

the Castle whenever you choose to come," said Harriet to the piper.

"And is the lord here himself? and maybe you're the beautiful young lady that loves the old castle music?"

"The Lord is here," laughed Miss Markham, "and I am the lady that loves the old music—but as for the beautiful lady, I am sorry to say we have no lady of that description in Effingham Castle."

"Now don't say that miss! don't say that," cried Shaun with much quickness, "sure I know by your voice you're as fair and as sweet as the flowers in May. Long life and success to your ladyship."

"You see, my lord," said Harriet, "our Irish piper has the peevishness at his finger ends. But what have you to say to Lord Effingham, Shaun?"

"Deed, then, I're nothing to say but what's good, and very good. Sure only he's the right sort of a gentleman he wouldn't have the good wish of the people as he has, an' them not knowing much about him, at all, at all!"

"There, my lord, there's a specimen of Irish heart-logic for you," said Harriet archly.

"I accept the compliment," said the Earl, "and I thank you, friend, for your good opinion. The gates of Effingham Castle shall be always open to you and that four-footed friend of yours."

"I humbly thank your lordship," said Shaun with his lowest bow, and the blood coursed merrily through his old veins, and the lightness of long-vanished youth was in his step for the moment as he moved on playing "Planxty Drury."

"But who is the girl?" said Lord Effingham, struck with Mabel's sad and singular appearance.

Harriet sighed as she turned her eyes on the poor wretched creature who had been watching the inmates of the carriage with the closest attention, and in very unusual silence. "Ah that, my lord, is a poor wreck of humanity—the people call her mad Mabel. She is a minstrel, too, in her way. Why so silent, Mabel? have you no news for me?"

"Oh wisha news, what news 'id I have? But they're goin' to hang Jerry Pierce—did you hear that?"

"Is it possible, Mabel?"

"It's truth I tell you, and listen hither," coming over close to the carriage, "Celia Mulquin and me is going away together to the well of the world's end—you know where that is?—oh no, that isn't it," she added in a desponding tone, "sure it's down at Holy Cross Patrick is, and I dunna where they'll put Jerry Pierce when they hang him—maybe in that dark vault where they put young Mr. Esmond in."

The carriage stopped as the coachman wanted to let those within have the full benefit of Mabel's wild prattle. All at once Shaun changed the gay fantastic measure of his planxty for the love-sweet "Shule aroon," and Mabel catching up the strain sang in her dreamy unconscious way

"Och! if I was on yonder hill,
It's there I'd sit and cry my fill,
Till every tear would turn a mill,
As go chi mo vourneen slau."

"Oyeh! it's little I cry now. I used to cry a long time ago before they took him away from me, but the tears are all gone—all gone. Come now, Shaun, let us be off!"—and she seized the piper by the arm, "the fun 'ill be all over before we get to Holy Cross, and I want you and me to dance a jig on King Donogh's tomb the night—no, behind it, where I hid from the men that killed old Esmond—ha, ha, they wanted to kill me that time, but I was too many for them—so now, Shaun, put the best foot foremost—step out, man—sigh, maybe it's going to hang that pretty lady in the coach that are—or shoot her, or something, and then she'll be walkin', walkin' ever, like me and Celia Mulquin. Oheh, but I'm tired—tired—and my heart is sore!"

There was a mournful pathos in the tone and the words that drew tears to Harriet's eyes.

"A strange being, that," said the Earl carelessly as the carriage rolled away.

"An Irish *Blanche*, my lord; her story much the same, only sadder still."

"By her madness hangs a tale, of course."

"A tale?—ay, a tale of horror—of blood—

and of—"

"Of love stronger than death!" subjoined Lord Effingham with a chilling smile that was more than half a sneer.

"Yes, even of that, my lord," said Harriet promptly.

"It were worth the hearing, if so," said the peer in the same ironical tone. "I see the children are dying, as you ladies say, to hear the story. Could you not gratify their curiosity some of these first evenings—when Mr. Goodchild and I are within hearing—and Mrs. Pakenham—if in humor to listen?"

"Most willingly, my lord, if Mr. Goodchild will promise to keep awake to hear me!"

"My dear Miss Markham!" began the chaplain, by way of entering a protest against the implied charge.

"My dear Mr. Goodchild, I freely forgive for stepping your senses in sweet forgetfulness during my late prosy narrative," said Harriet with a smile, "on condition, however, that you lend me your ears, as Mark Antony says in the play, when I come to unfold the sad tale, not exactly of poor Mabel's wrongs, but of her sorrows."

