The battlefield against popery: emigration and sectarian rivalry

‘If each priest were to take a wife about four thousand children would be born within the year, forty thousand would be added to the birth rate in ten years. Ireland can be saved by her priesthood!’

George Moore, The Untilled Field (1903)

Thus concluded the fictional Fr MacTurnan, so petrified that ‘Ireland would become a Protestant country if the Catholic emigration did not cease’, that he dispatched to Rome an heretical suggestion of rescinding clerical celibacy. This may have been a slice of farce typical of the modern Irish short story (of which Moore is often deemed the first exponent), but the demographic fears underlying the plot were not without a grounding in reality. While the previous chapters have focused on the various forms of influence which clergy exercised, and failed to exercise, over emigration, a significant strand of clerical commentary on the subject concerned the opposite: the effect the exodus might have on the churches, and more specifically, on the balance of power between them. This was a necessarily combative discourse, based on zero-sum assumptions that ‘the Protestant interest’ was strengthened by every Catholic departure and vice versa. It was manifested most virulently in the middle decades of the century and was inextricably bound up with the contemporaneous efforts of evangelical Protestants to convert Catholics in the so-called ‘Second Reformation’. Partly by mining the wealth of controversial written material produced by Protestant missionaries and their Catholic counterparts during this period, this chapter will attempt to ascertain how clergy believed their churches might be impacted by the substantial loss of population which emigration represented.

Between 1849 and 1852, as the immediacy of the Famine crisis dissipated and priests returned to being primarily religious pastors...
rather than relief organisers, many of them began evaluating how the dust of five years of death and emigration had settled on their parishes. Even before the official census revealed a deficit of two million people – some 20% of the total pre-Famine population – despairing clerics from all over the country roughly enumerated their own local losses. Fr Heslin, a Leitrim priest informed the *Freeman’s Journal* that since 1844 his congregation had diminished by ‘fully one-fourth’. Michael Coghlan, parish priest in Collinstown, Co. Westmeath, had seen ‘the whole of what may be truly called the “flower of the flock”’ depart. One Fr O’Dogherty told an Omagh Tenant Right meeting that his parish, one of the largest in Ulster, had ‘diminished by several thousands’. Another such meeting at Westport was addressed by a Fr Ward who asserted that ‘considerably more than one-half were gone’ from his parish ‘by famine, by emigration and by extermination from the face of the country’. The most alarming estimate, however, came from an anonymous priest near Clonmel, who caused widespread shock with his revelation that ‘two-thirds of my own congregation have departed to the workhouse or gone to America’. That much of this came prior to the year of most departures – 1852 – suggests many of these parishes had yet to reach their ultimate low.

The practical consequences were soon evident in parish life. Reports of chapels closed because of congregations ‘annihilated’ in parts of Co. Clare were the thin end of a very long wedge. A traveller in more prosperous Co. Wicklow found that ‘the chapel of Killaveny, a large building, was not one half so full on Sundays as formerly’. Similarly, one letter-writer informed emigrant relatives that ‘one ile of our Chapel would hold our congregation on Sunday at present’, while Archdeacon Fitzgerald of Limerick relayed the sombre fact that the priest of a neighbouring parish now employed a man ‘to scrape the floor of his chapel, which, without such care, would soon come to be covered with grass, as his congregation consists on Sundays of a few files ranged along the chapel walls, leaving the centre of the aisles wholly unoccupied. Six years ago the same chapel was full to suffocation’. With such reports, it is unsurprising that poets felt inspired, one contributor to the *Nation* composing a lament for ‘The deserted chapel’.
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I was, God help me, very proud of my flock seven or eight years ago. I rejoiced – I felt perhaps an unbecoming pride – when they crowded around my chapel in their holiday finery. [...] My chapel always overflowed – there is hardly a third of it occupied at present – and the showy gowns and ribbons, and the flashy kerchiefs have almost disappeared. There is, instead, squalor and rags, tottering old age and no children.15

On a personal level, for a clergy wholly dependent on the offerings of their parishioners, these scenes were surely frightening. The Famine and continued emigration, as the Nation later observed, ‘robbed the priest of his dues.’16 “The farmers who have any means are emigrating, and did emigrate,’ announced the parish priest of Ballycastle, Co. Mayo, ‘I have only the paupers, and as many as have any money they are very cautious to retain the same.’17 The usual sacramental offerings could not be fallen back on. As emigration continued to swallow the younger generations, marriages were few and far between, or even ‘nil’ as one priest told the Cork Examiner.18 Consequently Baptisms were, as Fr Heslin and others noted, ‘not one to four of former years’, i.e. less than a quarter of the normal baptismal dues.19 At least two chapels actually closed because reduced congregations proved unable to support their priests, and several other clergymen expressed a desperate fear that they might eventually be forced to follow or even ‘accompany the remnant of their flocks abroad’ although, as has been seen, few followed through with the idea.20 For a brief time, the feeling that emigration meant Ireland was, in one Irish Conservative MP’s triumphant words, ‘ceasing to be a Catholic nation’ seemed all too plausible a reality to many priests.21

This prospect provoked strident reactions from Catholic and Protestant alike. A significant rump of Catholic priests, particularly younger curates, were politicised by it. The advent of the Tenant League in 1850, which saw land reform as the remedy for Irish ills, was in great measure hastened by clerical involvement, urged on by the argument persuasively put forward by ‘A Munster priest’ to his colleagues in the pages of the Nation: “The rapidly decreasing incomes of your respective parishes prove to you how deeply you are concerned, if your people go on thus to fill up the workhouses, and fly in emigrant ships from the wreck which your country is fast becoming.’ ‘Indifference,’ he warned, ‘is a terrible crime at such a crisis.’22 Equally, the Catholic Defence Association, an organisation founded a year later with more narrowly religious grievances, and which, despite attempts to broker
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co-operation (thwarted by Archbishop Cullen), took much of the clerical wind out of the Tenant League’s sails, attracted its share of priestly support by invoking the demographic price of inaction: ‘If the people continue to pour out of the country with the same frantic haste as at present,’ an early supportive editorial observed, ‘there will soon be no priests for the missions, no congregations to preach to, no students for the University, no people to hold Diocesan jurisdiction over’. While the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, rather dramatically painted as the penal laws redux, could not, as Cullen found, rouse many parish clergy to anger, the rapid depletion of their own congregations clearly could.

In spite of parallel Presbyterian and Anglican congregational losses and, in some cases, consequent financial straits, and despite the Nation’s and the Tenant League’s efforts to bind Presbyterian and Catholic clergy together on the issue of emigration, some of the more trenchant Protestant commentators saw in all of this activity the selfish efforts of priests set merely on retaining their own income and status. ‘The Roman Catholic clergy sustain a severe loss and drawback in their pecuniary resources, in consequence of the tide of emigration continuing to roll unabated,’ wrote the Protestant Limerick Chronicle approvingly in 1852. The Dublin Evening Mail, likening clerical attempts to stop emigration with efforts to ‘restrain the ocean with a pitchfork’, suggested that the priests would soon have to emigrate themselves, thus ridding Ireland of ‘a most intolerable incubus’. In her letters from Ireland in the same year, Harriet Martineau suggested that, as a result, the ‘priesthood is obviously destined to decline’, notwithstanding that ‘it may become more noisy and quarrelsome as it declines’. This became a recurring theme. Catholic priests’ opposition to emigration during its later peaks in the early 1860s and the early 1880s were characterised as a defence of their personal income and influence. The Nun of Kenmare, Mary Francis Cusack, attacked this accusation head-on. ‘The Irish priest’s income is of very little moment to him,’ she asserted, ‘and the only influence he desires is to keep his people from the eternal ruin which is too often the sure end of wholesale emigration.’

