Witness

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THE SECOND PLENARY

view, puching article, from the pen of the ev. M. O'Riordan, D.D. D.C.L., of on the subject of "The imerick Plenary Synod of May-Not one paragraph of this instructive contribution should be eglected; but, its length, naturally revents us from reproducing it in There are, however, a few pages that we cannot refrain from giving to our readers-both on acount of the historical information that they contain and the evidence of Ireland's fidelity to the Faith that they present.

The Rev. Doctor opens his essay by showing, from the reports of the arious synods, commencing with that of Thurles, how the enactments each were all submitted to the Holy Father for approval before even being made public. In fact, so secret are the deliberations of a Synod that even bishops who would have a that even disnoys who would have a right to be present, but who were absent through necessity, could not obtain any information regarding the proceedings. Thus the officials must be silent; but the officers will ever talk, and talk is mere conject-

"They have reason to thank God and to be proud of a people of whom they are able to say: "It is this spirit of faith that marks the singular harmony which exists in Ireland between the Church's growth in outward form and grandeur and her progress in the sanctity of her children." "The cowl does not make the monk" is applicable to a people as to a person. With many nations it would seem as if, when they had expended money and energy unsparingly in raising sanctuaries to God or in benevolent institutions where His charity is enshrined, they forgot the purpose for which they worked.

In the January number of the American Catholic Quarterly Repiew," appears a most able and couching article, from the pen of the low M O'Riordan, D.D. D.C.L., o But in general our churches should be the homes and the shrines of a sacred art which we could call our own. The art of every people had to pass through a process of development. Every best begins at its worst; and if we wait till we are at our best we shall keep waiting forever. Cimabue and Giotto came before Fra Angelico, and if these had been disregarded for Greek models Italy to-day would present the absurdity of a naturalistic Christian art as represented by Titian and Benvenuto Cellini instead of the noble productions of the pre-Raphaelite painters; and the influence of those two schools of artists have been as divergent and far reaching as have been literature created by Dante and Petrach on the one hand and by Boccaccio on the other."

Then turning to the spiritual manifestations of faith amongst the Irish

people, he says:—
"I have been speaking of the material manifestation of faith in Ireland. But the piety of the faithful of all classes and of both sexes has be present through necess.

A any information proceedings. Thus the st be silent; but the officers er talk, and talk is mere conject are.

He then shows that "whatever be the final result of the Synod, its acts and decrees will be an index of the present needs and the general position of the Irish Church." A souple of highly instructive pages are given to an explanation of the rights, privileges, prerogatives and ranks of the various bishops, aroust bishops, land. But the piety of the faithful of all classes and of both sexes has notably increased for the past fifty years. In the early part of the century men as a rule went but once or twice a year to the sacraments. That was not owing, in the vast majority of eases, to any want of faith. It was largely due to the customs in which they had been brought up. The Irish priests of those times were for the most part educated in France, and they brought home that spirit of rigorism which prevailed there. Moreover, the people were just coming out from under the cloud which had hung over them during the penal times? For generations they had to think less of how often they could go to the sacraments than whether they could venture to go at all. The people still point out it is selveded gives all over the county in selveded gives all over the county is selveded gives all over the county is selveded gives all over the county in the county in selveded gives all over the county in the county is selveded gives all over the county in the county in the county is selveded gives all over the county in the county in the county in the county is selveded gives all over the county in the county is selveded gives all over the county in the county is selveded gives and over the county in the county is selved to the sacraments than whether they could venture to go at all.

