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ST. PATRICK'S DAY IN MONTREAL.

"WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS."

It is the feast of Erin's isle
Once more in Ville Marie—
Where'er we look—on every side
Old Ireland's flag we see.

And as it flutters to the breeze
There loving eyes behold
The cross and harp with shamrocks twined
Our emblems as of old.

And as we march beneath its folds
To keep St. Patrick's Day—
We think of that old storied land
Green Erin far away.

And as our fathers gone before
Who on Mount Royal sleep,
Still Ireland's sons in Ville Marie
This hallowed feast will keep!

And with the shamrock on their breast
As Irishmen they stand—
Most loyal sons of Canada
Yet true to native land.

And whilst the music of the past
Old memories wake again
Their hearts still turn to Innisfail
Across the stormy main!

—J. A. S.

REDMOND AND RUSSELL

On the Land Question.

Mr. John Redmond, M.P., chairman of the Irish Party, in moving an amendment to the address in reply to the King's speech, recently, delivered a masterly speech, during the course of which he reviewed the Irish land question. The amendment was as follows:

"And humbly representing to Your Majesty that the administration of the Irish Land Acts is not satisfactory to any class of Your Majesty's subjects in Ireland, and that the only permanent solution of the Irish land question must be found in a measure providing for the general and immediate creation of an occupying proprietary by the establishment of a system of compulsory sale and purchase."

It raised, he said, once more for the consideration of Parliament the Irish land question. Its vital urgency and importance would not, he thought, be questioned by anyone having any practical acquaintance with Ireland. Both the great parties in the House had dealt with the question, but to-day they found themselves more confronted by this great question, upon which depended not only the peace and prosperity of Ireland, but almost the very existence of the remnant of the Irish people. What was the reason for this extraordinary state of things? Was the question insoluble? No. The explanation was that upon this Irish land question Parliament had never allowed itself to be guided by Irish advice or Irish opinion. The land system in Ireland had completely and absolutely broken down.

Both landlords and tenants were united in declaring a want of confidence in it. The task presented to the Land Commission was an impossible task. What had been the cost of adminstration of the system? He found that the estimate for the year ending March 31, 1891, was about £132,000, exclusive of the Land Purchase Department; so that the cost of administration during the last 20 years was about 2½ millions. Then, since 1881, there had been no less than 400,000 law suits tried, and taking the average cost of each suit as £8, it meant that over six millions of money had been spent in hard cash in 20 years in carrying out the administration of the system. What had been the result? Rents had been reduced by something like 1½ millions, but the tenant-farmer was no better off since the reduction, because there had been a heavy fall in the price of agricultural produce. Under the operation of this system those who spoke in the name of the tenant-farmers of Ireland asserted that they were still charged rent on their own property and improvements, and all during those years there had been hanging over the heads of every tenant-farmer in the country the menace of lawsuits. They knew perfectly well that when the tenant had come within a few years of the period when this tribunal, in which he had no confidence, was coming to assess the rent, he would not put his heart into the work to get as much out of the land as it was capable of producing. Under this system the landlords of Ireland were being slowly but surely squeezed out of existence. Everyone knew the difference between the condition of the Irish and English landlords.

Whereas the English landlords were able to bear the reduction their brothers in Ireland, for reasons which were unnecessary to go into, were unable to bear those reductions, and the reductions which had already been obtained had, no doubt, brought ruin to many of the landlords in Ireland. One-third revision of judicial rents would mean for the small landlords of Ireland at any rate hopeless ruin. From the point of view of the country generally, he believed the working of this system had been absolutely disastrous. What country in the world could possibly prosper which was subject to this system of constant periodical litigation? Mr. Gladstone told them that the Land Act of 1881 would enable Irishmen to live and prosper on their own land. After 20 years of the system they found that during those years more than one and a half millions of the people had emigrated from the country, and during the years 1898-9-1900 there had been a distinct rise in the emigration over the previous years. That fact alone was sufficient to condemn the system. It was a significant fact that while Belfast had increased in population the population of the agricultural districts of Ireland, during the last twenty years, had steadily diminished, and the emigration had been of people in the prime of life. Yes, it was a heart-breaking thing for them to consider. The proportion of old people and little children was greater in Ireland to-day than in any country in Europe. The position was that one class of the population had been flying away from their shores. From every point of view, then, the system had failed. Surely, no prediction was ever so completely justified by experience as that of Mr. Parnell, who, in 1881, declared to Mr. Gladstone that the Act of the year could not possibly settle the question, and that it had been based upon wrong lines and unsound principles. Let him come to the remedy which they had been pressing on that House and advocating in Ireland for well over twenty years. Here again there was no difference between Irish landlords and tenants.

