

Sir—As a Roman Catholic priest, I feel most poignantly and indignantly the aspersions cast upon the ministers of the holy religion I profess by the Orange Press of Ireland, and by certain members of parliament, before a British House of Commons.

These avowed revilers of the Catholic priesthood hesitate not to assert that the class of men to whose pious and zealous exertions the exemplary patience of the great mass of the Irish peasantry is fairly to be attributed during their long continued privations, are not only implicated in the recent crimes of the country, but even identified with the assassin in every deed of horror and of blood.

Such vague and unfounded assertions unaccompanied by a single circumstantial proof, except that with which interested bigotry supplies the tainted source whence they proceed, and unsupported by any evidence except the "ipse dixit" of those vehicles of slander, should only serve to enable a discerning public to form a due estimate of the efforts that are now being made to divert the attention of parliament from the real cause of our social disorganization.

If, as is gratuitously asserted, any Catholic clergyman has denounced any one of those obnoxious landlords from his altar previous to the fatal event in which he has fallen a victim to the wild justice of revenge, the legal process of rendering that clergyman amenable to the law, and responsible for his seditious preaching, is neither expensive nor difficult.

May I ask why such steps are not taken by the afflicted relatives, or by the more fortunate, but yet mourning inheritor of the property, which has devolved upon him from the hand of the assassin? Oh! the former will not come forward, his courage oozes through his fingers. He skulks into his lurking hole, and laughs at the credulity of those who employed him after he received the reward of his turpitude.

There may be found in a Catholic congregation some hireling serf whose embarrassment tempts him to court the patronage of his landlord, and to offer his services as an officious whisperer, for the purpose of drawing a little grist to his mill. But why, I ask again, does not some such character come forward to substantiate the odious charge against the priests? No, he stands back, because he knows his perfidy would be detected, and that he should then be held up to public scorn as a liar and calumniator.

I have now to assure the public, by the most solemn asseverations a clergyman can utter, that the late Major Mahon was never denounced, nor even his name mentioned, from any Chapel altar in Strokestown, or within 20 miles of Strokestown, in any direction, on any Sunday before his death. I can under the same sacred pledge, declare that a single sentence was never spoken from the altar, which by misconstruction or otherwise, could tend to stimulate the peasantry to the atrocious murder which has been perpetrated. The infamous and inhuman cruelties which were wantonly and unnecessarily exercised against a tenantry, whose feelings were already wound up to woful and vengeful exasperation by the loss of their exiled relatives, as well as by hunger and pestilence, which swept so many victims into an untimely grave—in my opinion may be assigned as the sole exciting cause of the disastrous event which has occurred. I saw no necessity for the idle display of a large force of military and police, carrying outside so many rounds of ball cartridge, and inside some substantial rounds of whiskey, bacon, and baker's bread, surrounding the poor man's cabin, setting fire to the roof while the half-starved, half naked children were hastening away from the flames with yells of despair, while the mother lay prostrate on the threshold writhing in agony, and the heart-broken father remained supplicating on his knees. I saw no need for this demonstration of physical force; nor did I see any need for brutal triumph and exultation when returning after these feats were nobly performed. Nor can I conceive that the feelings of humanity should permit any man to send his bailiffs to re-visit those scenes of horror and conflagration with an order if they found a hut built or a fire lighted in the murky ruins, to demolish the one and extinguish the other, thus leaving the wretched outcasts no alternative but to perish in a ditch. In my opinion these scenes, of which I can only draw a very inefficient portrait, had more to do with the murder of Major Mahon than all the thundering denunciations of the Vatican could effect had they been rolled on his head. I tell, therefore, the Orange press, and I tell Sir Benjamin Hall that they have asserted a groundless and an egregious falsehood, and that their fabricated charge of denunciation against the Catholic clergy is a monstrous, outrageous, and flagitious calumny.

It is not true that the exterminated tenants of the late Major Mahon have been all sent to America. There are hundreds as yet who survived their expulsion after seeing their crops carried away from their doors and safely deposited within the landlord's haggard—left to subsist on the precarious alms of their neighbours, roving about as houseless wanderers, without a friend to console, or a resting place whereon to lay their aching bones.

