



# CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. V.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1854.

NO. 9.

## IRELAND A REFUGE FOR CIVILISATION ON THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

[We quote the following highly interesting reflections, by the learned Rector of the Catholic University, from the *Catholic University Gazette* of Sept. 14th.—Ed. *Tablet*].—

"The weak and contemptible things of this world are destined to bring to nought and to confound the strong and noble. High up in the north, above the continent of Europe, lay two sister islands, ample in size, happy in soil and climate, and beautiful in the face of the country! Alas! that the passions of man should alienate from one another those whom nature and religion had bound together! So far away were they from foreign foes, that one of them the barbarians had never reached; and though the wave of their invasion had passed over the other, it was not destined to be followed by a second for some centuries. In those days the larger of the two was called Britannia, the lesser Hibernia. The latter was already the seat of a flourishing Church, abounding in the fruits of sanctity, learning, and zeal; the former, at least its southern half, had formed part of the empire, had partaken both of its civilisation and its Christianity, but had lately been occupied, with the extermination of its population, by the right wing of the great barbaric host which was overrunning Europe. I need not allude to a well-known history; we all recollect how some of those Pagan invaders of Britain appeared for sale in the slave-market at Rome, and were taken as samples of their brethren by the great Saint so often mentioned in these pages, who succeeded at length in buying the whole race, not for any human master, but for Christ.

"St. Gregory, who, amid his troubles at Rome, engaged in this sacred negotiation, was led by his charity to a particular people to do a deed which resulted in surpassing benefits on the whole of Christendom. Here lay the answers to the prayers and questionings of himself and other holy Popes, and the solution of the great problem which had so anxiously perplexed their minds. The old world was to pass away, and its wealth and wisdom with it; but these two islands were to be the storehouse of the past and the birthplace of the future. A divine purpose ruled his act of love towards the Anglo-Saxon race; or, if we ascribe it to the special prescience proper to Popes, then we may say that it was inspired by what he saw already realised in his own day, in the remarkable people planted from time immemorial on the sister island. For Ireland preceded England, not only in her Christianity, but in her cultivation and custody of learning, religious and secular, and in her special zeal for its propagation; and St. Gregory, in evangelising England, was but following the example of St. Celestine. Let us on this point hear the words of an historian, who has high claims on the respect and gratitude of this generation:—

"During the sixth and seventh centuries," says Doctor Dollinger, "the Church of Ireland stood in the full beauty of its bloom. The spirit of the Gospel operated amongst the people with a vigorous and vivifying power; troops of holy men, from the highest to the lowest ranks of society, obeyed the counsel of Christ, and forsook all things, that they might follow Him. There was not a country of the world, during this period, which could boast of pious foundations or of religious communities equal to those that adorned this far distant island. Among the Irish, the doctrines of the Christian religion were preserved pure and entire; the names of heresy or of schism were not known to them; and in the Bishop of Rome they acknowledged and venerated the Supreme Head of the Church on earth, and continued with him, and through him with the whole Church, in a never interrupted communion. The schools in the Irish cloisters were at this time the most celebrated in all the west; and in addition to those which have been already mentioned, there flourished the schools of St. Finian of Clonard, founded in 530, and those of Caidus, founded in 640.—Whilst almost the whole of Europe was desolated by war, peaceful Ireland, free from the invasions of external foes, opened to the lovers of learning and piety a welcome asylum. The strangers, who visited the island, not only from the neighboring shores of Britain, but also from the most remote nations of the Continent, received from the Irish people the most hospitable reception, a gratuitous entertainment, free instruction, and even the books that were necessary for their studies. Thus in the year 536, in the time of St. Senanus, there arrived at Cork from the Continent fifteen Monks, who were led thither by their desire to perfect themselves in the practices of an ascetic life under Irish directors, and to study the Sacred Scriptures in the school established near that city. At a later period, after the year

650, the Anglo-Saxons in particular passed over to Ireland in great numbers for the same laudable purposes. On the other hand, many holy and learned Irishmen left their own country to proclaim the Faith, to establish or to reform monasteries in distant lands, and thus to become the benefactors of almost every nation in Europe."

