

better test than that here laid down by our Saviour, "By their fruits, ye shall know them." The battle between Popery and Protestantism has often been fought on the basis of doctrine, and when fairly fought, always to the defeat of the Priest; but we mean this night to try the issue between them on another ground, viz: their respective influence upon the nations that have followed their guidance.—Three hundred years ago, the Reformation started the nations to new life, and during that period, the two rival systems have been side by side working out their principles to their legitimate consequence, and with what results shall now be our enquiry. If it be found that those nations that have embraced the one have been steadily advancing in all that relates to the greatness and happiness of man, and that those who have embraced the other have been as steadily retrograding—then we claim under the authority of our Saviour's maxim to say that the former system is his, and that the latter is a vile counterfeit—an impudent imposture. We undertake to prove that Popery every where sinks and degrades those who have submitted to her authority, while Protestantism every where elevates and exalts; and that our argument may be entirely conclusive we undertake to show that the same results follow under all circumstances—under every form of Government—with every peculiarity of race, and under every variety of soil and climate.

Let us begin with a comparison of Ireland with Scotland or England. And here every advantage of nature is on the side of the former. In its climate it is more kindly than that of Great Britain, so that plants there grow in the open air which in England require a hothouse, and its mild air is sought by the invalids of the sister isle. Its soil is proverbially fertile. It is intersected by the finest rivers—it has the best harbours in the world—the waters around its shores swarm with fish, and it stands out in the Atlantic as if intended to be the very seat of commerce. All who have examined the subject agree in describing Ireland as naturally the finest of the three kingdoms.

Need we describe its condition socially and physically, compared with the countries on the other side of St. George's Channel. "Take up the map of the world," says Dr. Ryan, R. C. Bishop of Limerick, "trace from pole to pole, and from hemisphere to hemisphere, and you will not meet so wretched a country as Ireland." Let the few following facts suffice to indicate the social and physical condition of the inhabitants. Before the famine, while it had one third of the population, and had one fourth of the surface of the British isles, it yielded not one eleventh of the national revenue. The tonnage of her shipping was only one twelfth, or 250,000, to 3,250,000—and the proportion of persons employed in her manufactures only 1 to 23—As to the farming, there were 1,000,000 of the holdings on 13,000,000 acres of arable surface. Of these holdings one-seventh did not exceed 1 acre, one third consisted of from 1 to 5 acres, while not one twentieth were over 50 acres. While the English Upper classes are the wealthiest in the world, the Irish were deeply in debt, and the estates generally deeply in debt—while the English Middle class by their intelligence, their industry and their wealth formed the bone and sinew of the state, such a class in Ireland scarcely existed. Of the poorer, more than three-fourths of the dwellings were of mud, and