

too, while the hunted priest and his persecuted flock fled to some mountain fastness to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, the Cross was protected by the willing hearts and strong arms of the outlawed sons of the Gael. So it has been in the most stormy period of Ireland's history for the emblems of Christianity and of nationality have been blended together. Both banned and persecuted, both sharing the same hard fate, is it any wonder that both became entwined with the very principles of life in the hearts of the Irish peasantry.

You cannot deprive an Irishman of his nationality and patriotic devotion to mother-land, neither can you rob him of the religion of his home, of his heart. They are interwoven and inseparable, and any attempt to violate the sanctity of one or the other is sure to end in failure and disaster. On this account we are sorry to find some modern Nationalists making absurd attempts to divorce patriotism and religion, and to impress upon the minds of the Irish people the notion that the Catholic clergy are opposed to the National cause. This is wrong in principle, and is founded upon facts. Many eminent priests in Ireland are not opposed to the national movement, but are strongly opposed to the teachings and doctrines of certain leaders, who would try to enthrone the Goddess of Liberty on the altar of God, as the communists had impiously done in France. As ministers of God they could not tolerate the spread of infidelity, and consequently were constrained to oppose its disciples, though appearing before them in the garb of patriots.

There is some truth in this: truth that it might be well for leaders of Irish national sentiment to weigh well. There are thousands of good Irishmen who would sooner see Ireland the veriest slave at the foot of England than to find her even a free nation with the red flag of Communism and infidelity unfurled as her national emblems. A people without religion are unfit to enjoy the blessings of liberty, and one thing is certain, namely, that the leaders of the National movement must be in accord, religiously as well as politically, with the masses of the people if they mean to succeed. When Ireland flourished as the *Insula Sanctorum*, she was

then a free country, and pure Christianity, like a sea of glory, covered the land, while happiness and prosperity blessed her people. Ireland was then free—free as the wind that sweep over her noble hills—free as the wild waves that dashes upon her shores.

The invasion of the fierce Northman had subsided when the ruthless Saxon set foot upon her soil. These days of pillage, rapine and plunder recall sad memories, for the despoilers overran the fair plains of holy Ireland. The struggle between the oppressed and oppressors continued. The Reformation came to embitter the strife by sectarian hate. The death throes of defenceless men, the massacre of women and children, the shrieks, the groans and the tortures of the victims of English hate and religious rancor still cry to us for vengeance on their Saxon murderers. The Saxons spared neither age nor sex, neither strong manhood nor prattling innocence, in their efforts to root out the pearl of her faith and the pride of her national life.

But though terrible the persecution suffered by our fathers, and though their blood fertilized every foot of Irish earth, there are proud memories connected with their sterling patriotism and unflinching attachment to the precious old faith, for which they had withstood the rack and sword, the knife and halter. Such were the times of our fathers. They died leaving to us a noble legacy of loyalty to our country—fidelity to our faith.

Ah, truly, Ireland is but the grave of religious and political martyrs, and her soil is sacred with their dust and their bones.

He knows little of the Irish heart and of Irish human nature who imagines that the Irish of to-day is not actuated by the same feelings in this respect as were our forefathers, and the sooner this spirit is recognized the better. One thing is certain, namely, the leaders of the National movement in Ireland can never succeed unless they convince her people that in lifting up that oppressed country they respect the religious opinions of all classes, and reverence the cross to which the peasantry kneel in homage and devotion. In a word, they must remove injurious impressions that