

with the husks of error and heresy, is fast returning, like unto the prodigal, to the tender embrace of that parent, who, though outraged and insulted, yet watched over that ungrateful country with apostolical solicitude.

In the selection of those materials, subjects have been chosen which are least known to the public, and through which a void in the Church History of Ireland is partially filled up. A complete history of the Irish Church is a work as yet to be done, for it is one that would require the labor of many years, vast research, as well as an outlay that would render it a perilous project to the undertaker, and place it beyond the reach of the public.

In placing these records before the public, the humble individual, who has compiled them, trusts that they will be instructive, as well as acceptable to those for whom they have been intended. If a glance at the map of Ireland points out the name of the spot, which is traced as the native place of him, whose memory is recalling the scenes of childhood and in contemplating it, if a momentary pleasure enraptures his imagination, how much more should his heart be gladdened when he has at hand a faithful record of those sacred spots, which were hallowed by the footsteps of saints and solitaries; of those valleys and cloistered retreats, which re-echoed with the joyous sounds of the matin and vesper bell, calling their pious votaries to acts of praise and adoration; of those ruined and desolated churches, from whose tombs the trumpet of the Archangel will one day summon the mouldered ashes of his fathers to life and judgment!

As it may be useful to the reader, a concise account of the great religious orders, which have been cherished by the church, is annexed.

The first and the oldest is the rule of St. Basil, which that saint instituted A. D., 369, according to Barbosa, or in 350 as Miranda asserts, Felix II. sitting in the chair of Peter. All the Greek and Oriental Monks adopted the rule of St. Basil, and among other saints who professed it, are reckoned Saints Ephraim, John Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, John Damascene, Jerome and others. In those early ages of the Church of God, St. Basil's order became very renowned, and still continues to exist.

According to the testimony of Barbosa, the Carmelites observed the rule of St. Basil: but they now observe another, which Innocent III. confirmed, and which has been ratified and approved by Honorius III., A. D. 1171. St. Teresa has introduced a reform of the order, which was confirmed by Gregory XIII., A. D. 1580. The "Discalced" Carmelites, as those brethren are called, seceded from the other body, and were assigned a General of their own by Clement VIII. in his Constitution of the 20th of September, 1595.

The second rule of religion is called that of St. Augustine, which was instituted by this great saint A. D. 390, in the reign of the Pontiff Symmachus. The rule, which St. Augustine compiled, was for the direction of the Community of Nuns, over which his sister presided. The appellation of *Canon*, was originally given to all such clergymen whose names were registered on the roll of a Church. In the lapse of time it was appropriated to those who lived in community, and inasmuch as they were bound to observe certain canons or rules relative to their institution, they were generally called *Canons Regular*.