

THE POPE AS A PEACEMAKER.

The question of forming some kind of international tribunal for the just solution of the constantly recurring problems that arise between nation and nation, has during the last year received an unprecedented amount of attention. The reason for this more frequent and earnest discussion of the question of the abolition of war—for that is the grand result aimed at by most of the learned and humane writers on the subject—has been due to a variety of causes.

Early in the year—or rather before the close of its predecessor—the dispute between Great Britain and the United States on the Venezuela question, which for a time caused very real alarm; the trouble in South Africa and the German Emperor's interference; the Armenian question; the Italian-Abyssinian question; the rivalries between the triple alliance and the Franco-Russian combination; and the Spanish Colonial revolts—all these prompts thereby prompted—all these events and discussions, synchronous or successive, have emphasized the uncertainty of international relations and the dreadful and far-reaching contingencies that may possibly ensue on their interruption.

Some months ago we gave a very inadequate outline of the admirable address on international arbitration of Lord Russell of Killowen—one of the most elaborate, moderate and erudite papers on the subject that has yet been submitted to civilization. Nevertheless, Lord Russell is one of a considerable number of learned jurists in both hemispheres whose minds have been turned to this great question and whose invention has been exercised in the effort to discover a way by which nations in their dealings with each other could be brought under the rule of law.

One of the latest plans for inducing the Powers of the world to come together for the impartial consideration of what is right and also what is practicable in this respect is of special interest because it emanates from a Neapolitan professor, and because the lead of His Holiness is a *quid non* of its success. After reviewing the previous schemes proposed for the attainment of perennial peace, Prof. Pasquale Fiore indicates the main features of the existing situation—the vast armaments maintained at a tremendous outlay and the fear that assails any of the Powers thus guarded at the least chance of a diminution of their military strength. On the contrary, to that strength additions are being constantly made. Arbitration, under such circumstances, is not likely to be accepted as a regular and unfailing method of settling disputes; nor is there any guarantee that a powerful nation, if positively dissatisfied with the issue of an arbitration, would accept that issue to its own damage, as a person in a lawsuit would accept the jury's verdict and the judge's sentence. What he thinks possible, however, is a renewal or continuation of the Congress of Paris of forty years ago.

In 1856 the nations, assembled in council, assented to certain grand principles of maritime law and succeeded in winning general recognition for a common law relating to the rights and duties of neutrals and belligerents in time of war. The circumstances of to-day, with its grave, unsettled questions that civilization is afraid to touch, because no nation dares act alone, render another Congress sorely needed.

So long as the present state of things is unaltered, civilization is in constant danger of complications that may result in a fearfully destructive war. A Congress could do much, by making rules, binding on the participants, to provide against such a disaster.

But who is to call it together? Who is there that possesses at once authority or the respect that stands for it, and has at the same time the sanction and sanctity that arises from perfect purity and unselfishness of motive? There is, Prof. Fiore maintains, only one potentate who can claim those qualifications—that is, the Supreme Pontiff. Another point evidences the Pope's fitness for the task—His Holiness's known sympathy with the cause of universal peace. This sympathy has been expressed both in encyclicals and in conversations as well as in public acts, such as the assumption of the Caroline Islands arbitration. All that is necessary, therefore, is that His Holiness should be invited to take the initiative to summoning a Congress. The Congress once assembled, there would be an opportunity for bringing forward those touchy questions of disarmament and an international tribunal—a favorable decision on which would be so great a gain for civilization.

The attitude of the Rev. Dr. Mackay, of Crescent street church, towards the annual St. Andrew ball, which was duly held at the Windsor Hotel last week, is different from that of the other Presbyterian divines in this city. He denounces it as unjustifiable extravagance, in view, especially, of "the deplorable fact that the foreign missionary fund has had to be cut down twenty-five per cent owing to the hard times." Other Presbyterian ministers go to the ball

and enjoy themselves to the top of their bent, and let the foreign missionary fund take care of itself. They evidently think that the dancing of a strathpey is more acceptable to St. Andrew than the baptism of a convert. It is a matter, however, to be argued out amongst themselves.

A DISGRACE TO CIVILIZATION.

