



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. IV.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1853.

NO. 16.

DR. CAHILL'S LECTURE ON THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF IRELAND.

The Rev. D. W. Cahill, D.D., has lately delivered, for the benefit of St. Augustine's Schools, four lectures at the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson st., Liverpool—three on natural philosophy, and the fourth, which is reported as follows, on the social condition of Ireland. The hall was crowded to excess, there being no fewer, perhaps, than 2,500 persons assembled. On the platform were several of the well-known Catholic Clergy of Liverpool and neighborhood. Upon the Rev. Doctor making his appearance successive rounds of the most enthusiastic cheering greeted him.

Dr. Cahill, after thanking the audience for his reception, proceeded—I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, I have a most difficult office to discharge to-night. The statement of my lecture is worded in this way—"The Social Condition of Ireland."—There never was proposed a heavier or more responsible task, yet, to an Irishman, it is a somewhat easy task, as it is his constant study. (Hear, hear.) I don't appear here to-night to inflame your feelings with animosity, to introduce amongst you national discord or anti-national feelings. No, I appear here to-night as counsel for Ireland, and you shall stand over me as a jury. (Cheers.) In the present instance I have a two-fold object in view—I wish to inform the Irish about our country, and to the Englishman, to give a clear and impartial apology for the condition in which my country is placed, on account of the constant and horrid discord into which misgovernment has placed it, and the terrible poverty consequent upon this misgovernment. The charges brought against us are, that we are lazy and won't work; that we are improvident, and won't accumulate capital; that we have no enterprise, and would not engage in commerce; that we are discontented, and would not be propitiated; that we are rebellious, and would not submit to the laws; that we are disloyal, and would not be content with the throne.—Now, my business here to-night is not to make a speech, for my language would be unable to do justice to the subject; but, as a Reverend counsellor, to lay bare and uncover the wounds of Ireland.—I only point out to you the grievous distress our poor country has suffered. I have to go back, not for a century, nor for two centuries, but very near 700 years, before I can do justice to this most distressing case of Ireland, which I promise to lay before you. First, therefore, I begin with the years 1172-7, when Henry II. conquered Ireland through the dissension and treachery of our own countrymen; and from this time down to 1570, for nearly 400 years, there was continual struggling between England and Ireland; and during these 400 years they were never able to conquer Ireland, never able to pass Leinster; so that three other provinces were never conquered. And in these times the most barbarous cruelties were practised on the people.—(Hear.) Amongst other instances, he would mention that the English soldiers were not allowed to deal with us, not to spread even what civilisation they might boast. Never were the conquered treated with greater cruelty than from the reign of Henry II. to that of Henry VIII. The execution of Clare he would allude to, when the British soldiers outraged the wives and daughters of the Irish before their face, and shot them, or tossed them over the rocks if they complained. Five hundred lashes was the punishment if a British soldier married an Irish girl. I could point out to you if I pleased several instances of the most blackened cruelty; but it is not necessary, since I look upon them as dreadful stories; and it is more to the credit of a lecturer to moralize on facts of history, rather than merely to recount them. Now, I ask, what agriculture could have been successfully pursued in a country like ours, which during the four hundred years we have now in view was a scene of perpetual struggles between the oppressing conqueror and the poor conquered? (Hear.)—How could commerce be entered into, while the enemy's camp was at their gates, and they were nearly all occupied in repelling the invaders? (Hear.)—Every honest Englishman will bear me out in these conclusions. In England at the very time commerce was beginning the crusades had begun, and all their opening and kindling influences of chivalry. During those 400 years England was cultivating learning, the arts, and sciences, with the most important characteristic—combination amongst themselves; whilst poor Ireland was learning war, and feeling its fury, which made it a theatre of animosity and dissension.—(Hear.) To you, ladies and gentlemen, my jury, I now appeal, and ask whose fault was it that our country was so wretched? Was it the fault of the Irish? (Cries of "No, no.") No, gentlemen, it was the fault of fate; a strong and foreign enemy was against and pressed us down. (Applause.) And after this,

