

55, ECCLES-STREET, DUBLIN,

9th November, 1865.

VERY REV. SIR,

I beg to remind you that Sunday, the 19th inst., is the day fixed by all the Bishops of Ireland for the Annual Collection for the Catholic University. You will, therefore, please to announce it on Sunday next, 12th inst. At the same time you can read this letter, and such portions of Doctor Woodlock's Circular as you deem advisable; and you will explain to your flock the importance of the question of Catholic Education, in all its branches, and exhort parents to give a Catholic education to their children.

I have so often addressed you on this momentous subject, that, on the present occasion, it is not necessary for me to add many words; but you will remark that our Catholic University is, in truth, the embodiment of the great principle for which we contend. That principle is: That the Catholic Church, and she alone, has a right to control the education of her children; not as if we contended, although this absurd doctrine has been attributed to us, that there is a Catholic science of mathematics, of law, of medicine, but because we believe that Catholic youth learning mathematics, or law, or medicine, ought to be led by the hand by their mother, the Church, lest, while pursuing worldly knowledge, they might not learn those things which every Catholic ought to know, or, perchance, they might be seduced into the paths of error, to the injury of their immortal souls. Neither do we contend that there are no learned men, no able professors, outside of the true Church; but we believe that the teachers of Catholic youth ought to be men who,

in their lives, as well as in their teaching, will impress on the youthful mind love for religion and for the Church, which, as Catholics, we hold to be its infallible guardian.

We do not say that none but Catholics can teach sound moral principles: pagan philosophers propounded many such truths, and among the Romans of old are to be found striking examples of virtue; but we hold that pagan morality is not what we ought to aim at in educating youth. What we desire is, the formation of that Christian character, whose virtues are grounded on Catholic faith—are worked out in hope by the fulfilment of the duties it prescribes—and are completed in that perfect charity, which cannot be found on earth, except in the bosom of Christ's Spouse, the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. These are the principles we contend for, when we seek for Catholic education for Catholic youth: we declare our unwillingness to rest satisfied with a system which attempts to educate or develop the youthful mind, and heart, and imagination, and every spiritual power, without reference to the "one thing necessary;" without allusion to God's great message to man, and to His messenger, the Church; without mention of man's only business on earth, to serve his Creator "from the days of youth"; without guarding him against the danger of turning knowledge—the best of God's gifts, in the order of nature—against the Almighty Himself, the most merciful Giver of all good gifts. These are the principles embodied in our Catholic University; by maintaining the University, our people will declare their adhesion to these principles; and when it shall have been placed on a permanent footing of independence, we shall have in the midst of us an institution, whose office it will always be to promote these principles, to bring up the rising generations of Catholics in them, and thus to make them worthy children of our Catholic country. And such an institution will be not merely the teacher of the higher classes, but also the bulwark of sound principles of education in all classes.

Although yet in its infancy, our University has already given us several most important works: I need only allude to the invaluable volume of the late lamented Professor O'Curry, on the Manuscript Materials of Irish History; a work which is a rich storehouse for all who are desirous of cultivating a knowledge of ancient Ireland—the island of the saints and the learned. The excellent lectures of Professor Robertson on literary and historical subjects, have extorted the praise even of those most ready to cavil at works written in such a truly Catholic spirit. The learned and most recondite papers on various literary and scientific topics, which have filled the eight volumes of the “Atlantis,” have won for that periodical, and for its conductors—the professional staff of our University—the esteem of every learned body in Christendom, including the Imperial Society of St. Petersburg, and the learned academies of the United States.

But our Catholic University has done still more; it has already, within the few short years of its existence, reared many excellent professional men, second in learning to none of their age and position, and distinguished for their Christian lives. Even some of you, reverend brethren, have reason to congratulate yourselves and your flocks on having in the midst of you medical practitioners, who, being trained in our Catholic School of Medicine, know and, in the spirit of faith and true charity, fulfil the duties of a Christian physician, especially in regard to our poor and suffering brothers. Many, also, of the promising young men who have made their studies in the Catholic University, in one or other of its numerous departments, are now engaged in important branches of the public service, and are not the less faithful to their onerous duties towards their country and towards society, or rather discharge these duties with all the more advantage to others, as well as to their own souls, because they have been taught under a system which makes religion and duty to God the foundation of all that is good in man.

