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IRELAND AND AMERICA.

MR. M'GEE'S LECTURE IN LIMERICK.

On Thursday evening, March the 8th, Mr. M'Gee delivered a lecture in the Theatre, on behalf of the Young Men's Society, the Rev. Mr. O'Farrell in the chair.

The building was quite thronged with a most respectable audience, and very much interest seemed to be felt by all present in the subject, from the able and masterly style in which it was treated.

Mr. M'Gee, on being introduced by the Rev. Mr. O'Farrell, came forward to the front of the stage, amid renewed applause, and began by saying, it had been thought both courteous and just, that as the Limerick Young Men's Society was the first of its kind, his first lecture should be delivered here. It had also been thought advisable that the lecture should be on a practical subject, and therefore the few remarks and reflections he would offer, would be upon the social and religious results of the Irish emigration to America. It was a question of interest in any country to observe the movement of such an immense mass of population across a great ocean of three thousand miles. It was not only a movement from an old country to a new country, but from an old state of society to a new state of society, and therefore a subject to employ every thoughtful mind. But it was especially of interest in Ireland, the fatherland of the great majority of the emigrants.—Out of her own noble river, which no native could look upon without emotions of pride, had gone forth thousands, who had taken with them not only their thews and sinews, but who had also brought into that country, perhaps unconsciously to themselves, moral principles destined to exercise the greatest influence on the future affairs of the new world. One of the first social results of the Irish emigration had been to raise America from a second to a first rate power within a period of thirty years. In 1820 the United States would have ranked with the two Sicilies, with Holland, with Belgium, and after Prussia. In 1850 they ranked politically and commercially among the very first of the first-rate powers. This immense growth in so short a period of time was largely, perhaps mainly, to be attributed to emigration from abroad. A constant supply of cheap labor was the first necessity of a new country, the whole of whose resources were raw material, until human industry was let loose upon them. The native American and their natural increase, born in the country, could not supply the necessary amount of labor perhaps in a century, but it had been supplied by the emigration in twenty years. In twenty years American tonnage had doubled. In twenty years the number of States in the Union had doubled. In twenty years the total population had risen from ten to twenty-four millions. By the natural increase of population the country would now have had only twelve or fourteen millions, so that the remaining ten must have been derived from extrinsic sources. The consequent political and commercial importance of the country was proportionally increased, not only West of the Atlantic, but in the Courts and Councils of Europe.

West of the Atlantic, the civil results of the Republic becoming a first-rate power, were felt in Canada, to which the home government had given a constitution far more free than Grattan had secured for Ireland in '82—a constitution which left England but a nominal sovereignty over Canada, and gave to the Canadians a full and ample power over all the domestic interests and resources; and these concessions had been made by the mother country, as he (the lecturer) believed, not altogether voluntarily, but by reason of Canada lying so close to a great Republic, anxious to admit it into its own union, it was felt that every liberty should be readily conceded by England, which otherwise the Republic could both offer and guarantee to Canada. As long as Canada lay so close to a first-rate independent power, it would be neither the interest, nor would it be possible to repress its growth and freedom. Another civil result of the growth of the American Republic into a first-rate power was felt in Spanish America. It had annexed territories much greater in extent than the whole thirteen States of which Washington was President. It had incorporated Florida and Louisiana. It had taken Texas—as large as all Continental Europe—from the once illimitable empire of Mexico. It had secured California by arms, and the Spanish civilization had given way before the Anglican civilization of the North. It was said of old, "Empire comes from the North," and in this case the proof of the maxim might be every day witnessed in the New World. All these social results, both in relation to Canada, to Spanish America, and to the influence that America might exercise in European affairs, were to be attributed to the great emigration, and to the rapid development of the resources and increase of the population of the United States. One social result, he regretted to

say, the emigration had not produced, and that was, to institute a profitable commercial intercourse between Ireland and America. He regretted that there did not seem to be practical patriotism enough between the Irish in Ireland and the Irish in America as yet to make this island what it should be—the commercial entrepot between the old and the new country. The lecturer then proceeded to speak of the religious influences exercised by the Irish emigration on the United States. It was the fortune of the United States to be settled this side of the Reformation. All the sects were there at the foundation of all the colonies—Puritans, Quakers, Dutch Reformers, Huguenots—they were all at the beginning of the white population of the country. In the rest of Christendom there were Catholic traditions, memorials, and influences, which survived the Reformation, and were preserved to the present day—but America knew not Catholicity in the days when Christendom was a unit. It began with the sects, and Catholicity, which was the oldest in the rest of Christendom, had the appearance of being the latest comer into America—and the sects might, with some plausibility, take a tone of patronage towards it, and seem to treat it as a stranger and an intruder. Catholicity, therefore, had peculiar difficulties to contend with—on a new soil, on which there stood no saint, old and bitter traditions born after the Reformation, and not modified by intercourse with the rest of Christendom for three hundred years. British literature, which had been well said to be of late days a conspiracy against truth—material interests and the pride so natural to a Republic—with all these the infant Church in America had to contend, but the Irish emigration supplied its great element of strength—a ready-made laity—a laity who were faithful laborers in the cause of Catholicity—a laity who, when laying the foundation of edifices, and opening up roads and canals, were at the same time laying the foundation of Bishops, Sees, and Cathedral churches and religious institutions. The Puritan or the Quaker who employed the Irish emigrant saw in him a mere digger; but looking at him with the eye of philosophy, he was not only the pioneer of labor, but a lay missionary, who carried with him the seeds of a great system, and, unknown to himself, scattered them broadcast over the land, as in the ceremonies of the bodies that had been carried from the tombs of Egypt corn had been, and after four thousand years fructified when planted.

