

"THE MISSION OF THE IRISH RACE."

On Monday evening, the lecture room of the Odd Fellows' Hall was thronged with a numerous audience, anxious to hear Dr. Brownson upon this interesting topic. After a few preliminary observations, Dr. Brownson said, that the subject of his lecture would be the Mission of the Irish Race. Before proceeding to its direct discussion, he would remark that he was far from attaching so much importance to the difference of races, as many are accustomed to do at the present day. Whatever difference may be discovered among the people of the different countries of the world, it must be remembered that God has made of one blood all the nations of men; all have human nature, and that nature is essentially the same in all; no one race monopolizes all the virtues of humanity, and no one is so degraded as to be incapable of attaining to the highest human virtue. Differences no doubt there are, but they are accidental. One race, at certain times, seems to take the lead in some things—another race in others. In some respects the English, or the so-called Anglo-Saxon race, is at the present day at the head of the civilised world. It takes the lead in industry, in commerce, and manufactures, and is pre-eminent in all that concerns the human animal; and if man were a mere animal, with only animal wants, created for this world alone, to be satisfied with purely material goods, it would stand at the head of all the civilised races. But if we suppose man to be created for God, for heaven, to find good here only by promise, and to realise it only hereafter, as Christianity teaches, it stands, not at the head, but at the foot.

Yet even the Anglo-Saxon race, whether in Great Britain, or in the United States, is not incapable of rising above the material world. England was once called the Island of Saints, and individual Englishmen, or Americans, by God's grace, may aspire to the highest spiritual excellence. So of others—the French, the Irish, the German, the Slavonian. Even the Negro, all inferior as he is in the state in which we now find him, is a man, a human soul, for whom Christ died, kindred by nature to the white man, who by grace may aspire and attain to the highest Christian virtues, and perhaps may hereafter stand in heaven, far above his white-faced master.

The Irish, said Dr. Brownson, are, it must be confessed, a remarkable people. They have performed their full share in the work of converting heathen nations, and restoring letters and science in Continental Europe, during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, and are entitled to a large share of the glory. Their history is a remarkable one, though he did not profess to have mastered it, and had no intention of dwelling on it, even since the conversion of the nation to Christianity, far less on it, prior to the Christian Era. Some might smile at the Irish traditional history, and count it extravagant. But the Irish were more modest in their claims to antiquity, than the Welsh or Armorians. All primitive tribes, or people, who have occupied the same homestead from time immemorial, have primitive traditions, and the reason why the English and their descendant Americans have them not is, because they do not occupy their original homesteads, but have emigrated from them, and are comparatively a new people. In emigrating from their early homes, they lost their primitive traditions, and if they laugh at the Irish antiquary, it is because they have lost the memory of their own infancy. For his own part, said Dr. B., he was disposed to treat the traditions of every primitive race with great respect. Oral tradition is often as reliable as written history.

The lecturer then touched lightly on the Irish history, during the period from the invasion of Ireland by England, under Henry II, to the so-called Reformation in the sixteenth century, and then proceeded to speak more particularly of it for the last three hundred years. England apostatised from the faith; but Ireland still fondly clung to the religion of Saint Patrick. Hence the sufferings of the Irish nation for the last three centuries, for Ireland has been, truly, a martyr for the Catholic Faith. England has persecuted Ireland, because Catholic Ireland: England hates Irishmen, not for their nationality, but for their religion: Irishmen have suffered all that the malice of England could inflict, simply because they would not apostatize. The apostate Irishman, the Protestant Irishman—"if I may be permitted" said the lecturer, "to couple the words Irishman and Protestant together"—the apostate Irishman has never been an object of suspicion or dislike to his Anglo-Saxon neighbor; on the contrary, he has ever been viewed with special favor. Thus, it is clear, that it is not the nationality but the Faith, of the Irishman, that has provoked, for so many centuries, the unremitting hostility of Protestant England. Man has exhausted his malice in devising new Penal Laws, in inflicting strange and unheard of cruelties, upon the Catholics of Ireland—but in vain. In Ireland, as elsewhere, persecution has failed, as persecution always must fail, when levelled against the truth. Error, may be, always has been, suppressed by rigorous measures; but truth—never. The very means that Protestant England has employed against Ireland, for the destruction of Catholicity, have been, by the overruling Providence of God, made the means of spreading the knowledge of His Gospel amongst the heathen, and of extending the limits of the Catholic Church. Thus has it ever been; thus has God ever shown Himself to be stronger than the devil; and the latter, in spite of all his boasting, has approved himself to be, after all, the greatest fool in the universe.

