

if the priests were withdrawn from politics he would throw up his seat in Parliament and leave the country, and he did so. He did so under the belief that you could no more sway the peasantry against the exterminating landlords in 1855 without the aid of the priests than you could have raised the Highland clans a century earlier without the help of their chiefs. In his farewell address he (Sir Charles) remembered he had used a phrase which had been misquoted a hundred time since. He said, "You might as well appeal to a corpse in a dissecting room to rise and walk as appeal to the Irish peasantry to combine and act without their clergy." This had been distorted and constantly cited as if he had said that "Ireland was as dead as a corpse on a dissecting table." Now he hated controversy and did not think it worth while contradicting the misstatement. Before he left the House of Commons the party of fifty had been reduced to five by desertion inside and outside Parliament.

I enquired if he had gone into politics at once in Australia.

He replied in the negative and said his intention originally was to practise as a barrister and refrain from colonial politics, and he did so for a time. But the new constitution was coming into force, he was offered a seat in the first Parliament under it, became a member of the first government created by the will of the people, and thus became committed to a public career. The system of government in Australia Sir Charles described as the freest in the world. When a reform commended itself to the people it was immediately carried into effect. All public offices were filled at the discretion of ministers enjoying the confidence of the community. The Government of England or even the Queen could not appoint or remove even a policeman in Australia. She appointed the governor as her immediate agent or representative, but no one else. Australia was one of the most prosperous countries in the world, and he rejoiced to say that nowhere, not even in the United States, was there so large a proportion of Irishmen who were landed proprietors or in good professional and industrial positions.

I enquired if it was because Irishmen

were a majority of the population that Irish statesmen were so successful in Australia.

He said that the Irish, so far from being a majority, only amounted to a fourth or fifth of the population, and there was actually a smaller proportion of Irish in the parliament there than in the British House of Commons. But men who emigrated generally got their prejudices rubbed off, and a population chiefly English and Scotch allowed Catholics to attain to office in Australia which no wisdom or virtue apparently would enable them to reach in England, where there had not been a Catholic prime minister or speaker since the time of the Tudors.

I asked him his opinion in regard to the existing division among the Home Rulers, but he said he had refrained from mixing in personal controversies in Ireland for more than twenty years, even when his own name or conduct was in dispute, and he intended to persevere in the same course.

I enquired whether he thought the Gladstone administration then in course of formation would be useful to Ireland.

His reply was that if a man of genius and courage like Mr. Gladstone could not carry practical reforms it was vain to hope that any one else could. But for the individual will of Mr. Gladstone the Irish Church establishment would be still in full operation, and the Irish tenantry in three provinces bare of all defence against unjust landlords.

I suggested that the Irish had not shown themselves overgrateful for these services.

He said there was some truth in that charge, but perhaps only a half truth. It was hopeless to expect men to be enthusiastic over imperfect justice, and the English people would not suffer Irish questions to be settled fairly. The disestablishment would have formed a temporary theme for a satirist like the author of "Gulliver's Travels." Religious equality was proclaimed, and it was established by giving one party all the churches, all the glebes, and the bulk of the fund by way of compensation, and when the other party asked a single ruined church, dear to them from historic associations, the House of Lords threw out the bill which granted the