

[From the New York Freeman's Journal.]  
THE QUESTION OF IRELAND.

The condition of affairs in Ireland, as far as known to us, gives but little hope to the friends of freedom of any immediate emancipation from the thralldom and oppression which have so long weighed down the energies of the Irish people. The high hopes that had been held out in such bold and emphatic language by the leaders of Young Ireland, have been succeeded by much and bitter disappointment. It is hardly worth while to speculate upon the causes of this. Our own opinion is, that those ardent and enthusiastic gentlemen persuaded themselves that the people at large felt as they did, and were ready to execute what they recommended. It appears, however, that in all this they drew inferences which were not warranted by antecedents. Hence, one view of the subject implicates the leaders as rash, improvident, short-sighted and altogether unfit to discharge the duties of the office which they had arrogated to themselves. If this view be correct, the people at large were perfectly right in refusing to commit themselves and the destiny of their country to such men. Another view is, that the people failed in the hour of peril to support those leaders whom their previous enthusiasm had encouraged to risk the terrible issue of battle against the oppressors of their land. The charge containing this latter view, is by no means sustained, and it is far more probable that the leaders of Young Ireland calculated upon the spontaneous uprising of the people, and threw themselves into the breach as a signal for the contest. One thing appears to be certain, that there was no organization, no plans matured, no scheme of combination and concert—and this alone would be sufficient to destroy confidence in the capacity of those who urged on the crisis, but who were unfit to meet it when it came. Our first feelings on reading the recent news from Europe, would naturally be, as they have been, feelings of indignation and, almost, contempt for what would appear to us the evidence of cowardice, unworthy of Ireland, or of any country that wishes and deserves to be free.

But, on second reflection, we perceive that it would have been madness in the actual state of the case, for them to have presented themselves to the British forces as a defenceless herd to the slaughter. Assuming this as true, we cannot coincide with those who involve the Catholic Clergy of Ireland as causing the failure of the projected rebellion. If things were in the condition which we have just described, and every additional report goes to show that they were, it was a duty which the Clergy owed to their people, on every ground of religion and humanity, to interpose and prevent them from being uselessly sacrificed. For, in such condition of affairs not only would they be put down, but in addition to the butchery that would have been committed by the well disciplined troops, who were on the spot, there would have been scenes of devastation and ruin, the effects of which would extend to future and distant times. The harvest not abundant, hardly sufficient for the support of the population, was to be gathered in. Without it the bravest men that might have rallied to the standard of their country would have been left in a short period destitute of food; the British troops themselves could fire and destroy the ripening fields as they have done frequently before. The destruction of whatever remnant of prosperity may still be found in the country would be complete, and the yoke of oppression would be thus fastened in perpetuity on the feeble survivors of a nation made desolate by a powerful and disciplined army on one side, and an incoherent, unled and disorganized insurrection on the other. We think, therefore, that, in such circumstances, the Clergy of Ireland would have been faithful to their obligations of religion and of humanity if they had not interposed, seeing, as they must have seen, the certain and inevitable consequences of a movement so nobly conceived, but so miserably conducted, as that of the late attempted struggle in Ireland. It is true that some of her most devoted sons are likely to be sacrificed in consequence of its failure. But for this the case allowed of no remedy,—and whilst we regret the issue most deeply as regards them, we cannot acquit them of utter incapacity and of great rashness in bringing upon themselves, unprepared as they were, so melancholy a destiny. Still the case is by no means hopeless; the haters of English misrule are as numerous as they were before. This sad lesson may render them wiser and impress upon them the necessity of caution, foresight and or-

ganization on a more practical basis, should they still persevere in the legitimate purpose of freeing their enslaved country.

