

MAYNOOTH

First published in *Blackwood's* (May 1845), pp. 647–56; not in *F* or *SGG*. No manuscript has been identified.

This essay, which intervened between the April and June instalments of 'Suspiria de Profundis,' is a return to concerns with the agitation in Ireland and the activities of Daniel O'Connell to which De Quincey had devoted his journalistic attention repeatedly in 1842, 1843, and 1844. In his earlier essay on 'Ireland' (*Blackwood's*, April 1844), De Quincey referred to 'making pounds into guineas for Maynooth' as a trivial and misguided effort to provide help to the impoverished Irish. It was quite natural, then, for De Quincey to respond with considerable alarm when that annual stipend to Maynooth was increased from £9,000 to £26,000. Maynooth was a Catholic seminary established in 1795 by Act of Parliament. As a counter-movement to the Jacobin abolition of Catholic seminaries in France and Holland, Parliament had passed an act to establish a seminary at Maynooth. The annual grant initially was £8,000. In 1807 the grant was raised to £12,000, but opposition from Anglican churchmen forced a reduction to £9,000 in 1808. That sum was paid annually until it was generously increased in 1845. Sir Robert Peel, as De Quincey recognized, intended to appease the Catholic clergy who had supported the Repeal Association. In his effort to quell widespread insurgency, Peel pursued a number of concessions. In 1843 he established the Devon Commission 'to inquire into the state of the law and practice in respect of the occupation of land in Ireland.' Its report was presented in 1845, too late to prevent the Irish Famine that commenced that year with the blight of the entire potato crop. Peel sought to increase patronage in Ireland, and he passed a Charitable Bequests Act to help the endowment of the Catholic Church. In addition to his support of Maynooth, Peel established secular colleges in Galway, Belfast and Cork.

De Quincey argued, however, that by strengthening Catholic instruction, Peel was undermining the Church of England, British rule, and the ideals of university education. In order to denounce Catholic education, De Quincey must also claim that Oxford and Cambridge were not founded as Catholic institutions – not Catholic because prior to a polemic stance against a Protestant Reformation.

There are not many explicit references in the letters to the composition of this essay. De Quincey submitted the essay in March, received a set of proofs on 7 April. On 22 April, he returned corrected proofs along with a conclusion in manuscript, promising to correct when typeset later in the day (NLS MS 4074. f. 183, f. 184). The added manuscript conclusion is also mentioned in a letter to

Mr. Hughes, of the Ballantyne and Hughes, printers for *Blackwood's* (NLS MS 10998, ff. 140/141).

IT is due to the character of this Journal, unflinching in its Conservative politics through one entire storm generation, that, in any great crisis of public interest, or in any fervent strife of public opinion, it should utter its voice strongly; under the shape of a protest and a parting testimony to the truth, where the case practically may be hopeless; under the shape of a hearty effort, co-operating with other efforts, where the case is *not* hopeless. There is nothing more depressing to patriotic honour and loyalty than the cowardice of despondency, even when a cause has touched the very brink of defeat; and we believe that no spectacle of firmness is more naturally congenial to the temper of our countrymen, than the fidelity which still makes signal of its affection in circumstances desperate for resistance, and which in mortal extremities will not relax its hold from a cause once conscientiously adopted. Do we insinuate by this that the anti-Maynooth cause looks desperate?¹ Our trust is otherwise. But if it were, what we say is, that not the less the duty remains sacred of hoping after all light of encouragement seems to have departed. This in any case; whilst, in the present, that duty is trebly sacred, because a whole succession of objects will remain upon which our future hopes must retreat, even if this foremost intrenchment should be forced. Maynooth will be no *solitary* aggression on the great cause of Protestantism: that carried, theirs will rapidly follow: their 'aspiring heads' are already above the horizon; and it is necessary to defend the first line in a spirit of gaiety and confidence, were it only that the second line and the third may not be abandoned under the contagion of dismay.

Of late this Journal has a good deal retired from the strife of politics. Our readers must not misunderstand this. It was not through any treachery to that duty of hope which we have been insisting on as sacred: it was through a change in the public rather than in ourselves. Ireland had for some time narrowed itself into Mr O'Connell;² domestic feuds had dwindled into the corn-question.³ Neither of these subjects, it is true was so utterly exhausted that we could not have found something new to say. But by the intolerable persecution of much speaking and much writing upon two wearisome topics, the public attention at last fell into a mere lethargy, from which it could not be roused to vibrate or react under any amount of stimulation. The audience fell away to nothing as the garrulity of the speakers increased; the public patience languished as its abusers multiplied. Now, however, Ireland is again restored to us as a fountain of interest under a new and most agitating impulse. Never, for many years, has the public mind fermented with so uncontrollable a fervour. Ascendency upon one field at least for Popery is now felt to be making a forward rush; the balance of the constitutional forces, for a

government essentially Protestant, is threatened with overthrow; and, if this Maynooth endowment prospers, Protestantism will receive a deadly wound in the empire which is, and *has* been, and by Providence was appointed to be, its main bulwark.