Even as late as 1880, however, such outright denial was disingenuous. As emigration proceeded from areas that were already the poorest, particularly in the west and south, it is clear that many parishes and dioceses did struggle financially, and that the fact preyed on clerical minds. The parish priest of Cratloe, Co. Clare told Kirby...
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in 1863 that having lost more than half of his congregation to emigration, he was hardly able to support himself, let alone his new curate. The Archbishop of Cashel, Patrick Leahy, elaborated on the problem as he saw it:

The revenues of the priests and more especially of the bishops in the south of Ireland are diminished to a large amount. [...] The revenues of Cashel in the Irish famine year were all at once knocked down full one half while the expenses of living were in a manner doubled. The revenue of Cashel on my accession were therefore very much reduced and within the last two or three years they are still further reduced by another hundred or two & so that it is no easy matter to manage, while demands of every kind are multiplying expenses every day.

Edward McGennis, the Bishop of Kilmore, later confirmed that, as renewed emigration had caused ‘a great decrease of marriages and deaths’, the outlook was ‘not encouraging’. That these later complaints were expressed privately, however, demonstrates an acquired reluctance to provide hostages to fortune in a climate of sectarian animosity.

Nevertheless, while reductions in offerings can only have intensified many Catholic priests’ dismay over emigration, it was not their chief reason to regret their departed parishioners. In fact this dismay was simply an alarming symptom of the primary malaise. Arnold Schrier has suggested, following Cusack and others, that fears over emigrants’ faith were of much greater concern to priests than loss of dues. Measured by print acreage alone, that might well be borne out. Worries over emigrant welfare of one kind or another dominated most public clerical commentary on the subject. However, as we have seen, the action following on from this powerful rhetoric left something to be desired. It was arguably, therefore, a more general, usually privately expressed concern over the fate of the church in Ireland that lay behind some of the most fervent anti-emigration sentiment. If Leahy’s lament that ‘in a short time the Protestants will outnumber us’ and if so ‘we are lost, as a Nation, as a Catholic nation’ represented the pessimistic end of a spectrum, the more bullish reaction of James Redmond to another priest’s suggestion that the Protestant population was gaining ground on the Catholic – ‘At the worst of times I maintained we more than held our own’ – was at the other. Both show, however, that at times the possibility of Ireland losing its majority Catholic status, of ‘the faithful [being] supplanted by the proselytised’, was widely entertained. It followed that mass emigration, as the main ongoing agent...
of such an outcome, had therefore to be resisted, condemned and lamented by Catholic clerical spokesmen.

It was equally disingenuous, therefore, for Protestant commentators to claim that only a mercenary interest in retaining a steady stream of financial dues prompted priests’ dismay over emigration, since there had been an active effort on behalf of evangelical Protestant clergy to bring about the very scenario that Catholic clergy most feared. As the name suggests, the second or new ‘Reformation’ was regarded by its protagonists as an overdue attempt to complete what had failed in the seventeenth century, by reconciling Ireland to ‘Protestant truth’.37 In the end, it was singularly unsuccessful, but, as we will see, emigration played a significant role in its messy resolution, and featured prominently in the various narratives constructed for and against it during its lifetime. In a sense, therefore, the controversy can be seen as a distillation of wider clerical attitudes: many Protestant and Catholic conceptions of migration and how it might affect their churches are present here, albeit often in their most extreme form. This section will explore them.

The new religious movement had its immediate roots in the rise of Irish evangelicalism in the late eighteenth century, and began in earnest in the 1820s when a section of Church of Ireland clergy, encouraged by the spectre of Catholic Emancipation, embraced what had hitherto been the marginal preserve of Methodists and Nonconformists.38 The initial peak came in 1822–27, when Bishops William Magee and James Doyle were prominent advocates on either side of an often bitter theological pamphlet debate.39 Over the ensuing two decades, the controversy this debate created fed into the proselytising activities of several evangelical missionary societies. These included the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language (henceforth the Irish Society), the Islands and Coast Society, the Presbyterian Church’s Mission to Roman Catholics (or Home Mission), and perhaps most famously, the Society for Irish Church Missions. All of these organisations laboured primarily in Connacht and along the western seaboard, although at various points there were significant pockets of activity in counties Cavan, Offaly, Tipperary and Dublin.

The primary motivation of the missionaries, as Donal Kerr has identified, was ‘to rescue the people from the darkness of popery and priestcraft and to bring them to the pure light of the gospel’, although this development was also expected, in turn, to render a majority.
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Protestant Ireland more amenable to political integration.\textsuperscript{40} To this end the societies’ activities involved the employment of ‘colporteurs’ who distributed bibles, and scripture readers who recited them, and, perhaps most importantly, the provision of education to Catholic children in mission schools. Where appropriate, these labours were carried on through the Irish language. Significantly, the pupils at such schools, in common with those adults who entertained bible readers, did not always formally renounce their Catholic faith. However, Protestant missionaries tended to regard them as being on the brink of conversion, and for many Catholic priests, attendance alone signified an egregious ‘perversion.’

This initial missionary push appears to have had moderate success, and a number of formal conversions certainly did take place. As Desmond Bowen has outlined, these could cause great tension in a locality, representing as they did, ‘a shift in the uneasy balance of power between the two peoples.’\textsuperscript{41} Consequently, the idea of gathering converts in protective ‘colonies’ began to take hold in the mid-1830s, with the most infamous and enduring examples springing up at Dugort on Achill Island, at the instigation of the Rev. Edward Nangle, and on the Dingle peninsula, where a number were established with the enthusiastic aid of Lord Ventry. While Irene Whelan has traced this development to the influence of the previously discussed Protestant Colonisation Society, the evidence is too faint to make the link conclusively. Indeed, it seems equally likely that the very nature of the missions – led by incoming pastors, isolated from larger concentrations of the Protestant population, eventually requiring a church and school, and subject to the disdain of the surrounding community (very often including the resident Protestant clergy) – inevitably precipitated the formation of enclosed settlements.\textsuperscript{42} What is not in any doubt is that such settlements were also intended to act as bases for evangelisation of the wider district, efforts which merely increased tensions.\textsuperscript{43}

The high water mark of this activity and of these tensions came during the Great Famine. The potato blight was initially perceived, even by Archbishop MacHale, as a heavenly judgement on the religious failings of the Irish people,\textsuperscript{44} but Protestant evangelicals in both Britain and Ireland, and in both the Anglican and the Presbyterian churches, took it as a sign that their work to spread the gospel among Catholics should be expanded and intensified. It was not the first time that a crisis had been so greeted. The entry of Nangle
and others into the missionary fray came on the heels of a harvest failure in 1831 which appeared to present an opening for interventions offering scriptural instruction in tandem with temporal relief. In that light, the intense and prolonged suffering of the Great Famine seemed the ultimate such opportunity. Alexander Dallas, the English founder of the Irish Church Missions, believed in retrospect that the Famine ‘brought on a new crisis in the minds of the Irish people, loosening them from priestly power and preparing them to receive the gospel’. The secretary of the Presbyterian Home Mission, John Edgar, similarly told his church’s General Assembly that, ‘The famine has been overruled for good, in weakening the power of the Romish priests and giving access to the Romish people’.

