

Sale of Irish Catholic Children.

Besides these two classes—transported “criminals” and “free” emigrants—there was another. Notwithstanding Swift’s information from the “merchants,” it is certain that even while he was writing, and for long after, a brisk business was carried on in the deportation and sale of Irish Catholic children under twelve years of age. It had begun after the defeat of the Confederacy in 1642. Prendergast, whose work on the Cromwellian settlement I have not at hand, furnishes the evidence for that period. O’Hanlon (*History of the United States*, page 47 ss.) estimates that between 1641 and 1654 no less than 100,000 Irish Catholics of all ages were sold into the West Indies and North American colonies. Later on “the crowded exportation of Irish Catholics was a frequent event” (Lingard, xi, 131). That this traffic embraced children and that they were a very “saleable commodity” in New England, at the very time Swift was writing his essay, is shown in the following passage quoted by Dr. Walsh from Mrs. Johnson, a New England Protestant writer (*Narrative of the Capture*):

“In the year 1730 (Swift wrote in 1729) my great-uncle, Col. Johnson Willard, while at Boston was invited to take a walk on the Long Wharf to view some transports who had just landed from Ireland. A number of gentlemen present were viewing the exercise of some lads who were placed on shore to exhibit their activity to those who wished to purchase. My uncle spied a boy of some activity of about *ten years of age*, who was the only one in the crew who spoke English. He bargained for him. I have never been able to learn the price; but as he was afterwards my husband I am willing to suppose that it was a considerable sum. He questioned the boy about his parentage and descent, etc.”

The story elicited makes it very clear that frequently these boys, and probably the girls, were stolen from their families. “In 1748,” she says, “Gov. Shirley gave him a lieutenant’s commission.” In the period 1641—1654 the merchants of Bristol had agents treating with the Government for Irish men, women, and children to be sent to the West Indies and New England. At last, when those dealers in Irish flesh became bolder and began to seize English children and force them on board their slave ships, the Government revoked the orders. But from Mrs. Johnson’s testimony it is clear that nearly three generations later the traffic was still going on in Ireland. The law was evaded easily.

Lost to the Catholic Church.

The descendants of these people of every class (I am now speaking only of New England) have been all lost to the Church. Absolutely all. And but a very small portion of their descendants can be traced to-day in the American Protestant population. The only indication of their Irish origin would be the surname. But in the case of the children it may be assumed that they were given the name of the family into which they were purchased or even adopted. Mrs. Johnson’s husband received the name of her great-uncle. Again, probably not five per cent. of those Irish immigrants knew their names in English. Even if there was a will to preserve the Irish name, it was written down as it sounded (in Gaelic) to the Puritan ear, or some English name that sounded like it was written in its stead.

Italian Caseys and Murphys.

We have abundant evidence of how such things happen to-day in America, where one finds Italian *Caseys* and *Murphys*, etc. But it is also certain that the name was frequently changed deliberately to conceal the Irish Catholic origin. They did, however, undoubtedly change the character of the original Puritan population. Many writers of non-Irish origin have noted this of American character in general. “The average American,” wrote one of these a few years ago, “so far as I have known him, even when he has not an Irish name, is in character more Irish than he is English.” Bill Nye, the famous humorist, was of the same opinion. And the opinion of Chief Justice Taft is not very different. I quoted his words some time ago in the *Catholic Times*.

As I have said, the subject is vast and complicated, and I fear I have already strained the editor’s patience and space. I shall only add at present one more suggestive argument.

Colonial Militia Muster Rolls.

Notably Dr. Walsh, but also some other Catholic writers, have in recent years shown that in several New England towns whose archives they investigated the muster roll of the local colonial militia contained a majority of Irish-Gaelic surnames; and in one or two cases I can now recall they were nearly all Irish. If Ireland’s right to order her own life, and to care for and protect her own people, had been conceded in 1641 instead of in 1921, the descendants of these people would to-day be Catholic, if not in New England, then somewhere else. No home government with a thought for the welfare of its own people would have allowed their emigration in the manner in which Irish emigration has taken place down even to last year. Even throughout the entire nineteenth century it was always a disorganised, heartless, purposeless dumping on foreign shores of an unprotected population, pure, simple, and religious, but totally ignorant of where they were going and of the dangers of faith and morals that awaited them. *Misericordia Dei quod non sumus consumpti*.

Obituary

MRS. BRIDGET McLAUGHLAN, TIMARU.

The death occurred at her residence, North Street, Timaru, on the 15th ult., of Mrs. Bridget McLaughlan (writes a correspondent). The late Mrs. McLaughlan was born in Co. Tipperary, Ireland, and came to New Zealand some 50 years ago, landing at the Bluff. After her marriage she resided for a time at Winton, then at Dipton and Edendale, and latterly at Timaru. By her kindly and charitable disposition she made numerous friends in all the places in which she had lived. An exemplary Catholic mother, she had special devotion to the holy Rosary; and attendance at Holy Mass was most conscientiously observed by her. In failing health during the past four years her illness became acute during the past twelve months. Her greatest desire during her declining days was to be given sufficient strength to attend Mass, and the privilege of being able to attend Mass on Christmas Day and on Palm Sunday was granted her. She was attended during her final illness by Rev. Father Barra, and died fortified by all the rites of Holy Church. Requiem Mass for the repose of her soul was celebrated in the Church of the Sacred Heart, by Father Barra, who also officiated at the interment in the Timaru Cemetery. The late Mrs. McLaughlan’s husband predeceased her some eight months ago. A family of six sons mourn their loss.—R.I.P.

MRS. ELLEN BOURKE, HAMILTON.

The death is announced of Mrs. Ellen Bourke, wife of Mr. John Bourke, of Hamilton, Waikato. The late Mrs. Bourke (writes a correspondent) was born in Downpatrick, Ireland, 64 years ago. She arrived in Auckland in 1874, and shortly afterwards came to Hamilton. In 1883 she was married in old St. Mary’s Church, Hamilton, to Mr. John Bourke, of the Thames. God blessed the marriage with eight daughters, three of whom gave their life to God in religion, becoming teachers in the Order of Our Lady of the Missions, Christchurch. Six of the eight children survive their late mother. The deceased was descended from the best of Irish stock, and was a niece of the late Father Hugh O’Neill (parish priest of Kileo, Co. Down), a true Irish patriot and a man of most saintly memory. Refinement and solid piety were two of the outstanding gifts of the deceased, and these two characteristics she has handed on to her children. Viewed in the light of present happenings, the sacrifices the late Mrs. Bourke made for religion seems almost incredible, and only a soul of the strongest faith would have made them. Her husband and children who are left to mourn their loss must needs be comforted by the knowledge that God who rewards the cup of cold water given in His name will reward a hundred fold, a life of faith such as was led by the deceased. In her last days on earth she was comforted by all the rites of Holy Church, and by the frequent visits of the priests and nuns, and even by a visit of his Lordship Bishop Liston, who happened to pass through Hamilton at the time.—R.I.P.

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