

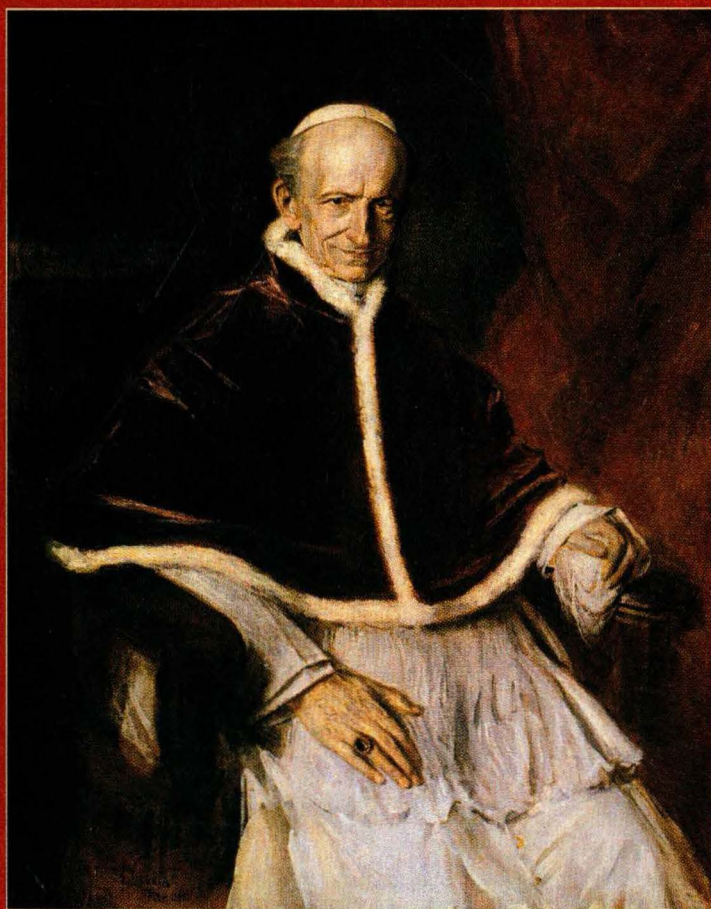
THE PAPACY AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

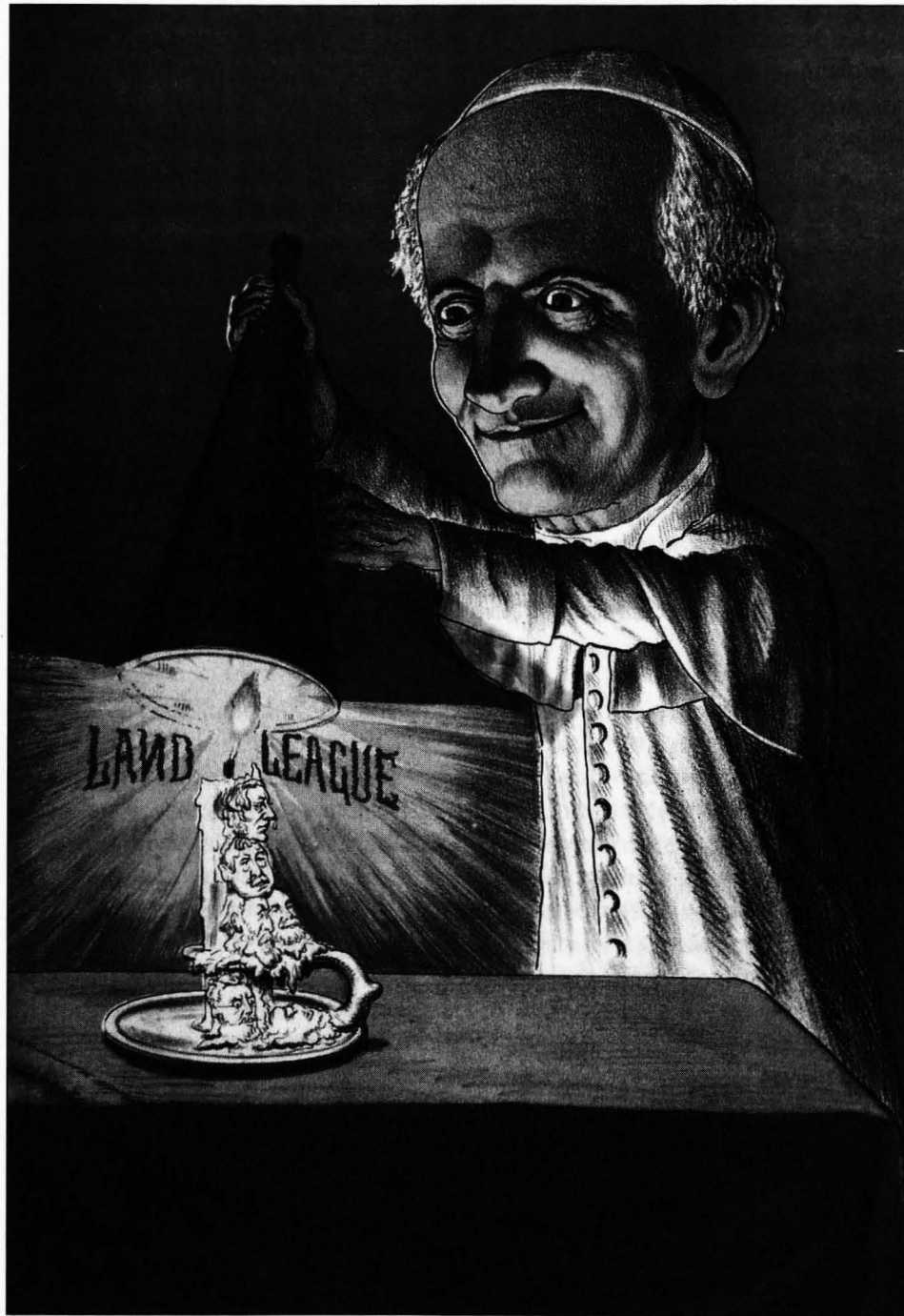
VATICAN DIPLOMACY, CATHOLIC OPINION
AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AT THE TIME OF LEO XIII

