

In this I see some explanation of the unexampled spiritual fertility of Ireland. What other race since the Apostles has so spread the Faith on earth? There is at this hour an Irish and Catholic population in England and Scotland, Canada, Australia, and the United States, double in number as compared with the whole population of Ireland.

#### THEY ARE MULTIPLYING BEYOND ALL OTHER RACES;

founding churches and episcopates, building cathedrals; raising everywhere altars, schools, colleges, convents; and covering the surface of new countries, I may say new continents, with the Catholic faith, as fervent, fruitful, and pure, as in Dublin, Tuam, Cashel, and Armagh. I know nothing else like this in the world, I may say in Christian history. When I remember how this faith has been preserved, through what sorrows and sufferings, with what a prolonged martyrdom of generations, I must believe that our Divine Master has called the Irish nation to a great mission and a great destiny. And this comes out all the more visibly in this age of national apostasy. The nations have fallen away one after another from the unity of the Kingdom of God. Germany and the North fell first; France, and Italy, and Austria, and now Spain, have followed. By anti-Christian revolutions and public rejection of the Vicar of Jesus Christ they have as nations ceased to be Catholic, and seem bent on ceasing to be even Christians; but Ireland, in heart, and soul, and will, in its private life and public opinion, in its popular voice and political action, is Christian and Catholic; with a noble pride and manly indignation at the apostasy and cowardice of the nations who are hiding their face from the Redeemer of the world, and disowning His Vicar upon earth. With all my heart I love Ireland for this apostolic fidelity, for this chivalry of Catholic fortitude and Christian love. Your Grace is at this moment, while I am writing, surrounded by the bishops and clergy of Ireland, delectating the cathedral at Armagh. I am consoling myself for my privation by writing these words, and praying that the promise made to St. Patrick may be abundantly fulfilled in all the world, and with a special benediction on the province of Ulster, and upon the faithful, fervent, generous people of Ireland.

Edmund Burke said that, with some changes, the Catholic Church of Ireland, to his mind, bore the closest resemblance of any church on earth to the Church of the Apostles. I fully believe this; for it is the most Pastoral Church in the world, where pastors and flock are in the closest bonds of confidence and love. Where this is Christianity is in its primitive purity of life. I am not going to dwell on these topics now. Ireland, its adversaries being both judges and witnesses, is at the head of the nations for purity and morals, and freedom from ordinary crime. For years I have declared my belief that Ireland is the most Christian country in the world. Its Christian traditions are universal and unbroken; its people know their religion; the intelligence of Ireland has been illuminated, quickened, enlarged by the inherited faith of fourteen hundred years; to your flocks Christian and Catholic are convertible terms.

#### AN IRISHMAN WITHOUT FAITH.

is a shame to his mother and to Ireland. The laity of Ireland, as I well know, are as prompt and clear when Catholic doctrine or principle is at stake, and speak as authoritatively and logically in defence of the Catholic religion, as if they had been trained in a seminary. The whole action of Irish homes, Irish public opinion, and the social life of the nation, moulds them, not by constraint and unwillingly, but insensibly and spontaneously, to the instincts and character of Christians. May God preserve this inheritance of His grace to you. In England it has been shattered and wasted; every year mutilates more and more the remaining Christian traditions of public life and opinion among us. We can test this comparative difference under our own hands. The difference of Catholic formation between those who come to us from Ireland and those who are born of Irish parents in England is sadly marked. The atmosphere of Ireland unfolds and ripens the Catholic instincts of faith; the atmosphere of England, like untimely frosts, checks and cuts them off.

I could have wished also to say to my Irish brethren what, as one looks at Ireland from a distance, may perhaps be a mirage or an illusion; but it may also be a truth and a reality, more promptly seen by those who look from a distance than by those who live in the monotony of every day and the importunate presence of the common life which surrounds them. Perhaps no one is so quick to perceive the growth of the trees about a friend's house as a visitor who comes only from time to time. One conviction, then, is strongly impressed upon my mind. I do not believe that Ireland was ever so full of life, power and resource as at this day. I can fully understand how the constancy of the many evils and wrongs you daily see, may make it hard to realize this fact; but I believe it to be the simple truth.

1. First, was there ever any time in the history of Ireland when its people were so completely united? There have been in past times many interests of races, families, and classes, which have hindered the fusion of the people into one whole. At this day they are as solidly united as the people of Scotland or Yorkshire. The moral importance of this fact will be estimated by all who know the past history of Ireland.

2. Next it may with certainty be said that the people of Ireland were never so well or so universally educated as at this day. The College of St. Patrick's, at Maynooth, has now, since the beginning of this century, wrought its effect throughout the Catholic clergy; a number of lesser colleges throughout the provinces has powerfully affected the Catholic laity.

#### THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

which for the last thirty years has covered Ireland with national schools, has diffused education through the whole body of the people. Popular education in Ireland is more widely spread than in England. What was intended to undermine the Catholic religion in Ireland has turned to the confirmation of the Faith. The mass of the people at this day are an intelligent and educated Catholic nation; all the more Catholic because all the more intelligent; and thereby able to appreciate explicitly the grounds of their faith, the notes of the Church, the history of heresy, and the emptiness of all anti-Catholic systems which after ages of pretension are visibly dissolving every day before their eyes. Firm and invincible as Ireland has ever been in its faith, it is

more so now than ever. Everything has been tried against it, from martyrdom and pitchforks to soup and secular education; *merges profundo pulchrior eeneis*. I am old enough to remember the high days of Exeter Hall, and Irish missions at Dingle and the like, and Priest Protection Societies, and the new reformation in Connemara, of which the great public oracle of England declared that, if its progress should be long maintained, Roman Catholicism would one day be as extinct in Ireland as the worship of the Phœnicians in Cornwall. But all these things have gone to the limbo of the South Sea Bubble; and the people of Ireland are rising and consolidating every year in vigorous intelligence and immutable faith.

3. To this I may add one more sign of prosperous growth in Ireland. Since the day when its people were put out of their inheritance in the soil there was never a time when so much land had returned again into Catholic hands. Famine and fever, and the exodus have indeed done their mournful work in assuring to those who survive or remain a better remuneration for their industry; but, apart from this, there never was, I believe, a time when more industry was at work in Ireland, when more capital was invested, more activity of production and exchange was in motion, and when, therefore, better returns were secured to the employers and better wages to the employed. Of this I lately had an unlooked for and trustworthy proof. A very intelligent Englishman, who had raised himself, as he told me, from the plough's tail, went over last autumn to Connemara to see with his own eyes the material condition of the peasantry in Ireland. On his return he assured me that in abundance and quality of food, in rate of wages, and even in the comfort of their dwellings,

#### THE WORKINGMEN OF CONNEMARA

are better off than the agricultural laborers of certain of our English counties. It is, therefore, to me beyond a doubt that the Catholic population of Ireland is at this moment forming to itself a social organization in all its conditions of industry and commerce, labor and capital, and filling up the unsightly chasm between the richest and the poorest with a gradation of social classes, which must every year indefinitely increase the resources and power of the country. I know, indeed, that the last census shows once more a diminished population; but when this descent has touched a certain point, emigration will slacken, if not cease, and the population must increase again.

4. And lastly, I must say that no one without a foresight almost prophetic could have foretold, in 1823 and 1829, to how high a share in the public life and power of the Empire Ireland has been lifted by the last five and forty years. On this let me speak out of my own observation. I was just entering upon life when the Catholics of these kingdoms were admitted into Parliament. I well remember the political conflicts from the time of Mr O'Connell's election for the County of Clare. From that day to this many events and reasons have made me note somewhat closely the course of our legislation; and my clear and firm conviction is, that at no time in the history of the English Monarchy has Ireland had so wide, so various and so powerful a share in the Legislature, in the public opinion, and the public life of the Empire. The justice of Englishmen has admitted Ireland to the same legal privileges and powers as England and Scotland; and the intelligence and energy of Irishmen are every year converting what is potential in the statute book into actual exercise and possession. It is not my intention now to enter upon political matters; but I must say in passing that I do not forget the inequalities which still

#### DEPRESS THE CATHOLIC POPULATION

of these kingdoms. They are not, however, inequalities of the law, which is the same for all; but inequalities of social and personal conditions, which still weigh upon the posterity of those who were a generation ago under penal laws. Who would have believed that, after five and forty years—to Parliament—there should not be a single Catholic returned to the House of Commons by any constituency in England or Scotland? And who would believe that, of the hundred and five Irish members in the House of Commons, the Catholic members should be only one in three to represent a people of whom the Catholics are nearly four to one? Nevertheless as I am aware, the Protestant representatives of Catholic constituencies are men of honor, and through them, also, Catholic Ireland makes its just claims felt, so far as they are felt in the Imperial legislature. Your Grace will correct me if I be in error; but am I not right in affirming that Ireland has a public opinion of its own, which has matured and strengthened in the last forty years beyond all example in the past history of the country? And has not that public opinion a powerful action, through an extensive and active press, upon the public opinion of England and upon the Imperial Legislature? And let me add that, in all the great cities and towns of England and Scotland, there is response to this public voice of Ireland which carries home both to the ear and to the intelligence of this country. My belief is that there is a great future for Ireland. If less than fifty years have brought about what I have hardly touched in outline, what may not another fifty years with the accelerating ratio of improvement accomplish? When I look on foreign nations, and I may say also upon England, I see cause for grave foreboding. Everywhere I see change, or what men call progress, without stability; Governments and nations are marching into the unknown, without a base of operations and therefore without a line of retreat; without communications open for resource, or means of reforming in case of a disaster; States, I do not say monarchies, for they have sold themselves and are morally gone, but States without faith and therefore without God; and States without God have no stability, because they have no vital coherence. They may hold together by the force of custom for a while, or by the tenacity of interest even for a long time; but they have no source of life or curative resources in themselves. All these things I see in Ireland. You have a people pervaded by faith, openly serving God by every form of private and public duty. You have a religious unity in doctrine, worship and communion, which resists and casts off all modern expedients of latitudinarianism of godless legislation.

To be concluded in our next.

An ancient Christian church has been discovered in the interior of Japan.