

**IRELAND AND THE HOLY SEE: A  
RETROSPECT, 1866 V. 1883: ILLEGAL AND  
SEDITIONOUS MOVEMENTS  
IN IRELAND CONTRASTED WITH THE  
PRINCIPLES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
AS SHOWN IN THE WRITINGS**

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Ireland and the Holy See: A Retrospect, 1866 V. 1883: Illegal and Seditious Movements in Ireland contrasted with the principles of the catholic church as shown in the writings by Paul Cullen

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**PAUL CULLEN**

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# IRELAND AND THE HOLY SEE

A RETROSPECT

1866 v. 1883

ILLEGAL AND SEDITIOUS MOVEMENTS

IN IRELAND

CONTRASTED WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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## CATHOLIC CHURCH

AS SHOWN IN THE WRITINGS

OF

### CARDINAL CULLEN

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**T**he Writings of the late Cardinal Cullen, archbishop of Dublin, have lately been published in three large volumes by the Right Rev. Dr. Moran, Bishop of Ossory. These writings consist of Pastoral Letters, discourses on public occasions, addresses, and speeches. The following extracts from these Writings are published with a view to show the attitude adopted by the Holy See towards Fenianism and all illegal associations hostile to the established authorities. They prove that for a period of thirty years the efforts of the Irish Catholic Bishops were constantly and urgently directed to suppress sedition and check all attempts at illegal agitation.

God grant that the publication of these extracts may place in a clear light the teaching of the Holy See and serve to disabuse those ignorant persons who think they can remain good Catholics while they join secret, seditious associations which the Church has never ceased to condemn.

In the month of April, 1849, Dr. Croly, archbishop of Armagh, died, and at that time Ireland was still suffering from the effects of a terrible famine and was disturbed by rebellion. Pius IX adopted the unusual course of appointing to the Catholic primacy Dr. Paul Cullen, rector of the Irish College in Rome, an ecclesiastic of singular learning and

talent, but who was rather a Roman than an Irish priest. Dr. Cullen, while still in Rome and archbishop elect of Armagh, wrote his first pastoral letter to the clergy and laity of that diocese. In this letter he said: — « Let no promises or provocations induce you to join in secret and illegal combinations which are the bane of society and bring ruin on those who engage in them ». He thus alluded to the agitators of the day: — « Others running into a contrary extreme, invade the rights of property and by preaching up socialism or communism endeavour to annul the commandments of God, by which we are forbidden, not only to take away unjustly but even to covet the possessions of others. What shall I say of those who, pretending to promote the interests of society, preach up sedition and licentiousness under the sacred name of liberty, and impugn that subordination and respect to established authority that are prescribed in the Gospel and are necessary for the welfare of every state? »

In September, 1850, archbishop Cullen, as Delegate of the Holy See, presided over the National Council of Thurles and signed the address of the Synod. In this address we read: — « We caution you also against those publications in which loyalty is treated as a crime, a spirit of sedition is insinuated and efforts are made to induce you to make common cause, to sympathise with, those apostles of socialism and infidelity who in other countries, under the pretence of promoting civil liberty, not only undermined the foundations of every government, but artfully assailed the rights of the Apostolic See and sought for the destruction of the Holy Catholic Church. »

Violence and illegality are thus denounced: — « But while defending the rights of the poor and announcing the woes with which the Gospel threatens their oppressors, it becomes our duty also to admonish the former that the merits, privileges and rewards which God has annexed to their state, can only be secured by the exercise of patience and resignation. The moment they become their own avengers, enter into secret and illegal combinations, condemned



so severely by the Church, and have recourse to deeds of blood and violence, they lose all resemblance to that Divine model, who in suffering for them left them an example that they should tread in his footsteps, as well as all right to that future joy in which none can participate save those who have shared in His afflictions here below . . . . . How important is the teaching of the Catholic Church upon this important matter ! Guided by Divine Charity she exhorts the rich to put on bowels of compassion for the poor, to consider them as brethren, to respect them as members of Jesus Christ; and at the same time she teaches the poor to respect the rights of property, to honour the rank and station of the great and powerful, to be obedient to those in authority, to be grateful for favours received and to pour forth fervent prayers for their benefactors ». This pastoral address, which was read and adopted in full Synod, concludes with this quotation from Scripture:— « Let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God. Render therefore to all men their dues. Tribute, to whom tribute is due: custom, to whom custom: fear, to whom fear: honour, to whom honour. Owe no man any thing but to love one another, for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. »

