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REV. DR. CAHILL

ON THE SACRILEGIOUS CONDUCT OF THE COOMBE SOUPERS.

During the worst days of the French Revolution there have been no instances of such diabolical sacrilege as the reported cases at the two Catholic churches of Francis street and High street on the 25th of last March.

"On the 25th of March last—the Feast of the Annunciation—a disciple of the Coombe proselytisers went into the church of St. Nicholas, Francis street, and approached the altar rails for the apparent purpose of receiving the Holy Communion.

It is not necessary in this place to discuss the Theology of this monstrous impiety. All Christians feel a chill of horror as they read the scarlet history of the Crucifixion; from Judas who betrayed Christ to the Jewish Decide who plunged his spear in the heart of our Lord.

We have, therefore, in the extracts before us not only the Act of Parliament on street disturbance, but we have the charges made by the police against this law, and we have also the clear decision of the magistrate against the offenders.

I am not in the present case, finding fault personally with the police magistrates of Dublin, while I review their decisions in some late Souper cases; I am merely calling the attention of the Catholic judges, the Catholic barristers, the Catholic magistrates, the Catholic noblemen and gentlemen of Ireland, to the public insult which is every day and every hour inflicted on the entire community of Catholics by the harassing and unprovoked conduct of the Soupers.

"A woman named Anne Fagan was placed in the dock upon a complaint preferred by Mr. William E. Barry, 20 New street, the schoolmaster of St. Nicholas Without-School. The complainant, on being examined, stated that about two o'clock on yesterday, as he was proceeding through Patrick street, he was assailed with insulting and offensive shouts by some people who recognised him.

"Souper, souper, ring the bell, Souper, souper, go to hell," which seems to be a favorite quotation from some local muse. Mr. Barry, however, did not relish the sentiments of the author or delivery of the rhapsody, whose elocution was alarmingly expressive, and he accordingly sought the intervention of an unromantic matter-of-fact constable, 98 A, who took her in to custody.

brought up in custody of 163 A, charged with creating disturbance in the public thoroughfare, by shouting out for sale certain papers entitled, 'The Proselytizers—Public Excitement,' which contained words of an offensive nature, and calculated to create a breach of the peace.

"He was required to find bail for his good conduct, or be imprisoned for seven days. "Police Constable 164 A applied for a warrant against a ballad singer named Martin Power, for creating disturbance in the public thoroughfare, by singing ballads of a seditious and offensive nature, calculated to create a breach of the peace, and thereby collecting a riotous and disorderly crowd.

In the cases just quoted, the charges were for "creating disturbance;" for "endangering the public peace;" for "uttering offensive language;" and one month's imprisonment, or a fine of £1 has been the sentence of the magistrate.

"Mr. Magee read the provisions of the 5th of Victoria, c. 27, s. 2, which enacts that any one using abusive and insulting language and behaviour in the public thoroughfare, calculated to provoke a breach of the peace, or whereby a breach of the peace may be occasioned, is liable to a penalty of £2, or a month's imprisonment; and his worship stated that it was the determination of the magistrates to put the law rigorously in force against persons engaged in such disgraceful proceedings as had recently taken place.

Firstly—Popery teaches that oaths to Heretics can be dispensed by the Pope. Secondly—Popery teaches that allegiance to an Heretical Monarch is not binding in conscience. Thirdly—Popery teaches that mental reservation towards Heretics is not only not sinful, but even meritorious when the good of the Church requires it. Fourthly—The Church of Rome not only grants pardon for all past crimes, but even grants a license for all future sins by paying to the Priest a given sum of money.

While I omit a lengthened catalogue of the vile lies of the emissaries of these Societies, I ask the officers of the Crown, I ask Lord Carlisle, I ask every man of candor and honorable feeling in this country if any comparison can be made between the cases decided and punished by Mr. Magee and the opprobrious insults contained in the extracts just quoted.

"Mr. Magee imposed a similar penalty of £1 as in the preceding case. Patrick Reilly, a vendor of street literature, was

vocation with flagitious crime and the filthiest immoralities. Are not these words of mine the stern reality of the conduct of the Soupers in Kells, in Connemara, in Dingle, in Cork, in Dublin, and in every part of Ireland where they have been permitted to reside? Is not this the atrocious conduct which has armed Catholic Europe against them, and which has led to their expulsion from Austria, Spain, Naples, and the Italian peninsula? Is not this conduct the just cause why the Continental journals have branded the English Biblical Societies as "the diseased scum of an atrocious impiety?"

