

*Cath. Church Mr. P. Brunan BX
Apologizer from St. M. Airdrie 1760*

A LETTER

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TO

WILLIAM THOMSON, QUARRIER, WHIFFLET,

IN ANSWER TO

ACCUSATIONS

MADE BY HIM IN HIS PRIZE ESSAY,

AGAINST

THE CATHOLIC CLERGY

AND

CATHOLICITY.

BY JAS. M'AULEY, CATH. TEACHER, AIRDRIE.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

AIRDRIE:
PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM BROWN, HIGH-ST.;
AND SOLD BY
JAMES WILKIE, AIRDRIE,
AND JOHN SUTHERLAND, BOOKSELLER, COATBRIDGE.

1849.

*To Mr. Denis Brunan
with the author's
best respects*

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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RESEARCH REPORT
NO. 1234

BY
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P R E F A C E .

THIS Letter was written for Mr. Thomson's private use, and it is with hesitation and reluctance, and at the request of some friends, that I permit it to appear in print. I do so the more readily as Mr. Thomson's charge against the Catholic Priesthood and Catholicity, in general, has received an extensive circulation in this town and vicinity; and, by being endorsed by the Adjudicators, might be received as genuine by the majority of the people. If Mr. Thomson's assertions be true, the people will now have an opportunity of hearing his proofs; if not, I leave it to the public to judge whether it is just, upright, or honourable, to charge the Clergy of the overwhelming mass of Christians with such libels.

Another reason I have for permitting this Letter to appear publicly is,—I have before sent letters of a similar tendency to some other gentlemen in town, but was never favoured with a reply; and lest this should meet with a similar fate, with all its faults I send it forth to the public. If expressions are used hurtful to the feelings of any Protestant, I regret it; but they must bear in mind, it is from Protestants I quote, and, also, that it was in defence of the Clergy and faith which every *practical* Catholic loves and reveres more than life—a Clergy that have ever been the patrons of education, the friends and supporters of the poor and the needy, and whether fever, famine, or cholera, visit their people, will not fly away and permit their flock to be destroyed by the wolf, but are always ready to brave every danger, and encounter every difficulty to gain souls for Heaven.

JAMES M'AULEY.

15, ALEXANDER STREET, AIRDRIE,
4th October, 1849.

historian, Cobbett, says, "the Catholic religion is charged with being unfavourable to genius, talent, and, in short, to the powers of the mind; they [the Protestants.] content themselves with the bare assertion, [like Mr. William Thomson,] not supposing that it admits of anything like disproof—they look upon it as assertion against assertion—and, in a question which depends upon mere *hardness of mouth*, they know that their triumph is secure; but this question does admit of proof, and very good proof too."

The Reformation in England was completed by the year 1600: priestly ignorance and popish superstition were then swept away. The Monasteries were then nearly all abolished. Young St. Edward's people had robbed all the altars, and the virgin Queen Elizabeth had put the finishing hand to the pillage. The kingdom of France remained buried in popish ignorance and superstition until 1787—so did Italy, the very centre of Catholicity—that is, 187 years after happy England stood in a blaze of Protestant light. Comparing these countries with the law-established Church and its family of Muggletonians, Cameronians, Jumpers, Unitarians, Shakers, Quakers, and the rest of the Protestant litter in Great Britain and Ireland, let us see which can produce the most numerous class of learned men. During the above period, these islands were in a blaze of light sent forth by Luther, Cranmer, Knox, and their followers. Here, then, is the proof from the *Protestant* historian, Cobbett, which he has taken from the "Universal Historical, Critical, and Bibliographical Dictionary," a work which is in every good library, and received as the very best authority as to facts, and contains lists of persons of all nations celebrated for their *published* works. The following is a list of a few of them:—

	Eng. Sc. & Ireland.	France.	Italy.
Writers on Law,.....	6	51	9
Mathematicians,.....	17	52	15
Physicians and Surgeons, ...	13	72	21
Writers of Natural History,	6	33	11
Historians,	21	139	22
Dramatic Writers,	19	66	6
Grammarians,.....	7	42	2
Poets,	38	157	34
Painters,	5	64	44
	132	676	164