Critics of the renewed missionary push saw something rather different to the simple crisis of faith in the Catholic clergy implied here. ‘Access to the Romish people’ was, the Catholic press alleged, gained through bribery and deceit. William Flannelly, Catholic curate in Clifden, Co. Galway, complained to the Lord Lieutenant of ‘ranting fanatical firebrands going from village to village and from house to house, seducing the poor people with a paltry bribe in one hand and corrupt fragments of the Protestant bible in the other’. Evangelicals, the accompanying editorial asserted, were ‘seeking to force conscience by pots of porridge’. Bowen has argued that such ‘souperism’ was never as widespread as Catholic allegations would suggest, and has largely exonerated the mainstream of the established church from the worst charges. Indeed, Edmund Walsh, Church of Ireland rector in Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick, was among those who at the time warned Catholics against ‘the moral miasma of the proselytising soup-kitchen’.

However, there can be little doubt that, as Bowen acknowledges, the provision of material aid was a tactic consciously used by the more zealous missionary societies to gather audiences and to encourage attendance at mission schools. Some exercised that tactic more bluntly than others. Mrs Houston, an Englishwoman who herself set up a mission school in Co. Mayo, criticised Nangle for ‘taking advantage of the bitter distress which reigned supreme in the heart of Achill’s barren mountains’. Other visitors were struck by Nangle’s lack of ‘a human view of the human wants and feelings of these poor islanders’. His philanthropy, they concluded, was entirely ‘political’, not to say as mean as circumstances allowed. Dallas was also open about his use of material attractions, though he considered that ‘a providential decision’ had brought about such relief. ‘Souls are there, still on earth, within...
the reach of gospel salvation, who would otherwise have passed out of
the body in darkness,’ he asserted.\textsuperscript{54} Yet, on occasion, the missionary
societies were also responsible for freely given and vital famine relief.
Despite local animosities, Dingle missionaries were reported to have
stepped in to plug the outdoor relief gap for the general population in
1847.\textsuperscript{55} Meanwhile John Edgar’s famous \textit{Cry from Connaught} appears
to have fomented a truly charitable endeavour, religiously indiscrimi-
nate in its distribution of considerable aid to those in distress, to the
extent that a good portion of the money donated went through the
hands of the Catholic Bishop of Killala.\textsuperscript{56}

The notion of missionaries ‘buying conversions’ is therefore a
difficult one to prove or disprove. Edgar certainly believed that his
efforts might encourage those relieved to feel gratitude and give
their benefactors a hearing, and that in responding to the ‘famine
of bread’ in a Christian manner, the ‘spiritual famine’ from which
he felt Connacht also suffered might be better addressed.\textsuperscript{57} With no
obligation to convert involved, this barely merits the term ‘souperism’,
with all its negative connotations. Moreover, as Thomas O’Neill noted,
any direct, negotiated exchange of religious affiliation for material gain
was a private bargain, unlikely to be spoken of openly and honestly by
either party.\textsuperscript{58} Nonetheless, the apparent mass conversions of 1848–49
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That essential fact meant two things for Catholic clergy who would
stop the mooted reformation in its tracks. Firstly, it gave strong
grounds for alleging that the hundreds and thousands of converts
which mission societies boasted of in their extensive publicity were
not sincere in their conversions. This formed the basis of a nation-
wide counter-campaign of propaganda which was largely carried on
through the Catholic press, and of which Fr Flannelly’s above inter-
jection is a typical example. Secondly, it necessitated more specifically
local action against those Catholics who, in a phrase resonant to this
day, ‘took the soup’. Lest all Catholics in desperate straits think that
‘bartering [...] the true faith of their fathers’ would have no adverse
consequences, converts, and especially those who acted as scripture
readers, were, as a matter of course, to be ostracised, and ‘treated
with the silence which [their] conduct deserved’.\textsuperscript{60} This tended also to
extend to an economic embargo on convert colonies, with a number of
missions complaining that, at the behest of their priests, local people would not trade with them, or give employment to their adherents.61

The Catholic backlash was also characterised by a violence, which, though mostly verbal, produced heated conflict. Most of the missionary societies’ reports allege the hounding of converts by the ‘Romish priests’ and their flocks. The case of one, Timothy Horan, recalled by a minister connected to the missions, was said to be typical. The ‘usual consequences’ followed his conversion:

He was denounced in the Roman Catholic chapel; and his friends, no less attached to him than before, dared not hold intercourse with him. The only employment he could obtain was from a Protestant gentleman [...] When this work was over, seeing no prospect of being able to live at home, he saved a few shillings and managed to make his way to London.62

Even at this stage, where they did not already exist, externally funded colonies, with model farms or industrial schools attached, could be seen as the solution to this fate. As a Cavan agent of the Irish Society noted in 1846, ‘my mind is strongly impressed with the necessity and advantage that might arise from colonising our persecuted Converts [...] Some of our most useful men are driven to foreign lands, to seek the protection that should obtain in their own’.63

The true extent of this persecution and its effect cannot be absolutely established. Stories like Horan’s were undoubtedly exploited by the societies, and perhaps exaggerated, in order to attract the English and Scottish funding that was their lifeblood.64 That being said, there is little doubt that the majority of converts were subject to this kind of treatment to some degree. Most, whether in colonies or not, became detached from the surrounding Catholic community, were derided by their former friends as ‘cait breac’, and were often verbally attacked from the altar by former priests.65 Archbishop MacHale himself is reported to have indulged in the latter, Nangle quoting him on a visit to Achill in 1851 urging listeners to ‘show no kindness to those who differ from you in their religious opinion; withhold from them the commonest courtesies of life; they are accursed of God and his church; and they should be abhorred by you; put them in Coventry; shame them into a profession of Popery; and if that won’t do shame them into a hypocritical conformity’.66 Nangle was at best paraphrasing whatever MacHale had said here, but the prevalence of this kind of pulpit denunciation was demonstrated by the fact that the Catholic
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hierarchy forbade the practice in 1854, and confirmed by the need to reinforce the ban with the threat of clerical suspension in 1858.67

Allegations that priests’ attacks on converts and missionaries went beyond the pulpit and turned physical were also common. In his memoir, the Protestant missionary Thomas Armstrong wrote of an especially vicious sermon by a priest on Achill regarding the ‘jumpers’ of the Nangle colony, in which he urged those listening to ‘Scald them, scold them, hurt them, shout after them, persecute them to death, and pull down their houses over their heads.’68 Armstrong also recalled a visit by the Belfast missionary Edward Dill to Connacht in 1847, when Fr Timlin, the local parish priest, seemingly barged into the crowd outside the church during Dill’s sermon looking for ‘the cock of the north’ so that he might horsewhip him. To much Protestant disgust, a majority Catholic jury later acquitted Timlin of the resultant charges of assault and causing a riot and a pamphlet of the trial proceedings was even produced in Belfast for those who wished to share in the outrage.69 Meanwhile, Armstrong had his own brush with clerical violence in his church in Ballina, Co. Mayo, where his attacker subsequently appealed ‘in support of priestly flagellation to the authority and example of the Saviour in the Temple!’70

