

### VALUE OF IRISH HISTORY

Ireland is a storehouse of spirituality. With the shadow of the penal laws still upon her, she gave a Catholic hierarchy to the United States, and another to Australia; and to-day, in the very anguish of a new birth, we find her apostolic sons preparing to evangelise China. That nation must possess an indomitable soul which fought the Danes for 300 years, fought the English for 700 more, and is to-day, still unconquered, fighting on (says a writer in the course of an article on the building of Australia a nation in the current number of *Australia*).

Here is a mine of spirituality indeed! Here are soul stuffs not yet listed in Australia's imports! The first step towards exploiting this gold mine would be to encourage Irish history in our schools. Could not prizes be offered of sufficient value to induce our Leaving Certificate and Intermediate, no less than our Primary students to sample the sweet wells of holy Ireland? Finally, I shall summarise the reasons given by an American school committee (W. H. Cahill, M.A., M.Sc.: E. F. O'Riordan, M.A., B.Sc.: Thomas A. O'Shaughnessy, Chicago) for the fostering of Irish history in Catholic schools:—

1. Because a knowledge of Irish history will enlighten the minds of the young on the purity and virtue practised in the ideal Irish home, and induce them to model their homes accordingly, and emulate the virtues of their ancestors.

2. Because it will enlighten the young on the sacrifices which their forefathers made for the faith.

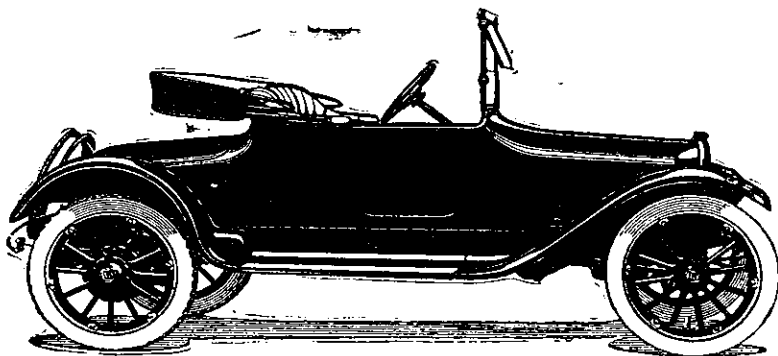
3. Because it will preserve in their minds Irish ideals—love of home and family life, hatred of divorce, respect for the sacrament of marriage, and abhorrence of Socialism. Even Lecky commends "that intense and zealous sensitiveness respecting female honor for which among many failings and some vices, the Irish people have long been prominent in Europe." (*European Morals*, ii., 153.)

4. Because it will show that Ireland was civilised long before the coming of Christ; that her missionaries after the time of St. Patrick converted many European countries, while the Irish at home maintained free schools and colleges.

5. Because it has been the greatest chapter in the history of the Catholic Church. The best way to keep the young loyal to the Church is to give them a thorough knowledge of Irish fidelity to the faith of St. Patrick, maintained through centuries of suffering.

6. Youth will profit by learning the history of a country of which we have such high testimony from one of its traducers, Froude: "Wealthy men," he said, "may sleep in Ireland with unlocked doors, so absolutely honest are the people. Offences of impurity also are almost entirely unknown."

One may be insupportable even with virtue, talent, and good conduct. Manners, which one neglects sometimes as little things not worthy of notice, are just those very things from which men often decide our character.—*La Bruyere*.



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