

## The Irish Vote.

BY JOHN BOYLE O'BRIEN.

I hold myself as much a man as any in the land, I know I have a heart to feel, a brain to understand, and so I ask you, gentlemen, as Irishmen of note:

What means the phrase the papers raise? What is the Irish vote?

The name implies some mass compact, by out force controlled. That can be shifted right and left, perhaps be bought and sold, Is that what freedom means to us—a lesson learned by rote?

Our only thought, "so dearly bought," Is that the Irish vote?

Or are we all so very wise none can deceive our sight? Or all so very foolish grown we never vote aright?

Are we but cargo stowed aboard some politician's boat? To be conveyed, all charges paid? Is that the Irish vote?

Our grandfathers in green Erin's Isle were reckoned proper men, And yet I have heard in ninety-eight they differed from them.

They called a man a slave who bowed "neath any foot his throat." What shall we say of him to-day? What call the Irish vote?

When war-clouds from the Southern sky came rolling far and wide, Were all the Irish exiles then massed on a single side?

Some have hearts beat beneath the blue, some wore the South's gray coat. Free heart! free hand! free speech! free land! Is this the Irish vote?

When some great man his party leads to triumph, who will dare To say, "Mid Yankee, German, Gaul, there were no Irish there?"

The other side had bought them in? No! as the wise man wrote: Each for himself and God for all. So let the Irish vote.

## FATHER JOHN THAYER.

REMARKABLE STORY OF A PRIEST WHO WAS A NATIVE OF BOSTON, A CONVERT, AND WHO LABORED LONG IN IRELAND. From a lecture recently delivered in Ireland by Rev. T. E. Bridgett, a distinguished R-demptorist, on the conversion and subsequent priestly career of Rev. John Thayer, who was born in Boston, in the last century, of Puritanical extraction. This extract deals with a tour he made in Europe and the events to which it led; I must remind you that at the period of Mr. Thayer's visit to Europe, in the year 1781, what was called philosophy was the fashion among educated people. Voltaire and Rousseau had just died, and their writings in France, like those of Hume and Gibbon in England, had undermined all Christian faith. At the same time those who wished to be thought cultured and philosophical prided themselves, above all things, on being candid and impartial. Mr. Thayer tells us how he boasted that in pursuing his inquiries he was determined not to be converted, though resolved to ascertain the truth, for he "could not entertain a prejudice willingly even against the devil." He adds that he was very much startled when a priest, to whom he applied for information, told him he must say the Lord's prayer for light. Fortunately for himself he obeyed, for God seldom gives light except to those that pray for it. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you." It would take me a long time to relate how Mr. Thayer's prejudices were gradually removed. Even when he came to see that his own sect was in the wrong and to suspect that Catholics were right, he resolved, whatever proof was brought against him, not to make his abjuration at Rome, for fear of taking a precipitate step. But "Providence," he says, "ever watchful over me, did not suffer these delays, which might have been fatal, but ordered various events which hastened my conversion." The first of these was that he read a book about the guardian angels which deeply impressed him and made him strive to avoid sin; the second was the death of

## BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE.

Though I cannot now relate the saint's history, I will just mention that he was a young Frenchman, well educated, who, by a very special inspiration of God, had left his family and country, and in a spirit of penance adopted the life of a pilgrim and a mendicant, practicing the most wonderful austerities. For some time he had lived in Rome, and by his wonderful piety had become known to many as "the holy beggar." At his death, which took place on the Wednesday in Holy Week, 1783, on the 16th of April, a sudden and unaccountable rumor spread through Rome that a saint was dead, and before and after the funeral for many weeks the church where the body was deposited was so thronged with visitors that the tomb had to be constantly guarded by soldiers. In four months 80,000 small pieces of his dress, or rather rags, had been distributed as relics, and his fame was spread over Europe and even to China. Great numbers of miracles took place on using these relics and invoking his intercession. Well, these things took place just when Mr. Thayer was staying in Rome and his mind growing disposed towards the Catholic faith. But at first, instead of helping, they retarded his conversion; for the report that a pilgrim and a beggar was working miracles aroused all his Protestant prejudices. Poverty and miracles are two things which most Protestants hate; for miracles prove the greatness of God, and poverty shows the nothingness of the world. Voluntary poverty has always been held in great esteem by the Church, not only as a practice of mortification, but because he who embraces it thereby proves that he understands the true greatness and riches of man to consist in nothing external. He exclaims, like St. Francis: "My God and my all!" But I must let you hear Mr. Thayer himself speak: "Such was my situation when the death of venerable Labre and the miracles which were said to have been obtained through his intercession began