1878 ■ 1903

LA PAPAUTÉ ET LE NOUVEL ORDRE MONDIAL

*DIPLOMATIE VATICANE, OPINION CATHOLIQUE
ET POLITIQUE INTERNATIONALE AU TEMPS DE LÉON XIII*





Caricature of the Irish policy of Leo XIII.
[Rome, Museo Centrale del Risorgimento]

On Her Majesty's Secret Service Gladstone, Ireland and Pope Leo XIII, 1881-1885/86¹

Karina Urbach

Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Holy See have - over long periods of time - been so strained that official sources hardly exist and secret ones are difficult to find. When in 1846 Foreign Office officials were asked to draw up a *Memorandum respecting the relations of Great Britain with the See of Rome*, they were able to squeeze the whole official correspondence of the last 160 years into 22 pages: "With the exception of the appointment of Lord Castlemaine by James II as ambassador to Rome in 1687"; wrote an FO official, "no communication with the Papal See appears to have taken place from the period of the Reformation in England up to the time of the overthrow of the Papal authority under Pius VII and the annexation of the Roman States to the French Empire in 1809."²

The FO official quoted Canning who in 1826 had been of the opinion that "the laws of Great Britain prohibited all intercourse between the British Government and that of the Pope of Rome."³ Though this was debatable⁴, politicians

- 1 I would like to thank Otto Feldbauer for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.
- 2 The situation improved by 1817 when a British Consul was appointed for the Roman States. FO 45/661. *Memorandum respecting the relations of Great Britain with the See of Rome*. Foreign Office, 16/07/1846.
- 3 Mr. Secretary Canning to Lord Burghersh, 20/04/1826. Ibidem.
- 4 The question whether relations between the British Government and the Pope were actually illegal puzzled everyone. In 1833 the solicitor-General wrote to Lord Palmerston that "it appeared to him that His Majesty might accredit a Minister to the Court of Rome; that he had had a strong impression upon his mind that this was forbidden by Act of Parliament, but that after a diligent search he could find no such Act; and that it was of course lawful, unless it was expressly declared to be unlawful; that he conceived, therefore, that a Minister might be safely sent to Rome." He would not allow to bring home any "bulls or relics" however. Campbell to Palmerston, 24/04/1833. Palmerston asked the law officers again in 1837 whether there "was any existing law which prevented the Crown from accrediting and sending a Diplomatic Agent to the Court of Rome?" The reply was, again, negative. Ibidem.

always had to take into account that the British public had a deep-rooted antipathy towards Catholics. In the 1850s when Pope Pius IX re-established dioceses in England to look after the increasing number of Irish immigrants, converts were called 'perverts' by the outraged public.⁵ A contemporary biographer of Leo XIII wrote about this prevailing sentiment: "some people in England are in the habit of regarding Irish Catholics as a population of religious bigots and fanatics."⁶

British Governments therefore preferred to work indirectly with the Holy See. In 1831 Sir Brook Taylor had been 'privately' employed⁷ by Palmerston in Rome and it was also not without precedent to discuss Irish problems with the Pope.⁸ Later, attachés of the British Mission in Florence, who happened to live in Rome took over 'confidential communication' - starting in 1844 with Petre who was followed by the highly skilled Lord Lyons and Odo Russell.⁹ Russell had helped to achieve Pio Nono's condemnation of the Fenians in

5 Korte, "Christianity, Science and the Victorians", 143.

6 McCarthy, *Pope Leo XIII*, 109.

7 In 1831 Brook Taylor like George Errington half a century later "was informed that there were reasons which prevented HMG from appointing any acknowledged and accredited agent to repair to Rome for the purpose of negotiating openly with the Pope; that his return to Rome, without any ostensible or official character, might afford them the means of availing themselves of his services in this delicate and important commission; that he was to consider himself in the light of a confidential agent of the British Government, without any diplomatic character; and that his communications with Lord Palmerston were to bear the character of private letters, and not of official despatches." His instructions were first "to persuade the revolted provinces to return to their temporal obedience to the Pope; and secondly, to prevail upon the Pope to make certain concessions to his subjects." FO 45/661, Instructions to Sir Brook Taylor, 02/04/1831.