Naturally, a lot of these claims cannot be substantiated and must be taken with a pinch of salt. However, two things can be noted in their support. The first is the rather imaginative nature of some of the attacks. Allegations of a Catholic crowd throwing a dead cat and a fish into the open carriage of passing Protestant missionaries in Doon, Co. Clare, for example, seem too ridiculous to have been invented. As do reports of a missionary in Cushendall (‘the Sebastopol of Romanism in Ireland’) which detailed the abuse he and his fellow missionaries were routinely subjected to when passing by groups of Catholic farm labourers: “here come the Bible-readers, soupers, black devils, jumpers, robbers, hairy dogs.” The last title is comparatively new; it is because of my bear-skin-coat [...] a volley of rotten vegetables invariably follows.71 The second is that there were often reports in the Catholic press making equally serious, if also rather blackly humorous allegations of violence on the part of Protestant missionaries, including one memorable incident where a drunken scripture reader attacked a Franciscan friar with an umbrella.72 Clearly, ‘bible war’ was sometimes all too apt a metaphor.

Little wonder, one might conclude, that many converts who found themselves at the centre of such an uneasy atmosphere of violence and
intimidation sought, like Timothy Horan, to escape it by emigrating. Indeed, converts having to depart ‘for the truth’s sake’ or in order ‘to have the liberty in a foreign land of worshipping God according to the dictates of their conscience’ became a common claim in mission reports, and a regular feature of pro-Reformation literature.73 This, of course, tied in neatly with a familiar trope of both Presbyterian and Anglican clerical rhetoric that, historically, their brethren had been obliged to leave Ireland for specifically religious reasons. What applied in eighteenth-century Ulster, or in 1830s Longford or Tipperary, it was claimed, was now also true of pockets of Connacht or Kerry. Historians of these earlier migrations have noted the difficulty of untangling the religious and economic motivations for emigrating, notwithstanding that religious persecution or sectarian violence were routinely considered by Protestant clergy as the root cause, as we have seen.74 Despite the obvious difficulties many converts faced, their emigration during the Famine and its aftermath was no less ambiguous a process.

Indeed, it is significant that emigration seemed to emerge as an issue for convert communities only after the onset of the Famine. Thomas Moriarty, himself a convert and head of the Irish Society’s mission at Ventry, noted in 1845 that of the forty families in his area who had converted, only two had emigrated.75 He noted elsewhere in the same year that despite the persecution of converts in Dingle and Ventry, ‘we are still over 150 families, amounting to more than 800 souls, thank God, besides all who have departed this life in the faith, and some who have emigrated’ [emphasis added].76 By 1855, however, Moriarty was acknowledging that emigration was a constant and serious threat to his mission.77 This certainly seems to suggest that, contrary to much missionary rhetoric, a desire for freedom from religious persecution did not alone account for convert emigration. Why could persecution apparently be borne in 1845 but not in 1855? In fact, as with most departures during the period, there was a strong economic survival element in the resolve of converts to leave. For all the allegations of ‘souperism’ that abounded during the Famine, Protestant missionaries were ultimately incapable of financially supporting and retaining in Ireland even those converts they had acquired before the Famine. They may have relied, in many instances, on external funding and imported provisions, but the mission colonies cannot have been immune from the intense and prolonged shortages of the Famine and its aftermath, nor, by extension, from the crisis emigration they induced.78
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Nonetheless, several Protestant missionaries went so far as to accuse Catholic priests of actively encouraging their converts to leave. The Irish Society’s 1846 report noted the plight of a former Repeal warden in Londonderry, who had started reading scripture in the hope of refuting the missionaries, only to find himself convinced of its virtue. He and his family became Protestants, but ‘the priest made great offers to him, if he would only leave the country; he was the great champion of Romanism here. There was not a Protestant in the country could meet him. The priest does not ask him to return [to Catholicism], only to leave the place.’ When the man refused the priest’s alleged bribery and stayed put, he was reputedly the victim of a campaign of vandalism. Less high profile converts were said to have been offered similar bribes. In 1847, the Dingle mission reported on the early re-conversion attempts of a Catholic Vincentian mission from Dublin: ‘They have promised such as would go back, weekly subsistence, and to give them passages freely to America in the Spring.’ Other Kerry agents of the Irish Society reported the same, one noting that several converts known to him had been offered £5 passage money if they would only return to Mass once before emigrating; another that the counter-missionaries ‘sent agents to the most ignorant converts, and promised them two stone of meal, every week til May, and then to send them to America free [...] But most of the converts refused.’

That most refused is at least partly borne out. The leader of the Vincentian counter-mission, Fr McNamara, noted that for all the excitement which the visit to Kerry had generated, few had actually reneged on their conversions for fear, one historian has suggested, of the financial consequences. However, later events in Kerry suggest that the substance of the wider charge – that many Catholic priests were content to see the emigration of converts and would-be converts – may also have held true. In 1849, the previously mentioned Fr John O’Sullivan publicly addressed the people of Templenoe parish, who he felt were perilously vulnerable to the proselytising of Rev. Denis Mahoney, telling them to ‘emigrate, emigrate, emigrate’. In the United States, he told them, ‘you will not be liable to the intrusion of a blackguard, who [...] seats himself coolly on your hearth, and tells you to your teeth that your Holy Religion is blasphemous and abominable.’ This was all framed in terms of the addressees’ material wellbeing, but in private O’Sullivan admitted that the tactic, though risky, was being employed primarily ‘with a view to annoy Denis Mahoney’.
Another O’Sullivan from Kerry, the parish priest of Dingle, Fr Eugene, essayed a similar strategy with considerably less acumen in a series of letters to the Tablet in 1852. Answering Protestant allegations that he had bribed converts with free passages, he explained that some ‘perverts’ had asked him ‘would I not send them, as I did others, to America? :

I said I would endeavour to do so, but would not make any absolute promise. This circumstance gave rise to a report that I was to send all the perverts to America. The effect which this report produced was thrilling. Numbers of them ran in haste to have their names put down to be sent to America. [...] The fact is if I gave myself any trouble about them in taking down their names, there is scarcely a single pervert in the town of Dingle that would not fling Parson Lewis to the winds if the head of the family received the means to emigrate.

