

'DUBLIN'S RELIGIOUS ASPECT'

PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC CHURCHES COMPARED.

The following extracts are taken from an article on 'Dublin's Religious Aspects,' written by the special correspondent of the *Daily News*—'P.P.W.'—who has accompanied the Eighty Club in their tour. In describing the 'Failure of the Union against Rome,' the writer's comparison between the Protestant and Catholic Churches is interesting and significant.

'Having discussed,' he says, 'the religious aspect of Home Rule with many leading Protestants, Unionists as well as Nationalists, I set forth on Sunday morning to see what could be seen of religion as it actually appeals to the citizens of Dublin. Incomparably the noblest fabrics in a town full of churches are the two ancient Cathedrals of

St. Patrick's and Christ Church, built in a gracious Gothic of Strongbow's days, but now Protestant, though disestablished. On approaching these venerable piles one scarcely knew whether or not service was proceeding—some of the more obvious doors were closed—but on obtaining entrance at last one heard the tender and pleading melodies of the English Prayer Book gently echoing over a congregation which did not fill the nave, let alone the aisles and transepts of the edifice. The worshippers were reverent and devout; well-dressed every one of them; I could not detect a hint of poverty as poverty is known in Dublin. "If," said my guide, "you see a man here with a top hat, you know he is going to a Protestant church or chapel." That is one of two contrasting pictures. Look now at the next.

'We visited the Catholic Pro-Cathedral and two other Catholic churches, one conducted by the Carmelite Order, and the other by the Jesuits—all of them vast structures in the Italian manner. Turning off Sackville street, we ran into what in London I should describe as a football crowd—hundreds of working men, a fair number of women and girls, and children not a few. What, I asked myself, can be the excitement that people should gather like this on a Sunday morning? It was the Pro-Cathedral emptying after Mass. We entered, but, strange to say, the church was as full as ever. A new service, with a new congregation, had commenced. So it was with the other churches, one Mass followed another from 6 o'clock onwards till noon, and the people, the workers, men as numerous as women, filling, nay, crowding, the churches every time. Various are the estimates of the percentage of Catholics who attend Mass every week. It is apparently agreed that there is a clear majority, and some put the figure as high as 90 per cent. of availables. Rich and poor attend the same churches, but a differentiation is sometimes secured by the charge of a few coppers for admission to certain seats. Still, the poor give their pennies, too—for the privilege of standing behind barriers—and all this money is, I am told, allocated to the upkeep of the edifices. One looked around upon these

Masses of Catholic Worshippers, hundreds of them haggard with privation and toil, and then one thought of the saying, "Home Rule means Rome Rule." What worlds has the Ascendancy left for Rome to conquer? Whatever may be the position under a national Parliament, it is certain that under Unionism the faith and message of Protestantism have not a chance of general acceptance in Ireland. The Roman Church, practically untouched by modernism, and overloaded with mediæval traditions, is to-day beloved and

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