As regards the efforts that have been made among ourselves to aid and encourage them, it is perhaps not expedient that we should express very fully our own opinions. The matter is at present in the hands of gentlemen in whose prudence and integrity we have every confidence, and they will, no doubt, proceed wisely in the course which the circumstances of the case will point out as the best to be followed. There is no doubt that a vast amount of money has been received, and a great deal of it from the poorer classes of Irishmen in this country, within the last few years. So far we do not perceive that it has aided in any sensible manner the great object for which it was contributed. We fear that much of it has been absorbed by real or supposed expenses of its collection and transmission to Ireland. We fear that of the amount which reached that country much has been absorbed by numerous officials labouring in the cause of patriotism, as if it were a profession from which pecuniary recompense was to be derived. All this is bad enough and sufficiently discouraging to deter men from contributing of their scanty means for so bootless a purpose. But we think that it has been attended with consequences of another kind which we cannot but regret and deplore—we refer now particularly to the frequent meetings which have been held, to the enthusiastic and inflammatory appeals which are constantly addressed, not so much to the reason as to the national susceptibilities and passions of those who have attended. Orators of all descriptions—some with characters and some without—have in these assemblies an opportunity of addressing the meeting, and, unhappily, in many instances, urging projects and even crimes—on excited multitudes which are contrary to religion and calculated to debauch the moral principles of right and wrong. Two instances found in some of the newspaper reports are particularly within our recollection. In one case the orator volunteered to assassinate Lord John Russell, and, if the report be true, so far from the proposition being received with horror, it was heartily cheered by the meeting; in another instance the value of the pike was estimated by its fitness to send Englishmen to hell. Speakers are not accountable for the newspaper reports of their speeches, and this language may not have been used in either case; but if it was used and received with approbation, we do not consider that all the funds subscribed for the relief of Ireland would compensate for the damage done to the moral feelings of an audience which could respond to it with applause. In short, if Ireland will show a disposition and determination to engage in the struggle, we would urge every lover of freedom and of mankind to aid her manfully and promptly in the contest. But if through weakness, disunion, cowardice or interest, the Irish are compelled or choose to remain as they are, it does not appear to us either wise or proper to keep up an excitement on their account which is injurious in its effects, which is carried on in another country, and at a distance of 3,000 miles from the place where it might be useful. Hence, therefore, we regard the formation of clubs, the practice of the rifle, and such other extravagant organizations not only as foolish but also as dangerous and wicked. We suppose, of course, that if Ireland now settles down into the tranquillity of forced submission, these things will gradually die away. But in the meantime, we would exhort our Catholic brethren to be on their guard—to know the persons to whom they give their money—to have a reasonable assurance that it will be rightly applied. We think, also, that the frequent calling of meetings and attendance at them, not to speak of the dangerous, and sometimes immoral, language in which addresses are made at such assemblies, ought to be discountenanced. We think that the abuses of designing individuals which have continued to be carried on for the last five or six years by unauthorized and irresponsible persons, whether on the rostrum or through the Press, ought to be brought to a close. As a trade it may be profitable to them, whilst it is injurious, both in purse and morals, to those who make it so, and of no practical benefit to the unfortunate country in whose name their confidence has been so frequently abused.

J. B. N. Y.

John O'Connell has made an appeal to the people of Ireland for funds to open Consultation Hall.

THE UNMASKED.

The writer of the following sketch is well known to some of our readers:—

ALBANY, August 28, 1848.

To the Editor of the Freeman's Journal and Cath. Register:

So much has been written of Rev. Nicholas Murray, alias "Kirwan," that it would seem nothing more on the subject could be said. As I was the first to place his real name before the public, and being one of his nearest relations this side the Atlantic, I hope you will insert the following memoir of the Rev. gentleman; you will find it a clumsy affair, yet it is nevertheless true in every respect.

Nicholas Murray was born about 1703, in the neighbourhood of Castletown, Co. Westmeath, Ireland.—He was very young when his father died, and his mother gave him as good an education as her circumstances would permit.—He was taught by a schoolmaster named White, till he was about sixteen years of age; after which he was bound apprentice to a Mr. McCann, who was shopkeeper in Granard, co. Longford. On his going to Granard, he learned that McCann had died a day or two previous; he remained with his widow two or three years until he had acquired a sufficient knowledge of the business to enable him to seek employment elsewhere. At this time, being nineteen years of age, a man who lived in the town was coming to America, and he persuaded Murray to accompany him. Not having the means himself, he applied to his mother, who, at great personal sacrifice, fitted him out; his eldest brother, Matthew, took him on his mother's car to Dublin, from which port he sailed for this country, in 1812 or 1813.

Now sir, whatever may be said to the contrary, "Kirwan," up to the time of his leaving Ireland, did not, in word or action, betray a dissent from the faith in which he had been educated; and he was considered and known to be a well-instructed young man. If he had any heterodox opinions, he kept them to himself, as we find in letter 2, page 14, where he states that "he found Father B. the miracle-worker, drunk one night in the gutter, and that his faith in miracle-working then received a shock." If Rev. Nicholas Murray will allow his memory to perform its functions properly, he will probably recollect that "Father B." was then a degraded priest, and a such deprived of sacerdotal authority. It is strange that he should have selected this man as a specimen of the Irish priesthood, and not have said a word about the rest of the clergy, who met the Bishop in Mrs. McCann's house—his silence on this point is evidence that their conduct was the reverse of what "Kirwan" makes us imagine Father B.'s to have been.