The chaplain, ashamed of being so literally "caught napping," the more so as he detected an incipient smile on his patron's face—was but too well pleased to get rid of the subject with an unconditional promise. The carriage stopping just then, Mrs. Pakenham's portly figure was soon visible in the vestibule of Effingham Castle, and poor Mabel was, for the time, forgotten in the important business of "lunching," for which the drive through the frosty air and the long visit to the Rock had duly disposed the party.

"And may my love come safe
(To be continued.)"

LETTER OF HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF DUBLIN.

Very Rev. Brethren.—The return of the month of May, associated, as it is now, with a name so dear and sacred to every Catholic, reminds us of one of our most gratifying and consoling duties. Whilst the great body of the faithful throughout the world are occupied at this time in rendering the most touching testimonies of their veneration and love for Her whom all generations shall call blessed, we, who have the happiness to hail her as the special patroness of this diocese and of this country, under one of the most glorious of her titles, that of the Immaculate Conception, should not be slow in gathering around her shrine, and presenting on her altar the homages and oblations of our faithful and devoted people. Guided by that Spirit which ordereth all things sweetly, the Church, when wishing to give a particular manifestation of that tender devotion, which she has cherished and exhibited throughout all ages to the Mother of our Lord, has wisely selected a season that presents all that is pure and beautiful in the aspect of nature—all that is redolent with the odours and animation of the spring time—to celebrate the praises and supplicate the intercession of one so transcendent in the beauty of holiness; and whom, amidst the trials and calamities of this vale of tears, we are accustomed to invoke with filial confidence and affection as our life, our sweetness and our hope. These tributes of devotion to the Mother of God cannot fail greatly to promote the honour of her divine Son, whose grace is reflected from her in all its purity and splendour—to preserve in the souls of the faithful a most grateful sense of the ineffable benefits of the Incarnation—and by continually bringing before their minds that most exalted, but at the same time most practical model of virtue, which is presented to us in the example of the Immaculate Virgin to incite them to a more fervent practice of piety, and a faithful discharge of their duties. It will be easy for you, reverend brethren, to dilate upon these important subjects; and whilst you exhort the faithful to entertain a true and sincere respect and veneration for the most holy Virgin, to inspire them with greater ardour and increasing zeal in the service of God. In every circumstance connected with the great mystery of the Incarnation, in which the Son of God showed the excess of His love for us by humbling Himself to assume human flesh, and to be made unto the likeness of men, you will find the most solid reasons to excite us to venerate the most holy Mother of our Redeemer. When an archangel was sent from the throne of God to announce to her the glad tidings of salvation, he addressed her in the same terms of respect with which Catholics of all ages have been accustomed to approach her—"Hail full of Grace," said he, "the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women." And when he laid open to her his heavenly commission, "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus," the great mystery of the incarnation was not accomplished until the Virgin gave her consent in the humble words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." So that the consent and concurrence of the most humble of creatures were required before the Son of God would assume flesh. What a mysterious economy on the part of the Almighty, and what a motive to respect and venerate the holy Virgin!