In speaking to this question, it is our purpose to array briefly before the reader its gravest aspects; to press upon his attention one or two which have been entirely neglected; to do this with the utmost rapidity that is consistent with distinct explanation of our meaning; but all along with no purpose of rousing angry prejudices, or appealing to any one sentiment that a candid man of any one party could describe as bigotry. We disapprove entirely, as a needless irritation to Roman Catholic feelings, of going back to the Revolution of 1829.⁴ If that great event were now pending, instead of being sixteen years in the rear, it would be our duty at any cost of possible offence in any quarter, to speak of it as our conscience might require us to speak. But, as things are, this would be to offer a wanton provocation, utterly useless for and practical end, and tending towards the continued alienation of many excellent fellow-subjects. Wrong or right, the policy of 'Emancipation'⁵ has triumphed; the thing is done, and cannot be undone; we must now adapt ourselves to a system which has become the law of the land. It is in such a case as with the past errors of a man's life: if he is wise, he will not suffer his energies to waste themselves upon unavailing regrets. To revoke the irrevocable being an effort so manifestly childish, he will apply himself to an effort which is rational, manly, and full of hope – to the correcting or mitigating of those consequences from his errors which are most threatening for his future welfare.

Social forms often show the same principle of vitality and reproduction; and, after the deadliest convulsions, put forward corresponding tendencies to restoration of their natural health and equilibrium. It is one, indeed, amongst the tests of excellence in any political constitution, that it can stand very rude shocks, and that it has internal resources for healing all injuries not organically destructive. Catholic emancipation, whatever might be thought of it if viewed from a station of unlimited power to choose or to reject, must now be reconciled to our minds for better and worse; and in peaceable times will gradually adjust itself to the working of our political system, settling into the general economy of the machine. But this Maynooth endowment tends to other results. The steps are inevitable from this centre to the very outermost periphery that bounds the ambition of Irish Popery; viz. to absolute ascendancy for itself, to absolute overthrow of Protestantism in Ireland, and therefore to ultimate separation of that island from the British empire, so far as the dreadful effort is concerned. For we must not overlook the modern symptoms of the case. Formerly, as in 1782 for instance, Ireland dreamed not of any further advantages⁶ than such as could be extorted from the occasional difficulties of England under foreign hostility, and such as should be sanctioned by English parliamentary concession. But under the long agitation of Mr O'Connell a new party has grown up which regards Ireland – however

inferior for aggressive war – as strong enough, by means of its excessive population, and the local advantages inherent in every *possessor* of the soil, for throwing off the connexion with England. Independence, on the footing of a separate nation, is seriously aimed at by the young blood of Ireland; not with a view to any imaginary advantages from development of native resources or alleviation of taxes, but on the single excitement of nationality. And by this ultimate object, as undoubtedly a favoured object working underground and extensively in the Ireland of 1845, we must measure the tendencies of an endowment conferred by Parliament upon the Popish religion.

Rightly to judge of any favour or privilege whatever conceded to Popery, we must consider the position of Popery with respect to the altered prospects of the world as it now is, and the duties of Protestantism, permanently as well as specially, in relation to the changed and changing attitude of our own particular crisis. But these being the capital aspects of the case, we will first of all notice those more manageable and rememberable topics which are flying abroad upon the popular breath amongst our antagonists.

