

"The Catholic Truth is as clear as noonday, and so should be its preaching and teaching to all believers. We desire and command that all our priests imitate the Apostle Paul in knowing only *Jesum Christum et hunc crucifixum* (1 Cor. 2, 2). Neither we nor any other Bishop, except the Roman Pontiff, can give definitions of faith. Benedict XIV. simply conceded, what was besought, that by the mediation of Our Lady of Guadalupe our prayers might be offered before the Throne of God, assigning also the proper offices; which act signifies only that such a service is pious and good, without saying anything in reference to a private belief. Therefore our priests must not confound a private faith in the apparition at Guadalupe with the sacred articles of Catholic faith, nor hesitate to say, when the circumstances call for it, that believers are not obliged to accept the apparition. Let them honor with solemn services the most holy Mother of God, under the national name of Guadalupe, as our Patron and Protector, but in their conversation and preaching, let them not speak of the apparition of Tepeyac."

This pastoral letter was called forth amid the general excitement aroused a year ago by the proposed temporary transfer of the Guadalupe painting to the Cathedral of Mexico. Archbishop Labastida desired to make extensive repairs in the Guadalupe church, and afterwards to restore the sacred figure to its beautified resting-place. He had a precedent for such action in the similar measures taken in 1836, when the painting of the Virgin was for a time in the convent of the Capuchins. But it was strongly suspected that the Archbishop was determined to give the great demonstrations, sure to be made on such an occasion, a political turn. It was feared that the scheme was a trump card of the reactionary party. Consequently, great opposition to the plan was manifested. Prominent Liberals petitioned the Government to prohibit the intended public procession, erection of triumphal arches, coronation of the Virgin, etc. What steps the Government took is not accurately known; but the Archbishop was, in some way, led to defer the solemnity, which had been fixed for the 31st of last December, until a time when, to use his own words found in the edict which he issued, "the public mind shall have calmed."

It only remains to add that the Bishop of Tamaulipas has been compelled to eat his own words. A second pastoral letter on the Guadalupe Virgin appeared under date of August 8, 1888. It runs as follows:

"His Excellency, Cardinal Monaco, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of the Roman and Universal Inquisition, in an official note of July 9, just received, writes as follows: 'Their Excellencies, the Cardinals Inquisitors General, have severely condemned thy manner of conduct and speech in opposition to the miracle or the apparition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary of Guadalupe.' And inasmuch as we have never intended to separate ourselves by so much as a jot from the teaching and determinations of the Holy See, or of its worthy Tribunals or Congregations, we say to all those who may have read our writings, that we also severely condemn our manner of conduct and speech in opposition to the miracle or apparition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, and that we recall, annul, and disown all our writings in which anything may have appeared, express or implied, against the miracle or apparition of our Lady of Guadalupe."

#### THE TIMES COMMISSION.

DUBLIN, December 1, 1888.

THE *Times* Commission is dragging its slow length along. We are now at the twenty-second day, and seem little nearer the conclusion of the accuser's case than we were at first. As yet there has been none of that irrefragable proof we were led to expect of the direct connection of Mr. Parnell with the crimes of the last ten years in Ireland. The *Times* has now at its disposal all the accounts and proceedings

of the National League, and all the Land League documents still existing. Still we hear nothing of consequence that the newspapers did not tell us long ago. It is, in fact, not individuals that are being tried, but a country in a state of revolution; and hitherto the evidence has rather gone to strengthen a case for that revolution. As an Irish statesman lately said in Parliament, we are now having laid before us in a concrete form the deplorable results of misgovernment in Ireland.

