

## CONSECRATION OF IRELAND TO THE SACRED HEART.

[PASSION SUNDAY, 1873.]

(“Nation”)

[The solemn and impressive act of the Church when Ireland was consecrated to the Sacred Heart, has supplied the occasion of the following beautiful poem, which is worthy of the national and Catholic spirit of the author, our gifted countryman, Denis Florence MacCarthy:—]

Where'er beneath the Saving Rood

The nation kneels to pray,

A holy bond of brotherhood

Unites us all to-day:

From north to south, from east to west,

From circling sea to sea,

Erne bares her bleeding breast;

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

She bares her breast, which many a wound,

Which many a blow made sore,

What time the Martyred Mother swooned

Insenate in her gore.

But, ah, she could not die, no! no!

One germ of life had she—

The love that turned, through weal, through woe,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

She gave her sighs, she gave her tears,

To Thee, O Heart divine!

She gave her blood for countless years

Like water or like wine;

And now that in her horoscope

A happier fate we see,

She consecrates her future hope,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

She consecrates her glorious past—

For glorious 'tis, though sad;

Bright, though with many a cloud o'ercast;

Though gloomy, yet how glad!

For through the wilds that round her spread;

How darksome they might be,

One light along the desert led,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

She consecrates her dark despair;

Though brightened from above—

She consecrates her Patrick's prayer—

Her Brigid's burning love—

Her Brendan sailing over seas

'Tis but none had dared but he—

These, and a thousand such as these;

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

And even the present, though it be,

Alas! unwisely sage—

Its icy-cold philosophy,

Its stained historic page,

Its worship of brute force and strength.

That leaves no impulse free—

She hopes to consecrate at length,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

But oh! forgive what I have said—

Forgive, O Heart divine!

'Tis Thou hast suffered, Thou hast bled,

And not this land of mine!

'Tis Thou hast bled for sins untold.

That God alone doth see—

The insults done, so manifold,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

But still Thy feet I dare embrace

With mingled hope and fear—

For Joseph looks into Thy face,

And Mary kneeleth near:

Thou canst not that sweet look withstand,

Nor that all-powerful plea,

And so we consecrate our land,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

For us, but not for us alone,

We consecrate our land.

The holy Pontiff's plundered throne

Doth still our prayers demand:

That soon may end the robber reign;

And soon the Cross be free,

And Rome repentant turn again,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

One valiant band, O Lord, from us

A special prayer should claim—

The soldiers of Ignatius,

Who bear Thy holy Name.

Still guard them on their glorious track,

Still victors let them be

In leading the lost nations back.

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

Like some tired bird whose homeward flight

Rececks its distant nest,

Ah, let my soul once more alight

Upon my country's breast:

There let it rest, to roam no more,

Awaiting the decree

That lifts my soul, its wanderings o'er,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

Then break, ye circling seas, in smiles;

And sound, ye streams, in song;

Ye thousand ocean-girdled isles,

The joyous strain prolong—

In one grand chorus, Lord, we pray.

With Heaven and Earth and Sea;

To consecrate our land to-day,

O Sacred Heart, to Thee!

## THE TRUE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

‘Catholic Opinion.’

WE are sorry to find the ‘Church Herald,’ with whose writers we would rather sympathise than quarrel, since they have much in common with us, talking arrant nonsense about the Anglican Church being the ancient Church of England.

The question is, whether the Established Church or the Roman Communion is the Ancient Church of England? Now the test of the identity of Churches is undoubtedly identity of doctrine—are, then, the distinctive doctrines taught now amongst the Roman Catholics, or in the Anglican Church; identical—one and the same—with those taught in the ancient, British, and Saxon Church, and up to the reign of Henry VIII.? Is Primitive Christianity and the religion of British Christians in primitive times the same as that of the Roman Catholic Church, or as that of the Established Church of this country?

