

But the Press had better not push this matter too far. There is no plagiarism known to mortals which can equal that regularly practised by newspaper men. Preachers will never be able to aspire to the dignity of holding a candle to them in this respect. An ordinary editor—and the world is not blessed with many extraordinary editors—turns over his file of newspapers to know what he shall write; from one paper he writes an article on affairs in Afghanistan, from another on the position of parties in England, and from a set of telegrams he writes autoritatively on the relations which exist between Germany and Russia. Our daily papers should be modestly silent about our weekly preachers. There is no institution in vogue among men so thoroughly rooted in plagiarism as the press. Original articles in newspapers are by no means so common as original sermons.

SIR,—I should regret having written anything tending to mislead, but do not think that a writing of mine can be found in which it is affirmed—what you say I affirm—“that the State cannot take property from landlords when the interests of the people demand it.” To say that I deny the power of the State to do what everyone knows it has done, and is constantly doing, is to say that I am temporarily divested of the average intelligence I am supposed to possess, and is doubtless an assertion which you did not intend to make. In response to my request you are so good as to furnish an extract from an article written by me, which gave you the impression that I “would deem it morally impossible or wrong to take property from landlords.” Had the words “without their consent” been added, your impression would have come nearer my meaning.

It may possibly have escaped notice that the subject presents two kinds of enquiry. First: Can the State take property from an individual when required for public utility? Secondly: Would the State in taking, without his consent, the property of an individual so required inflict upon him a wrong? My sentiments respecting the first question need not be repeated. With regard to the second, I maintain that it is not possible to deprive a man, against his will, of that which he lawfully possesses without doing a wrong. But I also maintain that, under given conditions, not to deprive him would be to do a greater wrong. The offer to compensate a proprietor, unwilling to part with his property, is an admission of intended wrong, an endeavour to mitigate or rectify which is the aim of the proffered indemnity. If a man consents to give up his estate upon the payment to him of a sum of money, or upon the fulfilment of conditions, which he agrees to accept, the transaction is no less honourable than if it were the result of his voluntary offer to sell.

It is conceivable that the exigencies of a State might include the seizure of the property of an individual for which it would be impossible to find an equivalent, but the need for which would admit of no alternative. The principle insisted upon by the high authorities Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill is that so clearly laid down by Father Ryan, and referred to by me in shewing that “land essentially differs from all other forms of what is known as property.

That “the Legislature is perfectly entitled to buy out the landed proprietors” is not the only foolish utterance of the aged Orator of Midlothian. His wanton and unscrupulous declaration “that Parliament might rightfully seize all the land in the kingdom if it were economically desirable to cut it up into little freeholds,” is truly declared by no mean authority to be “the most revolutionary proposition which has been advanced in Europe by any politician not professing to be a Socialist.”

Saxon.

#### PARNELL DAMPED.

Mr. Parnell is a little disappointed, probably, in the kind of reception the Americans have accorded to him. He came full of the fire of agitation; he was prepared to talk to great crowds about all the wrongs which perfidious Albion has heaped upon Ireland throughout long generations; possibly he had visions of indignant protests flung in the face of the British Imperial Parliament. But the sharp Yankees saw things in quite a different light. They told Mr. Parnell, in plain language, that they would willingly hear his descriptions of his country's sufferings from the famine, and they would cheerfully respond to an appeal for help to buy them bread, but Irish political agitation in the United States would be considered as altogether out of place and unnecessary. The practical application of this has been seen in the fact that although Mr. Parnell has asked donors of money to specify whether they intend it to be employed for the relief of the poor or for carrying on the political organization which Mr. Parnell at present rules, the money has been almost exclusively given for the poor.

That is just as it should be. American interference in matters between Ireland and England would be just as impertinent as would

be British meddling with the difficulties now existing in the State of Maine. Mr. Parnell will get a great deal of money together, no doubt, and so far he will render service to his countrymen, but his political movement will not gain much strength by his journey across the Atlantic.

