

**MAYNOOTH, ITS HISTORY,
TEACHING, AND RESULTS
A LECTURE, DELIVERED AT
RICHMOND, MAY 14, 1852**

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Maynooth, Its History, Teaching, And Results A Lecture, Delivered At Richmond, May 14, 1852
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EDWARD TOTTENHAM

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LECTURE.

I HAVE no time, Mr. Chairman, for preliminary observations. I feel that I shall best consult the convenience of the Meeting by coming at once to the subject. There is only one remark of an introductory nature which I am anxious to make, and in doing so, I am but echoing the sentiments to which you yourself have just given utterance. Though I may have some strong things to say this evening respecting Romanism and the Roman Catholic priests in Ireland, yet this does not arise from any ill-will or want of affection towards Roman Catholics themselves, but is rather dictated by a sense of duty and by a conviction of the paramount importance of truth. Nothing, I am sure, is gained in such a cause as this by bitterness or vituperation; "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;" and therefore, whilst I shall honestly give expression to my own sentiments, I hope I may be enabled to do so in a spirit of christian charity. Instead of being actuated by any unkind or unchristian feeling toward my Roman Catholic fellow countrymen, I trust I may say in the language of the apostle, that "my heart's desire and prayer to God" for them is, that they "may be saved."

In addressing myself to the subject which demands our attention this evening, it will be my business to present the Meeting with a plain unvarnished statement of facts and evidences. This may perhaps be wearisome to some, in consequence of the variety of documents to which I shall have occasion to refer; but such a course of pro-

ceeding on my part is absolutely necessary to a complete elucidation of the subject. The great point is to communicate information; and I am not without hope that if you give me your patient attention, the impression upon your consciences and your judgments may be in the end, by the blessing of God, satisfactory.

The subject, then, upon which I have to speak, divides itself, according to the announcement which has been given, into three parts:—the History, the Teaching, and the Results of the College of Maynooth in Ireland. By its history I mean, not the details of its every day proceedings, but rather the history of the grant, the chronological series of facts connected with its establishment and support. And it is the more important to enter into this part of the subject, because there is an idea in many minds that we are pledged in some way by the past circumstances of the case to continue the national support of this College; that there is, in point of fact, some species of compact, and therefore that it would be a most reprehensible breach of faith were we to withdraw the grant. I believe that this is a perfect delusion. I have never met with anything which, upon any reasonable construction, would warrant such an idea. On the contrary, the whole circumstances of the case, as I shall endeavour to show, lead to a totally opposite conclusion.

I. Let us, then, take a brief review of the HISTORY of this College. It was founded in the year 1795. Previous to that time, it was unlawful to erect or endow any seminary for exclusively Roman Catholic education; and, therefore, those who were intended for the Romish priesthood in Ireland, were obliged to go abroad, in order to be educated, to Universities in France, or Spain, or Italy, or Belgium. Foundations were established for their support in different colleges on the Continent, partly by private munificence, and partly by the liberality of the respective governments. The French Revolution, however, broke out with all its de-

structive tendencies, and completely altered this state of things. In the convulsions attendant upon that event, the property belonging to many of these colleges was destroyed or alienated, while the subsequent wars rendered the Continent difficult of access to the Irish students. Besides, in consequence of the state of Europe at the time, it was a matter of anxiety to the British government that the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland should be withdrawn from connections that were dangerous to the state; and the Roman Catholic aristocracy, as well as the prelates of that church, dreaded, in the continuance of a foreign education, the introduction of those principles which had already overthrown religion and order and property in France. Now it was under these circumstances that the College of Maynooth arose: and the first thing in order of time to which I have to call your attention is the memorial that was presented by the Roman Catholic prelates, in the year 1794, to Lord Westmoreland, the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. You will observe what it was that was expected and desired. In this memorial, after describing their condition and the change of circumstances in regard to education, they say:—

"From these considerations, and conceiving that piety, learning, and subordination, would be thereby essentially promoted, your Excellency's memorialists are induced to undertake the establishment of proper places for the education of the clerical youth of their communion. Being advised by counsel that his Majesty's royal license is necessary, in order legally to secure the funds which they may appropriate for that purpose, they humbly beg leave to solicit your Excellency's recommendation to our most gracious Sovereign, that he will be pleased to grant his royal license for the endowment of academies or seminaries, for educating and preparing young persons to discharge the duties of Roman Catholic clergymen in this kingdom, under ecclesiastical superiors of their own communion." Signed, "John Thomas Troy, R. C. Archbishop of Dublin, for myself, and on behalf of the Prelates of the R. C. communion in Ireland."

You perceive from this, that the object they had in view was by no means to obtain a national endowment, but simply and solely that the legal restrictions might be removed which stood in the way of their erecting and endowing a college for themselves.

We next come to the Acts of the Irish Parliament, in relation to this subject. There were two Acts passed—the first in the year 1795, and the second in the year 1800. This latter Act relates entirely to the government of the college, and contains nothing that bears upon the present question that we are considering,—namely, whether there was any compact or not for its national support. But let me call your attention to the first of these Acts. In the preamble, after referring to the fact that it had not been lawful to erect or endow any school for the education of Romish priests, and after giving a list of persons to be appointed trustees, it says that these persons—

—“shall be Trustees for the purpose of establishing, endowing, and maintaining one academy for the education only of persons professing the Roman Catholic religion, and that the said Trustees shall have full power and authority to receive subscriptions and donations to enable them to establish and endow an academy for the education of persons professing the Roman Catholic religion.”

The tenth section says:—

“Whereas, by an Act of Parliament, intituled, &c., a sum not exceeding £2,449,600 16s. 9½d., is granted for the service of the present year, be it enacted that any sum or sums of money, not exceeding £8000, part of the said sum mentioned, shall and may be issued and paid towards establishing the said academy.