Until the establishment of the Land League, Ireland lay helplessly bound in the fetters of a land system that paralyzed her energies, and prevented real advance in civilization. Left to herself, or the force of her own public opinion, she would long ago gradually, and without what would have been felt to be loss to the landlords, have modified the social order to her own needs. No minority could continue to hold a majority to such a system; but Ireland was held down by the irresistible power of England, which at the same time was not influenced by her opinion. Nay, so great is the chasm in Ireland itself, resulting from the middle and upper classes being enabled to depend entirely on England, that they also, living beside or among the Irish people, were ignorant or careless regarding the land customs that were crushing the country. Go back as far as we like, and we find the same force at work—a hopeless, grinding increase of rent upon the tenants' own improvements. Inglis, the traveller, was a singularly acute observer and by no means sympathetic. When he travelled in Ireland in 1834, it was the same story all over the country—excessive rents repeatedly raised. Opening the book at random the other day, I came upon a passage where, in the County Wexford, he found the people making a brave struggle to live in a civilized manner: "I went into the house of a farmer owning forty acres when he and his family were about to begin dinner. It consisted of potatoes, buttermilk, sweet skimmed milk, barley bread and butter. The farm had been four generations in the farmer's family. His great-grandfather paid six shillings per acre, his grandfather ten shillings, his father one pound, and he paid two pounds." Ten years later we had the Devon Commission, with its terrible disclosures. But nothing was done. Checked for a time by the famine, the screwing up of rent continued. The landlords held that the tenants were entitled to only a bare subsistence. Efforts at decency and improvement were regarded as proofs that there was a margin upon which the rent could be increased. "You are not the kind of tenant we want," said an agent to a cousin of mine who remonstrated against a rise. "You, with your style of living, may not be able to live and pay: we want a different class of tenant, who will be satisfied to live humbly and pay more." I heard upon good authority of a farmer's rent being increased because, while taking a son to an English school, he had the misfortune to meet "the agent" on board the steamer. If he could afford to give his son English schooling, he could afford to pay a higher rent. Ireland was kept at starvation point, and in famine times had to beg round the world.

Lord Kenmare's agent, giving evidence a few days ago before the Commission regarding those Elysian pre-Land-League days, said that then he often knew the tenants to be "blue with hunger." They were "blue with hunger," and yet there was little outrage, and, as Mr. Gladstone has put it, like people in a beleaguered city, they blindly clutched, each man regardless of his neighbor, at the only means of support available. This was all only nine

years ago: how was it that we in Ireland, not connected with the land, failed to perceive how impossible it was that such a state of things could be continued? Even those who had given their lives to the study of the question, had lost hope of a remedial settlement. Outraged humanity must in the end assert itself, and the explosion came. And it is really this explosion that the *Times* Commission is trying. So long as the people continued in mute and hopeless ignorance, regarding it as manifest destiny—that state of life to which Providence had called them, to be like sponges squeezed for the benefit of others—of course they were in the main quiet. In the main: from time to time and here and there, where oppression was worse than ordinary, took place acts of violence before which would pale most that have since then occurred. The moment those arose who unsparingly denounced the system and put their hand to its destruction; the moment a great organization was started to unite the tenants and work for reform, that moment it was inevitable that the flood-gates of the dammed-up indignation and realized sense of wrong and bitterness of generations should be opened, and we should have the ocean of horrors now being depicted. In the ferocity of the people too often evidenced (men even dancing around the blood of a murdered landlord) is shown, as in a mirror, the hatefulness of the system producing such results. Without a movement of like vehemence, reform was impossible; and, looking back at all that has since occurred, and all that has been accomplished, I for one marvel at the comparative bloodlessness and absence of suffering with which the change has been effected.

We have the extraordinary spectacle of the Law Courts in London trying the revolution, while all over Ireland the courts are busy utilizing it, and helping thousands, alike the poorest tenant and the families of chief justices, to wring from their landlords the benefits it has secured. If there were any sincere non-political belief in the unrighteousness of the land agitation as a whole, those who profess to disapprove ought not to share the advantages due to it.

So far, the revelations before the Commission have tended to strengthen and consolidate the Irish National party, and inspire it with greater confidence than ever in its leaders. The judges seem to be against Mr. Parnell and inclined to favor the *Times*. It is difficult otherwise to account for the admission of so much apparently irrelevant and redundant evidence. What will be their decision? If it be purely legal, if the circumstances of Ireland be ignored, the judges may easily, from their standpoint, conclude that there was a combination against the landlords, resulting in outrage, which the leaders failed to do their best to suppress. If it be a judgment on the reasonableness of and necessity for the movement, this will be largely influenced by the strength of the case for the defendants.