to make a noise at Rome and to become the subject of every con-

versation. Notwithstanding the instruction which I had received and the lights which I had acquired, I was no ways disposed to credit the public reports concerning the truly extraordinary person. Of all my prejudices against Catholics the deepest rooted was a formal disbelief of the marvellous facts which are said to have happened among them. I had been brought up in this persuasion, common to all Protestants, who never having been able to obtain the gift of miracles, like the fox in the fable, disdain it and deny its existence. [The fox, according to the fable alluded to by Mr. Thayer, lost his tail, whereupon he tried to get up an opinion that foxes are handsome without tails. Protestants have lost the gift of miracles, and they have in consequence got up the theory that a religion is more solid and spiritual that lays no claim to such gifts.] Not content with denying those which were published at that time, I made them the subject of my railings, and in the coffee houses passed some very unbecoming jests on the servant of God, with whose poverty and uncleanness I was shocked; and on this head I went even further than any even of my Protestant friends. However, the number and weight of the evidences increasing daily, I thought it was my duty to examine the matter for myself. I frequently conversed with the confessor of the deceased, from whom I learned a part of his life. I visited four persons who were said to have been miraculously cured; I was convinced by my own eyes of the state in which they were. I questioned them concerning the state in which they had been; I informed myself of the nature and continuance of the illness with which they had been attacked, and the circumstances of their cure, which were operated in an instant. I collected the evidences of those to whom they were known, and after all these informations, made with the greatest care, I was fully convinced that the reality of each one of these miracles was at least as well proved as the most authentic facts." He enters into some details, and continues: "Per suaded that there was something supernatural in these cures, I could not refrain from turning my thoughts on my own sect. These reflections involved me in much perplexity.

I can hardly express the violent state in which I then was. Truth appeared to me on every side; but it was combated by all the prejudices which I had sucked in from my infancy. I felt all the force of the arguments which Catholics oppose to the Protestant doctrine, but I had not the courage to yield. I clearly saw that the Church of Rome is established on innumerable and unshakable proofs, and that her reply to the reproaches of Protestants are solid and satisfactory; but I must abjure errors in which I had been brought up, and which I had preached to others. I was a minister in my own sect, and I must renounce my state and fortune. I was tenderly attached to my family, and I must incur their indignation. I must dear keep me back. In a word, my understanding was convinced, but my heart was not changed. I was in these circumstances, fluctuating and undetermined, when a little book, the 'Story of a Convert,' was put into my hands. The author gives a historical account of his conversion and briefly discusses the points which are controverted between Catholics and Protestants. He places in the beginning the following prayer which was communicated to him by a Catholic, to invoke the light of the Holy Ghost, and which the reader perhaps will not be sorry to see: O God of goodness, almighty and eternal Father, merciful Saviour of mankind! I humbly beseech Thee, by Thy sovereign goodness, to enlighten my mind and to touch my heart, in order that, by means of true faith, true hope, and true charity, I may live and die in the true religion of Jesus Christ. I am certain that, as there is good, so great, so holy, so worthy of being loved. But that I do not deserve I hope to obtain of your infinite mercy, and I implore you to grant it to me through the merits of the Precious Blood, which was shed for us poor sinners by Thine Only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. I cast my eyes over this prayer," continues Mr. Thayer, "but could not read it without being moved to say to myself, I wished to be enlightened, yet feared being too much so. My temptations and a thousand other motives crowded upon my mind and counterbalanced the salutary impressions of grace. At length the interests of eternal salvation prevailed; I threw myself to the prayer with the greatest sincerity, I was capable of; and the violent agitation of my soul, with the conflicts it had sustained, drew from me an abundance of tears. I then began to read the book, which is a short exposition of the principal proofs which establish the truth of the Catholic religion. The whole of those different proofs, which till then I had only viewed separately—so many rays of light collected, as it were, into one ray, made a lively impression on my mind. Besides, I did not make the same resistance as formerly to divine grace. I had not entirely finished the book when I exclaimed: 'My God, I am coming to become a Catholic.' The same day I declared my intention to the family with which I lodged. It gave them joy, for they were truly pious. I went in the evening to the coffee house, where I imparted my change to all my Protestant friends, and to repair as much as I could the scandal which I had given. I defended the sanctity of Venerable Labre, and declared that I had more proof of the truth of his miracles than I would require for any fact whatever. Moreover, not to be ashamed of Jesus

