

## AUSTRALIA—MEETING OF SYNOD.

The *Record* of the Free Church contains an abstract of the proceedings of this Synod.—Twelve ministers were present, and several elders. Sabbath desecration engaged the attention of the Synod, on which subject a committee was appointed. There was a long discussion on State aid for religious purposes. The former decision of Synod in favor of the acceptance of State aid, was affirmed by a majority of seven. At a subsequent diet, however, a committee was appointed to consider the whole subject, with the view, if we rightly understand the account, of establishing a Central Sustentation Fund, and thus rendering endowments unnecessary. Negotiations are still going on with the Established Church for union.

## IRISH PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS TO ROMAN CATHOLICS.

The following is an extract from the Report of the General Assembly's Home Mission, presented at the late meeting of the Assembly in Dublin:—

## MISSION TO ROMAN CATHOLICS.

The department of the Irish Presbyterian Home Mission intended specially for the benefit of Roman Catholic Ireland occupies five large fields of labour:—Birr, Tully, Kerry, Dublin, and Connaught. Among our Roman Catholic brethren in these spheres, we have one ambition and aim, to labour in the service, and for the glory of our common Lord, in the rescue of perishing souls. Determined not to know anything among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, our intention, singly and invariably, is to save. The meanest among them we do not despise; the youngest among them we do not forget; in the day of their sore calamity they have had our counsel and sympathy, our charity and prayers. Our prayers in secret and public have gone up for them, as a memorial before God; and our hope is, as they pass away from us, on ocean's flood, or the flood of death, that we shall meet them in glory.

How long and earnestly did our forefathers wait and pray for times of liberty and peace, times suitable and encouraging for extending the conquests of the Captain of Salvation, like those which we enjoy. The day was, when a Presbyterian missionary could not address Irish Romanists with a prospect of success, for Irish Romanists were crushed and robbed; the time was, and was long, when Irish Presbyterians themselves were denied liberty, and excluded from precious rights of citizens and of men.

But now that our personal and social privileges are secured—now that the open profession of our faith and celebration of our worship are secured by righteous law, the way is smooth and easy for the diffusion of our principles and the manifestation of the blissful influence of our faith. Now that the Presbyterian Churches of Ireland have rest, may they be edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Ghost, may they be multiplied. That of late years they have been greatly multiplied, is beyond doubt, and of the zeal and energy with which they are applying themselves to the Lord's work, we can furnish illustrations.

One of the most tasteful churches in Ireland has been erected by the missionary congregation of Tully, on a piece of ground once infamous for practices savage and wicked, which by the ministers and members of that congregation have been thoroughly put down. Their sphere of labour is a district sixteen miles long by eight broad, where Romanists are to Protestants as

twenty to one. Romanists attend public worship at Tully and two stations connected with it. A thousand Roman Catholic children have, at different times, attended their Scriptural schools; the minister, Scripture-reader, colporteur, and a zealous member of the Church have access to many Roman Catholic houses; and in these houses there have been sold or given during the year, 200 copies of the Scriptures, and 1,000 religious publications.

In connection with our mission in County Kerry there are five preaching stations, and seven daily schools, of 250 scholars, seventy of whom are Romanists; and our agents enjoy many opportunities of profitable intercourse with their Roman Catholic neighbours.

Parsonstown, or Birr, as it was called in the early days of our mission, has long possessed much interest for many who love Zion; and certainly not less now, associated as it is with the sacred memorials of those who long lived chiefly for its sake, and the fruits of whose labours and prayers flourish there with the memory of the just.

These fruits are in the schools where nearly 1,000 children, about one-half Romanists, have been made acquainted with saving truth—in the Sabbath congregation of nearly 100, one-half of whom once belonged to the Church of Rome—in 304 families to which our agents have access, having one or both parents Romanists—and most conspicuously and triumphantly, in a goodly number, once blind and bigoted devotees of the Man of Sin, whose sincerity has been proved by sore temptation and trial, whose faith groweth exceedingly, and whose abounding charity and patience, show that God is fulfilling in them all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power.