It is alleged that we, the confederate opponents of the grant, are not natural allies. Being heterogeneous, our opposition cannot be cordial. Why not? If comprehensive unanimity, and undistinguishing unanimity, were an indispensable condition towards a legitimate confederacy, then it would be an impossibility that any combined action of men (which is one main purpose of human society) should ever arise. Some of us think it a high duty of the state to endow and favour that form of Christianity which the predominant opinion (as collected from the *total* empire) pronounces the true one. This is our own creed; and it is our further belief that this duty is strengthened where not only the general opinion has pronounced itself strongly for that particular religious system, but where also the history and the institutions of the land have unfolded themselves for centuries, and through memorable struggles, under the inspiration of that system, conforming to it, and receiving its impress. On the other hand, considerable masses of those who now pull together with ourselves, are permanent protestors against all state endowments of any one particular church; and not only so, but they object to any possible mode of connexion between the government and the functions of ecclesiastical bodies. What of that? Those are most thoughtless, or else incapable of self-control who at such a moment of common peril remind us of differences utterly impertinent to the question. Can we not abstract? If we are in discord upon political points, are we not agreed upon the great interests of our common Protestantism? Why must we be in harmony further than as to the one vast cause which we jointly defend? Upon this logic, Whigs and Tories meeting upon the same deck must not unite to ‘sink, burn, and destroy’ the enemies of their common country; or two households, Radical and Conservative, in the same village, must not work the same engine for the extinction of a fire which threatens every hearth. is to the case of those who oppose the grant *exclusively* on the principle of hostility to state endowments of religious bodies, all of us

see clearly that they travel on our road no inch further than it leads to a private purpose of their own, and that they will violently wheel away from us at the point where our purposes begin to divide. But, in the mean time, our purposes at this moment, and for the instant result, do *not* divide; and their support is good or so much of the struggle as they are conscientiously able to share with us.

But surely, say another class of objectors, though it is a pity that the Irish are not Protestants, it is better that they should have Popery for their form of religion than no religion at all. True. And if this were the alternative necessity, viz. that, Popery decaying, all religion must decay in Ireland; then we also should cordially support any *safe* mode (but not *this* mode) of raising the standard of education for the priestly instructors of Ireland. But we are not called upon to legislate for that dilemma. If, indeed, the case were that of a Popish regiment, it is clearly the duty of government to provide a Popish chaplain, and to see that he is properly qualified for his office; because if you do not open a regular channel to Popish instructions, you are sure that both conscience and worldly honour, paramount principles for cherishing amongst soldiers, will lead them to withdraw from all other instructions. Not being Papists, the men will become practically infidels. But the case is far otherwise for the Irish people. Government is not summoned to provide any part of an improved equipage for an Irish religious establishment. That is done, or done sufficiently. Whether as Protestant or Catholic, every man has access to religious instructions and religious consolations. There is no call to improve the quality of the priestly ministrations; for, considering the quality of the doctrines and usages which are essential to Popery, we do not believe that the Irish priesthood is much open to improvement as a machinery for carrying out its own indefeasible purposes. To raise the standard of respectability at Maynooth, would not alter the character of the creed which Maynooth teaches. And when it is said that, with a higher education, the Romish priesthood would be more likely to breed schism or incipient reformation within their own order, we doubt greatly as to the interpretation of the facts upon which that speculation is grounded. The Reformation, which shook the sixteenth century, did not arise, (as we see it alleged,) because Luther or Melancthon⁷ was so much above the standard of monkish education. Men quite as extensively learned as they, and even more highly endowed by nature, had but the more passionately undertaken the cause of Papal Rome in consequence of those great advantages. Luther was strong in the strength of his forerunners. The men of Luther's age *inherited* the zeal and the light kindled by three centuries of growing truth. And what put the crest and plumage upon the aspiring hopes of that period, was the providential madness of Rome, and the towering altitude of her corruptions, which just then, from mercenary causes, soared aloft more audaciously than ever before. In the present state of the Papal church, and under the new hopes which we shall point out further on, as just now opening upon her, it is more than ever improbable that any laxity

of discipline at Maynooth, or in the general government internally of the Irish church, will be suffered to leave openings for heresies to arise. Essentially some are aware that, for the next half century, beyond all the churches of earth, she will be a church militant. Escaping decay during that critical period from the immense diffusion of *general* knowledge, [but of knowledge not by any means concurrently connected with spiritual knowledge] – Rome is likely (as we shall soon argue) to take a prodigious bound forward. And if, on the other hand, any great fermentation of truth *should* commence in the Popish church of Ireland, and that a vacuum should thus be created, into which the priests could no longer carry their ministrations acceptably, that vacuum would be instantly filled by zealous Protestants. Such a change would be so far from leaving any part of the Irish poor denuded of spiritual aid, or in any way exposed to the risk of infidelity, (according to the objection,) that Protestant help would arise (we are well assured) in a ratio more than corresponding, to a necessity that must naturally have been gradual in its development. And thus it would appear – that, by strengthening Maynooth, Government, so far from protecting the people against the chances of infidelity, would (in the case supposed) have been intercepting the fair chances of our own Protestant missions. Besides, that (according to a constant reproach of our antagonists, which they must not be allowed to forget exactly when it furnishes an argument inconvenient to themselves,) the *regular* clergy of the Irish Protestant establishment, having churches (as they insist) without congregations, will always compose a staff large enough to intercept any possible expansion of infidelity that could attend the declension of Popery through one generation at the least fully agreeing, therefore, that Popery is a blessing to Ireland by comparison with any risk of no religion at all, we deny firmly that she is exposed to such a risk. And if unhappily she were, a most Irish mode of averting that risk it would be – to fortify the claims of Maynooth, that last asylum of unhallowed and fraudulent casuistry, a casuistry which, like the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, makes void the pure law of God.⁸