The Heathen persecuted God's chosen people of old, and, by Divine permission, the Jews were scattered amongst all the most highly cultivated nations of antiquity. Driven by persecution from their native land, the Jew carried his theism to the Gentiles, and engrafted his peculiar theosophic system upon the Platonism of the Greek; and thus was his dispersion—

the result of a heathen persecution—the means by which the nations of antiquity were weaned from their gross sensuous idolatry, and prepared to receive favorably the saving doctrines of the Gospel preached by St. Paul.

Thus too did the persecutions of the first Christians tend but the more to diffuse that religion which the persecutors sought to destroy. Persecuted in one city—the faithful fled to another. Being for the most part of Jewish origin, they not only formed the nuclei of Christian congregations, but became to their brethren, missionaries, bearing with them the words of eternal life. Thus too was it with the persecutions set on foot by the Roman Emperors. At the very moment when they thought that, Christianity was extirpated, and Paganism triumphant, the earth broke away from under their feet. Emerging from their retreats, from the catacombs, the caves, and dens, in which they had long sought refuge from the wrath of the spoiler, the Christians came forth, not as trembling fugitives, but as a host, and planted the Cross on the capital of the world. Thus did God make the malice of the persecutor redound to His glory; and thus did the Devil, thinking to crush the Church, overreach himself—and prove himself an arrant fool.

As it was ages ago, so it is now. Still the enemies of God and His Christ devise how to overthrow the Church; and still does the Holy One laugh their impotent malice to scorn, making even their wrath to praise Him. Great is the mission which God has given to the Irish race. He has destined them to be the agents for carrying the knowledge of His truth to every country where the English language is spoken; to them has He committed the task of reclaiming the Anglo-Saxon race, in so far as it may be reclaimed—from the heathenism, and gross materialism, in which it has long wallowed. The Irishman is in fact the pioneer of Catholicity in all those extensive regions whose material capabilities, the sturdy, enterprising, money-loving, but irreligious, Non-Catholic Anglo-Saxon race is opening up. But how was this to be accomplished? The Celt, and above all the Irish Celt, is notorious for his love to his home, to his native glens, his mountains, and to his father-land. To move such a man from the home to which he clings with such a desperation of affection seems no easy task. Yet was it necessary for the accomplishment of the designs of God—that this home-loving Celt, should go forth, over the face of the earth, as a wanderer in order that he might become the Missionary of the XIX Century. For this purpose a force was necessary to drive him from that land which he would never quit voluntarily.—This force the Devil himself has supplied, in the cruel persecutions which, for so many centuries, he has excited against the Catholic Irishman. The malice of Protestantism has been the cause of the dispersion of the Irish race; it has been the means by which that race has been driven from its birth place, to carry with it the seeds of the Gospel, to every region where the English language is spoken, and to become the nuclei round which may collect and form, new Catholic churches, destined to shed a ray of light upon the moral, and spiritual darkness, which surrounds it. In America, in Australia—throughout the islands of the Pacific—from the cities of our Atlantic border, to the valley of the Mississippi, and the farthest West—from Maine, to Texas, to Oregon, and to California, has the influence of this Irish dispersion been felt. Bringing with it little save the Faith, the Irish race, exiled from its native country, has peopled all those regions; and where it has settled, there also has the Catholic priest followed it, and there also have sprung up around it the temples dedicated to the worship of the living God.

The lecturer proceeded to point out how necessary was this immigration of Catholic Irish, in order that the Catholic Priest upon his arrival on this Continent, abandoned as it long has been to heathen ignorance and prejudice, might find, not only shelter from the savage fury of the rabble, but a hearty welcome. He alluded to the cruel laws, still on the Statute books of many of the States; and though now but a dead letter, thanks to the strength of the Catholic population, yet rigorously enforced but a few years ago. A price was set on the head of the humble Jesuit Missionary laboring amongst the Indians of the State of Maine; and until lately, a Catholic Priest could not show himself in any of the large cities of New England without exposing himself to insult and violence. These days have passed away; and it is to the vast influx of the Irish Catholics that this happy change is owing; and thus has the cruel persecution of Catholicity, in Ireland, been the means of raising up, on this side of the Atlantic, the altars which Protestant malice had overthrown on the other side. Thus, again, has the devil been outwitted, and foiled with his own weapons.

Something analogous has occurred in Canada.—When, deserted by the French government of Louis XV., Canada was given over to a Protestant power, who, judging humanly, would not have concluded that a severe blow had been dealt to the cause of the Catholic Church in North America? And yet, unwittingly, against her will, the Government of Great Britain has been made use of by Almighty God as an instrument for the protection of His Church, and the propagation of Catholicity. As a French colony, Canada would in all human probability have been deluged with French Atheism at the end of the last century; her churches and altars would have been overthrown—her convents and colleges pillaged, and her priesthood exiled and massacred as they were in Paris. It was by being a British colony that Canada was delivered from these horrors; it was under the shelter of an Anti-Catholic power that have flourished, and developed themselves, those mighty Catholic institutions which lie around him, and whose influences were being felt, from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Coast of Labrador to

the shores of the distant Pacific Ocean. Thus again, in Canada as in Ireland, have the weapons forged by Satan against the Church, been, by the overruling providence of God, turned into a shield to protect her.

