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THE LETTERS  
OF  
REV. JAMES MAHER, D.D.,  
LATE P.P. OF CARLOW-GRAIGUE,  
ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS;

With a Memoir.

EDITED BY THE  
RIGHT REV. PATRICK FRANCIS MORAN, D.D.,

Bishop of Ossory.

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of poor Romanist children rescued from the priests?" and, above all, his letter to Mrs. Colonel Inglis, in which he describes myself and curate in the following words:—"We are forced to keep the iron gates of our school-house *always* bolted, to keep out *those terrible wolves* from our lambs?" Does he suppose that we forget his tract, entitled the "Dark Deeds of Popery"—the most scandalous, libellous, and foolish trash that ever fell from the pen of nonsense?

Oh, that mine enemy would write a book! was the exclamation of some writer of old. Mr. Massey has written two, leaving himself on all sides fearfully exposed to the severest censures which justice can inflict—to the sharpest rebukes that honourable criticism can administer. It is the misfortune of this man always to mistake the folly of fanaticism for the devotion of piety, the unreasoning arrogance of bigotry for the just conclusions of theology, and the display of pagantry for the qualifications of learning.

I now leave him, Mr. Editor, in your hands to deal with him as you please, and to show your readers that he has not been misrepresented, I send you his own letter for insertion.

Yours truly,

JAMES MAHER, P. P.

N.B.—Mr. Massey's followers, for works of penance on Ash Wednesday, were a portion of his own family, a few police, and other officials, and some boys, &c., numbering in all a score of persons; in the Catholic chapel there were (same day) about 1,000. The gross injustice of sustaining, by the public money, a Church, which, after centuries of patronage, aided by penal laws, never secured the adhesion of the people, is now very

generally felt in England. But why do not Protestants in Ireland—to acquit themselves of all participation in the injustice—call for its removal.

## XLI

### ON PROSELYTISM IN THE WEST OF IRELAND.

*June 11th, 1866.*

SIR—The discussion which Dr. Trench's letter on Proselytism in West Connaught has evoked, will not, I trust, be suffered to close until the nuisance of which the country indignantly and justly complains, shall be wholly abated.

His Grace confidently appeals to the liberality and Protestant feeling of England for means to sustain a war of aggression on the religion of our people. He praises and patronises the work, whilst he admits it to be of "an aggressive character." He goes into it, with Dr. Plunket, in right good earnest; he is ready to promote it in every way—declaring "that if any should be disposed to help it (the religious war), their contributions will be gladly accepted by the honorary secretary of the fund, or by himself." His Grace would not, I presume, if he held a dignity in the Turkish Empire, undertake to raise a troop of biblicals, and secure their pay by contribution from his country, to outrage the religious feelings of the Mahomedans, just as he proposes to do, in regard to one of the most ancient and faithful Christian nations in Europe.

It is a remarkable fact that an Archbishop of Dublin, and at the same time, one of Her Majesty's Privy Council, should become the advocate and collector for such a cause.

An attempt in the nineteenth century to raise money in England for the conversion of our island—as if it lay outside the pale of Christianity—is, to say the least, a very extraordinary proceeding. One wonders how a man of rank and character, who has conversed with our people, so remarkable among the nations of Europe for their unshaken fidelity to the religion of their forefathers, could put his hand to the work. Now, if there is anything in the world for which more than enough of money has been provided, it is surely the Protestant religion in Ireland.

It has already cost this impoverished country hundreds of millions sterling, and it is now sustained by an income of £700,000 a year, although not more than twelve out of every hundred of the population profess themselves members of that Church, and in Connaught the Catholics are 94 per cent. It has a large staff of unemployed dignitaries, deans, rectors, and vicars; where, then, is the need or the room for proselytising missionaries? There are 199 parishes in the kingdom, in which according to the latest census, there is not one member of the Established Church; and 575 parishes containing one to twenty members.

In truth, there is no place in the whole empire where the State clergy have so little to do, and are so abundantly remunerated for doing that little, as in the united dioceses of Tuam, Killala, and Achonry, in West Connaught, under the superintendence of Dr. Plunket. The entire Church population in the united dioceses for which the money is to be raised, is, in round numbers, 20,000,

watched over and cared for by 74 incumbents, with a good supply of vicars and missionary curates. One rector in the city of London, with three assistants, has a larger number of souls committed to his care, than the united congregations of all the parishes in West Connaught; and the Bishop of London has under his jurisdiction more than the entire Church population of all Ireland.

To go before the people of England, in these circumstances, to ask for more men and money to plant Protestantism in Ireland, three centuries after the reformation, is an act which it is hard indeed to characterize without using language inconsistent with the respect due to a High Church Dignitary. Over and above the ordinary Church revenues of the last three hundred years several millions (between four and five) have been lately expended in the evangelization of Ireland by the proselytising societies; and yet the cry is, money—more money. Protestantism, it appears, can make no advance, can never take a unit from the ranks of Catholicity, unless mammon takes it by the hand.

His Grace, in thus advocating the war of aggression on our religion, and seeking to raise money for the purpose, has not only forfeited the respect of the entire Catholic population, but he has fallen in the estimation of the sensible and moderate men of his own Church; and has finally committed himself to a fanatical section who have for the last forty years annoyed, insulted, and harassed the poor of the Catholic faith, almost beyond human endurance. His Grace's predecessor in the see of Dublin, Dr. Whately, a man of superior intellect, had too much sense and foresight to sympathise with religious hypocrisy and trading fanaticism, the evident characteristics of the proselytising movement in Ireland. The

system has been denounced, as well by Protestant as by Catholic; indeed by all, save those who have a pecuniary interest in the work, and none have exhibited the iniquitous means in getting up school shows, and congregations for grand occasions, more thoroughly than some clergymen of the Law Church. "In the long run," says the Rev. G. Webster, Chancellor of Cork, in his published letters, "I believe it will be discovered that the Irish Church Mission Society has done irreparable mischief to the Church in Ireland;" and the four rectors who edited the correspondence between him and the Rev. Messrs. Eade and Dallas, express their conviction (page 8) "that the English people are by no means prepared to support a society which only tends still further to demoralize the Irish Roman Catholics." See correspondence published by Hodges and Co., Dublin, 1864. This is the general feeling of the sober-minded clergy who have escaped the mania of proselytism.

Dr. Trench has one argument, and only one, to justify the project which he advocates, namely, the number of converts: and to give weight to his one argument, he enumerates very adroitly the converts in Connemara twice over; first, he gives the number in the congregation, and then the number in the entire parish. Notwithstanding this *ruse*, to magnify his gain, to make it appear double, he must know right well, as everybody else knows, that the merit of proselytism, in which he is engaged, is not to be tested by the number of converts on the rolls; for if bribes or other immoral means be employed, the greater the number, the greater the crime of the proselytising societies which he patronises; and if Dr. Trench had been able to show tens of thousands, instead of a few hundreds of which he has heard in his five days' tour in Connemara, it would not surprise me,

or anybody else, considering the enormous sums expended in the work, and the trials, perils, and temptations arising from the extreme poverty to which the people were exposed. Indeed, the small number of those who have conformed, in the most trying circumstances, gives me the highest idea of the fidelity and attachment of the poor of Connemara to the church of their forefathers. Greater numbers fell in the early persecutions, which were not more severe than those of latter times.

As to the exact number who have conformed it is idle to inquire, for whether few or many, it is quite clear, as I now proceed to show, from the circumstances of the times and the means employed to pervert them, that they have been, one and all, the helpless victims of the most heartless persecution, and of the most degrading and debasing system of proselytism.

The normal condition of the west of Ireland during the period referred to was that of great destitution, reaching in certain seasons the lowest depths of human misery; and now and then rising a little above it. The hideous and appalling ruin of God's creatures in those days, when the proselytiser came down upon them, will be best told in the cold formal language of official communication.