But a more cogent objection at first sight to us, the opposers of the Maynooth grant, seems this: ‘In 1796 your party it was that originally proposed and founded any grant at all.⁹ If it was right then, it is right now. And, as to the increase from nine thousand pounds per annum to twenty six thousand, that is a consideration for accountants rather than for states men; the sum cannot affect the principle.’

Here are our answers; for there are more points to answer than one.

First, It is not true, or near to being true, that the sum at issue could not affect the principle concerned. Many are the cases in which the quantities of the objects concerned in acts entirely vary the qualities of the acts. The law itself, which professedly neglects trifles, (*de minimis non curat lex*,)¹⁰ and which, in criminal cases, will not entertain a charge where the injury is below a certain money amount, shows how essential to the moral estimate of acts is the quantity of the value in issue. Money being power, quite as much as ever

knowledge was power, and much less restrictedly so, there arises with the variations of the sum the largest range of variations in the interpretation of the understanding between the parties as to the intention of giver and receiver. That sum is a bribe, which, divided by ten, is a fair acknowledgment of services performed. That sum in other cases is an insult, which, being centupled, would be a

honourable expression of distinguished merit. Nine thousand pounds might have been given, and (if we go back to the facts) really *was* given as a donation to an abject pauper; whilst an addition of seventeen thousand more may be accepted – and (if we consult the facts) *will* be accepted – in the haughty spirit of one who affects to regard as a testimony to his own merit what secretly he believes to be offered in trembling propitiation. It was Burke¹¹ who suggested the first endowment of a popish College; but how different are acts nominally the same! *His* motives were the motives of a reflecting patriot; Sir Robert Peel's¹² are the motives of a compromiser between adverse interests, whose heart, though honourable as regards intentions, does not prompt him to give a preponderating weight to either side, however opposed in principle. The *motives*, however, belong to our next head. At present, we are dealing with the money amount. It is alleged that seventeen thousand added to nine thousand can make no difference as to principle, and that all we, who reverence Burke and Pitt,¹³ are bound by their precedent. Now to that point the distinct answer is – that the nine thousand of Burke and Pitt was given as an eleemosynary dole to a body too poor, and at that time too abject, in political consideration, to move jealousy in and quarter. But the sum now asked is very nearly threefold of that fixed by Mr Pitt, and (if we add the interest of the outfit for the new furniture, appointments, &c.) is *more* than threefold. The small sum was given as charity; was given as an *annual* vote; and the large one will be given (if it *is* given) as an endowment in perpetuity to a haughty political interest, to a corrival of Trinity college,¹⁴ to a body that *has* moved jealousy in every quarter, and finally, (which sickens us to recollect,) to a body that will have the audacity, in concert with Mr O'Connel, one year after every favour shall have been received, to disown it as a subject for gratitude – acknowledging it only as the pledge and monument of English panic.

Secondly, As to the motives, these grew out of the perils diffused by the French Revolution.¹⁵ The year 1797, which followed the suggestion of this pecuniary aid to the Irish priests, was the last year of Burke's life. In what light he viewed the contagion from the anti-social frenzy then spreading over Europe, may be seen from the oracular words through which he spoke his mind both in 1796 and 1797. He was profoundly impressed with the disorganizing tendencies of the principles, but still more of the licentious cravings for change, which from the centre of Paris had crept like a mist over the whole face of Europe. France was in a less tumultuous state then than in 1792–3–4; but, as respected Europe generally, the aspect of things was worse;

