

kindled them on to the Apostolic task, impelled them forward to preach the gospel to the infidels, to reanimate Christians crushed under barbarous invasions, to arouse to noble action degenerate souls, to elevate powerful nations, to inspire intrepid hearts, invincible to the passions of princes and to the rage of the populace, to rekindle the extinguished lamp of arts and letters, to carry everywhere the light of science and of faith.

The Roman empire had done her work and fallen, but its fall saw left on earth, that institution for the spread of which the empire was to pave the way—an institution stronger than human empires; weak in this world, but strong in the strength of God. Built on a rock; secured by the promises of the Eternal Truth, against which Paganism, Arianism, Barbarism, could never prevail; which, when Rome was crushed remained itself unconquerable. She had bowed her head to the storm, and when the surging wave of invasion had swept past, she too called forth her warriors from the north, her northern army of bishops and of priests. The Church of the living God lifted up her head and the barbarians gazed at her, admired heavenly beauty and fell down in adoration at her feet. The soldiers of one of her greatest conquerors, St. Patrick, had done more than their full share in conquering the enemies of Rome. To them we owe at least more than one century of the life of the Church and of European civilization.

Ireland, thanks to God and St. Patrick, had obtained the title of Island of Virgins, had merited to be styled Island of Confessors, but one title was wanting—she had yet to win another crown,—to become the Island of martyrs. Alone, perhaps, of all the countries of the earth, Ireland had not been baptized in the blood of her children, and in the providential designs of God the blood of Irish martyrdom was yet to become the seed of the Church.

And now I must needs come, let me say it, to the most glorious, since the cause of heroic christian triumph, and yet the most painful page of Irish history. No! it is not a page, it is a book of natural woe. To that time when princely crime and royal rivalry caused Dermott McMurragh an Irish king to sell Ireland to a hostile country. Then were forged those manacles which have bound Irish hands, but never fettered Irish hearts, from that awful moment to the present hour. Pardon me, dear brethren, if I open not, if I merely take a glance at the exterior of this book of shame. It is not for a son to pu-