

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER FROM IRELAND.

Dear Editor,—

THE DISESTABLISHED CHURCH—CHANGES PRODUCED—TWO PARTIES THEREIN—THE CONFLICT NOT A NEW ONE—DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SOUTH AND NORTH—RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS—THE STORY OF THE SIEGE OF LONDONDERRY.

The Irish National Church endured alone the pain of disestablishment. An uncomfortable feeling was doubtless experienced by kind friends in the Colonies; and a sensation of alarm, mingled with sympathetic anguish, was necessarily felt by the sister Church over the channel; but the real agony of separation, suffered by the Church on the emerald isle, in passing through the ordeal of disunion, was so great and bitter, that it must forever remain a secret to those on whom the calamity fell. It is the body that endures the pain when a limb is separated from the physical system; but it was the reverse of this, when the Irish church was compelled to submit to amputation. The body politic maintained remarkable composure, but the severed member went into contortions and endured indescribable torture. Let you should charge me with flippant exaggeration, I will submit a passage from an address by the Rev. Wm. Maturin, D. D., recently given before the "Irish Church Society."

"We have reached," says this divine, "a solemn crisis in the history of our Church, one to which the past offers no parallel." * * * Temporarily the words of the prophet will be fulfilled; "I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down." When the sun sets on the last day of this year, it will set upon a Christian country where God's Church is still acknowledged by the state as the organ of a national Faith and Worship. When the sun rises on the first day of the coming year, it will rise upon a country without any public Christianity. The stroke will be double-handed. The church will have disappeared, and the nation, as a nation, will have no religion. The State will no longer be able to claim any religious body, through which it can invoke God's blessing, or deprecate His displeasure, or even pronounce his name. It will have no articulate voice in religion; no faith, no worship, no God. Individuals and religious bodies will retain their religion as before; but in the stillness of that last night of the year, when its final hour strikes, the religion of the nation will expire, and the tie which has bound it to God for ages will be severed. * * * It may be a necessary evil, if you please; the evil may be counterbalanced by good, and the gain may be greater than the loss; this is the most that can be urged on the other side; but of the evil itself, viewed in a religious aspect, the awful offence against God, and the withdrawal of the nation from all claim upon His Providence, there cannot, I suppose, be a second opinion."

Disestablishment was a heavy, faithful healthy blow by which the Irish Church has been aroused from her state of chronic inactivity. The vitalizing and invigorating effects are already apparent. No time has been lost. Measures are already employed to secure the means of sustentation and help which are to be withdrawn by the State. At the end of the present year, the church will cease to receive pecuniary aid from the State, except the salaries of the present generation of clergymen, and certain glebe houses which will be retained. Convocations have been held and the work of organizing for the purposes of government and support has already commenced. The clergymen have addressed themselves, not without success, to the task of cultivating the benevolence of the people. Other sects rejoice in these manifestations of prosperity; and they are not a little gratified that the refuge of a State Church will no longer exist for people too mean to respond to the claims of religious benevolence in their own denominations.

The altered circumstances of the Church made a new arrangement of the system of government necessary. A general Convocation took action for the settlement of the relative power of the bishops, clergy and laity. Those highest in power approached this subject, not without anxiety, lest it might turn out, that separation from State connection, had put Delilah's shears into the hands of the laity, who might use them to clip the locks of the ecclesiastical Satans. Report has it, that the scholarly and astute Archbishop Trench performed wonders in changing the purpose of his brethren whose plans were in the direction of democracy. It is hinted that a superabundant hospitality which flowed at the residence of the Archbishop, during the session of the Convocation, quite overcame for the time the new-born intention to relieve clerical dignitaries of some of their former power and responsibility in matters of church government. Separation from the State has

thrown upon the church in Ireland, the entire responsibility of settling another matter. The pamphlet, the journal and the platform have already been largely engaged for and against the orthodoxy of the Prayer book. The Evangelicals clamour for revision, the High Church party cry, "Sacriligious innovation."

The Archbishop of Dublin has been called upon to condemn a small book of prayer which finds sale among churchmen in Ireland. It is an agent of heresy, according to the evangelicals, and must be suppressed. The prelate declines to pronounce against the book. The work is taken up by the parishes, and they everywhere condemned it. It is expected that the Archbishop will be called to an account at the next Convocation. It will tax all his power and diplomacy to keep in harmony with both parties—a task, which it is said, he has undertaken to perform. The evangelicals are demanding power for the laity in the government of the church, one of the opposite party, high in authority, writes;—"Self-will and self-assertion are rampant, and the very notion of authority is discarded. It is easy enough to see, what the results of liberty bestowed under such circumstances must be, and we have already begun to experience them."