All classes in Ireland, landlords and tenants alike, demanded the abolition of the system of dual ownership and the State regulation of rents, and asked for the substitution for it of a system of occupying proprietary. The only portion of the land system which was working any good in Ireland at all was that which was comprised in the Irish Land Purchase Acts. From 15 years' working of these Land Purchase Acts, roughly speaking, about 50,000 occupying proprietors had been created. It was remarkable that the Fry Commission reported that the slowness of the Land Commission in this purchase department increased rather tnan diminished as time went on. Into the precise cause of the delay he did not intend to enter at length, but in his opinion a large measure of responsibility rested upon the Irish Land Commission. He believed the spirit in which they proceeded to the administration of the Acts was altogether wrong. There was a large class of Irish landlords who could not afford to sell under these Land Purchase Acts. They were men who were living on a small margin of their income, and although these men knew perfectly well that a further reduction of their judicial rents would sweep that margin away altogether, they refused to sell their estate to their tenants. The success of these Acts where they had been put in operation had been enormous. The price paid by the tenants had been on the basis of something over seventeen years' purchase on an average with that price, as there was no compulsion upon them to sell, and the tenants, no doubt, had reaped enormous benefits, because at that price tenants had been called upon by way of instalments of principal and interest to pay 25 or 30 per cent. less than the reduced judicial rents which they were to pay. The State had suffered nothing, and, speaking broadly, there had been no arrears; and the extraordinary part of the situation was this, that the very success of these Acts made it absolutely impossible for them to stop short. Indeed, it made it essential upon them that they should introduce a general scheme affecting the whole country. It was absolutely true that the greater the success which had attended these voluntary Acts the greater the necessity for a complete system of land purchase all over the country.

In his opinion the time had passed for tinkering with the system of land purchase. There had been 20 years' experience of these unfair rents, and 15 years' experience of these Land Purchase Acts, and they said that the only solution that could settle this question must be a broad and statesmanlike scheme such as had many precedents in other countries. He contended for a compulsory sale on terms which would not only be just to the tenants, but which should be perfectly just to the landlords. Compulsion had already been applied to the Irish landlords from the Act of 1881 downwards, and the real question it was necessary to grapple with was—could this system of compensation be applied to the Irish landlords without absolutely ruining them? and he believed it could. He knew it could, and he knew that very many indeed of the wisest and most far-seeing of Irish landlords not only believed that it could be done, but believed it was the only way in which they could be saved from ruin. He would respectfully submit to the Irish landlords this fact. Every year that passed the value of their property was going down. He respectfully submitted to them they were unwise in not coming in a body with the Nationalists, in joining with them in consenting to a measure of compulsory purchase which would be just to them as well as to the Irish tenants. He believed that if they waited for a further fixing of judicial rents they would be absolutely ruined. They did not wish to ruin and exterminate the Irish landlords. And if in the operation which will be necessary to carry out this great scheme, if the British Treasury chose out of that accumulation of money which was due to Ireland in respect of the financial relations to make the operation easy for the Irish landlords, the Irish tenants certainly would not be found to raise any serious objection. Would an operation of this kind be just to the British taxpayer? In this matter England was under a deep obligation to Ireland generally, as well as to the Irish landlords. It might be that even now the proposal before the House, if carried out, would undo the wrongs of the past. What risk was there for England and the Chancellor of the Exchequer? In his opinion, absolutely none. During the last 15 years 18 million sterling had been borrowed and repaid regularly in accordance with the regulations laid down, and it was the merest moonshine to talk of repudiation at a time when the payment to be made back by the tenants would be even less than those made by them during the last fifteen years.