The following story and the account of how certain pious customs sprang up in Ireland, are well worthy a careful reading:—
"The following will illustrate how it fared with Catholics in Ireland even so late as the early years of the present century. An old priest who died a few years ago told me of a Protestant landlord in the County Limerick who used to send an order to the parish priest of the neighboring town in the harvest time to have the chapel cleared out and ready for the magnate's men to thrash his corn in it. The command was yieldingly in raising sanctuaries to God or in benevolent institutions where His charity is enshrined, they forgot the purpose for which they worked; gloried in their own goodness and finally slided from the spiritual life which had put forth its activity in such beautiful forms till little more of the Church of God remained but the shell, and of His worship "in spirit and in truth" only the simodow. It is quite otherwise in Ireland. The thatched chapel has disappeared and splendid bulldings have been raised to replace them out of the poverty of the people, assisted largely by the generosity of their kinsfolk who have sought and found fortune in America. These temples stand out in their stateliness and architectural beauty as so many enduring symbols of the living faith of the people, quickened by trial into greater life and activity. "To those who observe us from the outside." as the Pastoral says, "these works seem but ill-proportioned to our poverty. And so they are." But the eye of faith that has designed them takes a wide and higher view of their purpose than that which mere political economy gives and which is circumseribed by the narrow limits of the present life. But they have also stimulated lrish art, although not so much. I think, as might be. The architecture is, of course, entirely Irish; and so are the carving, painting and scupture to a large extent. But these, too, should be ally or as nearly all as possible, the work of Irish artista. I am now considering it as each etically rather than economically. I look onward to a time when those who are to come after us might study the genius and dovolopment of Irish art in the churches which we are building to-day. They cannot the building to-day. They cannot the forman and advisibly to an analysis of the present life is not into the proposition of the living faith of the people, assisted largely by the generosity of their his proportions to our poverty. And so they are." But the execution of the living faith of the people, assisted the care life and the prop

laity. The Rosary was the only form of public devotion which the people could always perform, and they have clung to it with a devout fidelity which is not to be found elsewhere in Christendom. In some country places the people assemble in the chapel before Mass on Sundays where some pious and intelligent man of the parish "gives out" the Rosary, and the others join in. There is hardly a Catholic family in Ireland in which the Rosary is not recited every night during Lent and Advent, and in most of them throughout the entire year. The Association of the Holy Family, introduced a few years ago by the Holy Father, has made a great revival of the Rosary devotion in Ireland."

We are now treated to a glimpse into history—the sad history of the trials that the Church underwent in Ireland. Here are two paragraphs of the greatest importance, if we wish to form a just estimate of the condition of affairs in the Old Land and of the gradual changes brought about:—
"Before the churches and their emoluments were confiscated a priest

"Before the churches and their em-ohuments were confiscated a priest was present at the churchyard to perform the burial service at the grave. Then the churches and the churchyard passed under the control of the parson, and Catholic service was prohibited. The people solved the difficulty by taking some of the earth from the grave, often at a great distance, to have it bless-ed by the priest; they then take and scatter it on the grave before the coffin is lowered down into it; so coffin is lowered down into it; so that in spite of the law and without the ministractions of the person the body of the deceased would be laid to rest in consecrated clay. That custom is kept up to the present day."

"One can readily understand how priests who were brought up in such circumstances were glad to be let live at all, and did not always encourage sodalities and popular devo-tions such as we are used to at pre-sent. We now think them indispen-sable elements of spiritual life; if we had lived in Ireland in the days and sable elements of spiritual life; if we had lived in Ireland in the days and circumstances of our fath?rs we might think otherwise. It must not be thought, however, that sodalities were unknown in Ireland till lately. I have in my possession some books of devotion specially compiled for the use of Sodalities of the Blessed Sacrament and other confraternities, printed in Dnblin, Cork, Waterford or Limerick, in the early years of the century. I have heard of a poor old woman who died a few years ago at a great age, and who could sing the Latin hymns and recite the Latin psalms of Vespers from memory. She had learnt them in her early days in Limerick. But it is only within the present generation that popular devotions have spread to any great extent. There are few parishes in country or town where Sacred Heart Sodalities are not established. popular devotions have spread to any great extent. There are few parishes in country or town where Sacred Heart Sodalities are not established. Even now the outside world is not aware of the extent to which they have grown. A great many practices of piety go on, and a good deal of spititual activity is abroad all over the country which outsiders or passing visitors would never suspect. Even converts to the Church are much more numerous than is generally known; not so numerous as elsewhere, because Protestantism in Ireland is a symbol of ascendancy; it means social privilege more than religious conviction, whilst Catholicism carries with it in their minds the tradition of inferiority and exclusion from the good things of this world. These spiritual activities are not so much advertized in Ireland as elsewhere; and let us hope that the Catholics of Ireland will always think it enough Ireland as elsewhere; and let us hope that the Catholics of Ireland will always think it enough that God knows what they do in His honor without calling the attention of the world to look and admire them. Monthly confession and communion is a common practice with both sexes and amongst all classes; and those who neglect to do the Easter duty are very few. Intemperance, which was once so prevalent amongst all classes—in fact, was a tradition of extravagant respectability borrowed from the old gentry—has greatly decreased in the country parts and is less than it used to be in the cities. Working on holidays of obligation has become very common in late years; at the time of the first Synod of Maynooth it was very rare. We have been decreased into the ways and vices of the