From a relative of his and mine, I have been favoured with an account of the parting scene between him and his mother, on the day of his departure for Dublin. It was truly pathetic to see the old woman embrace her beloved son; she begged of him to mind his God and his religion, and to remember her whilst he lived; she invoked Heaven's choicest blessings on his head; and he in return, promised to do all that his mother required.—She gave him all she could spare in the world, and took great pains to have his linen and wardrobe as decent and as comfortable as her own means and those of her relatives could afford. He mounted the car, and started for Dublin, as before stated. This was not only his first remembered, but his only journey to Dublin. It was on this occasion that he passed "John's Well," at Kilmainham, in the neighbourhood of the Irish metropolis, a description of which he gives us in letter 3, page 21, where he says:—"There was a vast crowd of poor looking and diseased people around it. Some were praying, some shouting; many were in the trees, &c. All these trees were laden in all their branches, with shreds of cloth, &c. I enquired what all this meant! I was told, 'this is St. John's Well, and these people come here to get cured.'"

If the description given of St. John's Well be true, I am at a loss to know why the "diseased people" shouted, and how they could climb the trees—this needs explanation. But "Kirwan's" account of it has been probably copied after the description of St. Patrick's Well, on next page (22).

I will prove that "Kirwan" knows nothing at all about it, from his own knowledge, thus:

It is well known that the citizens of Dublin hold fairs in every village and suburb round the city; whatever may have been the original mo-

nives for instituting these gatherings, they were located in the most beautiful and picturesque spots, and in Kirwan's time and mine, they were resorted to for pleasure, and all the show booths, circuses, dancers, musicians, merry Andrews, and every other source of sport, were brought into requisition to afford that amusement which the people so ardently sought. In short they were miniature Donnybrook fairs. The fair of St. John's Well was one of these, and it was held during the week in which the Summer Solstice occurred. The rags, &c., in "Kirwan's" account were the streamers and flags from the tents and booths, as well as the the clothes of such poor people as could not pay for amusement, and boys who climbed the trees in order to see as much of the sport as they could, for nothing—and as some extraordinary feat would be performed, these people would express their approbation by shouting. Then the vendors of fruit, refreshment, news boys, &c., had to shout to sell their goods. Those whom "Kirwan" describes as diseased and praying, were beggars and boccaghs (he understands the term) who were stationed on the side of the road, exhibiting their physical inability to work for their living, and praying for those who relieved their wants. Such is the true description of St. John's Well; such has the water of this known it, and such doubtless was it in 1813, when the veracious "Kirwan" got a casual glimpse of it from the Kilmainham road, on his first remembered and only journey to Dublin, mounted on his poor mother's country car. I have proof that "Kirwan" did not stop a moment to view the fair, and consequently had not time to "kick up a dust" there. He has left a portion of the work to be enacted here where he expects the public will believe the second hand extracts from ignorant and prejudiced writers, combined with downright falsehoods of his own creation, to be true as holy writ.

Having shipped "Kirwan" off to this country, I will visit him this side of the water next week; I will then convict him out of his own mouth, from extracts of letters written by himself to his mother in 1822, and we will see whether "Nicholas Murray, the grocer's boy of Granard," be worthy of credit.

(Capital! Send it on.—F. Jour.)

The *Voir de la Verite* announces an interesting fact in reference to the new Archbishop. It is that he was once Vicar under M. Desgenettes, the curate of Notre Dame des Victoires, which has been the theatre of such miraculous graces to a multitude of souls in late times. Mgr. Sibour still testifies the deepest deference and love for M. Desgenettes.

THE MONKS OF MELLERAY.—REGISTERING ARMS.—The Dungarvan correspondent of the Cork Examiner writes:—"The Sessions for registering arms has passed off, many have had their arms registered, and more rejected, of those rejected, were those holy and good men who are doing so much unexamined good in their locality or mountain fastness, 'the poor Monk of Mount Melleray,' who wanted to get a gun for the purpose, solely, of keeping off the crows from their corn fields."

CONVERSION.—Stephen Edward de Vere, Esq. son of Sir Aubrey de Vere, Bart., of Curragh Chase, county Limerick, has embraced the Roman Catholic Religion.—*Tipperrary Vindicator*.

Births

SEPT. 12—Mrs Gilly of a Daughter,  
16—Mrs Furlong of a Son,  
16—Mrs King of a Daughter,  
18—Mrs Hunt "  
19—Mrs Mooney of a Son  
19—Mrs Mullaly "  
20—Mrs McKenna of a Daughter.

Married.

SEP. 19—Michael Dempsey to Mary O'Brien.

Wid.

Sept 9th, Henry Bart, infant Son of William and Mary Jane Murphy, aged 8 days; 18th, Mrs Joanna Whall, wife of Mr Patrick Whall, native of Halifax, NS., aged 28 years; 21st, Mrs Jane Davidson, widow of the late James Davidson, a native of Halifax, NS., aged 58 years; 21st, Jane, infant daughter of William and Eliza White, aged 21 days.