He ended this letter by asking, ‘what is to be done to prevent perversion – to uproot Souperism? After mature deliberation, I unhesitatingly declare that by emigration the whole can easily be effected.’ Thus, strangely, while endeavouring to deny Protestant missionaries’ claims that he and others offered free passages to those who renounced their conversions, O’Sullivan seems to have convinced himself that exporting converts was indeed the very course of action to take. Publicly, at least, this does not appear to have gone down terribly well within his own church, and both the Nation and the Tuam Herald roundly criticised his suggestion. The former questioned whether, if O’Sullivan was enabled to send his repentant flock to America, ‘the damnable system [would] be uprooted’: ‘Would it not remain behind to infect the new population that would necessarily settle in the district? – would not a new harvest grow up for the Devil to reap? – and would not the gold of England be lavished, as of old, to corrupt and destroy?’ O’Sullivan dismissed this oddly adapted Malthusian argument in his next letter by referring by name to upwards of sixty former converts who had gone to America, and whose places in the mission colony had not been taken. However, while he continued for some time to advocate emigration as a kind of reverse souperism and as an effective means of undermining the Protestant missions, there was an increasing sense in these letters that O’Sullivan was speaking out of turn: that he was the only Catholic spokesperson willing to publicly state what others may have privately felt.
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There was further hypocrisy, therefore, in Catholic reactions to the developing narrative of Protestant missions as they passed their peak in the early 1850s, that the decrease in their numbers was largely a function of emigration. Catholic anti-‘souper’ rhetoric, of which there was a very great deal, tended to gloss over the issue of convert emigration entirely. One must assume that this was partly because it did not fit the Catholic Church’s preferred narrative. It seemed to imply, after all, either that Protestant ‘bribery’ of converts could not exist on the scale claimed, or that Protestant accusations of ‘persecution’ and consequent banishment had some merit. When emigration in connection with the missions was mentioned by Catholic commentators, it was in a much more useable form. The *Weekly Telegraph*, for example, reported in 1853 that 24 young men and women had left West Clare for America to escape the proselytising of the local land agent, who was affiliated to the Irish Church Missions, and that the Nangle mission had shamelessly exploited the wrecking of the *California* emigrant ship off Achill Island by attempting to convert the survivors against their will. Most tellingly, however, any attempt by evangelicals to explain the shrinking of their flocks as the result of emigration was greeted by the Catholic Church, if at all, with a rather smug derision. Such claims were, some suggested, ‘A very nice, easy way of getting out!’ Indeed, the Fathers of Charity order, conducting a counter-mission in 1853, preferred to see the decrease in convert numbers purely as the fruit of their own and others’ like efforts, no matter that one local priest specifically told them that emigration was contributing towards the desired outcome in the Achill colony.

The ‘counter-Reformation’ was itself the subject of controversy within the Catholic Church. It was on this score that Fr Robert Mullen, a Westmeath curate whom Cullen had sent to America to fundraise for the Catholic University, wrote his previously cited letter to *The Tablet* warning of mass apostasy among Irish Catholic emigrants. Two million Irish Catholics, he claimed, had been lost to the church in the previous three decades, not because of any fault with the overstretched American clergy, but because of Irish clerical neglect. His intervention came prefaced with specific criticism of the concentration of church resources in Connacht:

Leave the Protestant establishment to fester in its rottenness for a time; it is a sore, all the appearances whereof indicate proximate suppuration [...] Are all the energies of the new association [Catholic Defence
Association] to be directed to prevent the proselytism of a few? Is there to be no voice raised, no hope held out, that will keep the people at home, and thus save millions from spiritual destruction?91

If Mullen thereby hoped to concentrate clerical minds on the emigrant’s spiritual plight, he succeeded, but decidedly not in the way that he had intended. As indicated in Chapter Two a minor panic was generated in the diocese of Killaloe, but his comments had their greatest and most enduring impact on Protestant evangelicals, who gleefully seized upon them as proof of the decline of Catholicism worldwide. This was an understandably attractive prospect to those working for, but evidently now failing to attain, that very outcome in Ireland. As the Presbyterian missionary Hamilton Magee later noted, 1852, an election year full of ‘political and religious excitement’, was a turning point for the Irish missions, as an emboldened priesthood was able ‘to turn the tide back into its old channels’.92 There was, therefore, a notable shift in Protestant missionaries’ rhetoric from 1852 onwards, in great measure prompted by Mullen’s report. So, while in 1847 the Dingle mission was contemplating any emigration from its ranks as a failure, and in 1850 it was only reluctantly willing to see emigration employed as a temporary relief measure, two years later, the emigration of converts was being painted by missionaries as the work of divine Providence.93 As the Islands and Coast Society asserted:

The thoughtful Christian is led to admire and adore the inscrutable wisdom of that Master-mind, which, seeing the end from the beginning, is able to order all events for the carrying out of his own grand, and well-digested plans. From every part of the coast, and “from the Isles of the Sea” has been heard the resolution to depart, bearing the Word of Life to distant shores, where its lessons of peace and love might be carried into effect unchecked, at least by opponents under the garb of piety.94

Underpinning this sentiment, compensatory though it undoubtedly was, were Protestant perceptions of the providential effect of emigration on Catholics in general. A feeling had already begun to emerge – in Britain and America as much as in Ireland – that most Irish Catholic emigrants, and most certainly their children, would fully succumb to Protestant evangelism once abroad and away from their priests.95 In letters that were reprinted in Belfast with an introduction by John Edgar in 1851, Nicholas Murray, an Irish emigrant who had
converted to Presbyterianism in America and eventually rose to the moderatorship of the American General Assembly, indicated why: ‘in Ireland you might be afraid of the priest’s whip, or of his cursing you from the altar […] But here his whip has no terror and his curses are harmless.’ In the wake of Mullen’s unintended confirmation of this assertion, commentators were able to proclaim that ‘the salt sea is a rapid solvent of the abject popular veneration which [the priests] command at home’, and that ‘once on the soil of the United States, it is well known how freely the Irish immigrant chooses his own religion according to the new lights and new influences around him.’ The Presbyterian missionary Edward Dill concurred. In a state-of-the-nation thesis published in 1852 he assigned all of ‘Ireland’s miseries’ to Catholicism, and though he warned Britain and America of the dangers of being overwhelmed by Catholic emigrants, he also felt that once away from ‘horsewhipping priests’ and surrounded by good Protestant example, they could ‘[rise] to comfort and [walk] with God.’ Edgar, meanwhile, described, on the one hand, ‘our Romish population, like fiery flying serpents […] spreading over the face of other lands’, but felt, on the other, that what most of them sought in the United States was freedom from clerical oppression, thus making them prime candidates for conversion.

Given this reaction to his letter, and the persistent invocation of it over many years to come, it is clear that Fr Mullen had been rash in publishing his views. His wiser colleagues realised as much immediately. A fellow Catholic University collector, on seeing The Tablet, complained in his diary of ‘such imprudence and indiscretion!! Will he ever have sense?’ At home, Cullen and the university committee had Mullen’s bishop upbraid him, and were soon dismayed to note that ‘the abominable press’ had begun giving ‘pointed remarks on the most mischievous parts.’ In thus speaking out, it was clear that Mullen had provided Irish evangelicals not only with the evidence – however erroneous it was – to buttress their alternative explanation for the apparent post-Famine failure of their ‘reformation’, but also with the grounds to continue their conversion efforts notwithstanding that failure.