because naturally the explosion of frenzy in Paris during the Reign of Terror,¹⁶ took a space of two or three years to reproduce and train the corresponding sympathies in other great capitals of the Continent. By 1797, the contagion was mature. Thence came the necessity for some *domestic* establishment where Irish priests should be educated: it was no longer safe that they should resort to St Omers:¹⁷ both because the unsettled license of thinking Upon all things established would form the very worst atmosphere for clerical sobriety; and more specifically because all the Jacobins of the time bore deadly hatred to England. The priests trained at St Omers, would in fact have become a corps of spies, decoys, and conspirators in the service of France. The rebellion of '98 read a commentary on this text. And no policy, therefore, could have been wiser than to intercept such a result by a periodical grant to Maynooth; whilst the requisite dependency of the institution was secured by making the great annual. Now, however, not only is it proposed to make it permanent, which (together with the enlarged amount) totally changes its character, but a greater change still is – that the original reason for any grant at all, the *political* reason, has entirely passed away. The objection to a continental education may be strong as regards the convenience of the Irish; but the inconvenience has no longer any relation to ourselves. No air in Europe can be tainted with a fiercer animosity to England than the air of Ireland. In this respect the students of Maynooth *cannot be* more perilously situated. Whilst we all know by the Repeal rent and the O'Connell yearly tribute,¹⁸ that the Irish Papists could easily raise three times the money demanded for Maynooth, if they were as willing to be just in a service of national duty as they are to be liberal in a service of conspiracy.

Thirdly, Connected with this question of *motives*, arises another aspect of the case. A college, it may be said, cannot do much in the way of modifying the political temper of a country, whether for the better or the worse. If disaffection to the government prevails in Ireland, that may argue no participation in such a spirit by the rulers of Maynooth. But in another direction, Maynooth cannot plead innocence. The O'Connell agitation could at any rate, with or without Maynooth, have distempered all public loyalty amongst the lower classes. *They* could present no resistance to influences operating too strongly upon their nationality. But the priestly order, if originally by their training at all adorned with the graces proper to their profession, would not have fallen under the influence of acts so entirely mobbish. Yet we know that by no other engine has Mr O'Connell so powerfully operated on the Irish mind as through the agency of the priests. Not O'Connell moulded *them* in his service, but they presented themselves ready moulded to him; and with exceptions so rare as to argue a more extensive secularisation of the priestly mind throughout Ireland, than has ever been witnessed in the strongholds of Popery. This early preoccupation by a worldly taint of the clerical mind amongst the Irish Catholics, could not possibly have reached an excess so entirely without parallel in Europe, unless chiefly through profligate systems of training at Maynooth. In

MAYNOOTH

all Ireland there was found with difficult any specimen of the simple rural pastor (so common in France) who withdrew himself from political strife. The priest who considered his spiritual character degraded by partisanship, (no matter in what service,) was nowhere to be heard of. Wherever Mr O'Connell wanted an agent, an intriguer, an instrument for rousing the people, he was sure of one in the parish priest. Now this fact is decisive upon the merits of Maynooth. It matters not what latitude may be allowed to variety of political views; no politics of *any* sort can be regarded as becoming to a village pastor. But allow him to be a politician, how could a priest become a tool without ruin to his spiritual character? Yet this is the Maynooth, training its *alumni* to two duties, the special duty of living *in procinctu*¹⁹ and in harness for every assault upon the Protestant establishment of their country, and. for the unlimited duty of taking order in any direction from Mr O'Connell – this is the Maynooth to which, for such merits, we have been paying nine thousand pounds annually for exactly fifty years, and are now required to pay three times as much for ever.

But from these narrower questions, directed to circumstantialities local and transitory, we wish to draw the reader's attention upon certain other questions larger and more philosophic. And, first of all, let us say a word upon one point continually raised and not at all limited to Irish cases, viz. the latitude allowed by conscience to a Protestant in promoting the welfare of Papists, where it happens that the personal service is associated unavoidably with some service to the Popish cause. As individuals, or even as a collective body in the commonwealth, every liberal man would wish to protect and to favour his Catholic fellow-citizens, if he could do so without aiding them in their natural purpose of making proselytes. There are cases undoubtedly in which these mixed advantages for the person and for the creed would so blend as to offer a difficult problem in casuistry to a delicate conscience. Sir Robert Peel in the final debate on the second reading of the Maynooth bill, attempted to throw dust in the eyes of the House upon the principle concerned in cases of this nature; and even if he had been light in his argument, we believe that he would have gained little for the particular question concerned in the Maynooth grant. He argued, by way of showing how untenable was the notion that we could not conscientiously support a religion which we believed erroneous, that upon that hypothesis we should cut the ground from below our feet in the mode of supporting our own religion. The law of England insists upon the Dissenters paying church rates and tithes to the English church; now, argued Sir Robert, the Dissenter might turn round and plead, in bar of this claim, the English churchman's demur to supporting Popery by supporting Maynooth. But the case accurately stated is – that no English churchman ever *did* demur to paying his quota towards Maynooth; on the contrary, he has paid it quietly for fifty years. What some few churchmen *have* demurred to was – not paying after the law had said '*pay*,' but legislating for the payment; passing the annual vote for the payment. Now, if a Dissenter happens