Is it not then easy to imagine, that persons labouring under such privations and afflictions—having no food or shelter, and finding no refuge, not even in the union work house—should become frantic from despair, and lose all reasonable control over the bad passions of our nature? If Sir Benjamin Hall would for experiment sake exchange his comparatively high and exalted position for the trodden-down condition of those miserable outcasts, perhaps the feelings and passions which actuate them—though in him they may be moderated by a moral and religious education—might urge him to turn upon his oppressor, and to seek revenge even at the hazard of an existence, which is only dragged on in wretchedness and destitution.

I am, Sir, your obedient and much obliged,
MICHAEL McDERMOTT, P P, Strokestown.

THE WEST INDIA MAIL.

SOUTHAMPTON, DEC 7.—The Forth, Royal Mail Company's steam ship, Captain Chapman, arrived yesterday afternoon at Southampton from the West Indies and Mexico. She experienced boisterous weather from Bermuda, and is, consequently, somewhat late in her arrival.

The freight of the Forth consists of in dollars, 125 810; gold dust, silver in bars, and doubloons 182 509; a quantity of gold, weighing 3,164 oz.; silver weighing 108 lbs. 9 oz.; 621/ 17s 4d. in British coin, one box of pearls, two packages of platina, one seron of bark, 66 packages of sundries, and general cargo, consisting of 79 cases of cigars, 5 bales of bast.

The Jamaica papers are chiefly occupied with accounts of meetings, held at different places, for the purpose presenting petitions to the British parliament on the sugar and free-trade questions.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ENGLAND AND ROME.

The *Courrier Francais* of Monday contains the following:—"We have been assured that Lord Minto, who has been charged with a private mission to the Pontifical government, has signed a convention for the establishment of good relations between England and Rome. It is said that the Holy See intends to accredit as its representative at London Cardinal Buffondi, a man of great learning and of a very liberal mind."

COMMISSION OF OYER AND TERMINER.

The judges sat yesterday at ten o'clock.
CHARGE OF ARSON.

A young fellow, named Thomas Davis, was indicted for attempting to burn the house of Mrs. Dickenson, a grocer residing in Fishamble-street. It appeared from the evidence that the prisoner got into the hall of the house, and having procured some sticks he made a fire against the door which led from the hall to the shop; the door and a portion of the hall were on fire when it was discovered, and the prisoner was found in the hall by the police and the inmates of the house. He was at once found guilty and sentenced to transportation for life, he being an old offender, although not more than seventeen years of age.

Caroline Robinson and Robert Harrison were indicted for stealing some gold shirt studs and other jewellery from Mr. Edward Twadcroft, an officer in the 4th Light Dragoons. It appeared that the property was stolen from the prosecutor's rooms in the barrack on the 11th November, and the female prisoner was seen about Mr. Twadcroft's room shortly before the property was missed, and on the day after both prisoners were arrested on a car in Bishop street.

Mr. Dunlevie defended the male prisoner, who was acquitted for want of evidence. The woman was convicted and sentenced to seven years' transportation.

John Pates v. William Francis Fury and Thomas Fury.
In this case (the details appeared a few days since in our police reports),

Mr. James O'Hea made an application to the court that the prosecutor might be at liberty to withdraw the bill of indictment; and the Court granted the order, and a verdict of not guilty was returned.

The court then adjourned to Saturday, 11th February next.

DUBLIN POLICE. YESTERDAY. COLLEGE-STREET OFFICE.

Anne Carey, late a servant in the employment of Dr. Lees, was charged with having broken several squares of glass in that gentleman's house. The prisoner was discharged from the service for drunkenness, and when a certificate of sobriety was refused to her, she broke the glass. Mr. Tyndall fined her 12., or in default of payment two months' imprisonment.

AUCTIONS.

Furniture, &c, To Day	...	J. BURKE
Books, To Day	...	J. LITTLEDALE
Furniture, &c, 13th Dec	...	J. LITTLEDALE
Furniture, &c, To Morrow	...	W. YOUNG
Forfeited Pledges, 13th Dec	...	W. F. BENTLEY
Crops, &c 13th Dec	...	M. CROOKE

THE CITY OF LONDON ELECTION.—It is confidently stated that a petition has been prepared against the return of one of the members for the city. This measure has, it is said, been resorted to in consequence of some recent disclosures.—*Times*