Irish and other Fragments

By

G. B. O'CONNOR

F. R. His. Soc.

2/- net.

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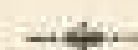
PREFACE.



My object in publishing these "Fragments" is to try and combine a certain amount of little used information with some amusement and racial satisfaction. At the same time I wish to prove to my country-people that the Gaelic part of our national inheritance owes something to the racial admixtures which our country has seen. That, in fact, not only the Gaelic and old Irish but the new Irish elements are represented in the national mentality and characteristics; and that apart from whatever may now be said to be working towards that end, we are a nation and a strongly marked one.

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IRISH ETHICAL PROBLEMS.

One often hears of morality as a matter of locality. According to Edmund Burke and Rudyard Kipling it is all a matter of geography, east is east, and west is west. Can it be therefore the ethical point of view is of local or national colouring? That, viewed dispassionately, right and wrong are not really different: only similar objects assuming dissimilar shapes according to the point from which seen. That, in fact, each nation has particular ethical standards varying from those of other people.

These doubts and the accompanying train of reflection they induced are the result of trying to understand the moral attitude of the Irish people as illustrated by recent events described in innumerable publications. That some of these publications are anonymous, and those responsible for the events prefer to remain unknown, inclines one to believe that the attitude they disclose is not that generally held or approved.

The profusion of literary effort devoted to this subject, apart from its connection with wearisome political questions, may well deter the ordinary reader from perusing it. Yet no more fascinating pursuit can be imagined than studying the moral character of the Irish people as shown in their domestic history. Both history and character repay attention so amply. For the country's history, like its climate, is a medley of storm and sunshine. The wild tempest driven tears of the Atlantic carrying back as curses the wailings of generations of emigrants. The short summer heats standing out like the blood spots staining the national records. No other small country has experienced greater vicissitudes. No other people attract more general notice, or present more difficult political problems. Of no other people has so much praise or slander been written; so much that is defamatory or eulogistic said. In tragedy and

farce alike the actors are never ordinary beings; they are always human angels or demons incarnate. We are shown an affectionate, eminently lovable people; occasionally guilty of a cold-blooded cruelty sparing neither age nor sex. An impulsive domestic people clannish to a degree; intolerant of one another's presence and opinions. A gregarious people; wanderers on the earth's face. A people of sporting tendencies; frequently guilty of fiendish cruelty to dumb beasts. A soldierly nation whose courageous deeds have added lustre to the military annals of European and American armies; displaying at times a moral cowardice beyond belief. A steadfast people whose devotion to lost causes has left many of them citizens of every country but their own; notorious for a moral invertebrateness the despair of their well wishers and rulers.

Other ethical and temperamental anomalies equally strange, equally difficult of explanation, are said to be peculiar to this nation. Honesty is a common attribute not restricted to any one people. Yet, we are told, that of the Irish is the honesty which would shed blood to obtain possession of the land, but revolts from stealing an implement used to cultivate that land. Theirs, the morality which shelters a murderer but looks with horror upon slight moral delinquencies. Which permits the terror that walks at night, but repudiates burglary.

If we ask for proofs of these ethical divagations, for such they must be considered, we are referred to the daily life of town and country side, to current accounts of agrarian outrages, cattle maiming and the worst forms of terrorism. Admitting much, too much unfortunately, to be accurate in these accounts we complain of their incompleteness. Of their being given without the setting and background of conditions. Comment upon the unnatural cruelty frequently noticeable in agrarian and political crimes in Ireland generally leaves out all that makes the crime intelligible. While in the desire to condemn and expatiate upon the motives of such crimes the means of accomplishment are mentioned only as proof of the savage nature of the people. To enable us

to understand the criminality of a people their moral ideas and environment must be considered. The results must be judged with a sense of proportion and both compared with the doings of other peoples similarly situated.

For instance, the fundamental differences between ancient systems of land tenure and those introduced with the enforcement of English laws would alone account for the number and bitterness of agrarian disputes. But when, as was the case, these differences were seen to facilitate the passing into English hands of all land ownership the wonder would be had disputes not occurred. Confiscations were too numerous and wanton and the foreign land system too repugnant to national ideas for even a period of two or three hundred years removing from the thoughts of a long memoried and vindictive people like the Irish the wrongs their forefathers suffered by both. Consequently, agitations, evictions, squatting, and reprisals became as much features in the national character as land hunger itself. Not until these features became thus ingrained did legislation recognise the futility of permitting them to continue.

The first attempt to alter these national characteristics was not a success. The forcible expropriations of the Encumbered Estates Act simply transferred land ownership from one set of proprietors to another. In the majority of cases former owners were racially and socially agreeable to their tenants. The new owners were strangers having no sympathy for, or common tie with, the tenants. They were simply investors wanting the position land gives, and the profits their purchase money might reasonably be expected to produce. That the last stage of the land dispute was worse than the first was inevitable, and was in fact predicted. What was not predicted was that the incidents of the land war would become part of the people's daily lives and their manner of conducting it naturally reflect their ideas of justice, of redressing wrongs, of above all satisfying that chronic land hunger inherent in the native character. Yet even in this if we look to other countries presenting similar

problems we find somewhat similar experiences. A few years ago in Italy agrarian disputes led to incidents that might have been copied verbatim from English newspapers recording scenes of a land war in the West of Ireland. And, whilst wanting in all the attendant conditions which explain but do not excuse the cattle maiming in Ireland, outrages of a like nature are not unknown in the English Midlands.

