

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S LETTER.

The following is a copy of the celebrated letter of Mr. Chamberlain in regard to Home Rule, which was referred to by Mr. Harrington a short time ago in the House of Commons.

"PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

"Highbury Moore Green,
Birmingham, Dec. 17, '84.

"MY DEAR SIR—Having at last a little spare time, I propose to reply more fully to the letter you were kind enough to send me in October last, relating to your experience in connection with Ireland. I have again read your account with much interest. It is on the whole a brighter picture than any I have yet seen. You seem to have found a general absence of anything like painful poverty, and a hopeful spirit with regard to the future. At the same time you remark on the absence of the bitterness which prevailed a few years ago, so that altogether I might, were I so inclined, found on your letter an argument as to the complete success of recent legislation and the inexpediency of attempting any further changes. I imagine, however, that this would be a conclusion foreign to your intention, and it does not satisfy my own estimate of the situation in spite of the great improvement that has taken place and the advantages recently obtained from the English Parliament. You have convinced yourself that the large majority of the people are still Nationalists in their aspirations. I should like to know exactly what this would mean and what the people really want, but before entering on that inquiry I ought to say that the answer to it will not necessarily be conclusive in any mind. As to the policy to be adopted I do not consider that wishes and rights are always identical, or that it is sufficient to find out what the majority of the Irish people desire in order at once to grant their demands.

I can never consent to regard Ireland as a separate people with the inherent rights of an absolutely independent community. I would not do this in the case of Scotland or of Wales or, to take still more extreme instances, of Sussex or of London. In every case the rights of the country or district must be subordinated to the rights of the whole community of which it forms only a portion. Ireland, by its geographical position, and by its history, is a part of the United Kingdom, and it cannot divest itself of the obligations which are denied the advantages which this condition involves. Accordingly, if Nationalism means separation I for one am prepared to resist it. I see in it the probability, almost the certainty, of dangerous complications, and an antagonist which would be injurious to the interests of the larger country and fatal to the prosperity of the smaller. Sooner than yield on this point I would govern Ireland by force to the end of the chapter. But if Nationalism means Home Rule I have no objection to make to it in principle, and I am only anxious to find out exactly what it means.

I object to the Home Rule proposed by the late Mr. Butt, because I believe it would not work, but would infallibly lead to a demand for entire separation. On the other hand I consider that Ireland has a right to a local government more complete, more popular, more thoroughly representative, and more far-reaching than anything that has hitherto been suggested; and I hope that the first session of a reformed Parliament will settle this question, so far at least as what is called county government is concerned; but for myself I am willing to go even farther. I believe there are questions not local in any sense, but which require local and exceptional treatment in Ireland, and which cannot be dealt with to the satisfaction of the Irish people by an Imperial Parliament. Chief among

them are the Education question and the Land question, and I would not hesitate to transfer their consideration and solution entirely to an Irish Board, altogether independent of the English Government's influence. Such a board might also deal with railway and other communications, and would, of course, be invested with powers of taxation in Ireland for these strictly Irish purposes.

I doubt if it would be wise or possible to go any further, and I do not know if public opinion at present supports so great a change, but if I were entirely free I should be greatly inclined to make a speech or two in Ireland submitting these proposals. If this were carried out the Irish people would have entire independence as regards all local work and local expenditure, Irish newspapers would find occupation, I hope, more congenial than that of bullying English officials and the English House of Commons, while the Imperial Parliament would continue to regulate for the common good the national policy of the Three Kingdoms—I am, yours truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN.

"W. H. Duignan, Esq., Rusball
Hall, near Walsall."

The Press Association adds that this letter was sent by Mr. Duignan to Dr. Kenny, M.P., by whom it was passed through the hands of a select number of Irish members of Parliament during the summer of 1885. Mr. Duignan promised to forward any replies received to Mr. Chamberlain if desired. He received what he described at the time as an able communication from Mr. T. D. Sullivan, but not many others. Mr. Chamberlain's letter was covered by one from Mr. Duignan, saying, "Be sure the letter does not get into the hands of anyone likely to use it otherwise than as a private communication." This copy of Mr. Chamberlain's letter was taken from the original in the year 1885.

Capital Punishment.

Various beliefs are held as to the authority for capital punishment. Some consider it unconstitutional, some as contrary to human reason, and some as contrary to the divine purpose. It is said that neither man nor the state has the right to inflict capital punishment, and many of these statements are plausible, but misleading.

It is part of a liberal education to know what our philosophy and our religion teach concerning the question. With the intention of adding a little to what has already been written on the subject, I have ventured to work it out among these lines.

To begin with, we must know whether the death penalty has the divine sanction, we must know, what relation the state which inflicts it bears to the divine power, and we must consider the essential nature of the penalty.

We are all under the dominion of God. Proof for this assertion would be superfluous. God in the formation of the state relegated His powers to His representatives, to the properly constituted authorities, by them to be exercised for the general good. For authority is an attribute of civil society, of which God is the founder. The Almighty verified this in the mission of the patriarchs to His chosen people; in particular, in the mission of Moses—who was law giver and judge, high priest and guide, invested with the power to instruct and direct the Israelites, and lead them "out of the affliction of Egypt." God said to Moses, "I am who I am. Thus shalt thou say to the sons of Israel: 'I am hath sent me to you.'"