very common in late years; at the time of the first Synod of Maynooth it was very rare. We have been drawn into the ways and vices of the commercial world without sharing much of the benefits. We have let ourselves pass nnconsciously through a process of Anglicization being my of us little dream of. The English "Reformers" thought that industry was retarded by the number of Catholic holidays; so Protestantism did away with them. In recent years they have come to think that the people had not holidays enough. They did not, however, revive the old holidays which they had done away with—that would be too much of an honor to Catholic saints—but they created new ones and called them "Bank holidays"— I suppose in honor of the God Mammon. Unfortunately the Catholics of Ireland have yledded, and have followed these changes in the humor of English Protestantism in this as in other things. It is to be hoped that the Gaelic revival will succeed in restoring these things, together with the mines of beautiful Catholic thought hidden away in the language which our Catholic fathers spoke."

we cannot allow the following splendid historical summary to pass unnoticed. With it, we leave Rev. Dr. O'Riordan's grand paper to those who have the advantage and privilege of reading the full text in the 'Review.' He says:—
"During the reign of Henry VIII. about 1.000 educational institutions were destroyed in Ireland. Out of confiscated Catholic property and public money were founded: The Parish School Act in 1537, Diocesan Free Schools in 1570, Trinity Col-Parish School Act in 1537, Diocesan Free Schools in 1570, Trinity College in 1591, Royal Free Schools in 1605, Erasmus Smith Schools in 1605, Erasmus Smith Schools in 1669, The Blue Coat Schools in 1672—with the purpose of making the Irish, Protestant in faith and English in sympathy. By the 7th of William and Mary all Papists were prohibited from teaching school under heavy penalties; and the child who went abroad for education as well as the parent who sent him forfeited all their belongings. Henceforth arose the "hedge-schools,"

Where the teacher and the pupil sat Feloniously to learn."

Yet by 1730 the Protestant Primate Boulter wrote: "I can assure you the Papists are here so numerous that it highly concerns us. point of interest, as well as out of concern for the salvation of these concern for the salvation of these poor creatures, who are our fellow-subjects, to try all possible means to bring them and theirs over to the knowledge of the true religion; and one of the most likely methods we can think of is, if possible, instructing and converting the young generation; for, instead of converting those that are adult, we are daily losing many of our meaner people, who go off to Popery." He suggested a new system known as "The Charter Schools," which began their work in 1734. In 1775 a by-law was made by which only "Popish children" were eligible for admission into them. In 1787 Howard, the philanthropist, caused a public inquiry anthropist, caused a public inquiry to be made into their condition, anthropist, caused a public inquiry to be made into their condition, which revealed lying reports on the part of those who controlled them and fifth, neglect, immorality and ignorance on the part of the children who were to be enlightened out of the superstitions of Popery. After ninety-three years of existence they were finally swept away. But during that time they cost £1,600,000 stering—all spent on not more than 12,000 children, and for such an "education" as Howard had exposed. In 1758 Catholics were allowed to open schools and according to Mr. Wyse the Catholic priests by their own sertions and without any public money educated each year four times as many as were "educated" by the Charter Schools at such enormous cost during the whole of their existence. He mentions that one priest is Comit Slive acatallished in a less that the charter Schools actablished in a less that the charter Schools are that is the control of the catholic priest in Camity Slive acatallished in a less that the charter Schools actablished in a less that the charter Schools are acatallished in a less that the charter Schools are acatallished in a less that the charter Schools are acatallished in a less that the charter Schools are acatallished in a less that the charter Schools are acatallished in a less that the charter Schools are acatallished the schools are acatallished the schools are the charter Schools are acatallished the school

