

Then we had the grievous reflection that our places of worship did not deserve the name of churches, and that, with the exception of one or two, they were almost undeserving the humble name of chapels; now, although we are yet far below our ancient fathers in the remarkable zeal which they exhibited in raising up altars to God and sanctuaries for his worship—those sanctuaries which might indeed be called houses of prayer, in the arrangements of which the faith, and piety, and genius of our Catholic forefathers beautifully imaged the mysteries of our holy religion (cheers.) When the solemnity of the sacred place spoke peace to the troubled soul, and the dim religious light shut out the glare of the world's treasures and the tinsels of the world's affections, because even the very buildings themselves invited men to regard holy things—when the past and the present thus pass in review before our minds, every Catholic ought to rejoice with the Israelite of old, when he saw the glory of the temple about to be revived, at the efforts now everywhere made through this country to restore religion to its ancient splendour in Ireland. Wherever we turn our eyes—to the south or to the north, to the east or to the west of Ireland, we behold superb temples raising in glorious triumph their lofty spires in the air. Even the most remote and deserted districts seem to hail with joy the bright prospects of religious freedom now so manifest through the land (cheers.) In Belfast, not many years ago, the most anti-Catholic and Orange town in the north, there are now 40,000 Catholics and four beautiful churches, the latest built, dedicated to St Malachy, remarkable for its beauty and the exactness of all its arrangements. In Longford, Armagh, and the other great towns of Ireland, edifices worthy of the sacred destination are already ornamenting the face of the country. Though the poorest province in Ireland, we were the first to lay the foundation of a temple worthy of our country, and though many despaired of ever seeing the accomplishment of that great work, the cathedral of Tuam now stands a complete and perfect model of gothic architecture, while it will ever remain a proud and lasting monument of the protecting hand of God over a faithful but suffering people (cheers.) How many religious establishments have already spread the benign influence of charity and religious consolation everywhere through Ireland (hear)? You now behold a beautiful church where many of you saw the divine mysteries offered up in a thatched hovel; and in the same town, near this, a splendid establishment of the Sisters of Mercy, who travel like angels of mercy from cabin to cabin, cheering the afflicted, and bringing with them tidings of joy and consolation in their holy labours. Oh! how well might we say with St Bernard, 'Who will grant unto me to behold the church of God, such in this my day, as it was in days of old. While the most splendid monuments are everywhere through this country in progress of erection for the interests

of religion, we cannot but see the connection between these cheering prospects, and the extraordinary movement now going on in the very heart of England. Upon this subject, there is now but one opinion, the reality of which was, only a few years ago, doubted by almost every one. It was then supposed that certain temporary feelings which had been excited in the heart of the church of England, which showed an opening towards Catholicism, although it might for a time go on widening and deepening, would again be swallowed up and absorbed, as it were, in the system and doctrines of Protestantism, and would eventually be no benefit to the cause of Catholic truth. It was, indeed, doubted by many, until the last few years, when the change could no longer be concealed from the most sceptical, whether any real alteration in the mind of the English people was taking place, and while we were anxiously inquiring and pondering over the thoughts and sentiments of those great men, which were tending to the support of their own belief, we were taking no note of the quiet onward movements which was taking place among ourselves. In this parallel action we see, in an eminent degree, the workings of Divine Providence. My visit to England during the year, and to Scotland this past summer, gave me an opportunity of witnessing the share appointed for our countrymen in carrying out their grand work of heaven. Everywhere through England and Scotland I beheld the most beautiful temples in progress—and those temples for the most part the work of Irishmen, everywhere immense congregations principally composed of Irish and Irish clergymen, distinguished for piety and zeal, labouring in the promotion of this grand movement for the revival. In the town of Bradford where about twenty years ago there were but a handful of Catholics, and where the sacred mysteries were offered up in a garret with perhaps half a dozen auditors, there are now twenty thousand Catholics and two magnificent churches (loud cheers). Irishmen are employed about their altars—Irishmen are employed in making their collections—and in promoting all the great works of art which now adorn the Catholic Church in England. The magnificent church of St George's in the Fields, the largest church erected in London except St Paul's since the reformation, is the glorious fruit of Irish piety; and though the genius of Pugin has cast a halo of glory over the present movement, the taste and majesty of that mighty mind, might have been passed over like the neglected shrub, and England and modern architecture would have been deprived of the blessings of the greatest mind that ever adorned this or any other age, if Irish piety and Irish religious attachment did not lead in the van, to receive the first dawn of the return of the happiest days of a long-lost sister (loud applause). This it was that first suggested to me the idea of the restoration of the magnificent pile in which we are this day assembled. When I beheld England and Scotland