

more explicit. We have so many laws, good and bad, that we cannot easily fix your meaning. We have a tithing law—ordaining that a church, not ours, should be supported by us. Surely, you did not mean to insinuate that we infringed on our Christian duties by not commending that monstrous law. We have again, game laws, *ad infinitum*, by which the liberty of rational beings—of the lords of the creation—are being less valued than the partridge, the woodcock, or the pheasant. Surely, my lord, you did not expect us to become the encomiasts of such laws. We have, my lord, many other unreasonable laws, restricting the franchise to the few, at the expense of the many—law with quarter-acre tithes—laws that consign them to the guardianship of those that made them poor. Surely, my lord, you could not have meant that we violated our sacred duties by not lending our countenance to these laws—laws which of course, we do patiently endure, but which, in reason and conscience, we can never approve. You should, I repeat have told us the laws which we did not support. If you meant the laws made to preserve the peace of the community, I deny the truth of the allegation. Her gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, has not under the wide away of her sceptre, subjects more faithful in the discharge of their duty than the Irish priesthood ever have been. I fearlessly assert, that the humblest Catholic curate in this diocese has been a more efficient peace-keeper in the locality in which he resides than the most active paid officer under the crown. If you mean the laws that bind the subjects to their Sovereign, again I deny the allegation; but this cannot, of course be your meaning. Our loyalty stands unimpaired before the world. If we err at all, it is in excess of that virtue. I gladly hope that the best of English Queens may never have occasion to test it. But if she have any will, and it as it has ever been, a tough good report, and through evil report as true as a needle to the pole, against her every enemy, foreign and domestic. Is it, in a word, my lord, the law of commutative justice that we discountenance? If these be the laws you accuse us of violating, your lordship, to say the least, made an egregious mistake. We consider it a conscientious duty to refuse sacraments to every person taking or retaining a shilling's worth not his own, being able to make restitution. Our canon of justice is that of the great St. Augustine—"Non duntaxat pecuniam sine restitutione oblaturum." It would not, my lord, be well for your pet "Establishment" if it were judged on this catholic rule of equity.

Perhaps, my lord, I have at length reached your meaning—that the laws to which we do not lend our support are the laws regulating the contracts between landlords and tenants. If this be your charge against us, I, for my own part, partly admit, and partly deny, its application. As far as they are founded on the principles of immutable justice, I emphatically deny the truth of the charge. As far as they enforce the rules of equity, binding the tenant to a fair rent for the land, we would defend the landlords' claims by every weapon in the armoury of the Church of God; and no Irish priest could countenance or admit a violation of this rule without becoming himself liable to restitution. If, however, these laws go to enforce contracts not based on equity, if they should be made the instruments of oppression—if, against reason and humanity, they were being made, and were intended to be made destructive of the well-being of society, and were physically found to be working the ruin of a whole kingdom, and subversion of every right, human and divine, I partly admit, my lord, the truth of your charge, that to such laws we did not lend our countenance. We bore with them, of course, we counselled our people to bear with them—not for the sake of their justice, but for the sake of God—who tolerated for a time, and half a time, these iniquities, and who, in his own good time, would have them redressed. But, my lord, to lend enactments which we felt to be so mischievous, a cordial support, or to sanction them with our approval, would, my lord, be exposing even us too much from us. What, my lord, could induce us to respect such laws? Is not every condition of an equitable contract everywhere throughout this kingdom, if we except some portions of the north of Ireland, violated by them? Have they not been proven to be a Draconian code, written in characters of blood? Have they not made our beautiful land a vast workhouse of pauperism? Have they not reduced the great majority of the people of Ireland to a state of destitution unparalleled in the annals of the world? What, my lord! would you have us act the eulogists and the abettors of a code that

