

Such, at all events, was the Church of Ireland at the time of the Restoration. Four archbishops and seventeen bishops, twenty-one prelates in all, started on their way to govern the Church, largely influenced as it was by Presbyterianism on the one hand (chiefly in the north), and by Romanism on the other (in the south).

Whether it was wise of Archbishop Jeremy Taylor to evict thirty-six ministers from their livings without trying some more lenient process first, taking into account the extreme difficulties of the age in which they lived, will always remain a question. His predecessor in office, Archbishop Bramhall, had succeeded in persuading a few of those similarly situated to accept Episcopal ordination at his hands, and a similar policy in time might have saved to the Church men who otherwise were driven into bitter antagonism to her.

Some such policy as this, coupled with a vigorous mission to the Irish people by clergymen speaking the Irish language and preaching from an Irish Bible, would have produced a far different result from that which settled in solid form, difficult to be moved, upon the National Church of Ireland.

Because, although it sounds well to speak of the four archbishops and their seventeen suffragans, yet the records of the period tell us that the Church was but in a sorry condition when the kingdom emerged from the iron rule of Puritanism. Froude, in his "English in Ireland," tells us that, at that time, there were "not a hundred episcopally ordained clergymen in Ireland," and that, according to a letter written at the time, "the state of the Church was very miserable: very few of the clergy resided on their cures, but employed pitiful curates which necessitated the people to look after a Romish priest or a non-conformist minister of both of whom there were plenty. It was an ordinary thing for a minister to have five or six cures of souls and to get them supplied by those who would do it cheapest."

Large numbers of what is called the "best Protestant blood of Ireland," emigrated to the New World to escape what they regarded as oppression on the part of the National Church. One of the bishops of the period draws this doleful picture of the diocese of Ossory, which he considers applicable to the whole Church of Ireland:

"If you walk through Ireland, as I rode from Carlingford to Dublin, and from Dublin to Kilkenny, and in my visitation thrice over the diocese of Ossory, I believe that throughout all your travel you shall find it as I found it in all the ways that I went, scarce one church standing and sufficiently repaired for seven that are ruined and have only walls without ornaments, and most of them without roofs, without doors, and without windows [Mant, vol. i., p. 663,

quoted in "National Churches," the Church of Ireland, Olden]. Parishes were grouped together to form a "living," and the average value of such livings was £43. 14s. (\$215). Under such conditions an efficient ministry could scarcely be looked for.

Dark as these prospects were for the Church of Ireland at the Restoration in 1660, events grew worse as time went on. Charles II. died in 1658, and James II. ascended the throne. At once, when it became evident that the new king was an undoubted Romanist, 1,500 anti-Romish families left Ireland. The revenues of vacant bishoprics were collected and paid to Roman Catholic bishops; the clergy were pressed to abandon their faith. Many of them were ill-treated and their churches seized, and when, in 1689, James himself was compelled to take refuge in Ireland, oppression grew heavier and heavier until, in 1690, an order was issued forbidding more than five Protestants to meet and converse together on pain of death or some other condign punishment. Two Roman priests were put in possession of Trinity College, Dublin, and the Provost and Fellows, together with many of the bishops throughout the whole country were obliged to take refuge in England.

But the darkest hour was succeeded by the dawn. James II. was overthrown at the battle of the Boyne, and William Prince of Orange brought hope and succour to the poor little cowering band of Church people who were mourning over their shattered Zion. During those dark years many of the clergy of the Church were staunch defenders of their faith. The Rev. George Walker, for instance, Rector of Donoughmore, raised a regiment for the defence of Londonderry, when the "prentice boys" closed its gates against the army of James, and so resolute was he that he was made governor of the town. William intended to reward his valour with a bishopric, but the resolute parson pursued his military zeal even to the battle of the Boyne where he fell fighting for his faith.

One bishop, however, and some of the clergy refused to take the oath of allegiance to King William, believing James II. to be the lawful sovereign. These were called non-jurors. The bishop's name was Sheridan, who resigned his living and was reduced to poverty. In those days it was rather hard for bishops or clergy to hold their livings unless, like the famous "Vicar of Bray," they were ready to change their spiritual or political views with every new turn of the wheel of fortune.

The bright days, however, that might reasonably have been anticipated for the Church of Ireland when Romish rule was again suppressed, did not appear in full force. They were days of political rewards and punishments. Many English ecclesiastics were made bishops of Irish sees, but remained quietly at home and