Other alleged Irish characteristics less repellent in their nature and effects but no less peculiar than those mentioned have also claimed attention.

The hard-drinking, lawless ruffian, writers of fiction have made familar to us was not unknown in other countries. The notoriety of the Irish brand is principally due to his having been given a talent for repartee and courage. But he was a type, a class so rare in actual numbers that the names and exploits of the individuals are fairly well known.

That a few generations ago people habitually drank more than they do now is as true of the Irish as of any other nations. Where the Irish differed was in the national inability to carry their drink. They became quarrelsome in their cups; and a quarrelsome disposition in the old duelling days was not conducive to general peace or individual longevity. The existence of this class and the state of society in which the anomalies we have pointed out flourished was due to reasons peculiar to the country. Successive laws and methods of government had created a community where a relatively small number of people formed a dominant governing class holding the bulk of that property which alone conferred distinction by its ownership, and all the power and patronage of the country. This class became notorious for an inordinate pride of birth and an exaggerated sense of individual importance admitting of no equality. Characteristics responsible for individual lawlessness, civil broils and tumults, too frequently ludicrous in their details, pitiful in their effects.

The sporting, fox-hunting dwellers in Castle Rackrents whose stupid extravagance brought on their country that

iniquitous enactment the Encumbered Estates Act, though more numerous than the " bully " class were usually of Anglo-Irish descent. They also were a class apart, and, but for the economic changes following the long Napoleonic wars, aggravated by a succession of famines culminating in the great Famine in the mid 'forties, would have been a comparatively small class and not necessarily a public danger. Nevertheless they were responsible for much of the lawlessness of their period.

Another national defect alluded to, want of thrift, has now lost whatever applicability it formerly had. Far from being unthrifty the Irish practise a poverty of living and pertinacity of saving that grudges expenditure in any shape or form. Many shopkeepers and farmers live in a much poorer style than their actual means warrant. Their ostentatious pretence of poverty frequently causes strangers to presume want of means, when absence of inclination would be more correct. Formerly a well simulated poverty acted as a bar to a rise in rent, or too frequently solicited contributions to clerical and political projects—contributions usually exacted in accordance with the observed worldly means of the solicited. That little actual poverty exists, outside the towns, is proved by the enormous sums held by Irish Banks on deposit receipt. A system of thrift which combines in the highest degree two dearly loved national traits in money matters—privacy and concealment.

Evidences of poverty sometimes adduced are the absence of manufactures in some districts and the contrast in cultivable appearance between others. Fortunately, we maintain, these contrasts do exist. To many Irish people the sight of fields devoted to the least profitable form of agriculture is preferable to factory chimneys. They desire to preserve their country as the Emerald Isle, devoted to tillage and pasture, where these pursuits do not interfere with other paying industries. The desolate brown appearance of the immense bog lands in the Midlands covers enormous wealth and represents in a more easily worked and obtainable condition than coal immense stores of heat and power. Moreover in the case of

manufactures, too many holidays formerly rendered their successful working almost impossible. The institution of Bank Holidays and the loosening of clerical control by rendering even holidays of obligation, as they are termed, less observed now than formerly appears to be removing this excuse for idleness. In this connection it would be a mistake to assume that relaxation of clerical control means that the Irish are becoming irreligious. In an automatic sort of way Protestants and Roman Catholics alike attach importance to the outward regular observance of religious duties. Physical inconveniences and hardships, pecuniary demands which become sacrifices from the poverty they affect, are cheerfully borne where the Church is concerned.

Other national differences noticed are those connected with the attitude adopted towards the enforcement of the laws. Here we get beyond supposition and find facts. Though the criminal laws of both countries were nominally similar in Ireland they were formerly administered with a ferocity unknown to Great Britain. British criminal records of the last hundred and twenty years contain no instances of brutal severity such as when father, mother, son and daughter were hanged at one and the same time for stealing linen off a hedge; when criminals sentenced at four o'clock in the evening were hanged at seven; when the disgusting incidents of the Brothers Sheares' execution passed without comment. Naturally such extreme harshness bred universal disgust and hatred of the law's administration. A feeling which found and still finds expression in disinclination to assist the Criminal Law and is often adduced as proof of perverted moral ideas and sympathy for crime. A mistake we believe; the sympathy being for the criminal not the crime. As is evident from instances of abominable crimes, unconnected with agrarian or political disputes, where a definite result was not obtained until several trials had taken place. The curious moral code or absence of perceptible moral sense shown in this distrust of the criminal law is unquestionably a survival from the time when the Irish were influenced by ethical

ideas differing from those now prevalent. Ideas fostered by sectarian feelings carefully inculcated from generation to generation, and the traditional recollection of the bloody progress of Judges of Assize whose routes could be followed by extemporised finger posts of judicially executed malefactors. Populations accustomed to have their numbers reduced periodically by the enforcement of laws opposed to national conceptions of justice may, conceivably, acquire peculiar ideas upon the sanctity of human life. The period when the penal laws were enforced in a manner discreditable to the administration, and when social claims dulled or turned aside the sword of justice, must have left its mark upon the national character. Partial methods of justice have always produced a defective moral sense; and the denial of justice is the prelude to personal retaliation.