The Poor-law inspectors reported that the people were dying of hunger by hundreds; their dead bodies were found in the vales and on the mountains, half devoured by the swine and famished dogs of the district, and even on the road side. Mr. Luke, in his well-known pamphlet, reports "that a road inspector near Clifden," where Dr. Trench has found his largest number of proselytes," "had caused no less than 140 bodies to be buried which he found scattered along the highway." It was stated in

courts of justice, when hungry men were being tried for stealing a few field turnips to save life, that the poor had feasted on the carrion of dogs and asses; nay, more, but it is hard to record it, as bringing back the saddest reminiscences—a stipendiary magistrate in Galway saved a wretched man from imprisonment for theft by stating in open court that his wife, maddened by hunger, had eaten the flesh of her own dead child; that the body of the infant was exhumed, and the allegation, horrible as it was, was sustained by the view of the mangled body.

The number left unburied in those days of misery when the proselytiser reaped his harvest, gave occasion to the following *Treasury Minute*, dated 5th of March, 1847: "that some measures seem indispensable to prevent the spread of contagious diseases which might be the result of leaving corpses unburied."

Passing over other testimonies, which exhibited in a fearful light the heartrending condition of the people, we beg to invite attention to a document published by the Relief Association of the Society of Friends, and signed by the secretaries, Jonathan Pin, now M.P., and Joseph Bewley, Dublin, 8th of the fifth month, 1849. It is as follows:—

*"The paupers are merely kept alive, but their health is not maintained; their physical strength is weakened; their mental capacity is lowered; their moral character is degraded."*

That is the time, the propitious and fitting time, for the proselytiser. Will it be pretended that conversion was possible in these circumstances? and the same condition has continued with slight variations down to the present hour. W. A. Day, London, a gentleman of strong Protestant leanings, after his tour in Connemara, wrote to the *Standard*, December 15, 1865, in these words:

"In dealing with the interests and feelings of the Irish, our rulers apparently discard all ordinary prudential considerations, and to such an extent is this systematised disregard carried, that they suggest conduct which brings into disrepute the personal humanity of the Queen. I travelled last year through a considerable portion of the south-west of Ireland, and among other wild districts I visited Connemara. On all sides there were evidences of want and misery, and the traces of what is there known as 'the little famine' were everywhere visible. I visited the convent of one of the Sisterhoods of Mercy in Clifden, and learned there many saddening details of the sufferings of the poor—of distress, famine, and pestilence, which had followed one another in their invariable rotation—of panic, which had driven multitudes away to seek the employment or charity of strangers, and of the painful and fruitless struggles for existence of hundreds of those who had remained; and then I was told with touching simplicity, and without one attempt at rhetorical exaggeration, that the lady to whom I was speaking had written to her Queen: 'I saw the poor people dying,' she said, 'and I knew Her Majesty had given largely to relieve distress among the Scottish poor. I saw also that she had given munificently to assist the operatives in Lancashire, and I thought of her as the succourer and mother of her people, and felt sure that when she heard how they were perishing that she would give some trifling sum to enable us to save their lives. I sent the letter, and day after day watched for the post, hoping that it would bring me some good tidings, but no letter came, and at last I persuaded myself that mine had miscarried, and so I wrote again. A reply then reached me, signed by Sir C. Phipps, saying that

Her Majesty could do nothing for us; and so the famine went on, and there was no help to be found."

These testimonies, without a particle of exaggeration, bring vividly before us the circumstances of the people at the time when the proselytisers, with the full sanction of the State bishops, boasted of their thousands and tens of thousands of converts, and predicted daily the immediate downfall of Romanism. Neither was there any concealment made of the iniquitous means employed to effect their purpose.

The missionaries selected for the work received their instructions from those as high in rank and dignity as Drs. Trench and Plunket, to avail themselves of the propitious moments of famine to lay waste the fold of the Christian Church in Ireland.

I have before me the second report, printed at Kirby-Lonsdale in 1848, of the

"GENERAL IRISH REFORMATION SOCIETY," which reckons on its committee three earls, five lords, members of Parliament, and a large number of parsons, soliciting subscriptions, as Dr. Trench is now doing, to carry on the work of proselytism. They say, "If ever there was a time for England to make a great effort to evangelise Ireland, it is the present. The poor are ready. The great distress has softened the heart of the poor. . . . A famine shows the poor Romanists the incapacity and tyranny of their priests, and the humanity and integrity of the Protestant clergy. . . . Many converts from Popery," they add, "have been kept from the grave; and the very many sincere inquirers after the truth have been enabled to come out of Babylon through our protection."—p. 5.

Here we have without any disguise, the entire process

of the manufacturing of Protestants. Whether the theology of the business be from heaven or hell, I shall leave the public to decide.

Figure to yourself, Mr. Editor, the pious Protestant missionary in the wilds of Connemara, awaiting patiently the desired moment when famine softens the heart, disturbs the judgment, and deranges the intellect of the Christian man, to step in and offer by a supply of food, to save him and his starving children from the grave, on the simple condition of his denying the faith which he and his fathers had ever held to God. "Many converts," they exultingly exclaim, "have been kept from the grave through our protection."

Were the poor of any other Christian country ever tortured and insulted in a similar manner? Shall we never be permitted to practise in peace our religion, endeared to us by long sufferings? Has not our fidelity been already sufficiently tried by centuries of persecution? There is, Mr. Editor, a malignant refinement in this process of conversion which one can scarcely think of with patience. The old style of manufacturing Protestants by penal laws, by confiscation of property, by imprisonment, or exile, was less insidious, less hypocritical, and more honest. It had to deal principally with men prepared to suffer, and struggle for the crown of immortal life.

But here the whole force of the persecution is directed against the weakest of the human race, the mothers and fathers in the agonies of famine, surrounded by starving children. Good heavens! and forced conversions of this kind, which would make an enlightened Pagan blush, are boasted of by Drs. Trench and Plunket, in the English press, as works of charity and as evidence of the progress of Protestantism.

The faith of the Established Church has never been embroiled in Ireland from conviction. Men have conformed to save their estates; to escape the dungeon, or the ruinous penalties inflicted for not attending Church service on Sundays; and latterly to save themselves from starving. From 1702 to 1773, as appears from a Parliamentary report, the number who apostatized to save their estates was 4,045. The State Church receives increase from other causes.

"Those who think little or nothing about any religion at all," says Dr. Whately, in his last Charge, "will usually be content to swim with the stream, and to profess whatever religion is established; partly as a matter of fashion, and partly because they are saved from pecuniary expenditures." This is quite true, but converts from conviction the State Church has never made.

A man who had once believed in the ancient Church, and now ceases to believe, never can have faith in any of the modern sects of latter time. This is the opinion of the most powerful intellects of the last and present century, of Dr. Johnson, Edmund Burke, and Lord Macaulay. Johnson has said—

"A man who is converted from Protestantism to Popery may be sincere. He parts with nothing; he is only superadding to what he already had. But to convert from Popery to Protestantism, a man gives up so much of what he has held as sacred as anything he retains—there is such a laceration of mind in such a conversion, that it can hardly be sincere or lasting."

Edmund Burke is perhaps still more emphatic—

"Depend upon it," says that great man, "it is true as nature is true, that if you force men out of the religion of habit, education, or opinion, it is not to yours they will go. Shaken in their minds they will go where the

dogmas are fewest—where they are most uncertain—where they lead them least to the consideration of what they have abandoned."—*Letter to Sir Henry Langrishe.*

There is not a man of thought in the kingdom who will not endorse these opinions. If the dogmas of Catholicity are given up nought remains. If the ancient church which has conquered the prejudices of the first scholars of the day in our Protestant universities, cannot be trusted, what church can? Whoever leaves Catholicity, goes straight into infidelity, never stopping on his way down at any of the meeting-houses of the sectaries. "In the last century," says Lord Macaulay, "when a Catholic renounced his belief in the real presence, it was a thousand to one that he renounced his belief in the Gospel too; and when the re-action took place, with the belief in the Gospel came back the belief in the real presence." What impiety it is, then, to tamper with the faith of a Catholic people; and to what extent is that shameless impiety heightened by looking to the poor in Connemara as subjects of conversion, when famine has fallen on the land. Will it be asserted by any sane man that conversion in the circumstances is at all possible? Could men change their convictions or be converted from one faith to another, when the intellect is deranged, and no thought rests on the mind but how to get food? Is it not utterly impossible to communicate to a famine-stricken peasantry a knowledge of the Thirty-nine Articles, or induce them to give up their belief in the Seven Sacraments, the cherished faith of their forefathers?

