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THE PROVINCIAL SYNOD OF CONNAUGHT.

This Synod, convened by the Metropolitan of the West, held its first Session on Tuesday, the 15th ult., the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. The following is an extract from the discourse delivered by His Grace the Archbishop upon the occasion:—

"If the apostles have been justly considered fishermen in gaining countries to the church, and those fathers I have alluded to likened to courageous combatants in protecting the faith, well might St. Celestine be entitled to the praise of both; since, whilst he preserved the East from heresy that was aimed against the Blessed Mother of God, he swept the Western seas with the nets of the fishermen, and brought our own nation from its depths to the bosom of the Catholic Church. Never was a more precious gem yet drawn from the bosom of the ocean, for since it caught first the gleam of the faith, which revealed its richness and its beauty, its solidity has been proof against all force; and, no matter how thick the darkness, it could not obliterate or tarnish its lustre. Not, indeed, that it was not sufficiently tried in the most fiery ordeals—not that Satan had not often sought to sift its followers as wheat, as he once attempted on Simon, but the same power that fortified the faith of Peter fortified that of Ireland, because it was indissolubly bound to the same rock; and hence those gates of hell, which could not prevail against the one, have been, from their connexion, equally powerless, against the other. In a long-continued contest, in which Satan and his followers have put forth all their strength for the overturning of our church, it is not to be imagined that it should have escaped utterly unharmed. It was a contest for life or death, for the light of faith or the darkness of infidelity; and like the serpent who leaves his body without defence when his head is in danger, the Irish people cheerfully sacrificed their bodies, their immunities—nay more, all the material interests of their church; and, what is more painful to a sensitive and intellectual people, they bore the forced privation of literature and science, in order to preserve the rich jewel of their faith, the hidden treasure of the field, with which wealth, neither the wealth nor wisdom of the world could be put in competition. In other countries even successful assaults upon religion were but of short continuance. In some the tidings that announced the approach of the aggressor were at the same time the harbingers of his triumphs; and the faith and courage of the vanquished sank at once, without an effort to rise from under the first tide of barbarous conquest that passed over them. In others, far, for example, nearer home, the feeble faith of the chief pastors of the church long dimmed in a tainted and corrupt atmosphere, paled before the more dazzling glare of mere secular honors, for which they panted, and when the few intrepid shepherds were stricken by violence—when the tall and majestic trees of the forest fell beneath the axe of the woodman, and the more numerous mercenaries yielded to the allurements of the world, then were these flocks scattered without leaders, a prey to every ravenous beast, never perhaps again to be gathered into the fold of the one shepherd, unless through a singular miracle of God's mercy—not so with the faith, and pastors, and people of Ireland. They were doomed to suffer from more than one tyrant, and these terrible trials were not confined to the term of a century. No; without taking any liberty with the stubborn faith of history, the ten persecutions that afflicted the early church might have been said to have been acted over again, in our devoted island, and with an intensity proportioned to the narrow range of race and time over which they extended. From the last and worst of the Henrys to the second of the worthless Georges, the grim portraits of the active or at times the royal persecutors of the Irish people for no other cause but attachment to their creed, stand out before us, without including the truculent and remorseless Cromwells in this ominous number; and as if to show how far like another Job, the patient fortitude of a nation, faithful to its religion, could extend, when sustained by the finger of God, the disastrous reign of the cruellest of all these monarchs was permitted by a mysterious providence to stretch over almost a half century, exhibiting an epitome of the most savage and revolting atrocities of them all. It was no wonder if, during such a lingering contest that would have exhausted the energies of the most devoted heroism, several of these mighty men who were appointed to surround Zion, and encompass its walls, should have gradually disappeared. It is no wonder if our churches were then defaced, if their towers had fallen, if our sanctuaries were left desolate, if our Sabbaths were made a reproach, and our festivals turned into mourning, if our temples became as a man's habitation, though