We take it that all will admit that no doctrines are more distinctive of what is called Roman Catholicism than 1. That of the Supremacy of the Popes as successors to St. Peter; 2. That the Real Body of Christ is present in the Lord's Supper; and 3. That it is a Real Sacrifice. We will take the first of these points only:—

One of the earliest facts we know about the British Church is the testimony of Bede, that it was Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome, who, at the request of Lucius, a British King, sent the first Christian missionaries into Britain. Now, what kind of Christianity was it they brought with them? St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, born A.D. 120, martyred A.D. 202, was a contemporary of Pope Eleutherius, and was in Rome during his Pontificate. He was a disciple of St. Polycarp, who was himself a contemporary of the Apostles; and the presumption surely is, that what he taught to others he had himself learned from his master, St. Polycarp, who had himself been taught by the Apostles. He tells us, concerning the authority of the Bishop of Rome (adv. Hær. iii. 2), that “the Church of Rome is the greatest and universally known Church, founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul; and that this Church, on account of its superior headship (or supremacy), all churches, that is, all the faithful throughout the world, are bound to be in accordance.” Such was the belief which Irenæus testifies was held by all Churches in his day. He says expressly that all Christians then believed in all things alike, for he writes: “The Church spread everywhere over the whole world, to the earth's utmost boundaries, having received the faith, sedulously guards it, as though dwelling in one house, and having one soul, and one heart, and teaching uniformly as having one mouth” (adv. Hær. i. 10). It follows, therefore, that this, which St. Irenæus testifies, was the belief of all Christians of his day, was amongst the doctrines taught by the first Christian missionaries sent into Britain by St. Eleutherius.

We would ask which are most like to the Christians of those primitive times, as to unity of faith and submission to the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, the Christians of the Established Church or Roman Catholic Christians?

Again, we have definite proof that the authority of the Bishop of Rome was actually acknowledged by the British Church long before the coming of St. Augustine. St. Prosper of Aquitaine, writing in 430, tells us of the Pelagian heresy, which had its origin in Britain, and that Pope Celestine “sent Germanus as his Vicar (or Legate) into Britain that he might drive away heresy, and restore Britain to the Catholic faith;” and he informs us that he was received by the British Bishops, and presided as Legate at their synods. The same St. Prosper also states that, as an existing and patent fact of his day, just as any Catholic might make the same statement now, “Rome, as the See of Peter, is the head of the Episcopal Order in the whole world, and holds in subjection, through the influence of religion, more nations than ever had been subdued by her arms (*S. Prosper de vocatione gentium*).” Why, this sounds very like what any Catholic might have said in reference to the late decrees of the Vatican Council, when, without a dissenting voice, all the Bishops of the whole world are seen united in Rome with their Head, and united in faith with him.

We would ask Anglicans not to stultify themselves, but to answer simply whether the Established Church under Cranmer and his fellows did not separate itself from the Church of primitive times, from the ancient faith of the British and Saxon Church, and from the existing Church of England of the sixteenth century, when, at the bidding of the tyrant Henry, and for the sake of their stipends and livings, the majority of the Bishops and clergy renounced the supremacy of the successors of St. Peter, hitherto always and everywhere submitted to, as we have from Irenæus and Prosper, and accepted the supremacy of the King instead? Is it not plain that, by this act, the predecessors of the existing Bishops and clergy of the Church of England obtained their titles to the churches and Church property, which else they would have forfeited, and that in this way they became a new corporate body—the Church by law established, when More and Fisher laid down their heads upon the block, and with them the other adherents of the Ancient Church of England submitted to the loss of all things rather than of the “Faith of their Fathers?” This ancient, proscribed remnant, despoiled and persecuted, but not forsaken, at the end of three centuries, is still vigorous, and now, reinforced by vast numbers of Catholics from Ireland naturalised amongst us, many converts, too, being added each year, we are become a powerful body, with an Episcopalate newly erected, but drawing its origin from the same authority of Christ and of Peter, which, by St. Gregory, gave the Pallium 1200 years ago to Canterbury, and through Pius IX. has transferred it to Westminster.