

A JOBBER'S JOTTINGS.

By Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH PEOPLE.

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SIR – The world has often heard of a tourist's jottings, jottings of a traveller, jottings in a foreign land, &c.; but I suppose it will be something new to chronicle the jottings of a "jobber." However, as the IRISH PEOPLE turns out to be a new element in Irish journalism, it may be expected that it will tolerate other innovations on old routine systems, beside the innovation it has made itself. But perhaps though you go in for democracy, you don't know all the phases of it – you don't know what a democratic "jobber" is – you don't know what a "jobber" is at all in the general acceptation of the term. I'll tell you. A jobber is a man who deals in cattle; who travels to fairs and markets; who buys pigs, sheep, cows, horses, every animal that an Irishman can raise, and every animal that an Englishman can use; for you must know that it is to Englishmen, and in the English market the jobber sells most of the cattle which he buys from the Irishman in the Irish market. I see your teaching is so much in me perhaps that I have used the word *democratic* jobber; well don't understand by that that I mean a *poor* jobber, or that I wish to be poor, or that I consider democracy means poverty. Far from it. I desire to be comfortable and rich, but then I don't despise the man poorer than myself, nor do I look up or bow down to the man richer than I am. I do not consider a man's worth or merit should be estimated by the length of his purse. For instance now, there is your friend Harvey Birch, a poor pedlar. I wouldn't look down on *him*. I consider him as good a man as myself – perhaps better; but then he hasn't money or means, and I, who have travelled so much, and met so many poor pedlars, know how they are despised by those who may yet be brought to their senses by Harvey's like and mine. Excuse me for getting warm, Mr. Editor. I see, as you have remarked in your answer to one of your correspondents, that I have been beating

about the bush too long. Before I come to my subject, though I will observe that only for those same “answers to correspondents,” I would have written you something long ago. You’re in such cross moods sometimes, and you give some fellows such an awful “pasting,” that I’ve been scared away from you during the ten months that I’m reading your paper. Well, here’s now the thing that put it in my head to dare to write to you.

From last week’s “Answers to Correspondents” I can learn that a Mr. De Witt has written to you, suggesting the republication of the leading articles of the IRISH PEOPLE in a pamphlet, and you say you will think about the suggestion. I know you have interests at heart other than making money by a newspaper; and, if you knew as much as I know, you would not think much on the matter before you would resolve to attend to the suggestion. I have travelled over many parts of the country – not alone this country, but England – during the past ten months. I know how the IRISH PEOPLE has been banned, excommunicated, and exterminated. I can see the vast difference in the spirit of the men in places where it is read and where it is not read. I can see the anxiety to get a copy of it by stealth. And who are the people afraid of, do you think? You will say the police. No. Perhaps the landlords. No. The truth is – I am sorry to have to tell it – they are more afraid of the priests than they are of “peelers” or landlords. I have travelled through many places where agents were selling the IRISH PEOPLE, on its first appearance, and where the agency was given up through clerical solicitation; and some priests in some localities have gone so far as to interfere with agents who were not of their religion. I have passed through one town where your paper was sold and is still sold. The priest waited on the agent to ask him to give it up. The agent would not do so. He waited upon several of the agent’s relatives, and they gave the agent some considerable annoyance for some time, all to no purpose. The priest subsequently gave a “sermon” on the paper. “Infidels,” “children of the devil,” and all the et ceteras came into requisition. But what did he wind up with, do you think? Well, with nothing more than this; to show the kind of people who were getting up this paper, he, from the altar of his chapel, to his congregation, in the middle of mass, on a Sunday, positively asserted

that the creed of the principal man connected with the IRISH PEOPLE was, that he may marry, and if he didn't like his wife that he may put her away from him; that he may marry again and do the same; and so on while he had any inclination for the ceremony. The married dames audibly expressed disapprobation. The "fair ones" must certainly have shuddered at the thought of meeting one of you. I don't know whether your staff is made up of married or single men, or a mixture of both, but certainly if any of you enjoy the cold comfort of bachelorhood, you need not visit *that* parish with the intention of "changing your condition." The name of this priest is Father —, and he has a parish in the county A—. If this be a libel on you, I think you could bring him to account, in any case send the paper bearing this letter to his bishop, that is if you don't polish it off with an "answer" to the jobber.

I'll tell you another story. I was coming from a fair one day with some twenty heifers. I was walking. Father Ned on horseback overtook me on the road. We got into conversation, and I can't now for the world recollect how it came about that we talked of "Fenians," but we did talk of them. In reply to a long discourse of his about their being excommunicated, and all that, I said there was an old tradition or legend, that the people who would free Ireland were sons of the old Fenians, who were spell-bound, within the bowels of some mountains, and that at some time the mountain would burst, and the warriors rush out, and sweep everything before them. "Father Ned," said I, "the mountain hasn't burst yet, for I am travelling through all parts of Ireland without meeting one of those whom you call 'Fenians,' and as to what you say about taking an oath, I tell you honestly that if it was considered necessary to enable men to free Ireland, to enable Irishmen to eat their heifers, instead of sending them to fatten Englishmen I would not scruple this minute to swear through a whole courthouse full of Bibles."

"What!" said he; "what's that you say?"

"I say that," said I; "and I say the truth." "Now, Father Ned, tell me what's the difference. I was at home one day, and a chicken belonging to one neighbour of mine went into the field of another neighbour. They were on bad terms, and the neighbour who owned

the field saying 'cush' at the chicken, threw a stone at it. It fell dead off the ditch into the road. The owner of the chicken summoned the killer of it, and I was summoned as a witness. There were three oaths sworn against that chicken, which wasn't worth three pence. I had to swear one, and lost my day into the bargain. You'd say nothing against me for taking *that* oath, and why would you send me to hell supposing I took an oath to fight for my country."

"That oath was legal, and the other would be illegal, and against the canon law of the Catholic Church."

"Father Ned, when was it that canon law and English law, came to be synonymous terms?"

He raised his hand, crying out vehemently. "You rascal, that's more of the teaching of that infidel paper, but you won't have it long," he rode off leaving me all alone with myself and my heifers.

Oh, Mr. Editor, I could keep you a whole week telling some interesting things I came across in my travels. But about the leading articles. By all means get them into a book. If you were to distribute gratis £10 worth of these books, even amongst the Presbyterians and liberal Protestants, you would do £1,000 worth of good. Then there are thousands of Catholics and Presbyterians in Ireland, who, had they read your paper from the beginning, would be earnest Irishmen today. Giving to these the leaders in a book, will be the same as giving them the paper from the beginning. The profit you would derive from the sale of the book amongst the Irishmen in Scotland and England will compensate for any losses you may suffer here by its circulation; for I take it that there will be losses here in a pecuniary sense, as like the paper, the people cannot openly get it. To sum up, here is the way you are received in many parts. The word "Fenian" means something, and some of the priests give it the meaning of "vagabond-half-devil-infidel," and give to the IRISH PEOPLE the honour of being the organ of such a class. Then you are only read where men dare to brave such opprobrious terms. Granted that, as you say in your last article on pulpit denunciations, there are many good priests. They are silent; they dare not open their mouths. One bad, speaking priest is to your cause more powerful for harm, than twenty of the silent good priests are for good.

I want to go to a fair in the morning, so I close. Perhaps *you* will say, you wish I had a fair to attend to while attending to this. No matter, if any of it is not worth publishing. You will hear again when he has an idle day, from,

ANTHONY THE JOBBER.

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