Is that what your specimen of upstart Protestant intelligence calls the grave of literature? Oh, shame!—where is thy blush? And yet the man who writes and propagates that falsehood is rewarded with a premium of twenty pounds sterling, and the calumny endorsed by a Gentleman and four neighbouring Ministers. But perhaps I do them wrong in ascribing this libel as their opinions, for in the note by them I find them saying, "that in some places the Essay should be enlarged, and in others retrenched;" that is, that these assertions ought to have been proven, or not inserted. I hope that is their opinion, but I still

fear *not*, for I before heard one of the Rev. Gentlemen make the same assertion when delivering a lecture to the members of the Mechanics' Institution, Airdrie, and when called upon for proof, as *you now are*, he shrunk from the task; but honour to the Protestant members of the Institution, they manfully and generously acknowledged that they believed the Priests were *not* the enemies of education. In other respects, I am highly indebted to this Rev. Gentleman for his courteous demeanour towards myself personally. But let us take another view of the above list, and allow one-third to the French, on account of their superior populousness, and then there will remain to them 451 to our 132 !!! so that there was three-and-a-half times as much education in Catholic France as there was in Protestant England; and even the Italians far surpass England in *genius*, talent, and the powers of the mind, for their population is not equal to ours and their number of men of mind considerably exceeds that of ours. Cobbett was not the only man who thought well of Catholics as literary men. Burke, the orator and philosopher, declared that *France alone* produced more eminent scholars than *all* the Protestant Universities of Europe. Gibbon declared that *one* single Monastery of Benedictine Monks gave to the world more works of learning than *both* the Universities of England; and Lord Hutchison, during the debate on the Catholic Relief Bill, in the House of Lords, 10th May, 1809, said—"Catholicity, which has this night been the subject of so much abuse, has been the belief of the most extensive and *enlightened* nations of Europe, and of the *most illustrious characters* that ever did honour to the name of man." Sir Lawrence Peel, chief-justice in India, in 1844 visited the Jesuit College at Calcutta, and says—"that he had seen men there of the first order of talent, devoting the greater part of their time, without *any remuneration*, to the instruction of children of the poorest classes." Borrow, himself, the very essence of bigotry and the chief of Biblicals, says—"I am ready to assert, that there are *no people in the world* better qualified, on the whole, to be entrusted with the education of youth than the *JESUITS* are. Their moral system and discipline are truly admirable; their pupils, in after life, are seldom vicious and licentious characters, and are in general men of *learning, science*, and are possessed of every elegant accomplishment." I could quote hundreds of Protestant authorities all to the same effect; but why follow the subject? for every well instructed and unprejudiced Protestant knows that it is a base calumny, got up by interested fanatics to blacken the Priests and Catholicity; but it is long since exploded, and can only pass current among old wives and illiterate men.

I ask you now, Sir, in sober seriousness, if you believe your own words, to give me proof what Council, Pope, Bishop, or Priest, ever by any Enactment, or Bull, or in any manner whatever prohibited education. I will not give you a prize of £20 for doing so, but as a matter of justice to the Priests and