8 This occasionally happened in an official way as well. When Count Metternich in 1843 for example had asked the British ambassador in Vienna whether he could help to suppress seditious publications (which were printed in Malta and distributed throughout Italy), HMG asked in return for the Pope to do something "about the mischievous agitation so notoriously carried on by the Roman Catholic Priesthood [in Ireland and] to request Prince Metternich to bring that collection of treason and sedition to the notice of the Papal court, and to engage His Highness to endeavour to persuade that Govt. to take the necessary measures for the suppression of such a flagrant abuse of their sacred functions by the Roman Catholic Priesthood in Ireland. [The Priests] were dangerous to other thrones as well as that of England." From Sir R. Gordon, 15/11/1843. FO 45/661, Memorandum on Communications with the Pope respecting Disorders in Ireland.

9 Petre took over from Aubin in 1844, Lord Lyons followed in 1853 and was five years later replaced by Odo Russell who stayed in Rome until 1870. His successor Jervoise was withdrawn in 1874. See for Odo Russell's time in Rome: Urbach, *Bismarck's Favourite Englishman*, 34 ff.

1870. Prime Minister Gladstone remembered the 'Vatican route' well.¹⁰ By 1881 he would be in great need of it again.

In Ireland social injustices and great agricultural problems had escalated into Fenian violence. Since the 1870s the Irish had fought for national independence and as a consequence the Irish Land League and the Home Rule party were two powerful movements with which the British government had to cope.¹¹ When Gladstone became Prime Minister for the second time in 1880, he employed the then standard government "carrot and stick" approach to control unrest in Ireland¹² - introducing land reform on the one hand and a coercion bill on the other. Gladstone's measures met with furious opposition and in 1882 he wrote to his Foreign Secretary Granville: "our Irish difficulties seem to mount up like Alp on Alp."¹³ To get some of the problems under control, the government needed help from many different quarters - including the See of Rome.

In untangling the complex web of negotiations between the Vatican and HMG one has to keep in mind that both parties followed a multi-level network approach. They seldom relied on a single channel. The Vatican and the British Government were after all key 'global players' in the 19th century. While Leo XIII tried his best to restore diplomatic relations worldwide, HMG had to deal with Roman Catholic subjects in Britain, Ireland and her dominions. Both therefore had to take into account the sensitivities of many differing interest groups which were part of the Rome-London-Dublin/Ulster triangle. What really complicated the matter was that from the very beginning their agendas were at odds: Leo XIII needed a diplomatic coup to end the Vatican's isolation and even hoped for a nuncio in London while Gladstone

10 "In 1844, when I was a young cabinet minister, and the government of Sir R. Peel was troubled with the O'Connell manifestations, they made what I think was an appeal to Pope Gregory XVI for his intervention to discourage agitation in Ireland." Gladstone to Cardinal Newman, 1881. Quoted in Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, 3, 62.

11 See for the relations between Ireland and the Vatican at this time: Larkin, *Modern Irish State*; Idem, *Plan of Campaign*; Idem, *The Making of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland*.

12 Biagini sums up Gladstone's Irish strategy: "1880-86: radical, land reform (1881); then full equality of political and electoral rights between Ireland and Britain (1883-85); finally legislative autonomy with a Parliament in Dublin subordinated to the 'Imperial Parliament' at Westminster (1886-94), accompanied (in 1886) by a proposal for further land reform. Biagini, *Gladstone*, 91.

13 Gladstone to Granville, 13/04/1882. Ramm, *The political correspondence*, 1, 360. The Irish Secretary Lord Frederick Cavendish, a relative of Gladstone, was murdered together with his under-secretary in 1882 in Phoenix Park. Cavendish was married to one of Gladstone's nieces. Biagini, *Gladstone*, 94. See for Gladstone's reaction, Ramm, *The political correspondence*, 1, 366 ff.

needed help from the Pope in Ireland but without any kind of long term commitment.

Diplomacy has nothing to do with faith, but Gladstone's mixed feelings towards Catholicism also played a part in his ambiguous decision making¹⁴ - after all he was the author of *Vaticanism* in which he decried the doctrine of Papal infallibility and the insistence that allegiance to the Pope should override national loyalties. Although Gladstone was a High Church Anglican, and one might have expected sympathy, he had condemned his sister Helen for converting to Roman Catholicism.¹⁵ On the conversion of his friend Manning he had commented: "I felt as if Manning had murdered my mother by mistake."¹⁶ Still some of his closest friends were Catholics: Acton¹⁷, the Marquess of Ripon¹⁸ (a famous convert) and in later years, after he had cost him the 1885 election, Manning again.¹⁹ Ripon was even made a minister of the Crown by Gladstone - "a break through the prejudice of centuries" according to Owen Chadwick.²⁰

By the 1890s a disillusioned Gladstone claimed that his faith in the Pope's power had always been limited: "even a reforming Pope of genius, like Hildebrand or Innocent III, could not effect anything [...] there was no hope now from Leo XIII."²¹ Yet ten years earlier the situation had been quite differ-

