize and blaspheme the Mother of Jesus Christ! You must turn your backs upon the graves of your dead,—forget them, nor hallow their resting-places with sacrifices or prayer any more. You must take the crucifix from off the altar and trample it under foot." This was the message that the saintly and pious Henry the Eighth sent to Ireland (laughter and cheers). But, lo! in one instant, in the twinkling of an eye, he was astounded to see that Ireland was united as one man against him (tremendous cheering)! He recoiled (renewed cheering). He recoiled at the sight. It struck terror into his heart. He had succeeded in uniting Ireland upon the glorious issue of Ireland's faith; and wherever Henry the Eighth's soul is to-night, as an Irishman and as a Catholic priest, I thank him for the message which he sent to Ireland (great laughter and cheers). At once the Irish people assumed the majesty and dignity of a great nation. The sword that was about to be sheathed was grasped again in the nation's hands. Here after hero stood at the front on many a battlefield. Amidst the bloodshed and cries of victory, Ireland has proclaimed, for these three hundred years, with an arm that never ceased for one instant to wave the sword of national faith; Ireland has proclaimed that, as sure as there was a God in heaven, so sure would Ireland's altar stand, and her Catholic faith remain with her until the end of time (great cheers).

My friends, it is really worthy of our attention as Irishmen and as sons of Irishmen. During the first four hundred years that the English were in Ireland, the country was divided—every little chieftain fighting with his fellow chieftain, trying to patch up a piece, or trying to curry favour with the English, and playing into the hands of their strong and merciless invaders. There is positively no man that loves Ireland can read the history of the first four hundred years of the English and Saxon invasion, without being ashamed and grieved for his country. But the moment he comes to the question of Ireland's religion being attacked,—and it is the record of three hundred years,—that moment I rise and lay my hand proudly on the annals of my country (cheers). Show me the history of the nation,—show me the pages that record as much bravery, as much determination, and such a magnificent spirit of fidelity, as the history of the religious contest for the last three centuries in Ireland. Ah! Henry found, indeed that he had touched the rallying centre of the Irish Union in their religion, the moment he laid his finger on that religion. He had no longer to put down some little petty prince in Connaught, or some King in Ulster. He had no longer to deal with some sept in the mountains of Wicklow. He had no longer to pit McCarty Mor, standing alone, against the King of Munster; he was no longer able to put up one Irish chieftain against another; he was no longer able to foment treason or treachery amongst them; No! Like one man, the voice of Ireland came forth from out the mouth and from out the Catholic heart, and Catholic brain:—"Never, never, English King,—even though you call to your aid all the powers of earth and all the devils in hell,—never shall you succeed in wresting from Ireland her sacred Catholic faith" (tremendous cheering). Now, my friends, the contest raged with uncertain results. Generally speaking, we were victorious; sometimes we were defeated. I can call to your recollection the glorious name of Hugh O'Neill, when he stood at the Yellow Ford, and didn't let one English soldier escape from under his hand (loud cheers). I can recall, with joy, and with pride, the day when Owen Roe O'Neill marched with his gallant Irish army to Benburb, and shattered to pieces the flower of English chivalry (renewed cheering). But if there was an Englishman here he would be able to remind me of the day when we were broken on the banks of the "Boyne's ill-fated river." He would remind me of the day when the bravest of Ireland's soldiers were hurled from the bridge of Athlone into the Shannon, swollen with the winter's rain, and bearing upon its lovely bosom, out into the Western Ocean, the corpses of the best and bravest men of Ireland. He might remind me of the day when Patrick Sarsfield sallied forth, a sad and heart-broken man, from the heroic walls of brave and immortal Limerick (tremendous cheering). Therefore, the history of this great contest has been one of alternate victory and defeat, of alternate joy and sorrow. But, one thing is certain; there was no doubt that no defeat that we suffered ever yet extinguished Ireland's love for her faith, Ireland's love for her nationality and for her freedom (applause). These two points toward the enemy who assailed one as the foe who assailed the other. The tyrant who called upon Ireland to bow down as a mere Province of the British Empire; and Ireland said: "No! I will be a Catholic nation; and I will be a nation unto the end of time" (enthusiastic applause).

