

JAN. 31, 1886.

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A GREAT SUBJECT.

DION BOUCICAULT ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND.

Mr. Dion Boucicault is one of the most distinguished as well as one of the ablest Irishmen of our generation. He is a man not of versatility, but of genius; therefore his view is comprehensive and his word of particular value. He has won the highest prizes of the world's applause as actor, author, dramatist. He is a scholar and an observer—a critic and a man of the world.

"I wish to have a few words with you, sir," said a Pilot reporter to Mr. Boucicault the other day.

"There is a notice found on the quarter deck of every passenger ship," replied the great actor. "It is this: 'You must not speak to the man at the wheel.'"

"Let us presume we are in port," retorted the Pilot commissioner. "I would like to have your views of the immediate future of the Irish race, for the million readers of the Pilot."

"My chatter on so great a subject would contain little that your readers have not already procured. I am only a wayfarer on the road of life—strolling rather than a spectator of the great farce!"

"I have a pathetic and tragic scene save it from being grotesque. The actor, who is a philosopher, sees the world curiously across the footlights. He becomes the spectator, and the public are unconsciously the actors. The people in a theatre are more heavily than in any other assembly. So the audience of each city has its own characteristics, and is personified in the mind of the actor who cares to study."

"This is very curious and interesting; but about the Irish question, Mr. Boucicault?"

"You will have my views on that. Well, it is pretty clear to every spectator, that we are in the fifth and last act of the drama entitled 'Justice to Ireland.'"

In the first, by Pitt Rivers and Emmet; in the second, by Fitzgerald and Emmet; in the third, by O'Connell and the fourth, by Smith O'Brien; and in the fifth, by Parnell. We dramatists say that if a play be properly constructed each act is its interest and power to the preceding acts. So O'Connell enjoyed the value of the acts of Grattan and Emmet, while Parnell arrives at the catastrophe prepared by all the preceding events."

"You think, then, that England is arriving at a period when she may concede all that Ireland wants?"

"What does she want? I think England will before the end of this century concede all that sensible Irishmen, including Parnell, will desire. All she can enjoy and maintain."

"To what will she owe that concession?"

"To the drift of circumstances. To the altered position of England in the European political family—to the altered position of the United States as a factor in civilization. England is not weaker in any respect than she was, but other nations are much stronger. Paris and London were thirty years ago the foci of the political system around which the other peoples revolved. The center is now in Berlin."

"To what does this tend?"

"To the inevitable dual which must take place between the two great principles of Monarchy and self-government by the People. Napoleon the Great foresaw it when he prophesied that within a century Europe must become Republican or Cossack. That century has yet thirty years to run and there is every reason to believe the duel will be fought before it has expired."

"Between the Republican communities of this side of Europe: France, England, Belgium, Holland, Spain and Italy, arrayed against Germany, Austria and Russia."

"Yes. The western nations afford sanctuary to the secret societies and political refugees that make war on the eastern monarchies. This state of things cannot last. The republican communities cannot exist beside these monarchies without contaminating the rising generations with the virus of self-government. The Kings will not subside into Presidents without some great effort to restore the form of civilization that is now falling to pieces. Meanwhile, it is the policy of Germany to detach Great Britain from other European allies. She is the only coherent power of the West."

If Germany succeeds in isolating England, she will turn to the United States and attempt to form an alliance with America that would be impregnable. Here the Irish question would necessarily arise. England has seen in the recent election that the two political parties here are so nearly balanced that the Irish vote cannot be disregarded, and as she may have to conciliate this country, I think she exhibits an inclination to prepare for very important Irish concessions."

"Even to the extent of disunion?"

"Of all the silly pretensions ever advanced by any nation, this pretense of disunion is the most impudent. Ireland and Great Britain were never united until 1801. I recall the infamous bargain by which the former country was sold to the latter? And this filthy transaction is called a sacred bond! This is the union that has brought Ireland from a prosperous country with over eight millions of inhabitants to a beggary one with under five."