The Irish peasant, like the peasant of all other countries, had a master passion for the land, and his efforts to obtain possession of it had often driven him to deeds foreign to his nature. When he became the owner of the land he tilled he felt satisfied, because he knew he had something to leave his children, and all that was wanted to effect this was a moderate grant of the Imperial credit being made in the interest of Ireland. He might say that Ireland was practically unanimous upon this question. He had heard that the members for Belfast, Derry City, and Dublin University were not in favor of the scheme of land purchase. The right hon. gentleman the member for North Armagh was not opposed to land purchase in principle, but he objected to it in a compulsory form. Thus 95 per cent. of the Irish members of that House were in favor of a compulsory system of purchase all of whom had pledged themselves to vote for a measure to that effect. Lord Salisbury, in his letter to Mr. Russell, said that compulsory land purchase could not be granted now under "existing circumstances." Were the "existing circumstances" these, that Ireland was now peaceful and crimeless? They could not forget the facts of history. It was in 1870 the first Land Act was passed, after, as Mr. Gladstone said, the chapel bell had been rung. In 1881 it was the same. The demands made before fell on deaf ears, an an Act was passed after what might be called a social revolution. What they had gained has come after a long period of shame which was full of heart-breaking and sorrowful occurrences, and after inhuman deeds into which a gentle race had been driven.

The story of Ireland was the story of a people expatriated and scattered through the world, bringing with them a burning memory of their lost and ruined homes and a most deadly hatred of British rule. Wise, indeed, would be the statesmanship and blessed the man who put an end once and for ever to that record of human wrong and human suffering. For the reasons he had stated he begged to move the amendment.

Mr. T. W. Russell, rising from the Unionist benches to second the amendment, was greeted with loud and long cheers from the Nationalists. He said old members of the House who remembered his relations with the Party opposite during the last ten years of bitter strife and conflict would doubtless feel surprise at his present conduct, but during the fifteen years he had sat in Parliament he had never risen with a stronger sense of duty or more certain in the conviction that he was doing right and asking the right thing than now, because he was supported on this question by an Ireland absolutely united at the outset, he warned those who had taken the trouble to go "scavenging in the dust bins" of his old speeches and had dug up five or six speeches he had made to his constitutents in fifteen years, that they would gain nothing by their actions, and it would give anybody a great deal of trouble to find that any other member for Ulster had addressed as many speeches to their constituents. He stood up now, if they liked, as a convert. Ireland had changed, and he had changed with it. He had been engaged during the last ten or twelve years, not in pushing forward his constituents, but in endeavoring to restrain them and hold them back. But now the time had come to press this question. The fact which had precipitated the issue and made it the dominant factori in Irish politics was the utter breakdown of the present system through maladministration.

The failure was due to four things. The treatment by the courts of appeals from valuers, the treatment by the courts of the tenants' improvements, the conspiracy amongst landlords and landagents in Ulster to absolutely destroy the Ulster Custom, and rob the tenant of his property, and the very success of the Purchase Act, which necessitated a compulsory measure. In fourteen years the Appeal Court had heard 30,000 appeals on values. These appeals had cost the parties at least £1,000,000, and the net result was that the landlords had secured an increase of their rentals by ¼ per cent. The hon. member proceeded to cite the House a case in which the Court of Appeal overruled the opposition of its four experts, and raised the rent by 20 per cent. This Court of Appeal was absolutely ignorant of land values, and yet that Court overruled its own experts. Did Parliament expert free people would consent to such treatment? This was only one case out of twenty he had, and all typical of hundreds of thousands of others. This was the procedure which was driving the Ulster tenants to desperation. They were not going to tolerate it. They were determined to have justice or they would know the reason why. With the exception of their administration, which was as faulty as it could be, the purchase acts had been an entire and unqualified success. The people who had bought were satisfied, the landlords who had sold were satisfied, peace had taken the place of turbulence where the Acts had applied, and England had lost nothing by the transactions. He believed the House had honestly intended to do right in land legislation for Ireland, but the moment these measures went over to Ireland the administration fell into the hands of men who, honestly believing that they spelt robbery in every line, did everything in their power to wreck the policy that the Legislature desired to see carried out.

