

figure as "the lion of a fashionable dinner table," and at the same time use the language this one is made to use. And who ever heard bluntness spoken of as an American characteristic? It is the Briton who glories in plain speech!

And what do you mean by civilized society? Supposing the story to be true, who were the most civilized, the coarse specimen portrayed, or the "mothers with marriageable daughters who could not make enough of him?"

I call them worse than the heathen mothers, ready to throw their daughters to such a crocodile as that!

But the story is a made-up one, as you should have seen, or else your and Mr. Yates' vulgarian was an Englishman, which I can prove by his saying *top-coat*, a name an American never gives to his outer garment, which he always styles *over-coat*.

No, Mr. Editor, the story, like the coat, "is made out of the whole cloth," and it is so thin that you should have seen through it, before publishing it with or without additions.

A. H. H.

I am sorry to have offended the patriotic prejudices of A. H. H., but I really do not see that I have anything to retract. If A. H. H. has not discovered that a numerous class of Americans, even of those "native born," carry a most vulgar bluntness into any kind of civilized life which may open its doors to them, it is only in proof that he has been accustomed to have intercourse with the better class of Americans at home, and has not travelled much. I could tell story after story, from personal experience, which would sound little, if at all, better than that which Edmund Yates wrote in the *World*. A. H. H. must remember that to say this is to cast no reflection on the American people, any more than it would be for him to tell, as I am sure he can, some tales of English bad manners; for no people, outside of heathendom, can be coarser than our coarse English. The difference is that we can mock at our own heathens, and approve of criticism that is levelled against them, which is a virtue our American brethren lack as yet. No doubt Edmund Yates heard the story just as he told it, and no doubt he could tell many more after the same sort, and if A. H. H. will read some English papers he will find that we criticise our own countrymen more severely than we do anybody else.

IRISH LAND LAWS.

Mr. O'Connor Power, writing in the *Nineteenth Century*, puts the case of the Irish tenants in the very strongest light. He says:—

"The main cause of Irish poverty is not to be found in over-population, or in any want of energy or economy on the part of the Irish people, but in the system of land tenure imposed by Imperial conquest. Foreign competition and bad harvests, by which, in one year alone, according to the calculation of Mr. Dwyer Gray, Ireland has lost *thirty millions* sterling, have had one advantage, and that is, they have drawn attention, in a striking way, to the great evil of the system of tenant-at-will, the most demoralising and degrading to which it is possible to reduce the working population of any country. It is hardly in the power of language to describe the many evil effects of this system. It has blasted the hopes, ruined the homes, and destroyed the lives of millions of the Irish race. It has stopped the social, political, and industrial growth of Ireland as effectually as if the country had been in a state of perpetual civil war; and no war has ever been so cruel in its incidents or operations towards those among whom it was carried on, than the war which Irish landlordism has waged against the people whose inheritance it usurped, and whose property it has confiscated. 'The worst fed, the worst clothed, and the worst housed people in Europe'—this is the description which every impartial traveller who has seen the Irish people at home has given of them. Behold the result of the system of tenant-at-will and centuries of English rule!

"Of the 600,000 tenant farmers in Ireland more than half a million, representing with their families about three million persons, have no security in their homes, or in the business upon which they depend for their daily bread, but are at the mercy of a few thousand persons—the lords of the soil of Ireland. Agriculture being the mainspring of the nation's wealth, the interests of the commercial and trading community and naturally dependent upon the industry of the farmers, and so it results that the fate and fortunes of more than five millions of people are in the hands of the small section numbering not more than a few thousands. No system of government could possibly bring prosperity to a people so circumstanced. Even if they were endowed with all the attributes of political freedom, their social condition would still be a condition of slavery. They are the victims of a system clearly incompatible with social rights and industrial freedom. It may be necessary for me to explain here what I mean by 'social right' and 'industrial freedom.' Social right may be defined in words which are to be found in the Declaration of American Independence, and I would define it, in those words, as 'the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;' and industrial freedom, in the sense

in which I use the phrase, is the right of the workers to enjoy the fruits of their own exertions, and to be safe, in the pursuit of their industry, from the rapacity of their neighbours. There is nothing more capable of proof than that the present land system of Ireland is opposed to the social rights and the industrial freedom of the Irish people as here understood. When a people die in large numbers of starvation in their own country, or fly from it because they cannot get enough to eat out of the food which that country has produced, and which is more than sufficient to sustain them, that the people are denied the right to live; and if a people have not a right to live in their own land while it is rich enough to support them, they are deprived of liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

I hold that Mr. O'Connor Power is right, and the writer in this journal last week who signed himself "Saxon" is wrong in affirming that the State cannot take property from landlords when the interests of the people demand it. The power which gives property can always take it again when the common good makes it necessary. Mr. Gladstone, in his speech at West Calder in Midlothian, said, "If it is known to be for the welfare of the community at large, the Legislature is perfectly entitled to buy out the landed proprietors"; and he then admitted the justice of the principle so long insisted upon by Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill and others, that "those who possess large portions of the spaces of the earth are not altogether in the same position as the possessors of mere personality; personality, or portable property, does not impose the same limitations upon the actions and industry of men and the well-being of the community as does the possession of land." Of course full compensation must be made to the dispossessed—as was the case when the Irish Church was dis-established—and as was often not the case when the forefathers of many of the present land-proprietors came into possession of Irish property. If it can be proved that the system works badly—that a readjustment of the land laws would procure the peace and prosperity of many thousands of Irish people—then the Government is bound in all equity to take this matter in hand and deal with it. Municipal bodies have the right to compel persons holding property in a city to sell it all, or some portion of it, at a fair valuation when the welfare of the city may demand it, and why should not the State exercise the same control? If the land-laws of Ireland are bad, let them by all means be amended. At any rate, the tenant-at-will system is bad from beginning to end. It must take from the tenant everything like a desire to carry on good, scientific farming. Of what use is it that a farmer cultivate his land, enriching it with manure, changing the nature of the crop, and such like things, when he may be turned out of it at the end of any season? Nothing can be so calculated to impoverish the soil and all who till it, and in the interests of justice and good order it should be abolished at once.

Of course it will be argued against this that the whole proposition is revolutionary, and the work of expropriation once started in Ireland may cause a demand for the same kind of thing in England. Tories and Whigs alike would regard the mere suggestion as coming from the devil; but that should not be allowed by reasonable people to stand in the way of an act of justice to Ireland. The Irish must not suffer a cruel wrong in order that the interests of English landholders may be carefully conserved. The old motto still stands, and well is it for our common humanity that men can yet dare to believe in its ethics: *Iustitia fiat, ruat cælum.*

AFFAIRS IN FRANCE.

The French Cabinet is again in difficulties. Several members have unanimously resolved upon presenting a proposal to Waddington, that as the maintenance or reconstruction of the old Cabinet is impossible, and Waddington or Say taking the Premiership being out of the question, De Freycinet should be asked to form a Cabinet. Grévy quietly watches the transition and Gambetta bides his time, and we may rest satisfied that the fiery spirits in the ranks will be curbed by the leaders. But whether they will be able to do that effectually and for some time to come is open to doubt. The French nature leans to revolution, and is impatient of anything like a settled order of things. But it would be worse than a pity—it would be a crime to disturb the peace and hinder the prosperity of the nation for any merely political or selfish purpose. Let us hope that prudence will prevail.

EDITOR.