

# The Catholic Record.

"CHRISTIANUS MIHI NOMEN EST, CATHOLICUS VERO COGNOMEN."—"CHRISTIAN IS MY NAME, BUT CATHOLIC MY SURNAM."—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

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NO. 413.

## THE IRISH QUESTION

### Right Hon. Mr. Gladstone's Glorious Plea.

### THE GRAND OLD MAN STILL TURNS TO BRITISH HONOR AND IRISH FREEDOM.

### He Demolishes the Poe by Unanswerable Argument.

### I—HISTORY OF AN IDEA.

We begin this week the reproduction of Mr. Gladstone's last pamphlet, that on the Irish question. Like all the ex-Premier's political utterances, it is lucid, logical and profound, unanswerable by his pigmy opponents, the Churchills, the Hicks Beaches of *hoc genus omnia*.

In the year 1868, I was closely associated with the policy of disestablishing the Irish Church. It was then, not unfairly, attempted to assail the cause in the person of its advocate. To defeat this attempt, an act became necessary which would otherwise have been preposterous and abusive. In order to save the policy from suffering, I laid a personal explanation before the world. The same motive now obliges me to repeat the act, and will I hope form a sufficient excuse for my repeating it.

The substance of my defence or apology will, however, on the present occasion be altogether different. I had then to explain the reasons for which, and the mode in which, I changed the opinions and conduct, with respect to the Church of Ireland then established, which I had held half a century ago. I had shown my practical acceptance of the rule that change of opinion should if possible be accompanied with proof of independence and disinterested motive; for I had resigned my place in the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel in order to make good my title to a new point of departure. On the present occasion, I have no such change to vindicate; but only to point out the mode in which my language and conduct, governed by uniformity of principle, have simply followed the several stages, by which the great question of autonomy for Ireland has been brought to a state of ripeness for practical legislation.

It is a satisfaction to me that, in confuting imputations upon myself, I shall not be obliged to cast imputations on any individual opponent.

The subject of a domestic Government for Ireland, without any distinct specification of its form, has been the last fifteen or twenty years. I have at no time regarded it as necessarily replete with danger, or as a question which ought to be blocked out by the assertion of some high constitutional doctrine with which it could not be reconciled. But I have considered it to be a question involving such an amount as to be a kind of change, and likely to be encountered with some of the most serious and delicate of conditions, upon the fulfilment of which alone it could warrantably be entertained. They were in my view as follows:

1. It could not be entertained, except upon a final surrender of the hope that Parliament could in any way be able to establish honourable and friendly relations between Great Britain and the people of that country.

2. Nor unless the demand for it were made in obedience to the unequivocal and rooted desire of Ireland, expressed through the constitutional medium of the Irish representatives.

3. Nor unless, being thus made, it were likewise so defined, as to bring it within the limits of safety and prudence, and to obviate all danger to the unity and security of the Empire.

4. Nor was it, in my view, allowable to deal with Ireland upon any principle, the benefit of which could not be allowed to Scotland in circumstances of equal and equally clear desire.

5. Upon the fulfilment of these conditions, it appeared to me an evident duty to avoid, as long as possible, all steps which would bring this settlement into the category of party measures.

6. And, subject to the foregoing considerations, I deemed it to be of great moment to the public weal that the question should be promptly and expeditiously dealt with; inasmuch as it must otherwise gravely disturb the action of our political system by changes of Ministry by Dissolutions of Parliament, and by impeding the business, and derogating further from the character of the House of Commons. These were the principles, which I deemed applicable to the subject; and every step I have taken from first to last, without exception, has been prompted by, and is referable to, one or other of them.