I appeal to Dr. Trench himself if he has ever received into his Church a man whose motives in the change are above suspicion? Can he name even one convert, such as, to his own knowledge, have been received by hundreds, in his own day, into the Catholic Church? Prayer,

study of the holy fathers and calm meditation on the things that are above, have brought the *elite* of the Protestant clergy—sacrificing honours, dignities, and wealth, to seek peace and rest for their souls in the bosom of Catholicity. Can any man of that class be claimed as a convert to Protestantism? Is he to be found in the Priests' Protection Society? The voice from that depository, as well as from Connemara, is for money to save the Protestant converts "from relapsing (it says) outwardly to the Church of Rome." The printed circular marked private, and signed Thomas Scott, honorary secretary, calling for pecuniary aid for that purpose, lies before me. If Dr. Trench and Dr. Plunket, or the Bishops of Canterbury, Winchester, Carlisle, Ripon, and Rochester, who are all contributors to the Irish Missions Fund, had any faith in their own church as holding a divine commission to win souls to Christianity by prayer and legitimate persuasion, it is not to Connemara they would have gone, where the people hold all the truths of our divine religion, nor to the back lanes in the metropolis where the utmost distress is witnessed every day; they would, as honest men and sincere Christians, have bestowed their time and labour where most needed, namely, upon those committed to their own care. They would have gone to combat the wide-spread infidelity in England, and reduce the number of the unchristianised millions, of whom the Church Pastoral Aid Society speaks, and instruct "the myriads of the labouring people," whom the census represents "as ignorant of Christianity as were the heathen Saxons at Augustine's landing; and as much in need of missionary enterprise to bring them into practical acquaintance with its doctrines" (see abridged report of Horace Mann, p. 97): Or, acting on a point of honour, they would have gone to

reconvert the Newmans, the Wards, the Allies, the Mannings; they would have entered the lists with their equals in knowledge and dialectics, over whom to gain a triumph would be no disgrace.

How the infidels must rejoice when they see the mitred chiefs of the empire concentrating their biblical forces and troops of proselytisers against a Christian people, to induce them in the days of distress to abandon the church of their fathers, with a view, no doubt, to make up congregations for the deserted temples of Anglicanism, whilst the men of no religion, repudiating all Christian doctrine, all belief in the mission of the Saviour, are left in quiet possession of the field!

Proselytism, as carried on in Ireland, and patronised by Dr. Trench, is a scandalous sacrilege, it is an outrage on rational nature; there is neither truth nor sincerity in it, and the actors in the scene, whether they be the high dignitaries of the Establishment or the low and ignorant herd of trading proselytisers, will, where justice is administered without respect of persons, receive the due reward of such enormous iniquity.

As an old man, yea, very old, standing on the narrow isthmus between time and eternity—no longer, as it were, of this world—I may, perhaps, be permitted to say—Hold! my Lord Archbishop, do not, I pray you, continue the attempt to draw a faithful nation from its sacred moorings into the troubled and ever varying stream of Protestant opinion. You must know what has happened in the dispersion of the faithful in England; do not lend the sanction of your name and position to the impious purpose. The proselytiser may degrade and demoralise the Irishman, may extinguish the light of faith in his bosom, and cast him a moral wreck on society, but you can never make him accept your Church's teaching; he



knows your Church only as an instrument of tyranny and oppression; he views it as Edmund Burke did, when he exclaimed, conversing with Lord Brougham, "Don't talk of its being a Church! It is a wholesale robbery"—see Hansard, vol. 44, p. 932. He knows it, my lord, as having aided in the enactment of laws, commanding priests and bishops to depart out of the kingdom, and condemning them to death if they returned. He knows it, as denying to his fathers the power of educating their children at home, and, at the same time, with barbarous cruelty never surpassed, prohibiting them from seeking education abroad. He knows that there was no right human or divine, which the Church did not violate, to accomplish their ruin. Knowing all this, you can never make the Irishman accept the teaching of the Anglican Church. It has never been accepted by any nation in the world, not even by Scotland or Wales, who have a form of belief of their own. Do not, then, I say, in God's holy name, corrupt the soul; it is made to the Creator's likeness; lay no hand upon it; conviction is a sacred thing; let it be the result of prayer and light, which has brought so many of the most intellectual, disinterested, and learned of the people in England and Germany to Catholicism; but to shake the poor man's belief in the truth and efficacy of the sacraments, to induce him to abandon his faith by an offer of food, or a promise of clothing, whilst he and his family are on the brink of starvation, is a crime, the malice of which, involving the ruin of the soul, can scarcely be exaggerated.

If Protestantism can bring souls to God by prayer and preaching in West Connaught, is it not passing strange that it cannot retain them or win them back to its communion in London, the centre of Protestant civilisation, or in any part of England?

Anglican proselytism never succeeds where the necessities of life abound, and where man is consequently raised above the temptation of bartering his faith for a mess of pottage.

A Protestant who sincerely believes in the teaching of his church cannot help often asking how it comes to pass that Protestantism, with all its learning, dignities, and wealth, honoured by the court, upheld by Parliament, patronised by all fashionable society, and sustained at the public expense, can never make converts in the educated and enlightened classes; never amongst those who are ready to make sacrifices for the truth: such as we see not infrequently going over to Catholicism. The Priests' Protection Society complains "that a few converts to a false creed," they mean converts to the ancient church, "have founded, within a short period, 43 chapels and missions in England and Scotland." How can this state of facts be satisfactorily accounted for? Simply by admitting that Catholicity, although hated and despised by this world as Christ himself was hated, has in it that divine truth and power which subdues and captivates the heart, and wins its way to victory in the face of a thousand difficulties—whilst Protestantism, in its golden panoply, but uncommissioned by heaven, seeking only to conceal its weakness, collects the waifs and strays of society, the orphans of the poor in West Connaught, feeds them, registers them as Protestants, and boasts of them as converts. I defy the ingenuity of the most learned to account fairly for the facts on any other grounds.

Is this a system, Mr. Editor, worthy of English sympathy, or deserving the support or countenance of the new Archbishop of Dublin? Is religious harmony never to be established in Ireland? His Grace's administra-

tion of the metropolitan see promises badly for our future peace. It will, I apprehend, be remembered by a nation of Catholics as a period of discord—religious animosity, promoted by English gold, episcopal intolerance, and fanatical bigotry.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

JAMES MAHER, P. P.

XLII.

THE ALLEGED "CONVERSIONS" IN CONNE-  
MARA.

June 21st, 1866.

SIR—The letter of his Grace, Dr. Trench, on proselytism, which has been received with great favour as an invaluable testimony to all those engaged in the proselytising warfare in Ireland, still engages public attention; but those to whom the letter has been addressed, and who wish to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, will hear, and carefully consider, what other competent witnesses—having the fullest opportunities of watching the progress of events, have to say on the subject. A witness of that class I shall now introduce to their notice.\*

An Irish peer, in a pamphlet of 42 pages, addressed to his Grace Dr. Trench a few months since, and published by Hodges, Smith, and Co., Dublin, gives the result of his long and careful investigation of the missionary movement in these words—"That whilst the efforts of proselytism hitherto have been unproductive of good,

they have produced much direct and indirect evil," p. 42; and again he observes, "that up to the present time, forty years of zealous proselytism in Ireland have achieved no appreciable success." Winding up his remarks, he thus addresses the Archbishop, p. 39—"I believe your Grace will consider that I have now sufficiently established my assertions—that proselytism has failed in Ireland; that the attempts at conversion have produced bad effects, and were in mode, if not in nature, injudicious;" and here I must add that the Irish peer who thus testifies so strongly against the proselytisers gives abundant evidence in his well-written pamphlet, that he is himself a decided Conservative and a steadfast Protestant.