planted almost in every village a tyrant more inhuman and barbarous than the fabled Ogres of our fairy tales—a code that made the meekest Irish society a man qualified for his situation by the worst kind of ruffianism—the landlord's bailiff a more important personage than the amiable sovereign of these realms? Yes, indeed, duty demands of us the approbation of such laws! We must, in mercy to the system, divest ourselves of every Christian feeling, and call falsehood truth, wrong right, and the most monstrous iniquity the strictest equity! This, my lord, I say again, would be too much for you to ask even from us. Permit me, my lord, to suppose a case. It is hardly a possibly case, to be sure, for your native country would not endure it, for one day; still my lord, let me suppose that the Landlords in England were, with a few honourable exceptions, selfish, grasping, cruel, tyrannical—that they had made for themselves a code of laws to regulate their properties—a code that made them irresponsible, in their own minds, to God and man—a code which enforced what they called their rights, but never hinted at their duties—that by these laws, so craftily devised to carry out their intentional mischief, they made England desolate; scattered the English people, and made them wanderers over the earth—left one-third of your Ocean Isle uncultivated, the other two-thirds comparatively unproductive—let me suppose again that by these laws they made the English nation a beggar in rags at every gate in Christendom—that with them they were enabled with impunity to exterminate hundreds, thousands of the English people from the homesteads of their fathers—selling their cabins to the earth, and casting them out on a merciless world to die in ditch, to make room for the ox, the ass, the goat, or the sheep, thereby preferring the most stupid of the brute creation to him whom the God of heaven "made little less than the angels." Let me suppose again, that these laws having full sway for centuries in England, made more widows and orphans, produced more barbedshaws, heartburning, agonies of such a kind as would cause more tears to be shed and more premature deaths—a greater destruction, in fine, of human life than the eleven persecutions decreed by the Pagan Emperors of Rome, I ask you, my lord, in what terms would you speak of those laws? Would not the indignant soul of a Stanley revolt at their very contemplation? Would the parsons of England be Christian parsons if they gave their cordial support to a code which worked such ruin? Would they not be worse than the apostate priests of the cruel Jezabel, if, folding their arms in silence, they looked on with cold indifference on their hearers, crushed to powder beneath the wheels of this Moloch? But what would they be, my lord—they the ministers of the God of Mercy, what names would be too bad for them, if, instead of siding with their suffering people, they raised their voices to applaud the cause and cheer on the authors of this universal ruin? No matter, my lord, how you or they would feel, we know how those who love their people do feel and have ever felt. We know how, under similar circumstances, a Moses felt—how a Jeremiah felt, though he merely saw with the eye of a prophet the bondage and oppression of his people—we know how a David felt, though he only viewed the misery of his nation in the distance, when this cry of wounded nature escaped him—

"Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem."

Who say, raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof.

"O Daughter of Babylon, miserable! blessed shall be he who shall repay thee thy payment which thou hast paid us."

We know how a Matthias felt, when his own beloved Judaea was beneath the hoof of the trampling and relentless Antiochus. We know what the Redeemer felt when he looked on the crowd hungering in the wilderness, when he said, with all the sweetness of a Saviour who loved man even more than his own life,

"Misericord super turbam."

and we also, my lord, know the cry that comes from under the altar of God, even in the region of light and love and peace—the cry of the murdered innocents.

It may be, my Lord, that I have still mistaken the laws to which your lordship said to have alluded—that your meaning was, we did not lend our support to the administration or execution of the laws. If your lordship meant the proper administration and execution of the laws, we emphatically deny the justice of this charge.

The rule of justice, by Irishmen, rests upon indisputable Protestant authority. But if, my lord, you meant the mal-administration or perversion of the best laws, this we did not, of course, support or countenance, and your lordship must know well, from your experience of Ireland, that in this we were justified, for Dante's picture of hell is a feeble sketch of many of the inferior courts of justice that have been in Ireland where the grossest iniquity was worked in the form of law. There were, of course, here and there, places not misused courts of justice, where an innate love of equity predominated over prejudice and bigotry. Such courts we ever approved, and hailed the executions of their decisions with rapturous delight. Of others, where it was not the law which was good that was administered, but the malice of man, the most you could expect from us would be to say nothing. I admit, my lord, that there is everywhere a great improvement in our courts of justice. Our rulers have poured in upon them a flood of light, which is daily scaring away barefaced partiality and corruption. Fear not, then, my lord, to give us fair play, and you will find us your steady supporters and zealous co-operators—you will find us the encomiasts of every law that is good, and of every officer under the crown, executing the law, who will hold the balance of justice as a lance. Make, by wise legislation, Ireland prosperous and our poor folks happy, and you will never hear us beyond the sanctuary, except when teaching the living virtue—in love God and their neighbour, and honour the Queen; or, when giving hope and consolation to the dying Christian,

"Pointing to Heaven, and leading the way."

I come now, my lord, to the most serious charge of all. You are reported, my lord—I should fondly hope falsely reported—to have said, "Why didn't the priesthood do more crimes they know to be predicted and afterwards completed?" There are many startling proofs of the connivance of the priesthood in the sanguinary crimes of the peasantry.

These, my lord, are grievous charges—First, that the priest does not denounce the crimes which he knows to be predicted and afterwards completed, and secondly, that there are startling proofs of the priesthood's connivance in the sanguinary crimes of the peasantry.—Should you have made, my lord, this statement—which I would willingly doubt—might I ask you, from what sources of information have you derived it? Was it from your own experience?—was it from the interested ministers of a rival church? or, was it from your detective police—these invisible, veracious gentry, who expect, of course, to be paid by the yard for the tales of horror they can invent? Was it, my lord, from the evicting, and, for that reason, disinterested proprietors of the south, who have always taken such a deep interest in everything that concerns the Catholic poor, and their spiritual guardians—the priests? Should you have made this statement, my lord (for I can scarcely induce myself to believe you did), I must respectfully and earnestly ask you again—Whence had you this information, with which you would blast the character of the most hard working, zealous, and in your own words, untiring ministry in the discharge of their religious duties (I say it, my lord, without presumption, excluding myself, of course, from the benefit of the testimony,) that ever ministered in the church of God? It is no small thing, my lord, to tarnish the fame of 2,730 Christian pastors—to make them accomplices in deeds of blood from which every Christian soul must revolt with horror—to present them to the world as besmeared with the blood of the unhappy victims of the assassin's knife, or ministering to God at His altar with hands stained with crimes, and hearts polluted with guilty purposes, which would make them the abominated of God and the detested of mankind? Our fair fame, my lord, is dearer to us than life, for if you rob us of it, you make life valueless to us, and if, my lord, there be a choice lot in Heaven, it is reserved for him who dares to stab innocence through its character, and strip it of the white robe of honour which makes it beautiful and edifying before men. If, my lord, you have made this charge against us, you must have made it on what appeared to you, at least, to be certain grounds; I therefore demand of you the proofs—the startling proofs—of this atrocious imputation. In the face of the British empire I dare you, my lord, to confront us with your informers and our accusers. Bring forward your hidden spies—the satellites of the dark, mysterious council—bring your informants