similar instances occurred elsewhere similar instances occurred elsewhere through the country."

"The same anti-Catholic purpose established the Hibernian Military School in 1769, the Hilernian School in 1775, the Female Orphan School in 1790, the Association Against Vice in 1792, the London Hibernian Society in 1806, Kildare Street Schools in 1811, Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in 1819. Cardinal Cullen gives a list of several other institutions founded with a view to the enlightenment of the Papists. But he points out that charity begins at home, and that the money thus wasted might be usefully spent in England. He quotes from a report signed by twenty Anglican through the country a report signed by twenty

ence. He mentions that one priest in County Sligo established no less

than thirteen schools, and adds that

ly spent in England. He quotes from a report signed by twenty Anglican bishops: "The almost incredible degradation in morals as well as religion in which the masses of our people are sunk;" and from a Mr. Kay, of the University of Cambridge: 'I speak it with sorrow and shame that our peasantry are more ignorant, more demoralized than those of any in Europe.'"

"In 1831 the Government tried to mend their hand by the introduction of the 'National School' system, of which Archbishop Whately, whilst openly declaring it an innocent system, privately expressed his confidence that it would "soon wean the Irish people from the errors of Popery." That system has been cobbled many times since it was established; each stage of improvement betraying the fact that the original purpose of the system is still inspiring and hampering the action of those who are responsible for it. In 1847 they established "model schools," to be examples of pedagogy for the ordinary National Schools. By the year 1867 these, about thirty in all, had cost £50,000, and they have been nary National Schools. By the year 1867 these, about thirty in all, had cost £50,000, and they have been costing about £30,000 ever since. Though meant mainly for the supposed benefit of Catholics, hardly any Catholics go to them. I find, moreover, from inspectors' returns that they are behind many of the National Schools in efficiency. The Royal Commission of 1869 condemned them as an utter failure; and the late Lord Randolph Churchil said that 'they are the greatest imposture that could be kept up in Ireland.'"

"The whole system on which edu-

ure that could be kept up in Ireland."

"The whole system on which educational opportunities have been offered to the Catholics of Ireland has been from the beginning a system of defiance and denial as long as that was possible, then of hypocrisy, deceit and cobbling. The history of the action of the English Government in this matter is such that they seem to have lost the faculty of framing an educational system for Irish Catholics without slipping in some craik by which to twist the work of the machinery into proselytism. Little wonder that the Irish bishops suspect whatever they offer, however denominational mappearance."

n the Synod will probably have the to say that has not been said eady in 1850 and 1875. For, in s' the Government has done little nothing. They have an interme-te system by which Catholic uth are prepared for and encour-ed to aspire to a university train-ed to aspire to a university train-

