

**A VOICE FROM IRELAND UPON
MATTERS OF PRESENT CONCERN;
ADDRESSED TO LEGISLATORS
AND MINISTERS OF STATE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649367238

A Voice from Ireland Upon Matters of Present Concern; Addressed to Legislators and ministers of state by Daniel O'Rourke

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

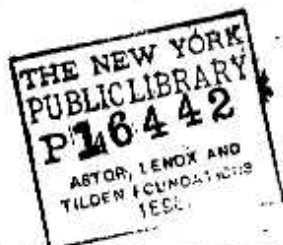
Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

DANIEL O'ROURKE

**A VOICE FROM IRELAND UPON
MATTERS OF PRESENT CONCERN;
ADDRESSED TO LEGISLATORS
AND MINISTERS OF STATE**



VOICE FROM IRELAND

UPON

MATTERS OF PRESENT CONCERN.

ADDRESSED TO

LEGISLATORS AND MINISTERS OF STATE.

BY

DANIEL O'ROURKE, ESQ.

"Dare you for this adjure the civil sword,
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a classic hierarchy."—MILTON.

LONDON :

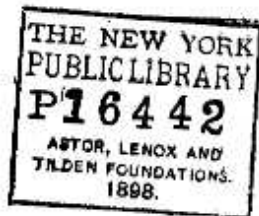
JAMES RIDGWAY AND SONS, PICCADILLY.

1837.

J. W. D.

CSD

CHELSEA:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLATCH, 23, MARKET STREET,
SLOANE STREET.



A VOICE FROM IRELAND,

§c.

AFTER a long season of misrule, commensurate at least with English domination, Ireland has at length put forth her voice, and in accents sufficiently loud and intelligible to make herself heard and understood. Whether it will be responded to by our legislators is still a matter of doubtful speculation; and the more so when we consider the deeply-seated nature of the disease, and the limited view that is taken of it by statesmen in general. That the case is an urgent one seems to be generally admitted, although the spirit of procrastination that hovers over our councils betokens a cloudless atmosphere rather than one that is charged with the elements of civil strife.

With a fine country and a grateful soil affording every advantage for cultivation and commerce, and with a hardy race of people, easily aroused by a sense of wrong, but susceptible of the kind and generous feelings, nature seems to have thrown away her choicest gifts, and to have inflicted a curse upon the land instead of a blessing. Yet it is not the work of nature but of misgovernment, arising really but not necessarily from British connection; the result of bad policy and of unjust laws, originating in ignorance and rapacity, and persevered in from the same causes. Whether the condition of the people would have been materially improved had they remained independent is now only matter of speculation; but as the capabilities of nature are the same in Ireland as in England, there is no reason to suppose that civilization and improvement would not have taken the same course, the facilities for both being equal. Something, indeed, may be laid to the account of the reformation in religion, which made but small progress in Ireland; but the practical working of the two systems, when united with state-policy, is not so widely different as to produce the enormous disparity between the two countries which some religious zealots may imagine.

In order to illustrate the subject we will suppose a case. The island of Great Britain shall be conquered by some European nation, the Russians for instance, who shall plant a colony, and partition the lands of the natives amongst their own nobles. The

Greek religion as a matter of course becomes established by law, with full possession of the tithes and other church-property, no person of any other faith being allowed to acquire land, to be eligible to serve in any department of the state, nor to assume any command naval or military; for the Greek Church being that of the state is paramount to the religion of the majority. Can it be supposed that under such circumstances England would be the prosperous country she now is? Or rather, would not the land groan beneath the burden of its taskmasters, and the people become mere hewers of wood and drawers of water? Yet just so has it been with Ireland. Treated as a conquered country, the land confiscated to foreigners, tithes and church-property alienated to the clergy of a different religion, the natives reduced to a state of villanage, proscribed the right of acquiring property or of holding any other than menial offices in the land that gave them birth, it is not surprising that ignorance and poverty should overspread the people, nor that they should pant for an opportunity of hurling vengeance upon their oppressors.

That the condition of the Irish people was exactly such as is here described is within the recollection of persons now living; and the statute-book will proclaim it to posterity. If their political state has undergone some amelioration of late years, it has been doled out too grudgingly and evidently too late to be of any essential benefit. Besides, their long accumulated wrongs have struck too deep into the soil,

and have entwined too closely around the fabric of English society to warrant the hope that Ireland will ever by concession acquire a government founded on the laws of nature, of reason and of common sense. I wish for the sake of both countries that it may be otherwise, for they possess interests in common; and if governed by equal laws and just institutions there would be no impediment to a cordial union. But we are not to be misled by the fair speeches and fair promises of mistaken men, any more than by the vapouring of those who lie in wait to deceive. The wounds of a nation may be cauterized, but we miscalculate if we think by a local application to cure a disorder that is generated in the system. We may close the wound in one place, but the disease will break out in another. To grapple with it effectually requires not only talents and penetration, but a degree of moral courage that falls to the lot of few statesmen; for there is much prejudice to overcome, and many adverse interests to deal with. The pacification of Ireland can be effected by no ordinary mind; it must be the triumph of reason and justice over bigotry and selfishness.

“ Who sees her dismal wrongs but would demand,
What barbarous invader ruled the land? ”

Short-sighted politicians are too apt to over-rate the value of a particular measure which however just and proper in itself is only of partial benefit, and

confined in its operation. The Catholic Relief Bill was a case of this sort. Sanguine men lauded it as a talisman, that was to quiet discontent and produce a harvest of human happiness; and they were led into this error by some who were too cunning to undeceive them. Although predicated as a final measure, (and its full and comprehensive character warranted the term so far as the subject-matter of it was concerned,) yet those who took a larger view of human affairs knew well that it would neither instruct the ignorant, feed the hungry, nor clothe the naked; that it left a nation of Catholics under the legal control of a handful of Protestants; and that it overlooked those questions of internal policy which are of more importance to a people than an attention to the squabbles of adverse sects. The measure was in itself only an act of justice, a partial restoration of rights that had been withheld by legal violence, so ill-timed indeed as to be a surrender of power that could be no longer retained, the grace of concession being lost to the government and forced from it by a people greatly in advance in intelligence.* Such indeed has always

* This measure, however, partook of the same sectarian spirit that mars all our legislation, and renders it so far inoperative. By one of the clauses Roman Catholic legislators were restrained from voting upon any measure affecting the Church of England, as if they were sent to parliament by their constituents to waive their civil rights and become the puppets of a religion they abhor. But a provision so contrary to reason and common sense, although submitted to from motives of policy, could not be otherwise than futile;