From the torrent of reproachful criticisms, brought down upon me probably by the necessity of the case, it is not easy to extricate, in an adequate form, the charge or charges intended to be made. One or two of the statements I must own surprise me; as for example when Lord Northbrook, complaining of me for resistance before, and for my action after, the election of 1868, states confidently that nothing had happened "that could not have been foreseen by any man of ordinary political foresight." I do not dwell upon the undeniably truth that many things may be foreseen, which, notwithstanding, cannot properly become the subject of action until they have been seen as well as foreseen. But I have seen the statement. I assert that an incident of the most vital importance had happened, which I did not foresee, which was not foreseen, to my knowledge, by any one else, even if some knowledge, by Lord Northbrook himself, and which I might have hoped for; and which I doubt whether Lord Northbrook himself had seen at the first night of the Session at Mr. Parnell, with eighty-four Irish Home Rulers at his back, would be con-

sidered in the fair and moderate bounds of autonomy; of an Irish legislature, only for affairs specifically Irish; of a statutory and subordinate Parliament. But in this incident lay the fulfilment of one of those conditions which were in my view essential, and which had been therefore un-

fulfilled. The more general and more plausible form of the attack I think may be stated as a dilemma. Either I had conceived the intention of Home Rule precipitately, or I had concealed it unduly. Either would, undoubtedly, have been a grave offence; the second as a plot against my friends, the first as an attempt to escape from the sober judgment of the country, and to carry it by surprise. The first aspect of the case was presented by Lord Hartington in the House of Commons, and by Mr. Chamberlain, on the 20th of June, at Birmingham. The second was put forward by Mr. Bright, in addressing his constituents, and with much point and force, by Lord Hartington at Sheffield. In substance he argued thus: "Mr. Gladstone has never, during fifteen years, condemned the principle of Home Rule. Either then, he had not considered it, or he had assented to it. But, in his position as Minister, he must have considered it. Therefore the proper conclusion is, that he had assented to it. And yet, though he was Secretary for Ireland, with Lord Spencer as Viceroy, when he was Prime Minister, to neither of us did he convey the smallest idea of such assent."

Telling as this statement evidently was, it abounds in leakages. In the first place, I deny that it is the duty of every Minister to make known, even to his colleagues, every idea which has formed itself in his mind. It should even say that the contradictory proposition would be absurd. So far as my experience of Government has gone, subjects ripe for action supply a Minister with abundant material for communication with his colleagues, and to make a rule of mixing with them matters still contingent and remote, would confuse and retard business, instead of aiding it. But letting pass, for argument's sake, a very irrational proposition, I grapple with the dilemma, and say *non sequitur*: the consequence asserted is no consequence at all. It was no consequence from my not having condemned Home Rule, that I had either not considered it, or had adopted it. What is true is that I had not publicly and in principle condemned it, and also that I had not mentally considered it. But I had neither adopted nor rejected it; and for the very simple reason, that it was not ripe either for adoption or rejection. It had not become the unequivocal demand of Ireland; and it had not been so defined by its promoters, as to prove that it was a safe demand. It may and should be known to many who are or have been my colleagues, that I made some abortive efforts towards increasing Irish influence over Irish affairs, beyond the mere extension of County Government, but not in a shape to which the term Home Rule could be properly applied. Nor have I been able to trace a single imputation upon me, whether of omission or commission, in respect of which I should not, by acting according to the orders of my superiors, have offended against all or some of the rules, which I have pointed out as the guides of my conduct, and by which I seek to stand or fall.

As these disputes of ours, trivial enough from one point of view, are in a certain sense making history, it may be well, in connection with the thread of these observations, I recall, by means of a very brief outline, some particulars relating to the Government of Ireland, and to the demand for a domestic legislature, during the last half century. For that demand, constant in the hearts of Irishmen, has nevertheless been intermittent in its manifestation; sometimes wide, sometimes narrow in its form, sometimes, as in the famine, put aside by imperative necessity; sometimes yielding the ground to partial and lawless action; sometimes exchanged for attempts at practical legislation, which for the moment threw it into the shade.

The great controversy of Free Trade, the reformation of the Tariff, and the care of finance, provided me, in common with many others, in the main provided the Three Kingdoms, with a serious and usually absorbing political occupation for a quarter of a century, from the time when the Government of Sir R. Peel was formed in 1841. When that period had passed and when the question of the franchise had been dealt with, the general condition of Ireland became the main subject of my anxiety.

The question of a home-government for Ireland was at that time in abeyance. The grant of such a government to that country had only been known to us, in the past, either as the demand for a repeal of the Legislative Union, or in the still more formidable shape, which it presented when the policy of Ireland assumed the violent and extravagant form of Fenianism. The movement for Repeal appeared to merge into this dangerous conspiracy, which it was obvious could only be met by measures of repression.