to be in Parliament he is quite at liberty to make the same demur as to church rates; but he makes his demur in the wrong quarter if he addresses it to the collector. So again, as regards to the increased grant, and the permanent grant to Maynooth, if it passes the two Houses, we shall all of us pay our share without scruple; neither will nor consciences be at all wounded, for we pay under the coercion of a distress-warrant, contingent upon our refusing to pay. It is the suffering the law to pass, without opposing it in one way or other, that *would* wound our consciences. And, again, the English law does not require a Dissenter to concur in the propriety of paying church-rates, it requires him only to pay them.

But we Protestants, in paying to Maynooth, supposing that we made ourselves parties to the payment by consenting to the bill, feel that we should be willfully abetting the propagation of error. It is true that the Papist finds himself in the same necessity of contributing to what he regards as heresy by contributing to the support of the Protestant Establishment. But if a Protestant resorts to a country, or acquiesces in a country where Popery is established, he does not complain that he falls under the relation of a tributary to a system which did not seek *him*, but which he sought.

There are other casuistical points, arising out of these practical relations to systems of religious belief, which are often unskilfully mingled with cases like this of Maynooth; but they cannot disguise the broad distinction between the principle in that question and the principle in the question of Catholic emancipation. There the object was purely negative, viz. to liberate a body of men from certain incapacities. Successive penal laws had stripped the Papist of particular immunities and liberties. These were restored by emancipation. A defect was made good. But no *positive* powers were created by that measure. Now, on the other hand, when a large revenue is granted, (as by the pending Maynooth grant,) this is in effect to furnish artillery for covering advances upon hostile ground. This gives positive powers to Popery for propagating its errors. That Sir Robert Peel should hold such a mode of collusion with falsehood to be lawful – would be astonishing, were it not that he manifestly confounds the case of promoting a law by votes, or any mode of active support, which is a true and substantial assent, with the case of paying under a demand of the law. Now this is no assent at all, any more than the surrendering your person passively to the arrest of a police-officer is an assent to the justice of the accusation, or to the reasonableness of the law under which you will be tried. To pay on the demand of the law is no assent at all, but an abridged process of yielding to the physical coercion of the law. You are aware of the steps through which the compulsory action of the law will travel; and it cannot make any difference as to the principle of your submission, that, for the sake of saving time, you yield to the first step, instead of waiting for the last. It is, therefore, no duty of a Protestant, in any circumstances, to abet Popery by any mode of support, but only seems to be so by confounding cases essentially different.

Next arises for notice, the very interesting question on the prospects of Popery at this moment, and its chances of a great restoration, by means of combination with various forms of human power. One cause of error upon this subject lies in the notion that conspicuous obscurations of civil grandeur, jurisdiction, and wealth, which Popery has suffered of late years in almost every state, have, therefore, been absolute losses of spiritual power. On the contrary, these losses are likely to strengthen Popery. Precisely in the most bigoted of Popish kingdoms – Austria, Bavaria, Spain, and Portugal – the Popish religion has been shorn, during the last fifty years, of its most splendid temporalities.²⁰ The suppression of the Inquisition²¹ in Spain, &c., the extinction of religious houses on a vast a scale, the limitation of the Papal rights in the disposal of Bishops, the confiscation or sale of church land, to an amount unsuspected in Protestant countries – these and other convulsions have shaken the Papacy in a memorable degree. But it is certain that the vigour and vitality of Popery, in modes more appropriate to a spiritual power, are reviving. Popery has benefited by the removal, however harshly executed at the moment of enormous abuses connected sometimes with wealth, sometimes only with the reputation of wealth, but in either case with a weight of popular odium. The vessel has righted and become buoyant by the sacrifice of masts and rigging. A spirit of activity has again manifested itself in many directions. And with this has concurred a new body of hopes, arising from social accidents in America. Throughout the great central valley of North America,²² and along the line of the most recent inroads into the western forests, a great opening has arisen, of late years, for throwing a network of spiritual power over a vast territory that is rapidly unfolding its power and wealth. Through this opening has poured, for some years like a spring-tide, huge host of Catholic missionaries. Such was the extensive demand for spiritual ministrations amongst a population multiplying to excess, that any order of Christian clergy would have been welcome. Here is a basis laid for future magnificent development of Popish power. Rome itself has been stirred and agitated with the prospect of seeing its energies revive, and of reaping a malicious retribution by entering into combination with that Teutonic race,²³ from whom, during the last three centuries, she had received her deadliest wounds.²³ But a doubt arises, whether this very combination will not be more likely to impress a totally new character upon the Papal religion. The Saxon energy will be likely to strangle Popery, rather than Popery in the long run to pervert that energy. In England itself, through Oxford, unexpected auguries have dawned upon Rome,²⁴ of a new birth for the pomps of Papal Rome. And exactly at this crisis of hope and unlimited anticipation, the splendid endowment of Maynooth, solemnly-proposed and vigorously pressed forward by a cautious minister of England, coinciding also with the spasmodic throes of the Irish people to establish an independent nationality, have doubtless spread through the councils of the Vatican as much of what will probably be found visionary expectation, as through the hearts of our own Protestant

