

## THE PASTORAL OF THE IRISH HIERARCHY.

**A** QUARTER of a century ago the Bishops of Ireland met for the first time in a national synod to consider various important matters of policy and discipline which claimed their attention. Since that date many changes have occurred, and the Ireland of to-day is not that of '75. The questions which then engaged all minds have either become dead issues, new ones springing up in their places, or have been so modified as to now present a totally different aspect. Thus it was necessary, the Bishops saw, that another convention should be held to deal with these topics, old and new, which affected the well-being of the Irish Church, and accordingly the second national synod was called to meet at Maynooth in September. The result of its labors has now been given forth in Pastoral form, and it is a document which will be read with lively interest by Catholic Irishmen the world over.

One point in connection with it that we may notice here is the praiseworthy action of the hierarchy in issuing the Pastoral in Irish as well as English. At a time when the lovers of Gaelic are struggling to keep that tongue alive in the hearts of the nation, this patriotic recognition of its importance by the episcopate cannot be over-estimated. The example set by the Bishops will be followed by all the clergy, and a powerful impetus will be thereby given to the revival of interest in the national language. The Irish press refers to this occurrence as "an epoch-making event," and it characterizes the spirit animating the synod as "enlightened and truly national."

Needless to say, the Pastoral displays remarkable ability. It is comprehensive in scope, thoughtful in tone, and impresses upon us the wisdom and sanctity of the framers, who with Apostolic zeal and solicitude set before their people the highest ideals of Christian life. In terms of unbounded praise it dilates upon the spiritual progress of the past twenty-five years. The "Land of Saints and Scholars," consecrated with the blood of countless martyrs, still keeps true to St. Patrick's priceless heritage, and the fervor of her children's faith is as undimmed to-day as it was in