A national tendency to secrecy and plotting has also been attributed to the Irish by foreign writers. Rightly so we believe. For its proofs are to be found in every page of the national records. Every province has harboured these secret societies, both sects have provided their members. Antagonism to British authority or ideas is not solely responsible for the inception or working of these societies. Agrarianism has produced as many as politics. Nor has sectarianism limited their numbers or restricted their objects. Protestantism has supplied the most virulent anti-English partisans. Roman Catholicism some of the firmest supporters of the British connection. That there are associations to which members of one Church only are eligible is admitted. Yet side by side with these exclusive Societies are others advocating political changes, which derive guidance and leadership from members of both sects.

Were these secret Societies restricted to Ireland or even the British Isles they might be attributed to circumstances peculiar to the country alone. Unfortunately they are not. For the Irish in the United States and the Colonies display similar racial readiness to form and join secret combinations. Whatever the aims of Irish secret societies have been their methods have

always been alike. The Peep o' Day Boys of the North though widely separated from Captain Rock's men in the South, used similar methods. Distant in point of time though the Whiteboys are from the present Associations there is but little difference in their procedure and objects. Successful as some of these Associations have been, we repeat they were the product of certain racial and sociological conditions. To understand them something must be known of their origin, economic, sectarian and political circumstances.

In connection with this subject it will be opportune to dispel the common belief that Irish plotters and conspirators are more venal and less trustworthy than those of other nations, and that Irish conspiracies have not been, and will not be, successful because they are always betrayed before consummation. Both conclusions we believe to be erroneous. Comparing the number of conspiracies having for objective a change of Government in Ireland—an object necessitating an extensive membership of all ranks and both sects—with similar schemes in Gt. Britain there has been no more than the usual amount of betrayal. From the revolution until the extinction of Chartism every British political conspiracy and movement had its hosts of informers. Controversies still rage as to the betrayal of Stuart plans in Scotland and England. While it is only now, and principally from biographies, we are discovering the extent of plotting and betraying that took place during the American and Napoleonic wars.

From the foregoing it will be seen that writers upon Irish affairs have not depicted the people in a very flattering light. In this they have followed an established custom. One having the authority of tradition. To a certain extent such treatment is unavoidable. For all the subjects discussed are based upon or affected by acute political and religious controversies. Matters not lending themselves to fair and impartial treatment. Even after discounting this difficulty there is no denying the various writers have presented a strong case supporting if not proving the contention that in the interpretation

of certain ethical conventions Irish ideas differ from others. We have already indicated some reasons for thinking this unusual attitude has been induced by certain peculiar Irish conditions. We go farther now and say over and above these reasons there have been strong inclinations and tendencies grafted upon the native Irish character sufficient to account for it.

For many years the inhabitants of Ireland were considered politically inferior to those of Great Britain. The bulk of the native and quasi-native population was deemed unfit to possess landed property, or to exercise the most important duties of citizenship. Whilst the largest portion of the population was subject to an inferior sectarian status that starved their brains and energies alike. Treatment such as this might have passed harmlessly over some nations. In the case of the Irish, centuries of adaptation to ancient laws had bred in their very bones the principle of common responsibilities and liabilities, equal or easily acquired status, and a common religious system which deprecated unrestrained freedom of thought. Their moral will had been dulled by the absence of all personal responsibility.

The centuries during which this treatment was evolving the moral ideas natural to it, witnessed the introduction of other causes calculated to have similar results. Numerous settlers, undertakers, and grantees of every description flocked into the country. Many were younger sons, the majority were adventurers; none too scrupulous in their methods. Others were officials, whose rapacity has become proverbial. The dependents of these included fugitives from justice, ne'er do wells, and discharged soldiers who had married native women. Later these were reinforced by political and sectarian irreconcilables; Cromwellians and Quakers from England, Covenanters from Scotland, Huguenots from France, Calvinists from the Palatinate. These all permanently settled amongst and married into the Anglo-native and native population.

Among such a mixture of races, a very hotch potch of obstinate visionaries and individualistic cranks, there

could be nothing but trouble, and if there is anything in heredity, that trouble would follow the moral twists of those responsible for it. Successive generations engaged in outbreaks and reprisals, plots and counter-plots; individuals, groups and parties strove to attain similar ends by methods that in their opinion usage had rendered customary and time had honoured. Peculiar conceptions of law and order, right and wrong, became stereotyped, and as morality is not in itself a natural attribute like pain, all sense of ethical proportion vanished. Expediency masqueraded as justice. Self interest claimed a legal and divine sanction. The vices of the unfortunate became inherent in one class. The uncontrolled exercise of power bred lawless and rapacious dispositions in the other.

If, as is said, personal qualities are largely due to inheritance and environment, surely national qualities representing the sum of individual must be referred to like causes.

Many responsible people believe that with changed conditions, *i.e.*, more uniformity in agrarian methods, increased trade and manufactures, and an improved educational system, acting upon increased responsibility for national and local administration Irish development will incline towards similar conditions to those of Great Britain.

We neither believe nor wish for this form of development.

Given the changed conditions above suggested we consider the development of the Irish people will be in the direction now foreshadowed by its domestic, as apart from its political condition.

The conclusion of the great world war has produced a wave of serious crime, in this the Irish appear to be submerged. Before the war serious crime was practically absent from the country districts; even now some offences are almost unknown, while minor offences are not too frequent. We are justified therefore in believing that with the return of normal conditions, national ethical ideas will again prevail.

MARSHAL SAXE AND DIMINISHING POPULATIONS.