"Such was St. Columba, who is the Apostle of the northern Picts in the sixth century; such St. Fridolin in the beginning of the same century, who, after long labors in France, established himself on the Rhine; such the far-famed Columbanus, who, at its end, was sent with twelve of his brethren to preach in France, Burgundy, Switzerland, and Lombardy, where he died. All these great acts and encouraging events had taken place, ere yet the Anglo-Saxon race was converted to the Faith, or while it was still under education for its own duties in extending it; and thus the example of the Irish was a continued encouragement to the Pope, as time went on, boldly to prosecute that conversion and education which was beginning with such good promise, and not only their example, for they themselves, as the historian I have quoted intimates, took a foremost part in the work.

"The foundation of many of the English sees," he says, "is due to Irishmen; the Northumbrian diocese was for many years governed by them, and the Abbey of Lindisfarne, which was peopled by Irish Monks and their Saxon disciples, spread far around it its all blessing influence. These holy men served God, and not the world; they possessed neither gold nor silver, and all that they received from the rich passed through their hands into the hands of the poor. Kings and nobles visited them from time to time, only to pray in their churches, or to listen to their sermons; and as long as they remained in the cloisters, they were content with the humble food of the brethren. Whenever one of these Ecclesiastics or Monks came, he was received by all with joy; and wherever he was seen journeying across the country, the people streamed around him to implore his benediction and to hearken to his words. The Priests entered the villages only to preach or to administer the Sacraments; and so free were they from avarice, that it was only when compelled by the rich and noble, that they would accept lands for the erection of monasteries. Thus has Bede described the Irish Bishops, Priests, and Monks of Northumbria, although so displeased with their custom of celebrating Easter. Many Anglo-Saxons passed over to Ireland, where they received a most hospitable reception in the monasteries and schools. In crowds, numerous as bees, as Aldhelm writes, the English went to Ireland, or the Irish visited England, where the Archbishop Theodore was surrounded by Irish scholars. Of the most celebrated Anglo-Saxon scholars and Saints, many had studied in Ireland; among these were St. Egbert, the author of the first Anglo-Saxon mission to the pagan continent, and the blessed Willebrod, the Apostle of the Friesland, who had resided twelve years in Ireland. From the same abode of virtue and of learning came forth two English Priests, both named Ewald, who in 690 went as messengers of the Gospel to the German Saxons, and received from them the crown of martyrdom. An Irishman, Maildulf, founded in the year 670 a school, which afterwards grew into the famed Abbey of Malmesbury; among his scholars was St. Aldhelm, afterwards Abbot of Malmesbury, and first Bishop of Sherburne or Salisbury, and whom, after two centuries, Alfred pronounced to be the best of the Anglo-Saxon poets."

The seventh and eighth centuries are the glory of the Anglo-Saxon Church, as the sixth and seventh of the Irish. As the Irish Missionaries travelled down through England, France, and Switzerland, to Lower Italy, and attempted Germany at the peril of their lives, converting the barbarian, restoring the lapsed, encouraging the desolate, collecting the scattered, and founding churches, schools, and monasteries, as they went along; so, amid the deep pagan woods of Germany and round about, the English Benedictine plied his axe and drove his plough, planted his rude dwelling and raised his rustic altar upon the ruins of idolatry, and then settling down as a colonist upon the soil, began to sing his chants and to copy his old volumes, and thus to lay the slow but sure foundations of the new civilisation. Distinct, nay antagonistic, in character and talent, the one nation and the other, Irish and English, the one resembling the Greek, the other the Roman, open from the first perhaps to jealousies as well as rivalries, they consecrated their respective gifts to the Almighty Giver, and, laboring together to the same great end, they obliterated whatever there was of natural infirmity in their mutual intercourse by the merit of their noble use of grace. Each by turn could claim pre-eminence in the contest of sanctity and of learning. In the schools of science