countrymen, they have spread of what equally, we trust, will be converted by this national insurrection against Maynooth into visionary fear.

Another point we are bound to notice, as error generally diffused – though shocking to just logic. It is said, by way of reproach to ourselves – the England of this day – that we took all the splendid endowments of Oxford, Cambridge, and so forth, from Roman Catholics;²⁵ which being so, we are bound to make some restoration of the spoils to the Catholics of this day. Was there ever heard more complex absurdity? Mark its stages:

1st, If you *had* taken them from Catholics of the 16th century, how would *that* translate any interest of property in the institutions to people of the nineteenth century, simply as professing the same faith? We took various spoils about 1780 from Hyder Ali, the sultan of Mysore: in 1799 we took others more costly from his son Tippoo: will that entitle some prince of Turkestan, or Bokhara, in the year 2000, to claim these spoils on the plea that he is a Mahometan?²⁶ An interest of inheritance would thus be vested in the emptiest of abstractions.

2d, They were *not* Catholics,²⁷ in a proper sense, who founded the chief colleges at Oxford, &c. The Roman Catholic faith was not developed fully at the period when many were founded: it could not be developed even as a *religious system* until after the great polemic writers, on the one side and the other, had drawn out the differential points of doctrine. And when partly developed, or showing a tendency to certain conclusions, it was not fully *settled* until the Council of Trent.²⁸ Next, as a *political interest*, it was not at all developed until between the beginning of Luther and the termination of Trent. Impossible it was that it should; for until a counter-pole existed, until an antagonist interest had arisen, the relations of Popery, whether political or religious, must have been indeterminate: as a kingdom surrounded by deserts and trackless forests, cannot have its frontier line ascertained.

3dly, If they had been Catholics, in the *fullest* sense, who founded our universities, it was not as Catholics that they founded them, but as great families who had accumulated property under our system of laws; and secondly, as natives of the land. They were *able* to found universities, because they had been protected by English laws; they were *willing* to found universities, because they were of English birth, and loved their native land. The Countess of Richmond, for instance, or Henry VI, in his great foundations at Eton or Cambridge, or Baliol at Oxford,²⁹ did not think of Popery under any relation to heresy. They thought of it, so far as *at all* they thought of it, in its general abstraction of spiritual loveliness; and under that shape it differed not at all from the Protestantism of the English church. The temper in which they acted, is a pledge that they thought of man, and the children of man, not in relation to those points in which they differed, but to those above all in which they agreed. They were compatriots of the islanders – they loved knowledge – and in those characters, not as Papists, they founded colleges.

4thly, Supposing that in the plenary and controversial sense they *had* been Catholics who founded our great medieval institutions; supposing, next, that they had founded them *as* Catholics, and *because* they were Catholics; supposing, also that from them, in that aerial character of '*persons holding a creed,*' any lights of inheritance could, by leave of Thomas Aquinas,³⁰ be imagined metaphysically to descend, lastly, and not withstanding all this, their establishments had passed into the hands of other trustees by due course of law – that is, by legislation under the countersign of king, lords, and commons; that is, by the same title under which any man whatever, Papist or Protestant, holds any property whatever. Are we obliged to settle an annuity upon A B, because he can trace himself lineally to a man who held our lands under Edward the Confessor?³¹ Yet, by the supposition, A B *can* prove a relation blood to the ancient owner, though none at all to the lands. But the Catholics can show no relation whatever either to the foundations at Oxford, or to the blood of the founder. Upon this conceit, if a man could trace his blood to an ancient Druid, he would have a *lien* in law upon all the oak-trees in the island!³² *Resum teneatis?*³³

