

St. Michael's Palace Toronto Canada Feb 18, 1866

My dear O Donogh.

I don't know in whose hands better than yours can be placed a petition from Toronto to the Imperial Parliament of England, praying it to have mercy on Ireland, and to grant to it prosperity and happiness in assimilating its legislation to that of Canada. I therefore presume on your kindness, ability, and love of Ireland, to forward to you this petition. It may appear strange to some to find this petition coming from this quarter of the world, but when the petition is read and the motives and reasons which dictated this petition they will be I trust duly appreciated. I may here mention

Since of them, 1<sup>st</sup> Our love of kindness and country which burns more or less in the breast of everyone, no matter where he resides, and which even out-lives the separations dictated of faith. It is the workings of nature herself.

2<sup>nd</sup> all in the first a desire to see others enjoy the happiness and prosperity which we experience, under a government of our own choice and laws made by ourselves to suit our own wants and circumstances. 3<sup>rd</sup> our common humanity urges us to raise our voice to deplore the evil that causes the horrid spectacle exhibited every day in the landings on the American shores of hundreds of pauper families in rags and misery from Ireland, with tears in their eyes and imprecations on their lips against their former landlords and rulers. 4<sup>th</sup> matter is a desire to see the cure of evils by constitutional means effected, and by this demand a huge organization which may yet give a great deal of trouble to England in case of any war with another power. Whilst I disapprove of this brotherhood I look upon it as the suppuration of a deep chronic wound inflicted upon Ireland. It is as natural a consequence to misrule as the falling of a heavy body to the earth, is the effect of the law of gravitation; for the moral order has also its laws. A hungry and oppressed people will murmur and plot, and conspire, witness the

history of all nations. The debate following the Queen of England's  
 last speech has added ten fold strength to the Fenian cause. Cattle  
 before me. The Government forbids it to continue or to pass as it deals  
 with the Cattle question. Your amendment being negatived must of course  
 has caused a great indignation to echo through this country even  
 among strangers, whose attention of late is called to the grievances of  
 Ireland by the Fenian tracts and meetings. O. M. Native Christian  
 Charity. A Christian people has ask in the name of the God of Charity,  
 in the name of the gospel of his son Jesus Christ which preaches justice  
 and charity for just laws, just to the poor as well as to the rich. The Irish  
 here in Canada ask, how is it possible that under the same Sovereign  
 the laws can be so unequal. Here Catholics are not taxed to support a  
 Protestant Church. Here there is a perfect liberty of education. The school  
 law provides that the Catholics are taxed only for their own children.  
 schools and their Universities are empowered to confer degrees, and the  
 Catholic Colleges receive their portion of public endowment as well as  
 the Protestant. Here the Landlord makes all improvement as in England  
 or allows their value to the tenant. We hear of no such evictions in any  
 country except in Ireland. I have lived in and visited many countries  
 in Europe and America and I solemnly declare that I have heard  
 or seen none where the peasantry and small farmers work harder and  
 are worse fed, clothed, and housed, not excepting the generality of slaves  
 now freedmen of the Southern States. This struck me most forcibly  
 in Louisiana when I first landed in this country about twenty years ago  
 I mentioned in a paper addressed to the Irish Clergy which, by the  
 way was intended for them alone as I did not wish to give joy to the  
 enemies of peace and order by the publications in the newspapers, that  
 the feelings of exasperation of the Irish against their former rulers know  
 no bounds, especially when they compare the laws of this country with the  
 ones they had to abandon. A priest in endeavouring to persuade one  
 of his parishioners from joining the Fenians was answered as a final  
 reply. Oh father you did not see hear the screams of your children or  
 their cries when the Cabin was dragged over their heads, or you did not

see them in hunger and cold huddled together for warmth on the roadside. Another  
 said to one of our priests who was collecting for a church, father I gave the last dollar  
 I had to help to save my poor country from ruin. The next dollar that I will earn I  
 will give it to your reverence. How often have we heard this tale of woe. I had to sell  
 the last bushel of wheat and the last pig to pay the landlord. Knowing full well  
 that in a few months the famine would be on us. I thought it better to do this and  
 die in the cabin than in the poor house or by the roadside as I know the priest would  
 amonit us and the neighbours bury us in our own grave yard. God with my wife  
 and my children but alas I am alone in the world. You know my dear O'Donoghue  
 the tens of thousands of cruel evictions in Ireland within the last twenty years  
 the victims relate to their children born in this country, scenes of horror + woe  
 and in those long winter nights instruct them in Irish history + Irish wrongs  
 Often do the children go to bed weeping for their relations in Ireland. Irish tales, songs,  
 Irish newspapers reproduced here, Irish patriotic speeches at school exhibitions, keep  
 up the spirit of Irish nationality not to speak of the processions on St. Patrick's day.  
 The poor Irish as it is true more or less despised by other nationalities, and this  
 food makes the children of Irish parents hate more the oppression, that cause  
 their parents to appear despicable, some uneducated and proud children  
 become ashamed of their parents but they are the exception. The sons of the  
 Irish born in America swell immensely by the Jewish radicals. The utterances  
 of English statesmen and papers on the right of revolution. The  
 English idolatry of Garibaldi and the Italian so called patriots.  
 The American boast of their breaking their chains have produced  
 their effect on the new minds of the Irish American children. I might  
 as a fifth motive to get up the petition, as an earnest desire on  
 my own part as a Catholic Bishop to see the oppression of the  
 poor cease. We daily witness its effects in the poor houses, jails, streets,  
 and back lanes of our cities. I do not wonder that the  
 oppression of the poor cries to heaven for vengeance for by  
 it souls are lost. Solomon prayed against too much riches  
 and too much poverty. I would consider it a crime to be  
 silent on the wrongs of the poor and to be eloquent in denouncing  
 revolution, I fall to in trying to get justice for the people. I endeavour

at least to give bread to the hungry, to clothe the naked and to protect innocents. I rejoice to add my mite of labour to the exertions of my miserable brethren in Ireland in the cause of humanity & religion. The Church is the guide in justice and truth of the rulers of Kingdoms as well as of the subjects. In the sorrow of my heart at witnessing the degradation of a noble people I have exclaimed how long O God, how long. I try to console myself with the expectation that though many are lost by this scattering of families, and wholesale breaking up of relations of home, religious and habits, the holy Providence of God is making use of the Irish people to plant the faith in many lands, of which at home operates as the Jewish persecution did on the Apostles, and the English language is the vehicle as the Latin was to carry the faith throughout the world. They are used to help in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi. From the rising to the setting sun I need not repeat to you the text. We must often adore and admire & bless the Holy Providence, that the Irish people in this country in the midst of dome circumstances have kept so well the faith. God makes use of the weak to confound the strong.

I look to God especially to stay the hand that smites at the poor. He will one day in other vindicate His blessed Providence. I see from the "Times" that there is a difficulty in obtaining soldiers in England. There is a difficulty in retaining them. At every possible railroad station leading to the United States there is a certain number of reliable soldiers to examine the cars to prevent desertions.