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THE PRESENT AND PAST ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH THE REFORMATION IN IRELAND.

A LECTURE DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE, NEW YORK, ON MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 17, 1853, BY T. D. M'GEE.

(From the American Celt.)

We have heard a great deal of late, ladies and gentleman, of the progress of the new "Reformation" in Ireland. All our sectarian journals are full of anecdotes of its success...

The present "reformation" in Ireland, is I perceive, chiefly confined to the famished shores and islands of Kerry, Galway, and Mayo. Achill and Arran are its strong points...

But the subject I have chosen, ladies and gentlemen, will not be confined to persons, places, or the time being. It is of more general and ancient interest. It is nothing less, than to account for Ireland's moral superiority, or inferiority to the neighboring Island and the nations of Northern Europe...

The history of "the Reformation in Ireland," is in fact, the history of the people of that country, for the last three centuries. Every people organized or dispersed, must have some enduring bond...

The grandeur of this subject arises not only from its embracing a whole people, and from so beautifully illustrating the retributions of Providence...

an ignorant of its existence, though quite ready to be informed of the fact. As I believe, ladies and gentlemen, it will be my duty to show you that the Irish people, at "the Reformation," and their descendants...

We will take first if you please, what we may call the two centuries of coercion from 1550 to 1770 inclusive.

Henry the VIII, of England, who died in 1547, was elected in 1541, "King of Ireland," and is the first of our English sovereigns. You know something of his character. Six years before his Irish election...

The most important condition made by the Irish electors with Henry, is that quoted against Lord Strafford, in the Irish Commons Journal of 1641—"That the Church of Ireland shall be free and enjoy all its accustomed privileges..."

I know it has been asserted more than once, that the Irish Bishops, or a majority of them, did, like the British Bishops, favor "the Reformation" at the outset. So far as I have seen, this charge rests on the single authority of a letter from the King's Chancellor at Dublin...

shops, although in the name of dioceses they never saw, and of authority they never exercised. They gave in their adhesion to the pretensions of the Prince, whose creatures they were. I do not deny that in the subsequent reign, (about the year 1550), a native Bishop, Dr. Coyne or Quinn, of Limerick...

It is well that we should study every particular of this contest. A recent popular writer has somewhere said, "if there be a great and distressing body of facts, with some great mystery, of iniquity, or error, or misfortune connected with it, tell it, and tell it, and tell it again..."

My first conclusion from the facts I have enumerated is that, had the Irish Bishops apostatized in 1551, or had the Irish Chiefs gone to church with Queen Elizabeth ten years later no coercive measures would have been attempted...

It is always to be remembered that in Ireland the rejection of the Reformation, was not only an ecclesiastical, but also a popular decision.

When the citizens of Cashel heard that Dr. Magrath had taken the oath of supremacy they rose in a tumult and drove him out, and Dr. Edmund Butler was consecrated to fill his place...

A new royalty in any kingdom, must needs hedge itself in by an aristocracy. It must create a new, if it cannot enlist the old aristocracy. If it cannot enlist the old, it must destroy it, in order to make way for the new...

in the Celtic chiefs; every clansman held his rood-fee; there was no primogeniture, and no entail of estates. Consequently, even by the letter of the confiscations, the chiefs ought to have forfeited no lands except their own. To confiscate Munster as Elizabeth did, to punish the Desmonds; to confiscate Ulster as James I. did, to punish O'Neill and O'Donnell was as unjust as if all in this city should be plundered by Federal troops...

National Confiscation was peculiarly a Protestant invention. It was unknown to Pagan Rome, it was not conceived of by the honest barbarians. The right to the soil on which they were born, or to the "usufruct" of that soil was never, I believe, denied to a whole nation by any government, ancient or modern, except by England to Ireland...

The first great confiscation designed by Henry was carried out under Edward VI. It was directed against the religious houses of which there were some six hundred, all possessed of considerable landed and chattel property. The Augustinian Orders counted alone 250 houses...

The second confiscation was undertaken by Elizabeth. Its pretence was the rebellion of the Earl of Desmond. That nobelman stood at the head of the Munster branch of the noble Norman house of Fitzgerald, the Earl of Kildare being head of the Leinster branch. In Henry's reign, Kildare was beheaded; six of his brothers, and his son, "Silken Thomas," (so called from his splendor in dress) shared his fate...