

# **RECOLLECTIONS OF THE IRISH CHURCH**

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Recollections of the Irish Church by Richard Sinclair Brooke

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**RICHARD SINCLAIR BROOKE**

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“THERE be two kinds of Christian Righteousness,” the one, without us, which we have by imputation ; the other in us, which consisteth of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and other Christian virtues ; and St. James doth prove that Abraham had not only the one, because the thing believed was imputed unto him for Righteousness, but also the other, because he offered up his son : God giveth us both—the one justice, and the other ; the one, by accepting us for Righteous in Christ, the other, by working Christian Righteousness in us. For—“ Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury, whatsoever, it is our comfort and our wisdom ; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered ; that God hath made himself the Son of Man, and that men are made the Righteousness of God.”—From Mr. Richard Hooker's *Discourse on Justification*.

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CHAPTER I.

TRAVELLERS in Africa tell us that when through design or accident, one of the large ant nests which are found on the banks of the Senegal River is destroyed, the animals immediately commence to construct another on the same spot, and such is their spirit of industry, that in a brief time the "hill," which had been once their habitation, is almost reproduced, and at once occupied again by the little architects as their home.

The same spirit appears among human beings ; witness the rapid re-edification of Chicago, and more recently that of Paris.

And in like manner has our Irish Church acted



now for seven years, wisely and patiently building up her desolations, and if "Diruit" may express the work of her opponents, she can meekly, yet determinately, assume as her motto the word "Ædificat," and act upon it with earnestness.

Plutarch tells us, that when Alcibiades was condemned to suffer death by the Athenians, he merely said, "I shall make them sensible that I am still alive;" and this, also, our disestablished Irish Church, is acting out, but in a humbler spirit than that of the haughty Greek; she exhibits proofs of undeniable vitality; her funds, we trust, are increasing, though still very inadequate; her machinery is certainly fast forming and fitting together; her churches are well and sacredly served, and many new ones building; her clergy are, in the main, thoroughly orthodox, attached to the doctrines which Ussher and Bedell preached, and for which Latimer and Hooper died; and some of the most religious of her ministers, and most influential from character and learning, now wear her mitres; there is an increase of harmony between her clergy and her laity; there is an increase of harmony between the clergy themselves; witness the proceedings of the Synod of 1877, which resembled a happy sailing over a Pacific Ocean, terminating in an united anchorage in a port of peace. From the calm heights of her growing stability, she can look back on the day

of her deep trial with patience and good temper, yet with clear discrimination as to the merits and results of the whole transaction.<sup>1</sup> At that time many arguments were advanced in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment, and all founded on what were called heavy "GRIEVANCES," which were promised due consideration and redress. One of these grievances—surely a sentimental one—was, that the Established Church was to the Roman Catholic "a badge of conquest." If this were the fact, so would be the Queen's Viceroy at the Castle, the Queen's Soldiers in the Barracks, and the Queen's Ship of War in Kingstown Harbour. During the debate, and when the public were discussing the subject, a lively Englishman said to an Irish carman, "Here is your fare—half a crown—I hope you wont consider the Queen's head on it as a 'badge of conquest.'" "Not a bit," was the answer, "and to show you my sincerity, if your honour has another half-crown in your pocket, I'll take it."

It is a fact that thousands of Irish people

<sup>1</sup> In the conduct and bearing of the Irish clergy at present, we are reminded of the advice given to the Athenians by a Greek orator—

"Ὡς πλειστους επιθυμειν των

"παροτων νυν πραγματος."

LYSIAS, *Orat.* 24.

That as many as possible should be content with (or desire) things as they now are.

believed that the entire tithe rent-charge was to be swept away and extinguished by Mr. Gladstone's Act. This would have been doubtless a relief to some, especially to the Roman Catholics, who pay of it £30,000<sup>1</sup> a year ; but I need not say that this tithe tax, amounting to £600,000, is still exacted, and paid to the Government—being transferred to them from the clergy, whose hereditary property it had been for centuries.

Another grievance which the Bill was to redress, and one oft and pathetically declaimed on by Romanist and Radical in the House of Commons, was the Supremacy of the Irish Church over that of Rome. Now, has this grievance been redressed, and has the recent legislation had the effect of levelling up the Roman Catholic to an equal platform with the Irish Protestant Church ? We would deliberately say *It has not*. Truly, it is a delicate matter to discuss ; but it must be plain to every observer that the two Churches still remain immeasurably apart, and statesmanship has failed to assimilate them ; no doubt, if "siller could do it," as the Laird o' Dumbiedikes said, it would have been done, for the Liberal Government has poured thousands into the Roman Catholic chests, to enable them to "level up," and Mr. Butt, the priests' friend and ally—

"Oh quam mutatus ab illo  
Qui quondam."—

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<sup>1</sup> Most unjustly, to my mind.