In none of these controversies had I personally taken any direct share, beyond following the statements of 1834 and of 1844 by my vote against Repeal of the Union. Mournfully as I am struck, in retrospect, by the most absolute failure of Parliament, at and long after those periods, to perform its duties to Ireland, I see no reason to repent of any such vote. Unspeakingly criminal, I own, were the means by which the Union was brought about, and utterly insufficient were the reasons for its adoption; still it was a measure vast in itself and in its consequential arrangements, and it could not be made the subject of experiment from year to year, or from Parliament to Parliament. There was then a yet stronger reason for declining to impart a shock to the Legislative fabric by Repeal. Before us lay an alternative policy, the relief

of Ireland from grievance; and this policy had not been tried in any manner at all approaching to sufficiency. It was not possible, at the time, to prognosticate how in a short time Parliament would stumble and almost writhe under its constantly accumulating burdens, or to pronounce that it would eventually prove incapable of meeting the wants of Ireland. Evidently there was a period when Irish patriotism, as represented by O'Connell, looked favorably upon this alternative policy, had no fixed conclusion as to the absolute necessity for Home Rule, and seemed to allow that measures founded in justice to Ireland might possibly suffice to meet the necessity of the case. But the efforts made in this direction, down to the time of the famine, were, though honest and useful, only partial; and they unhappily had been met by an obstinacy of resistance, which entailed long delays, and frequent mutilations; and which in all cases deprived them of the generous spirit of English Constitution, does give hope that if the relations between England and Ireland are to become thoroughly satisfactory, the most important contribution to that essential end will have been made by my hon. friend, and those who speak like him."

In a speech at the Guildhall, on receiving an address, I reverted to the subject of Home Rule. This was the period (October, 1881) when I deemed it my duty more than once to denounce in strong terms the movement against rent in Ireland, and with it the extravagant claims which seemed to me to be made in the name of National Independence. Yet I then spoke as follows:

"I do not on any point connected with the exercise of local government in Ireland; it is not even on any point connected with what is popularly known in that country as Home Rule, and which may be understood in any one of a hundred senses, some of them perfectly acceptable, and even desirable, others of them mischievous and revolutionary—it is not upon any of these points that we are at present at issue. With regard to local government in Ireland, after what I have said of local government in general, and its immeasurable benefits . . . you will not be surprised if I say that I for one will hail with satisfaction and delight any measure of local government for Ireland, or for any portion of the country, provided only that it conform to this one condition, that it shall not break down or impair the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament."

Once more I entered on the subject, in the House of Commons, on February 9, 1882. I referred to the party, led then as now by Mr. Parnell. The citation is by Mr. Harnard:

"Neither they, nor so far as I know Mr. Butt before them, nor so far as I know Mr. O'Connell before him, ever distinctly explained, in an intelligible and practicable form, the manner in which the real knot of this question was to be untied. The principle upon which the hon. members propose to proceed is that purely Irish matters should be dealt with by a purely Irish authority, and that purely Imperial matters should be dealt with by an Imperial Chamber in which Ireland is to be represented. But they have not told us what authority it is to be determined what matters, when taken one by one, are Irish, and what matters are Imperial. Until, Sir, they lay before this House a plan in which they go to the very bottom of that subject, and give us to understand in what matter that division of jurisdiction is to be accomplished, the practical consideration of this subject cannot really be arrived at, and, for my own part, I know not how any effective judgment upon it can be pronounced. Whatever may be the outcome of the hon. member's proposal, if it is well conceived, that neither this House of Commons, nor any other that may succeed it, will at any time assent to a subject by which the one paramount Central Authority, necessary for holding together in perfect union and compactness this great Empire, can possibly be either in the greatest or the slightest degree impaired. We are not to depart from the principle; and what I put to the honorable gentleman who has just sat down, and to the hon. member who preceded him is this—that their first duty to us and their first duty to themselves, is their first obligation in the prosecution of the purpose which they have in view—namely, the purpose of securing the disengagement of purely Irish affairs by Irish hands—is to point out to us by what authority, and by what instrument, affairs purely Irish are to be divided and distinguished, in order that they may be appropriately and separately dealt with from those Imperial affairs and interests which they have frankly admitted must remain in the hands of the Imperial Parliament."