Now, the question arises, which of those conflicting testimonies, that of the prelate, or that of the peer, is most entitled to respect? The former, who derived all his knowledge from the paid agents of the mission, eulogises proselytism as a successful and meritorious work; the latter, who, at the outset, favoured the proselytising party, but having for years watched their proceedings, is at length compelled to admit that their efforts have caused much direct and indirect evil, and have been productive of no good.

If this weighty testimony of the peer is to be received—and who with any knowledge of Ireland can reject it?—the prelate has most unwisely allied himself to an unscrupulous faction, who have imposed upon his credulity. His Grace's letter has inspired with hope the authors of much direct and indirect evil, and set in motion the agents of discord and religious animosity. He repays this poor country for his immense salary—at least £10,000 a year in pay and patronage—by upholding a system of proselytism and enormous fraud on the public,

which his equal in rank and scholarship, and with all the advantages of a long life residence in Ireland, pronounces to be a failure. And here, Mr. Editor, let me add that there is not a respectable Protestant in Dublin, who could not conscientiously endorse that opinion. Not only is the sham reformation, to which Dr. Trench lends the sanction of his rank and name, a failure, but the church itself, in which he holds the highest dignity, has utterly failed, as all Europe knows, to plant Protestantism in Irish soil. Is it then, I ask, fair, or honest, or honourable, to call on England to contribute its money to sustain a cause, without candidly stating that the labours of 300 years, and the expenditure of hundreds of millions sterling have utterly failed to sustain it against the will of the people.

His Grace's exertions in the cause will, I fancy, on the whole, prove very unsatisfactory to the Church Endowment Committee of West Connaught. He is altogether unfitted for the task. Having a character to sustain, his lordship did not go through his work with that recklessness of truth and boldness of assertion, in which the old proselytisers were unrivalled. Coming before the British public with a show of only a handful of converts, instead of tens and twenties of thousands, and without any sensational cases of Popish persecution, is a proceeding far more likely to injure than to serve the cause.

The proselytisers of years past, before their credit was fairly tested, never minced matters. They spoke out boldly, especially when they hoped to touch English money. The Rev. R. Bickersteth, one of the head-centres of proselytism, addressing a meeting—the report of which copied from the *Times* now lies before me—held in the year 1851, in the Egyptian Hall, Mansion House, London, the Lord Mayor presiding, supported by the

Duke of Manchester, Admiral Harcourt, and that great prop of all such meetings, Mr. John Paul, said, "In less than three years 20,000 to 30,000 converts have been made through the operation of this society. In Connemara there were only 500 Protestants when they began, now there were from 5,000 to 6,000. . . . All these have been brought out of Popery through the instrumentality of the preached Gospel." Money of course, had nothing to do in the business; but yet, in the next sentence, he adds, "Their great want at present was £10,000, not (he takes care to inform them) for the purposes of bribery, but for increasing the forces in Ireland of missionaries, schoolmasters, and scripture-readers," &c.

The Rev. R. Bickersteth, and those of his class, were the men to succeed in carrying out boldly this enormous imposition. Twenty or thirty thousand rescued from Popery was, observe, the result of only a season or two of evangelical labour—less than three years; it was not unusual in those days to boast of hundreds of thousands of converts, and then the money came. Nay, one very zealous rector in my neighbourhood, whom I have often called to order through the public press, gave, in 1858, the exact number brought out of Romanism at 700,000, a number far exceeding the whole Church population in Ireland; but that reckless overstepping the limits of truth did not at all mar the effect of the statement. English money could not be had on other terms. Dr. Trench evidently does not know how to work the mission.

The rector in my parish, the Rev. D. Massey, a first-class proselytiser, writing in 1851, the year in which Mr. Bickersteth exhibited in London, states, although he had not a convert in his parish, that "already twenty thousand converts from Popery have returned to the bosom of the Church within the last five years, and (he

continues most insinuatingly) "the generous aid of Christian friends in England gives good hope of a vast increase."

That is the kind of statement—twenty or thirty thousand converts—that tells in England. The last authentic enumeration of converts by a very zealous churchman, the Rev. Dr. Hume, of Liverpool, brings down the entire number of all the converts of all the societies in Ireland for the last thirty years, so low as 3,090. Contrast that return with the flourishing statements of the Rev. Messrs. Bickersteth, Massey, Garret, and all the head-centres of proselytism, and you may easily judge of the extent to which English credulity has been imposed upon, and the amount of insult, of calumny, and injury, that has been inflicted on our poor people. Is this a cause, I beg to ask, which an enlightened English Archbishop, located in Dublin, can, with credit to himself as a Christian and a gentleman, undertake to sustain? How kind it is of England before she has converted her domestic infidels, her un-Christianised millions, and sectaries of all kinds—to send us Dr. Trench to convert the faithful Irish. Oh, if the press would but let England see things as they really are, the vile system of lying, of collecting money, the cunning and hypocrisy of the proselytisers, and the sufferings and tears of the poor, the harassing of conscience, and insults for adherence to the faith of their fathers, to which they are subjected, we should soon see the end of this nefarious proselytising traffic.

Yours truly,

JAMES MAHER, P.P.

N.B.—The defence against the charge of bribery, which Dr. Trench offers to the public, shall be considered in our next letter.

XLIII.

ON PROSELYTISING SCHOOLS.

*June 28, 1866.*

SIR—In my last letter I promised to review that portion of Dr. Trench's address to the people of England, in which he comes to the rescue—with what success we shall soon see—of his friends the proselytisers, charged with carrying on their missionary labour, chiefly by bribery and other iniquitous means. No one knows better than his Grace that this charge has been preferred by witnesses of the highest credibility, both Catholic and Protestant. He himself states the case very fairly in these words:—

"Much controversy has arisen," he observes, "both in respect of the actual extent of these conversions and the means by which they have been brought about. . . . Some of our own communion, and Roman Catholics in general, deny *in toto* that any real work of conversion has gone forward. Whatever of this kind may seem to have been effected was, they affirm, the result of an extensive system of bribery, taking advantage of the extreme needs of the people during the years of famine; that since that time these so-called Church missions have been stationary, or retrograde, being only hindered from perishing altogether by the lavish employment of the same unworthy means to which they were indebted for their first success. The whole story, they say, is an enormous deception."

This is the charge, as preferred both by Protestants and Catholics, fairly stated by his Grace, and I beg to ask what he has to say in disproof thereof? How does he meet it? First, it is not denied, nor attempted to be

denied, that the children of Catholics have been taken in infancy, housed, fed, clothed, and brought up, in contemptuous violation of all natural and parental right, in the religion of the proselytiser, and not that of the parent. A respected dignitary of the Established Church, the Rev. G. Webster, Chancellor of Cork, in his published correspondence with the agents of the Church Mission Society, observes, "The terrible fact with which you have to grapple is, that under your society a Roman Catholic child receives his bed and breakfast, he is housed and clothed, on the expressed condition that he listens to Protestant teaching, and attends a Protestant place of worship," page 27. The fact is admitted on all hands; and it is hard to imagine anything more iniquitous. An establishment for this purpose, the Birds' Nest, in Kingstown, for instance, is under the eye of Dr. Trench himself. A large number of those claimed as converts has been thus manufactured. With regard to the adult pupils, the proselytisers have been charged with drawing them to Protestant schools by doles of food and clothing, for the purpose of subverting their faith. The existence of those schools, and the *modus operandi*, are well known to every man in Ireland. The defence set up by Dr. Trench of the proselytising schools is of such a character that it must be given in his own words to do the subject justice.