Despite the fun often justifiably poked at it the Coroner's Court often serves a very useful purpose. There was an instance of this at an inquest held in Belfast, Ireland, the other day, when an incidental reference to the accommodation for prisoners at the police station gave the coroner an opportunity of calling attention to an official report on the subject which has long been before the City Council there. Here are some passages from this document:—

There are only twelve cells, arranged in three tiers, and the upper tier is used only as store-rooms. More than a hundred prisoners are often shut up in these cells. The air is indescribably foul. The cells are dirty, and we saw vermin crawling up the walls. An open grating is the only means by which air and light can enter. The heating apparatus is useless, and neither pillow nor rug is provided for the prisoners. What the condition of the unfortunate creatures must be confined in winter weather in unheated cells, open to the air, without covering, may be imagined, but cannot easily be described. Each cell contains a closet, in a hopeless condition of dirt and decay. These closets are only flushed once a day, when the prisoners leave the cells. The large cell contained, when we visited it, no less than sixteen prisoners, huddled together, without light or heat, and breathing air of a character that is hardly describable. Not one of the cells was properly washed. The drainage is as bad as bad can be. The soil-pipe leading from the upper cells is broken. The hall is so bad that the drainpipes are unable to carry their contents away. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to know that the place is swarming with rats."

It is almost incredible that such a horrible state of things can exist in a civilized city. But that it actually does exist in Belfast, the banner city of Orangism, of Protestant ascendancy, of secular education, and of high percentage of literacy—a high percentage of literacy which would make the Montreal Herald's "education" writer thrill with pleasure—is a fact which cannot be gained.

ST. PATRICK'S PARISH.

The Rev. Dr. Conaty, so well and favorably known in Montreal, and especially by the people of St. Patrick's, has received through Cardinal Gibbons, official notification of his appointment by the Holy Father to the Rectorship of the Catholic University at Washington, in place of Bishop Keane, who is called to Rome by the Pope to take his place in the Propaganda. Dr. Conaty intends visiting Montreal in all probability this week, and if so he will preach in St. Patrick's on Sunday, either at Grand Mass, or in the evening at 7.30. His many friends here will be delighted to have an opportunity of again hearing his eloquent voice and of congratulating him on the high honour which the Holy See has conferred upon him. He intends taking up his permanent residence at Washington towards the end of this month.

We wish the distinguished churchman God-speed in the new and important field that awaits him.

Already two of the four new altars to be placed in the nave of St. Patrick's have been donated by generous members of the parish. The St. Bridget's altar, which was planned by Mr. W. E. Doran, architect of the church, is a beautiful specimen of Gothic art, and will add much to the already magnificent decorations of that grand edifice. It is hoped that the two remaining altars, viz., that of St. Ann, and of the Holy Angels, will soon be given also. Those desirous of erecting a memorial to themselves or to some deceased friend have here a unique opportunity.

The wainscot panels around the church, which are to contain the "Litany of the Saints," are being taken very fast. Within ten days, thirty-five of these beautiful panels, each to contain an oil painting of a Saint by Mr. Locke, have been taken, and are going fast every day. At this rate the "Litany" will be filled in before three weeks have passed.

Preparations are already being made to celebrate the golden jubilee of old St. Patrick's, which occurs on March 17th of the coming year, 1897. The first Mass was said in this, the Mother Church of the Irish Catholics of Montreal, on St. Patrick's Day, 1847. That the occasion may be one of true Christian joy and happiness for every member of the parish, a grand four weeks mission is to be held in St. Patrick's this winter. It will be arranged so as to close before March 17th.

The two splendid oil paintings in the sanctuary, by Mr. W. S. Locke, of Brooklyn, who decorated St. Patrick's, are worth a visit by any lover of art. One is a superb copy of Titian's masterpiece, "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin." The other is a picture of the "Sacred Heart," and is Mr. Locke's own composition. Each of these pictures stands over thirty feet high by some twelve feet in width, and their execution give evidence of high artistic merit in the painter.

The Barron buildings, on St. James street, were totally destroyed by fire last night. The total loss will foot up about \$150,000.