Let us then zealously combine with our good and faithful people in raising her altars, and ornamenting her shrines, with a gratitude and liberality worthy of such a benefactress; let us celebrate her praises, and proclaim her virtues teaching them to the young, and recalling them to the old; let us prudently promote every approved devotion in her honour, and let every returning month of May enkindle in our breasts a more ardent desire to adorn her shrine with a brighter wreath and a still more fragrant offering, in the purified dispositions and increased virtues of our people. And ought not our desire to promote her honour and glory to be increased, when we consider the exertions which are made by error and heresy to destroy all respect to the holy Mother of God. Tracts are daily published with the view of degrading her dignity; anathemas and insults are daily hurled against her from many pulpits, and, as I have learned from the best authority, in a school not far from this city, instituted for the purpose of robbing Catholic children of their faith, which has been justly described as a culture's nest of iniquity, children are taught to insult and spit on an image of the pure Virgin to whom the Eternal Father committed the care of His only Son made man. There is another illustration of this spirit of hostility against the Virgin, which I observed some time ago in London. In that city there is a missionary museum, containing objects of curiosity from various countries visited by Protestant missionaries. Among other things there is a collection of most infamous and obscene pagan gods and goddesses, in the midst of which the managers of the museum have placed an image of the pure Mother of our Lord, as if to degrade her to the level of the idols by which she is surrounded. Here, indeed, we see that the ancient serpent cursed by God for occasioning the ruin of our first parents, is still lying in wait for the heel of the purest of Virgins. But the words of the Lord are still fulfilled; for, notwithstanding all the arts and exertions of the church-enemy of mankind, she still crushes his head with her virgin foot: *ipsa conterat caput tuum*; and with the Church we may say that she alone destroys all heresies in the whole world, *tu sola interemisti omnes hereses in universo mundo*. Knowing the intensity of your zeal in promoting every good work, and the affection of your flock to the holy Mother of God, I will not detain you any longer on the devotions of this holy season; I shall rather direct your attention to some practical matters, on which you will find opportunities to instruct the faithful, whilst addressing them in the course of this month. The first matter I shall refer to is the important question of Catholic education, a question which may justly be discussed when treating of the holy Virgin, who enjoys the glorious privilege of being invoked as the seat of wisdom—*sedes sapientie*. The condition of the present times render the knowledge and practice of religion most necessary for youth. The world is now beset by a wide-spread indifference for every form of religious belief; all its tendencies are directed to the cultivation and promotion of material interests. Men engaged in the pursuit of those temporal matters, too often forget their Creator, their last end, and the concerns of their immortal souls. As a preservative against such fatal evil, it is necessary to inculcate, with unceasing care on the tender minds of youth, the fear and love of God, attachment to the true Church and her holy doctrines, the importance of receiving the sacraments, devotion and respect to the holy Mother of God and the infinite superiority of spiritual things over the fleeting, vain, and transitory goods of this world. Unless deep impressions of this kind be made on their children by parents in their domestic circles, by masters in schools and colleges and by the sacred ministers of religion in their public instructions, it is to be feared that the suggestions of flesh and blood will be too powerful for youth, and that they will be carried away by the torrent of bad example, and overcome by the bad maxims of the world, which are extolled and inculcated every day, and brought home to every one, even the humblest peasant, by the licentiousness of the press, and publications which now appear under the name of Protestant dignitaries and bishops, impugning the authority of that sacred volume to which, in past times, they used to appeal, as if it were the special foundation of Protestantism. The dangers to which youth is exposed were never so great as at present, and hence the necessity of a practically religious and thorough Catholic education. What will it avail young men to acquire learning, and to prepare themselves for some useful and honorable earthly career, if they have not learned the doctrines of the true faith, and the practices of the Church of Christ? The Pagan philosophers mentioned by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans,