There is something cruel in the costs to which the latter are subjected. £23,000 have already been collected, almost entirely in Ireland. When all comes in from the States, Australia, and England, supposing we have £50,000, that will hardly be too much. This is a small sum compared to what is being spent in law expenses by the tenants through the litigation to which they are forced in Ireland before the commissions and courts to seek reductions in their rents. An effective, statesmanlike settlement of Irish affairs is being continually postponed, and we are plunged more and more deeply into a chaos of litigation, uncertainty, heart-burning, and demoralization, upon which batten an increas-

ing number of lawyers and a widening circle of officialism. The *Times* has, besides practically boundless resources at its back, the whole force of the Government. This is an issue between the people of Ireland and a newspaper, in which the Executive might be expected at least to remain neutral; yet so used are we to our paid officials and Castle system of government being pitted against the people, that we are hardly struck by the entire Irish Executive being practically placed at the disposal of the *Times*. A small army of police and magistrates and persons in Government employment has been maintained in London upon full salaries for weeks, and will doubtless be renewed and maintained so long as there is a chance of dragging down the character of the people who pay them, and the representatives in whom that people trust.

Apart from the possible decision of the judges, it is difficult to say what will be the general effect of the proceedings of the Commission upon the British public. We should have little fear if they were fully reported in the papers; but editors generally omit those passages which tell against their own views; and even the *Times*, which was wont to report correctly, has not been altogether free from making slight alterations in its own favor. The reduction of the Conservative majority at the Holborn election on Thursday does not look as if the action of the *Times* was serving the Government, and there is something to show that the English people are getting tired of this eternal round of coercion and bickering. The abandonment of the Van and Wheel Tax and of the Irish Drainage Bills; the evident shock to the House of Commons at the attempt of an Irish police constable, by a ruse, to serve Mr. Sheehy, M. P., with a Crimes Act summons within the House itself; the small majority on Mr. Bradlaugh's motion regarding that unfortunate Mr. Moroney who, for refusing to be sworn in an inquiry into some plan of campaign proceedings, has been kept nearly two years in prison—these may be but straws in the wind, it would be possible to attach too much significance to them; nevertheless, in estimating the drift of British opinion, we cannot put them out of consideration.

Besides the Commission, there is not much to remark upon here at present. Agrarian crime has perhaps diminished, but everything is pervaded by the canker of coercion, distrust, hatred, and unsettlement. One of the latest efforts of the dominant party to extend peace and good will through Ireland is advertisements that have appeared in the newspapers from one of the chief land-agent firms of numerous farms to be let—"Protestants only need apply." The opposition of the Parnell and Liberal parties to a further grant of £5,000,000 for the extension of peasant proprietary under Lord Ashborne's Act rests mainly upon political grounds and questions of general expediency. Were it not so strongly advocated and urged by Mr. Smith and Mr. Balfour, it would have the approval of some who now, at least, stand neutral in the discussion. D. B.

#### A BAVARIAN PEASANT PLAY.

LEIPZIG, November 19, 1888.

It is with a fine touch of traditional contempt that we Anglo-Saxons are wont to accord to the Frenchman a superiority over ourselves in the pleasant art of acting. Like George Eliot's "Mr. Craig," we have "heard tell" that one Briton can lick ten Frenchmen, and we would not willingly deprive such feeble creatures of any inferior advantage that nature may have bestowed upon them. With respect to the Ger-

mans, however, the case is different. They enjoy somewhat the same physical advantages as ourselves, they have no reputation for the *spirituel*; and yet, with them also, we are compelled, I think, to the same admission. American acting is, as a rule, better than British; but such players as can be heard in almost any small German city are not to be found in America outside of two theatres in New York, nor in all England away from Mr. Irving's establishment in the Strand. Nor is acting the only point in connection with the theatre upon which we of the Anglo-Saxon race are open to the accusation of inferiority. If I were attempting an article upon the "present condition of the stage" (which Heaven forbid! the topic has been overdone) I should find it instructive to note that here in Germany the plays of Shakspeare are repeated at least five times for every once they are given in England, and, making due allowance for the representations of wandering stars, twice as often as they are performed in America. Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, and the other native dramatists are as frequently, but no more so, before the eye of the public; and the small street-boy, for the equivalent of five cents, can hear the masterpieces of his country's literature performed by competent actors. Perhaps the roseate view of the German stage that this calls up will be clouded for some when I add, as devotion to historical accuracy compels me to do, that Offenbachian opéra bouffe, long since dead in its native land, still flourishes here, and may be heard at a slightly increased cost of admission. The correct principle of political economy here displayed, in taxing a luxury higher than a necessity of life, will have to be counted in excuse of the performance.

