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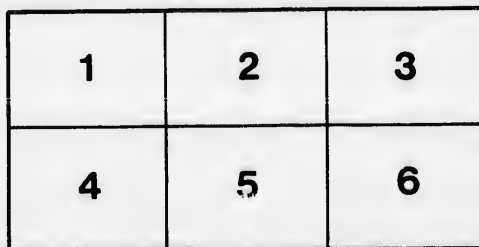
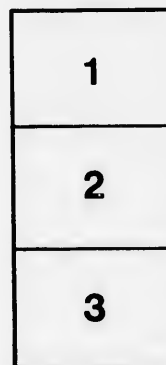
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PASTORAL LETTER
OF
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF TORONTO,
ON THE
FEAST OF ST. PATRICK, MARCH 17th, 1875.



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"Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways!"—(Rom. xi. 33.)

JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH, *by the grace of God and the appointment of the Holy See, Archbishop of Toronto, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Kingston, &c., &c.*

To all our well-loved children in Christ, health and salvation :

In the admirable providence of God, He selects families and nations to be the agents of His holy will. He selected Abraham and his progeny to be His people and Aaron and the tribe of Levi to be His priests. He has in a special way chosen the peoples of Europe to be the ministers of His word to the other nations of the earth. But from time to time He has been provoked to reprobate some of His choice. The Jewish people are no longer the people of God; Aaron is no longer His priest. Many nations of the earth, once bright with the lustre of the true faith, are, on account of their unworthiness and sins, no longer blest with that divine light. But through His great mercy God has preserved for a sacred purpose *one* people inhabiting a little island in the western ocean. Them He has tried with the most bitter earthly afflictions. In His unsearchable providence He has kept them under the rule of an oppressor, and scourged them with many stripes of sorrow. Yet He has reserved for them the purest of all gifts, the richest of all treasures, the inheritance of a true faith which promises them eternal life for their perseverance. And such is the portion of the Irish people. And to them has God given, not only true faith, but the extraordinary mission of spreading it through all the countries of the world. For this

sublime apostleship they have been prepared with a generous and pious nature; sublime intellect, warm and tender impulses, an indomitable hatred of tyranny, and undying love of true liberty; a deep-rooted thirst of learning, and an unconquerable desire to impart their knowledge to others; an abhorrence of treachery and of false friends, and an unbounded love for their benefactors. In the face of these qualities they have also their drawbacks, like every other nation since the fall of Adam. They have, too, in a more or less degree, the vicious counterparts of the virtues there enumerated. But they have in their faith and in their Catholic instincts a remedy for these in the frequentation of the Sacraments. Apart from this the good qualities of the majority immensely counterbalance their faults; whilst the unrestrained vices of the minority throw a lurid glare of sad reflection upon the great virtues of the majority. It has been well said that an Irishman must do twice as well as any other man to get half the credit. On the other hand, Irish defects and vices are doubly exaggerated, from the common idea of what is to be expected from an Irishman. Let him do but half the wrong of any other man, and he will get twice the blame. So high is the estimation of the ordinary virtues of the Irish. When an Irishman is not faithful and obedient to his heavenly instinct, the luxuriance of his nature makes him very vicious, and hence the disgrace of the few is the reproach of the many. God has kept, as an arrow in His quiver, this little island to go forth to conquer spiritual kingdoms for Christ. Ireland was peopled from time to time by noble races. St. Patrick found them, though not christians, yet not idolaters. They were primitive in