- 14 By the 1890s he would feel utterly betrayed by the English Roman Catholic peers: "in his comment on the Roman Catholics peers (...) there was a flash of bitter indignation (...) After all that the Liberal party had done for them, out of some thirty peers only two or three, Lord Ripon and others, were on what he held to be the right side." Briggs, ed., *Gladstone's Boswell*, 183 ff.
- 15 "(Gladstone) referred to the newspaper report of the event as 'the record of our shame' and urged his father to expel Helen from the family home." Burrow, "Faith, Doubt and Unbelief", 154.
- 16 Quoted in Briggs, *Victorian People*, 33.
- 17 See for this Hill, *Lord Acton and Kettenacker, Lord Acton*.
- 18 Ripon would also sit in the Cabinet of 1892 as First Lord of the Admiralty, Chadwick, *Acton and Gladstone*, 39.
- 19 Manning published an article in 1885: "How shall Catholics vote at the coming Parliamentary election?" It was not favourable to Gladstone. By 1887 Manning was working together with Gladstone again for Home Rule. After that they had no more arguments. On Manning Gladstone commented in the late 1890s that he "was difficult to understand, but there was a great deal of good in him." Briggs, ed., "Gladstone's Boswell", 183. McClelland, *Gladstone and Manning*, 166.
- 20 It was indeed a courageous move from Gladstone's side, but it also meant that his close friend Acton could not join the government - too many Catholic members would have upset the Ulster faction.
- 21 Briggs, ed., *Gladstone's Boswell*, 183.

ent²², otherwise Gladstone and Granville would never have started on the risky business of sending a go-between to Rome.²³

Their choice fell on George Errington, a member of Parliament for the Irish constituency of Longford.²⁴ The Catholic Errington had once belonged to the Home Rule Faction and now represented the interest of the tenant farmers.²⁵ Opinion on Errington varied. Gladstone wrote in 1881: "I do not know how far he is able."²⁶ While Granville praised him in a letter of recommendation as "an impartial and competent person in an independent position, but trusted as well by the Govt. as by all who know [him]";²⁷ Errington's political opponent Justin McCarthy²⁸, had quite a different view: "[Errington] was a man of position and of education, but he certainly was not a striking political figure. He was more a Liberal than a Nationalist. He was well liked in society, but had made no mark whatever in the House of Commons."²⁹ To McCarthy, Errington was just a "ridiculous incident in a serious story."³⁰ Yet he was certainly more than that. Like the leading character in Goldoni's play *Il servitore di due padroni*, Errington served two masters. For three years he had to arrange secret

- 22 At that time Gladstone's advisor Acton had painted a more positive picture. In a 1881 letter to Mary Gladstone, Acton had written: "(Leo XIII) is trying new arts, and endeavours to restore, by conciliation and management, what Pius ruined by authority (...) and then there is no insuperable obstacle to reconciliation with the Powers." Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone, 1881. Quoted in: MacDougall, ed., *Lord Acton on Papal Power*, 229.
- 23 Their official alternative was Sir Augustus Paget, who was accredited to King Umberto of Italy and passed on information from the Irish Chief Secretary, W.E. Forster, to the Vatican.
- 24 Errington (1839 to 1920) was born in County Dublin. He was educated "first in England at Ushaw College, Durham and in Ireland at Newman's Catholic University." Errington was wealthy and in 1874 became a MP. Parnell's obstructionist policy meant - in his eyes - revolution. By 1880 he published his own political pamphlet 'The Irish Land Question. A Problem in Practical Politics'. Woods, "Ireland and Anglo-Papal relations", 36 ff.
- 25 This was Balfour's information on Errington. See Balfour Speech, 16/02/1882 in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 266, 768. Errington would work together in Rome with his compatriot the Benedictine Bernard Smith, who hoped that they would achieve to get a nuntius in London. See Schwedt, "Bernhard Smith".
- 26 Gladstone to Cardinal Newman, 17/12/1881, in: Matthew, ed., *The Gladstone Diaries*, 11, 179.
- 27 Letter from Granville to Errington, 03/10/1881. BL Add ms. 49690/25: The Errington mission to Rome, 1881-85, Foreign Office Notes, August 1890.
- 28 Justin McCarthy (1830-1912), politician and writer, joined Parliament in 1879 as a representative for the Irish constituencies of County Longford, Derry City and North Longford. In 1880 he joined the Irish Land League, in 1882 he became chairman of the National Land and Labour League of Great Britain. He was a supporter of Gladstone and the Home Rule movement. After the Parnell divorce scandal of 1890 he became chairman of the Irish Parliamentary party (until 1896). He wrote several novels and biographies - about Leo XIII (in 1896) and Gladstone (in 1897). His papers are deposited at the Miller Nichols Library at the University of Missouri.
- 29 McCarthy, *Pope Leo XIII*, 110.
- 30 Ibidem.

deals between the Vatican and HMG and soothe the nerves of both parties - hardly an easy task with two such demanding padroni.

