

[FOR THE RECORD]

HOPE FOR IRELAND.

TORONTO, Nov. 10, 1851.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

The present state of things in Ireland cannot fail to interest us all. Assuredly the hand of Providence has been seen in over-ruling events of different and in some respects opposite characters. To check the progress of Popery, and to advance the cause of true religion, "Kirwan" has been lately visiting his native land, and the publication of his letters in Scotland and Ireland, with additional illustrations from his own pen, must tend to good; while we may expect from that able champion of truth, some additions of no ordinary character to the large services he has already rendered to the Protestant cause. Permit me to request insertion of the following able article from a late number of the *Glasgow Scottish Guardian*, entitled "Hope for Ireland."—One almost sees in it the graphic pen of Kirwan himself:—

"HOPE FOR IRELAND."

"That great movement which James the VI. commenced more than two centuries ago in the north of Ireland, now rapidly progresses throughout the entire area of the sister island. The eyes of the public are at length becoming open to the cause of Ireland, and everywhere Romanism is fleeing before the steady approach of mental and spiritual freedom. Those who are sufficiently enlightened throw off at once the hated fetters of Popery, those who are not, turn their backs upon a country which offers them no hope of sustenance. With minds and bodies bowed down beneath the grinding influence of a debasing superstition, the miserable inhabitants of the south and west feel their utter inability to compete with their unenthralled compatriots of the north of Ireland. The struggle for existence is to them as unequal, as between the efforts of a chained captive and a free man. To quit their native land is, however, easier than to quit their ruinous superstition, and hence they seek on the other side of the Atlantic, a remedy for evils which exist in Ireland only so long as Popery there finds shelter. It is wise than ridiculous, it is absolutely impious, to speak of the differences of race as originating the contrast shown by the provinces of Ulster and Connaught. Is it likely that Unerring Wisdom has awarded an undue privilege to the Saxon over the Celt, or that He who said to the whole human family 'Go forth and prosper,' has laid an interdict upon the Celtic prosperity? The Celt, such as he is, differs in nothing from the Saxon except in matters equally subject to the control of both. Romanism has invariably desolated every country in which it has established its vampire fangs. Amidst every kind of soil, climate and people, it has checked industry, discouraged knowledge, and retarded or obstructed advancement. The existence of Popery and national prosperity are incompatible conditions, which can no more be combined than fire and water. If, then, the Celt has clung with insane tenacity to a beaming superstition, which, like that of Juggernaut, grinds its devotees to the very earth, can we feel surprised that he should take on the aspect of a crushed and degraded being? But this is not because he is a Celt, nor because he labours under any constitutional defect as a man. It is because his mental and physical powers have been mesmerized by Popery. He has been taught that the influence of the priest is superhuman, and therefore he relies on priest-craft, and not upon himself, as the only source of relief from pressing difficulty. To conciliate the cunning agents of Rome

he will stop short at nothing, for his ignorance has rendered perception of crime impossible, except the terrific criminality of displeasing his priest. We may regret the infatuated folly of such an individual, but it is not in human nature to mourn over his departure from a soil which he has impoverished, and from a country whose choicest blessing he has perverted to the most disgraceful uses. In the wild prairies of America there are solitudes in which he will be compelled to rely on his own intellect and exertions—there, too, he will have nothing to excite the cupidity of that social wolf which has ruined him in the land of his fathers—he will be free alike from the extortion and intermeddling of the priest, and probably come in time to consult that Holy Volume, which, though his best inheritance, has hitherto been withheld from him. This will place him on a level with the much-hated Saxon, as it would have done, had it been permitted in Ireland.—Thus America may gain a useful citizen, and Great Britain be freed from a bigoted and priest-ridden pauper. But everything will depend upon the absolute and unconditional cessation of priestly influence over the minds of those Irish emigrants, otherwise dearly may the United States rue the day she sheltered them upon her shores. A wholesome system of diffusion alone can prevent the attack of the Papal harpy. Our trans-Atlantic kinsmen know already what it is to have an Irish quarter in a city, but what would this be compared with an Irish colony, with its enlightened Cullen, or docile McHale? For Great Britain there is nothing to dread in this emigration *furor* but the risk of its dying away. With the United States, however, the case is very different; for although the arrivals have gradually been swallowed up and lost in the motley population there existing, yet now the numbers will greatly interfere with this diffusive principle, and the formation of an American Connaught is quite within the range of human probability. As regards Ireland the most cheering prospect seems developing itself. Englishmen and Scotchmen are occupying the favourable position which Irish apathy and ignorance have abandoned. Protestantism is thrusting forth the Anti-Christian machinations of Rome into the Atlantic, and gaining a daily triumph at the expense of its opponents. Spiritual knowledge and freedom are extending through districts hitherto given over to the darkest superstition, and industry is rising from the sleep of ages, like a giant refreshed and ready to begin his toil. Proudly, too, stands the Province of Ulster, as a guide and beacon to light us to the harbour of safety. Far from looking upon Ireland with dismay at this juncture, we never before saw in her condition so much of the elements of hopeful prosperity. The heavy clouds of Popery are dispersing, and the radiant light of Gospel truth is beginning to dawn, even upon the mud habitation of her poorest peasantry. Want and famine and misery have demonstrated even to these, the little influence which Romish priestcraft has in altering the decrees of Providence. They have learnt in the bitter school of experience that Heaven grants not favours to unclean hands, and that they themselves in human suffering require no raving and boisterous bigot like him of Tuam to secure for them the merciful consideration of Omnipotence. He by whom the sparrow's fall is not unnoticed both sees and comprehends their wants and necessities. Who, then, shall designate the late blight and famine a curse or an infliction, when its probable result may be the salvation of a people numbering many millions? What if that mysterious disease which swept away the whole food of a nation, swept away also the power of the spiritual incubus which made the nation a by-word and a scorn to humanity? We commend the skill and judgment of the surgeon who removes a member to preserve the health of the entire body, and shall we dare to murmur at a dispensation which promises so much good at so