Whilst this, however, is a mere vapour of the speculative brain, there is a final absurdity, less showy in its extravagance, yet in practice more misleading. We cannot allow ourselves, consistently with the rapid movement of our sketch, to do justice to this fallacy; but we will indicate its outline. Look back to all the pro-Catholic journals for the last forty years, and you will find it every here appealed to and relied on as a substantial argument – that, in many states on the Continent, Catholics and Protestants sit as assessors on the same bench of judgment; act harmoniously as officers, commanders and commanded, in the same regiment; meet daily as fellow-students in the same schools and colleges. The inference is – that mere partisanship, deeper bigotry, and no other cause whatever, has made it difficult or dangerous for English Protestants and Catholics to effect the same coalition. Having no room left for a fuller exposure of this delusive representation, we shall here content ourselves with an illustrative allusion or two. The Moors were expelled from Spain before any English Catholics became the objects (having willfully *made* themselves the objects) of something like proscription under English laws. The chasm between the Moors of this day and their ancestors stretches over more than three centuries. Has that rent closed? Have those wounds healed? Is the reader aware of the figurative language, under the symbol of house door keys, still hanging over Moorish hearths, &c., by which, to this hour, the Moors cherish for their children's ears deep vindictive remembrances of their ancient habitations in Spain, and their haughty vision of a bloody re-entrance? Does the reader imagine that an invasion by Moors of Italy or France would move under the same burning impulses of an invasion of Spain? The return of the Moors to Spain would be like the *recoil* of a catapulta. And, allowing for higher civilization, of the same deep memorial character would have been any re-entry of Roman Catholics upon *power* in England, had it

been less gradual than the prudence of Parliaments made it. The deep outrages of Catholics upon English lights, under the troubled movements amongst the thrones of Europe during the century of strife, which made the temptations to treason irresistible for vassals of Rome, forced from the Protestants such stern reactions, as have left with both parties an abiding sense of profound injuries. Attainders to be blotted out, judgments to be reversed, burning records of shame for persons and for creed, sculptured in our laws, to trample under foot, are likely to stimulate the malice (calling itself the retribution) of lineal descendants, even if there were no *estates to reclaim*. And surely those fantastic persons who think, that merely to bear the name or classification of '*Catholic*' must confer Upon one, pleading no shadow of a connexion with the founder of a college, some claim to a dividend upon its funds, are not entitled to hold cheap the very different sort of claims, resting upon acknowledged heirship, which are now lying amongst the monuments of thousands. It is a record of the political imbecility, it is to the high *disgrace*, of the continental states, that with most of them Catholics and Protestants *could* meet in this insipid harmony: it was a harmony resembling the religious toleration of people – tolerant, because careless of all religion. Had they, like ourselves, possessed a constitution of slow growth, a representative system, popular mind, all stimulating to noble political feuds, – in that case they would have had high principles like ourselves; they, like ourselves, would have faced the action and reaction of endless contest; and their political progress, like ours, would have been written on every page of their history and legislation. It was because they slept and snored for ages with no instincts of fiery political life, that they were able, in modern times – Catholics and Protestants – to fraternise in effeminate raptures of maudlin sentimentality.

We apply this last topic specially to our conclusion: – In pointing to the yet unappreciated difference between our own feuds with popery and those of other nations – which foreign feuds, at the very best, (if they rose at all to the grandeur of civil strife,) moved through butchery and violence, as in France, not through laws and scaffolds – moved like the uproars of Afghans, not like the grand tribunitial contests of ancient Rome – we could only indicate a feature or two of the inexhaustible case. And naturally it was to England that we pointed. But now – but by this Maynooth revolution, it is not England that is primarily menaced. Ireland it is upon which that evil will descend, which, by the wisdom of Parliament, backed by the protesting tumults of the people, did *not* descend on England. For England, Parliament was cautious and retarding in all its steps. The 'return of the Heracleid'³⁴ was by graduated movements; and, had it even been abrupt, a thousandfold greater were the resources for combined resistance of Protestants against combined reaction of Papists. But in Ireland, deeper are the vindictive remembrances, more recent are the deductions of claims to property, and louder the clamours for wide resumption; from massacre and counter massacre, from Cromwell, from Limerick, from Londonderry, from Boyne, from Aughrim,³⁸ the wounds are yet

MAYNOOTH

green and angry; and the hostile factions have never dissolved their array. This is the land into which a Moorish recoil is now threatened. The reader understands us to speak of a return – not for the physical men – but for the restored character of supremacy in which they will be able to act with power.