## CONNAUGHT.

Even in poor Romish Ireland, Connaught long had a sad pre-eminence in darkness, Popery, and poverty; and famine and pestilence in 1846 and 1847 seemed to have completed her ruin.—These proved, however, only dark hours before the coming day. Those who knew Connaught only before 1846, would scarcely know it now. A change has passed over it so great and good as to furnish a wondrous illustration of His power who brings light out of darkness, and good from ill. Famine and disease did, it is true, cut off not a few of its people, but many of them were, alas, mere cumberers of the ground; their number, too was small in comparison with those who fled away from the land which Romanism had cursed, to find a home amid Protestant plenty and liberty. All these have been benefited by the change; and though for a time they were a sore plague to the lands of their adoption, yet, in the end, they will bless and be blessed, for a great part of them were young and enterprising, with mind full of reminiscences both of the baseness of their own priests, and the generosity of Protestants, when adversity crushed them down while a goodly number of them carried away with them far across the sea that blessed book which they dared only read in secret at home, and, better still, the precious seed of Divine truth sown in their hearts, which will bear a far more abundant and a richer harvest than the virgin soil of the new young world whose forests they cut down.

We have no such tales of wretchedness to tell as once harrowed every heart, but Connaught is not on that account less interesting or less worthy of high benevolent regard; our missionaries ministered to her wants in the day of her deep poverty; in the day of pestilence they sat by the bed-side of her dying, and wept with her over her dead, and as they live to tell of her prosperity, they live to enjoy it too, and to command the confidence, approval, and same due to men who have been, and who still are, to a whole province, as the light of the morning when the sun riseth—even a morning without clouds; as the tender

grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. The number of three is, we acknowledge, small for a whole province, and for representing the missionary zeal of a whole Church such as the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, yet still twenty missionary agents, lay and clerical, labouring in thirty-four large districts, is at least a beginning, and we trust an earnest, hopeful, and good, of what Presbyterian Christian enterprise will do for the benighted West. Having daily, industrial, and Sunday-schools connected with our stations; circulating largely the Holy Scriptures, 2,000 copies of which the Bible Society last year gave us, visiting from house to house, preaching a pure and plain Gospel, and having in a less or greater degree access to Roman Catholics by all our agents; we certainly lack not opportunity of doing good in many and varied ways, and the success which God has in time past graciously bestowed, we receive as a happy pledge that He will yet give much more. That success is seen in the improved dress, manners, cleanliness, order, whole appearance, and character of the pupils of our schools; in our congregations increasing in numbers, respectability, liberality, vital religion; in the habits, and homes, and exemplary character of the living, the peace and triumph of the dying; but it lives and flourishes also where the missionary may never see it, away in foreign lands, among men who have never heard the humble missionary's name; and it will live and flourish immortal, where the great Redeemer shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; and His faithful missionary shall be satisfied too, though, on some distant skirt of the great harvest-field he may have lived, and laboured, and died, unnoticed and unknown.

Though we count by hundreds members of congregations, benefited by our missionary labours, yet what are these, or even the thousands of our pupils, Romanist and Protestant, in comparison with the multitudes who still kneel before the idolatrous mass—the dark clouded throng who press onward to the devouring grave. Here, in the trackless bog, lives a poor girl whom the teaching of the Sabbath-school has united to Christ; there, on the lone mountain side, an aged father is dying, and over him the missionary, who brought him to Jesus, is blessing God for this triumph of His grace; there in the world's estimation are of little worth, yet they are more momentous than the conflicts of armies, more glorious far than the spoils of war. These are buildings of God, over which no ploughshare shall ever pass; these are foundations on which no salt shall be ever sown.

Connaught with its young prosperity is dark and dreary still. Rome's religion is there, and in spite of it alone can Connaught thrive; Rome's priest is there, and his influence withers like the hot wind of the wilderness; but even for Connaught, light and happiness are yet in reserve; the growing empire of Emmanuel shall spread over it; the pollutions and all the abominations of its Anti-Christian service shall yet be no more. Even there the cross shall triumph; and truth, and love, and freedom reign. May those who labour among her people be built up and comforted together in God's most holy faith; may the Lord increase them with men as a flock, and add to them a hundred fold. May the blessing of the Lord be upon them; we bless them in the name of the Lord. We sowed together with them weeping, but we hope to reap with joy, and by their side to fill our bosom, when both shall joy with the joy of harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.—*Missionary Herald*.

## THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES AND SLAVERY.

We have received many communications from Mr. Linton of Stratford, on the subject of