Christ, I united a great number of friends to be witnesses of my abjuration. Many lamented my weakness, others made a jest of it, but God, who called me to the faith, supported me, and I have a firm confidence that He will support me to my last breath." Such is the story of Mr. Thayer's conversion; but I must now pass rapidly on. He was received into the Church on May 25th, 1788. He then returned to France, entered a seminary, made ecclesiastical studies, and was ordained priest

in 1787. He was prevailed on to write a history of his conversion, which he did, both in French and English, and the pamphlet was translated into many languages. It went through a great number of editions in English, both in England and in Ireland. The copy from which I have been reading to you was published in Dublin in 1800, and belongs to the Rev. Dr. Downes of Kilmallock whose sister made her confession to Father Thayer, in Limerick. In the pamphlet written either before or just after his ordination, Mr. Thayer says: "This is the only desire of my heart, to extend, as much as lies in my power, the dominion of the true faith, which is now my joy and my comfort. I am ambitious of doing more; for this purpose I desire to return to my country, in hope, notwithstanding my unworthiness, to be the instrument of the conversion of my countrymen; and such is my conviction of the truth of the Roman Catholic Church, and my gratitude for the signal grace of being called to the true faith, that I would willingly seal it with my blood, if I could not grant me this favor, and I doubt not but he would enable me to do it." When Mr. Thayer wrote this, there were throughout the whole United States only 25,000 Catholics, and twenty-four priests, and they had as yet no bishops, but were governed by a prefect apostolic. It is probable that Mr. Thayer waited for the appointment of a bishop, which took place in 1790, for in that year he went to America. In the meantime he had been laboring in the poorest part of London, using an old factory as his chapel, and had converted several Protestants. In America he took part in the first national synod of Baltimore, in 1791; he labored hard; in several places he visited churches and schools, and engaged in very successful controversies with the Protestant ministers of Boston, to whom he once belonged. Why or when he left America I do not know, nor when or how he came to Ireland. He was certainly in Dublin in the beginning of 1809, and I am told he came to Limerick in 1812. He had been twenty-five years a priest, and

his first zeal was certainly not relaxed. About fifteen years ago I was told by a very old priest, the Rev. Patrick Benson of Feenagh, that he well remembered being taught his catechism by Father Thayer, and how zealous Father Thayer was in hearing the confessions of the poor. I am sorry I made no further inquiries at that time, when old people were alive who could have told me many details. My principal informants are the Rev. Dr. Downes and Mr. Hartney of Tralee, whose father was Mr. Thayer's intimate friend. Mr. Thayer must have been brought to Limerick by the Most Rev. Dr. Young, who was then bishop, and he was the friend of the well-known Limerick Father Patrick Hogan of St. Michael's. Father Thayer had no charge as parish priest or curate, but he said mass and heard confessions in St. Michael's and St. John's, and often preached. His sermons were principally controversial, and in those days such sermons were much needed, for the people were giving up their faith, being weary with persecution or obscurity; for you must remember that this was long before Catholic emancipation. Even in the early days of his conversion he found great joy in those very things which had been his chief difficulties. He had thought that was idolatry to honor and invoke the Blessed Virgin; and even when his mind had become convinced that this was a grievous mistake

his imagination was haunted by what he calls the ghosts of his former prejudices. But this soon passed away, and in 1787 he wrote: "I endeavored to join in every institution which tends to the honor of the Blessed Virgin, and to study as much as I could depend on me to extend the devotion to this dear Mother of God." The mystery of the holy Eucharist, which appeared to me so incredible, became an ever-flowing source of spiritual delight. Confession, which I had considered as an insupportable yoke, seems infinitely sweet, by the tranquility which it produces in the soul. His manner of life in Limerick, in his old age, showed the truth of these professions. He used to say mass daily at St. Michael's, about 11 o'clock, after hearing confessions from 7. He then took his one meal, which was both breakfast and dinner. He kept a perpetual fast, and never ate either meat or eggs. During his last years he resided in Park College used to read to him, by the bishop's leave, in order that he might lose no time. He would never sit near a fire nor allow one in his room. At night he used to take a little dry bread and one glass of wine; he heard confessions almost all day, and when the churches were closed would continue to do so in certain houses, especially in his own lodgings, which you may be interested to know were over the shop of Mr. Bourke, the glover's, in Patrick street, and afterwards at Messrs. Ryan Brothers, cloth merchants, at the sign of the golden eagles, in the same street, opposite Ellen street. When he first came to Limerick, confessions, except at Easter, were rare, but he induced many to confess monthly, and some even more frequently. He had a vast number of penitents, and I have been told that they were nicknamed 'Thayerites' by those who did not relish a pious superior to their own.