"Tommy," said the teacher, "what is meant by nutritious food?" "Something that ain't got no taste to it," replied Tommy.—Household Words.

THE INDIAN FAMINE.

GRAPHIC AND TOUCHING LETTER FROM A CATHOLIC SISTER.

STARVATION AND PLAGUE STARING THE PEOPLE IN THE FACE—HEROIC DEVOTION OF THE PRIESTS—PROSELYTIZING THE CHILDREN.

In a letter which has just been received from a nun who is stationed at St. Mary's Convent Allahabad, a picture is given of the sufferings caused in India by the famine. The writer says:

"May, God bless you for your great kindness in offering to help us, for just now we are in a dreadful state. Thousands of poor creatures are dying of hunger, as famine has spread all over the land, and for want of money we are losing the souls of hundreds of God's little ones. It is really dreadful to see our compound in the mornings, filled with hundreds of poor, starving creatures crying for bread. We can give them but little, for everything is now so very expensive, and our funds, as you know, are so low that we can hardly pay for what we get to eat.

THE FIELDS ARE ALL PARCHED

for want of rain, and there is no grain to be had. So here we are, with famine and plague staring us in the face—for a terrible plague has got into the country from China, and is now lessening the population of Bombay, Calcutta, and other places rapidly. What will become of us if things do not change it is really very hard to tell. We have had public prayers and processions, that God may spare and have mercy on us. I wish that some of the good people at home would get up a collection for us, for we are really in a dreadful state. The priests here have a dreadful time of it. Only a fortnight ago one of them had to bring 15 or 16 starving children from Satna to Allahabad, a distance of many miles, and the poor man had to deprive himself of all his food to try and satisfy them even a little. Two of the poor children died shortly after arriving here, and one was in such a dreadful state that her entrails were quite visible. We were so happy when they died, knowing they had entered into a place of intense happiness and bliss for all eternity. Some places we have heard of mothers devouring their children in their dreadful hunger, and in others again they are eating the blades of grass in the fields. It is, I believe, dreadful to see those that are stricken by the plague. The whole body swells and becomes perfectly black, and after a few hours of intense suffering the patients die. A few weeks ago an English gentleman rescued a poor little child who had been

THROWN INTO THE RIVER

by her mother, and gave her the name 'Moses,' after 'Moses.' She is now in our native orphanage at Bankipore. Our poor parish priest, Rev. Father Carroll, is quite heartbroken about his people, for there are many Europeans—mostly Irish—dying of starvation. The Protestants are taking all the children from us, as, of course, they have the money at their command. Most of our poor people have enough to do to keep hunger from their own doors, and consequently the priest is almost as poor as those who go to him for help. However, he is a holy, kind-hearted man, and would deprive himself rather than send them away fasting. What grieves us most is to see the number of children we are losing daily for the want of a little money wherewith to buy them from their poor, starving parents, and also to see how powerless the poor priests are for want of the same. The other day the Bishop of Punjab, or Lahore, got about 100 children for the sum of 20s. We have asked some Catholic gentlemen to baptize any little children they may find in a dying state on the roads, as many are found thus. I sincerely hope and pray that God in His mercy may soon send us some little help; for if things go on as they are at present we fear a mutiny very much. As it is, riots have broken out in several parts of the country, and only a couple of days ago a terrible outrage was perpetrated on a beautiful statue of the Queen at Bombay. It was smeared all over with tar, and that certainly does not speak well for the natives' kindly feelings for the English."

ARCHBISHOP FABRE.

PRAYERS OFFERED UP FOR HIS RECOVERY IN ALL THE CHURCHES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE.

There is no change in the condition of His Grace Archbishop Fabre as we go to press. In all the churches, yesterday, prayers were offered up before the Blessed Sacrament for his recovery, in accordance with the request made by the Vicar-General of the archdiocese. His Grace is, however, weaker, despite the fact that he spent a comparatively easy night. Among the visitors at the Episcopal residence yesterday was His Lordship Bishop Emard, of Valleyfield.

NOTES AND NOTICES.

The metallic action used in the Chickering Upright Pianos renders them proof against atmospheric changes. C. W. Lindsay, 2268 St. Catherine street, has imported an assortment of Grands and Uprights for the Holidays.