their habits and customs, leading a patriarchal life, with many of the noble qualities of the present aborigines of North America. They had no idols. They believed in the existence of a Supreme Spirit. St. Patrick found in all his travels through Ireland only one object that approached idol worship. It was a ball surrounded by twelve pillars. It represented the sun and the signs of the zodiac. They were good astronomers in those days. The country people, however, in their simplicity, might have worshipped these symbols with an extra reverence; but the rapidity with which the faith of Patrick spread, so that in his own lifetime he could ordain priests, consecrate bishops and found monasteries of monks and convents of holy virgins, shows clearly that the religion of Christ found many disciples, and that its seed fell on luxuriant soil. St. Patrick's bishops and priests were so ardent in their zeal that they carried the light of the Gospel into England, Scotland, Germany, France, even into Italy, regaining to the church many of those peoples who had lost the faith on account of the incursions of barbarians and the breaking up of the Roman Empire. But this is not all. At the present hour our bishops and priests and people are spreading the faith through new worlds. They are conquering back again England and Scotland, renegade to the faith since the whirlwind and vertigo of a worldly "Reformation" snatched them from Christ's fold. They are carrying the same faith through the countries where England carries the sword and commerce. The congregation of Archbishop Manning is nine-tenth Irish or their descendants. The same holds for the dioceses of Edinburgh and Glasgow. There are in England 2,000,000 of Irish extraction. My principal aim in this instruction is to direct the mind of the Irish people and their descendants to their providential destiny, and to exhort them to fulfill it. It is the highest honor God could confer on any people, to make them His co-operators in carrying His Gospel, and in saving those that were lost. The heartiest blessing on the head of a preserver is elicited from one who was about to perish. Job strongly rejoices to feel that he had such a blessing, and cried out: "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me." (Job xxix. 13.) That blessing has been poured a thousand times over on the heads of the Irish missionary who has come to the rescue of those who were perishing for want of the sacraments which he could impart.

Let us see how our ancestors struggled to preserve the faith once preached to their

forefathers, and from it let us draw a lesson for our own conduct. Henry VIII. attempted to introduce into Ireland his invented religion and his new-found matrimonial laws. In England, unfortunately, he succeeded in inducing the bishops to acknowledge him head of the church. But in Ireland this was laughed to scorn. No Irish bishop took the oath. There was indeed an Englishman at the time in the See of Dublin, put there by English favor. He apostatized. In his letters to England he speaks of the undaunted spirit of the Irish, who held firm against the new doctrines. It is true that an English Parliament sitting in Dublin made a decree favoring Henry VIII.'s pretensions as head of the church; but it was never accepted by the Irish. It has been a frequent policy of conquering nations to impose their own forms of Government, and especially of religion, upon the conquered nations, in order to make them one with themselves. We find this policy carried out in cases by the old Romans. We find it even amongst the nations of North America. After conquering another tribe they endeavored to make them adopt their customs, laws and religion. Thus the Romans, with all their might and power of persecution and sword, endeavored to oppose the introduction of Christianity into their Empire, because the God of the Christians was not acknowledged by the State. England, in her folly, adopted the same policy in Ireland. The Irish language was proscribed. A new-fangled faith was enforced upon the people by statutes equalling and surpassing in their atrocity the edicts of Nero and Dioclesian. Not only religion and their native tongue but even education was denied them, except in the false doctrines of the "Reformation." The penalty for denying that the King of England was head of the Church was death. No such penalty was inflicted for the denial of Christ's divinity. Schools and monasteries were destroyed. The churches were all closed up. The most minute points of cruelty were invented to crush the true faith from the hearts of the people. But the generality of the Irish people stood firm. They said with the sons of Maccabees and like the early Christians: "God has given you power over our bodies. Them you may torment: but our souls you cannot touch." They had their choice, to renounce the faith of their forefathers, or suffer all the pains which the most savage tyranny could inflict upon them. They chose faith and fatherland. And now their fidelity and its fruits are steadily and surely overcoming their conquerers. Christ, too, conquered when he was conquered, nailed to