next came the disastrous period of Henry VIII. He found fault with his Queen; dismissed her; quarrelled with the Pope, because he condemned him; and married a subject in 1533. He was succeeded by two or three young princes, whose career lasted, including Elizabeth, until 1603. Those years were the most disastrous in Irish history. England had changed her national faith, but failed in changing the Irish.—The conquerors took every acre of land, as the law said—"An Irishman must only have an acre of arable land, and half an acre of bog." The laws of Elizabeth were levelled against the three most important things in a nation's welfare—property, education, and the religion of the people—the Catholic Faith. (Hear.) During the seventy years we have now in review, persecution raged to the greatest extent, and Elizabeth contemplated the entire subjugation of Ireland. About the end of her reign, by dint of the cruellest warfare, and the banishment of seventy thousand Irish, she subjugated that country, leaving behind her the most withering, burning destruction and heartrending cruelty that have ever been recorded against any nation! Look, now, at the position of our poor country. No agriculture, no commerce, no learning, no education, no homes, no property, no position! And don't you think, now, that succeeding historians behave very wrongly when they charge and upbraid the Irish with the want of education, when all education in it was by law extinguished? And don't you think that the English historian is a villain to so charge them? (Hear, hear.) But I will say, to the credit of the generous frankness of the English, that I never sat with an Englishman for an hour that would let me go on with my statements, before his generous disposition swelled with indignation at the injustice and iniquity of the treatment of my country. (Applause.) To the glory of my country I tell it, though so persecuted, even the seventy thousand banished Irishmen never gave up their faith.—(Cheers.) England gave it up, but all Ireland remained faithful. She never flinched, but perished at the block sooner than forswear one shred of her ancient faith. (Loud cheers.) I gave you an idea of the fidelity of Ireland. I will give you an instance.—In 1654 nineteen Catholics were seized in Old Leidlun on account of their faith.—They were promised extensive landed property if they would change their faith. Three days were allowed to them in prison to think upon the subject; but when asked on the first day, they all replied "No." The second day, and again the same answer. On the third, when told to prepare for the block, they all answered, as one man, "The sooner the better."—(Enthusiastic cheering.) One of the company, a young lad of eighteen, when brought before the executioner, requested to see the governor. His request was granted, as something important was expected. He humbly asked pardon for being so bold in soliciting the governor's presence, and then begged that he might be beheaded first, as his father was among the others, and he could not bear to see him put to death! (Sensation.) The noble youth's request was granted, and then followed the decapitating of the rest, the nineteen heads being cut off upon the block sooner than say they surrendered the faith of their fathers. (Applause.) And so terribly was the persecution carried on in these days, that to shoot an Irishman was only five pounds penalty! (Cries of "Shame.") I will give you an instance. Some soldiers were passing an hotel, into which they entered. In some difference or frolic, they shot the waiter dead. The landlord, deep in grief, made a statement of the grievous murder to the colonel.—This gentleman treated the matter quite coolly, saying that he must have given some reason, and jocosely said, "Oh, never mind; put him in the bill; I'll make it all right." So, gentlemen, the waiter was put in the bill, which ran as follows:—"Breakfast, 1s 6d; dinner, 2s 6d; shooting a waiter, £5."—And murdering a waiter was only £5! (Groans.) And now, as I have gone over the events of these seventy years, will you allow me again to moralise? How do you think Irishmen could preserve their property, be educated, and maintain their faith under such trying circumstances? (Hear.) Their heroic conduct under these oppressing times was far better and more glorious than was that of the noble Greeks under Leonidas, at the pass of Thermopylae; for they stood bravely under it for seventy years. (Cheers.) It was in these times that the Irish Priest and the Irish people became first perfectly acquainted with each other. The Priest had to put off his vestments, and assume the frieze coat; had to leave his altars, and preach by the hedges; had to roll about himself the chains that bound the people, live in the forest with them, and descend with them into caves; and still more, if necessary, to perish with them. (Loud cheers.) And from that hour to this the people venerate the place called the "Ma's bush" or the "Ma's rock." For the poor Priest, at the risk of