were men of great learning, and highly instructed in every useful art of life; but because their knowledge was not sanctified by religion, they became monsters of iniquity, and a reproach to the human race. The same may be said of the great actors in the first French Revolution, who, having shaken off the guidance of religion, notwithstanding their acquirements and their knowledge, brought indelible disgrace upon themselves, and perpetrated scenes of cruelty and blood not to be equalled in the history even of savage life. Knowledge alone may be most pernicious; in order to make it truly useful, it must be guided and sanctified by religion, which a great English philosopher declares to be the aroma or the element necessary to preserve science from corruption. And here let us observe, and this is an observation to be attended to in our days, and in Ireland especially, that this necessary element of religion cannot be introduced and cherished in mixed schools, in which masters and pupils of every religious profession are assembled together, and from which it is necessary to banish religious instruction and religious practices, lest the followers of one creed should be offended by the doctrines and practices of others. In such schools, religion, the most important duty of man, must give way to temporal concerns. Masters are to make no allusion to religion; they cannot touch on the history of the Church of God; they cannot denounce the authors of heresies and schisms; they must give mere Pagan instruction to their pupils. The whole day, the whole year, all the hours of school must be devoted to the cultivation of things connected with our short existence here below; the interests of that eternal life which is beyond the grave are not taken into any account, and are left to be provided for by chance, and outside the common hours of school. Besides, in our case, in the mixed system the claims of the Catholic Church are ignored or openly set aside, and the whole right of directing the education of a Catholic people is handed over to a Protestant government. Deeply beloved, our Divine Redeemer gave to His Church the right of teaching all nations, and she has faithfully discharged that commission, banishing ignorance and superstition from pagan countries, propagating the blessings of civilization, instructing states in the art of Christian legislation, breaking the chains of the slave and the captive, preserving literature, directing the course of science, establishing schools and universities, and doing everything to promote man's welfare in this life, and to secure his eternal happiness hereafter. In Ireland, though the Church has been so often stripped of her possessions and reduced to poverty by her enemies, who still enjoy her spoils, she has not watched with assiduous care over the education of the people, and made most extraordinary sacrifices in establishing schools, colleges, convents, and even a university, to provide for their instruction? and are we now to be told, are the Catholic people of Ireland, who sacrificed everything they had for their religion, to be told, that for the future the Catholic Church is to have no share in the education of their children, that in their school books no mention of their religion or their Church is to be made, that the future teachers of the rising generations may be Socinians, or Unitarians, Presbyterians, or Protestants, who may infuse their own opinions into the unsuspecting minds of our Catholic youth, whilst the Catholic Church, notwithstanding her Divine commission and her past services, is to be deprived of her influence and her rights? England is to have separate schools for every religious denomination; Scotland is to have the same, the religion of the colonies is also to be respected, but the great boon reserved for the Catholics of Ireland, a boon for which they are expected to be most grateful and thankful, is that schools are to be opened, for their children, in which, to mention their religion, to mention the name of Catholic, to mention the Vicar of Christ, to make the sign of the Cross, to invoke the Holy Mother of God, and other similar acts, are to be most strictly prohibited. Protestants and Presbyterians may be very learned and skillful in secular knowledge and in the arts of life, but they cannot make those religious impressions on the minds of children, which are necessary to prepare them for their struggles against the spirit of the world, nor can they teach them those practices and doctrines of our holy Church, without which it is impossible to secure our eternal salvation. Masters, destined to instruct Catholics, ought to be good Catholics themselves, sincere in their belief, practical and edifying in their lives. In a mixed system, the nomination of masters and the whole management of education necessarily devolves upon government. Now, what did our rulers do for Catholic education in past centuries in Ireland, to establish a claim on our confidence at present? They established a great university, royal colleges, charter schools, Kildare-street schools, incorporated schools, all engines, and powerful engines for propagating Protestantism, and taxed the country to endow such establishments! They spent millions in promoting Protestant education in a Catholic country; and make most stringent laws to prevent Catholics from teaching, and to render it impossible for the Irish people to instruct their children in the Catholic faith. We are not to be surprised that they acted in this way, as they were imbued with a bitter hostility to the faith of St. Patrick, and were accustomed to swear, or to profess to believe, that our religion is superstitious and idolatrous. Looking, then, to the doctrines of the past, and guided by its light, must we not look with suspicion on any attempt to place the education of Catholic children under their control? However fair and liberal they may be in other concerns; and it is our duty to insist on having a Catholic system of education for a Catholic population, and Catholic instruction for Catholic youth? Acting in this way, we shall be only carrying out the advice given to us by one of the greatest statesmen and orators of modern times, our countryman, Edmund Burke—"The schemes of these colleges," he says in a letter to Dr. Huzar, Bishop of Waterford, "did not originate from them (the ministers of that day); but they will endeavor to pervert the benevolence and liberality of others into an instrument of their own evil purposes. Be well assured that they never did, and never will, consent to give one shilling of the public money for any other purpose than to do you mischief. If you consent to put your clerical education, or any other part of your education, under their direction or control, then you will have sold religion for their money. There will be an end, not only of the Catholic religion, but of all religion, all morality, all law, and all order in that unfortunate country, Ireland."—*Burke's Letters*, vol. iv., p. 292. The words of so profound and upright a politician ought to make a deep impression on our minds, confirmed as they are by the experience of other countries, where it has been found that the education of a people cannot be given up to a Protestant government without exposing to imminent destruction, not only the Catholic religion, all morality, all law, all order, and introducing a revolutionary spirit, a most fatal indifference to every creed, and a contempt for everything sacred. The next subject which I recommend to you as a theme for your instructions is the exercise of charity, of which you will find many illustrations in the life of the holy Virgin. The circumstances of the times call most loudly for the practice of this virtue. In this city scenes of the greatest misery are witnessed every day, and the destitution is still greater in remote parts of the country. The people in many places are so pressed by want that they are abandoning their homes in large numbers, and seeking foreign countries, where, in all probability, as they are starting without any proper preparations, they will have to suffer excessive hardship, and be exposed to the greatest danger both of soul and body. Exhort the poor emigrant to be cautious about what he is doing, and not to leave his home until he shall know what provision he can make for himself and family beyond the seas.