And now let us inquire what is the law in reference to these public insults in the streets against the entire Catholic community. The law is, that the tract distributor is protected! and if the offended Catholic raise his voice in anger at this unprovoked attack on his creed and his character, he is seized by the police, dragged to the court, and fined and punished! And if the police appear at all remiss in protecting the Souper they are reprimanded, deprived of their time: and in certain cases degraded and dismissed!—Where the law is, therefore, so constituted as to afford no relief to the Catholics under these aggravated and burning insults, while it protects their guilty assailants, is it any wonder that they begin to take the law into their own hands and break out into open violence? If the same sacrilege which was committed in Francis street chapel occurred in Liverpool or in Manchester, blood would be copiously shed in the streets.

I shall conclude this letter by one more quotation from the sermons of this wretched Society: and it is a quotation which, from the sacred and the amiable character of the deceased Prelate just indecently dragged before the public in gibing irreverence, will raise (if I not much mistake) a blush of shame on the face of every liberal Protestant in Ireland.

"Mr. George McQuigan will preside at the Discussion Meeting in Irish Town Schoolhouse, near Irish Town Church, on this (Wednesday) evening, May 20, 1857, at half-past seven o'clock.

"Subject—Is there a Purgatory? "If the Priests of the Church of Rome have the power to take a soul out of Purgatory, why have they left the soul of the late Dr. Murray so long in torment?"

The first person who will suffer public reproach from the Souper announcement just quoted is Dr. Whately of Dublin. During a spotless life of half a century in the city of Dublin, Dr. Murray has never been known to offer the least offence, to cause the smallest unhappiness, or to give a moment's uneasiness to any human being. His intercourse with society was a brilliant example of benevolence to all men: no one who had ever known him who did not hang in unceasing admiration on the abundant flow of Christian feeling from his guileless heart; and his prudent lip was ever sealed against the expression of even one bitter word in a whole life against those who differed from him in religious convictions.

D. W. C. May 21, 1857.

MODERN NECROMANCY.

(Translated from the Civetta Cattolica.)

(CONTINUED.)

Before we enumerate and discuss the various hypotheses which have been put forth with a view to explain the phenomena of Modern Necromancy, we ask the reader's courteous attention to two brief and simple considerations, one of which has to do with the phenomena themselves, and the other has reference to the causes which are to explain them. As regards the phenomena, it is fit to observe, that they naturally group themselves into two grand categories, that is, into phenomena purely physical, and into others which belong to the moral order. To the first category, for example, belong all those movements of rotation, change of place and of other sorts, which we observe in the tables and in other inert bodies, and which may be caused by merely physical influences, as for example mechanical impulses, electric currents, attractions and the like.

"The first is, that they should render an adequate account, not of some of the facts only, but of all: the other is, that we should not bring forward these causes as possible merely, but as the real ones. If the second of these requisites is wanting the problem would only be resolved in a hypothetical and abstract manner: that is to say, we should demonstrate that the phenomena may be produced possibly by such and such a cause, but not that they are really so. And if the first of these essentials is defective, the problem would only be half resolved. Here, however, let it be remarked that on the one hand it is not at all necessary that all the phenomena should be ascribed to one cause only, whilst rather their varied multiplicity seems to demand for itself just as varied a multiplicity of causes: but, on the other hand, it is highly probable that in reality all the causes do derive from one principle only, if we regard their simultaneousness and their connection one with the other, and how they have developed themselves one from another with a manifest continuity of action and identity of object. Having said thus much, let us now enter upon the subject, endeavouring to investigate what may be the causes which render an adequate account of the proposed phenomena. Now, the answer to such a question will appear of its own accord to spring out of the brief examination which we shall have occasion to make of the principal opinions which have been put forth by those who have undertaken to resolve the question. In the first place, however, we must put aside out of the number of those opinions, those which do not explain but rather deny the facts. Such is, for example, the opinion of those who take all the wonderful tales which have been told about the tables and the mediums in a bundle, and without giving themselves any more trouble to examine them, attribute them all without exception to imposture, deceit, and the illusions of charlatans. We say without exception for no one doubts, and we are very far from denying that several, nay, many of the facts which are narrated, may be the fruit of imposture. Who does not know that there is not a more ancient art in every country than that of those who trade upon public credulity, and sharpen their wits in a thousand most crafty ways, so as to impose upon, not only the foolish who are always in the majority, but sometimes also even upon the knowing? Who is not also aware that it is their custom, we might rather say the precept of their art to adapt itself to the time, to find out the prevailing taste and epidemic of the time, and as soon as anything new or strange arises which attracts the eyes of the world, they immediately rise and counterfeit its appearance, in order that the true giving some credit to the false, the latter may be exposed to view with greater safety. It is then exceedingly probable that in this affair also the charlatans have played their tricks on more than one occasion, and seeing the noise which the spirits and tables were making, they have endeavoured by their ingenuity to simulate their results; and if we had