and if the vessels of their glory were carried away captive. Then were literally fulfilled our Redeemer's own words—that 'The birds of the air have their nests, and the foxes their burrows, but that the Son of Man hath not a place wherein to repose.'—Then was He again forced to fly into the desert, not from fear that the multitude might proclaim Him King, but from fear that His followers should be subjected to the tragic execution acted on Cavalry. It was no wonder if the solemnities of our worship then ceased, and if the voice of the organ and choir were silent; the heavenly canticle that commanded the sun, the moon, the stars, the sea, the rocks, the rivers, and the mountains, to praise the Lord, seemed then under an interdict, since not only the cunning of the artist, but the materials which he fashioned, were all impressed into the service of heresy; so that the musical metals themselves were forbidden to entone the glories of their maker; and if, perchance, their sedulous tongues were heard to issue from any obstinate tower, summoning the scattered flocks to the temple of God, for sacrifice, or penitence, or prayer, they were sure to be taken down by some sacrilegious hand, and, like muffled felons, consigned to some neighboring morass in solitude and in silence. Then, too, were our apostolical candlesticks, which so long spread their broad and united effulgence over the land, gradually extinguished and taken away; and on two occasions, within the disastrous interval I have mentioned, there were to be seen but two or three of those solitary episcopal lamps, ebbing out as if the last remnant of the sacred oil that fed them; yet, with the flickering flame which they cast around the hallowed spots where they remained, burning them into so many 'gossens' of light and gladness, amidst the gloom of despondence which was setting in over the entire country. And why do I dwell with such marked and special emphasis on those two periods of our history, when our bishops residing in Ireland were so few, and barely sufficient by the imposition of their hands, enfeebled by age and embrowned by labor, to propagate the ministry of the priesthood, when they were obliged, like St. Athanasius, to snatch a hasty sight of their flocks, and then to fly, to found, perhaps, as did our own Archbishop Florence MacConry, the University of Louvain. Colleges in foreign lands, from which the exiled youth of Ireland might bring home the sacred fire of religion and of learning, and scatter it among the people, chilled and almost benumbed to death by the cold and creeping influence of heresy, which threatened to seize and extinguish their constitution. I do it to bear solemn and authentic testimony to the singular merits of such a nation, and to animate by the recollection of the devotedness of their predecessors the faith of the children who had succeeded such a religious race. I do it to carry out the spirit of my text, to show that the Holy Ghost resides among those who are truly gathered together in His name, not only actively and infallibly guiding the teachers of God's church, but infallibly guiding their flocks also, and making their graces, docile hearts the passive depositories of His truth and often when they may be for a short time from some necessity deprived of the tending care of their pastors. I do it to show on opening this council how great is our reliance on the prayers of all the faithful who are here assembled in the name of our Divine Redeemer. At any time and on any occasion our confidence in the humble supplications of the people would be great, knowing their mighty efficacy. How much more so when they are offered under the shadow of her protection who was seen on the anniversary of this day taking possession of the kingdom which her Divine Son had prepared for her; while the heavenly chorus were heard thus greeting her advent into heaven—'Who is it that cometh up from the desert, glowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?' (Canticles, 8 c., v. 5.) And well, too, in the dawn, I hope, of more prosperous times, may we repeat the same significant anthem, which may apply to the church, the spouse of our Lord, as it does more directly to the glories of His mother. In no nation among those by whom, according to her own prediction, she was to be called Blessed, is the honor of the Holy Virgin cherished with more zealous reverence, or her intercession sought and relied on with a more affectionate devotion. We require no new or strange theories on this point; for it is not yesterday or today the name of Mary has become among us the source of so much attraction to the homage of every Christian heart. No; her name and worship were wafted to Ireland with the first tidings of salvation by which our shores were gladdened, and that amidst circumstances which left an ineffaceable impression. Events of an exciting character never fail to lend a peculiar color and complexion to the minds of contemporaries. When St. Patrick was on the eve of starting from Rome for the conversion of our country, he was no stranger to the blasphemies by which the Holy Virgin was assailed, nor to the zeal and

grief the Pontiff who labored so much to vindicate her insulted dignity.