#### ENGLAND AND AFGHANISTAN.

Here is a good statement—which is from *Truth*—of the case as between England and Afghanistan:—

“We own India; the Russians own Central Asia. Between us and the Russians lies a mountainous country from which an army of invasion cannot debouch in a condition to effect conquests. This mountainous country is inhabited by a brave, hardy race, who have been independent for many thousand years, and in whom the two virtues, love of liberty and love of country, are peculiarly developed. The Afghans had as their chief or sovereign, Shere Ali. This sovereign had always been our faithful ally, but he, like his predecessor, had warned us that it would be unsafe to send a European as Resident in his capital owing to the number of fanatical characters to be found there. We had agreed by treaty not to send one.

“Our Ministers and their Viceroy in India being as determined to pick a quarrel with Shere Ali as was David with Naboth, for like David they were anxious to round off their territories scientifically at the cost of their neighbour's vineyard, suddenly announced that they meant to send an English Envoy to Cabul, and then, without waiting for a reply to this announcement, they started their Envoy on his way to Cabul, accompanied by a large escort of troops.

“The commander of Shere Ali's frontier fortress, which commanded the road to Cabul, refused to allow this Envoy and his soldiers to pass. So we brought up troops, took the fortress, and drove back the Afghan troops. On this Shere Ali fled from his capital, and soon afterwards died. His son, Yakoob Khan, reigned in his stead. This Yakoob was a half-hearted sort of fellow, He made peace with us, and told us that we might send an Envoy to Cabul if we insisted upon it. We did so, and the Envoy was, soon after his arrival, as had been predicted, massacred. On this we invaded Afghanistan and occupied Cabul.

“Our first step was to execute, in a general sort of way, many Afghans for having resisted the advance of our troops, which were acting in alliance with Yakoob Khan, and then we sent off our friend Yakoob as a sort of State prisoner to India. Having thus asserted ourselves, we seized on all the gold that came in our way, and confiscated all the cannon and rifles that we could lay our hands on. Every Afghan who resisted us was killed, and to make ourselves thoroughly respected we burnt here and there a village.

“Now the Afghans consist of various tribes, who had accepted the suzerainty of the Ameer of Cabul. Strange as it may appear, these tribes are foolish enough to object to our proceedings; nay, still worse, they are wicked enough to fight for their independence. We reply by shooting them down, not as enemies but as insurgents. But insurgents, in the name of reason, against whom? Against our prisoner Yakoob, or against ourselves? We in England do not know in what capacity our Generals are exercising sway in Afghanistan—whether they are there merely as temporary occupiers of the territory within the lines of our armies, or whether they regard themselves as the sovereigns of the country. How, then, can the Afghans know this, and why, if they do fancy that their independence is being attacked, should they be executed in cold blood for defending it?

“We are, in fact, in a thoroughly false position. We know that we cannot annex Afghanistan, and we equally know that we are making ourselves so deservedly detested by its inhabitants that any Government which we may set up will at once be overthrown on our departure. This arises from our venerated Ministers having thought themselves wiser than any Viceroy who preceded Lord Lytton, every Secretary of State who preceded Lord Cranbrook in the India Office, every ruler of Afghanistan who preceded Yakoob, and every man of mark in India except Lord Lytton and his immediate *entourage*. We should have taken Shere Ali's advice, and not have attempted to force an English Resident on the Afghans. Had we done this, Shere Ali would now have been ruling at Cabul, the Afghans would have been our friends, we should have saved nearly £10,000,000, and we should not find ourselves in the wretched fix in which we now are.”

And the end of all this is not yet seen. Tidings come that the difficulties of General Roberts have only just begun. A severe winter has set in, and his troops are badly in want of warm clothing and fuel. Everything is against the British in Afghanistan at present, and the war is practically interminable. The crops having been gathered, the tribes have now leisure to fight and pillage until the spring. Fresh forces are being collected in almost every district and territory, and there is even fear of a general revolt in India. The effort to carve a “scientific frontier” will lead to sad if not disastrous results.

EDITOR.