† PAUL, Archbishop of Dublin.
Dublin, April 23, 1863.

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

MISSION OF THE JESUIT FATHERS.—The missionary fathers are labouring with untiring zeal and assiduity, in the pulpit and in the confessional. The resident and neighbouring clergy have been assisting during the week in hearing the confessions of the large numbers that attended. On last Sunday, in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, there was a solemn and magnificent procession, consisting of about five hundred children of both sexes, suitably dressed, the clergy, and his Lordship the Right Rev. Dr. Furlong. A rich and beautiful canopy was borne over his lordship, who carried the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. On Tuesday last his lordship administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to upwards of six hundred children.—*Wexford People*.

THE RECEPTION OF A NOVICE IN ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.—The following interesting description of the reception of a Novice at Gravesend is taken from a Protestant contemporary—the *Gravesend Free Press*—omitting only the description of the ceremonial, with which our readers are familiar. On the evening of Monday April 20th, we witnessed in this church a sight which has never before been seen in Gravesend. In the old Monastery of Rochester, and in the College of Cobham, vows had been taken in days of yore—but by Monks and Priests. We have no record however of a convent in Gravesend till our own days. In Catholic times the fishermen were of course Catholic, and in the Old Church of Milton their Parish Priest or Chaplain ministered to their spiritual wants. But as a town, Gravesend has been essentially a Protestant town. Many amongst us remember the day when there was no Priest in Gravesend, when our only notion of Catholicity was connected with the begging tramp and the Irish harpers and hoppers. How would our grandfathers have been astonished could they have risen from their graves and have witnessed the spectacle of Monday evening. In one of the largest, and certainly in the most beautiful church in the town, they would have seen their own children and grandchildren (some still Protestants, but many of them Catholics), assembled together to witness a ceremony of which they themselves had no conception, and which had they known it, their honest English prejudices would most unmercifully condemn. It was the reception of a Novice into the Order of the Sisters of Mercy, as the ostentatiously displayed placards had already announced to us. Upwards of 1,000 persons were present. After the Novice had quitted the Church, the Bishop seated before the altar preached a quiet, unpretending, but solidly instructive sermon. The closing portion of the sermon was most touching. The speaker spoke of Christ as our Judge, and told his audience that their Judgment questions would not be concerning their position in the world.

THE MAGINN MONUMENT.—OUR DEPARTED GREAT MEN.—(From the *Galway Vindicator*).—It will be perceived from an article copied from the *Nation* into another column, that our respected contemporary has consented to become the treasurer of the "Maginn Monument Fund"—a fund contemplated to be raised for the erection of a monument over the grave of the late lamented and illustrious Bishop of Derry, the Right Rev. Dr. Maginn. The public are now in the mood of erecting statues, of perpetuating the memory of our great men; so that we cannot doubt the appeal on behalf of the "Maginn Monument Fund" will be generously responded to. However, the character and career of Dr. Maginn may be considered, whether as priest, prelate, or patriot, he was undoubtedly one of the greatest Irishmen of the present century. A man of imposing presence, of profound erudition, of unrivalled eloquence, and undying love of country, he laboured for a quarter of a century to elevate the position of his fellow-countrymen morally and socially, and he succeeded in imparting a spirit of independence and self-reliance to his co-religionists in the North, which in many districts of Ulster, and Derry especially, has felled the demon of ascendancy that was rampant in that province from the "Plantation of Ulster to the advent of him who was justly styled 'the Fenelon of the North.' Only those acquainted with the district, which was the scene of his labours, could form an opinion of what a patriot priest, devoted heart and soul to the progress, mental and material of his people, could accomplish. His life was full of labor. He was always engaged in building churches or schools, in organizing public meetings for the amelioration of his countrymen, and corresponding with every man who took an interest in the welfare of Ireland, and the advancement of the Irish people. The great progress of the Catholic people of the North, within the past half century, is eminently due to his example and energy. Nor was he a man of narrow prejudices. Though he never spared the tyrant or evil-doer, no matter of what creed, he enjoyed the respect and esteem of his Protestant and Presbyterian neighbours, and many of them, we have no doubt, will now join in the national tribute about being inaugurated to his memory. During the three years of his Episcopate he was a pillar of light in the Irish Church. His name and fame resounded from one end of Christendom to the other; and his unexpected demise, in what might be termed the commencement of a brilliant career, was mourned throughout the Catholic world. It is somewhat of a reflection upon the Catholics of Ulster, and of Derry especially, that the grave of the immortal Dr. Maginn has remained unmonumented and undistinguished for the past fourteen years. But knowing the public spirit of the people of that province, we are inclined to believe that it was because a cult was not made on them for this high and holy purpose, that the grave of their popular prelate has been so long neglected. They will now, we have no doubt, generously discharge one of the deepest debts of gratitude ever due to departed greatness. And we feel certain, also, the appeal in the *Nation* will evoke a wider sympathy. There were few men of mark in Ireland during the lifetime of that great priest and prelate who did not enjoy the hospitality of St. Mary's Cottage, at Buncrana, on the picturesque shore of the Swilly, and who did not depart rejoicing, at having made the acquaintance of one of the most gifted and warm-hearted patriots who ever breathed the pure air of Ireland. In every province of Ireland, therefore, and in every clime to which our people have gone, there will be numbers of our countrymen who will feel honoured in being permitted an opportunity of contributing towards the erection of the Maginn monument. We wish our contemporary every success in the laudable labor he has undertaken. To us also it will be a "labor of love" to co-operate in every way we can in this patriotic and praiseworthy movement. Dr. Maginn has bequeathed a character of sterling patriotism to the people of Ireland—he has left behind him in the history of his life a bright example to the priests and Bishops of the Irish Church—and it should be the duty of all, of priests, prelates, and people, to mark, for the admiration of future generations, the spot where rest his sainted remains, by a monument worthy of his reputation, and of the large place which he occupied in the affections of his contemporaries. Our truly great men are so few, that their graves ought not to be neglected.

