

sion and absolution was steadily and markedly increasing. (Applause.) Men and women must be encouraged to come to the clergy, and this they would only do if they knew that, though a man like themselves, he is endowed with supernatural powers for the exercise of his ministry, and that his ordination was no form, but a real endowment of powers from on high. He was to search for souls, that he might make them recognise their sin, and long for healing, and that they were to come to him that he might exercise the ministry of reconciliation, and give absolution and advice. Whilst in certain quarters the bitterest invectives were being hurled against this means of grace, and the term habitual confession, as a land of 'Mesopotamia,' was being used in place of the term auricular confession of bygone days, souls were perishing and starving round them for want of this spiritual nourishment which alone could awaken them, and save them from their sins. (Applause.) He could not see how it was possible to work in crowded cities without this.

Was it not possible for them, as a branch of the Church, to have clear directions regarding its use, and to have a regular order of confessors appointed? The practice was right. It was permissible. It was a common thing in the Church for people to go to confession. And yet they spoke of it with bated breath, and wondered why the thousands of folk in the towns were indifferent to religion, and seemed to have lost the sense of sin. If things were to be tolerated, why were they not to be sanctioned and regulated? Whatever was the thing they were afraid of? Could they wonder if sometimes they were accused of a want of backbone, and it was said of them, "They are not Catholics, and they are not Protestants; they must be Anglicans." (Laughter.)

We have, or have had, upon our bookshelves, a goodly collection of Anglican manuals that give instructions as to the manner of confessing. Among these are 'Sacramental Confession' (by Rev. F. C. Lowden), 'Hints to Penitents', 'How to Make a Good Confession', 'The Prayer Book for the Young', 'A help to Repentance' (published in Hobart), and (among others) the well-known 'Manual' by the Rev. Vernon Staley, which devotes twelve pages to 'Sacramental Confession,' and in a tone that is singularly Catholic. Some years ago, an Anglican clergyman, 'Father' Black, made himself responsible for the statement that from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred of his brethren in the ministry were in the habit of hearing confessions in England and Scotland. A hundred years ago hardly one would have dared to make such an avowal. Well, time's whirligig brings in his revenges. And one of these is the testimony now borne by a large and growing section of the Anglican Church to the antiquity, and usefulness of 'this most scriptural duty' of the confession of grievous sins committed after Baptism.

IRELAND'S CLAIM STATED

By 'T. P.'

I ask leave (writes the gifted and versatile T. P. O'Connor, M.P., in the 'North American') to give a short statement of the cause of Ireland and especially of the claim that she makes to the sympathy of the people of the United States.

What is the claim of Ireland? It is that there may be restored to her that of which she was robbed by force and fraud—her own native Parliament.

There are some people who are under the impression that the demand of Ireland is for the creation of something revolutionary, novel—something that never existed before. The Irish Parliament, cribbed, cabined and confined, but recognised as a separate assembly, had existed in Ireland for centuries, when, in 1800, it was destroyed. Our demand is for the restoration of an assembly and of a national existence almost as ancient as that of the Hungarians; and England, like Austria, will only be

Restoring the Old,

and not introducing the new, when she again consents to the existence of an Irish Parliament.

I have spoken of that Parliament as having been destroyed by force and by fraud. On that point there is no contest among historians. Lecky, who, unfortunately, became in his old age an enemy of the na-

tional demand, has, in page after page of his famous history, described the corrupt means by which the Act of Union, which destroyed the Irish Parliament, was brought about. Gladstone has characterised the conduct of Pitt—the chief Minister responsible for the business—by the strong epithet, 'Blackguard.'

The two houses of the Irish Parliament, which surrendered Ireland's rights, had no national authority to do so. Though four-fifths of the Irish population, then, as now, were Catholic, not one Catholic sat in either house. It was the betrayal and the

Sale of Ireland's Liberties

by a small and corrupt oligarchy, which, under the intolerant system then in existence, was placed in control of all Ireland's population and all Ireland's destinies.

The Act of Union, though passed by such questionable means, might claim some sanctity if the results had answered to the promises by which it was carried. It was to make Ireland prosperous, free, in a better position than she was while ruled by her own Parliament. Above all, Ireland was to gain in wealth and in fair taxation by the power and generosity of her neighbors.

Nothing could be more tragic than the contrast between the succeeding facts and these anticipations. Listen to this brief summary of British rule in Ireland since the Act of Union.

1. Three famines.
2. Three rebellions.
3. Ninety Coercion Acts, depriving Ireland of all the liberty supposed to be fundamental in the British Constitution—suspension over and over again, for example, of habeas corpus, suspension of trial by jury, suspension of free speech, free writing, and free meeting.

The worst of these three famines was that of 1846. It is computed that a million people died of hunger or pestilence in that dreadful period, and yet in those very years Ireland produced more food than would have fed all her population.

Famine, plague, want of liberty—these are the things which have produced

The Great Irish Emigration

and have robbed Ireland in half a century of half her population.

The Act of Union, thus, while depriving Ireland of the control of her own affairs, has led to the most disastrous failure in all history in the art of government. The Act, in addition, was responsible for the worst land system in Europe—a system which put a penalty on industry, which gave to the landlord the full fruits of the labor of his tenants, and which, placing in his hands the one industry of Ireland, enabled him to destroy the home, to blight the lives, to exile and even to kill thousands of the Irish people.

By their fruits shall you know them. Were there ever such terrible and tragic fruits as these from a legislative measure?

Take taxation, finally. An English Royal Commission reported that Ireland was

Overtaxed

to the extent of \$17,500,000 (£3,500,000) a year. This grievance, instead of being redressed, has been aggravated by the additional taxation rendered necessary by the foolish, unnecessary, and wicked war with the Boer Republics.

A member of the present administration, Mr. Thomas Lough, has summed up the case of Ireland on this point in the sentence: 'Since the Union, the population of Ireland has halved; the taxation of Ireland has doubled.'

The present system in Ireland is as remarkable for its extravagance, for its folly, and for its inefficiency as for its want of moral right in the assent of the governed. There are forty-two public boards, each more inefficient than the other. Education—the sole fortune of most young Irish boys and girls—is bad, root and branch, from top to bottom. The elementary schools are often in squalid cottages, badly ventilated, and in winter the fuel has often had to be provided out of the poor salaries of the teachers.

While in Trinity College the Protestant minority has every advantage of university education, the Catholic youth of Ireland for two generations have been demanding in vain a university in which Catholics may find education without a sacrifice of their religious convictions.

There is scarcely a department of human life which is not prejudiced by this inefficient system. I almost wept once as Lady Dudley—wife of the gentleman who but the other day was Tory Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—told me of the terrible ravage of disease, mostly tuberculosis, on the western shores of Ireland—ravages

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