So what was the Errington mission really about? The editor of the Gladstone-Granville correspondence claimed in the 1960s that "none of Granville's correspondence with Errington [...] has been traced."³¹ This changed over the years. As C.J. Woods discovered, the records can be found in the National Archives.³² What is even more intriguing is the fact that a copy of them is also deposited among the Balfour papers at the British Library.³³ Granville's successor at the Foreign Office, Arthur Balfour, had been extremely interested in tracing the correspondence. Extracts were sent by him to Prime Minister Salisbury who even toyed with the idea of making this 'bombshell' public in the 1892 election campaign.³⁴ This would however have adversely affected his own communication with the Pope as well as the situation in Ireland, and the plan was therefore dropped.³⁵

Errington's first task in Rome was to inform the Pope about the 'rebellious' Irish priests. The Prime Minister thought it only natural that the Pope should call them to order: "We, I apprehend want nothing but that the Clergy like other people should support the law. But the Pope ought for his own credit to want this just as much as we do, & not to set it up as something gratuitous on his part, or requiring an equivalent at ours."³⁶ Gladstone expected therefore that Leo XIII should speak out publicly against the Irish agitations: secret instructions to the clergy would not be sufficient.³⁷

31 Ramm, ed., *The political correspondence*, 1, 298.

32 The PRO is now called the National Archives London. FO 800 235: Errington Mission; 02/11/1881: Press allusions; 31/10/1881: Diplomatic relations with Vatican; 31/12/1881: Turbulent priests in Ireland.

33 BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.

34 "Do you think all this, or any of it, is worth bringing out?" Lord Salisbury to A.J. Balfour, 04/07/1892, quoted in Harcourt-Williams, ed., *Salisbury - Balfour Correspondence*, 422. The notes on the Errington Mission were passed around in August 1890. McDonnell gave them to Browning, while Browning sent them to Patisson and Balfour to Barrington. Ibidem, 315. See also Roberts, *Salisbury*, 577.

35 Salisbury's latest biographer has however a kinder explanation for this restraint: "Unlike Gladstone himself, who had used the secret Berlin conversation with Waddington over Tunis in 1878 to embarrass Salisbury in 1881, it was decided not to damage the nation's interest for Party advantage." Roberts, *Salisbury*, 577.

36 Gladstone to Granville, 06/12/1881, Ramm, ed., *The political correspondence*, 1, 317.

37 Gladstone to Granville, 17/12/1880, Ibidem, 230; Granville to Gladstone, 19/12/1880, Ibidem, 231.

Errington sold this idea very delicately to the Vatican and also gave the impression that HMG was interested in a closer relationship. Consequently Cardinal Jacobini was pleased about the first contact with Errington: "[regarding] a representation of the English Government by the Holy See, I cannot do less than testify the lively satisfaction for the sentiments of sympathy and deference [...] which the noble Lord [Granville] has expressed in general with respect to the Holy See."³⁸

This was how a misunderstanding began. Granville seemed shocked about the promises Errington had obviously made to the Cardinal and reported back to the Prime Minister: "It is evident that the Pope wishes to use our present necessities as a lever to force us to renew unofficial [sic] communication with him."³⁹ Gladstone rejected such ideas as "visionary"⁴⁰, and Granville assured him that he had not promised anything of the kind.⁴¹ He warned Errington not to make promises that could not be kept: "I am a little afraid that you hold out prospects of a renewal of a semi-official diplomatic appointment in a way that is not consistent with the language that I have always held to you."⁴²

Whereas HMG was interested in a flirtation, the Vatican hoped for a long term relationship. Thanks to this 'misunderstanding', Errington achieved a lot.⁴³ He managed to persuade the Vatican to install pro-British bishops in Ireland. Dean Higgins had been a candidate of the Gladstone government for the Bishopric of Kerry and Errington assured Granville that this had played a part in the nomination: "Monsignor Masotti desires me to say that the express desire of the British Govt. in favour of Dean Higgins, was an impor-

38 Errington to Granville, 01/10/1881, (enclosure to his letter). BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.

39 Granville to Gladstone, 19/12/1880, Ramm, ed., *The political correspondence*, 1, 231.

40 Gladstone to Granville, 20/12/1880, Ibidem, 233.

41 "I did not express sympathy, deference, and interest for the Holy See & I did not admit the impossibility of the Pope receiving communications from our Embassy at Rome, which he is actually doing." Granville to Gladstone, 03/10/1881. Gladstone corrected letters Granville sent to Errington. Granville remained careful: "I snubbed him (Errington) for having given the Cardinal hopes of the renewal of semi-diplomatic relations." Granville to Gladstone, 05/12/1881, Ibidem, 298, 301 and 317.

42 Granville to Errington, 02/12/1881, BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.

43 See for this Woods: "During the period of Errington's mission there were nine cases of Episcopal succession or precedence being decided. In most he endeavoured to canvass for or against particular candidates, supplied always with information on their respective merits or demerits." Woods, "Ireland and Anglo-Papam relations", 46.

tant element in the selection made by the congregation of him as Bishop of Kerry.⁴⁴ In fact the Vatican had asked for and received a favour in return. At the time the Pope had been concerned about the anomalous position of the bishop of Gibraltar who was under the impression that the British Government was working against him. Granville sorted out this problem to get his way in Ireland.⁴⁵

In December 1881 another such deal was struck. The FO pushed for the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. McCabe - an anti-Home Ruler - to be created a Cardinal: "there is a rumour in the Irish papers of McGettigan being appointed Cardinal. This would do no good",⁴⁶ a worried Granville wrote. Errington did his best to convey this message to the Pope and was successful: McCabe became a Cardinal and was - for a short time - of use to HMG.⁴⁷

In 1883 the Pope also sent a rescript to the Irish Bishops: *Quale cumque de Parnellio*, prohibiting the Irish Clergy from further promoting Parnell's testimonial fund.⁴⁸ This, however, had exactly the opposite effect and the fund tripled.⁴⁹ In his 1896 biography of Pope Leo XIII Justin McCarthy explains how the Pope's Irish policy almost led to a schism: "the Vatican decidedly issued an opinion and a warning to the Irish people on the national move-

44 Granville to Errington, 02/12/1881: "I hope you will express in strong terms the satisfaction with which we have heard of the nomination of the Bishop of Kery, dear Higgins." BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.