The English landlord was a real owner of property, who let his land, and as a fully-equipped going concern; whereas the Irish landlord deew his rent without doing anything for the land. That produced a state of things in Ireland for which the remedy was only to be found in the sale to the tenants of the land they occupied, and his suggestion was that they should pay for it the highest market value, plus a bonus for compulsion. He asked the Government to recognize that they had from that day forward a new Ireland to deal with, and he believed that by the policy now recommended they would not only buy out the fee-simple of Irish land, but also the fee-simple of Irish disaffection. He seconded the amendment with all his heart.

IRELAND'S DAY IN SAN FRANCISCO.

Judging from the following report which we clip from "The Monitor" there will be no "Rag Time Seventh" celebration in San Francisco. The grand old national songs and patriotic old dramas will occupy the places of distinction in the programme of the celebration of the national festival. The report is as follows:—

The feast day of Ireland's patron saint this year promises to be celebrated in a manner far surpassing any previous affair of the kind held in San Francisco. The St. Patrick's Day Convention of 1901, which has been in session for several weeks past, announces a programme for the 18th of March, the day of thecelebration, which has never been equal on any occasion.

The interesting fact that the celebration will be the first of the twentieth century, has inspired the delegates to the convention to redouble their efforts, and, as a result of their labors, "Ireland's feast day" of 1900 gives assurance of being one that will forever live in the hearts of all true lovers of the Emerald Isle.

The Executive Committee of the convention has labored unceasingly to place St. Patrick's Day of this year in its proper place. With this end in view, among other arrangements, a circular letter has been ordered sent to all the leading Irish and Catholic firms of this city, as well as to all large concerns known to be friendly to the Irish cause, requesting them to observe the 18th of March as a general holiday, or at least to close their places of business at the noon hour. This movement has already met with great success. Many favorable responses have been received from prominent business houses signifying their intentions to accede to the wishes of the Committee. It is also expected that very many of the leading commercial establishments in the "down-town" district will also decorate for the occasion.

In order that public school children might have the advantage of participating in the exercises to be held on St. Patrick's Day, a special committee from the convention has been appointed for the purpose of interviewing the Board of Education on this matter. Nothing in fact has been left undone, no expense spared, to make the first St. Patrick't Day celebration of the twentieth century what it should be—the grandest ever known in the history of our city.

Afternoon and evening performances have been arranged for. The large sale of tickets is indicative of the interest being taken in both. For the afternoon, Central Theatre has been engaged. Samuel Shortridge, than whom there are few better public speakers in our midst, has been engaged as orator for this occasion. For poet of the day, John M. Miller, a well known young man of this city and a prominent member of Division No. 5, A. .O. H., has been secured. The ever popular and interesting drama, "Colleen Bawn," dramatized from Gerald Griffin's interesting novel, "The Collegians," now running as a serial in the Monitor, will be produced. The production will be under the direction of the veteran Irish character artist, James M. Ward. Between the acts a number of well known local ladies and gentlemen will render several of the best and most stirring somgs and recitations of the old land. Tickets for the Central Theatre exercises have been placed on sale at fifty cents each. These tickets can be exchanged for a reserved seat without extra charge at the theatre five days previous to and including the day of the celebration.