His love for the poor was very great as he learned this from Blessed Benedict Joseph. He had a private fortune when young, but he had so entirely spent it in good works and aims before his death, that Dr. Downes tells me that he sold his watch shortly before his death in order to relieve the poor. Mr. Hartney says that he left nothing to purchase his grave; and Mr. Hartney's father, out of reverence and

charity, had his body placed in the vault of his uncle, Dr. McMahon, Bishop of Killaloe. This vault is in the Protestant churchyard in St. John's square. His last residence was, as I have said, at Mr. Ryan's, and his last sickness was dropsy; but even that did not interrupt his work of zeal; he continued to hear confessions sitting in his bed, and was occupied thus even on the very day of his death, which, according to one authority, was the 15th of February, 1815. You see, then, what is the influence of the saints. A Protestant paper said the other day that the life led by Blessed Benedict was of no earthly use to any living creature. From the history of Mr. Thayer, you may see at least one proof of its use. It changed a vain glorious tourist into a zealous Catholic priest, who spent his life and fortune in instructing, elevating and consoling the most ignorant and poor, whom the philosophers and men of science would have left to perish in their poverty and ignorance. Let us ask St. Benedict Joseph Labre by his prayers to raise up for many more zealous priests like Father Thayer, and to take under his special protection Limerick, which already owns itself his debtor.

## ENGLISH CATHOLICS AND IRELAND.

London Catholic Press.

English and Scottish opinion is being fast roused to indignation by the sight of the ghastly realities of the Balfour regime. The death of Mr. Ridley, the grim slide on the nature of political imprisonment under the Cereion Act, while the wholesale eviction on the Vandeleur estate are a practical comment on those provisions of the Tory Land Act which were designed to make evictions as easy as the taking of a house under the old law. It appears that the Coercionist regime means in plain English the starving to death of political opponents, and the levelling to the earth of Irish homes, and men ask themselves, are these the methods which are to secure the union of Ireland to the Empire, and knit the two peoples into one living whole or are they not rather the perpetration of a crime which will be remembered in the same bad methods which in former days made Irishmen hate all that was English, and made Ireland the weak spot of the Empire?

At the same time the absolute criminality of Ireland speaks volumes for the self-restraint of the people now that they know that these evil deeds of their rulers are done not with the consent of England, but with the consent only of one party in England, and that party a rapidly dwindling one. We shall not discuss here the purely political aspect of the situation. Writing for Catholic readers we would put another phase of the matter before them. The majority of those who are suffering under the Coercion regime are our fellow Catholics; the homes that are being broken up near Kilmaree are Catholic homes; the six victims whose blood now lies at Mr. Arthur Balfour's door were all Catholics. In the name of our Catholic brotherhood we would beg of the Catholics of England and Scotland—not the English Catholics living in Great Britain—but our fellow Catholics of English and Scottish descent, to lose no opportunity of protesting against these atrocities. Whenever a meeting is held to denounce them let some English or Scottish Catholic find his way to the platform. Let it be made evident that whatever the small group of Unionist or Coercionist Catholics may say, they do not represent the Catholics of their country, and that the Catholics of the United States, in which the writer says that American Catholics have almost given up hoping to see the Catholics of England doing anything effectual for their brethren in Ireland. Fortunately we have on our side some of the highest and most venerated names among the Catholics of England. While the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the Cardinal Archbishop of London let the Unionists rejoice in the proposition of a Norfolk, and a man like Lord Ripon of political views of the stamp of a De Laish. But unfortunately the oldest, and in many ways the most influential of our Catholic papers is on the side of the English and Scotch Unionists. England and America it is supposed to speak for Catholic England. Unfortunately, too, some of our more wealthy Catholics have not outgrown the prejudices of three centuries, and are to be found today ignorantly defending cruelty and wrong in the name of law and order, and in the name of the rights of the rich man's world goes very far, and the rich man's opinion is supposed to be worth almost as much as his money bags. We honestly believe that the majority of English and Scottish Catholics are not in favor of the miserable and cruel policy now adopted in Ireland, but they are allowing a noisy minority to speak for them, and the time is surely coming when they should make effective and organized protest against this state of things.