Mr. Plunkett hereupon stated that he had taken down my words, and that he could only understand them as an invitation to Irish members to re-open the question of Home Rule. Nor did he see how I could refer using such words re-stated a subject to a committee of Parliament, a motion for a Committee on the subject, to any and every plan for referring such a subject to a committee of Parliament, I have at all times been opposed. But Mr. Plunkett's meaning was evident, nor could I dispute the substance of his interpretation.

I will not weary my reader by adding to citations by which his patience has already been so severely tried. But I ask him to remember that down to this time no safe guarding definition of Home Rule had been supplied, and no demand, in the constitutional sense, had been made by the Irish nation. I begin him then, after he has read the foregoing declarations, to place himself for a single moment in my position, as one who thought conditions to be indispensable, but who refused the question might under conditions be entertained, and then to ask himself whether it was possible more carefully to indicate in outline the limits within which the subject of Irish self-government might, and beyond which it might not, legitimately be considered, and whether it

is anything less than absurd to impute to me that my "principles" forbade me to promote it?

I next pass to the period preceding the election of 1885. It had now become morally certain that Ireland would, through a vast majority of her representatives, present a demand in the National sense. But no light has been thrown, to my knowledge, upon the question what that demand would be. Further, not only was there a Tory Government in office, but one which owed much to Mr. Parnell, and which was supposed to have given him, through its Lord Lieutenant or otherwise, assurances respecting Irish Government, which he had deemed more or less satisfactory. Under these circumstances, I conceived that my duty was clear, and that it was summed up in certain particulars. They were these. To do nothing to hinder the prosecution of the question by the Tory Government if it should continue in office (of course without prejudice to my making all the efforts in my power to procure a Liberal majority). Entirely to avoid any language which would place the question in the category of party measures. But to use my best efforts to impress the public mind, and especially the Liberal mind, with the supreme importance, and the probable urgency, of the question. And lastly, to lay down the principle on which it should be dealt with. These rules of action applied to the circumstances of the hour above enumerated. I proceeded on them as follows:

It was impossible for me, while ignorant of the nature and limits of the Irish demand, to give an opinion upon it; and even had it been possible, it would have been in conflict with the condition which I have numbered (p. 5) as the fifth. But, to give emphasis to the importance of the question, I severed it in my Address from the general subject of Local Government of the three kingdoms. Ireland had arrived, I said, at an important epoch in her history; she had claims to a special interpretation of the principles of Local Government. It would be the solution of a problem, testing the political genius of these nations. We be to the man who should present a retarder to the consummation, should probably throw into the shade all the important measures, which in my Address I had set out as ripe for action. And the subject is one "which goes down to the very roots and foundations of our whole civil and political constitution." And yet it has been said, strangely enough, that I gave no indication to my friends, except that the Government in the sense of our country Government for Ireland.

Lastly I laid down, over and over again, the principle on which we ought to proceed. It was to give to Ireland everything which was compatible with "the Supremacy of the Crown, the Unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that Unity."

It appears to me that the whole of the provisions of the Irish Government Bill, lately buried, but perhaps not altogether dead, lies well within these lines, and that my case thus far is complete.

What I have in these pages urged has been a defence against a charge of reticence. On the charge of precipitancy I need not bestow many words. In which the agonized and painful words, which I had Roman Catholic Emancipation, as we suppose he wished, many an Englishman would have thought him precipitate. Precipitancy indeed was avoided, but at what cost? For nine-and-twenty years the question was trifled with on one side of the Channel, and left festering on the other, and manipulation was at last accepted as an alternative to civil war. Such is not the manner in which I desire to see the business of the Empire carried on. It was not pondering the case; it was paltering with the public interests. I do not deny that promptitude is disagreeable in politics, as it often is to a doctor's or a surgeon's patient. But if the practitioner sees that, by every day's delay, the malady takes hold and the chances of health or life are dwindling away, it is his duty to press the operation or the drug, and the sufferer will in due time be grateful to him for the courage and fidelity, which at first he mistakenly condemned.