In one part of his letter, speaking of the adult pupils, he says, "No one could have passed without remarking the clear, bright, intelligent looks of the elder girls; their neatness, cleanliness, and singularly well-mannered ways;" and then he adds, "I can only say for myself that when I witnessed the vigorous and healthy life which pervaded those schools—the affection of the children to their teachers—the hearty interest which they displayed

in their work; this was enough to scatter to the winds the insinuation that a dish of oatmeal or of Indian corn was the attraction which drew the scholars to these schools."

That cause will, I imagine, be looked upon as wholly indefensible which a clever man seeks to prop up by such reasoning. What a burst of ridicule and laughter would await the lawyer if, in defending before a committee of the House of Commons, the return of some M.P. against the charge of bribery, he were to exclaim, in the words of his Grace, "For myself I can only say that the respectable appearance, the vigorous and healthy life, the clear, bright, intelligent looks of the voters, are quite enough to scatter to the winds the suspicion that such men had accepted bribes!" How hard it is to sustain respectably a bad cause! Such reasoning, even though from an episcopal throne, is not likely to have much weight with any class of intelligent readers.

His Grace, not quite satisfied with his own defence, afterwards adds—here again we quote his words—"I took pains to inquire about the matter of the oatmeal, of which, at a distance, one hears so much. In many of the schools this food—it is about a farthing's worth of value—is only given during three months in the year, those which immediately precede the coming in of the new crops, when distress amongst the poorest class of scholars is extreme."

He took pains to inquire! but has he heard of nothing more? Is there no suppression of important facts? He will not, I presume, venture to say so; for I myself, within the present year, had the honour of bringing under his notice the following items of a proselytising committee, under the direction of Miss Fanny Bellingham and the patronage of Lord Roden, "*For the Relief*

of the Converts and Children of Connemara for the Year 1852"—I quote the words of the report:—

Cash for meal	...	£1,092	15	4½
Ditto for frieze, corduroy, flannel, calico, tailoring, &c.	...	250	17	4½
Ditto rice, salt, milk	...	43	0	8

Next we find a long account of bales and parcels of clothing for the Connemara schools and orphan nurseries, which must have been of considerable value, for the carriage thereof cost £23 6s. 5d.; and here, Mr. Editor, let me observe that this is only one account out of many which his Grace might have well consulted in his painstaking effort to discover the truth.

His Grace, in the spirit of candour, invites his readers to call him up "if he suppresses important qualifying facts, or puts matters in a wrong light." Acting on this invitation, I respectfully beg to ask why have the accounts referred to been passed over, and why has the farthing's worth of meal, putting matters in a very wrong light, been so prominently brought forward?

Again, observe, Mr. Editor, that his lordship declares that the adult pupil converts of Connemara are so respectable, so singularly well-mannered, so independent, as to be raised quite above all suspicion of being attracted to proselytising schools by a dish of oatmeal or Indian corn; and in the next sentence he states that the pupils are so wretched, in such extreme misery, as to accept a farthing's worth of meal a day for three months in the year. How bewildered and inconsistent the clearest intellect becomes in the sustainment of a bad cause! "This half-pint of meal, given," continues his Grace, "that the child may not hunger through the long hours of school, is a simple act of charity, which could not without cruelty be left unperformed." It is quite

true that to clothe the naked or feed the hungry child, is an act of charity most acceptable to the Common Father of all: but to do so on condition that the child violates its conscience, abandons the religion of its parents and country, or puts itself in training for the purpose, is a crime, the malice of which can scarcely be exaggerated. What a much clearer and juster perception of the sound principles of morality did his Grace's predecessor in the see of Dublin possess when, writing upon this very topic, he said—

"There cannot be a more emphatically unsuitable occasion for urging anyone to change his religion and adopt ours than when we are proposing to relieve his distress. \* \* \* We present ourselves to his mind as seeking to take an ungenerous advantage of his misery, and as converting our benefactions into a bribe, to induce him to do violence to his conscience. \* \* \* What," he continues, "would be the feelings of any man of us if, when residing in some foreign country of a different religion from his own, he saw his children starving around him, and if he were given to understand it was expected that, in consideration of the relief offered, he should receive himself, and allow his children to receive, such religious instruction as he had been taught to regard as erroneous? Surely, if any one of you were so situated it is likely you would be filled with disgust, both for them and also for the religion itself, which they had thus attempted to force upon you."—[Dr. Whately's Address to his Clergy in 1847, p. 8.]

How strongly, emphatically, and justly did Dr. Whately, in the vigour of his intellect, condemn that system which his successor so unwisely and weakly defends!

If there were schools in England conducted on the

same principle, in which it was known that Protestant children were taken in, fed, and clothed, on condition of renouncing Protestantism and of becoming Papists, how long, I beg to ask, would such an outrage on the rights of Englishmen be tolerated? Public indignation would at once suppress such schools; or see them wrapped in flames. Do I, Mr. Editor, exaggerate? The attention of the House of Commons, and of all England through that house, ought to be brought to bear on this intolerable grievance. It is of so odious a character, that if properly exposed and perseveringly combated, it must ere long succumb.

Yours truly,

JAMES MAHER, P. P.

#### XLIV.

#### ANGLICAN ATTEMPTS AT PROSELYTISM IN IRELAND.

*July 20th, 1866.*

SIR—To bring the case of Ireland fairly and fully before the British public, so that they might see it and feel it, as it really is, would task the highest powers of human intelligence; yet if the effort were made, and succeeded, I am convinced that many of the grievances of which we justly complain would, ere long, be redressed. The existence of an alien church, whose ministrations the people have faithfully resisted for 300 years, increases indefinitely the difficulties of the task.

Observe, Mr. Editor, how it has worked at all times, in season and out of season, up to the present hour, to oppress us. Everyone knows that whatever of liberty Ireland has won, these last eighty years, in her one hundred hard-contested struggles, all has been achieved in the face of the most unrelenting and pertinacious opposition of the Church: nor is there at present the least evidence of increasing liberality of sentiment in the clerical body. Ireland cannot now, it is true, as of old, be fined nor imprisoned for the absence from Protestant service on Sundays, but she can be, and she is, harassed and insulted in various other ways. The proselytising societies, which Dr. Trench patronises, and which no free people in the world would tolerate for a season, are known as a source of bitter annoyance, and yet the highest dignity in the Establishment becomes their patron and advocate. He pleads their cause before the British people, and offers his services to collect funds for their sustainment. He knows full well, that the proselytising system, according to the unanimous opinion of Catholic Ireland, and of a very large and enlightened section of Protestantism, is an insidious and insulting effort of malignity to degrade and demoralise a faithful nation. His Grace states, in his letter to the *Times*, in the plainest terms, that it is almost universally repro- bated. "Some of our own communion," he writes, "and Roman Catholics in general, affirm that proselytism is the result of an extensive system of bribery, taking advantage of the extreme needs of the people during the years of famine. The whole story they say is an enormous deception."

With this knowledge of Irish opinion, he hesitates not warmly to espouse the cause of souperism, to keep alive and in activity all the evils which pecuniary proselytism

engenders. It is, however, some relief to know, notwithstanding his Grace's labours, that the English mind is beginning to view this subject aright. Dr. Trench has been sharply reproved for his advocacy of those mischievous societies, by the *Church Times*.

If the Bishop's report of conversion be true, "the people," says the *Church Times*, June, 1866, "have in that case abandoned a religion which, however it may be overlaid with accretions, is yet substantially Christian; for a belief, which is certainly not Christian at all, nor even commonly reverent and decorous. The coarse ribaldry and horrible blasphemies which are the staple of the theological utterance of the school which professes to have converted West Connaught, have no affinity with the Gospel, and a Christian scholar and gentleman like Richard Chenevix Trench ought to have more sympathy with the religion of Bernard and Fenelon, of Vincent of Paul and Francis Xavier, than with a system Antinomian in theory, and scurrilous in expression."

The just and well-merited rebuke of the proselytisers and of their most reverend patron evidently indicates the setting in of a sound opinion on the subject in England. Wherever these men fall to work they render religious harmony amongst Her Majesty's subjects an impossibility. In the days of famine they are seen hovering like ill-omened birds of prey about the cabins of the poor, tempting the hungry inmates to barter their faith and that of their children for the food that perisheth.