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the cross. The Irish numbered 800,000 in Queen Elizabeth's time. So low had they been reduced by sword, famine and pestilence. Their conquerors outnumbered them two to one; yet by a merciful providence of God they soon outnumbered their conquerors three to one. Chaste living, healthy early marriages, and a detestation of the crime of injury to woman, were amongst the Irish the fruitful cause of this increase. The Catholics, some time after, were hardly 1,000,000 whilst the Protestants—English, Scotch, and a few Irish apostates—were 2,000,000, with the whole island, its riches, ornaments and offices in their hands. Catholics were banned and hunted down; yet God preserved them. About a hundred years ago no Catholic place of worship was tolerated; yet the people worshipped God by stealth, and by their unalterable faith conquered. Whilst the Irish were thus persecuted in Ireland worldly men sought conquests through the newly-discovered continent. They were devoured with a thirst for gain; and, following the instincts of their old Scandinavian ancestors, their ships swept every harbor and inlet in quest of gold and precious stones, establishments were formed to trade with the natives and to cajole from them their wealth; and here, as the venerable Father Thebaud says, the Irish ascended their ships, whether welcome or not, prest forward to their commercial centres, crowded their cities, and at once proceeded to practice their religion. They collected together in a little room perhaps at first. With heart and will they endeavor to commence a church, and here is the beginning of the 10,000 altars from which sacrifice ascends in this new country. The great gold fields of California are discovered. There is a rush for gold. Irishmen go there too, and behold the California of to-day, one of the richest gardens of the church of God. The diamond fields of Southern Africa are discovered. The Irish, without intending it especially, carry there also their faith. Australia is made a penal settlement where the convicts of England and Ireland are transported to do penance for their sins far from the centres of civilization. An Irishman in his poverty steals something to save his children from starvation. He too is sent there. He carries with him his faith; the tears of his repentance water the soil; and behold another of the most flourishing churches that could adorn old Christianity. We need not speak of the church of the United States. In Canada its triumphs are well known. The Celtic race, Irish, French, and Germans are making of this country, to the dismay

of those who do not profess the true religion, a home of true faith. An Irishman settles in the backwoods. He is an object of suspicion and even of dread. He does not attend camp-meetings or places of worship in which he does not believe. He tries to instruct his children in the prayer of the true faith. Another family comes along and settles; the priest finds them out, and behold the nucleus of a Catholic church. By this we do not approve of any Catholic unchurching himself by settling in countries where there is no chance of his children being instructed in the true faith or of himself receiving the sacraments. How many have been lost by this isolation. It has often been the boast of many villages in this country that there was not a Papist amongst them. But a poor Irish servant girl is much needed. She brings with her an earnest love of God and preserves her faith. This is the beginning. In a few years a modest chapel is put up and the awful sacrifice offered there. There is no stopping it. The decree of God has gone forth that the Irish people, having lost all in their own country, should establish His true religion and worship wherever they turn. The Irish are indeed an apostolic people. With what readiness do they come forward to the accomplishment of their divine mission! How noble the generosity which caused them for their faith to despise all worldly honors and gains. How many of their noble sons aspire to the priesthood. For them earthly honors and wealth pale before its dignity. How many of our chaste virgins prefer seclusion, the chaste spouse of Christ, and the contemplation of Heavenly things, to the brightest nuptials the world could offer her. Yet there are many things to be deplored even in the midst of these fruits of the conquering courage of this apostolic people. It is true that their altars cover the land: but how many more altars might have been erected, how many more people be converted, how many children preserved from the contagion of vice and heresy, had they had more opportunities of Christian education, and had there been more missionaries in the country? And yet the loss of one child, and with it of its divine faith, is the loss of all its posterity.

We wish to refer to the fearful famine, if famine it can be called. For God had blessed the land with abundance of everything, except one little root, the food to which the poor had been reduced by merciless landlords and landlaws. There was enough grain and meal in the country to feed double the number who perished of famine. But we will speak now

of the loss of souls consequent on the wholesale sweeping away of the people obliged to desert their homes and to seek foreign countries, where from the very necessity of their condition, many of their children must perish spiritually, and be forever lost to the faith. They land in destitution and poverty and are obliged to take up their abode in the lowest slums of the cities and towns. The children are put to work with Protestant masters, and must commence to earn their living without an appearance of education. Thus in the great cities of England and America the Irish poor, though clinging strongly to their faith, furnish too many apostates to morality. Hence the loss of those souls must be accounted for by their inhuman evictors. The sight of this misery has often furnished our mind with a reason why the oppression of the poor cries to Heaven for vengeance.

Poverty alone is not a crime, but we all know too much poverty brings crime. Hence Solomon prayed against it. Then, too, there is another terrible temptation that lurks near poverty especially. It is to seek some little comfort for the want of food and clothing in intoxicating drink. We believe that the Irish do not drink more than other people; but their blood is so hot, and their nature so fervid and exuberant, that by adding to it the fire of alcohol the Irishman becomes more degraded than men of other and more plodding temperaments. The remedy for the latter failing is, we thank God, being rapidly applied by that grand movement of temperance, aided, as it must be, by the frequentation of the Sacraments. A Cardinal said to me in Rome: "These teetotal Irishmen must be sauts, since, having such splendid qualities of heart and mind, they add to them the extraordinary mortification of total abstinence." Intoxicating liquors cause great crimes and misery. It is misery itself. Of all the virtues that make an Irishman happy, and make him tend to the accomplishment of his apostleship, temperance is the most necessary after his faith.

