

THE CATHOLIC

QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB OMNIBUS CREDITUM EST.—WHAT ALWAYS, AND EVERY WHERE, AND BY ALL IS BELIEVED.

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THE REAL MONSTER EVIL OF IRELAND.

It would be a very hard and very unusual case if, with regard to a country so disturbed, so miserable, and so divided as Ireland, every political quack had not his nostrum, as well as every wise man his notions, more or less definite, as to the nature of the disorder, and the chances of a cure. In disease of the body natural, a quack may generally be known by the use of specifics. A complication of disorders arising from the most opposite causes, local and general, he will undertake to cure by one simple remedy, equally and impartially efficacious with them all. Gout, gravel, rheumatism, diseased liver, deformed spine, apoplexy, consumption, paralysis, old age—these, and, if it were possible, a hundred other distempers afflicting the natural man, the quack medical will dislodge and annihilate by the same remedy, by some peremptory pill, or counter irritation, or cold-water cure. As the law books tell you (most falsely) that there is a remedy for every grievance, so the quack tells you that he has a nostrum for every complaint. It is much the same in the body politic. There the quack traces up a most complex disorganization to some simple cause, and is for changing Babel or Bedlam into a Paradise by the application of some one measure of relief. This passion for nostrums is of old standing, and we may fairly say that it is uneradicable. Of course, Ireland has its share & even more than its share of nostrum-mongers, who all treat you with a different diagnosis of the disorder, and to a different succedaneum for its cure; but all are equally confident that in a case which has baffled the skill of all their predecessors, they only are in possession of the secret which is to replace turbulence and famine by heavenly peace and plenty. Blessed are the quacks, for they shall be filled with self-complacency!

In treating of English miseries, we have had constant occasion to rebuke this class of practitioners. The distempers of England, as well as those of Ireland, are the prey of unlicensed pretenders, who are all for making her young again, each after his own fashion. It has been our fortune to believe that these dealers in specifics are fundamentally in error; and that for a country broken up as this is by distress and disaffection, there is no single remedy, no royal road to restoration, no hope of a cure but by a long, laborious, and distasteful process. Something in the same manner do we judge of the grievances of Ireland. Particular measures may be right or wrong; but for a country so sunk down in wretchedness there is not, there cannot be, any single, speedy and pleasant mode of redress. Certain definite grievances stand out and stare us in the face. Certain badges of iniquity and marks of oppression are palpable to the very senses. Certain legislative measures are absolutely requisite either for policy or for justice. Repeal, as it has for it omens of success and victory, may or may not be a desirable measure. But for a perfect cure, for any approach to a perfect cure, it is our duty to say we see no chance of any such blessing within a reasonable or moderate space of time. This measure or the other measure may be an indispensable preliminary. It may be impossible to enter on a judicious course of treatment until this or that obstacle is removed. It may be necessary to put the patient in such a posture before the surgeon can operate upon him at all. We will not now dispute about the propriety of any particular mode of treatment; but we say

that, under the best treatment, the case is a very sad and mournful one to think of.

Let us get rid, in our minds at least, of the great question that now agitates Ireland. Let us suppose that a prosperous settlement of it has taken place. Let us imagine that Ireland is a free nation, independent of all foreign claims, and unshackled from difficulties from without. Take Ireland as she is with herself. Consider the discordant elements not so much mixed up within her as placed side by side in hostile juxtaposition; and then let any sane man put his hand upon his heart, and tell us whether he does not think that there are in that kingdom the materials—to say the least—for many political and social problems, right hard of solution, many most knotty points of difference, the end of which is not quite so easy to foresee. And yet we have here* a man who tells us that he has found out a scheme for curing the radical and parent evil of evils in afflicted Ireland within the compass of eight years, and his speculations—not deficient in ingenuity, and a certain narrow earnestness—have found a good deal of favour among the best of all possible instructors—the guides and guardians of the press. Surely, any Pagan nation to whom he had brought so speedy a solution of such a problem would have made a god of him after his death. Unhappy Stapleton, to live in these Christian times when the road to Heaven is rather more steep and thorny than it was then. What an apotheosis has the man missed by being born in these degenerate days. A scheme for setting Ireland at rest, and rooting out the causes of disturbance in eight years! The calamities and the crimes of centuries boxed up in a nutshell! Truly it is an edifying subject for reflection!