But when distress has passed away, the proselytisers change their tactics, they try what can be gained by the evangelical use of unceasing Billingsgate and falsehood on a gigantic scale, and in this department of literature they are pre-eminently distinguished. Abuse, in fact, is one of the choicest weapons in their armory. They value

it as highly as the Prussians do the needle gun. Its use is recommended by their highest authorities. The Rev. R. Bickersteth, a very leading man in the ranks of the Irish Church Missions, at the great meeting held in London in 1851, the Lord Mayor of the city presiding, announced that, "the grand principle of the society was to use no concealment, no reserve in the language they made use of with respect to Popery." And never has a principle been more strictly adhered to. Vituperation of the most offensive character, wounding our religious sensibilities, is poured out on everything Catholic in speeches at their meetings, in sermons in the streets, in reports, handbills, and placards. Bill sticking is a powerful instrumentality in the working of the mission. The walls where proselytism is carried on are covered with controversial placards in large attractive type. Thus, "Is not the Pope Antichrist?" and "Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse," "Is not the Pope the man of sin?" and "Rome the mother of Harlots," "Has not the Church of Rome borrowed the celibacy of her religious orders from paganism?" "Romanism is only paganism baptized." "The papacy came hot from hell, and its presence makes a hell upon earth." "Roman Catholics are affectionately requested to attend."

The printing and scattering on the highways of those infamous handbills, and the posting up of those blasphemous and insulting placards, is stated, in the Society's Report, to have cost £1,229 16s. 8d., for the year 1863; and the hire of lay agents and Scripture-readers, who carry out the grand principle of vituperation to the greatest extent, amounts, in the same year, to the good round sum of £5,842 5s. 4d. Thus, for abusing and defaming us, with a view to our conversion to Protestantism, the proselytisers expended, according to



their own account, in twelve months, £7,072 2s.—(see Appendix to the Fifteenth Report of the Society for Irish Church Missions); and since the adoption of the principle, fifteen years ago, of no reserve in language, in speaking of Popery, the expenditure in slander and defamation, taking 1863 as an average year, must have exceeded one hundred thousand pounds. These are facts, Mr. Editor, which admit of no question; and it would be hard to discover, in the history of the most barbarous nations, anything so thoroughly impious, insulting, and scandalous. No wonder, then, that the *Church Times*, in the interest of Protestant civilisation, denounces the theological utterances of the West Connaught proselytisers, "as coarse ribaldry, and horrible blasphemies," having no affinity with the Gospel, or just claims on the sympathies of Dr. Trench.

Why did not his Grace, writing to his countrymen, enlighten them on this interesting and novel mode of introducing Protestant Christianity into Ireland? He was certainly acquainted with the system, for I had the honour of bringing under his notice, last January, a fair sample of the controversial handbills and placards which the societies issued at such enormous expense.

Latterly I am happy to perceive that the intolerable placard nuisance has been greatly abated; in some places it has wholly fallen into disuse. The opinion of the laity, unwilling to violate all the decencies and proprieties of society, has made itself felt in the camp of the proselytisers. Gentlemen, too, in the clerical order, untainted by fanaticism, have strongly disapproved of it, as discreditable in a high degree, to Protestant civilisation. "In the long run," exclaims the Rev. George Webster, Chancellor of Cork, "I believe it will be discovered that the Irish Church Mission Society has

done irreparable mischief to the Church of Ireland." What are men of honour and principle to say to this system of organised vituperation, or, as the *Church Times* has it, of coarse ribaldry and horrible blasphemies? How will enlightened English opinion deal with it, even though it claims and enjoys the patronage of an archbishop?

There is another point in the proselytising movement upon which some light should have been thrown. England should have been honestly told what is the expense of raising a crop of converts in Ireland, what is the expense per head, the market price of a convert. The Irish beneficed clergy who complain of their limited means, never embark their capital in such unpromising speculation.

The *Saturday Review*, October 31, 1863, in a very interesting article headed "Costly Converts," states the cost of one in Jerusalem to be £1,111. They are cheaper, he observes, in other countries. The Jew at Jerusalem, he continues, is a costly and noble convert, and is, doubtless, cheap at £1,000. An African Jew can be bought up at much a lower figure. The average expense in Bucharest, Bagdad, &c., is at the rate of £600 per convert. Now, I have not the least doubt, all things duly considered, that to convert Popish Paddy, into a pure Protestant, costs England much more than even the Jew at Jerusalem.

The Protestant Church in this country has wealth, power, and state, has highly-cultivated intelligence, immense and varied learning, great zeal, in fact, it has everything which the world can give in a high degree; but it has no converts, simply because it has no commission from above to make them, and to conceal its failure in the presence of the Catholic Church, it

patronises the Proselytising Societies, who utter falsehoods on this head without limit or scruple. But I must return to this subject in another letter.

Yours truly,

JAMES MAHER, P.P.,

Carlow-Graigue.

XLV.

TO HIS GRACE DR. TRENCH, ON THE ENORMOUS EVILS OF PROSELYTISM.

*Sept. 28th, 1866.*

MY LORD—Public opinion is irremediably opposed to the Church of which your Grace is the chief ornament and highest dignitary. The latest reports from England are in the following words:—

The *Times* writes, Sept. 19:

“The Irish Establishment is an institution, which, to be condemned, needs only to be seen. . . . It was originally conceived in deadly antagonism to Irish sentiment, and it has since been upheld against the all but universal dissent of the Irish people.”

The *Telegraph* writes, Sept. 21:

“Had an enemy of Ireland wished to doom the people to years of untold misery, he could not have more effectually attained his end than by planting such a church within its shores.”

The *Saturday Review* writes, Sept. 15:

“Reformation and the reformed religion in Ireland were purely foreign inventions, thrust down the throats of the Irish people at the point of the sword.”

Lord Brougham, 1838:

“I well remember a phrase used by one not a foe to Church Establishments—I mean Edmund Burke—‘Don’t talk to me of its being a Church—it is a wholesale robbery!’ It is a thing (continues Lord Brougham) wholly peculiar to Ireland, and could be tolerated nowhere else.”—“Hansard,” vol. 44, p. 932.

The *Morning Post*, an unscrupulous defender of the Establishment, admits its unpopularity, September 16, and writes:—

“Some hold the Church to be the cause of all Ireland’s disquietudes, and, therefore, a thing to be got rid of as summarily as possible.”

This class includes nearly all who have no pecuniary interest in the matter.

This, my lord, is a sad history in a few words; and here, let me add, that there is not a statesman of note in England who has not, at one time or other, within the last thirty years, expressed opinions as strongly against the Church as those just quoted. One of the most irritating and offensive abuses of this institution is of such a nature, that your Grace, if so minded, may, with very little delay or inconvenience, effect its removal, and thereby abate, to a certain extent, the feeling of hostility which is so generally entertained against it. I mean the organisation and sustenance of the proselytising bodies in Ireland, who carry on all their operations, by a system of fraud and falsehood, to which I now beg leave respectfully to direct your attention.

The societies engaged in this work, under a variety of names, and having branch societies in London, are very

numerous, and sustained in great part by funds raised in England. Their mission is simply to turn the Catholic population of this country from the religion of their forefathers. It matters not what religion they embrace in its stead. Anything will do, provided only the converts cease to profess Catholicity. They may become Independents, Latter-day Saints, Unitarians (denying the divinity of Christ), or any other Christian dogma. They may believe as little or as much as they please, or lapse into infidelity. The object of the societies is gained if they renounce the ancient faith; and if this result is ever brought about, the proselytisers promise to dissolve their several societies at once.

This mission, my lord, exasperates the Catholic, and renders him deeply discontented, whilst it is viewed as a dead swindle by the intelligent Protestant. Both consider proselytising, through the agency of an ignorant horde of bible-readers, hired for the service, as an act of deep hypocrisy and unparalleled insolence. The latest writer of your Grace's church, who has noticed the subject, the Rev. Richard Littledale, L.L.D., in the "Essays on Questions of the Day," observes, p. 48: "It is enough to say that even if the reports of the proselytising societies, were as true as they are unscrupulously mendacious, the result would be a very poor return for three centuries of monopoly!"