For a state to be perfect in its organization, it is necessary that it should have all the powers necessary for its good government. It is plain, that it could not fill this purpose, without possessing the right to punish offenders. The capital punishment is

included in this right is true, because there are capital offences. It is in the nature of justice, that punishment should be proportioned to the crime. After all, it is a question of degrees of punishment. There is no difference in kind between electrocution and life imprisonment, one being the extreme, the other a lesser penalty. Take an individual for example. How could he be said to enjoy freedom, if, while encumbered with a diseased member, he were prevented from removing it? The same question holds good in the body politic. How could it be a compact power, were it unable to rid itself of unwholesome and even dangerous members? Nay, just as a man is bound at times to get a hand or a leg amputated in order to save the whole body, so is the state bound to lop off those members, whose evil example would sap the juice of the tree of state, and whose crimes would vitiate the life blood of the community.

Let not any one imagine that the state can abdicate its right to impose the death penalty. For the state has full power to act for its own good, and this fullness of power, which is measured by those things that necessarily occur in a state, is a constant quantity, itself measured or weighed by those necessary occurrences.

There are three classes of pain for wrong doing.

One is *curative*, and is applied in cases of light offences. Its object is to prevent the repetition of the fault in the same person.

A second is *deterrent* to warn others from the path of criminality.

The third is *expiatory*. By this the criminal makes atonement to violated justice.

Corresponding to each of these classes of punishment is a class of wrong doing. A father chastises his son. The offence is slight and will presumably, not be repeated if the child is admonished.

The deterrent punishment is not so much for the benefit of the criminal as of those who might make the offense a precedent. The imprisonment, to which a robber is consigned, deters others from committing robberies. In this case, the offence and the punishment are greater than those of the delinquent boy.

The taking of life is the extreme violation of justice and demands the extreme penalty of death, otherwise the state would be unable either to preserve the order which justice requires, or to maintain the security of its people.

It must be remembered, that the power of inflicting the death penalty belongs to the state in its corporate character, and cannot be exercised by a private individual. Death may be inflicted directly or indirectly. In the former case, death is wished as an end, in the latter it results from accident and in self-defense, and attaches no stain of capability. The state kills directly, for the death of the criminal is the end desired. But even here the state does not act, until the object to be punished has surrendered his conscience right to live, in other words until he has ceased to be a person.—P. J. Behan, in the Catholic Review.

Bishop Auzer of Canton, China, has received the dignity of a Grand Mandarin from the Emperor.

The Abbe de Maubeuge, a chaplain of Notre Dame des Victoires, Paris, has paid to the French Treasury the sum of forty thousand francs, received by way of restitution from one of his penitents. At the treasury they are now praising the confessional as an excellent institution, and they are right.

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A Medical Client of Mary.

Dr. Joseph Recamier, the illustrious French physician of the great and noble, of princes and kings, a *valet* whose reputation was European, was not more eminent for his learning and ability than for his Christian faith and piety. Whenever he considered medicine ineffective, he addressed himself to the great Healer, and he always solicited the Blessed Virgin to act as his intermediary.

One evening before concluding night prayers, which he habitually recited in presence of his whole family, he announced that he would say three "Hail Marys" for the conversion of a patient in extreme danger. The prayers said, the aged Doctor caught hold of the chair by which he was kneeling, and, supporting himself by its means, rose to his feet. As he did so his watch-pocket came in contact with one of the chair's corners. Whether from the effects of the shock or from a simple coincidence, the main-spring of the watch broke, and there followed so sharp a whirl of the broken mechanism that some one inquired:

"Why, what is that?"

"'Tis the devil running away," smilingly replied the physician.

At six o'clock the following morning Dr. Recamier arose, and, shortly afterward leaving his residence, proceeded briskly to the Rue du Bac to inquire as to the condition of the patient for whom he had prayed.

He found everybody in the house joyous and happy; the mother of the sick young man thanked the physician effusively; the youthful wife pressed his hands gratefully; and the patient himself, as soon as he saw Dr. Recamier, cried out: "Come in, Doctor,—come in! I'm happy now; for I am reconciled to Him you serve so well."

The gratified practitioner was soon put in possession of the details of the conversion. It was Frederic himself who had called for a priest. It was Frederic, too, who, after having made his confession, asked for Extreme Unction and the Holy Viaticum. The Doctor congratulated his patient, and acknowledged that he had secured a great many prayers for him. This announcement was the signal of further expressions of grateful joy.

Five minutes later the patient stopped in the middle of a smile to utter a profound sigh, and then—nothing further. The sigh was his last: Frederic was dead. The unfortunate woman, his mother and wife, passed at once from joy to grief, from happiness to despondency. But Dr. Recamier, pointing out to them the statue of the Blessed Virgin recently placed in the apartment, reassured them.

"Courage, ladies,—courage! The Blessed Virgin almost miraculously prolonged his life so that he might have leisure to prepare himself for death. Frederic recoiled from the reception of the Sacraments; she caused him to desire them and ask for them himself. By the way," he added, to make a diversion and to bring to their minds a consoling thought,—“by the way, at what time did he ask for a priest?"

"At half-past nine last night, Doctor," was the reply.

"Half-past nine!" he repeated. "Why, it was just at that hour that we finished our 'Hail Marys' for his conversion. I know it, for the main-spring of my watch broke just then; and here you may see that it marks that hour. Ah! my dear ladies, pray to our Blessed Mother; pray for the dear departed; pray well, and rest assured that God will give you all the strength of which you stand in need at so trying a time."—*Ave Maria.*

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