To go forth as Missionaries and to carry the Cross unto the heathen—this is the mission of the Irish race. To prepare the way for the return of the nations to the Church of Christ—is the task that has been assigned to it: it is as the pioneers of Catholicity that the Irish race excites the warmest sympathies of the whole Catholic world. As a Catholic, not as an Irishman—because of his religion, and not because of his nationality—is the name of Irishman dear to every Catholic. "For the Protestant Irishman," said the lecturer—"I feel no especial sympathy; to me he is but as the Moslem, as the Hindoo, or as any other alien from God's Church: I pray for him on Good Friday; but in other respects, he is no more to me than any other member of the great human family."

The learned gentleman concluded by exhorting his hearers, above all things, to preserve their Faith.—It was this that distinguished the Irishman from the heathen by whom he was surrounded, and often outnumbered: it was this that preserved to the Irish their distinctive nationality. So long as they remained Catholic Irishmen, they remained Irishmen: but as apostates, their nationality was at once merged in that of the Non-Catholic races amongst whom they dwelt. To preserve his Catholic religion should therefore be the dearest object of the true-hearted Irishman. To him the Faith preached by St. Patrick should be a jewel beyond all price, to be preserved at all hazards. It would prove his best consolation, his truest glory in this world, and it would be his exceeding great reward in the next. Dr. Brownson then sat down amidst long continued, and oft reiterated, shouts of applause.

We see that the *Semi-Weekly Leader* of Toronto, a ministerial organ, defends the proposed modifications in the School Law upon the plea, that a majority of the people of Upper Canada are, in favor of these modifications, and opposed to the system which the minority are inclined to support. Godless education, or education without religion, is as unacceptable to most of the Anglican Protestants, as it is to Catholics; and, united, Catholics and Anglicans would form a majority of the population of the Western section of the Province. "We who hold to the secular view of the question"—that is, who are in favor of secular education, or education without religion, says the *Leader*,—"are in a clear minority;"—and therefore we should submit to the will of the majority, is the conclusion drawn by our cotemporary. Upon these grounds we hope that no Catholic, no freeman, no lover of "Freedom of Education," will consent to take his stand. The Catholic demands "Freedom of Education"—that is, complete exemption from all State control, or interference in the matter of education—not because it is acceptable to a majority, but because it is his right, his inalienable right; a right which no majority has conferred upon him, and which no majority can take away. If he demands separate schools, it is not as a favor, not as a concession to the votes of a majority; but as a right to which, as a freeman, he is entitled, and because the Church of Christ has pronounced "altogether dangerous" those schools which a certain portion of his Protestant fellow-citizens of Upper Canada seem desirous of compelling him to support. The Catholic, in fine, demands "Freedom of Education;" not as a concession to the clamors of a multitude, but as the practical recognition of the claims of immutable justice.

If, as the *Leader* seems to assert, public opinion be in favor of yielding to the just demands of the Catholics of Upper Canada, we are happy to hear it, and heartily coincide with "public opinion;" not because it is "public opinion," but because it is right. To public opinion, as mere public opinion, the true Catholic must ever be profoundly indifferent. The question he asks, is not, "What does public opinion say?" but—"What is right?" Now, public opinion can not make right, wrong—or wrong, right; nor in any way alter the essential nature of things. "What is right?"—the Catholic learns from the Church—the only authority competent to decide; he will not therefore rest his case upon "public opinion." Nor on the will of majorities. There is no virtue inherent in majorities that he should submit to the decision of a majority, simply because it is the decision of a majority. It is certainly sometimes a convenient, but always quite an irrational, and an arbitrary, mode of settling disputes, to submit them to the decision of majorities. There is no more reason why the will of a majority should constitute law, than why the will of all the red-haired men, or of all the pot-bellied men, in the community should constitute law. If a minority be in the right, if the expression of its will be in accordance with right reason, and the will of God, then is it the duty of the majority to submit itself to the decision of the minority, no matter how numerous the one, or how small the other. We are therefore not content to accept the reason, put forward by the *Leader* for according "Freedom of Education" to Catholics, as a valid plea. By recognising to-day, the principle therein involved, Catholics would be recognising a principle which might, to-morrow, be urged with fatal effect against themselves: We ask for separate schools—in those localities in which the Church deems separate schools requisite—because it is just and right, irrespective of the will, caprices, or passions, of the majority, that, if we be taxed for school purposes, we should have the value of our money given to us in schools of which we may make use without doing violence to our religious convictions; because it is unjust, and always unjust—no matter what may be the opinion of the majority, no matter how clamorous, or how numerous, that majority may

be—that Catholics should be taxed for Non-Catholic school purposes.