BIGOTRY SCORED

igotry amongst politicians down by the sea are unfortunately too renarkable; but, sad to say, the same evil spirits haunt almost every part of the Dominion. A very able and pointed article from The Freeman on this subject, has just come under our notice. Leaving aside the local issues referred to in the opening of hat article, especially concerning the city of St. John, and some of its magnates, we will reproduce the sane and timely remarks of a more gener al kind. The writer says:-

al kind. The writer says:—
"Manifestations of intolerance are becoming the rune rather than the exception. The weak and narrow-minded bigot has possession of our civic, provincial and federal chambers. In every little hamlet where a municipal body meets, some extremist airs his views. He poses as a man with a grievance against his neighbor, simply because that neighbor is born of a different faith. The fact is forgotten that though of a different religious belief, the citizen that is abhorred is entitled to that self-same respect, the same courteous treatment, and the same privilege as the more favored citizen, whose only he more favored citizen, whose only laim to worth is an accident of

oirth. ''In a great many cases the citizen who is looked down upon and detested by such a bigot is a credit to the community in which he lives. This community in which he lives. This picture is no figment of the imagination, but a cold, plain, everyday fact. No distorted faficy need be conjured up to bring one to the realization of this truly existing condition of men and matters in this Canada of ours.

"It seems a shame and a blot upon our escutcheon that this spirit of

"It seems a shame and a blot upon our escutcheon that this spirit of
bigotry and intolerance should be
allowed to prevail. How can we, in
fairness, seek to induce immigrants
to come to our country in the face of such a religious and racial preju-We cannot send emissaries Ireland, or in fact, to any other land, to seek to bring to our shores he class of immigrants which ountry desires to see peopled in our

The time has passed for this as "The time has passed for this as-sumption of authority by a few. The law-makers and politicians should endeavor to clear Canada and Cana-dians of this shameless stain. This narrow-minded bigotry which pre-vents a Catholic from being appoint-ed to an office on account of his re-ligion does not belong to the present day, but is a relic borrowed from the dark ages.

he dark ages.
"As an enterprising and an intelligent people we cannot afford to live under such a stigma. The laws of the land are not fairly interpreted. It is the unwritten law rather hose framed on the statute books

are carried out. "The people of the Mother Country, "The people of the Mother Country, England, Ireland and Scotland, are aware of the existence of such an unwritten code in Canada. They know that, as a rule, our people are intolerant, prejudiced, narrow-minded and bigoted in the extreme. To eradicate this impression will require some gigantic work on the part of those entrusted with the confidence of the voters, the citizens whom we have elected to represent us in the council chamber, in the legislative bodies and in the Commons of Canada. In closing it would be safe to say that there are many gentlemennot of our faith—who abhor and detest the existing spirit of bigotry. The few uneducated loud-mouthed politicians are to blame. They strive to keep alive the racial and religious cry which every good citizen should endeavor to eradicate." Ireland and Scotland, are

NOTES FROM ROME.

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STATE OF ITALY.-Vesuvius wa ever more menacing than is the po litical condition of Italy. umblings of discontent startle the nation as a forewarning of volcanie nation as a forewarning of volcanic activity. It would not be possible to give a more concise idea of the conflicting ambitions of the politicians and of the corresponding misery of the people than in the words of one of the most able correspondents for the Catholic press of Ergland. He thus describes the political situation:-

situation:—
"The fall of the Saracco Ministry has not surprised anybody, as it had long been foreseen, and indeed the only marvel is that it withstood so long the combined attacks of its jeal-ous and ambitious encaies, such as Sonnino, Giolittii and Zanardelli, all anxious to possess themselves once more of power. But the manner of the Ministry's collapse may be considered as unique in the history of Parliamentarism, the Chamber having within the space of a lew minutes voted for and against the Gov-

ernment, both times with overwhelming majorities. This proves not only the superficial and trivial character of the so-called representatives of the nation, but also confirms the long evicting restricted. the superior of the superior of the so-called representatives of the nation, but also confirms the long vxisting suspicion that a conspiract to overthrow the Saracco Ministry had been organized by Signor Sonnino. The latter, however, played his cards too openly, and by revealing with too much effrontery his real motives and his boundless ambition, found himself isolated, and lost the game just at the moment when he ing with too much effrontery his real motives and his boundless ambition, found himself isolated, and lost the game just at the moment when he considered his triumph as assured. After making the running, therefore, Sonnino will in all probability lose the race for power to his rival. Signor Giolitti, who is a great favorite of the present King and has already been called to the Quirinal. The two most likely candidates for the Premiership are generally considered Signor Giolitti and Signor Villa, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, who has in that capacity given proof of great tact and energy, without estranging the sympathies of any party. After Sonnino's blundering generalship, the Conservatives have lost all chances of forming what would be considered a reactionary Government, and it is certain that the task of reconstituting the Cabinet will be confided to the Liberals.