time we could adduce more than one instance of this, in which the imposture was most clearly established, and the spirits which were running wild through the houses were brought to their senses by the police officers, without any more formal exercise than that of the staff. But to maintain, on the contrary, that everything is simple imposture, is to fall into an absurdity; it is to fall from Scylla into Charybdis, encountering difficulties and prodigies much more incredible than are those which are not explained by this proceeding, but simply cut short. In fact, those who are of this opinion must, in order to sustain it, deny at one stroke the veracity of all the experiments, and the authority of the numberless and most respectable witnesses who affirm the reality of the phenomena as things only too true; they must call half the world blockheads, they must in a word refuse henceforward all credit in human authority: since if in this case the world is divided into two parties, one of which is the smaller and composed of the deceivers, and the other, which is by far the greater and composed of the deceived, who is there that does not suspect that the same may happen in an infinity of other cases? Besides all this, they ought to explain among other things, how it has ever happened that the secret of this imposture, which is practised in every part of the world by so many thousands of mediums (who are for the most part women, that is to say, of that chattering sex which has greater difficulty in keeping a secret than the spirit itself) has never leaked out, has escaped the lynx-eyed investigations of so many dispassionate and sagacious witnesses, and up to this day keeps on producing wonders which very far surpass all that the most famous jugglers and charmers have ever done.—Imposture, like every occult art, is always the monopoly of the few, nor has it ever any very long success: and the more common it becomes, the more does it lose its credit and efficacy, because the deceit is sooner or later found out.—Besides, we ought to consider well the nature and history of man; in the same way as every lie supposeth a truth, and owes its impure birth to a foul mixture of truth and error, so every imposture supposes a reality of which it is the spurious image: and as there has never perhaps existed any order of facts truly extraordinary and marvellous, which did not find its counterfeit, so there has never been an imposture which had not its corresponding order of true facts.—Hence the discovery of deceit in some cases, so far from showing that all are false, serves the rather to prove that there are some which are true and real. This is the case also in the present question; and confirms in this manner what is quite manifest already, namely, how unreasonable a thing it is to wish to ascribe to mere trickery and fraud all the phenomena of Modern Necromancy, which are of so frequent occurrence, so public, and so extraordinary. The same condemnation we must take of that other opinion, which pretends to explain everything by "hallucination." According to this opinion it is not now the juggler who shows us by means of his machinations the moon in a well (to use a common phrase) by making an effect which is very simple and natural in itself appear miraculous; but it is a disease of the imagination or of the senses which illudes people, and makes them fancy that they see really certain objects, which have no other existence after all than in their own diseased brains. According to this opinion, the phenomena of necromancy have not the slightest object in reality; the tables do not really turn, dance or speak; the pencils of the tripod do not really write; the air is not really struck by sounds and blows; there is nothing in fact, in the surrounding objects which departs from its wonted course and order. The disorder and strangeness is entirely in our eyes, ears and senses, the nerves and organs of which being from time to time invaded by some unknown, vicious and foolish humour, produce all these phantasmagoria. It will seem incredible that any one can have put forth seriously an explanation of this sort, and maintain that all who have practised and witnessed in these days the marvels of the tables, were all of them simply labouring under hallucination: that in the circles of the spiritualists, the mediums and the spectators, the actors and those acted upon, were all of them suddenly and at the same time affected with a certain giddiness of the senses and of the intellectual powers, which made them fancy they saw those wonders of table-turnings and dances, of knockings, sounds, light, and so forth. So it is, however: this doctrine has been gravely propounded by a learned member of the Institute of France, M. Littré; in an article written in that respectable periodical; "La Revue des Deux Mondes." If any one doubts it, let him read it: and if he does not happen to be himself attacked by some unfortunate hallucination all of a sudden, he will see that the article which we speak of contains the following statement made with all the pomp of science and with all the graces of erudition. It asserts, then; that all the recent phenomena of the tables and spirits, as