If there is one truism more than another calculated to convince us of our utter insignificance in the economy of nature it is, that there is nothing new under the sun. Successive generations worry about problems their fathers sought to solve. Nations grow perturbed about matters which troubled their predecessors. Though conditions may vary, the problems do not. Not the least of these perpetual problems is the decrease of populations. Take a well known instance. For many years the French have been troubled as with a nightmare by a diminishing birth rate. The result of economic causes, otherwise beneficial, this threatened to become a national danger. A threat the awful waste of life during, and as a result of, the late war has made a stern reality. It is therefore of interest to consider how, nearly two centuries ago, a great leader of French armies devoted a facile pen to discussing reasons and remedies for a similar state of affairs. The suggested remedies being curiously reminiscent of what we wrongly consider quite modern ideas.

Bound up in a book upon the "Art of War," purporting to be by Marshal Count Maurice de Saxe, owners of old copies will find a long article termed "Reflections upon the propagation of the human species." Common enough as the subject now is in all forms of literature the company in which the "Reflections" appear strikes one as peculiar, to say no more. Moreover some acquaintance with 18th century attitude towards similar questions, and the biography of the Marshal favours the belief, the treatment of the subject would also be peculiar.

As to the writer. A King's son, Count Maurice, as was the custom of noblemen of the period, voluntarily became the subject of a foreign prince. Married to a

lady of rank he preferred the society of a French actress. A very capable soldier—his military abilities being highly esteemed by Frederick the Great—he acquired the reputation of a laborious writer. Devoted to pleasure and said to be one of the most dissolute of men, he found leisure to become an experimental inventor. Nothing came amiss to Count Maurice. In love and war few men were more successful. Bellona favoured him on several occasions, once, we have national reasons to recollect, at Fontenoy. Cupid was equally indulgent. His early marriage having been soon dissolved his actress friend provided thirty thousand pounds—an immense sum at the time—to promote other matrimonial experiments.

Remarkable as were the Marshal's actual exploits they were mere child's play compared with those he had meditated. Meditations also strongly reminiscent of present events. At one time he looked forward to becoming King of the Jews, and establishing a Jewish Kingdom in the Holy Land. At another, King of Corsica or Emperor of Russia. To seize Constantinople and subjugate the Turkish Empire was a scheme abandoned only for the intention to found an Empire in the New World.

Whether desirous to see more powder fodder forthcoming, or from a fellow feeling likely to have moved the son of a father said to have acknowledged 354 children, the Count was certainly an authority upon his subject. Moreover unlike most reformers he had personal experience of the ill he desired to cure and the efficacy of his remedy. His own early marriage had proved unsatisfactory. His most permanent liaison was quite the reverse from the remedy point of view.

The decrease of population it was admitted was not new. More than one ancient and modern writer had drawn attention to it. It was in the suggested remedies the writer's personality and experience found full scope. Advocating an increased birth rate and in the same breath providing improved means to slaughter the additional supply may appear incongruous. It was simply cause and effect. To Count Maurice, a German, a soldier, and a

member of the governing class, to be used as cannon fodder was the natural fate of the common people.

Precisely as if he had been writing for the benefit of the descendants of those to whom the Reflections were addressed the Marshal claimed importance for the subject owing to the necessity of filling the ranks of the Army. He admits that having taught the rules of an Art which tended to diminish populations it was necessary to indicate means for reducing the effect of such teaching. This is done with arguments and deductions savouring strongly of then current ideas. Unquestionably the suggested remedy was the Marshal's own. That it excited no great attention was due to its author like many other reformers being before the psychological time, the principle of his remedy if not its details being now admitted as a basis for legislation in certain parts of the great American republic.

The primary cause of decreased populations was attributed to the universally contagious malady of luxuriousness, the contention being that as nations progress in civilisation and acquire habits of luxury the birth rate declines. Unfortunately from the historical point of view we are not told what these habits were. The only clue afforded is an allusion to the breaking down of class barriers then becoming noticeable. We can imagine that to the blasé French Marshal accustomed to the Court of Louis XV. (the most pretentious and luxurious in Europe) the wildest extravagances of the minor German royalties and people—known in his youth—would appear hardships, the daily life of the lower orders a long purgatory of misery and suffering.

In some matters the Marshal was decidedly wrong. As in attributing the alleged decrease to the enforced celibacy of religious Orders in Christian, and polygamy in Mahometan countries. Why celibacy in one form of belief should have the effect of polygamy in another was not explained. In one direction never contemplated by Marshal Saxe, loss of population apart from casualties has resulted from warfare. Wherever in the British Isles soldiers from the United States or the Dominions have

been stationed there they have found wives; to a lesser extent this applies also to France. Europe thus suffering a double loss.

Briefly, the remedy gave a choice of two methods. The payment of premiums proportionate to the number of children in the family. A system now officialy recognised in France. And, what was considered would prove more efficacious, the introduction and legalising of a system of determinable marriages. All marriages were to be for a certain period, renewable or not at the option of the parties concerned. Not of their mere whim or caprice but for specified reasons; among others, the absence of offspring. A childless marriage at the end of five years was to be dissolved, leaving both parties at liberty to incur new obligations. Where children had been born the union was to be renewable at pleasure. If renewed for three consecutive periods of five years, then to be indissoluble except for ordinary causes. No limit was suggested to the number of occasions when fresh contracts might be made.