The evening exercises will be held at the Mechanics' Pavilion. The programme arranged for this occasion is a varied one. Roncoviere's famous band will discourse delightful Irish melodies, stereopticon views of Ireland and America will be presented and a monster chorus of male voices will render the most popular songs of the "old country." The Emerald Glee Club will also participate and render many of Moore's charming melodies. A grand promenade concert will also be given and the whole affair will conclude with a dance. The price of admission to the Pavilion has been placed at the extremely low figure of twenty-five cents. That the immense building will be crowded on the occasion is assured beyond a doubt. Taking all in all, the celebration of 1901 promises to be an eventful one, and one that will reflect credit on the convention under whose management it will be held.

NOTES FROM ROME.

THE POPE'S ANNIVERSARIES.—The celebration of the anniversaries of the Pope's birth and of his accession to the See of Peter were celebrated in Rome with great eclat. A correspondent says that:—

"Hundreds of congratulatory telegrams from all the European courts and from every part of the world continue to arrive at the Vatican, and several Prelates, under the personal supervision of Cardinal Rampolla, Papal Secretary of State, are kept busy all day long answering them."

SOCIALISM CONDEMNED.—Mgr. Bacilieri, Bishop of Verona, taking occasion from the Papal Encyclical "Graves de Communi," published on the 18th of January, has addressed an eloquent Pastoral Letter to his clergy, severely condemning the Socialist theories which, thanks to a most active propaganda, have found many proselytes, especially in the provinces of Verona and Mantova. Mgr. Bacilieri goes on to propose the remedies calculated, in his opinion, to check the progress of Socialism, exhorting the clergy to fight these shallow doctrines with the arms abundantly provided for them by the Church.

COLD AND FAMINE.—For twenty-five years back Italy has not experienced such a cold spell as that which swept over the whole Peninsula, from the Alps to Sicily, during the past few weeks. The poor suffer most terribly and especially in Apulia are people and animals dying from famine and exposure. An incident will illustrate the condition of affairs—it is a sad story from Villanova in Apulia:—

"A poor priest, the Rev. Giovanni Gammarota, was travelling from Lungoli to Villanova on the top of the old-fashioned stage coach which still does duty for the train in those out-of-the-way districts. The wind was blowing impetuously, and repeatedly blew away the priest's hat. At first the postillion got down and picked up the hat, but at last he refused to do so any longer, and the priest had to descend himself from his lofty perch to look for his hat, the coach in the meantime driving away. Next morning the unfortunate priest was found frozen to death on the banks of the river Cervaro. It is supposed that he lost his way in attempting a short cut, and was overpowered by the intense cold."

CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.—We glean a few paragraphs of Roman news that may serve to show how the Holy Father has faith in the ultimate conversion of England.

On the 14th February the newly-elected Mother-General of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, with her first assistant and another Sister, were received in private audience by the Holy Father. They presented to His Holiness a beautiful bound copy of "Convent Stories," the last work of their late venerated Mother-General (Mother Magdalen Taylor), in which they had inserted her portrait. His Holiness, looking earnestly at the picture, asked if it was considered a good likeness. He then spoke some touching words of encouragement, exhorting them to continue her work in the same spirit, and giving a spiritual blessing to the new Mother-General. His Holiness inquired about the progress of the institute, showing a lively interest in every House. He repeated several times, "Pray, pray for the conversion of England," and was much pleased to hear of the devotions and English sermons in the Sisters' Church (St. George and the English Saints, Via S. Sebastiano). He spoke with great pleasure of having founded the Collegio Beda for converts. His Holiness sent his special blessing to the Noviciate and entire institute, as also to its works and benefactors.

His Eminence Cardinal Respighi, Vicar of His Holiness, said Mass and received the vows of two novices, Sister M. Julienne O'Connor) and Sister M. Odilia (Dunlevy) on February 12th (Feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary) in the Institute. The Sisters were attended by four little children, pupils of the school, acting as bridesmaids. The Cardinal afterwards breakfasted in the convent and received the Community. The young ladies and children of the different classes in the school were presented in turn, for each of whom he had a kind word and blessing.

Our next issue will contain special reports of St. Patrick's Day celebration in Montreal and other leading centres in Canada, as well as of the demonstrations in other parts of the world.