Certainly, having bought into all of the above, it may seem surprising that Protestant missionaries did not then deem their own work in Ireland to be superfluous. However, as an 1853 report from Connacht stated, the mission schools having lost some two thousand pupils by emigration in the last few years, ‘what a blessed thing it is,
that, before leaving, they were thoroughly instructed in the truth that makes free.\textsuperscript{103} If the emigration of converts made for loss of morale amongst missionaries, not least, as one noted, because 'those who have gone were missionaries at home to their parents and other relations',\textsuperscript{104} they could take heart from the notion that the emigrants would act similarly in their new homes. The acclamations of sister churches seemed also to confirm these hopes. An Edinburgh correspondent told the General Assembly in respect of its Home Mission that 'you do not know all the good you are doing. I was glad to hear that some girls who were at your school but never professed Protestantism, regularly attend Protestant worship here; and there are many such cases.\textsuperscript{105} An American church told the same body that 'the progress of the truth in your island affects us almost as directly as if the movement had occurred in our own country'.\textsuperscript{106} While ‘Americanus’ told the \textit{Irish Presbyterian:}

\begin{quote}
The Irish Protestant comes here with his joyousness, versatility, frugality and social habits, on the whole, to do us good. But the Irish Papists come in swarms, on the whole, to do us evil [...] My way of solving it is to educate the people and Christianise them. This is the best and cheapest way; and you owe it to yourselves, and to us, to do so. Then Ireland will be a noble arm of Britain, and because of the migratory character of her people, a fountain of blessings to all the earth.\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}

The galvanising idea that ‘Ireland is thus the battlefield against Popery for Britain and America and all the world’ seems to have taken a firm hold in Protestant missionary circles.\textsuperscript{108} It became a given that, as the Islands and Coast Society explained, ‘the religious interest of Australia, North America and Ireland have become strangely united by the unprecedented tide of emigration going forth from this land’ and that Irish missionaries should therefore ‘joyfully prepare the sons and daughters of Ireland for emigration, that they may bear fruit to the glory of God and of their parent land, and not cause disgrace.\textsuperscript{109}

Thus, a situation where many Irish evangelicals held that a combination of conversion and emigration would equalise the Catholic and Protestant populations, or even enable the overthrow of Irish Popery altogether, had fundamentally altered. While in 1848 even the relatively moderate Presbyterian missionary Hamilton Magee was confident enough to state that ‘The final evangelization of Ireland is certain,’\textsuperscript{110} by 1852 even the more ambitious Alexander Dallas, then barely started on his mission, was, according to his wife, privately
‘brought to feel that his work was to be, not the external reformation of Ireland as a nation, but the gathering of individual souls for the “multitude which no man can number”, in the future kingdom of Christ.’ The undoubted success of the Catholic counter-missions, which were rejuvenating Catholic congregations all over the island by the early 1850s, was sobering from a Protestant point of view, but Fr Mullen’s report of mass apostasy among Catholic emigrants seemed to offer a lifeline. It suggested that the ‘bible war’, which many missionaries felt was being lost by Protestants in Ireland itself, could nevertheless be won on a different front. The emigration of converts, or of those who had gone through mission schools without ever formally converting, or even of the far greater number of Catholics who had never yet shown an interest in the Protestant religion, could therefore be seen in a positive light, as part of a greater divine plan to defeat Catholicism on a global scale. Therefore, from about 1852 onwards, most Irish evangelicals increasingly saw their role as being a religious filter in the emigration process, producing a ‘fountain of blessings to all the earth’.

Precisely how accurate all of this was is obviously open to question. Mullen’s dubious figures aside, the only evidence offered for the mass conversions of Irish Catholic emigrants is anecdotal, and, as in an 1858 book by Daniel Foley, came from interested sources. Moreover, later warnings in the vein of Mullen’s – usually from Irish-American clergy who might well have been unaware of Irish evangelical gloating on the subject – tended, even in private, to emphasise that Catholic apostates were generally lost to all religion, and did not in fact convert to other churches in great numbers. It is probable, as has been seen, that Catholics in remote areas reconciled themselves to Protestant denominations in the absence of a priest, but it seems unlikely that their numbers justified Irish evangelical jubilation. As one Catholic priest responding to an old Irish Society report countered, ‘The miracle is that no one has seen those large armies of converts [in America]’. Nevertheless, by citing the continued exodus, both from their own convert communities and the wider Catholic population, Irish evangelical clergy had managed to grasp a face-saving narrative of global victory from the jaws of what was increasingly looking like a resounding home defeat.

This particular wishful thinking did not entirely obscure the previous fiction, however. Dallas’s Irish Church Missions, the most enduringly successful of all the Protestant mission societies,
continued to suggest for some years that emigration and conversion, working in tandem, were ridding Ireland of ‘Popery’, although it was largely a device to attract vital finance from English evangelicals who still longed for that outcome.\textsuperscript{117} The 1861 census, the first to record religious affiliation since 1834, finally disabused these backers of any such notions, as despite considerable prior wrangling over alleged flaws and deceits in the data collection, it showed no great levelling of the Protestant and Catholic populations, merely a slight proportional realignment.\textsuperscript{118} It was clear that, even if the Catholic Church had borne the greatest losses, all the churches had been considerably affected by famine and emigration.

However, while the hope of a new Protestant reformation had been common to clergy in the Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian Church, they received this final deathblow to any serious entertainment of the concept very differently. 1861 found Presbyterian clergy in Ulster in a relatively secure position, which had, in great measure, been created by the very emigration the census recorded. Firstly, there was an argument – as we have seen, not entirely rejected by Presbyterian commentators – that emigration over the previous decade had rendered better the economic lot of those left behind.\textsuperscript{119} What is more, it was generally agreed that the purportedly transformative religious revival that had swept through Presbyterian congregations in 1859 had been in some measure precipitated by similar occurrences in North America in 1857–58.\textsuperscript{120} Intelligence of the American ‘awakening’ had certainly been relayed to the north of Ireland via emigrant correspondence, as well as through the close ties between the two regions’ churches born of decades of Irish westward migration.\textsuperscript{121} These links would only strengthen in the decades to come, thereby confirming Ulster’s pivotal place in the greater evangelical Atlantic world.\textsuperscript{122} Therefore, while the census may have revealed that emigration had deprived the Presbyterian Church in Ireland of up to a fifth of its adherents over the preceding three decades, and hastened the decline of its Home Mission into practical irrelevance, it was also immediately apparent to Presbyterian clergy that the outflow had not been without its own advantages to their communion.

The 1861 census offered the Church of Ireland no such comfort. In the run-up to the census-taking, the stakes many Anglican clergy invested in procuring a favourable result had been high, encompassing not merely the fate of the mission societies and their stated objective, but, contrary to one historian’s claim, the survival of the church...
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establishment itself. Much depended, it was clear, on the census showing an unambiguous movement away from Catholic domination and toward the Church of Ireland. When it was shown that, despite huge Catholic losses, the Anglican proportion of the population had only marginally increased to just 11.9% there were numerous attempts to spin the results, including continued questioning of the methodology employed, an emphasis that in certain districts the Anglican population had increased, and reference to the fact that relative decline in each church – roughly a fifth of Presbyterians, a third of Catholics and an eighth of Anglicans – clearly favoured the Church of Ireland. However, this litany of defensive literature in the 1860s merely confirmed that the writing was on the wall for the establishment. One lecture was even printed with an appendix of Fr Mullen’s Catholic apostasy figures as if to remind readers that there was a global Plan B. Last-ditch attempts were made by some parish clergy to enumerate their own congregations, but even the would-be compiler of this project was ‘not too sanguine as to the result’. The clamour for disestablishment could no longer be resisted, and when it inevitably came to pass, a Catholic balladeer made great play of turning Protestant rhetoric on its head:

Sure this great Emigration or extermination,
From the Irish nation will shortly take place,
And every white choaker souper ranter or groper,
From Dingle to Derry must join in the chace…
No longer the blessed big belly’d parsons,
Will preach that papists are out of their wits,
Since they got this brain blow they must bundle and go
As their Church is not worth a two penny bit.

