

It is perhaps not generally known that an agitation, of a nature precisely similar to that which is now raging among the lower classes in the north of Ireland, broke out in America at the beginning of the present century. There is extant a most minute detail of the extravagances which marked its progress, from the pen of a Presbyterian minister, by which we learn that it was attended by the same bodily affections which have assumed so revolting a shape in the present instance; and, which is much to be observed, the writer ascribes to its immediate inducement the rise of the numerous fanatical sects, known by the names of New Lights, Schismatics, Marshallites, Unitarian, Shakers, and others, and acknowledges that the Presbyterian Church was shaken to its very basis by the wild enthusiasm and disorder which characterized the entire movement. Since the period of which we speak, "Revivals" in America have been of frequent occurrence; in Europe they have been more rarely witnessed; but whenever they have appeared, they have been accompanied by the same phenomena, and have issued in the same melancholy results, till at length, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, in the midst of our boasted intellectual progress, large districts of the United Kingdom have been disfigured by scenes of fanaticism and superstition, for which a parallel can hardly be found in the darkest days of Roman superstition; and the most strenuous attempts are being made, while we write, to introduce the epidemic into Scotland, attempts which Christian ministers, even of those bodies of Presbyterians from whom better things might have been expected, have not been ashamed to encourage.

There is a reason to think, indeed, that a section of the Irish and English clergy—we trust a very small one—has been led, by false representations of the moral effects of the movement, to cherish the idea, that it is nothing less than the result of a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which it would be no less impious than idle to discountenance. But thoughtful and sober-minded Christians will take a very different view. While they devoutly ascribe to the giver of all good, whatever beneficial results can be traced, however indirectly, to the agitation which is taking place, they will shrink from the profanity of associating His hallowed name with the shocking enormities which are inseparably connected with this "Revival" and which can only excite in them feelings of profound pity. If any real amendment should be proved to have been effected in any parts of the district through which the movement has spread,—if any attention to religion should have been awakened in hearts that were inaccessible before,—any increased disposition shown to make use of the appointed means of grace,—they will welcome these additional tokens of the operation of that Divine love, which is so constantly employed in the work of bringing good out of man's evil.

But, unhappily, there is too much reason to believe that the reformation of which enthusiastic men have boasted as having changed the outward face of society in the north of Ireland exists simply in their own heated imagination. While the feelings are so strongly excited, it is perhaps difficult to collect unbiassed testimony on this important point. Still, there are not wanting materials on which to found a dispassionate judgment. To take the case of the city of Belfast itself, the very head and centre of the movement. It is confidently asserted (we quote from the letter of "a Clergyman" to the *Standard*), that "in Belfast, above all places, the genuineness and purity of the revival have been best authenticated, and most successfully vindicated by the after results. There the whiskey shops are almost

universally closed,—there drunkards, infidels, blasphemers, and bad characters of every sort are either reclaimed or disappear at the resistless menace of public opinion. There party spirit and quarrelling and wrangling have died away, and love and union prevail among all classes and creeds, so that the constabulary have a perfect sinecure." But surely in this case "the wish is father to the thought." These bold assertions, which are credited by many without further inquiry, prove, when confronted with the stubborn testimony of criminal statistics, to be nothing better than empty declamation. The returns of the Belfast Petty Sessions show that in the four months from May to August of the present year, the months during which the Revival in that city was at its height there was an increase (as compared with the corresponding months of 1868,) of no fewer than 482 offenders, male and female, sentenced to punishment for being drunk and disorderly; and, as regards the abatement of acrimony and party spirit, at least among the active supporters of the movement, it is sufficient to mention that at the recent Conference of the Evangelical Alliance in Belfast, the presidency of the Bishop of Down and Connor was not sufficient to secure the incumbent of St. George's, who ventured to suggest the necessity of caution in forming opinions on the subject, from the grossest ill-treatment at the hands of the infuriated assembly.