But, when the victory came, it was still, after so many battles, a peaceful one. God had ordained it, and preordained it, in His own way. In the beginning of this century, which is now drawing to a close, Ireland lay prostrate, after the unsuccessful rebellion of 1798. I have often heard it remarked that the men of Wicklow and the men of Wexford are considered the finest specimens of the Irish peasantry. Go through the villages, pass along the highways, pass down along the eastern shores of Ireland, and every man that you meet is as straight as a lance; broad-shouldered, with heads erect, and a fearless light in their dark blue eyes, looking at you with the glance of a mountain oak. You

might well be afraid of a contest with them on the field of battle. Well, in the year 1800, the first year of our century, these men of Wicklow and Wicklow were hunted through Ireland like wild foxes or wolves. A price was set on their heads. Thirty-six thousand English soldiers were in pursuit of these brave and heroic though misguided men. Their blood was shed not only in the fair fight of battle; their blood was shed in treachery, as when ninety of them were slaughtered on the Hill of Tara, after they had given up their arms. Ireland beheld her two famous counties, Wexford and Wicklow, a desert, filled with English troops, and English yeomanry; and nowhere were the people able to lift their heads; bowed down, oppressed, and stricken. England took advantage of that hour, and she bribed an Irishman to sell his country. She took from us the last vestige of our legislative assembly, the power of making our own laws. She took the Parliament from College Green, in Dublin, and she set up publicly the principle that Englishmen had a right to make laws for Irishmen. She was able to do it; and in the year 1800, she had stamped out the rebellion in the blood of the people, which flowed on the virgin plains of Ireland. The heart of the nation seemed to be broken. Castlereagh sold his country. Castlereagh was an Irishman; and he cut his own throat from ear to ear (laughter); he sawed away with the razor as if he would cut his head off; and they found upon his dead face a grin of despair, with a certain expression, as if he died defying and blaspheming the God that made him.

Well, my friends, the century opened thus. Ireland's Parliament was gone; Ireland's heart was broken. Nothing remained to Ireland but her people and her faith. Her people were still at home; her faith was still in their minds and in their hearts; and, starved, heart-broken as she was, she still had the two highest gifts that God can give a nation,—Divine Faith, and a plentiful, strong and loving people (applause). The people remained; and, in the year 1823, there were eight millions of men in Ireland. God gave them another great and high gift; He gave them an Irish leader,—a giant in bodily frame; a giant in the proportions of his mighty intellect; a giant in his energy, and the power with which he was to shake the English Legislature with the loud cry of justice to Ireland. A giant in his lion heart, that never knew fear,—he stood before the nation as a representative Irishman,—the glory and pride of Ireland, and the terror of her enemies,—Daniel O'Connell, the Kerryman (tremendous cheers). He came, when he had eight millions at his back, and he stood before the doors of the House of Commons that were closed against him. With the voice of eight millions thundering upon his lips, he smote those doors, and said: "Open to me, oh! ye doors! closed by the demon of iniquity and of bigotry! Open to me and to my people; I demand it in the name of the God of religious liberty, and in the name of the God of Justice!" (Great cheering). His voice was the voice of a Saint, storming the gates of Heaven with the united power of his prayers. His voice fell upon the lintels of those doors as the blast of Joshua's trumpet fell upon the walls of Jericho; and, as the strong walls of the city crumbled, and fell down before the voice of Israel's trumpet, so at the sound of the voice of Ireland's Tribune, the doors that had been closed against us for three hundred years,—the doors that had been sealed with Irish blood, in the determination that they should never open to an Irish Catholic,—rolled asunder; and into the midst of the terrified bigots and lords of England, stalked the mighty and terrible Irishman, Daniel O'Connell (enthusiastic cheers). Ah! my friends, it was like letting a bull into a china shop (laughter). He played the "Old Harry" with some of them. He alarmed the country in every direction. The first English statesmen were obliged to listen to him; and the greatest bullies that ever met him got afraid of their lives that eye that could look so terrible upon an adversary,—that eye that could throw sulk and quick a glance over the levelled pistol, when he pointed it to the heart of D'Estero (applause).