Having a demand for second-hand upright pianos to rent, C. W. Lindsay, 2268 St. Catherine street, will offer inducements to immediate customers, giving such instruments in part payment for new upright and Grand Pianos by Chickering, Heintzman & Newcomb & Co.

BUTTER AND CREAM AS MEDICINE

One of the favorite remedies of physicians is cod liver oil. Why a product of the decomposition of fish refuse should ever have been chanced upon when butter and cream are nature's supply and at once the most readily obtainable is unexplainable. While any one can take cream or butter the consuming of fish oil requires the fortitude of a saint and the heroism of a martyr, and, as we know, the oil does not agree with

many and is hard of digestion in others. Now, it has been demonstrated that fresh, unsalted butter is rather more digestible than oil and is pleasant to take, on thin-cut slices of bread, and as high as four ounces a day of this butter can be eaten with impunity by even delicate persons, and cream can be taken to the full degree of the patient. Where one is suffering from prostrating sickness and no body needs nourishment this fresh butter, it is now asserted, has no equal in building up the wasted tissues of the body, and as a stimulant very hot, fresh milk is without a rival, outside of the use of alcohol, which is better left alone, when possible. Growing children may be greatly benefited by indulging in generous amounts of butter, though it may seem expensive, but it may prove the cheapest in the end. Either of these remedies can be taken without a doctor's prescription and is outside of the "kill or cure" warrant.—Practical Farmer.

CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

The case of the smallest farmers is pitiable in the extreme. Their holdings are chiefly in narrow, winding glens and ravines, pent up among the mountains. Their cultivable tracts on the low level can hardly be drained, and are marshy and swampy. When the rainy season began in August the swollen mountain streams poured torrents of water over these little plots. The destruction of their entire crop was completed almost within a week. The rain spread the germs of the potato disease to the whole crop. The oats and hay rotted in the flooded ground. More than half this class saved nothing of their crop. The rest of them got in up to about a fourth.

The position of the most heavily struck class is easily ascertainable. They grow invariably an acre of potatoes and about a quarter of an acre of oats, and the hay varies from 10 to 20 tons. Their stock of cattle ranges from 4 to 7 head. The current local prices for cattle are from £5 to £6 a head. Taking the crop at the prices of an average year—say it would be obviously unfair to quote current prices—which have gone up considerably owing to the scarcity, the value of the crop would be as follows:—

Potatoes.....	£20 to £25
Oats.....	2 to 3
Hay.....	15 to 20

Total crop lost.....£37 to £48

Against this their stock of cattle varies from four to seven head, and at the current prices at the local fairs this would represent in money from £25 to £50.

Assuming that he paid no rent the poorest class of farmer has £25 worth of stock to maintain his family upon until he can get in the next year's harvest, and to pay out of it the price of seeds for next year's crop, manuring and tilling the ground, and restocking his grazing lands.

These figures show the farmer's actual loss in money so far, and the extent of his resources. They, by no means, represent his loss in comparison with previous years. Having no potatoes of his own he will have to buy them. He must also get in hay for his cattle. The price of both these commodities is about doubled. Hay in the local markets early in the season was to be had for £1 the ton. It is now £2. Potatoes were last year going for 1s 8d the cwt. in Sligo. They are now 3s 2d to 3s 6d. Everything that the farmer has to buy is dear. What he is selling is cheap. Cattle are £1 to £2 apiece under last year's prices, and the farmers who bought cattle in spring have to part with them at prices which are nothing or only very little ahead of those he paid for them six or seven months ago.

In the course of my investigation I endeavored, as far as possible, to combine personal observation with inquiry. I met and talked with the tenants in their homes and in the fields. Everywhere I saw hay rotted in manure heaps, the oats sodden with moisture, and girls and boys picking through it for good grains and drying them at the fire. Out in the tillage land I saw the men digging at potato stalks, and turning up tubers which were like masses of black pulp, giving out a sickening odour. In the close glens I did not see a sound potato. In the more open valleys an occasional patch free from the black disease was found, but the potato was soft and wet, and had a bitter, unpleasant taste when cooked.