England has no name to rival Erigena in originality, or St. Virgil in freedom of thought; nor among its canonised women any saintly virgin to compare with St. Bridget; nor, though it has one hundred and fifty Saints in its calendar, can it pretend to equal that Irish multitude which the Book of Life alone is large enough to contain. Nor can Ireland, on the other hand, with all its confessed zeal and erudition, boast of a Doctor such as St. Bede, or of an Apostle equal to St. Boniface, or of a Martyr like St. Thomas, or of a list of royal devotees so extended as that of the thirty male or female Saxons, who in the course of two centuries resigned their crowns, or of the twenty-three kings, and sixty queens and princesses, who, between the seventh and the eleventh centuries, gained a place among the Saints. Yet, after all, the Irish, whose brilliancy of genius has sometimes been considered, like the Greek, to augur fickleness and change, have managed to persevere to this day in the wisdom of the Saints, long after their ancient rivals have lost the Faith.

"But I am not writing a history of the Church, nor of England or Ireland, but tracing the fortunes of literature. When Charlemagne arose upon the Continent, the special mission of the two islands was at end, and accordingly Ragnar Lodbrog with his Danes began his descents upon their coasts; yet they were not superseded till they had formally handed over the tradition of learning to the schools of France and had raised the monument of their long fidelity to their mission in the pages of history. The Anglo-Saxon Alcuin was the first Rector, and the Irish Clement the second, of the Parisian Studium. In the same age the Irish John was sent to found the school of Pavia; and when about this time the heretical Claudius of Turin exulted over the ignorance of the devastated Churches of the Continent, and called the Synod of Bishops, who summoned him, "a congregation of asses," it was no other than the Irish Dungall, a Monk of St. Denis, who met and overthrew the presumptuous raider.

## CAUSES OF THE DIFFUSION OF MORMONISM IN AMERICA.

(From the *Tablet*.)

Among the many causes of the rapid diffusion of Mormonism we may confidently assign—1st. The activity of the Mormonite press in the United States. 2d. The persecution with which the intolerant Protestant ravaged the sect so as to stifle its internal discords. 3rd. The artful dexterity with which Joe Smith turned to account all those incidents of his career that tended to extend and confirm his influence on the minds of his dupes; and 4th. The profoundly Protestant character of Mormonism itself, making it contagious in a country which is profoundly Protestant.

Joe Smith was commanded, he tells us, by God Almighty himself, to found a monthly newspaper and a jobbing printing office, and accordingly a journal named the *Morning and Evening Star* came out under the management of W. W. Phelps at an early period in Smith's career—a publication which was quickly followed by a hebdomadal newspaper named *The Upper Missouri Advertiser*. Through the columns of these widely circulated publications the passionate ravings of Joe Smith and his delirious disciples deluged and anazed the adjacent districts, being apparently as inexhaustible and certainly as turbid as the over-flowing Missouri. So very effective was this mode of propagating the new creed—in a country where every soul knows how to read, and knows little more—that flocks of recruits came lagging into the camp or church which soon swelled to three thousand souls.—The Mormonites at this time could boast of two colonies, one in Ohio and the other in Missouri. Owing to the flourishing condition of "New Zion," the cares and presence of the prophet were no longer needed in the rich savannas of Missouri; New Zion could prosper without him. Joe Smith hastened, therefore, to direct his cares to the struggling colony which he had left in Ohio, and which he was alarmed to learn withered and drooped in that ungenial soil, and, what shocked his mind still more, his mill, his shop, and his farm were languishing like his church. Unfortunately the moment the prophet abandoned his flock in Ohio, a pack of "raging wolves" rushed upon the sheep with voracious appetite. The Protestants adjacent to "New Zion" had perused the Mormonites with malevolent glances, and frequently asserted that the converts of whom they boasted were more suited to the goal than the tabernacle. A thousand floating rumors were babbled by Protestant slander, and cherished by Protestant credulity, to show that loose notions on moral subjects disfigured and characterised the pious readers of the "Golden Bible." It was blazed abroad that not only a community of property, but what was more awfully culpable, a community of females existed secretly among Mormonites. It was to no purpose