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## Better than our Fears.

BY ANGELOUE DE LANDE.

Oh, grieving heart! by anxious cares oppressed  
Seek false asylum on thy Saviour's breast,  
Hide there thy woes, thy loneliness, thy fears:  
He will be better to thee than thy fears.

Art thou in weakness, poverty, and pain?  
He'll comfort thee till thou art wrong again;  
Gently remind thee how, in bygone years,  
He hath been better to thee than thy fears.

Through many a sunless day and starless night,  
His beacon-lamp has been thy guiding light;  
His love has turned to smiles thy bitter tears.  
When He was better to thee than thy fears.

Hushed be thy murmurings! Israel's God  
Thine; He leads thee there by His right hand divine  
Grieve not His tender heart by selfish tears:  
Is He not better to thee than thy fears?

Though dark the present, and the past a gloom,  
Where thy joys lie wrapped in midnight gloom,  
Wait thou in patient trust the coming dawn,  
God will be better to thee than thy fears.

N. Y. Freeman's Journal.  
**SHORT INSTRUCTIONS FOR LOW MASSES.**

[Delivered by the Rev. James Donohoe, rector of the church of St. Thomas Aquinas, Brooklyn, N. Y.]  
XXXIV.  
PENANCE.

DEAR PEOPLE: In this, the last instruction on the sacrament of Penance, we shall endeavor to embrace in brief form many things of importance for the people to know concerning this sacrament which have been omitted in previous instructions.

In this as in other sacraments the matter is twofold, remote and proximate. All the sins committed after Baptism are the remote matter. The proximate matter consists in the three acts of the penitent, of which we have already spoken, contrition, confession and satisfaction. Since previously confessed and remitted by absolution can be sufficient matter for the sacrament of Penance, for a sin remitted always remains a sin committed. Confession of and contrition for that sin can be renewed. In case a person come to confession and confess no sin mortal or venial, absolution could not be given, as there would be no matter for the sacrament. Venial sin is sufficient matter for absolution. It sometimes happens that the penitent confesses matter doubtfully sufficient. In this case the confessor asks the penitent to confess a sin of his past life in order that there may be certain matter for absolution and that the sacrament may be saved from the danger of nullity. Those who go frequently to confession and who carefully guard themselves against falling into any sin after telling their shortcomings should always tell a sin of their past life in order to guard against the danger of exposing the sacrament to nullity and in order to obtain the fruit of the sacrament. Those who do this must be careful to examine themselves to contrition. Remember always that the sacrament has three parts, contrition, confession, and satisfaction, and that each part is an essential one.

The form of the sacrament is the words used by the priest in giving absolution. As soon as the priest says: "I absolve thee from thy sins," if you have confessed your sins aright, if you are sorry for having committed them and are determined to perform the penance enjoined, then your sins are forgiven. The sentence of the priest is ratified in heaven: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven."

A firm purpose of amendment is necessary in order that your sins be forgiven in the sacrament of Penance. This firm purpose of amendment is included in contrition, for you could not be truly sorry for your sins without having this purpose of avoiding them in future. This purpose ought to have three qualities. It should be firm, efficacious and universal. It must be firm, that is, there must be a serious decision on the part of the will by which you simply and absolutely determine to avoid sin in future. It must be efficacious, that is, you must be determined not only to avoid sin but to take whatever means are necessary to determine to shun the proximate occasions of sin.

Your purpose of amendment must be universal. That is, it must extend to all mortal sins, not only to those you have committed, but to those you might commit. There can be no true and full conversion to God without an aversion to everything that is morally sinful.

In case a person forget to confess a mortal sin and afterwards call it to mind, it must be confessed in the next confession. If a person forget to confess sin through culpable negligence, the confession is sacrilegious.

Confession should be preceded by a diligent examination of conscience. The same diligence that is usually employed after serious affairs of great importance will suffice. Equal diligence