The extinction of this enormous grievance as a peace-offering to a long persecuted creed, is, my lord, imperatively demanded in this age of progress as well by Protestant as by Catholic sentiment.

Those societies are now, I rejoice to say, greatly on the wane; their folly and their impotence have become evident, almost to all.

To ascertain, my lord, what sums are annually

expended in this anti-Christian business of Protestant proselytism is not an easy task. The Irish Church Mission Society, in its cash account for the year 1856, published the following item:—

Total of ordinary income from England, £32,247	15	6
Total from England and Ireland ...	36,735	15
	3	

If the other proselytising societies, about twenty in number, be at all as successful in collecting money, their united income for the suppression of our religion, without including the immense wealth of the Established Church or of Trinity College, or the endowed schools, will probably range between two and three hundred thousands a-year.

This is a state of things, my lord, which has never existed in any other Christian country, nor would it be tolerated in any.

The means employed for the suppression of Romanism, as our religion is offensively styled, and the maintenance of the proselytising bodies are well worthy of their object. First, Ireland is to be represented in all their reports as thoroughly demoralised, lying outside the pale of civilisation, a moral wilderness, a howling waste, and sitting in the region of the shadow of death. Whole volumes of descriptive eloquence of this kind have been prepared for circulation in England to awaken Christian sympathy for a lost people, and to stimulate the charity of the wealthy to contribute their money. It is deserving of remark that in all the charges against the ancient religion, it has never been said that we have ceased to believe in Christ, or any of the doctrines of Christianity. No; that is not our offence. On the contrary, our offence is that of adhering with unshaken fidelity to that form of Christianity in all its integrity which we have received from our forefathers. This is the head and front of our offending.

Secondly, the Irish themselves, fallen though they be, are always to be represented as hungering and thirsting for a free Gospel, and as having lost all respect for priests, nuns, and Popish practices, and are therefore coming out of Romanism in thousands and hundreds of thousands into the glare of pure Protestant truth.

The circulation in England of these defamatory and offensive reports has been found, on trial, to be the most efficient means of raising funds for the conversion of Ireland.—“Payment for result,” we all know, is one of the cries of the day, and our gossellers are too wide awake to ask England to pay unless they exhibit on the face of their reports a work of conversion in some degree commensurate with the vast sums sought to be raised. Hence, my lord, the necessity of those unscrupulously mendacious reports of which the Rev. Dr. Littledale speaks.

The agents, both English and Irish, employed in reporting, have executed their task in lofty defiance of truth, justice, and honour. We shall quote the testimony of only a few; we have that of hundreds before us, but those we select are, perhaps, the most prominent and most generally known.

The Rev. R. Bickersteth, M.A., as agent of the Irish Church missions, delivered his testimony at a meeting in London in 1851, the Lord Mayor presiding, stating, as reported in the *Times*, “that in less than three years 20,000 to 30,000 converts have been made through the operation of the society.” The Rev. Alexander R. C. Dallas, as honorary secretary, supported the statement of his friend, and asked “for a contribution of £10,000, which he added would enable him in the course of six months to send agents to the strongholds of superstition, and open the minds of the people.”

The Irish witnesses had to give evidence of further progress, and they executed their task without any qualms of conscience.

The Rev. Dawson Massey, B.A., the head centre of proselytism in Leinster, with whom, as being rector of my own parish, I have had a long acquaintance, informed his English readers, in 1851, that “already twenty thousand converts from Popery have returned to the bosom of the church within the last five years, and the generous aid of Christian friends in England gives (he adds) good hope of a vast increase.”

It is quite evident, according to this hope of Mr. Massey, if England would only send him money enough (and he has collectors in London, Bath, Birkenhead, New Brighton, Isle of Wight, and Edinburgh), all Ireland would in a few years more be gathered into the Protestant fold.

The testimony of the next Irish witness, the Rev. James P. Garrett, Kellistown, Hon. Sec. to the Carlow branch of the Irish Society, shows great progress. In his report for 1854 which lies before me, he states “that God has honoured and blessed our Society’s work with an almost miraculous success. Tens of thousands in Ireland have openly left the Church of Rome, and tens of thousands of Irish emigrants have done the same in America.” The miracle is that no one has seen those large armies of converts, nor can it be discovered where they bivouac. “Vast,” he exclaims, in a fit of wonder, “is the turning from Romanism,” and “when Romanism shall fall, then our society and kindred ones shall dissolve, but until then we appeal to you and the favoured churches of our empire to help us.” Money, my lord, English money, as the means of conversion, is the great desideratum in Ireland. Conversion to Protestantism is never lasting, never perfect, unless mammon takes the convert by the hand.

Following up the idea of miraculous success, Mr. Garrett gives, in the year 1858, the number of Romanists taught from the beginning by the Irish society at about 700,000, "who, otherwise," he adds, "must have remained in ignorance and superstition." "The society has," he continues, "26 flourishing missions, 422 agents, sixteen missionary clergymen ministering to congregations of converts." According to this report, the number rescued from Romanism and superstition, by this one society, exceeds by far the entire church population of all Ireland; but no matter, the statement was required. It was absolutely necessary, if funds were to be raised for proselytising purposes, to assure England, the great paymaster, that all Ireland was entering *en masse* into the Established Church, or joining some form of dissent or sectarianism of English growth. The principle of payment for results required the statements.

The Bishops of Rochester, Canterbury, Winchester, Armagh, and Tuam, whose letters I have before me, are more reserved and measured in their statements than the parsons. They never report, like Messrs. Bickersteth, Massey and Garrett, tens or hundreds of thousands of converts. They judiciously abstain from giving exact numbers, but the vague phraseology of "mighty operations," "numerous converts," "churches crowded," "meetings thronged to overflowing," "late-comers swarming like bees all round the building," "and new congregations"—this style of writing which they cautiously employ, affords ample margin to their imaginative and enthusiastic readers to put down any number of converts they please.

To reprove, my lord, and confound the spirit of false witness and deceit so evident in those reports, and so injurious and insulting to the Irish character, I can desire

nothing better than your Grace's own testimony, in your letter to the *Times* last May. Your Grace visited West Connaught, the head-quarters of proselytism; you have traversed it for five days, surrounded by the paid agents of the movement; you have received their statements, and they neglected no means of impressing your Grace with a high idea of the success of their labour, knowing that you had come to report progress, and through your report to enable the missionaries to collect more money. Now, my lord, I beg respectfully to ask, have you seen the tens of thousands who have openly left the Church of Rome—can you endorse any one of their reports? Are they not, as Dr. Littledate has said, unscrupulously mendacious? You have seen the country dotted with little missionary chapels, seminaries, and nurseries, erected principally by English money to deceive the tourist, and make him believe that a great work is in progress, and with money those buildings could be got up anywhere. You have seen the little children who are styled converts—the two and three-year-old theologians—in the hands of the proselytisers. But besides these, and the paid agents which your Grace has noticed, have you met with the tens of thousands reported by Messrs. Bickersteth and Massey? Have you seen even one convert who is not of that class which the sagacity of the peasantry has designated soupers—one whose motives and conduct are above suspicion. You will not, my lord, venture to say you have.

Conversion, everybody knows, is never effected by turning loose on society a low, ignorant rabble, designated Bible-readers, hired to abuse religion and circulate enormous falsehoods and insulting reports. It is the work of prayer and meditation, and of God's grace obtained through prayer. No other agencies, your Grace knows,

were employed in the universities and pious families of England to bring men in hundreds, whose motives are respected by all, to a knowledge of the Catholic truth.

The monstrous mendacity of those evangelical reports will be brought out still more strikingly, by placing them side by side with later reports from zealous proselytising clergymen, but who, having a character to sustain, decline the use of wholesale falsehood to forward their purpose.