On the other hand, see what has been done by the Protestant and the godless systems, which have hitherto been alone upheld amongst us by public authority. I shall not speak of the innumerable Catholics who have lost their faith, and become Protestants, in the Protestant University of Dublin; of the humble Catholic youths, from the distant counties of Cork, or Kerry, or Clare, or from much nearer the walls of Trinity College, whose talents won sizarships for them; whose faith gradually withered away in the (to Catholics blighting) atmosphere of that great Protestant institution, until the religious principles could no longer stand against the temptation of a scholarship, or some distinction unattainable without apostacy from the faith of their fathers. I shall not speak of the unknown hundreds of Catholics, who, within those walls, gave up the practice of their religion; and if they did not cease to call themselves Catholics, ceased to glory in that name which is the noblest title a son of Catholic Ireland can bear. I shall not tell you of the heart-rending facts which have come under our own knowledge, respecting Catholic youths educated in the Protestant University—of the promises of religious youth blasted, of the hopes of good mothers turned to despair, of the horrible death-scenes, too horrible to be described, unrelieved even by one ray of hope; I shall only remind you that within the last few months, one of the teachers of youth, perhaps of Catholic youth, in that institution, has publicly denied the eternity of the torments of hell, and has thus endeavoured to destroy in the minds of the young men whom his University educates, one of the most powerful motives for curbing their passions, for avoiding sin, for hesitating to rush headlong into the abyss of infidelity.

As for the other University legally existing in Ireland, unhappily its fruits too begin to be manifest. Its colleges were not long in existence, when, as you know, a contribution to history came forth from the halls of one of them; a contribution how different from those of our Catholic University, to which I have alluded—I mean Professor de Vericour's

History of European Civilization. Suffice it to say, that the author is loud in his eulogies of the first French Revolution, and places our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—whose name be praised for ever!—nearly on a level with Mahomet and Luther. Well may a distinguished member of the Queen's University say, that history in such a place is an "absurdity;" it is worse, it is a blasphemy. But how is a young Catholic to be educated without history, unless, forsooth, we wish to multiply the melancholy instances of ignorance of that great science, or rather of knowledge of Protestant perversions of it, and belief in those perversions, not long since exhibited in our city?

And that godless system has, alas! brought forth its children too. Three or four years ago, the public journals announced, that in one of its colleges, which is represented as the most successful, her Majesty's representatives were publicly insulted in the grossest manner, and it was feared that one or more of them would have been treated with personal violence. But we have to deal especially with the Catholic youth who frequent these colleges. Of these young men, many of them innocent and unsuspecting when they first entered those halls, how many, alas! have made shipwreck of their faith or morals, or of both faith and morals! A few years ago, two youths, brothers, were placed in one of these colleges. They had been brought up in the practice of our holy religion, and trained by good parents to every virtue. Alas! they were not long in the college when they fell away from these early observances. In a year or two, one of them contracted a mortal illness, and came home to his afflicted friends to die. His good mother, seeing the dreadful hour approaching, sent for the priest of the parish; but the unhappy youth refused to see him. Filled with anguish, and with concern for the soul of her child, the mother flew to a holy religious house, at a considerable distance from her home, and conjured one of those worthy priests to come with her; but his visit produced no influence on the dying infidel. He died profess-

ing his utter disbelief in all religion, and went down into his unhallowed grave even as the beast of the field, who knows not its Maker! It was thought this dreadful scene would have produced on his brother a lasting impression for good. The second youth returned to college, and spent some further time there. He is now, and has been for some years, the declared apostle of irreligion and socialism, the enemy of the Catholic Church and of her ministers, the unscrupulous calumniator of all who would wish to stop him in his career of wickedness. Alas! even in faithful Ireland, that suffered so much for the faith, such are the bitter fruits of a godless education. May God preserve us from such fearful scourges and calamities!

I trust, Very Reverend dear Sir, that the examples referred to will suffice to show you and your people the bitter fruits we must expect from any system which would educate Catholics otherwise than on the principles of our holy religion. On the other hand, the advantages which we are beginning to derive, on a limited scale, from the Catholic University, prove the great blessings of which it will be the source in years to come and to generations yet unborn. It only remains for us to do our part, by supporting the institution according to our means; and especially at this moment, when the Bishops of Ireland are anxious to develop it more and more, so as to make it worthy of the position in which the Holy Father has placed it, at the head of Catholic education in Ireland.

I shall say no more on this subject, being confident that your exertions will have the effect of making the collection more successful this year, when the good hopes mentioned by Dr. Woodlock open before us, than it has ever been for the past.

Before I conclude, I beg to remind you that next Tuesday, the 14th inst., will be the feast of our great patron S. Laurence O'Toole. Exhort the faithful to honour his memory on that day, and to place themselves under his powerful protection, begging of him to preserve us from

the cholera, and all contagious diseases which are injurious to the bodily health of man; and still more from heresy and indifferentism to all religion, godless education, and all the evil combinations which destroy the immortal souls that have been purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament may be given on S. Laurence's Day, the Sunday within the Octave, and on the Octave itself. On Sunday, the 19th, when you are about to make the collection for the University, remind your flocks of the zeal of S. Laurence for the purity of the faith, of his works of mortification, of his spirit of prayer, and of his attachment to the Catholic Church and its practices; and impress upon their minds that it is only by securing for the rising generations a Catholic education they can expect to see saints like S. Laurence spring up among us.

Wishing you and your flocks every blessing,

I remain,

Your faithful servant in Christ,

✠ PAUL CULLEN.

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Wishing you and your flock every blessing,
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