"What sort of a government would suit Ireland, and what would be her relation to England?"

"I presume they might have associated governments like those of Hungary and Austria. It is a question whether the Irish people are suited to form a republic."

"Would they have an English governor as Canada or Australia now has?"

"That is a question of detail. The English, a very long-headed race, have always avoided home-made monarchs. They have had a German family on the throne for the last 200 years; they had a French family for 400; they tried a Scotch lot for about 80 years; but after killing off one and banishing another, they concluded to go abroad for a safe king; and they found an inoffensive, obscure German prince, who did very little harm."

"Have you ever contemplated what would be the results of any sudden concession of independence to Ireland, and what form of government would be best fitted for her?"

"We are a sensitive, impulsive people,

and like all primitive races, unreliable in temper and prone to violence. The greatest calamity that could occur to Ireland would be to find herself called on suddenly to exercise functions for which she is unprepared. To preclude any struggles of parties degenerating into a reign of terror, it might be well that the Government of Ireland should be absolute for the first 15 or 20 years; purely military and secular, with some Irish soldier as chief at the head, a disciplinarian of the type of General Grant, or Sherman, who would stand no nonsense. (There would be plenty of it). The country might be divided into 24 military departments, with 3,000 men in each, and four great depots for artillery and cavalry at Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast, representing altogether about 100,000 men. These fellows might be disciplined on the Prussian plan, which ends in making every man an available soldier or sailor.

"Would not such a force be a standing menace to England?"

"Not at all. It would be employed preserving the peace in Ireland. Ireland would soon right her wrongs. We are not a brooding race, and England would find Ireland as reliable an ally as she now finds Scotland. When the Irish people held their national army equipped in the national uniform, and marching under the national flag, this sentimental, emotional race would shout all the evil out of their hearts, and feel like being friends with everybody. It is to be hoped whenever any concession is made to Ireland, however much that it may be made gradually, and not with revolutionary precipitation. Great changes, however necessary, should be carefully administered. A starving man is fed with small bits of food—a large meal would make him sick."

"Do you belong to any political persuasion?"

"Yes, to the party of Common Sense. We are prepared to do what is practicable and can be done honorably: we desire to show by the conduct of Irish affairs that we are capable of managing our national concerns, and worthy of the place we seek for Ireland in the family of nations—to invite their love and sympathy for our people, and to gain their respect. England has always held us in contempt, until our race founded a new Ireland on this side of the Atlantic, and challenged the respect of the world by the diligence and thrift by which we acquired wealth, and the intelligence and coherence by which we acquired power. That is the kind of humiliation I would inflict on England; that she should freely confess she had done us injustice as a people."

"It is said that some well-meaning prominent Irishmen should excite ridicule by their extravagance, while others misguided provoke horror by their outrages on humanity. We all suffer for their misdeeds. The first French republic founded the freedom of the people of Europe and the prosperity of the present century. But it produced the types of Marat, of Carrier, and of Sanson. It behoves her own people to so conduct themselves that their dignified attitude in both old and new Ireland will repudiate any association or sympathy with the outcasts of the period. But if European governments will show coercive laws like dragons teeth, why Nihilists, Communists and Fenians will rise like armed men, as Hussey de Burgh said on a memorable occasion."

"THE POPE'S POSITION.

Important Christmas Allegation of the Sovereign Pontiff.

ROME, January 2, 1886.

On Christmas Eve His Holiness received the cardinals in the Hall of the Throne. Cardinal Sacconi, dean of the Sacred College, expressed in his own name and in the name of his colleagues their wishes and congratulations to the Holy Father on the occasion of Christmas, saying that it was not only his personal qualities and merits that he had to-day the honor of addressing His Holiness on the part of the Sacred College, but solely by the privilege of the age which God had permitted him to reach and of which college he was called upon to be dean. The address of Cardinal Sacconi was exceedingly affectionate and eloquent.

IMPORTANT ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER.