whoever they may be—the landlords' bailiffs—the galled parson, for such is said to be the slanderous, infamous, treacherous correspondent of the Times. Let us have a fair jury—not an unusual packed one—no clipped jury list—none of the minions of the exterminators of our people in the jury box. Give us, my lord, a jury of your own countrymen—Protestants if you will—but honest Protestants.

Our chaplains, our registers, our people, all are open to them—the police, who assisted at our religious services; let there be nothing hidden from them, and if their finding be that we, the Irish priesthood, did not denounce crimes known to be predicted, and afterwards completed—that the proofs were not only startling, but true, of our connivance in the sanguinary crimes of the peasantry, we will bow our heads in resignation, and though conscience, and the great God, the searcher of hearts, would still acquit us, we will cheerfully confess you, at least, blameless before the world. Come, then, my lord—I address myself of course, to the Newspaper Lord Stanley—to your startling proofs. Select your victims and prove them guilty. Unless you do so, or publicly retract the charges, I hold myself before the world justified in branding these reported charges as the most atrocious calumnies, and consigning, to the infamy of ages, your name as intimately connected with them. On the brilliant escutcheon of your noble house—an escutcheon reflecting the splendour of Catholic chivalry in bygone days—let the indignant historian add the blinding, dishonouring motto,

"Calumnians est audacter at non possunt esse."

You, my Lord, may have believed the calumnies you uttered. Your informers, however, did not believe them. They lied, *scandal et caligo*, knowingly and willingly, *sanctifying their stock in trade*; and, "were you to wash them in mire," the evil habit would continue. Popery in any, and every shape, is a ready target for the malignant darts. Whittaker—the Protestant Whittaker—a most impartial witness, or rather a partial one, for so was the decided enemy of Catholicity, truly said, that such persons as the above "had their minds impregnated with a peculiar portion of that spirit of falsehood which is largely possessed by the father of lies—ready for any fabrication of falsehood, and capable of any operations of villainy—that they are equally devoid of principle as of shame. Again, he says, "forgery—I blush for the honor of Protestantism while I write—seemed to have been peculiar to the reformed. I look in vain for any of these accursed outrages of imposition among the disciples of Popery."—*Vind. col. 2, page 23.*

The Protestant Bayle agrees with Whittaker in saying, "All that detraction and the blackest malignity have ever invented, of supposed crimes atrocious, invectives and calumny, spread brutally and without judgement or taste, have been applied to the Catholic priesthood."—*Acta aur. Ref. vol. 2, page 586.*

We and our country, my lord, have been long tried in the furnace of tribulation. We have not, I fondly hope been found wanting to our Faith and to our God. With His grace we will be able to withstand even this trial. It is perhaps the darkness before the dawn of that prosperity which God, I firmly believe, has reserved for our country. This, my lord is your duty—that will be ours.

The Saviour of the World was never so near his glorious resurrection as when his enemies had laid him in the monument, and closed its entrance with, in their mind, an immoveable obstruction; sealed it, and said to themselves—"The preacher of sedition is dead—Cæsar's enemy; he shall never arise." But yet a little while, and heaven and earth hailed his triumphant resurrection.

ANOTHER CHURCH WATE VICTIM. On Thursday evening, John Simonds of Mursley, an honest and industrious man, with a wife and family, was brought to our goal at Aylesbury, in custody of a police-constable, committed to take his trial at the Quarter Sessions on a charge of refusing to pay the great sum of *five pence* for the "wood and wine, the cushions, and the *cassock* of a parish church! Simonds is to take his trial at the ensuing Quarter Session, in our County hall, the first week in January. An indictment will be preferred against him for refusing to obey the order of the magistrates to pay his *5d.* Meanwhile, we confidently make an appeal to every friend of liberty and of religion. Heavy damages may be levied against him. Will not a pious public see that his wife and family should not suffer. We make this appeal confidently, not from personal but from public motives. We shall open a subscription immediately.—*Butcher's Appeal.*