You see, then, that these Trustees were appointed with authority to receive subscriptions in order that they themselves might erect and endow this College, which, previous to this time, it was not lawful for them to do; and that the grant of the Irish legislature was simply a grant, as we often say, to set the thing a-going, but not at all intended to convey the idea that there was to be a continued national endowment.

Considerable stress, however, has been laid, in reference to the other side of the question, on certain speeches that were delivered when this original Act of 1795 was passed. For instance, Lord Fitzwilliam, who had succeeded to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, in opening the session of 1795 spoke as follows:—

“Attached as you are to the general cause of religion, learning, and civilization, I have to recommend to your consideration the state of

education in this kingdom, which, in some parts, will admit of improvement, in others, may require some new arrangements. Considerable advantages have been already derived under the wise regulations of Parliament from the Protestant Charter Schools, and these will as usual claim your attention; but, as these advantages have been but partial, and as circumstances have made other considerations connected with this important subject highly necessary, it is hoped that your wisdom will order everything relating to it in the manner most beneficial and the best adapted to the occasions of the several descriptions of men which compose his Majesty's faithful subjects in Ireland."

It has been alleged that this statement intimates something like a pledge or compact for the support of the College that was to be established. But what is there in that speech that really conveys such an idea? If it was the design of the Lord Lieutenant simply to relax the laws which previously had prohibited the erection of such a college, without giving one single penny out of the public treasury, he could hardly have said less. You must view this language also in connection with the memorial of the Roman Catholic prelates, to which it was a response; and I have shewn you that there is nothing in that which countenances the idea of the national support of the College. Besides, in this speech, the Protestant Charter Schools are positively introduced by name, and yet no compact has been observed with regard to them. I argue, then, that if there was no compact supposed to exist with regard to the Protestant Charter Schools, which are expressly mentioned (and all support has long since been withheld from them), *a fortiori*, there could be no compact supposed to exist with reference to the Roman Catholic College, which is only vaguely hinted at and not mentioned at all.

It appears, however, that Mr. Grattan, in moving the address upon that occasion, entered more fully into the subject. He says:—

"A report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the Institutions for public education, was laid before Government in 1790; it will be submitted to this House now. The extract I have seen, and from that extract I collect that the fund is above £40,000 per annum—of which £18,000 is for Protestant Charter Schools. On this subject it is intended that a plan should be submitted for colleges for the education of the Catholic clergy, who are now excluded from the Continent—and also two or more colleges, where the children of the Protestant clergy shall be in a great proportion on the foundation, and where the patronage of the minister will be less considered than that of the University."

He does not tell us what the features of that plan were. He does not enter on the question whether the proposed College was to be permanently supported by the state or not. We must therefore view this statement, like the preceding one, in connection with the memorial of the prelates, and with the Act of Parliament that was enacted; and interpreting the speech of the right honourable gentleman in connection with these two documents, we arrive at the very same conclusion as before, that the speech cannot be regarded as implying any positive compact upon the subject. Besides, if this speech conveys the idea of a compact with regard to Maynooth, it equally conveys the idea of a compact with regard to the other institutions referred to. I ask, then, not only what has become of the Protestant charter schools, which are here distinctly mentioned, but also, where are the two or three colleges for Protestant youth here spoken of? They have never been called into existence at all. So far as Mr. Grattan's speech is concerned, they stood upon the same footing as the Roman Catholic Colleges; and yet Parliament could not have supposed that the words of that speech implied the existence of a compact with respect to them, for they originated nothing on the subject. Why, then, should the idea of a compact with respect to the Roman Catholic College be argued from that speech?

Lord Fitzwilliam's administration lasted but a very short time. Lord Camden succeeded, and in a speech closing the session, he referred to the subject in these words:—

"A wise foundation has been laid for educating at home the Roman Catholic clergy."

This is the sentence upon which the advocates of the compact rest. But when we consider that the memorial of the Roman Catholic prelates was simply an expression of their desire to be allowed to establish a college for themselves, surely the passing of an Act in which their petition was granted, the giving a Parliamentary sanction to the establishment of such an institution, and

the voting a certain sum of money *towards* carrying their design into effect, affords a sufficient and satisfactory explanation of what Lord Camden said, without the necessity of having recourse to the notion of a compact binding for ever. Besides, it is quite clear that the obligation on the legislature can only arise from the act of the legislature itself, and that I have shown you does not warrant the idea.

The next thing that comes in order is the history of the grant from that period to the time of the Union in 1800. In 1796 there was a grant of £7,000 to enable them to forward their design; in 1797, of £8,000; in 1798, of £10,000. These were in each year merely *donations* in aid of the object, which were subject to the vote of Parliament. Then the building was completed, and in the year 1799, the trustees came again before Parliament with a petition, in which, after alluding to the completion of the building, and expressing their conviction of the advantages to be derived from the Institution, they gave an estimate of the expenses of maintaining the College for the first year, and they prayed a grant of £8,000 for that purpose. Now the question is—and it is a very essential one in the consideration of the subject—what did the Irish Parliament do upon that occasion? The House of Commons passed a bill for that object; but the House of Lords rejected the bill by a majority of 25 to 1. So that, you see, although they were willing to remove the legal hindrances in the way of the establishment of such an Institution, and although they were willing to give sundry successive grants towards its erection, yet in the year 1799 they deliberately refused a proposition for its maintenance and support; and, in point of fact, there was no grant of money at all to the College in that year. This historically shows that they felt themselves at liberty to deal with the question as they thought best.

We now come to the period of the union between England and Ireland, in the year 1800. Whatever were