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GENERAL GORDON ON IRELAND.

The following private Letter from General (then Colonel) Gordon, who had just previously visited the West of Ireland, was published in the (London) TIMES of 3rd December, 1880. The italics are not Colonel Gordon's:—

“MY DEAR J.,—You are aware how interested I am in the welfare of this country, and having known you for 26 years, I am sure I may say the same of you.

“I have lately been over to the South-West of Ireland in the hope of discovering how some settlement could be made of the Irish question, which, like a fretting cancer, eats away our vitals as a Nation.

“I have come to the conclusion that—

“1. A gulf of antipathy exists between the landlords and tenants of the North-West and West and South-West of Ireland. It is a gulf which is not caused alone by the question of rent; there is a complete lack of sympathy between these two classes. It is useless to inquire how such a state of things has come to pass. I call your attention to the pamphlets, letters, and speeches of the landlord class as a proof of how little sympathy or kindness there exists among them for the tenantry, and I am sure that the tenantry feel in the same way towards the landlords.

“2. No half-measured Acts which left the landlords with any say to the tenantry of these portions of Ireland will be of any use. They would be rendered—as passed Land Acts in Ireland have been—quite abortive, for the landlords will insert clauses to do away with their force. *Any half measures will only place the Government face to face with the people of Ireland, as the champions of the landlord interest. The Government would be bound to enforce their decision, and with a result which none can foresee, but which certainly would be disastrous to the common weal.*

“3. My idea is that seeing—through this cause or that, it is immaterial to examine—a deadlock has occurred between the present landlords and tenants, the Government should purchase up the rights of the landlords over the whole or the greater part of Longford, Westmeath, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Cavan, and Donegal. The yearly rental of these districts is some four millions; if the Government give the landlords 20 years' purchase, it would cost 80 millions, which, at 3½ per cent., would give a yearly interest of £2,800,000, of which £2,500,000 could be recovered; the lands would be Crown lands; they would be administered by a Land Commission, who would be supplemented by an Emigration Commission which might for a short time need £100,000. This would not injure the landlords, and so far as it is an interference with proprietary

No. 25, G.L.]