So the Irish emigrant had carried with him divine truths in his poverty and necessity.—and as assuredly as the corn of Egypt had grown again in the fields of the West, had the good seed of Catholicity been scattered through the American soil and produced fruit a hundred thousand fold. It was twelve years since he (the lecturer) first visited America, and at that time in the intelligent and orderly city of Boston, no one thought of celebrating the 25th of December. It was to the Irish servants, laborers and mechanics, the children of the Puritans were indebted for the recognition of the anniversary of the Saviour's birth. Gothic architecture, church music—emblems of philosophy purely Catholic, followed everywhere the organization of the infant Church, and if the old Puritans of Cromwell's time revisited again their colonies of New England, they would hardly recognise, through gothic arches, and through the dim light of stained glass-windows, their own descendants who listen in the pauses of their formal service, pieces of Mozart's music performed on deep-toned organs. It had been said, and it might be said, this Irish emigration was not intellectually and morally influencing America, but there were abundant proofs to the contrary, and those influences were but in their infancy. On the other hand, America had influenced the emigrants settled within her territories, especially in relation to the treatment and education of children. The Pagan theory of Ancient Sparta, revived in despotic Prussia, that children belonged to the State, and that the political Corporation or State ought to be the educator of the children, he regretted to admit, had been servilely copied in free America. Parental authority was superseded by political supervision, and each generation learned to look down with scorn or with pity upon the assumed inferiority of its own predecessor. The fourth commandment was practically reversed, and that the letter might conform to the spirit, it ought to read in America, "Parents, honor your children, that your days may be long in the land."

The Catholics had lately been aroused to a consciousness of their danger, and not content with building churches, they had also established nunneries, and opened separate schools for their own children. This had given a new edge to prejudice, and new virulence to calumny. The real cause of the present crusade in America, that had got the congenial title of Know-Nothingism, was not in the imprudence of individual emigrants, though he did not de-

ny that such imprudence had been exhibited, but it was principally to be found in the wonderful development of the Church of late years. So great an institution could not have sprung up so fast, and struck its roots so deep, and cast its shadow so well, without catching the angry minds and exciting the worst passions of men. Individual independence may, no doubt, have been an accessory cause, but the main cause was, that the world and the Devil could not see unmoved so vast a territory added to the patrimony of the Catholic Church. In conclusion, the lecturer said that he might be asked for practical advice by those who contemplated emigration in the present year. He had never advised emigration, nor was it a subject for dogmatizing on in public. All that he had to say upon it might be condensed into one generally—if you can live at home, stay at home, and he did believe that many of those who had emigrated to America, if they had worked as hard, and used as much energy in their native land, as they were obliged to do in the land of their adoption, would be quite as prosperous and far more happy, for no amount of mere pecuniary success could ever compensate for the sickness of heart and tantalizing memories which the unwilling absentee endures. The Ireland of the exile was like the Ireland of the poet—removed by distance of time and space, the sharp angularities of oppression vanish and disappear. The partial stains of suffering or of crime are no longer visible. He sees but the grand outline of the land of his birth. He views it through the medium of his own imagination. It is to him the Island of Saints—the Ireland which had beaten back the Baltic tribes—the Ireland the school and mistress of modern eloquence—the land of Burke and of Grattan and of O'Connell. He was proud of it—he rejoiced in it, but for him or his it could never be a home again. He (the lecturer) might be pardoned, if he said he did believe there were few hearts in Ireland that loved their country more devotedly than hearts three thousand miles away in the wilderness of the West. He could not advise any to emigrate, but if they must emigrate, then it was well they should know the state of society into which they were about to enter, and it was with that view chiefly he had chosen the subject of the social and religious influence of the Irish emigration to America.

The learned gentleman was loudly applauded at the conclusion of a most instructive and learned discourse, of which we have given only an outline, from the pressure of other matter on our space.—*Munster News*, March 10.

The following remarks from T. D. McGee, the well known Irish correspondent of the *American Celt*, upon the condition of Ireland and the state of public feeling towards England, will be read with interest at the present moment:—

Athlone, March 27th, 1855.

"I think that now, after taking all due pains to inform myself of the state of the three Provinces of which I knew least, I may venture to express my own opinion of the prospects of Ireland. Thus here, in the very heart of the land, by the side of the quiet yet strong river, which waters or drains no less than seventeen counties, I address myself to that duty, fully remembering the promise I made our readers in announcing my temporary absence from New York—to give them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, whether it conflicted with my previously formed opinions or not.