In his reply the Holy Father referred to the motives of joy which the season brings, but added that this joy would be purer and more agreeable if the times were less sad for the Church and its government rendered less difficult. The greatest part of such difficulties comes from the present situation of the Pontiff—a situation which he has always declared to be intolerable, and which becomes, as the events occurring prove, more deplorable every day. "The year about to end," said His Holiness, "has brought to light, as you have well pointed out, Cardinal, that in the present circumstances the very exercise of charity is not free to the Sovereign Pontiff in the city of Rome. All member with what rage a great part of the journals have risen up against the design which we manifested of opening, in the vicinity of the Vatican, at Our own expense, in case it should be necessary, a HOSPITAL FOR THOSE STRICKEN BY CHOLERA."

All have yet present in memory with what insinuations, with what malignant interpretations it was striven to misconstrue that act; with what artifices and threats it was sought to hinder its being put into execution, and there is no need of any other proof to render evident the bitterness of the new order of things which has reduced the Sovereign Pontiff to the unworthy condition of a simple individual. But that is not all; there is still worse. It is an immense grief and a profound sorrow to us to see the impiety with which the heretical errors of Protestants are spread in all liberty and with impunity, with which the most sacred and august dogmas of our holy religion are attacked in this Rome, which is the centre of faith and the See of the universal and infallible teaching power of the Church; in this Rome, where the integrity of the faith should be protected in the most efficacious manner, and the honor of the only true religion sheltered from every attack. It is a thing which grieves Our heart to see under the protection of public laws the

multiplication of the temples of heresies; to think that it is permitted to attack openly in Rome the most beautiful and most precious unity of Italians—the religious unity. Thanks to the foolish efforts of those who arrogate to themselves the impious mission of founding in Italy a new Church, on another basis than that established by Jesus Christ as the indestructible foundation of His celestial edifice. And we have every reason to

FEAR FOR RELIGION.

and for the Church still other and more serious offences. There has again been presented to Parliament the law upon divorce, a law which, permitting in many cases the dissolution of the conjugal bond, goes directly against the precept of God Himself, a precept declared to man from the beginning of the world: *Quod Deus conjunxit, homo non separet*; a law which openly opposes the teaching of Jesus Christ, the universal Lawgiver, and the whole economy of the Church on marriage; a law which refuses to recognize in this great Sacrament the sublime excellence to which it was raised by Jesus Christ, and which degrades it to the condition of a purely civil contract; a law which degrades and humiliates woman, who compromises the education and well-being of children, which breaks the ties of domestic society and destroys it, which sows discord in families, which is a source of corruption for public morals, and for States the principle of a decadence sown with ruin. And in fact the experience of times not long past has been so bitter and so deadly, that it has forced the very partisans of divorce to re-establish in their codes the indissolubility of marriage. And yet if the will of the sects and the desire of Freemasonry should happen to be satisfied, We will behold

A LAW OPPOSED TO CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES promulgated in this Rome, whence should depart only the pure light of revealed truth and the splendor of Catholic life to be diffused throughout all Christendom. If God should decide to remove such a disaster from Italy, We should return Him thanksgiving with sentiments of the most profound gratitude; but We cannot cease to experience the gravest fears so long as the present condition of things endures, in itself and by itself to the dignity and independence of the Sovereign Pontificate, prejudicial to the liberty of the Roman pastors in the exercise of their supreme power, it is an oppression which manifests itself on every occasion, making us feel more heavily the burden of the domination of another and demonstrating the impossibility of an accommodation with such a situation and of remaining indifferent in its presence. The Son of God made Man, who even as a child knew how to escape the persecution of the impious, and who by His divine power has changed the face of the world, will assuredly not cease to assist His afflicted Church and to ameliorate the condition of His unworthy Vicar. But let all the Catholics of the whole universe hasten the period of divine mercy by continual prayers, and, above all, by a thoroughly Christian life, absolutely conformable to the faith and the law which they profess."

His Holiness then, with remarkable emotion, gave the Apostolic Benediction to all present.

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