I have endeavored to point out the conditions, under which alone the question of a statutory Parliament for Ireland could be warrantably entertained. The real test may be stated in one word: the ripeness or unripeness of the question. All men do not perceive, all men do not appreciate, ripeness, with the same degree of readiness or aptitude; and the slow must ever suffer inconvenience in the race of life. But, when the subject once was ripe, the time for action had come. Just as if it had been a corn-field, we were not to wait till it was over-ripe. The healing of inveterate sores would only become more difficult, the growth of budding hopes more liable to be checked as England, in her soft farm-chairs, a leisurely, very leisurely consideration, with adjournments interposed, as it had been usual, so also would have been comfortable. But for Ireland, in her leaky cabin, it was of consequence to stop out the weather. To miss the opportunity would have been not less clearly wrong, than to refuse waiting until it came. The first political juncture which made action permissible, also made it obligatory.

So much, then, for precipitancy.

## FROM BILLINGS' BRIDGE, ONT.

The picnic which took place Thursday, at Billings' Bridge, in aid of the Catholic church just erected there was very successful, and gave satisfaction to all concerned in it. People came from all parts, from the city, as well as from the rural districts, and consisted of young children, pretty maidens, young men, and the heads of families. The weather was most propitious, indeed, it was the finest day of the

year for out door amusements and permitted all to enjoy themselves to their hearts content. There was a sumptuous feast for the assembly, for which thanks is due both to the farmers of Gloucester and the Catholics of Ottawa, through whose liberality and charity it was provided. A good band of music and an excellent platform for dancing afforded much recreation and delight not only to the graceful maidens and active young men who could dance, but also much pleasure to those who could only listen to the lively strains and look on at the dancers. There were, finally, races for men and boys, and horse racing for which prizes were awarded. All will recall with pleasure this picnic especially those who are interested in the building of the Catholic church at Billings' Bridge.—*Ottawa Free Press, Sept. 4.*

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## THE PILGRIMAGE TO ST. ANNE DE BEAUPRE.

We have been favored with the following account of the pilgrimage to St. Anne de Beaupre by one who was there: As previously announced, the pilgrimage to St. Anne de Beaupre under the direction of the Rev. J. A. Sloan, Ottawa, took place on the 25th, 26th, and 27th of August. On Monday a contingent from the vacante of Pontiac went down to Ottawa to join those of that city, numbering in all about 900 persons. The train, consisting of 23 carriages, left the Canada Atlantic station at 10 a. m., and after Alexandria was reached about 60 more were added to the number of the passengers. The pilgrims arrived at Montreal at 5 p. m., whence they were conducted to Quebec by the beautiful steamer "Canada." Here two boats had been chartered for the occasion to convey the pilgrims to St. Anne's. At this holy shrine several received most extraordinary cures, but among the most evident were Miss Hickey, of Ottawa, and Miss McGuinty, of Ross, parish of Portage du Fort. The former had been suffering for three years from spinal disease, and consequently was unable to walk without the aid of crutches. The latter had during the past two years a weakness in her legs so that she could walk only supported by crutches, or some of her friends. Both young ladies on returning from holy communion left their instruments of support before the statue of St. Anne and returned to their respective places without the help of any person. It must be said that their cure is but partial at present but every hope is entertained for their speedy and entire recovery, as all the way back they frequently manifested their having felt much stronger. Another young lady, Miss Clark of Quyon, suffering from deafness declared on returning that she could hear much better. I am happy to say that our local young friend, Thomas McGuire of Calumet Island, has also somewhat recovered his sight. He feels convinced that after another visit to the venerated sanctuary of St. Anne he will be entirely cured. The pilgrims left St. Anne's about 2 p. m. on Wednesday and arrived in Ottawa at 7 o'clock Thursday evening. Rev. Father Sloan is to be highly congratulated on the success in every respect of his pilgrimage, and on the excellent order in which everything in connection therewith was carried out. Rev. Father Stenson, of Nepean, preached two eloquent and feeling sermons on the boat, and Rev. Father Callaghan, of St. Patrick's, Montreal, addressed the large and pious number at St. Anne's. Both these reverend gentlemen's erudition and capacity is too well known that any comment on my part should be necessary to say with how much eager attention they were listened to by all present. The pilgrimage was in every respect a source of piety and I might add one of pleasure also, so that all who attended it are highly pleased, and eagerly look out for another occasion on which they may visit the famed and venerated shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre.—*Pontiac Equity, Sept. 2nd.*

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