But what means are there to remedy this terrible failing and this universal oppression of the poor? We think it is the duty of every Catholic to find out some means of preserving the Irish people from the contagion of false religion. The enemies of our creed and country lose no opportunity of seducing our people to heresy; and the many Irish Catholic names which we begin to find amongst the ministers of the Protestant religions prove what we have said to be true. The Irish heart is religious; and the mind of a child, so easily

warped to this heavenly feeling, can be readily influenced to what he considers the honorable work of preaching the Gospel. It is, therefore, looking upon the destruction of this race as one of the greatest losses which the Church could sustain, and as hindering the designs of providence, that we are so solicitous for the preservation of this people and their children. We regard it as one of the greatest public benefits. For by their means the true faith will be preserved in whatever land they inhabit in large numbers. When we regard those noble heroes and patriots who are endeavoring in Ireland to preserve the race, to retain the vigor of nationality, and to prevent the people from being deported out of the country as paupers to other new and foreign lands, were so many of their children are engulfed in misery and absorbed into the dregs of society, we look upon them as men who serve the cause of God and His church, and perform heroic acts of charity which will bring down blessings upon themselves and upon their families. Irish nationality and the Catholic religion go hand in hand. To break up their nationality is to do serious injury to religion. Through the great mercy of God there has always flourished in Ireland a true patriotism, betimes wild and foolish, yet intense. But it is our hope and prayer that this race of men will never become extinct. Whatever pertains to politics in Ireland is always mixed up with religion and the preservation of the people. There are some children of Irishmen who, hardly worthy of having a father, are ashamed of his nationality because it is down-trodden. "For apostacy to nationality," says an illustrious author, "is the first step to apostacy in religion." We have in the higher walks of Irish life many examples of this truth. Tares will grow up among the good wheat. The Irish clergy, though often tempted by large bribes of worldly gains to take sides with the conquering race, never could be induced to abandon the people. They spurned the pensions offered them by the English Government, and preferred poverty with their flocks to being the salaried emissaries of any government of this world. From time to time they incur the displeasure of some over jealous patriots; but the policy of the Irish clergy has preserved the people from greater extermination and butchery.

For the last thirty years the Irish Catholic people have been subject to some of the greatest trials: but their faith sustained them, and the immense majority come forth from the fearful ordeal victorious. A partial famine desolated the land, God forbid I should say, sent by the

Divine providence. They had to fly to other countries as if from a charnel house. Tens of thousands fell victims of the disease that follows starvation, and their bones have strown the ocean's bed, and their dying breath infected the hospitable countries that received them. Heaven received innumerable souls. They died with the words, "God's holy will be done," on their lips. For those martyred souls we have no prayer. They enjoy God. Thousands lay on the roadside as they had been dragging their emaciated bodies to the workhouse, and, as eye witnesses testify, though dying from want of food they would scream and cry and shudder when the soupers, as the proselytizers were called, would approach them with food in their hand and the temptation of renouncing their religion on their lips. "Oh mother," cried a dying child, "don't let those Protestants come into the house. I am afraid I would take their food and give up my religion, I am so very hungry." These tens of thousands of martyrs to their religion, in dying rather than renounce one iota of their faith, are the most beautiful sight the world ever presented to God since the first martyrdom. And we are the kith and kin of such a people. Let us glory in our faith and live up to it. Should such a people perish? Yet the loss of the children that remained in this country has been enormous. If the Irish in their poverty and misery erected so many churches, what would they have done if permitted, like other nationalities, to emigrate with some little means to commence with. We are too apt to count the gains and not to compute the losses. Were the children preserved, and had there been priests enough to gather them into congregations, the church would rejoice in additional millions of Catholics in this country. It has been the hope and aim of our life to preserve as many as we could of the children of this noble race. They fill every Catholic college, school and convent in this country. Read the ordinations in the various seminaries, and Irish names are the most numerous. Read of the names of those holy virgins who consecrate their purity to God in the thousands of convents that bless this country, and the Irish names predominate. Yet there is a great deal to be done. Would to God we had some of those great monasteries of Ireland in her glorious days, where students could be received gratis, that by good education they might be fitted to take a place in society, and where at the same time their eternal welfare would be cared for. The loss of one child, as we have said, is the loss of all its posterity. And hence the duty of preserving

the present generation of Irish children is more incumbent on us. It may be very well to build costly churches, but it is far better to preserve living temples of the Holy Spirit.

