

Sir E. N. Buxton, Bart., M.P.	£10
S. M. Peto, Esq., M.P.	10
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The Committee hope to be able to give 50 additional prizes of £5 each. A monthly publication, devoted to this subject, is about to be issued, entitled, "The Working Man's Charter."

MONASTIC AVARICE AND TYRANNY.—In 1826 and 1827, Maria and Catherine, daughters of Alexander M'Carthy, a merchant of Cork, were admitted members of the Ursuline Convent of Blackrock, on the payment of £1000 each, by way of portion. Vows of "voluntary poverty," as well as "perpetual chastity" and "obedience to the superior," form part of the ceremony of profession.

The father made two wills, excluding the two daughters from all share in his property, but these wills were never properly executed, and he died in July 1843, leaving a fortune of between eighty and ninety thousand pounds. By separate deeds, executed after the father's death, the two nuns made over their shares to Cecilia Fulham and Margaret Lynch, as Trustees for the Convent; and a suit was instituted by the Trustees and one of the sisters (Maria), to obtain possession of the property. The substantial point at issue in the suit, was whether the assignments were valid, the plea being that these assignments were obtained by a degree of moral compulsion, tantamount to what the lawyers call *duress*. In support of this plea, it was urged that both the sisters had declared that they considered their establishment in the Convent a bar to any further claim on their father, and that the heads of the Convent thought so too.

"In August, 1843 (continues the report), after the grant of the letters of administration, John M'Carthy had a conversation with Catherine, in which she informed him that she applied to the Superioress for liberty to assign any right that she had to her younger brothers, and that the Superioress said that she had not the power of giving such liberty; that she afterwards had an interview with the Bishop, but that the Bishop replied he had no power, and that upon being asked who had the power, he stated that nobody had such power and he directed her to go the Superioress. Catherine then told the Bishop that she had already been with the Superioress, who had referred her to him, to which the Bishop replied, "You must observe your vow of obedience;" and that upon her suggesting that if it was meant that she must dispose of the property against

her conscience, it would be for a court of equity to decide how far such an act would be valid. The Bishop replied, 'If these are your ideas, madam, let me tell you I have lawyers in my family as well as yours, and this is too good a thing not to be looked after.' She also told her brother that she must not only sign the deed, but sign it cheerfully, and she said she had found a book in the Convent stating, that any person speaking or acting adversely to the claims set up by the Convent for the property, would be guilty of a mortal sin. It was alleged that the other sister had made declarations to the same effect."

The Lord Chancellor of Ireland (Brady) delivered a decree against the Convent, on the ground that "the deeds were obtained under the pressure and compulsion of their vows;" and the Trustees appealed to the House of Lords against this decree, insisting that it was erroneous in form as well as in substance, as an issue should at all events have been directed so as to have the question of *duress* tried by a jury. To this it was answered, that an issue had been offered, and the plaintiffs had refused to accept of it.

The House of Lords dismissed the appeal, but on merely technical grounds. The case may yet go to a jury, to decide whether the deed was signed voluntarily or under compulsion. Of the issue there can be little doubt. The spirit of Popery is unchanged.

Recent Death.

Died at Leeds, July 18, in his fifty-fourth year, the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, LL.D., D.D., Pastor of one of the Congregational Churches in that town, and an eminent writer.

Dr. Hamilton's first publication was 'A Sermon, preached at Leeds, April 16, 1815, on occasion of the execution of Mr. Joseph Blackburn, Attorney-at-Law, for forgery; with details of conversations with him during his imprisonment.' It was an eloquent and affecting discourse, and attracted much attention. The works published by him in the later years of his life are valuable contributions to the literature of the age. They are full of thought—sparing in words. Their style is rather massive than elegant; though sometimes abrupt, it is characterized by precision and force, and is in many respects thoroughly unique. His Prize Essay on Missions, and his Course of Lectures (in the Congregational Series) on the revealed doctrine of rewards and punishments, are volumes of surpassing value.

Dr. Hamilton's ministerial life was entirely spent at Leeds.