"Landing in Ireland in the very season when the assembled Fathers of Ephesus hurled their condemnation against her impious assailants, our apostle must have been imbued with a deep sympathy in the triumphs of the Church, and the discomfiture of its enemies; and he must have listened with devout rapture to the echoes of the enthusiasm which went round the Christian world when the people of Ephesus still remembering the virtues of the Virgin who so long sojourned in their city, with the beloved Apostle to whom she was commended by her Divine Son, rose up in the majesty of their mighty faith, seconding the zeal of their bishops, and drowning the hoarse and dissonant murmurings of a courtly, and corrupt, and heretical faction in the loud and enthusiastic proclamation that Mary was the Mother of Jesus, and, for the same reason, Mother of God. Mother of God! What an assemblage of ideas, of sanctity, of influence, and of mercy do these words, Mother of God, convey? And what wonder that her name, her honor, her patronage, and her invocation should have been, from its origin, bound up with the frame work of our religion, nay, inscribed on our soil, and intertwined with the household salutations of our venerable language? Yes, the religious statistics of Ireland can attest the numberless churches that have been dedicated to Mary in every diocese in Ireland, and through the massive fragments of their ruins strewn over the land, you can behold, as through a broken mirror, an imperfect image of the ancient piety of our people. Nay, more, the ordinary social greetings of the natives bear the impress and breathe the fragrance of the cloisters of the doctrines of the incarnation which you look for in vain in any other country, and, unlike the constrained and unmeaning conventionalities of 'Fine day,' the most refined form of ordinary salutation it appears that can be found in our imported speech, polished it may be, but cold and icy as it is polished, our own native tongue sends, warm from the heart, that heavenly phrase with which the angel of the Lord introduced his divine embassy, reflected again back with additional fervor by invoking on the person uttering the salutation the fond benediction of God, and His Virgin Mother. There is, rely on it, in such pious forms of salutation a leaning to a high and Christian urbanity which all the faithless literary institutions of the world cannot supply—there is that ordinary aliment or daily bread which the sustenance of faith requires—there is a fashioning of the young and tender mind to wisdom by setting the spotless mirror of purity always before it, and there is in it that fragrant virtue which is never found to flourish save in the garden of the Catholic Church, watered by the graces coming through the Virgin Mother. With such evidence, then, furnished by their topography and language, of the singular veneration of our people for the Virgin Mother of God, it is not necessary that I should specially impress on you to mingle with your prayers for us a prayer too for her powerful intercession. To her this temple is specially consecrated. Nay, though several festivals to her honor are interspersed throughout the entire year, it is to this great feast of the assumption of her body and soul into glory that our cathedral church is peculiarly dedicated. It is but right, then, that on such a great and solemn occasion as this we should implore her interposition in her own temple—a temple which, were I to be silent, would not fail to attest the traditional reverence of Ireland for the Mother of God—raised, as it has been, by the munificent piety of the clergy and people of this diocese, with my revered predecessor at their head—one of the men whose praise is in the churches, who showed forth the dignity of prophets, powerful in instructing the people. As language is too feeble to convey any adequate idea of her bliss and glory, the church applies to her some of the most beautiful images in which the Divine Wisdom celebrate its own praises—"I was exalted like a cedar in Lebanon and as a cypress tree on Mount Zion; I was exalted like a palm tree in Cadés, and as a rose plant in Jericho: as a fair olive in the plains, and as a pines tree; by the waters in the streets was I exalted. My branches are of honor and of grace, and my odor like the odor of the sweetest balm and cinnamon." Yet not all these figures could adequately express the graces with which she has been adorned, the glory to which she has been elevated, the extent of merciful patronage with which she has been invested, or the odor which her name and virtues have spread throughout the world. No; nor the still more exalted image of St. John, comparing her to a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Yet all those high prerogatives of the Queen of Heaven are still the gifts of the Almighty, flowing from the immensity of His goodness, as experienced in the angelic anthem that welcomed her advent to Heaven—"Who is it that cometh up from the de-

sert flowing with delights leaning upon her beloved."