The victory was gained for Catholic Emancipation. But still there remained the old, time-worn, detested citadel of "the Protestant Church of Ireland." Now, mark. When the Apostle is discoursing upon the Catholic Church, he says: "She is built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, the great corner stone being Jesus Christ, our Lord." Was the Protestant Church in Ireland built upon a foundation of Prophets and Apostles? Well, my friends, if Henry the Eighth was a Prophet or an Apostle. I give the thing up (great amusement). If Queen Elizabeth was either Prophet or an Apostle she was one of the founders of that Church, and they are welcome to her (laughter). So also, are Queen Elizabeth's Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, who wrote such a nice letter about how he was putting the Irish to death, and how they writhed in the torture. He asked permission of the Council in London to put to death the holy Catholic Bishop who was once the guest of this queenly court, their mistress. Do you know how it was done? It was in Dublin; and there the old Archbishop of Armagh was brought out, in St. Stephen's Green. They tied the old man to a stake; they put tin boots upon him, filled with resin and pitch; and with a slow fire around his feet, they roasted him to death, slowly (astonishment). These were the traditions on which the Protestant Church was founded in Ireland. God forbid that I should entertain or preach animosity between any Catholic and any Protestant. I am not alluding to Protestants, at all; I am talking of their old "Mumbo Jumbo" of a Church (laughter). But, even though O'Connell sat down in Parliament there was a cry of pain from the Catholics of Ireland. Even though many of the Penal Laws were wiped out of the blood-stained statute book, by that powerful hand, there still remained this old Protestant Church, and the Protestant Bishops going to London to make laws (God bless the mark!) for you and me (laughter). These were the nice laws. If a landlord, in any part of Ireland, swore that somebody had fired a shot at him from behind the hedge, he wasn't asked to produce the pistol nor the man that fired the shot, nor to show where the ball made a hole in his hat. He wasn't asked for any proof if he said, "Pon his honor he was fired at;—a desperate thing!"—the whole side of a country would be "proclaimed;" no man could go about his proper business after certain hours; and the people of a whole district would be imprisoned. You have all heard of a judge who sat upon the bench. He was a joker of jokes; and very good jokes he sometimes made—capital jokes. He was particularly fond of a morning's good work and good jokes, when he had some poor fellows before him whom he was about to sentence to death. On one occasion, there were five or six poor Irishmen brought up; and Lord Norbury—this pleasant judge—sentenced them all to death; but he forgot the name of one of them; and when they were going out in the hangman's company, the sheriff said: "My Lord, you have forgotten to sentence Darby Sullivan." "Oh! dear me," said his Lordship; "Darby, come here; I have a word to say to you. Darby," said he, "I beg your pardon. I had forgotten your name." I was passing sentence; but, it is better late than never. So you will, of course, be taken out to-morrow morning, and be hanged by the neck until you are dead. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul!" "Spare the prayer," said the poor man who was going to his death. "Spare the prayer. Don't pray for me. I never knew anybody to prosper after your prayers" (laughter).

There remained that Protestant Church, full of

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

Dublin, Jan. 3.—The tenant farmers of the county of Dublin have joined the agitation against the Land Act, and for the first time formed a "Defence Association." It is evident that the clause for whose benefit the Act was intended does not regard it as a final settlement of the question, and are disposed to use the increased power which legislation has placed in their hands to make further encroachments upon the rights of property as they hitherto have understood. A preliminary meeting was held yesterday in the European Hotel. Mr. Kettle, a poor-law Guardian, occupied the chair, and commenced the proceedings by the delivery of a speech, in the course of which he expressed some surprise that a body of men possessing so much intelligence and energy as the farmers of the county had kept so much aloof from public matters, and told them that they must now be up and doing, as they lived in a very progressive age. The principal object of the meeting was to form a defence association something like that in Kildare. The Land Act, he said, had never been expected to be of any real positive benefit to the tenant, or a final settlement of the question. The rule of law was, first evict and ruin, and then compensate for the injury done. In order to obtain compensation the tenant was compelled to embark in a course of litigation, which commenced in the County Court, and might terminate in the Court for Land Cases Reserved. He believed that tenants generally would submit to almost any terms rather than seek the benefits which were seemingly conferred on them by the Land Act. One of the objects of the association was to secure to the humbler classes whatever little advantage it conferred on them. He thought that, as an indispensable class in society they had a right to claim a properly defined and secure position. It had been handed down by eminent political economists that the land belonged to the people, and therefore all classes had an interest in it. The landlords held from the State, and might be considered *ex officio* officers, or head tenants, who should be guaranteed their property defined interest in it; the tenants might be regarded as the working stewards, the labourers upon whose exertions depended the development of agriculture and the material interests of the people, and it was not to be supposed that society would derive all the profits which should flow from the land if these men were left in so unsatisfactory a position as to make it their interests to cheat society in order to protect members from the rapacity and tyranny of some of those honorary officers who had it in their power to desolate the land at their pleasure. They must be placed in a position from which no man can remove them so long as they pay a rent which the State shall fix by the most equitable standard in the interests of society. Resolutions were passed to the effect that a tenants' defence association be formed like the Kildare Association, to unite the tenants against any encroachment on their rights and to promise by legal and constitutional means the social interests and independence of the tenant class, and to ask the Legislature to readjust the law upon a more equitable and better defined basis, claiming that the tenants should be recognized by the State as an indispensable class that should have an interest commensurate with their position and responsibilities, and that such changes should be made in the law as will give to the tenants "that security of tenure which the Land Act of 1870 has failed to obtain."—From Times Correspondent.