The Irish Society held a meeting on Tuesday, the 19th of March, 1861, in the Divinity Hall, Trinity College, Dublin, the Rev. Samuel Butcher, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, who has lately been promoted to the See of Meath, being in the chair. The report for the year 1860 was read and adopted. Speaking of the Irish Church, in promoting Protestantism, the report states "that her converts as yet have been comparatively few, but she is convinced that her work has not been in vain." Again the committee say, "It may seem a small triumph that we should be able to boast of a convert here and a convert there, but we must look beyond facts." I suppose into the region of fiction.

Compare, my lord, these reports, examine them without prejudice. One class of witnesses, the most renowned proselytisers, the Revs. Messrs. Bickersteth and Dallas, report twenty to thirty thousand converts, in 1851, gained by the Irish Church Mission Society, in less than three years; and Mr. Massey has twenty thousand gained by another society, in five years, and progressing at that rate of increase those last fifteen years, they should now be able to show at least 150,000 converts.

Again, Mr. Garrett reports, in 1854, tens of thousands of converts, which may mean any number you please; and, in 1858, he reports congregations of converts under a regular ministry, whilst other witnesses, the Professors

and Fellows of Trinity College, under the guidance of Dr. Butcher, after a careful survey of the whole field of missionary enterprise, honestly declare that they can discover only a convert here and there, and further they candidly admit that the converts of the Irish Church are comparatively very few. Was false witness against our people and their religion ever carried to so daring a pitch?

The Rev. Maziere Brady pronounces the statement oft repeated by Protestant historians, that 25 Irish Bishops separated from Rome in Elizabeth's reign, to be "the most impudent falsehood in all history." I cannot subscribe to that opinion. The falsehoods which I am now engaged in exposing, are far more impudent and audacious. To assert that the Irish people of the present day, amongst whom we live, whose faith is spoken of throughout the whole world, have apostatized in tens and twenties of thousands, is evidently a calumny of a more malignant and foul character, than the slanderous assertion that Irish Bishops conformed to the Established Church 300 years ago.

A clergyman, the Rev. G. D. Haughton, who has lately published his opinions in the *Fortnightly Review* of August last, p. 755, asks, "How is it that the Anglican Church is stopped in its growth. . . . Even in England, with all its social pre-eminence, more than half the nation stands aloof from it, the Scotch disdain it, the Irish loathe it, and the Welsh reject it," and he afterwards adds, "Three centuries of domination and monopoly have failed to give it a hold on the Irish soil; it is as hateful a stranger there as ever."

This, my lord, is the truth, the simple truth, stated in the plainest language, the truth known to every intelligent man in Ireland, and the report of the proselytising

bodies, got up with a view to levy money in England, is one shameless defamatory, gigantic falsehood.

How long, my lord, shall the confidence and simplicity of your countrymen be abused, and the character and fair fame of Ireland be malignantly blasted by those mendacious reports? The persecuting enactments of the past century against Catholics have, it is true, been repeated, but we are still assailed by weapons scarcely less offensive; our national pride is wounded; a low rabble of evangelicals are sent to teach the children of St. Patrick the truths of Christianity; our character is stigmatised. We are represented by the hired agents of a foul conspiracy, as a nation of apostates from the faith of our forefathers. If Ireland boasts of anything in the face of the nations of Christendom, it is of her long tried and invincible fidelity to the ancient religion, and if men wish to touch us where we feel most intensely, and make us tremulous with virtuous indignation, they have only to report, as the societies do, that we have in tens of thousands abandoned that religion.

This proselytism is one of the most nefarious projects which hypocrisy, avarice, and the spirit of lying have ever devised. And suppose, my lord, the people, forgetful of ancient honour and the sufferings of their ancestors, were to go forth from the home of their fathers, the Catholic Church, where shall they find peace and rest for their souls? whither shall they go? The Established Church is open to receive us. "Don't talk of its being a Church, it is a wholesale robbery," was the exclamation of the first statesman of the last century. The *London Telegraph* of the other day, August 7, very truly declares that "all the sophistry in the world will not blind them (the Irish), that they

are cursed with the most absurd and iniquitous Asiatic institution which the perverted ingenuity of man ever devised." Another journal, the *Scots* on the same date, states, "The Irish Church has parallel in the world—it is both a folly and an insult in principle—it has been not only a failure but a monstrous mischief in practice."

Viewing the Church as fairly represented by English journalism, and the soundest judgment, and highest talent in the empire, is it not evident that a Catholic can no more enter it from conviction, than become a worshipper of Mahomet in a Turkish mosque! and if some poor, hungry creatures have entered it, or sold their children to it, who can doubt their motive was to escape all the misery of slow starvation?

To you, my lord, the opportunity is given of abating the unparalleled nuisance. A word will do it. Your Grace has only to tell England that Protestantism has made no progress in this country, that the reports of the proselytising bodies are the most impudent and shameless falsehoods in the annals of history, that the infamous project of separating the people of Ireland from the faith of their fathers by penal laws in times past, and by falsehood and fraud at the present day, has been not only a failure, but a monstrous mischief.

Announce the truth in the words of a divine of your own communion, the Rev. Dr. Littledale, "that three centuries of domination and monopoly have failed to give the church a hold in the Irish soil. It is as hateful a stranger there as ever." This truth circulated in England through the press would at once dry up the sources of proselytism, and leave the Irish people at the end of centuries to practise the duties of their religion in peace. This course, I respectfully recommend, would

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serve both England and Ireland. It would save the one from fraud and imposition, and the other from insult and injury; and perhaps it is the only service you can ever render to this Catholic nation.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

JAMES MAHER, P. P.

P. S.—Established etiquette, I am aware, exempts your Grace from the necessity of noticing the remonstrance of an humble priest; but the rector of my own parish, whose testimony I have impeached as utterly and shamefully false, can claim no such privilege. But will he reply? He has gone far beyond all our assailants in vulgar abuse, in hypocrisy, and low scurrility. He has written volumes in that style. But will he reply? No. He knows the truth is on our side, and he will prudently prefer to remain under the shelter of an ignominious silence rather than incur the risk of a further exposure.

J. M.

#### XLVI.

#### ON SOME STATEMENTS OF ARCHDEACON GOOLD.

*Nov. 5, 1866.*

SIR—Having read, about three weeks ago, in the provincial press (*Tipperry Vindicator*) a letter from Archdeacon Goold, I resolved at once not to let it pass unnoticed, but the cholera breaking out just then with great violence in my parish, I could not give a moment to the subject until now.

The venerable archdeacon is evidently a man behind the age in liberality, intelligence, and good breeding. His letter, on which I am about to make a few observations, irresistibly leads the mind to that unfavourable conclusion.

The reverend gentleman, having been asked by his Catholic neighbours for a plot of ground whereon to build a chapel, not only refuses the favour, but avails himself of the occasion to pour out a flood of abuse on priests and people—broadly insinuating that their chapels have been used for wicked purposes. Being reminded that churches are places for religious instruction, he replies, “undoubtedly, provided the people are taught therein their duty to God and to their neighbour, but if they are desecrated by coarse, scurrilous, and unchristian denunciations \* \* \* they become dens of cursing, scolding, and strife.” Continuing in this strain, he writes, “What I am dreadfully ashamed of—what brings the burning blushes to my cheek, both as an Irishman and a Christian, is, that when I see Roman Catholic priests heading drunken and brutal mobs, hounding them on to deeds of insult and riot, preaching up Sabbath desecration, and trying to set landlord against tenant, and tenant against landlord. The sad sight, so familiar to my eyes, leads me, every day I live, on bended knees to bless and adore God that I was born, nurtured, and educated in the bosom of the reformed church.” Again, he says, “I am no logician, but God has not deprived me of the use of reason.”

There is not, I imagine, Mr. Editor, a Christian, either Protestant or Catholic, in the country, who will not at once admit that these passages contain an elaborate and fearful misrepresentation of our practices, and a foul, malignant libel on Catholic society. The reverend gen-