Having beaten back Protestant missionary encroachment on their flocks, and seen the demise of the much-resented Anglican establishment, Catholic priests could be expected to feel smug. Certainly, these must have seemed remote possibilities to the demoralised incumbents of grass-grown chapels twenty years earlier. The great irony was that emigration, which, in tandem with famine-related deaths had more than decimated the Catholic population, had also directly contributed to these more welcome outcomes. What is more, as Emmet Larkin famously observed, the post-Famine increase in vocations begun under Cullen’s watch was enhanced by the corresponding loss of population: one priest for every 2,000 parishioners in 1850 became one
for every 1,250 in 1870. One can dispute the effects of this increased ratio, and, as Eugene Hynes has noted, implications of unquestioned clerical rule can easily be debunked, but the statistic was certainly a favourable one for the church, and one which was as totemic a sign of the devotional revolution as any other. While it would be a step too far to surmise from all of this that Catholic clergy actively conspired to seek or to encourage mass emigration, it must be pointed out that neither were they entirely incognizant of the benefits of the exodus to the church in Ireland.

In that sense, the actions of the two Fr O’Sullivans and of unnamed others in the face of the Protestant missions were indicative of a hidden truth: emigration, on occasion, solved problems. Sustained economic and social ostracising of ‘jumpers’ clearly helped to hasten the departure of some genuine converts who could not be won back to Catholicism, while many of those whose conversions had been of less certain sincerity, could in essence be bribed back with the offer of a new life abroad. As an aside, one has to admire the brazen use that some individuals therefore made of the religious conflict that had sprung up around them: playing one side off the other to attain a living at home, followed by a passage to America could represent an effective survival strategy. From the Catholic Church’s point of view, however, the excision of such devotionally unreliable, not to say economically underachieving adherents, who seemed only to offer the possibility of further embarrassment down the line, was logical. No church, and especially not one aspiring to an increasingly demanding orthodoxy, could tolerate the perpetual idle threat of the wayward or desperate parishioner that they might, as one Jesuit later put it, take up with the agents of souperism when they did not get their own way with the priest.

This unsentimental acknowledgement that there were some people whose emigration was tolerable, if not desirable, was not confined to Protestant converts, nor to the religiously wanton. At a more subtle level, hinted at above, there were also internal class considerations at play. As historians have recognised, a key factor in the post-Famine success of Catholicism was that the less conventionally devout elements of pre-Famine society – the rural poor – had been in large part swept away by death and emigration, leaving an already more orthodox and prosperous farming class behind. That process was only accelerated in the ensuing decades, and Catholic clergy were well aware of what it meant for their institution. Implicit in many of their
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public and private laments over emigration, therefore, was that some departures were to be regretted more than others. Thus it was that Dr Miley, in publicly disagreeing with Fr Maher’s planned emigration scheme, did so on the basis that it targeted better-off farming families, ‘the very class who are the mainstay of religion in Ireland’, which, ‘now more than ever the vital interests of the universal church calls loudly on us not to relinquish’. With the farmers readying to ‘make off with all they can & emigrate from this land of woe’, as a Kinsale priest told Cullen, there was a prospect that ‘next year we shall have no one in the country but inmates of work houses’.

Such an eventuality clearly would not do, and when there were signs of an increase in farmers leaving some districts during the early 1860s economic downturn, something akin to panic once again set in. That ‘all the small farmers are utterly gone’ was the trigger for Archbishop Leahy’s above-mentioned jeremiad, while a Cork priest complained, that ‘those who remain (as a rule) are either Catholics that is half-Protestant, or else poor people, many of whom there is good reason to know have not frequented the sacraments since the publications against the St Patrick’s Brotherhood or the Fenians appeared’. Leaving aside the political implication in this latter statement, the fear that the church in certain areas of the west and south was losing many of the most ‘respectable’, devout and therefore the most valuable of its communicants to emigration was palpable. An earlier imploration in a pastoral letter issued by Cullen makes sense in this context. Prompted, in part, by Daniel Cahill’s glowing account of America in his popular series of letters to the Catholic Telegraph (which comprised the emigrant guide mentioned in Chapter Two), the primate repeated the usual warnings against emigration before going on, remarkably, to recommend it to any who ‘by remaining at home, consider it probable that they shall be compelled to terminate their days in those disgraceful abodes of crime and wretchedness – the poor houses’. That, of course, had a lot to do with the maintenance of individual dignity. However, the dignity and standing of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and the farming elite on which it relied, cannot, as ever, have been far from Cullen’s mind.

George Moore’s priest, eager to see the ‘flower of the nation’ – that is, the priests, who ‘live in the best houses, eat the best food, wear the best clothes’ – produce ‘magnificent sons and daughters’ in the cause of maintaining Ireland as a predominantly Catholic country was therefore not entirely the stuff of fiction. This better class of repopulation,
though imaginary and played for comic effect, was clearly in line with
the interests of the Catholic Church. That Moore could write as much
in 1903, moreover, reflects the fact that, notwithstanding the results
of the 1861 census, real fears continued to be harboured by Catholic
churchmen in areas where an occasional spike in emigration still
threatened to remove ‘the flower of the flock.’ There are echoes in all
of this of Protestant concerns as expressed to the Poor Inquiry some
years earlier: for a number of reasons, financial and devotional, no
cleric wished to lose those better-off parishioners who were ‘the chief
ornament of [his] church. In neither case did that denote an active
desire to see the expatriation of the less devout lower orders, but it
did suggest a hierarchy of regret, in which, for each denomination,
the religious ‘other’ came bottom and the most religiously committed
and economically comfortable families of the clergyman’s own church
came top. In that light, if a winner was to emerge from the ‘bible war’,
it should, in theory, have been evangelicals, who, despite failing to
gather the expected numbers of converts, or indeed hold on to those
they did convert, had witnessed the concurrent emigration of millions
of Catholics. However, one Protestant commentator admitted in 1854
that, ‘the experience of a few years has blasted the expectations of
even the most sanguine’. The Famine, he explained, had not dealt the
expected deadly blow to Catholicism, since the two million lost to
Rome were among the poorest, and those who weathered the storm
found themselves better off as a result and as attached as ever to their
priests.\footnote{140} This continued to be the upshot of much later emigration:
as Daniel McGettigan, Archbishop of Armagh noted in 1884, despite
having lost thousands of young people from the diocese over the
previous decade, ‘we have still a fair population and on the whole,
very good and virtuous.’\footnote{141}

Notes

2 Misgivings over priestly celibacy were also not unknown, as a pamphlet
from some years earlier attests. Anon., \textit{Remarks on the Celibacy of the
R.C. Clergy by the Rev \_\_\_\_, the P.P. of \_\_\_, County of \_\_\_, Ireland. Part 1}
(Dublin, 1839). On Moore see Frank O’Connor (ed.), \textit{Modern Irish Short
4 \textit{F.J.}, 15 June 1849.
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7 F.J., 31 May 1850.
12 Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, p. 300.
13 The Nation, 29 Nov. 1851.
14 The Nation, 8 Mar. 1851.
15 F.J., 10 Oct. 1851.
16 The Tablet, 12 Feb. 1853.
17 The Tablet, 3 Jan. 1852; The Nation, 8 Nov. 1851.
18 The Tablet, 14 Feb. 1852.
20 The Nation, 13 Dec. 1851.
22 The Nation, 10 May 1851.
23 Bowen, Paul Cardinal Cullen, p. 126.
26 The Anglo-Celt, 19 Aug. 1852.
29 Cusack, Case of Ireland, pp. 223–4.
30 I.C.R.A., Kirby papers, KIR/1863/179, letter from John Bourke to Kirby, 3 July 1863.
31 Ibid., KIR/1863/101, letter from Leahy to Kirby, 27 Mar. 1863.
32 Ibid., KIR/1889/176, letter from McGennis to Kirby, 3 May 1889.
33 Schrier, Ireland and the American Emigration, p. 64.
35 The Nation, 13 Dec. 1851.
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Layman (Dublin, 1837).