his life, would privately attend at these places; and perhaps, as the morning sun arose, he would uncover the Host of salvation to the people and to God. (Great applause.) No persecution, no event since—not the most refined tyranny, have been able to break those bonds of sympathy between the Clergy and the people, which will go on and strengthen in Ireland to the very end of time. (Hear, hear, and prolonged cheering.) And now we go on to the third period of Irish history, from the reign of James I., 1603, until the beheading of Charles I., in 1649; and how did we fare now? Worse. Poor Ireland was conquered; and now we might naturally suppose that there would be an end to it. But no; we were again subjected to the fresh evils and cruel persecutions by our conquerors under the Scotch monarch. And again I ask, how is it possible, with such evils to contend against, for Ireland to have advanced in those arts which would make her happy, prosperous, and free? ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) We now arrive at 1649, when Charles was beheaded. And what sort of a period now follows? If the Devil himself ever came upon earth, he came in the shape of Cromwell. (Roars of laughter.) He came to Ireland, wrote to the ancestor of the present Marquis of Ormond to the following effect:—"Ormond, I command you under the penalty of death, to surrender to Cromwell; and if you surrender, you shall have £30,000, and do so I advise you." I saw the manuscript of this letter in Trinity College, Dublin. Ormond did surrender; but the Irish Catholics, to the last man, fought for their king. And when the greatest persecutor that ever lived came to our country we resisted him, and yet we got the name of rebels. (Hear, hear.) Tipperary was the most violent in defence of their king. Tipperary previously had been very wealthy, and the most religious people in Ireland. They had more to lose, more to fight for. These two things taken from them—their property and their religion—have made them the most violent of all Ireland from that day to this. ("Hear" and cheers.) Cromwell, in order to curb them, made a plantation here, yet not a man would volunteer to face the Tipperary boys, excepting the most reckless and depraved. (Laughter.) So, the earliest settlers were the wickedest of the troops, and these becoming landlords, had been the most tyrannical, while the people had been the most furious in opposition against them. (Hear, hear.) Again, in reviewing the last period—sixty years of cruel war—I ask what could we do? Could we carry on agriculture? Advance in sciences? Engage in commerce? Was there a moment for Ireland to breathe in the midst of all this? The Reverend lecturer reviewed the historical period down to William the Third, Prince of Orange, who overcame James the Second at the battle of the Boyne. He is usually taken as the representative of Orange principles, but he was far from any such low character. He was a man of wide and tolerant principles, and Orangemen did him much injustice. However, the moment he succeeded in his conquest his party were let loose upon Ireland, and the people never suffered such tyranny. (Hear, hear.) From George the First, 1714, to George the Third, 1760, Ireland was still persecuted. The Catholics were deprived of all their rights, except what was given to them by stealth. But George the Third was a good man, but a stubborn old fellow. (Hear.) The year 1760 is a most important period. George the Third came to the throne in perfect peace, and, having nothing to do, they were determined to tax the American people, from the sole of their foot to the pomatum of their wigs. The Americans remonstrated, and sent Washington to London to state their grievance. He waited on the Prime Minister several times in the outer court, to gain a hearing. He was treated so lightly that, at last, he said to the minister, "I call here frequently, and yet I get no conclusive answer; what shall I do?" The minister laughed at him; and when Washington got into the street, with his hat off, he vowed vengeance before God against England. (Rapturous cheering.) He returned home, fired the zeal of his countrymen. In battle after battle he was victorious over the English, and in 1782 he lifted the flag of American independence. (Applause.) I intend going to America shortly, and I will take a small bottle of Irish potteen and when within the nearest distance of Bunker's Hill I will drink on deck to the American flag. (Cheers.) After these reverses you never saw anything in your life so agreeable as England became to Ireland. Again, the French revolution began in 1789, in which she overturned her altar and her throne, and England, in terror, then gave us the privileges we now enjoy, and which gave us leave to worship God. Maynooth College was founded about this time, 1795 and we also got to vote at elections. England yielded through fear what she would not give to justice. In the language of those great men, Sheil and O'Connell—(great cheering)—England's difficulty is Ire-