small a cost? The natural resources and abundant productiveness of Ireland are too well known to require more than a passing remark, and the time is singularly propitious for the investment either of money or skill in that country. The estates of the large proprietors are rapidly passing into Anglo-Saxon hands, those already transferred by the Encumbered Estates Commissioners, exceeding three and a-half millions sterling in present market value. As fast as Irish proprietors and farmers relinquish their lands, English and Scotch capitalists fill in the void places, and abundance of active and enterprising agriculturists show themselves ready to occupy. The opening for missionary labours is also clear and defined, but hitherto this important point has received nothing like the care and attention which it merits. The unhappy feud of Saxon and Celt is not confined, unfortunately, to the poor and ignorant—its influence extends to religion which ought to be beyond the reach of jealous and unworthy feelings. A spiritually enlightened Celt is an honour to the human race; and if the name of an Irishman has become synonymous with many of the worst traits of our nature, it is but a proof of the demoralizing effect of the Romish doctrine, which has perverted a highly endowed and talented people into a race of murderers, open-day assassins, and perjurers; and transformed a lovely and productive island into a famine-stricken lazar-house, and focus of rebellion and discontent. Now, when the popular faith of Popery is on the ebb, is the time to diffuse religious intelligence, and obliterate this imaginary distinction of races by uniting the whole in the fold of Christ."

Mr. Editor, if not too long, may I request insertion also of the following important statements from a late number of the *London Times*:—

"In the fiery school of adversity the clergy of the Protestant Church of Ireland have unlearned the indulgence of happier days, and applied themselves to the work of charity and instruction with a spirit worthy of their high and holy calling. In many cases they were the channel through which the Government relief was distributed; in many others they generously supplied the wants of the people from their own attenuated means. The extreme pretensions of the Ultramontane party, and their avowed hostility to secular education, have disgusted a lively and intelligent nation, at length made aware of the value of knowledge, and possessing pecuniary facilities for its acquisition. The result of these concurrent causes, probably of some others which time and investigation may yet bring to light, has been the weakening of priestly influence precisely at the moment when it assumed to be most powerful, and the humiliating discovery that those who are boasting of the return of Catholic England within the sphere of Papal and planetary influence are not only unable to make any impression here, but cannot even retain the hold which they have for centuries possessed over the popular mind in Ireland. It seems now pretty clear that something like a new reformation is taking place in the province of Connaught. We were unwilling hastily to give credence to the numerous statements which reached us on this subject, because we are well aware how readily mankind mistake their hopes for their accomplishment, upon what slight evidence such assertions are often made, and how easy it is for those unacquainted by practical experience with the Irish character to obtain information apparently trustworthy, but really concocted for the purpose of meeting the views which they are believed to entertain. Neither did it escape us that, in time of general calamity, relief, however trifling, might be sufficient to procure apparent proselytes, whose counterfeit zeal might readily be mistaken for real conviction. This is the heartless system of pecuniary proselytism, to which Dr. Cullen points, in the address of the Catholic Defence