IRELAND'S "PROSPERITY."—(From the *Morning Star*).—It is not uncommon to read in the accounts of voyages to remote regions of canoes full of rude savages boarding a ship from shore, and helping themselves to her stores. Tribes untutored in the art of agriculture, and subsisting entirely by the precarious fruits of the chase, or by fishing, and decimated by periodically recurring famine, do nothing to startle the observer in robberies such as these. On the coast of Patagonia it is intelligible; but what is to be said to an event of this kind on the coast of Ireland? There was a time when that island was populous and prosperous, yielding in abundance the fruits of the earth, and covered with fat flocks and herds—a time when its people were so light-hearted and joyous that their happiness became

a proverb in Europe. Civilization, as it unfolds itself in science, and art, and letters, was a vigorous growth with them; and not only were Englishmen largely fed from Ireland, but this country also reaped from it—statesmen, philosophers, orators, and poets. For we know not how many hundred years has Ireland enjoyed the benefit of the English Government, with English laws and the English Church—all administered in the spirit which created them; and now in this year of grace 1863, at the time when but for an exceptional and temporary calamity this country would be flourishing in such abundance of wealth as she never before attained to, the newspapers are called upon to chronicle an occurrence on the Irish coast which must be read as a stern rebuke to our principles of government in Ireland. An English vessel sailing from Liverpool for Wexford, laden with maize, was boarded off the Wexford coast by a number of fishermen, who took possession. They refused money; their families and themselves, they said, were starving; they wanted food. They ate there ravenously of the raw corn, put a large quantity into their boats, and went home with it. These men, it is obvious, were not ordinary plunderers. What they did was evidently done under the dire pressure of want. They were starving, and their country supplied no food for them. How comes it that a cargo of Indian corn could command a higher price in Wexford than in Liverpool—Ireland being an agricultural country, if anything at all? With the exception of the linen manufacture, which has increased of late years, but which nevertheless represents only a small portion of the annual produce of the country, the production of corn and cattle is the occupation of the Irish people. Do they, then, not produce enough for their own consumption? Not after paying for their imports of other articles. They still export corn and cattle; but they are of inferior quality, those they receive of inferior. Indian corn, and maize, and American beef and bacon, cost less than Irish wheat, horned cattle, bacon, pigs, and butter; but cheap as they are comparatively, it seems undeniable that large numbers of the Irish people are reduced to the very extremity of want. The distress is not concentrated, as in the cotton districts of England; it is spread over a larger surface, and among a people more accustomed to privations; but in the aggregate we doubt not that it is as great and deep as that of Lancashire. No one can reasonably find fault with this administration or with that, although careful inquiry might bring home culpability to some. Individual statements, mean well, but they are necessarily the slaves of a traditional policy which has sprung from the existence of predominant interests incompatible with a wholesome regimen of Ireland. So undeniable is the depletion of Ireland both in wealth and population—the result of some grand defect in the law and government which makes them, as they are, unsuitable for the Irish people to live under and thrive—that in some quarters in which the government is thought more of than the governed, an attempt has been made to show that change in progress in Ireland is for the better. It is certainly for the better that such of the Queen's subjects as are incurably discontented should go away; but it is surely for the worst that causes for such discontent should exist, leading to a loss of population. At any rate, it cannot possibly be for the better that the soil of Ireland should cease to yield the full measure of food it is capable of yielding. This, at least, is retrogression—this, at least, is a falling-off of the nation's strength and resources. And is it not a fact? Is not the diminished