

Contemporary Church Opinion.

Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette:

In an article on "Ireland and Lower Canada," in the present number of *Church Bells*, the writer says—"The contrast between Protestant Ontario and Romish Quebec is the contrast between Protestant Ulster and the Romish South and West of Ireland. Montreal is, very rightly, called the commercial metropolis of Canada, its geographical position fully entitles it to be so called. And yet, while Toronto, with nothing like the same advantages, has increased its population 100 per cent. in ten years, Montreal has only increased 40 per cent. While the value of the assessment of Toronto has in those years increased from 46,000,000 to 156,000,000 dollars, that of Montreal has only increased from 80,000,000 to 127,000,000." The Romish priesthood, the writer says, are doing their utmost to keep up the division between the two peoples, and have for years adopted the policy of systematically squeezing out the Protestant element from every public office. Let Protestant Home Rulers meet this case of Lower Canada if they can."

Church Bells, London:

Church people and Protestants all over Ireland are naturally much distressed at the result of the division on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill. Of course, it had been previously felt that the Bill was certain to pass the second reading; but it was much hoped that the overwhelming evidence which has been lately forthcoming concerning the disastrous result of Home Rule on all religious bodies in Ireland except the Roman Catholics would have had some effect upon the majority, of whom some at least, it was believed, would not consent to the betrayal of the loyalists into the hands of their bitter and exulting enemies. The reliance on England's honour has been much shaken by the fact that party has prevailed over principle, and that many have voted against their convictions for a measure which would inflict a deadly wrong on a people who have in fair and in foul weather, in hopeful times and in times of depression, never flinched in their loyalty, never yielded a hair's breadth to menaces, never trifled with treason—who have, in short, never had the slightest dealings with the party which their present leader declared, a few years ago, to be marching through blood and rapine to the dismemberment of the empire; but neither Church people nor any other Protestants are dismayed. The terrible dangers which threaten them have drawn them closer together, while their religion and the brave spirit which they have inherited from their forefathers prevent them from despairing of the ultimate justice of their cause, and also from seeking to make terms for themselves by cringing to their triumphant and insulting foes.

The spirit in which the Home Rulers deal with the Protestants is strikingly shown by an incident which has lately occurred in Galway. An infirm woman, respectable and industrious, and in a condition of absolute destitution, was lately forced to appeal to the Poor Law Board for outdoor relief. Two shillings a week was the sum recommended by the relieving officer, and she would, no doubt, have got that sum if she had not been a Protestant. The Board were indignant at the very idea of assisting a poor creature who was so misguided as to prefer Protestantism to Roman Catholicism. After various expressions of intolerance, the sum of one shilling only was given to the unfortunate woman. There is not a single Protestant pauper in Galway workhouse, although many of the ratepayers are Protestants. Under the circumstances, this fact does not appear very astonishing.

The News (London, Eng.):

Mr. Gladstone has indeed secured, by personal influence and a combination of party interests, the second reading of his Home Rule Bill; but the Irish majority of forty votes is really no majority at all. Mr. Gladstone himself said such a measure, affecting the whole Empire, ought never to be carried merely by Irish votes; and the Duke of Devonshire aptly described the present position on Saturday evening, when he said:—"It would, perhaps, not be accurate to say that we, on the morrow of a vote by the House of Commons in favour of Home Rule, are no nearer to Home Rule than we were before, any more than it would be accurate to say that anyone who had undertaken to make a journey to the moon was no nearer his destination when he had ascended to the top of St. Paul's Cathedral. (Laughter and cheers.) But I think the real progress made on either journey would be not very dissimilar." We are more confident than ever that the country at large will not have Home, or Rome Rule.

ON KNEELING AT PRAYER.

The posture of kneeling which Christian people assume when engaged in prayer is not an invention of man, nor is the practice derived from any human authority. We kneel in prayer because our Lord knelt in prayer.

When He endured the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. He 'kneeled down and prayed' (St. Luke xxii. 41). And the Apostles, who learned their faith from Him, learned that kneeling was the bodily posture to adopt when offering up prayer to their ascended Lord.

St. Stephen the first martyr even in the agonies of death knelt down before he offered his prayer of intercession for his murderers, and commended his soul to God.

When St. Peter stood by the death-couch of Dorcas, he knelt down humbly before offering the prayer which called her spirit back.

And the great Apostle St. Paul, when, leaving Asia for the last time, he called for the elders of the Church at Ephesus to bid them farewell, 'kneeled down and prayed with them all'; and a few days later, when at Tyre he bid his brethren in the faith farewell, they all knelt down on the sea-shore and prayed.