45 See for the Gibraltar affair: Larkin, *Modern Irish State*, 135 ff.

46 Granville to Paget, who was asked to pass on this message to Errington, 15/12/1881. BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.

47 For the record Granville played down HMG's part in this manoeuvre: "you are aware that HM Govt have not asked his Holiness to perform any act, nor made any suggestions as to the course which he should pursue, but Mr. Gladstone, Mr Forster and I request you to convey to the Pope in suitable terms our appreciation of the motives which have determined the Pope to take a step which seems to us well calculated to justify the Pope's attachment to the interests of order and morality in Ireland." Granville to Errington, 06/01/1882. Errington replied dutifully: "I hope you will allow me to express your satisfaction at Dr. McCabe's promotion to the Pope, in the same guarded terms as before." (without date). BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.

48 "Apostolic mandates absolutely condemn such collections as are raised in order to influence popular passions, and to be used as a means for leading men into rebellion against the laws. The clergy must hold themselves aloof from such subscriptions, when it is plain that hatred and dissension are aroused by them, and that never in any way are censures pronounced against the crimes and murders with which wicked men stain themselves (...) Quibus positis, it must be evident to your Lordships that the collection called the Parnell Testimonial Fund cannot be approved by this sacred congregation, and consequently it cannot be tolerated that any ecclesiastic, much less a Bishop, should take any part in recommending or promoting it." Quoted in: Eversley, *Gladstone and Ireland*, 251.

49 Eversley, *Gladstone and Ireland*, 252.

ment, the political and the agrarian; and the intervention was received with a chorus of applause from the landlord class, and the Conservatives, and the anti-Nationalists of Ireland [...]. To the majority of the Irish Nationalists it seemed that the Vatican had come to the help of Mr. Gladstone and of the English Government in the effort to stamp out a great national and patriotic agitation.⁵⁰ McCarthy thought that the Pope's intervention had been a great mistake "founded on imperfect knowledge" fed to him by rich English Roman Catholics. He was not the only one who believed Leo XIII had been wrongly informed.⁵¹

Cardinal Manning, who by 1883 had fallen out with his old friend Gladstone, was alarmed about the Pope's politics: "[Cardinal Manning] stated in the strongest terms that the Pope's action all through has been a series of blunders from beginning to end; but to please England, and deluded by false information, he has alienated his true friends, and seriously compromised his own authority and the interests of the Church of Ireland; that his name has in consequence been bandied about in the papers, and that in the most humiliating way he has been constantly disowned and his action repudiated in and out of Parliament by H.M. Govt."⁵²

Errington agreed on one point - the quid pro quo had not worked: "What the Pope really feels is, that having incurred so much odium and annoyance, in rendering an admitted service, he receives no proof of sympathy and gratitude. As Cardinal Czacki, who is one of our greatest friends, and perhaps the keenest observer here, said to me the other day: "when a man has fought for you and got wounded in your service, the least we can expect is that you should call and enquire how he is, and show him some sympathy and gratitude."⁵³

50 McCarthy, *Pope Leo XIII*, 107.

51 Naturally Errington had always had rivals for the Pope's attention. In 1881 he wrote: "Two Irish Bishops, Dr. Conway and Dr. Logue, have just arrived (in Rome). They inform me and everyone who speaks to them that the condition of Ireland is most satisfactory, that things are quietly settling down, that the Land Act has pacified the country, and all the stories to the contrary are gross exaggerations." Errington to Granville, 07/12/1881. BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.

52 Errington quoting Manning in a letter to Granville. Errington to Granville, 19/11/1883. Ibidem.

53 Cardinal Parocchi's advice was that though diplomatic relations were much desired, they would have more of a chance once Cardinal Manning's was dead and a more "tranquil" situation had developed in Ireland. Errington to Granville, 17/01/1884. Ibidem.