productiveness of Ireland a great and startling fact, portending some greater calamity, and by no means to be imputed to wet seasons and a want of sunshine? The Chancellor of the Exchequer feels it, as well as the poor people who are pining on insufficient food in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone is obliged to adduce this fact to help him to account for the falling off his estimated revenue. We have from time to time, so far as we know almost alone of English journals, called attention to the remarkable decay of Irish resources, and need not now go minutely into the authentic statistical returns which prove that decay. But we may cite the figures of the statement which the Chancellor of the Exchequer says the government has caused to be carefully drawn up. Taking the four years from 1856 to 1860—themselves exhibiting a falling off as compared with preceding years—but taking these as the normal or average condition of Irish agricultural wealth, it is found that the three principal crops—oat, wheat, and potato—with an estimate added of the value of the other products ascertained by the number of head of stock, amounted to £39,437,000 per year. Well, every successive year since 1859 the crops have diminished, and the number of cattle has diminished, and the number of cattle has diminished. In 1860-1, the aggregate value fell to £34,893,000, a decrease of four millions and a half. In 1861-2, it fell to £29,077,000, a decrease in two years ten millions and a half. In 1862-3, it descended yet lower, having fallen to £27,327,000, or in three years nearly one-third. And that this is not the result of bad seasons is plain. These will only diminish the yield of crops per acre; but in Ireland, year after year, hundreds of thousands of acres are going out of cultivation altogether. In 1862 there were 255,807 acres less under crop than in 1861, and the decrease was nearly equally divided between cereal and green crops. Since cattle as well as men are fed upon the produce of the soil, it is natural that there should also be a falling off in live stock, and accordingly we find that the value of the stock in Ireland in 1861, and £4,164,000 less than in 1859. At the same time the emigration of the most valuable class of the peasantry is increasing, and statesmen may fondly hope that they are thus getting rid of the "Irish difficulty." The Irish difficulty is curing itself by killing the patient. It was a political-religious difficulty which might have been removed by honest legislation. But if the difficulty be disappearing, the strength which Ireland imparted to the empire is disappearing with it. Can England better afford to lose that strength than make an effort to retain it?

The petition, as insolvent, of Maurice O'Connell, late of Drumcunning, Tralee, in the county of Kerry, farmer and butter dealer, previously of Rock street, Tralee, aforesaid, shopkeeper, superannuated sergeant of the Irish Constabulary force, was to have been heard on the 13th inst., in Dublin.

MINNERS OF WAR WITH AMERICA.—We have this afternoon received a communication from London, which enables us to state on the highest authority that a war with America is most imminent. Orders have been transmitted to our dockyards to hold all our available vessels in readiness for immediate service; and to prepare to commission every available ship; and similarly warlike instructions have been issued to the War Department and the Horse Guards.—*Irish Times*.

Dr. (Drogheda) Argus have just been informed that an order reached Drogheda on this day (Saturday), to immediately fit up Millmount Infantry Barracks for 650 stand of arms.

DISAPPEARANCE OF AN OFFICIAL.—The official to whom reference is made in a paragraph headed as above, is a gentleman who held the office of pay clerk or cashier in one of the most important administrative public departments in this city, the business of which is conducted in the Custom-house. His absence from his duties for a few days, about a week ago, excited the suspicion of his superiors, and orders were issued for his immediate attendance at his office. His non-appearance caused further inquiries of a very searching character to be made, which resulted in the discovery that he had absconded (probably to America), taking with him the amount of a cheque drawn in his favor to pay certain expenses for something under £800, and a sum of about £800 or £900, for which he is a defaulter to the Board of Inland Revenue for income tax.—*Saunders*.