I sought information from every source where knowledge was likely to be found. I obtained the views of traders in towns, of solicitors, doctors and clergymen—all, in fact, who might be supposed to be acquainted with the condition of the agricultural population. I interviewed farmers, landlords, and on the country roads entered into conversation with policemen. When I came to weigh this mass of testimony from so many different sources I found in it practically no divergence. It leads to the conclusion which I have endeavored to put before your readers that all classes of farmers in the county have been severely hit by the failure of the harvest, and that they are affected on these grand divisions:—

1.—The rich farmers, comparatively few in number, who cannot pay their rents in full without serious embarrassment, and who must draw upon their capital for whatever portion of the rent they do pay.

2.—A smaller class of farmers who may be able to afford a portion of the rent, but must then obtain largely on credit the seeds, &c., of next year's farming.

3.—The poor farmers, the most numerous class, half of whom can pay scarcely any rents, and the other half of whom are confronted with all the horrors of famine. The landlords have done nothing in reply to the representations to them from various boards and public meetings, including a meeting of Unionist farmers of North Leitrim, held in Manorhamilton. The Leitrim landlords have never reduced the rents. The only "reductions" one hears of are an offer of 10 per cent. on old arrears paid up made some years ago by one landlord, and an abatement of a like percentage on another property to tenants who had "titled out of Court. In the adjoining

County of Cavan reductions have been given, and on the Colonel Stewart estate there, for which Mr. C. C. Templeman is the agent, 40 per cent., or 8s in the pound, has been announced off this gauge.

RESOLUTIONS OF CONDOLENCE.

At the regular meeting of Branch 2, C.M.B.A., held in St. Ann's hall, on Tuesday, 2nd inst., the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved.—Whereas it has pleased Almighty God in His infinite wisdom to remove by the hand of death from our midst a worthy Brother, who held the high position of Grand President of our Order in this Province; and was also a loving husband and kind father; be it also

Resolved.—That the members of this Branch tender to the wife and family of our deceased brother Patrick O'Reilly, our heartfelt sympathy for the great loss they have sustained, which makes this to them a time of sorrow. And we earnestly pray that God may give them the fortitude to bear the heavy cross in thus depriving them of a loving parent and a good and upright citizen; we further

Resolved.—That this resolution be entered in our minutes, and that our Charter be draped for a period of six months, and a copy of said resolution be sent to the family of our deceased brother, and also another copy to be inserted in the next issue of the TRUE WITNESS.

P. KEON, H. REC. SEC.

At the monthly meeting of St. Patrick's Society, held on Monday evening, 7th inst., the following resolutions of condolence with the family of the late Mr. P. O'Reilly were carried unanimously:—

Whereas, this society, since its last meeting, has learned with the deepest regret, of the death of one of its most useful members, Mr. Patrick O'Reilly, be it, therefore,

Resolved, That this society tender its most sincere condolence and sympathy to his bereaved widow and children, and pray God to sustain them in the trial which they are passing through.

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of St. Patrick's Society, and that copies be communicated to the late Mr. O'Reilly's family, and to THE TRUE WITNESS.

(Signed),
JOHN O'LEARY,) Committee
JAMES MEEK,) on
THOS. J. O'NEILL,) Resolutions.

At the regular monthly meeting of St. Gabriel's T. A. & B. Society, it was moved by Mr. James Burns, seconded by Mr. Michael McCarthy, and unanimously adopted:

Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God in His infinite wisdom to remove by death Miss Katie McCarthy, the beloved daughter of our worthy brother Mr. James McCarthy, be it

Resolved.—That the members of St. Gabriel's T. A. & B. Society tender their sympathy and condolence to Brother James McCarthy, and pray that God may grant him courage in his sad bereavement.

And be it further resolved.—That these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of this Society and that a copy be sent to Brother James McCarthy and family and to THE TRUE WITNESS.

WILLIAM FORD, Sec.

Richard—I understand that old Griffin has given his consent to your marriage with his daughter. Was he good-natured about it?

Robert—Yes, confound it, he was so good-natured that I couldn't help wishing that while I was about it I had asked for something valuable.—Boston Transcript.

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