"I feel safe in saying there is hope for Ireland: I see it in the general watchfulness of the war; in the all but unanimous popular saying that the late defeats are 'a judgment upon England'; in the curious speculations as to the future course of France; in the revival of the pseudo prophecies of Saint Columbkille; in many social signs, to me far more certain harbingers of hope, than the fitful evidences of any excitement springing out of the war.

"Public spirit, or public life, there is, strictly speaking, none. In Parliamentary efforts, or tenant-right, or other agitation, there is no general faith. In repeal, or separate nationality, less than none. Lucas and Duffy, though personally popular, are not politically strong, Mitchell and Meagher are remembered only as madmen, or regretted simply as suicides. There is neither man or spirit of a kind, to move, or lead, or order the balance left of this generation. And yet I see signs and evidences of hope for the future!

"The country has 'improved,' because the cottier and conacre class has been swept away; because encumbered estates have been broken up; because the fewer laborers have been able to insist, in spring time and harvest, on higher wages, (1s., 1s. 6d., and 2s. per day); and because the last three years have brought good harvests and high prices with them.

"Intellectually it has also changed. Four thousand male and female teachers—about half of each—

have not been teaching under the national system without fruit. A thousand Nuns and several hundreds of Christian Brothers, have not labored in vain. Maynooth sends forth her fifteen hundred clergy educated on one system; diocesan and foreign colleges supply as many more. The new University, though not yet felt as a power, is already felt as a necessity. And thus it is, that from several different sources, streams of knowledge, new and old, are being poured out into the stagnant pool of Irish society.

"Religiously, the spirit of true progress not only runs parallel to, but outruns, the simply social improvement. Exact discipline was renovated at Thurles; and Irish zeal has been signally aroused by the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, and the Inquiry into Nunneries Bill. New Gothic churches, dedicated to the old Saints, arise on every hand. In the midst of almost every village of thatched houses, springs up some fine ecclesiastical edifice, with buttress and clere-story, oriel and bellry. The Redemptorists, with their head quarters at Limerick, traverse half the kingdom; the Passionists from Dublin penetrated to the most out of the way glens of Connaught; the good Vincentians of Castleknock, in Ulster, and the midland counties, are equally irresistible. Many Fathers of the two former orders are Italians, Belgians, or Germans, yet, even with their imperfect English, they sway the Irish multitude wheresoever they will. Missionary crosses from which the ladder and the spear depend, are seen in almost every country and city churchyard, where all day long groups of pious passers-by may be found kneeling devoutly, with book or beads in hand. If I am not deceived by these signs, the great Catholic re-action of which Montalembert speaks, has practically reached this island. The upheaving of that wave which, in Spain, lung Balmez foremost, and in Germany, Schlegel, Stolberg, Hunter and Voight; which gave Holland, England and America, new, or restored Hierarchies, has in Ireland moved vast masses of inert and merely nominal Catholics, into the daily practise of the faith they profess, and thus has given new life to all the institutions and orders of the church.

"In all these signs, social, educational, or religious, I see grounds of hope. But as to mere politics—party, parliamentary, or 'national,' there is no such thing noticeable in Ireland at this date. Not but that many feel the want of some sort of public life, and blame this or that, or sigh for this or the other set or person, to revive public spirit. In my humble opinion no man nor men could, if they would, *revive* it before its time. Events must work for Ireland, or men will work in vain. Events alone will not, of course, suffice, but neither will any human efforts, without events. They are transpiring, and premature issues of an active kind would only distract, perchance defeat, certainly exasperate them. The great social change which is going forward might be checked or hindered by premature political issues, but otherwise forward it will go, creating a new Ireland within the old, gathering up from social sources, the true materials of political power.

"In addition to these hints, I should add, that I find great reluctance in all classes to discuss home politics. There is a 'what's the use?' sort of air about almost every person I meet, which, at first, struck me as very discouraging not to say slavish, but which I now really believe to be the natural reaction, against the too-great volubility of the last ten years. The events of '43 and '48 (the latter especially) have driven in the sanguine hopes of the Irish heart, and the war is only beginning to wake them again into life. I do not blame this shyness, or silence, or prudence; I rather respect it now that I have considered it closely, I even regard it with hope, as a proof that the credulity of this generation has been exhausted, and that they can be gulled no more by self-flattering follies.

"To sum up the present state of Irish mind;—it is full of changes, but also full of hope; it is in process of modernization, and all friends of this country ought to be willing to give it fair scope and full time, for so thorough and so desirable a change."

THE NUNNERY INQUIRY.

OPINIONS OF THE AMERICAN PROTESTANT PRESS.

The disgusting outrage of the Legislature of Massachusetts upon the Catholic ladies of Roxbury, has, we are happy to see, called forth the stern rebuke of the Protestant press, with one or two insignificant exceptions. We give some specimens below:—

(From the *Boston Atlas* of April 10.)

The Committee of Investigation continued its labors yesterday. Mr. Senator Carpenter, a volunteer visitor of the Roxbury school, and Chairman of the Investigating Committee, has had the grace to back out, for which considerable act we ought to be duly thankful. Mrs. Mary Aloysius, Superior of the school, appeared before the Committee, and put in a written statement verified by her oath. This, with