

the background of the clouds. But beneath your streets, and around your palaces, within the saloons of your aristocracy, and the emporiums of your commerce; ay, and around and within the lanes, and, as it were, inhabited ravines, of your ancient and honourable city, there circulates a fluid pressed forward to every quarter by a resistless *vis a tergo*. That fluid is not light—but it is the material, it is the food of light; and, just as darkness is about to commingle and swallow all things, at the movement of a single stop, and the application of a tiny taper, your city flashes into light and splendour—night again flies away, and day resumes its empire. It is just so with Ireland. “Our night is dreary, and dark our way.” But the laboratory of education, and especially the education in the Irish tongue, is working beneath the surface. The retorts are charged, the purification is advancing, the pipes are laid, the pressure is applied, the fluid is circulated, though as yet it is not light; but just in the moment when darkness thickens—we call on you for a few lamplighters with tapers to touch the gas. The *Earse* of your own Highlands is so nearly akin to the *Scalig* of Ireland, that a few months would enable many of your preachers to proclaim the gospel to our countrymen. Find them and send them, we will receive them and aid them, and Ireland may yet resume her early title, and become, not in name, but in reality, an “*island of Saints*.” The Church of Scotland having this day resumed her maternal care of Ireland, we look forward with hope to the day when she will sit as a venerated matron amongst her many children. One of the late voyagers to the North, remarks, that to whatever land his vessel sailed, whatever bay or inlet he explored, he everywhere found a Scotchman; and he wittily adds—“If we be fortunate enough to reach the Pole, I make little doubt we shall find a Scotchman astride upon the axle.” It is Scotland’s highest honour, that her parochial schools and her learned universities, qualify her sons for every office of honourable employment; send them out sometimes as *adventurers in the lottery of life*; but bring them home again to their native hills the improvers of other lands, and the benefactors of their own. And I trust the day is coming, when, wherever the Scotsman is found, whether at the Pole or the Equator, the Church of Scotland will be found planted beside him. I trust wherever a Scotsman is found, he will carry the Church of Scotland in his heart, will bear her up in his petitions at the Throne of Grace, and pray for her peace and prosperity. And I trust the day is coming, when, wherever Scotsmen are found, there the Church of Scotland will spread her mantle over her sons, lay upon them the bonds of her hallowed discipline, while she opens to them the bosom of a mother’s affection, and extends to them the hand of a mother’s care. I feel bound, Sir, to apologize to this venerable Assembly for the length of their time I have occupied or wasted. May I be borne with for a few closing words? Some of our fathers, more observant than we of the times and the signs of them, might perhaps have drawn some encouraging omens from the circumstance of finding in the Chair a Scotsman with an Irish tongue and an Irish heart. I see on your left a venerated brother, who was, I believe, the first to awake attention to the gospel might that slumbered in the Irish tongue. Others have since laboured in the same cause; and to yourself, under Providence, Ireland will soon be indebted for a gift that will awake her music and her poetry to the strains of the gospel. The Shamrock wreathed harp of my country has hitherto responded to the *coronach* of sorrow or the record of blood; by you it will be entwined with the roses of Sharon, and your hand will awake its cords to the strains of mercy and love. You have visited our country, not to spy out the nakedness of the land; but you have returned with the best bunches of our *Escal* *col grapes*, encouraging others to come