39 Strictly speaking, the term 'Second Reformation' refers to this specific period, although Whelan uses it in a more general sense. Whelan, Bible War in Ireland, p. xviii; see also Stewart J. Brown, The National Churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland 1801–1846 (Oxford, 2001), pp. 93–167.


41 Bowen, Protestant Crusade, p. 143.

42 Whelan, Bible War in Ireland, pp. 251–65.

43 Ibid., p. 263.


45 Whelan, Bible War in Ireland, p. 254.


47 W. D. Killen, Memoir of John Edgar (Belfast, 1867), pp. 227–34; B.N.L., 6 July 1849.

48 F.J., 2 Mar. 1849.

49 Bowen, Souperism, pp. 227–34.

50 The Tablet, 24 June 1847.

51 Bowen, Souperism, pp. 115–16.


55 Bowen, Souperism, p. 82.

56 Bowen, Protestant Crusade, p. 33.

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60 W.T., 12 Mar. 1853.


64 Moffitt, *Soupers*, p. 91.


72 W.T., 12 Mar. 1853.

the Irish Scripture Reader, or the Martyred Convert and the Priest (London, 1866), p. 27; ‘The author of Mick Tracy’ [W. A. C.], Tim Doolan, the Irish Emigrant (London, 1869), p. 11.

74 Dickson, Ulster Emigration, pp. 37–47; Griffin, The People with No Name, p. 66; Miller et al., Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan, p. 5; Elliott, Irish Migrants in the Canadas, pp. 36–60; Kerby A. Miller, ‘The lost world of Andrew Johnston: Sectarianism, social conflict, and cultural change in southern Ireland during the pre-Famine era’ in James S. Donnelly, Jr and Kerby A. Miller (eds), Irish Popular Culture, 1650–1850 (Dublin, 1998), pp. 222–41.

75 Charles Gayer, Persecution of Protestants in the year 1845, as detailed in a Full and Correct Report of the Trial at Tralee, Thursday, March 20th, 1845 for a Libel on the Rev. Charles Gayer (Dublin, 1845), p. 16.

76 Letter from Moriarty reprinted in Thompson, A Brief Account, p. 205.

77 Thomas Moriarty, Dingle and Ventry Mission (Dublin [?], 1855 [?]), p. 3.


80 Anon., Twenty-Ninth Report of the Irish Society, p. 44.


83 Tralee Chronicle, 10 Mar. 1849.

84 Lyne, Lansdowne Estate, pp. 85–6.

85 The Tablet, 13 Nov. 1852.

86 The Tablet, 18 Dec. 1852.

87 The Nation, 20 Nov. 1852.

88 The Tablet, 18 Dec. 1852.

89 W.T., 29 Oct. 1853; W.T., 19 Nov. 1853.

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91 The Tablet, 10 Apr. 1852; F.J., 24 Apr. 1852.
94 Anon., Islands and Coast Society, 1852, p. 8.
98 Dill, The Mystery Solved, p. 302.
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101 P.R.O.N.I., Clogher Diocesan Records (Roman Catholic), Donnelly papers, DIO(RC)1/11B/2, Diary of Rev. Dr James Donnelly, written during fundraising trip in America, 1852–53; D.D.A., Cullen papers, 45/2/File III/1852/2, letter from William Skelly to Cullen, 25 Apr. 1852. The ‘abominable press’ in this instance included The Times, 12 Apr. 1852.


104 Mecredy, Reformation, p. 10.


110 M.H. (1848), 524; This counters Bowen’s suggestion that the idea of converting Ireland was the sole preserve of more radical, aggressive English evangelicals. Bowen, Protestant Crusade, p. 207.


112 A number of reports on missions and confirmations noted the considerable size of congregations notwithstanding recent population losses. F.J., 12 Sept. 1851, 19 Sept. 1851, 4 May 1855.

113 This was reinforced by the number of trained convert missionaries who, for one reason or another, emigrated from the 1850s onward. See Miriam Moffitt, The Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950 (Manchester, 2010), p. 111.

114 Foley, professor of Irish at T.C.D., was a member of the Irish Society. Foley, People and Institutions, pp. 25–9; Daniel Foley, A Missionary Tour through the South and West of Ireland, undertaken for the Society (Dublin, 1849). See also Henry McManus, Sketches of the Irish Highlands: Descriptive, Social, and Religious with Special Reference to the Irish Missions in West Connaught since 1840 (Belfast, 1863), p. 237; B.N.L., 9 Apr. 1858.

115 See chapter two above.


117 B.N.L., 22 Nov. 1859; although support from this quarter fell throughout the 1850s. Moffitt, Society for Irish Church Missions, pp. 108–70.

118 Moffitt, Soupers, p. 100.

119 Anon., ‘Ireland as it is’ in Presbyterian Magazine, i (Feb. 1859), 25–6. See chapter one.

120 Andrew R. Holmes, ‘The Ulster revival of 1859: cause, controversies
and consequences’ in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 63:3 (July 2012), 488–515; *Achill Missionary Herald and Western Witness*, 16 Mar. 1858.


124 News cuttings and correspondence in the Larcom papers for 1860–61 show the level of Anglican anxiety over what the census might confirm or rebut. N.L.I., Larcom papers, Ms 7,750, News cuttings book ‘Census, 1861’.


127 *Irish Church Directory* (1868), 5.

128 Anon., *A New Song on the Emigration of the Ministers* (Dublin, c. 1869).


130 Hynes, *Knock*, p. 100.

131 Cara Delay notes a curious moral dilemma presented in the confessional to John O’Sullivan which was itself solved by the emigration of one of the protagonists. Cara Delay, ‘Confidantes or competitors? Women, priests, and conflict in post-Famine Ireland’ in Éire-Ireland, xl:1–2 (Spring/Summer 2005), 112–13.

132 For an example of an almost comical, failed attempt at this type of bargaining, see Martha Kanya-Forstner, ‘Defining womanhood: Irish women and the Catholic Church in Victorian Liverpool’ in *Immigrants and Minorities Special Issue The Great Famine and Beyond Irish Migrants*
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in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, xviii:2–3 (1999), 172.


134 Connolly, Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland, p. 54; Connolly, Priests and People, p. 278.


136 I.C.R.A., Cullen papers, CUL/1740, letter from Miley to Cullen, 4 May 1849.

137 Ibid., CUL/NC/1849/23, letter from D. Murphy to Cullen, 7 Oct. 1849; see also Ibid., CUL/1717, letter from Higgins to Cullen, 22 Feb. 1849.


139 F.J., 4 June 1860; Dublin Evening Mail, 4 June 1860.

140 Anon., ‘From our Connaught correspondent’ in Irish Presbyterian, ii:21 (Sep. 1854), 162–3.