Then dealing with the distress all ver Italy, we are treated to this ombre picture:-

ombre picture:—

"Whatever the political shade of the future Government may be, Italians are wearily convinced that it will follow the fate of its predecessors and collapse ingloriously after a few months of useless and empty wrangling at Montectiorio. But while politicians battle for power and neglect useful legislation in order to glect useful legislation in order to satisfy the stimuli of their individual mbition, the country suffers cruell from the abandonment in which it is left by those who call themselves its representatives, and whose duty it left by those who call themselves its representatives, and whose duty it would be to safeguard its interests. The distress in Italy is increasing every day by leaps and bounds, and in some provinces actually borders on famine and starvation. Take, for instance, the unfortunate island of Sardinia. During the last twelve years no fewer than 52,000 evictions for non-payment of Government taxes took place, which figure, when compared to that of the population, shows that one out of every 19 inhabitants was left utterly destitute during that period owing to the cruel rapacity of the tax-collector. The last number of the "Nuova Sardegma" announces that in the first week of the century no fewer than 445 houses or fields were confiscated for taxes varying from a maximum of houses or fields were confiscated for taxes varying from a maximum of 25frcs. (£1)—in only four cases—down to a minimum of one half—penny! The awful misery of the population may be guessed from the fact that in 85 per cent. of these cases the amount to be paid did not exceed one lira, or about ninepence. "Truly," exclaims the "Nuova Sardegna," bitterly, "our Government has inaugurated the twentieth century in a worthy manner!" Even in Piedmont and Lombardy, the richest regions in Italy, the distress among the working classes is such tions of the marshy soil, in which they sink up to the knees, are content with a salary of 60 centimes, or 10\frac{1}{2}d., a day. But the most pitiful cry of distress comes just now from the Puglie, or ancient Apulia, hitherto famed for the wealth of its olive groves and for the involvents. olive groves and for the inexhausti ble productiveness of its vineyards A terrible malady has attacked the olive trees and the vines, rendering them absolutely barren and in some them absolutely barren and in some cases completely destroying the plants, so that not only the peasantry, but even the landed gentry, are reduced to the verge of starvation and despair. Instead of practically aiding the population, the Italian Government, too much occupied with its own political quarrels, has contented itself with strengthening the garrisons and sending bayonets where the people cry for bread. It will be remembered that the terrible bread riots of 1898, which culminated in the barricades and street fights of Milan, commenced precisely at Minthe barricades and street ugus. Milan, commenced precisely at Minervino Murge in the Puglie, where the distress of this year has surpassed in intensity even that which gave rise to the terrible revolt of three years ago. It is indeed the case to cry "Caveant Consules" ere it be too late."

BLESSED SACRAMENT FLAG.

"Blessed Sacrament Flag " The "Blessed Sacrament Flag" was unfurled recently in front of St. Joseph's Church, Cincinnati, to announce the forty hours' devotion. The flag is of pure white, bearing a representation of a monstrance with adoring angels. It is the wish of Archbishop Elder that some outdoor signal of this kind be used to notify strangers of the forty hours, and various methods are employed by different churches.

John Daly, Lord Mayor of Limerick, was a passenger aboard the Cunarder Etruria, which arrived at New York on Saturday last, from Liverpool and Queenstown. He is on his way to Chicago to attend an Emmet celebration this evening. He will return to New York in time to speak at the Emmet celebration in the Academy of Music on March 10.