We beg leave to assure our cotemporary *Le Canadien*, that we judge of the intentions of men, whether office-holders, or office-seekers, or, what is much the same thing, whether Canadian placemen, or Canadian patriots, solely by their acts: and that if we have judged harshly, of the intentions of the present ministry towards the Catholics of Upper Canada upon the School question, it is because their conduct has not been so bold, and straightforward, as to inspire us with any very lively confidence. Nothing is more easy than for the ministers themselves to inspire that confidence. They know, perfectly well, what are the complaints of the Catholics of Upper Canada: they know that most of those complaints have sprung from the peculiar interpretation which, at the instigation of Mr. Ryerson—a man whose sole object is to convert the Common Schools of Upper Canada into instruments of Protestant propaganda—has been placed upon the words "School Fund." They well know that the Catholics of the Upper Province have long complained that, though supporting their own separate schools, they are, by that interpretation, liable to be assessed over and above the sum required for obtaining the Legislative School grant: and that they can obtain no share of the sums so raised, which are devoted to the procuring of School sites, and the building of School houses, of which Catholics can make no use. To remedy this grievance required either, a simple clause, declaratory, that, by the words—"School Fund"—the Fund in which the separate school was entitled to share—were intended the whole amount raised by assessment, as well as the Legislative grant: or, the simple enactment that, all supporters of separate schools shall, for the future, be exempt from all taxation for other than separate school purposes. If it be the intention of the framers of the "Act Supplementary," to do this justice to Catholics, why, would we ask, the studied ambiguity of their language in the VI clause? Why did they not clearly state their meaning? Why leave room for future litigation, to be attended—as it must be in all cases in which Mr. Ryerson has any influence—with a decision adverse to Catholic interests? If, on the other hand, it be the intention of ministers to perpetuate the injustice of which Catholics complain, why should we have confidence in them? What cause have Catholics to be thankful? Whether, in such and such a district, or under such and such circumstances, there should be separate schools for Catholic children, is a question, not for the laity, but for the Ecclesiastical authorities of the district, to decide. But Catholics have the right to insist that, when they do demand separate schools, not only shall separate schools be accorded them, supported by a fair share of the public funds to which they contribute, but that they shall be exempt from all assessments imposed for any other school purposes, whatsoever. Until this be granted, nothing is granted; so long as the Protestant Trustee shall have the power to compel the Catholic supporter of a separate school to pay one cent for the building of a Protestant school-house, we shall treat all "Acts Supplementary" as mere acts of barefaced hypocrisy, as a mockery of justice, and as the acts of men who know, but are afraid to do, what is right.

The City Council has named a committee, composed of His Honor the Mayor, and several of the City Councillors, to make suitable preparations for welcoming the first Canadian Ocean Steamer upon its arrival at this port.

On the 1st of May we shall move our printing establishment to No. 4, Place d'Armes.

Subscribers changing their residence about the 1st of May, are requested to inform us of their new abode.

THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. Sold by W. Halley, Toronto.

That this neat and useful little manual comes from the establishment of Murphy & Co., Baltimore, with the approbation of the Most Rev. Dr. Keurick, is a sufficient recommendation. Containing, as it does, devotions to, and the Rosary of, the Blessed Virgin Mary, with Litanies and the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception, it will be found a useful assistant during the coming month, so appropriately set apart for devotions to the mother of God. It contains wood-cut illustrations of the Divine Mysteries, and a (copper-plate) portrait of the Blessed Virgin, worth the whole price of the book.

The ball given by the St. Patrick's Society took place at Russell's Hotel, on Tuesday evening last, and was attended by a large number of our most respectable citizens, of all origins. The decorations of the ball-room, the music, the luxuries of the supper table, the speeches in response to the toasts, all were said to have been exquisite in their kind, and these along with the assiduous attentions of the managers, combined to render the entertainment one of the most harmonious ever witnessed in Quebec. Lord Elgin, we regret to learn, was prevented by personal indisposition from attending, but was represented by a brilliant staff. Family affliction, we are sorry to learn, likewise prevented the President of the Society, C. Allyn, Esq., whose duties, however, were ably discharged by M. Connolly, Esq., one of the Vice-Presidents.—*Quebec Gazette*.

The Toronto city election has resulted in the return of Mr. Sherwood, by a majority of 410 over his opponent Mr. R. Ogle Gowan.

Births.

In this city, on Friday the 22nd instant, the wife of G. E. Clerk, Esq., of a daughter.

On Sunday, the 17th instant, the lady of Joseph Cauchon, Esq., M.P.P., of a son.

Died.

At Quebec, on the 21st instant, Mr. Daniel McGowan, aged 37 years.