This method would eliminate, it was considered, all possibility of any person dying without issue. And, calculated on a system of equal progression, would produce such an increase of population as to constitute "the foundation of a monarchy that could not fail of becoming one day formidable to the whole world." A result to be attained after allowing for three-fourths of the children born not reaching puberty.

That this remedy did not at the time meet with public approval, even in the country it was intended to benefit, we know. Whether intended to be taken seriously or not we can only surmise. There is nothing in the article itself or conditions of the times to question its serious intention. That his remedy should have escaped the condemnation of the Church is surprising. Striking at the theory of marriage and parental duties inculcated by the Christian churches the proposition formed a direct challenge. Yet it was not taken up. Apart from the object lesson the Marshal's remedy

affords, the silent contempt of the Churches towards it is not without interest.

In Marshal Saxe's time State interests were recognised as paramount, and in matters of marital relationship parental and official control was supreme. Freedom of selection of one's life mate was unknown, battle and sudden death appallingly frequent. It was a period when we read of Frederick William of Prussia forcibly mating his gigantic Grenadiers to provide future gigantic regiments. Of his son ordering local authorities to furnish marriageable girls to assist in replenishing the population of the newly annexed Prussian Poland. Of British colonies populated by consignments of more or less criminal women.

We have travelled far in the opposite direction since those days. Sexual and educational equality, suffragette movements, and the bachelor girl are now recognised and accepted facts. Will persistence in their effects assist in the solution of what must be in several countries the most insistent national problem, or will it mean race suicide? Possibly these movements only form a mere phase in the life of the race, the limit of the pendulum swing before present exceptional conditions force it to return to the normal beat, in accordance with nature's first law: the preservation of the type, not the individual.

THE IRISH REPUBLICAN DEMAND.

WHILST avoiding trenching upon the controversial aspect of any form of political thought or action, especially at the time of writing, it is possible to discuss phases of both which have some peculiar reference or analogy to national sympathies and characteristics set up by long distant conditions. One of the most insistent of these phases is undoubtedly the demand for an Irish Republic. A demand not less noticeable because it has been made before and is one of the few Irish agitations having no sectarian basis.

Probably this demand has been revived and strengthened by our having seen the most ancient thrones in Europe, in the world in fact, crashing into the waters of revolution to be swept away with a completeness never surpassed before. The pride of antiquity, rights conferred by public choice, the security of prestige, strength of popular affection, nothing has availed. To an intensely imitative people like the Irish, affected by none of these considerations, the desire to embark on similar experiments has proved irresistible. Over and above this tendency to imitation there is no disguising the fact thousands of miseducated young people and a few cultured high brows do believe in the feasibility of a successful Irish republic. In many instances honestly considering more freedom and greater national development would be obtainable under such government than under any other. They are believers, applying the belief to their own particular case, in the French philosopher's century old remark, that the evident tendency of mankind everywhere is to establish democratic ascendancy, republican institutions being the manifest destiny of mankind.

To many others the idea of a republic is a long cherished tradition. The Irish have no exiled royal family—the Stuarts are forgotten—no super Duke or Peer to substitute for the present occupant of the throne. Others again recognise the demand as merely a recurring phase which comet-like appears at certain intervals and is attributable to the accident that apart from Great Britain the countries Ireland had been most intimately associated with, past and present, are republics.

Among other reasons—less weighty yet betraying the national individualism—given by professed republicans is that a republic besides being cheaper than a monarchy would give each Irishman a chance of becoming President—on the principle of every French conscript carrying a Marshal's baton in his knapsack. To all these we may remark mankind are in general governed by words and phrases not things, and are too apt to forget the inherent and indelible differences in races and nations. The present being a case in point; the actual difference between the demanded republic and a monarchical constitution being in name only. Dissatisfaction with present conditions in the mind of many being so intense that few have given thought to the fact that under a constitutional monarchy the actual government is in the hands of Ministers selected by the elected delegates of the people, the nominal leadership of the State being an hereditary position confined to one family only. In a republic the head of the State is elected periodically. The elected individual, however called, would certainly claim to exercise more administrative power than our limited monarchical system permits. The dispute between the United States President and Senate over the Versailles treaty is an illustration of this.

If there is anything in the saying that sooner or later every nation gets the form of government it deserves: that is the form its national temperament and characteristics find most suitable, then in Ireland we should indulge in some very careful thinking indeed before embarking upon a system which requires the recurrence at frequent intervals of all the transference of political power and

influence constituting a presidential election. Putting aside the question of expense, and loss of trade, working hours, etc., which would occur at these times, can any thinking man contemplate without dread the wire pulling, corruption and orgies of intimidation and strife that would accompany them. All students of Irish conditions know what goes on at Parliamentary and Local Government elections, and that a dispensary Doctor or Petty Sessions Clerk cannot be elected without leaving a trail of hatred and malice behind. How much more then a President of a Republic? Are we not justified in assuming therefore that at present the Irish are temperamentally too untrained for such a form of government. To accept it they would have to adapt their political environment to their actual national conditions, not the other way about.