But the German stage does not run all to classical drama, any more than it does entirely to free-and-easy opéra bouffe; and it is in the middle ground lying between these two extremes that one must dig, if he is seeking something novel and representative to talk about. Most modern German plays which occupy the largest acre in this middle ground, share with most modern German novels a common defect—they are distinguished for nothing in particular. The best one can say for them is that they are pleasing, and the worst, that they are apt to be sentimental. But if few will be found to claim for them any striking originality, there will be still fewer willing to deny that they testify to a healthier state of public taste than do the wretched burlesques and idiotic extravaganzas that appear to fill most English and American theatres. The extravaganza could never succeed in Germany: its flimsiness of structure is too fatally at variance with the national appetite for solidity—in amusement as well as in other things.

If, however, it is still the mission of the stage to depict more or less faithfully, according as it is able, the manners and customs of the day, then we may be grateful for a class of plays that exists in Germany, and for one company, at least, in whose behalf it may be claimed that they in great measure fulfil this lofty purpose. They concern themselves, indeed, with only one class of people—the peasants; but as this class is a very numerous one, and as its present customs are likely, in common with all other customs not conforming to the standard set for all by this great century of democracy, soon to disappear, one need not so much regret this limitation. Indeed, the limitation is essential when one comes to consider that these plays, in order to be true to the life, must be spoken in dialect, and that it is not easy to find actors equally at home in the language of the field and mountain and that of the draw-

ing room. It was my good fortune, a few weeks ago, to see one of these plays performed by the company to which I have alluded—an admirable organization of actors, whose home is in Munich, but who spend most of their time in travelling from city to city. The name of the play was "The Crucifix-Carver of Ammergau," and the scene was laid, as in all the other plays of the troupe, among the peasants of Upper Bavaria. The story told was a simple one, containing, however, incident enough to prevent the action from ever flagging, and plot enough to bar any accusation of its having been written merely as a setting for some pretty dancing and singing. Nothing is made to occur that could not very well take place among the simple mountaineers with whom the play is concerned; and, if we except the fact that geniuses, among painters as among peasants, are becoming rare nowadays, none of the personages display qualities above their station.

The first scene, which takes place in the public room of the inn at Ammergau, introduces us to all the principal characters of the little drama. The landlord, who has just been chosen burgermeister, is receiving the congratulations of his fellow-townsmen. His foster-daughter *Loni*, and an incorrigible peasant-girl employed as her assistant in the kitchen, are serving the guests with beer. On the stove in the corner is seated an old man, of ragged and unshorn appearance, who cuts splinters from a bit of wood, and contributes, from time to time, chips of wisdom to the conversation. He and *Loni* appear to be great friends, and the young girl, who has all the country robustness of body and roughness of speech, treats him with a tenderness that she shows for no one else. Among the landlord's visitors are *Trandl*, an old woman with a great deal to say for herself, and her son *Pauli*, who brings with him a crucifix that he has just finished carving on an order from the innkeeper. The crucifix is much admired, and while it is being exhibited, *Fritz Baumeister*, an artist who spends his summers in the village to paint the scenery there, comes in and declares it to be the work of a genius. *Baumeister* offers to take *Pauli* to the city with him to study; but the lad is in love with *Loni*, and, although she has nothing but hard words in return for his patient devotion, he cannot make up his mind to go away and give her up.

While the artist is talking to *Pauli*, *Loni* is the subject of a conversation between the new burgermeister and one of his neighbors, who asks the girl's hand for his son *Muckl*. The match is considered a very desirable one for *Loni*, who is only a foundling left at the door of the inn when a small baby. But the girl, advised by *Lehnl*, the old man on the stove, and following her own inclinations as well, declines *Muckl*, a self-assured, blustering fellow, after first making fun of him, and the landlord refuses to compel her against her will. *Muckl* himself comes in in time to hear of his defeat, and he carries it off with an assumption of raillery that only partially conceals his chagrin.

The next scene shows the cow-keeper's hut on the hillside, where *Loni* sleeps alone in order to lead the cattle early to pasture. A young girl, or *Deandl* (the peasant word for *Mädchen*), is yodling, as *Loni* and old *Lehnl* come up the hill. *Pauli* and the artist come down from the mountain, where they have been painting all day, and some of the villagers, among them a half-witted boy who is always asking for a present from every one he meets, pass by on their way home from work and exchange greetings. When all the others have gone,