land's opportunity. (Renewed cheering.) As Sheil said in one of his parliamentary speeches—"Ireland is like a convicted felon in a convict ship; his only hope of escape and relief is in the wreck of the ship." (Loud cheers.) From the year 1703 to 1830, when the Irish were allowed to have property, and vote at elections, they acquired two twenty-fifths of the whole property of Ireland, by which the industry of the country was encouraged; a clear proof that if we had accomplished so much under a tolerant government, in a few years, we should have done very much under a propitious government. There is no other nation under Heaven that have accumulated money with more honesty, more industry, and more frugality than the Irish. (Hear, hear.) Again, look at the illustrious names that, like stars, burst forth in the firmament of literature, when the ban upon education was removed. We have Milner, Lingard, Sheil, O'Connell, Dr. Doyle, and many others, who stand before all Europe as the most eminent men who have graced the annals of any country. (Cheers.) On the contrary, from 1692 to 1793, we had not a single individual to write in our favor and represent our grievous case in opposition to the lies of English historians, which, like the pediments of a bridge, are the foundations upon which succeeding historians have built their bridges, so that there are lies lying beneath in the very depths of the structure. (Hear, hear.) The 40s. freeholders were created about this time, to carry out a deep-laid plan for the destruction of our national parliament. (Hear, hear.) In eight years, by bribery and intimidation, England succeeded in taking away from us our national parliament. (Disapprobation.) It was a remarkable time; it was on a first day, of a first week, of a first month, of a first year in a new century, on Monday January 1st, 1801. They succeeded by spending four and a half millions, and have left Ireland without a parliament from that day to this. (Cries of "Hear, hear.") Our parliament gone in 1801, what more did England do? She took away our linen trade by putting a duty upon them; she discouraged our trade, beggared our commerce, and made that verdant, beautiful island a desert. Yes it was the Irish landlords sold our birthright, and by their treacherous conduct has come upon us the greatest curse Ireland has ever sustained. Between the years 1793 and 1815 land rose cent per cent, in Ireland; provision rose in equal proportion; the wealthy left it; clothes became dearer, and the young men entered the army, so that the Irish could live no longer in their own country—they had to leave Ireland come to England, and go abroad. The gentry lived upon their incomes, in luxury and waste, so that they sank Ireland into still greater depths of poverty, 14-25ths of the landed property being mortgaged. We have cruel middlemen upon our lands, exacting the highest prices, and the poor tenantry rent-racked, the landlords spending their money and living out of the country; corn cheap, and no money—no manufacture—not a chimney in Ireland except in Belfast. Catholics then got the Emancipation Bill; but what did that do? It introduced elections; but yet, when they elected Roman Catholic friends they were ejected and turned out of their homes the next day. Awful times followed. Mr. O'Connell began to agitate for another parliament; but his professions were doubted, as it was alleged they wanted to separate Ireland from England. A new spirit arose amongst the young men of Cambridge and Oxford, the nursery of statesmen, to look with suspicion upon the movements of Ireland. The press headed the outcry, and scarcely a newspaper appeared in England but what contained something to the discredit of Ireland. The Protestant Church in Ireland was consolidated by law. English feeling was never more jealously manifested. So what did we get by Emancipation? Thus we see we have only had about twenty-three years in which it may be said Ireland could advance in improvement. And now for the charges brought against us. We are idle. Idle? Where is the work to do? There is no work. We are improvident and beggarly. Yes; like a story I heard the other day of a poor fellow that was going to America by one of the emigrant ships at the Waterloo Dock, when he was accosted by a German who sold boxes with—"Buy a box, Sir." "What for?" said our friend. "To put your clothes in," replied the German. "Bedad, if I do then, I'll have to go naked on deck." ("Hear, hear," and loud laughter.) We have no enterprise, and not a single chimney or manufactory. We are dirty; but give us the price of razors and soap, and we will show you that we are clean. I'll tell you a story of a party of Cromwell's soldiers who went into a cabin in Ireland, and demanded the second best bed in the house. "That's bad news for Morgan, Sir," replied a poor fellow sitting at the fire. "Who the deuce is Morgan?" asked one of the party. "Morgan, Sir," answered the owner, "is no other than the pig."