But while those who write of the "amount of good produced" deal only in such vague generalities as we have quoted above, there is not wanting the most painful proof of the enormous evils directly traceable to this pernicious agitation. Not to dwell at present on the hundreds of cases of insanity which it has contributed to our asylums; not to speak of the demoralizing disease (hysteria) intentionally produced and propagated by the "Revival" preachers; nor yet to enlarge on the frightful amount of immorality which must necessarily result from the collecting of large bodies of young men and women, till long after midnight, in crowded and ill-ventilated assemblies, subjected to the greatest nervous excitement; we would call special attention to the effects produced in the supposed "converts," themselves, which cannot but be a matter of general notoriety. The grossest idleness and self-indulgence, an utter deadness of conscience, together with spiritual pride in its worst and most insurable form, these are among the most striking characteristics of the wretched dupes whose bodily contortions are confidently appealed to, (we shudder while we write it) as convincing manifestations of the work of the Holy Spirit on their hearts. As a direct proof of the idleness to which we have adverted, we have the testimony of the rector of Killyleagh, that in a large town the inhabitants were reduced to such poverty by this sole cause, that it had been found necessary to raise a subscription for their relief. But perhaps the most remarkable feature of the whole movement, and that which contains its strongest condemnation, is the wholesale contempt which it has poured, from the first, on one of the chiefest of the means of grace, the solemn public reading of the Word of God. The following extract from a recent pamphlet of Archdeacon Stopford, (which we may have occasion to notice hereafter,) speaks volumes to this point. "A steady observer of the movement, who has been so nearly all the nightly meetings (in a large town in the north of Ireland) says, he never saw the Bible opened, or heard one word read out of it, except once in a Methodist meeting, when a Presbyterian minister tried to read the parable of the Prodigal Son, but was put down by cries of 'You are spoiling our meeting.' There is no occasion, however, to quote from the writings of those who

yield to the "Revivals," but a partial and qualified amount of approbation. The most overwhelming evidence of the unreality of the whole work is to be found in the numerous published records of the revivalists themselves, two of which are issued weekly from Glasgow. We rise from the perusal of a series of these documents with a profound conviction that the present century at least has not witnessed a more gigantic system of imposture, nor furnished a more striking monument of human credulity, than the "Revivals," which it is our painful duty to chronicle. *Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal.*

**ENGLISH CHURCH SERVICE AT LUZERNE.**—Whatever may be our political or social prejudices, I do not see how any right-minded American can travel on the continent of Europe, without feeling a pride in his English descent. The Englishman may be awkward and in some cases—I have found them very rare—supercilious. But wherever he goes he carries with him in all their integrity and pride, the institutions of his home. In a country where society is but one great lie, he speaks the truth. In a country where every body cheats, he is not merely honest, but has a credulous simplicity about him which makes him a ready victim of imposition, until almost the last step, when woo to those who encounter his wrath. In a country where infidels as well as believers take off their hats to relics, and cross themselves with holy water, and dip down before alters, he tramps resolutely through cathedrals, and from his clumsiness much more than from even his scepticism, jostles so rashly among the "spectacles" as to draw down many a scowl from the priests in charge. But with all this defiant rejection of what he thinks wrong, we have an equally defiant maintenance of what he thinks right. With him—and he travels a great deal—goes his Church. Of all intolerant Roman Catholic Communities, that of Luzerne has been the most so. Yet here we had, on Sunday, August 14, a congregation of nearly four hundred attending our Church service, and listening to two most faithful sermons from the Rev. Mr. Alford. The scene was indeed remarkable. For the church is one which the municipal authorities, I suppose from political considerations, lent to the English for public worship. It is called "St. Maria Hilf," and blossoms all over with Mariolatry. The high altar has now a veil over it, but this does not conceal the immense picture above, representing the virgin being worshipped by all sorts of personages, celestial as well as terrestrial, while on top are in large letters the words—from which the church takes its name:

HILF, MARIA, HILF!

Nothing, however, could be in greater contrast with this than the faithful sermons which were that day preached.—*Francis Wharton.*

The *Gospel Messenger* has a most earnest "Pas-toral" from Bishop DeLaacy on Diocesan Missions. The reasons for a deficiency in funds, he enumerates at great length, in four reasons:—1. The clergy do not all read from the pulpit or desk, the pastorals issued by him: thus the laity are ignorant of what the Diocese needs. 2. The Diocesan paper does not reach every eye. 3. The clergy do not address their congregations on the importance of these objects. 4. The Missionaries do not take up regular collections.

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