that these libels were boldly met, and vehemently protested against by the Mormonite journals; slanders only crept farther when overthrown. As a growing hope had risen in the Mormonite mind of one day spreading their sect over the district and mastering all Missouri, the general alarm was probably better founded and certainly wiser spread on the fearless avowal by the Mormonites of this anticipation. But the indignation of Protestant piety at the doctrinal perversities of the Mormonites could no longer contain itself, when, in June, 1833, a Mormonite newspaper had the impudence to argue that negroes should be at once emancipated! A perfect hurricane broke forth. A meeting of three thousand persons immediately assembled, in which it was proposed and carried by acclamation, that the country should be swept clean of those pestilent heretics. Mr. Phelps, the editor of the *Morning and Evening Star*, Mr. Partridge, a bishop of the Mormonites, and the "angels" or heads of the community, were favored with an address, in which they and their church were by no means flattered.

It was unmistakably the object of the enlightened Protestants who got up the address to check the growth of heresy, through the instrumentality of bowie knives, and economise logic, in which Protestants are clumsy proficient, by a boundless profusion of blows, violence, and revolvers—in short, to wrench from the terrors of the Mormonites a promise to close their printing office, shops, stores, and publication. The Mormonites supplicated time for the consideration of this imperative and insolent address. But their violent visitors would not hear of delay, procrastination being a world which is rarely found in the vocabulary of evangelical citizens. So the latter seized at once upon Phelps, the editor; Partridge, the bishop, and another "saint," whose name has not reached us. The editor contrived to extricate himself, and evade his captors, but his associates were hauled along in triumph, surrounded by a roaring swarm of vociferous anti-Mormonites, who carefully stripped their prisoners, appointed them all over with tar, and then showered upon them a world of feathers, after which they humanely permitted them to escape with their lives.

It was whispered that the Lieutenant-Governor of Missouri connived at—if he did not strenuously forward—these outrages, and a crusade was publicly preached from several pulpits against the Mormonites, as against the enemies of God. A swarm of Protestant riflemen accordingly took the field, unfurling a blood-red standard as an intimation of their pious designs, and presenting to the "Latter-Day Saints" the perplexing choice of exile or extermination. Seeing resistance impossible, the distressed Mormonites secretly dispatched Oliver Cowdery to consult the prophet at Kirtland, and, at the same time, consented to begone in two caravans at intervals of three months. Their newspaper no longer appeared, and, appeased by this submission, their foes, the riflemen, benevolently spared their lives.

Meantime their victims roved in a secret and solemn conclave to revive their interdicted newspaper at Kirtland, and to vex their tormentors by establishing a new one. They also resolved to put themselves under the protection of the chief governor of Missouri, by appealing to his justice to save their property and lives. In his reply, the governor, Mr. Dunklin, denounced their enemies, and threatened to prosecute the aggressors of the "Latter-Day Saints." The Mormonites were elated, and in lieu of preparing waggons to depart they diligently prepared firearms to resist their malignant adversaries. As Americans as too enlightened to obey the laws of their land, and as they cannot well respect judges whom they themselves have nominated, the governor and his threats were laughed at. The anti-Mormonites mustered, by way of answering the governor, put themselves under the command of Lieutenant Boggs the Titus of New Zion—fiercely attacked the Mormonites, and, surrounded by screaming women and blazing homesteads, sacked and burned the establishment. The uproar of civil war raged in Missouri until the vanquished believers in the new prophet—all wounds and tears—promised humbly a second time to quit their native province.

The hasty flight of the afflicted Mormonites suggested that of the Israelites flying—before the pursuing Pharaoh—into the desert. They rapidly packed up their broken furniture, and scrambling together as much food as they could find, they breathlessly hurried away in various directions. It was with a grim smile and chuckle of satisfaction that their Protestant tormentors contemplated the distressed and bewildered people flying in scattered groups with stumbling haste they knew not where—some to beg a refuge in Clay county—some to Van Buren's county—and some, more unfortunate than their brethren, to La Fayette, where they were received with execrations, loaded rifles, Protestant