In the French colony of St. Domingo, when the rebel negro was sentenced to death, he took some black seeds in the hollow of his hand, and sprinkled some white seeds on the top. He then held out his hand to his judges, and shaking it, exclaimed, "Where are the Whites now? They were all swallowed up and had disappeared: and in this disappearance he typified the coming revolution of St. Domingo. Of course, we do not mean to compare the prospects of Ireland with those of St. Domingo. The cases are widely different. But yet in Ireland there are two hostile races, separated by property, rank, connexions, and long-descended traditions of animosity. Will eight years—or eighteen years—see these races, so long separated, blend harmoniously into portions of one sound and healthy community? Somehow or other, this blending must be brought about; but by what methods, and with what speed? The man who can look this problem in the face with total unconcern must be either very bold or very blind.

We have not room to follow up this subject as we should wish, otherwise we might add a long catalogue of ills which materially affect the future welfare of Ireland, and which no single remedy will touch or eradicate. We come to the grand evil admitted by the pamphlet now before us; and not merely admitted, but insisted on as "the monster evil of Ireland,"—we mean the two millions of starving peasantry. This is the evil which our author—our miraculous author—would cure in eight years. And how, think you? Why, by a contribution

The Real Monster Evil of Ireland." By Augustus G. Stapleton, Esq. London, Hatchard, 1843.

from the Government of a sum of sixteen millions of pounds sterling, to be spent and re-spent during the period above named. By this means, quoth Mr. Stapleton, the "turbulence" of Ireland would all be bought out of Mr. O'Connell's market; for eight years there would be ample employment, and ample wages; and during the whole of that period English capital would voluntarily fly into the country, attracted by its repose, and as much more would be kept in readiness to fill up the gap made by the sudden cessation of the sixteen millions at the end of the eight years. Truly a most miraculous contrivance; the best answer to which is, to state it, and let it speak for itself.

But Mr. Stapleton is most sadly mistaken if he thinks that the grievance connected with famine is a question of money alone. It is in Ireland, as in every other country, most true, that where the wealthier classes, the natural guardians of the poor, have allowed them to grow up side by side with Famine, they have neglected every other department of their duty along with this. They are endowed with property to watch over the physical and moral prosperity of the poor to the best of their ability. Where they have neglected the one duty, you may be sure they have neglected the other also. In Ireland, this is most palpably the case. Where the moral duty had not been wholly neglected, a worse element has been introduced. It has been perverted. Popery has been carefully and zealously made the foundation of an immoral influence, tending to ruin and convulsion, just as certainly as the worst physical destitution.

The case of Lord Lorton and Lady Ventry, with their Protestant Tenantry Association schemes and their new Reformation Societies, are worn threadbare. But, unhappily, these cases are multiplied all over the surface of the land; and it is not easy to see how these efforts to abuse power to an immoral and irreligious purpose, would be very much checked by any conceivable grant of money, even if it were sixty millions instead of sixteen.

We have an instance of this abuse of power in to-day's TABLET, in a case that has recently occurred in Ballinasloe. In this instance the unworthy exercise of power was rebuked publicly by the indefatigable Bishop of Clonsfert—Dr. Cuen. But, even in this instance, we have nothing but the old story repeated; a repetition, for the ten thousandth time, of conduct which is hastening, and will bitterly evenom, the social revolution that is now knocking at our doors. Catholic children, it seems, are starved, or otherwise compelled to attend Protestant schools, and learn heresy from a Protestant Bible, expounded by a Protestant teacher. And this is done at the bidding of a Protestant landlord. This is his fulfilment of his moral duty towards his dependents. How are these landlords to be converted from the error of their ways? In them the disease is inveterate. They are made drunk with tyranny, and maddened with excess of power. But how is the evil spirit to be driven out of them? We sadly fear that no grant of sixteen millions, no mere Repeal of the Union, no ordinary correction, will accomplish this necessary task. The people must be fed, it is true; but it is also true that those who have rule over them by wealth, must be treated like insane people; must be tied up in the disposition of their wealth by legislative strait-waiscoats, must by law be shorn of the power they have so grossly and so wantonly abused.—*London Tablet.*