We incline to think this republican dream, for such it really appears, has its origin in the political and social conditions forced on Ireland during the last few centuries. The Irish are naturally an aristocratic people, deferential to good birth, addicted to leader worship and intensely tenacious of personal, national, and sectarian differences. *Faute de mieux* they have had an aristocracy mostly foreign in origin and professing new-fangled sectarian ideas put over them; their lords and masters. Cultured Irish people cannot forget that the proportionately very numerous titled classes in Ireland owe their position in many cases, and advancement in the peerage in others, to what they term a national betrayal—the Act of Union. Before that betrayal was consummated the attempt by United Irishmen to set up an Irish Republic was largely engineered by members of the aristocracy. This cannot be said of more recent attempts, they being the work of rank and file democrats. In addition to these considerations and sub-conscious influences there are world movements in national ideals taking place which give point to the question: Would it be possible to ensure—we won't say equality but—agreement on principles? Is not some form of probation necessary to train the public mind to forget the long continuance of a governmental system which had accustomed the bulk of the nation to consider

themselves a despised and neglected part of the national body.

The basis of a working agreement must be the recognition of equality, of a common desire to obtain a certain purpose. Republican institutions have invariably at first produced a series of military despotisms or the destruction of freedom. A nation which has just found its feet cannot be expected to have the activity of an athlete. Adolescence must precede manhood. Otherwise, the despot or a tyrannical majority.

THE ANGLO-SAXON MYTH.

THE revival of the Anglo-Saxon fellowship cult, and a recent remark of Mr. Asquith's that few people in England were not of Teutonic origin, though intended for widely differing purposes have a similar foundation. Of all common human tendencies that of attributing national origins to a mythical or legendary ancestor appears to be the most deeply rooted. For though there are said to be people without any form of religious belief we have yet to discover a race not claiming some fabulous descent. Accepting this as a general excuse for what we believe to be an inaccuracy and admitting the convenience, in this age of knowledge in tabloids and literary bell-wetherism, of the term Anglo-Saxon peoples being used to simplify discussion, to denote the highest form of civilisation, and, when applied to English people alone the subtle aroma of superiority it is intended to convey, we consider neither of sufficient importance to excuse the inaccuracy and its irritating effect upon people unable to share the claim.

During the war we thought the new estimate of the German character then forming would cause a change. So far has this been unrealised that the very people—the Irish—who suffered from the application of Anglo-Saxonism are more than ever enamoured of the Teutonic character and disgusted with the result of the war. Nevertheless, as the subject assists to gratify a natural desire to know something of our forbears, and may be used in the settlement of national questions, it is not unworthy of consideration.

Starting from the dawn of nationalism, as distinct from purely local or feudal attachments, we find the virile patriotism of the Elizabethan era claiming British histories—despite their partially legendary nature—as a common English heritage from the ancient Britons.

The poet Spenser, when eulogising his Sovereign, attributed the fame of her realm, race, and renown, to the British hero, King Arthur. Later, in two rather halting lines of Butler's "Hudibras," we find the custom of painting the face alleged as proof of a still earlier racial derivation.

> Display them thicker on their cheeks
> Than their old grandmothers the Picts.

Later again a still more definite pedigree occurs in Defoe's "True born Englishman."

> The Pict, and painted Briton, treacherous Scot,
> By hunger, theft and rapine hither brought,
> Norwegian pirates, buccaneering Danes
> Whose red-haired offspring everywhere remains,
> When joined with Norman-French compound the
> breed.

From thence we may skip other allusions until the modern attitude is seen in Tennyson's line "Saxon and Norman and Dane are we." We should incline to think the omission of Pict and Celt was caused by exigencies of rhyme were not similar omissions common to the period.

The first important deprecatory reference to any racial difference between the dwellers in the British Isles occurs, strangely enough, in the remarks of an English Chancellor, Lord Lyndhurst; a colonial by birth. Then, in the early Victorian era we notice a dislike to everything appertaining to the Celtic fringe. A feeling we may reasonably attribute to the Prince Consort, the atmosphere he had introduced, the workings of the German literary cult and English resentment of the trouble caused by the Repeal and Catholic Emancipation agitations. These produced a desire for closer identification with the Germanic peoples and henceforward the Anglo-Saxon theory became common property, its protagonist, Carlyle, if there is anything in a name or birthplace, being a Gael. Carlyle was not the only writer guilty of obscuring the

national identity. More unlucky than other offenders he is now paying the penalty of an obsession astounding in its wrong-headed stupidity. Paying it vicariously too for few people know of the German Ghost he employed.

Divesting ourselves of all bias whatever we find the claim to Anglo-Saxon extraction rests mainly upon individual partialities rather than scientific proof.

The first dwellers in the British Isles of whom we have authentic information were the autochthonous tribes known as the Picts. An Iberian people probably, short, broad and dark, either akin to or of the same type as the Basques of France and Spain. Interspersed among these Picts, as a dominant people which had imposed its language and polity on them, were branches of the Celtic family known as Brithons and Gaels. The Brithonic Celts being of the same race as the Bretons of France and related to the Gaulish tribes of that country. A racial amalgam found by the Roman legions on their arrival, and, except for a faint Latin strain and the effect of some irruptions to be mentioned later, left by them on departing.