In 1851, the Irish bishops issued an address in reference to the penal enactments of the Ecclesiastical Titles' Bill and urged their flocks « to adopt the best and surest means of defeating it, namely—the fulfilment of all your duties, loyalty to the crown, obedience to the constituted authorities, moderation, patience » etc. « But whilst exerting yourselves to impede an unjust measure, recollect that the man who outrages the peace of society and violates the law, not only offends against the moral code, but grievously injures the cause that he supports, and strengthens the hands of his enemies. Based upon the eternal principles of truth and equity, the cause with which you are identified cannot fail to succeed, when advocated by means which are consonant to its justice and holiness, and such,

dearly beloved brethren, are the only means which we feel convinced you are disposed to employ. »

In 1853, when the convents were threatened with penal legislation, Dr. Cullen, then archbishop of Dublin, issued the Synodical address of the bishops of that province, in which occur the following passages: — « When an institution so dear to you is thus threatened we exhort you to use all legitimate means of petition and remonstrance which the Constitution places at your disposal, to protest and to make every exertion to arrest the impending persecution. Should, however, God in His wonderful ways permit fanaticism and bigotry to have a momentary triumph over virtue and religion, it will be our duty to bear this affliction with patience and resignation, and never to allow ourselves to be betrayed into an open and violent resistance to authority. Persecution has been oftentimes our lot: its vestiges are indelibly engraven on the surface of our country; but no provocation, no trials could eradicate the spirit of submission, obedience and loyalty, with which our forefathers were animated. Let the past be the guide for the future, and whether in good or ill fame, whether protected or persecuted, let us be always good and faithful servants of the realm ». After mentioning the behaviour of the early Christians under persecution from the Emperors, the address proceeds: — « We cannot stray from the path of duty if we walk in the footsteps of our forefathers in the faith. Like them, therefore, let us be submissive, patient and obedient subjects, let us hate and reject every thing seditious; let us give due respect to all who are placed over us, and pray for them that God may give them wisdom and strength to know and to do what is pleasing in His sight. »

In January, 1860, in a meeting held in the Dublin Catholic cathedral to express sympathy with Pius IX, archbishop Cullen thus vindicated the loyalty of Catholics: — « Casting back those charges on the heads of their authors, we tell them that our principles as Catholics, render us hostile to all seditious practices, and that guided by the

inspired teaching of the Apostle who commands us to obey the higher powers not through fear but for conscience' sake and to love God and honour the king, we repudiate and condemn resistance to lawful authority and denounce treason and rebellion wherever they may spring up. This contrast between the Catholics of Ireland and their opponents has not escaped the attention of a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Normanby, to whom the country is still grateful for his zeal and energy in promoting its welfare; a nobleman, who having spent several years as ambassador of Her Majesty in Florence, is well acquainted with the history and crimes of the Italian revolutionary party: — " There are some original peculiarities ", says he, " in the present agitation in Ireland; for it is by the Ministers of the Crown that the cause of revolution is supported; it is in the meeting of the masses that respect for established authority is enforced. There is no blot in the whole condition of Ireland which has so much grieved her best friends as the proneness of the lower classes to secret societies for the purpose of assassination. It is by Ireland's popular leaders that this system of secret societies is now denounced. No part of Mr. Hennesy's speech at Dublin was more applauded than when he pointed out to execration the terms of the oath by which, as a member of a secret society, that strange idol of some of our statesmen, Garibaldi, bound himself to political assassination. And it was the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, who said the best government for Rome was that in which political assassination was so rife that he was at the time himself obliged to interfere through the Consul at Ancona. " These words of the noble lord place our proceedings in a proper light, and show how far we are from being liable to the charges which have been so unsparingly lavished on us by the British press. But it is not a new or a strange feature in Irish Catholics to be faithful to their sovereigns; respect for established authorities and obedience to law are hereditary among us " etc. . . . . " I do not indeed pretend that we have not many reasons for com-