These questions will prevent the disestablished Church from settling down into her former inactivity. Pious men of all denominations see a brighter future for this Church, so long dead, but now showing signs of life. The struggle between the two sections in the Episcopal church, is however by no means the most important scene on the religious arena in Ireland. The old combatants,—Protestantism and Romanism are still central and prominent in the eyes of a stranger as he looks on the religious condition of this fair Island. The war has been long, but the promise of termination is dark and distant. The rows and riots and battles of more than two hundred years are fresh in the minds of the people, and they recite them as glibly as children say their alphabet. In the South where Roman Catholicism is dominant, there is a silence and reserve characterizing the intercourse of the people, which cannot fail to arrest the attention of strangers who have been accustomed to the free expression of opinion on political and religious questions. The experience of generations has discouraged the various Protestant bodies from pursuing an aggressive policy; Roman Catholics are left in the undisturbed enjoyment of their own notions of religion. As a rule Protestant churches have no agents employed to labor among the Catholics. They satisfy themselves in their endeavour to live blameless lives before them, and in keeping the doors of their houses of worship open to all who choose to enter. According to their faith so it is unto them. They do not expect converts and they rarely get them. The Protestant churches are living, but they are not terrible to Roman Catholicism, which is greatly favoured by this freedom from the faithful preaching of the gospel to the people in their houses and in the streets. Earnest missionary labours would disturb the peace of cities and towns. A persecution sufficiently bristling and sharp to keep aggression at a respectable distance, and to keep all the sheep and lambs in the fold, is not allowed to die. It is always prompt and active when necessity calls. Dogmatism, superstition and fear are employed to hold Roman Catholics together in the South of Ireland. Protestantism is quiet and unobtrusive, and Catholicism is quietly but effectually doing its own work.

But a very different state of things obtains in the North. There public sentiment and the general state of society is in striking contrast with that of the South. You see an active and demonstrative people whose countenances and bearing are an evident testimony to their independence in thought and in expression of opinion. This reaches to the lowest class where it is sometimes shown, in a coarse and terrible manner. The "No surrender" of the "Apprentice Boys" is practically the motto of both parties. When the clock strikes six in the evening, the Linen Factories at Belfast send forth their thousands of men, women and children to rest from the labours of the day. A curse from a female operative against William of Orange, elicits a curse from another pair of feminine lips against Pope Pius the Ninth. Then a thousand females undertake to settle the affair by scratching, spitting, and pulling hair; and they are immediately assisted by a thousand male operatives, who perform their part, by beating themselves to the business of bruising one another's heads. Such an event was in the hands of the constabulary and police court for final adjustment when I was in Belfast.

On the 19th inst., twenty thousand assembled in County Tyrone to celebrate the opening of a

Protestant Hall. A burning excitement spread over Down, Derry, Antrim, and Donegal, lest there should be a general fight, and a reproduction of the scenes of the Boyne and Londonderry, with this difference,—the free use of fists and shelleys, instead of smooth bores and broad-swords. The riot that was feared on a large scale, was only realized as you may have noticed, in one town on the return of the people from the celebration.

The fifteen thousand Roman Catholics and the twelve thousand Protestants of Londonderry inherit and keep alive the spirit of their ancestors, who were the besiegers and beleaguered of that city. On the thirteenth of August, the anniversary of the relief, when the apprentice boys were peaceably celebrating the day, the Roman Catholics assailed them, and a riot ensued, which cost one poor fellow his life, and required the interference of the police. There was to have been a regatta at Derry on the 24th of August, the day that I left the city, but the authorities prevented it, lest it should prove the occasion for more rioting and bloodshed. The newspapers remonstrated, but the peace was not disturbed.

Like many other parts of Ireland, Londonderry is "beautiful for situation." In the valley of the Foyle, upon a slight eminence is the old city, enclosed by walls, about a mile in circumference. The modern buildings extend into the hill on both sides of the river. Accompanied by an ex-schoolmaster, of about three score and ten years. I walked round the old city upon the top of the walls which are now used as a promenade. The heart of the old man is not a stranger to the bravery of his ancestors, who resisted even unto death in its most trying forms. The spirit of the soldier animated his countenance, as he pointed to the hill in the distance where James encamped with his Irish and mercenary troops—to another place where a battery was planted—to the house where the deputy-mayor lived, who nearly succeeded in betraying the city, and to the place where the boom was stretched across the river below the city. Then he turned to the monuments of the men and the relics of the means by which the city was victorious in its defence. He pointed to a statue which surmounts a fluted, Doric column erected upon the wall, and said, "That was raised in honor of the Rev. George Walker who encouraged the starving citizens by prophetic promises to resist the besiegers." Those trees "pointing to seven old seamores on the wall" are all that are left of the thirteen planted by the apprentice boys after the victory, "Here" laying his hand upon an old cannon "is Meg which the thirteen brave fellows served during the struggle." "There" pointing to a house at some distance on the left bank of the road "the relief ship under full sail struck the boom, and broke it; but the rebound cast her ashore." The besiegers then rushed with triumphant yells from the hill side to board her, but she fired a broadside and the shock of the discharge set her afloat, and she sailed in triumph to the relief of the starving citizens. So real did this veteran teacher make this scene of the past, that the shouts of joy from the thousands of men, women and children, who had been living on hides, horseflesh and vermin, seemed scarcely to have died away around the walls and among the hills. For an hour I looked upon the city and its surroundings, and listened to the recital of the thrilling incidents of the memorable and heroic defence of Derry. The memorials of the struggle are on the walls, and the spirit of the times is in the breasts of the people.