For more than a century before the Roman Eagles winged their way towards the Alps various Teutonic tribes had ravaged the coasts of Britain. Slightly later some Scandinavian rovers—generally termed Danes—began, from descents upon the seaboard hardly deserving the name of raids, to penetrate inland, harrying and destroying all before them. Several generations passed before these or the irruptions of their southern continental neighbours assumed any importance, no attempt at the acquisition of territory or permanent settlement being made prior to the arrival of Hengist and Horsa with their savage hordes. We break off here to remark: for our knowledge of the Germanic invasions and their results we are practically restricted to the works of "the Venerable" Bede and "the Wise" Gildas, both clerics by profession and partisans from nationality, a later compilation, the "Historia Britonnum," attributed to the Brithonic Celt, Nennius, being but seldom referred to. This is the more noticeable because formerly Nennius' work was considered of such authority that a translation in Gaelic (still extant) was compiled by some Irish Clerics in a position at the time to verify and compare it with their own annals. Of late Nennius has come into favour again, modern foreign authorities having admitted the probable correctness of his work even when differing from the earlier writings. Putting Nennius aside and confining ourselves to the best known authorities; if it is right to call them authorities in view of the fact that nothing in history is more obscure than the condition of the rural population when the Roman armies departed or than what occurred during the following centuries. We are told that Angles, Saxons, and other tribes came into Britain in large numbers, generation after generation taking part in successive invasions, the magnitude of these, according to Bede, writing 200 years after, being attested by the deserted state of the country they had left. Later information enables us to assign part of this migration to the fact that Jutes, Angles and Saxons had for many years been wandering about the continental sea coasts before attempting to reach Britain. Without wasting time on figures, necessarily more or less guess-work, let us see what the wholesale migration of a number of tribes implies. No mere ordinary flitting common enough at the period, but a sea voyage presuming the possession of a large number of transport vessels as well as the usual fighting galleys. Even admitting these barbarians landed in sufficient numbers to overcome resistance, the fact that at the end of the first century of their efforts only the country south of the Thames and Severn (excluding the extreme west) had been subjugated, is opposed to the employment of great numbers. This period—not a mere arbitrary one, but that marking the limit of invariably disputed encroachment in that quarter—witnessed a succession of fiercely contested battles. Continuous and savage aggression having been met by disciplined and valorous resistance, during which the aggressors, whether victorious, or, as occasionally happened, defeated, sustained fearful losses. At the end of this period, we are told, that though no further large

influx of invaders took place, their progress in conquering the country was much speedier. The only explanations of this unusual result must be that the British were exterminated, were driven into parts continuing Celtic, or, that tired out and disheartened by the long struggle in which they had lost their kingly and chief families, their resistance collapsed. The improbability of either extermination or expatriation speaks for itself. Moreover, had such been the fate of the men custom, as exemplified in similar cases, is against a like fate having overtaken the women and children also. Direct proofs against both are, that for centuries after the establishment of the Saxon kingdoms the hereditary aggression upon the British of the Midlands was still in progress, while in other parts British chiefs combined with their erstwhile Saxon enemies to resist unpopular Saxon rulers. Two centuries later again a million of villeins, of a different race to their Saxon masters, were cultivating the land for them. We must not forget the very large proportion this number represents of the then population of the whole country. That the invaders captured London is more than doubtful. They encircled it on the west, and traded with it, we believe, no more. Whatever dilution the British race had undergone in other districts, no material alteration had apparently occurred in the extreme north and west and the north-east of England. Credible authorities now go so far as to say the eastern half or at the most three-fifths only of the country had been reduced by the German tribes. In the Scotch lowlands Saxon occupation practically ended in the ninth century, the blend of Picts, Gaels and Teutons there receiving no other addition but Danish blood—an *olla podrida* of races that continued until the thirteenth century when the majority of the Picto-Gaels were driven still further north.

Immediately on the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms they began to suffer from the incessant incursions of the northern continental tribes. So frequent and persistent were these raids that for nearly a third of the long period of six hundred years between the Roman

and Norman occupations these northerners were, when not actually supreme as in the time of Cnut, usually masters of a considerable portion of the country and in the hey-day of their power held a larger area and penetrated to more distant parts of the islands than their predecessors ever did. On purely plundering expeditions they were seldom accompanied by women, but during the two centuries of their rule in Great Britain constant intercourse was maintained with, and migrations on a fairly large scale took place from, their native country.

At the Norman invasion though the rulers, nobles and some of the lower orders were of Teuto-Danish extraction a considerable if not the largest portion of the population were of Celtic descent, diluted to a varying degree in different localities. In some districts a Danish strain predominated, in others a Teutonic; of no portion of the island could it be said these strains alone occupied it, but in several places Celts alone remained. In any event the Norman invasion resulted in weakening the foreign and strengthening the native strain, for though the leaders were the offspring of men of Scandinavian origin with Gaulish or Frankish mothers many of their followers were of the same stock as the Brithonic Celts. Since then history records no great influx of foreign elements into England, such minor ones as there were tending to still further weaken the attentuated Anglo-Saxon strain. Similar effects resulted in Scotland from the long and intimate relations with France. The Welsh alone have practically retained their original ethnical composition, and that certainly was not Anglo-Saxon. During two centuries the Danes harassed Ireland, and, though the physical features of the country prevented its being overrun altogether, the midland plains almost ceased to be Gaelic. On more than one occasion their power was said to have been broken, but fresh contingents of Danes arriving, it was not until the eleventh century when shattered by Brian Boroimhe they ceased to appear as a distinct nation and except in some few coast towns merged in the native population. Until the Norman invasion the Irish were a comparatively pure stock.

Since that event they have been almost as racially intermixed as the sister countries, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessing the largest and most important accessions of new blood. But appreciable as such additions were the Scots, Welsh and west countrymen who contributed so largely to them cannot accurately be described as Anglo-Saxons.