Another means of preserving the nationality and faith of the Irish has been also providential. We have, diffused over the universal world in every city and town, Irish societies in which fatherland and religion are fostered, and who, on the recurrence of the festival of their patron saint, form magnificent processions proclaiming to the world their undying love of Ireland and their faith. These are another of the providential dispositions of God to transmit to future generations of Irishmen the noble spirit of their ancestors. These societies, under the direction of the clergy, their best friend, form, as it were, banks to preserve this mighty flood of population from being wasted and absorbed in other and less religious people. It is true that some descendants of the Irish, when too highly favored by providence in worldly goods, have become ashamed of the land of their fathers, because, indeed, it is under the hand of an oppressor. They will even change or disfigure their name, forgetting that the Irish race is the oldest, most respectable and least contaminated of all the families of Europe. But there will be always national abortions, and, as I have said, taxes will grow up amongst the good wheat.

In order to draw the practical lesson from this great festival of St. Patrick, we most earnestly recommend to his spiritual children:

1st. To cherish a love for their fatherland and the faith of their ancestors. These two loves come from God. They are virtues, and their impulses are most noble.

2nd. To give a good christian education to their children. Without a christian education they are lost; without a good education they are almost useless to themselves and to others.

3rd. To cultivate the good, sound literature of the age. You have, for instance, the lives of the Irish Saints now brought to light, from the archives especially of foreign countries, by priests and patriots of the highest order of talent and merit. For the history of this providential people is more studied in foreign countries than in their own. Their undying perseverance in faith and nationality, against the greatest odds, has challenged the admiration of the world. Read, then, the lives of your country's saints; read, too, of her heroes, raised for her by God in her adversities. Read, and learn from their example.

Learn, too, the present state of your country. You can do this by hearing lectures, by reading good Catholic newspapers. They are an immense means of instruction and improvement.

4th. We recommend to the national societies the care of the poor, of emigrants, and especially of the orphans. They bear in their hearts a treasure above all worldly riches—that is, the faith, which is our victory. Let it not be lost. For faith, to the Irishman, is his consolation in the darkest hour of affliction, his hope when the world frowns upon him. His church is the bosom of his home and country. When lonesome in a foreign country, he seeks consolation from his God alone. His faith to him is everything, for it promises him an eternal reward in the enjoyment of God and of his friends in Heaven.

5th. We most earnestly recommend the formation of temperance societies, wherever there are ten Irishmen. Would to God that, during the last fifty years, temperance societies had been as numerous as at the present time. Tens of thousands of unfortunate Irishmen would have to-day happy homes and beautiful families.

6th. To lend a helping hand in all peaceful and constitutional struggles of the Irish at home.

And, lastly, let Irish mothers cultivate amongst their sons the holy spirit of the

priesthood. And let Irish families in this country, as in Ireland, make it their chief glory to have a priest of their own blood to offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass for them.

Let us, then, conclude, exclaiming with St. Paul: "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God. How incomprehensible are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways." Truly He has chosen the feeble things of this world to confound the strong.

We invoke upon you, dearly beloved children in Christ, the blessing of our Lord and Saviour, and the protection of His Immaculate Mother and St. Patrick to fulfill your noble destiny on earth, and to reap its glorious reward in Heaven.

This pastoral letter is to be read in all the churches and chapels of the Diocese on the feast of St. Patrick, or on the Sundays immediately preceding or following the festival.

Given at St. Michael's Palace, Toronto, on the feast of the Forty Martyrs, March 10, 1875.

† JOHN JOSEPH LYMCH,
Archbishop of Toronto.

Ex mandato Illustrissimi ac Reverendissimi Archiepiscopi.

JOANNES J. SHEA,
Secretarius ad hoc.

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