your Catholic neighbours you are bound to do so, or retract your *proofless* and bold assertion. Please now to follow me a little farther, and I will point out for your information Enactments passed, *not* by Catholic Priests, Bishops, or Popes, but hellish Enactments adopted by a PROTESTANT legislature, signed and sanctioned by the visible head of the Protestant Established Church, ratified, confirmed, and rigorously carried into execution by a Protestant people, making it treason for Catholics to teach or get education, in these Protestant countries. In the 34th year of the reign of good King Henry VIII., the following Enactment was passed against his Catholic subjects—“ *Nothing shall be taught, or maintained, contrary to the King’s instructions. And if any spiritual person [the Priests again,] preach or maintain anything contrary to the King’s instructions, or determinations, made, or to be made, and shall be thereof convicted, he shall for the first offence, recant; for the second, abjure and bear a faggot; and for his third, shall be adjudged a heretic, and be BURNED, and lose all his goods and chattels.*” This was conscience-stretching with a vengeance! Again, 8th Anne, ch. 3, sec. 13,—“ A Catholic Schoolmaster, if found teaching, was, for the first offence, *imprisoned* in the common gaol; for the second, *transported*; and, thirdly, if he returned to his country and friends he suffered as a traitor, and any person informing on him received a reward of ten pounds; if on a Priest, twenty pounds; and if a Vicar-general, or Bishop, fifty pounds.” You see here, Sir, the informer was well rewarded, while the Bishop, Priest, and Schoolmaster, were punished with banishment and death. The *anti-educational* part of the *Protestant* Penal Code ran thus—“ If a Catholic kept school, or taught *any* person, Protestant or Catholic, *any* species of literature or science, such teacher was, for the *crime of teaching*, punishable by law by banishment; and if he returned from banishment, he was liable to be *hanged* as a felon.” “ If a Catholic, whether child or adult, attended, in Ireland, a school kept by a Catholic, or was privately instructed by a Catholic, such Catholic, *although a child*, incurred a forfeiture of all its property, present or prospective.” “ If a Catholic child, however young, was sent to *any* foreign country for education, such infant child incurred a similar penalty, that is, a forfeiture of all right to property, present or prospective.” “ If any person in Ireland made any remittance of money or goods, for the maintenance of any Irish child educated in a foreign country, such person incurred a similar forfeiture.” I request you read these Enactments again, and ponder over them at your leisure, and then ask yourself whether is it the Catholic priesthood, or Protestant monarchs, Parliaments, Clergy, and people, that have been “ opposed to knowledge, because the degrading superstition they call religion can find a foundation only on the grave of knowledge, and reason, and truth?” “ Thou hypocrite, cast out the beam out of thy own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to take the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

I confess it requires a great *hardness of mouth* and brazen-faced-effrontery in any Protestant to tell us that the Catholic Priesthood are the enemies of education, and that Protestants are its patrons and protectors. I only quote from the Penal Code a few of the Enactments referring to *education*: there were others against "Property," "Personal Disabilities," and "Religion;" and, as Burke eloquently said, "It had a vicious perfection, and it was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency; well digested and well disposed in all its parts. It was a machine of wide and elaborate contrivance; and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man." This Code against Catholics prevented the accumulation of property, and punished industry as a crime. It enforced *ignorance* by Statute Laws, and *punished the acquisition of knowledge as a felony*. But that is not all, for the party that thus persecuted learning, reproached, and still reproach Catholics with ignorance, and tell us the Priests have been the cause. Now, Sir, if you produce me a code, similar to the above, ever enacted by the clergy of the Catholic Church, against the education of their people, I will join with you in holding the authors of it up to public ridicule, and the contempt and execration of mankind. If you cannot—and I challenge and defy you to do so—then are you guilty of writing and propagating that which you should have known to be the reverse of truth. History declares that there is no hierarchy, nor clergy, nor people in the world, that appreciates more highly the advantages of education than the Catholic Priesthood. They know that except the benefit of redemption and vocation to the faith, providence can confer no greater blessing on a nation than that of a good moral religious education. The Priesthood of Ireland know, if the lights of education were once diffused throughout that beautiful but oppressed and misgoverned land, it would be impossible to keep her gallant sons enchained—they know if the mind of the peasant was enlightened by education, he would seek for redress for his numerous wrongs, in the powerful protection of the law and not in the strength of his own right arm—they know if the crimes of her children, (which are few in comparison to England's,) have stained the pages of her history, it is because a Penal Code, which was singularly calculated to demoralize a people, first stripped of the possessions of their fathers, left no alternative but apostacy or treason, and almost extinguished literature among them. The light of faith seems to keep pace with the light of literature; and whenever Heaven wished to remove it from any nation, it generally effected it by giving it up to ignorance—to barbarism—which destroyed the liberal arts, upset the monuments of human literature, demolished and effaced every vestige of human civilization. Who is he that forms the virtuous parent and dutiful child? It is he who is instructed. Who are they who bring the bright offerings of

To Mr Denis Branan
with the Author's
Best respects
July 16th 1850