Yes, leaning upon her beloved, who looked to the humility of his handmaid, and exalted her to the dignity of a queen, arrayed in gilded garments, enriched with varied embroidery. And were I now, in invoking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to turn to her image there, her head enwreathed with a diadem, some, perhaps, would feel, or affect to feel, scandalized, as if we were addressing ourselves to senseless representations. Should any entertain such a feeling, they will, I trust, be instructed by the following historical incident:—When Leo, the tyrannical Emperor of the East, had ill disguised his want of reverence for our Divine Redeemer, by making war on the crucifix among other images, a pious bishop, knowing his heart was steeled against all persuasion, called to mind the apologue with which Nathan reached the heart of David, and accordingly made use of a similar argument. Admitted to the presence of the Emperor, he showed him a coin impressed with the imperial image, then flung it on the ground and trampled it under foot. The Emperor was suddenly enraged, and felt himself treated with the utmost indignity. And he was right; he forgot for a moment his false logic regarding the unfeeling materials of images; nature asserted her dominion over him, convincing him that, in the insult offered to his senseless likeness on the coin, the imperial majesty was obviously outraged. The bishop's argument succeeded, who promptly observed—"If you feel insulted at your image being thus trampled on, how is it that you have no feeling of insulting the God of Heaven, whilst you insult, break, and scatter in fragments the symbols of our redemption, the venerated image of his crucified Son? I need not pursue the application of this historical incident to the image of the Blessed Virgin. All the honor that is due to the Blessed Mother of God is given because her merits are all derived from the inexhaustible source of our redemption. On her divine Son she leaned in her sufferings, by Him she was sustained, and on Him her Beloved, she leans now in His glory. Of our church it may be likewise said that she is going up from the desert, wherein she so long sojourned, continuing to lean exclusively on Him whose arm sustained him in her trials through the wilderness, where "he has been the guide of her journeying." In her more prosperous career she surely stands not in need of other aid or any other counsel than the outstretched arm that protected her in her dangers and in her weakness, and those that should be inclined to lean on the hollow support of the world would find they were only leaning on a reed, which every breath was sure to sway, convinced of the truth of the inspired maxim, that it was better to trust in God than in princes. We will then trust in the promises of Him who has founded His church and protected it, beseeching Him, in the prayers of the liturgy, on this solemn occasion:—Aid us, O Lord, by Thy presence, pour Thy spirit into our councils, and be Thou the sole aggressor of our judgments; guide us in the ancient paths, and let not ignorance mislead us, or a regard for gifts or persons betray us from the right course. And thou, O Blessed Virgin, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercies, our life, our sweetness, and our hope, turn thy compassionate looks on us, and obtain for us the grace of 'treasuring up the words of thy divine Son, as thou didst treasure them in thy heart, that they may be a light to our path, and a lamp to our feet in all our trials, that after sharing in the sorrows which thou didst share with thy suffering Son, we may with thee, and all the saints, be sharers too in his everlasting glory. Amen."

THE CHOLERA, OR PROTESTANTISM IN GENOA.

(From the Tablet.)
The Piedmontese have for some time past, under the inspirations of Mr. Abercrombie and his father-in-law, Lord Minto, troubled the peace, not of the Pope only, but of the secular sovereigns on the Continent as well. Freemasonry may do very well in London, but it does not answer abroad. The philanthropic and gastronomic energies are very dangerous, and the Mason who swears universal charity stabs his brother behind his back. People who are not endowed with the high Masonic sentiments recoil from such proceedings, and prefer the old system. They wish to live in peace themselves, and are therefore quite content to leave others alone, if only that they may repose at last.
The Piedmontese Liberals have pushed matters to such excesses that the King is really helpless in their hands, and does not administer the scantiest justice to all his subjects; even if he had the desire to do so. A wicked faction, indeed, as is always the case, by the moderate and the prudent, have seized on the government of the State, and subverted the liberties, merely because they stood between themselves and the ultimate issues of their detestable plots.