Our blessed Lord during His earthly ministry accepted the homage of those who came kneeling down to Him and worshipping Him. He who knows the hearts of all men, and how prone we are to excuse ourselves from the trouble of kneeling, has taught His Church to give her children special warning on the subject. She seems in her service as if she could not impress too deeply the duty of kneeling. The rubric before the Confession is, 'A general Confession, to be said of the whole congregation after the Minister, *all kneeling.*' The next rubric is, 'The Absolution, to be pronounced by the Priest alone standing, *the people still kneeling.*' Before the Lord's Prayer, 'Then the minister shall kneel and say the Lord's Prayer, *the people also kneeling.*' Again after the Creed, 'And after that these prayers following, *all devoutly kneeling.*' Before the Collects, 'Then shall follow three collects, *all kneeling.*' In the office for Holy Communion the rubric before the Lord's Prayer is, 'The Priest shall say the Lord's Prayer, *the people kneeling.*' Before the Commandments, 'The Priest shall rehearse the Ten Commandments, *the people still kneeling.*' Before the Confession the clergyman exhorts the people to 'make your humble confession to Almighty God, *meekly kneeling upon your knees,*' and the rubric is, 'Then shall this confession be made by one of the Ministers, both he and all the people *kneeling humbly upon their knees.*' The Blessed Sacrament is to be received by the people '*all meekly kneeling.*'

So that it is with no uncertain sound that the Church teaches as the position of prayer.

How can we hope that our prayers will ascend as incense before God if we deliberately refuse to offer them as He, by the example of His saints and the rules of His Church, has taught us? Our bodies and souls are joined as long as we are in this world, and we must not try to put asunder what God has joined together, or to think that we can offer reverent worship with the soul while we refuse it with the body.

There is a passage in Carlyle's *Life* in which the effect made upon him by the irreverent lounging attitude of the congregation of so-called worshippers in Westminster Abbey is incidentally glanced at: 'The lines of worshippers in front of him, sitting while pretending to kneel . . . brought back the feeling that it was but play acting after all.' How opposite an impression might have been made upon that sad, lonely, rugged nature by a congregation worshipping in spirit and in truth, according to apostolic example, and in obedience to the rules of the Church!—*Banner of Faith.*

PAROCHIAL TACTICS.

A clergyman is expected to cultivate all the virtues, canonical and theological, and all the Christian graces under all possible circumstances whatever. His people like him to be learned, pious, patient, persevering, pains taking, &c. &c., for £200 a year. We should be glad to see all the clergy models of perfection, but it is unwise and unfair to expect too much of them: and we must remember that there are "diversities of gifts"—*e.g.*, the good organizer is not always a good preacher, and *vice versa*. The good visitor is not always much of a student. But there is one qualification which some people expect every clergyman should possess—*viz.*: that he should be incapable of taking offence.

We know what St. Paul has said about charity not being easily provoked, and we know St. Paul himself had a sharp contention with St. Barnabas. People who think all anger wrong ought to read up Bishop Butler's *Rolls Sermons* on Human Nature, and learn the truth from him upon the subject. We read of our Lord being angry with the hypocritical ruler of the Synagogue. A clergyman has a good deal to try his temper, and must count the cost of this as well as of other trials. He has the parishioner who is always suspecting him (if he, the clergyman, be a man of progress)—suspecting him of advanced ritual or Popery; the jealous parishioner, who is angry with him because he is not sufficiently noticed or visited; another because he is not more dealt with because he is a Protestant. Not unfrequently incompetent and extortionate tradesmen act on the principle that the parish clergyman should employ them himself and obtain employment for them merely because they are his parishioners.

Then there are people who are ambitious of having the ear of the clergyman, such as it is, and try to manage him and work him for their own ends. We believe a wise man will see through much or all of this, and quietly and firmly teach people to know their own place. There are some clergymen, we are aware, who themselves go in for a large element of humbug in the administration of their parishes—*e.g.*, we know men of this type who always strike an attitude when they meet a parishioner; they fling their arms into the air, and as they descend they grasp the beloved parishioner, with the added force of the momentum of a falling body, or they lean affectionately on his shoulder and pat him; or if the case be serious, they slap him on the back. We know a person of this class, in particular, who seems always to get a lateral curvature as soon as he meets a person on whom he has to experiment. And then he is so mysterious: the victim is taken by the button-hole and led aside