To prevent Manning's 'intrigues' from succeeding⁵⁴ and to win back the Pope's favour, Errington begged Granville to support the Pope in the Goa question. The 'Goan schism'⁵⁵ had its roots in the 1838 bull which withdrew three British colonial territories (Cochin, Cranganore, Mylapore) from the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Goa, (Goa had been Portuguese since 1510)⁵⁶, against the wishes of the local padroado clergy. The Portuguese crown had sided with the local clergy and in the following decades they and the Holy See had not been able to resolve the situation.⁵⁷ Leo XIII now asked for British support in his negotiations with the Portuguese Government. The British, as the real masters of the region, should make it clear that "they would not consider the substitution for the ancient shadowy protectorate of Portugal of a new and effective though restricted protectorate, as a change for the better."⁵⁸ Granville did his best to please the Pope.⁵⁹ In the long run the concordat of 1886 restored jurisdiction over Cochin and Mylapore and the Archbishop of Goa received the title of patriarch of the East Indies.⁶⁰

Direct interference in colonial affairs was quite an unusual step to take for a go-between. It certainly shows the importance of Errington's position in that his advice was taken seriously in London. Colonial issues were of great interest to the Vatican and Cardinal Parocchi had already developed long term plans with Britain including his idea to supplant French ecclesiastical influence in the East: "they would not be sorry here if they got encouragement

- 54 In fact once Manning had left Rome by January 1884, Errington was much more successful in Rome again. He managed to persuade the Pope not to support a memorial church for the former 'rebel' (freedom fighter?) O'Connell. This would have been a symbolical act the British had to prevent. Errington to Granville, 04/01/1884: "I have remonstrated very seriously on the possible serious results of this." Ibidem.
- 55 *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 4, 814 ff.
- 56 Goa was once the capital of Portuguese India and was annexed by India as late as December 1961. See for example: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 6, 267.
- 57 Ibidem, 268.
- 58 Errington to Granville, 15/01/1885. A month later Errington wrote again on the subject: "I still earnestly hope you will allow me to make the settlement I asked for. (...) This long protracted Goa difficulty has been a grief and a sorrow to successive Popes." BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.
- 59 Granville to Errington, 21/02/1885 and 20/05/1885. Ibidem.
- 60 *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 6, 268. Similar deals were struck in Malta and still need to be researched. In connection with the Errington mission the following example is of interest: In 1884 Errington wrote to Granville that he needed some positive signs (either in Goa or Malta) from the British Government in order to make progress in the Irish question. In Malta the Governor John L. Simmons had opposed a substitute for the sick Bishop of Malta. Because of the death of Cardinal McCabe the British Government overruled Simmons. However the Vatican's candidate Antonio Maria Buhagiar did not become the new Bishop of Malta in the end. By 1888 the Salisbury Government had managed to install Carmel Siclima Pater Pace - an Englishman. See for this episode: Larkin, *Fall of Parnell*, 59.

from you and from Germany to appoint a Nuncio to Constantinople, and receive an envoy from the Sultan, the object of which would be, to undermine French influence in Turkey."⁶¹ Such long-term plans could not even be commented on by HMG since by 1885 the Errington mission had run into difficulties. Cardinal McCabe's death in 1885 had been a great blow for the British government. ⁶² They would have needed another loyal supporter at the See of Dublin, but instead Dr. Walsh was brought forward as a candidate, who was according to Errington "a violent and dangerous man."⁶³ Despite Errington's and the Duke of Norfolk's pleas,⁶⁴ Leo XIII "reserved the decision entirely to himself." It was all the more poignant that he decided against British wishes and for Walsh.⁶⁵ Justin McCarthy saw this as a sign that the Pope was on the side of Ireland again⁶⁶ - the 'flirtation' with Britain seemed to be over.

The second Gladstone Government was defeated on 6 June that year. This was due to foreign policy issues and the split within the party, but in part also to Gladstone's clandestine Vatican policy - which the papers had gleefully exposed. Parts of the "secret" Errington mission had never been quite secret. Hansard records that over the period of three years (from 1882 to 1885) questions were regularly asked in the House of Commons about Errington, whom the opposition called "the government's ambassador to Rome".

Gladstone had every reason to be alarmed about this. He had corresponded with Errington and had, according to his diaries, met him on several occasions.⁶⁷ Many points in the whole affair were embarrassing for him and Granville. Firstly the great friendliness towards the Vatican "would have shocked and alienated many of [Gladstone's] nonconformist and Low Church supporters." ⁶⁸ Secondly HMG had made deals with the Pope that affected ecclesiastical and colonial affairs - but that had never been discussed in Parliament. Thirdly Gladstone had the Pope indirectly informed via Errington that Ireland

- 61 Errington to Granville, 17/01/1884. BL Add ms. 49690/25: Errington mission.
- 62 Errington to Granville, 12/02/1885: "The Secretary of Propaganda, Monsignor Jacobini, considers the death of Cardinal McCabe particularly unfortunate at the present moment; and he agrees with me in fearing that Dr. Walsh of Maynooth will be strongly put forward as successor." Ibidem.
- 63 Errington to Granville, 12/02/1885. Ibidem.
- 64 He wrote a letter to Cardinal Howard, "pointing out the danger of Dr. Walsh's appointment." Errington to Granville, 26/03/1885. Ibidem.
- 65 William J. Walsh (1841-1921) became Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland in 1885.
- 66 McCarthy, *Pope Leo XIII*, 109.
- 67 Matthew, ed., *The Gladstone Diaries*, 11, 18 ff.
- 68 Roberts, *Salisbury*, 577.

could never be granted Home Rule - a year before he became an advocate of Home Rule himself.

