

finds easy access. These schools are not only of inestimable value in themselves, but greatly useful in preparing the way for direct Missionary effort, preparing the young for understanding and appreciating preaching, giving them a thirst for knowledge, and power for securing it, and opening the Missionary's way to the homes and hearts of the old. But for them, multitudes would grow up in ignorance, for their priests would open no schools. Very many Romanists in the West, still attending mass, know their Bibles well, for they were well taught in our schools; and not a few still read them, but secretly, for fear of the priest's spies, and were they out of the reach of such, they would go to mass no more.

Connaught has during last year passed through one of its terribly testing times. Thousands of its sons, strong for the repeal of union at home, have shed their blood to prevent repeal in a foreign land; and thousands, as if to fill the vacancy, have rushed away from their native shore. Gaunt starvation came into their poor huts, like a ferret into a rabbit burrow, and they fled in crowds—crowds of Romanists, and even Protestants too; yet, for our country's sake, and for the sake of civilization and religion, we are happy to say, that our missionary strength in the West is still unbroken.

In all the five counties of Connaught our missionary staff stands firm. The progress of art helps our progress. The roaring railway train has left old Bianconi on his long car far in the rear; and we rush on with advancing science, with Bibles, and tracts, and lending libraries, and all our missionary equipments at our backs, in the van.

Of the thirteen organized congregations in Connaught, of which the Presbytery of Connaught is composed, the others being in other Presbyteries, each one has a neat comfortable church, and eleven of them equally good manses. Though in all there are only 306 payers of stipend, their stipend last year amounted to £357 10s. 3d., being an increase steadily advancing of £253 6s. 3d. above 1853; their contributions to missions being £87 7s. 0d.; and to all religious objects, above £1 16s. 0d. for each family—above £550 annually.

Since the famine year, no province of Ireland has been more distinguished for advance than Connaught; and throughout the world, the Irish Presbyterian Church is known and honoured as Connaught's friend.

Connected with the Connaught Mission we have seventeen missionaries who minister in 45 different districts, their average attendance each Sabbath being 1,400.

In their thirty-five daily and Sunday schools there are 1,000 children, of which 350 are Romanists. Some of these schools are under the National Board of education, and it is no more than justice to this great institution to say, that while it has made a new era in school houses, school requisites, teachers, superintendence, and literary and scientific instruction, it has secured for all the benefits of united education, and afforded every church full opportunity of giving religious education to its children.

The colporteur is now looked on as a species of church-officer, not bishop, elder, or deacon, but still a very important and useful member of the missionary staff: for combining in himself merchandise and gratuity, literature and religion, the Scripture reader and hawker in one, he has many facilities of usefulness, can glide along quietly and unobserved without creating alarm; and having John Bunyan, John Newton, Richard Baxter, or some other true saint to introduce him, he waxes eloquent on the Romanists' heath in praise of his wares, effects a sale of some good book or periodical, or it may be of the Protestant Bible itself, gives a few tracts into the bargain, convinces of the worth of the purchase by reading a portion aloud, and so insinuates himself into the good graces of the family, that they kneel with him in prayer, and rise from their knees, wondering if it can be possible that this gentle, kind and holy man can be one of the Protestant soupers whom they had heard their priest so often curse from the altar.