Yours truly,

EDWARD MANNING.

For the Christian Messenger

ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

THE WAR, THE ABSORBING TOPIC. THE VIEWS AND SYMPATHIES OF THE PEOPLE. SUCCESSFUL ISSUE OF THE NORTH WEST EXPEDITION. PROSPECTS OF THE NEW PROVINCE OF MANITOBA. CHURCH BUILDING BY BAPTISTS AND PEDOBAPTISTS &c.

The all-absorbing topic in Ontario, as I suppose all over christendom, for the last few weeks, has been the great European war. As event after event of astounding magnitude and importance, has crowded upon us, people even at this great distance, have waited with almost breathless interest for the next scene in the bloody drama. While in the Eastern province public meetings have been held to express the sympathy of our mercurial fellow colonists with their glory-loving ancestors in "La Belle France," the staid and sturdy Teutons of the West have not been slow to express their wishes for the downfall of the aggressor. "May it be the last of the Bonapartes!" was the fervent

ejaculation with which I heard the first news of actual war, greeted by men of intelligence and christian feeling. I doubt if the faith of the most ardent looked for so speedy and signal an answer to the prayer. The monarch who forced on the war as the only sure and speedy means of establishing his throne and perpetuating his dynasty, is now a prisoner in the hands of his enemies; the son for whom he risked all, a fugitive from his native land, and yet the demon of war is unappased. Still the local extras, filled with records of events but a few hours old in the heart of Europe, are cried about the streets, and caught up by eager purchasers. Shall we lose all faith in the nineteenth century civilization, and its so-called christianity? Can it be that the only effect of the scientific appliances and engines of warfare which some of us have fondly hoped were destined soon to render war impossible, because of its awful aspects, is to be to render it tenfold more bloody and terrible than ever before? And has that heaven of christian sentiment which we had believed was silently but powerfully affecting the whole mass, has it really so little power as to be unable to prevent that folly of follies, and horror of horrors, "a war of succession," in the year of grace 1870? Nay, we cannot but still hope that the almost unexampled carnage of this fearful conflict, may so impress its ghostly, ghastly, image upon the retina of monarch and statesman and citizen, that they will for long years at least, not cease to recoil from the slightest contemplation of so illogical and terrible an arbitrator.

At last the North-west expedition has completed its long and toilsome journey. The British flag is once more planted on the wooden ramparts of Fort Garry, and soon the Governor whom Nova Scotia has had the honour of furnishing, will, we hope, be able and willing to preserve order, ensure freedom of speech and action to British subjects, and secure justice between man and man.

Soldiers, it seems, cannot yet be dispensed with, even on British territory, though perhaps were public business conducted with a more anxious and tender care for the rights, feelings and even prejudices of all classes, the necessity might be less apparent. We look for a speedy development of the wonderful capabilities and resources of Manitoba. The adventurous sons of these older provinces will henceforth be able to try their fortunes in the far-west without departing from under the aegis of the old flag. If accounts apparently candid and authentic can be relied upon, this new province of the Dominion offers inducements in many respects superior to those of the far famed Western States and Territories of the Union. A direct and comfortable route, over Canadian soil, is now the great desideratum. Meanwhile companies are being even now formed in Ontario, for emigration to the New territory.

Those who have faith in Chapel-building as a gauge of progress and a pledge of stability, in Denominational matters, will be pleased to learn that some progress is being made in this direction by Ontario, Baptists. Smaller churches are being continually erected in various corners of the wide field, but I have in mind particularly just now, the new edifice whose corner stone was laid a few weeks since in Aylmer, not far from London. The Aylmer church,—I now use the word in its more primitive sense—dates its origin as far back as 1816, Elder R. Crandell was its first pastor. The name suggests the inquiry whether he was related to the "Father" of that name in Nova Scotia. There were originally twelve members. If I mistake not it has sent out one or more offshoots. It now numbers 237 members. The new building, which is to be completed in 1871, is let at a contract price of ten thousand and thirty-six dollars, without the spire. When completed it will be, I believe, the largest Baptist chapel in Ontario, superseding the one in Brantford in the claim to that distinction.

However, the Wesleyans are at present taking the lead in the erection of fine church edifices. Rev. W. M. Punshon recently laid the corner stone of one in process of erection in Toronto, which bids fair to be one of the most elaborate structures of the kind in the Dominion. The extreme dimensions are 216 feet in length by 104 in width, and the clear dimensions of the auditorium or church proper, are 124 feet long by 68 wide and 56 high. The style is French Gothic of the fourteenth century and both exterior and interior are to be very rich and elaborate, aiming to combine massiveness with elegance. Its ordinary capacity is estimated at 1800 persons, which number can, on extraordinary occasions, be increased to 2400. The contract price is sixty-nine thousand dollars. Whatever may be the value of these facts as