In the House of Commons Drummond Wolff condemned the "irregular and clandestine communications" and wondered whether Errington's expenses were paid out of the secret service fund. Granville strongly denied that secret diplomacy as well as secret service money had been used,⁶⁹ and Gladstone admired Drummond Wolff's "Power of Imagination".⁷⁰ Yet even the Goa negotiations leaked out. In 1882 Questions were asked in the House regarding India and the Vatican for the first time and the Marquess of Hartington did his best to fight them off.⁷¹

When MP Thomas Sexton asked a few years later whether it was true, as *The Standard* had reported, that the British Government had sent Errington to Rome to prevent the appointment of Dr. Walsh as archbishop of Dublin, Gladstone replied that: "The Cabinet have never, so far as I am aware had any Cognizance of any communication between Mr. Errington and his Holiness the Pope."⁷² In fact, he like Granville had discussed the mission on several occasions as one can see from his diaries.⁷³ *The Times* of 29 April 1885 made it plain that the Government opposed Walsh.⁷⁴ Together these stories threw a negative light on the government, and Gladstone and Granville played down their connections with the Vatican as much as they could. This naturally displeased the Vatican: "[the Cardinal Secretary said] that these repeated disavowals seemed quite inconsistent."⁷⁵

69 18/04/1882, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 268, 887 ff
70 *Ibidem*, 268, 894.

71 13/02/1882, *Ibidem*, 266, 497.

72 27/04/1885, *Ibidem*, 298, 822 ff: Mr Cowen: asked whether Mr Errington had been sent to Rome for the purpose of making any representation in favour or against any particular bishop for the See of Dublin.

73 Gladstone mentioned in his diaries that the cabinet met in February 1882 and discussed: "Question respecting Errington. He had not any diplomatic communication to make but conveyed information personally collected by him & the cousin's official correspondence. O'Hagan did the same." 11/02/1882. See Matthew, ed., *The Gladstone Diaries*, 10, 209 ff; 18, 30, 265 ff and 364.

74 *The Times* quoted the debate verbatim, 29/04/1885. Clipping in: FO 45/661.

75 "I said I could not admit such an observation at all; that you had on the contrary at all times incurred annoyance and even risk in order to avoid seeming unfriendly (...) and that the matter could not be judged merely as one of more or less friendly considerations, when it involved, if not the existence, at all events attacks, possibly very serious, on the stability of the ministry." Errington to Granville, 17/01/1884.

Even after the fall of the Gladstone ministry questions continued.⁷⁶ Irish MP O'Brien had, by bizarre means, acquired one of Errington's letters.⁷⁷ In it Errington claimed that he did his best to keep the Vatican "in good humour" since the Dublin Archbishopric was still "undecided". O'Brien saw this letter as an insult: "the idea of everything that was vital to the religion and liberties of the Catholics of Ireland being trafficked in and bargained for in this miserable way at Rome" was "repulsive". He also spotted correctly that the English had promised to favour Catholicism in India and Malta and came to the conclusion that the Pope had been betrayed.

In the end it was a Conservative government that instigated the "first official British visit to the Vatican in the capital of United Italy." Although the Conservatives had to be as afraid of the no-popery middle class as the Liberals, in November 1887 the Duke of Norfolk⁷⁸ travelled to Rome to thank the Pope for his congratulations on the Queen's Jubilee.⁷⁹ Norfolk was vehemently against Home Rule and gave the Conservative government advice on how to get Irish unrest under control: "no direct dealings with Walsh, [but] direct dealings with Rome" - and as the new Foreign Secretary Balfour cynically summarised: "a direct bribe to Rome in the shape of a Catholic College, [...] to be given when, by the efforts of the Holy Father, the Irish Priesthood shall have learnt the ten commandments."

The idea was new, the methods had remained the same: in 1888 Leo XIII condemned boycotting and again Irish priests who "go in for being more of a political partisan than a priest." The conservatives did not deliver a College in return. Balfour had to abandon the plan "after overwhelming Orange protests." The Errington and Norfolk missions show that, despite the best efforts of the Pope, the British public would not tolerate any overt improvement in relations with the Holy See.

76 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 300, 1885, 377.

77 A German paper, the *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung* revealed how this had come about: "Die Parnell'sche Partei kam einfach dadurch in den Besitz des Briefinhaltes, dass eines ihrer Mitglieder einen Abdruck desselben auf Fliesspapier fand. Um sicher zu gehen, schrieb dann ein Parnellit, auf Grund früherer Bekanntschaft, einen Brief an Errington, in scheinbar unverfänglicher Sache, damit eine Antwort zum Zwecke der Schriftvergleichung erlangt werde. Errington ging in die Falle. So erzielte man volle Gewissheit." Quoted in O'Reilly, *Leo XIII*, 308.

78 Norfolk had already been approached as a new go-between by the Gladstone Government in February 1885. See Woods, "Ireland and Anglo-Papal relations", 58.

79 Kennedy, *Salisbury*, 204. The Duke of Norfolk worked closely with John Ross of Bladensburg, a convert, and Count Strickland to bring about better relations with the Vatican. See for this the forthcoming book by William Lubenow on the Catholic Aristocracy in Britain.

Like the protagonist in L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*, Norfolk and Errington had to liaise between two completely different social worlds of whose relationship the public would have disapproved. Whatever hopes had been harboured by the two principals in the drama - whether of temporary advantage or of a lasting relationship, the ending was - as in the novel - tragic, leaving all of the involved parties disillusioned.⁸⁰