An old lady named Kerr and her servant were murdered on Sunday night in Holywood, near Belfast, under mysterious circumstances. A light was seen in the house all night, and in the morning the milk-boy, getting no answer when he knocked, walked into the house, and the old lady was found lying with her head smashed in a brutal manner, her servant near her, both quite dead. There were no marks of violence, it is said, on the servant, but a bottle of poison was found beside her, which suggested the suspicion that she murdered her mistress and then destroyed herself. Two persons, however, in women's clothes, one of whom is supposed to have been a man in disguise, were seen coming from the house with bundles in their hands containing articles which, it is stated, can be identified, and this alleged fact is not easily reconciled with the theory that a murder and suicide were committed. Later accounts state that one of the two women who were met near the house can be identified. It is believed that Miss Kerr was first attacked in the hall and dragged into the kitchen, where the murder was completed, and the body carried into a pantry. The servant is supposed to have been an accomplice. Two women had been drinking in the house with her on Sunday night, and her mistress remonstrated with her and sent them away; she was to leave to-day. After the murder the three women must have had a carouse, and the servant either died from the effects of it or was killed, and her two companions went upstairs lay down in a bed, and slept till morning, when they rifled the house. A quantity of plate and clothes was taken away. Miss Kerr was aunt of the late Mr. Simms, of the publishing house of Simms and McIntyre.

A telegram from Belfast stated that the police have at length succeeded in arresting the woman Charlotte Rea, a sister of a prisoner charged with being concerned in the murder of Miss Kerr and her servant at Holywood. She is believed to have been an accomplice, and manifested great alarm when her hiding-place was discovered. The excitement produced in the locality by this tragic affair has not abated. The Northern Whig gives the following description of the cottage called "The Croft," in which the murdered lady lived:—"This picturesque cottage on the Victoria-road, inside the walls of which the dreadful murder was perpetrated, is no doubt the chief place of interest in connexion with the tragedy. The Victoria-road commences at the end of the town in High-street, and is a junction from the Bangor-road. It is narrow, winding, and ascending and at the top, near the residence of the late Miss Kerr—the murdered lady—it commands a beautiful view of Belfast Lough, and the Antrim coast. The cottage is built of brick, and is distinctly irregular in form. A tiny flower-pot, a few ferns in width, separates it from the road. Ivy and jessamine-climb half-way up the walls, and at the east end, flowers are in bloom both summer and winter. Surrounding the dwelling there are several flower plots, and behind there is a large garden, where the deceased took pride in cultivating the plants. Each room in the dwelling contains suites of furniture of the best description, and valuable pictures decorate the walls. Nothing seemed to have been left undone by Miss Kerr to provide for her personal comfort, and 'The Croft' had the reputation of being not only one of the nicest structures in the neighbourhood, but one complete, in every respect, in its internal furnishing and adornment. The house since the intimation of the bodies has remained closed, but the little window in front, which the milk-girl looked through to ascertain the cause of the delay of the opening of the door, and through which she saw the body of the servant lying on the hall floor near the door, was eagerly scanned by the visitors, as was also the window in the end of the room looking into the room where the murderers are believed to have caroused and slept after the commission of the horrible deed, and also the window in the rear looking into the kitchen, into which they dragged the body of Miss Kerr, and terminated her existence by blows, after which they placed her in the scullery, and rolled her up in the blanket and 'quilt' in the extraordinary manner that has already been described." Charlotte Rea is a girl about 23 years of age; who with her sister has been employed, sometimes as a domestic servant and sometimes as a factory hand. Some bundles of wearing apparel which are be-

(CONCLUDED ON 6TH PAGE.)