Leaving the domain of more or less doubtful history, we turn to legend, pure and simple. A source frequently proving of considerable assistance though often reduced in value by clerics and others making the traditions they record fit in with dates and incidents connected with ecclesiastical history. Still, after making due allowance for all perversions, it is strange that with the exception of King Alfred, the legendary heroes of England have been taken from the race a falsely engendered antipathy professes to disown. That the great Celtic romance of King Arthur and his knights should have stimulated the genius of poets as far apart chronologically as Malory and Tennyson is not surprising when we remember that, in addition to furnishing more than any other subject the theme of ancient ballads in England, it has in various shapes and forms spread to every European land, returning ultimately to its birthplace in the form of an Icelandic saga. The greatest of English dramatists drew from the same prolific Celtic source several plays and characters, including Puck the prophetic, the ancient Celtic Pucca, a merry and malicious fairy. It has been said in explanation of the extent Celtic legend dominates Shakespearean lore that the population of the Poet's country is essentially Celtic and non-Teuton. Other playwrights about the same period also drew inspiration from native British legends.

To supply the want of historical proofs recourse is occasionally had to philological evidence. Generally the least reliable of all proofs, it is in this case especially so, for though the Roman occupation effected but slight racial changes in the British, it affected their language considerably, Latin having attained almost complete predominance in the towns and their vicinities. A fact

accounting for the oft-remarked absence of Gaelic words in the older English speech. On the other hand, the vitality of Gaelic in parts not occupied by the Romans, but which came under Saxon control, is notorious. In the neighbourhood of the Lake district Gaelic continued in use down to the sixteenth century. In the west of England variations of it have only recently died out. On the north-east coast, usually considered the most thoroughly Saxon, Celtic was in use as late as the fourteenth century. Much of the importance attached to the survival of dialects is due to a belief that the conquered adopted the language of the conquerors, a belief no longer held, seeing that Celtic-Iberian languages are now spoken or remembered in Ireland, the Isle of Man, Cornwall and parts of Scotland. Brittany, which has always been more closely connected with France than Ireland with England, even now uses a form of Celtic. Most pertinent of all is that the very place name we use for the habitat of the Teutonic peoples, Germany, is said to be derived from the Celtic " gair " meaning a neighbour.

English place names and topographical distinctions have likewise been adduced as proof of complete subjugation by Teutonic tribes, thus ignoring the probability that, as in other instances where these tribes used Saxon names they did not discard the Celtic or Latinised ones, only varied them agreeably to their own speech. If we assume local nomenclature affords an incontrovertible proof of ethical derivation or nationality what do we deduce from the capital of the Saxon kingdoms and the most important town for centuries after their dissolution, Winchester, being derived from the Celtic " gwint " an open space; and that though in duration and thoroughness the English occupation of Ireland has surpassed Saxon domination in England, less than ten per cent of Irish place names are English, many of them being compounds formed by retaining well-known native portions and adding translations of other parts. On the other hand three Irish provinces have the Scandinavian final " ster " and several districts the distinguishing " gall " contracted to " gal " and meaning foreign.

Let us now turn to institutions. Scarcely a day passes that we are not told our public polity still bears the impress of Saxon hegemony, or, as a recent French writer sarcastically remarks; we are not erroneously led to recognise in the primitive German institutions, the source of all human dignity and of all human independence. In the case of representative government, particularly so, that being a Teutonic contrivance inherent in, and the distinctive mark of, the descendants of Germanic peoples. If by representative government is meant the form of administration now common to most nations, how account for the fact that in England it was unknown till towards the close of the thirteenth century? Or, if is meant a system developed from collections of families being represented in the management of local and public affairs, then we have only to turn to the ancient system in Ireland and the Mir system in Russia to find this alleged Teutonic speciality was common to other nations. The witenagemot was the result of evolution from a similar system, and was neither the precursor nor prototype of an English parliament at any time. The insecure nature of this buttress of the racial edifice is apparent from the Celtic-Iberian-Latins of Castile and Arragon having in medieval times a more representative system than the English, and that, long before England had emerged from the shadow of Tudor despotism another branch of the Celtic family, the Bretons, had through representation an effective voice in all matters affecting their welfare and government. Still more conclusive is, that the purest Teutonic peoples were almost the last to adopt any form of popular or representative government. Political institutions do not spring into existence ready made: they are the result of long imperceptible developments, a process to which the numerous towns the Teutonic barbarians found on their arrival in England no doubt contributed.

Some modern tendencies in political and social matters equally claim attention. The cult of individualism, the innate feeling of man's equality, the instinct which finds expression in nationalising the land, etc., are now recognised as long dormant Celtic ideas. From the science

which treats of man's physical constitution and connexions we obtain little if any corroboration of the Anglo-Saxon theory. Survivals of the "dull stammering Saxon," as the Gaels usually termed him, are to be found only in certain localities. Types of the other British races are to be found in all quarters of the islands. Localities where the tall, fair-haired, blue-eyed type—that of the later Celts—exists, indicate the high water mark of Saxon aggression, and it was these the barbarians had found so difficult to displace.

To derive any support from the science of anthropology it is necessary to explain why dark-haired, medium-sized people predominate in the British Isles, and why, though the fair type has almost decreased to vanishing point, the equally marked, contemporary Danish stamp has survived. In default of a more satisfactory reason we must conclude the Anglo-Saxons diluted the original stock but slightly, and the dilution has grown less marked in process of time.

To show the mythical nature of the Teutonic pedigree, we may adduce the formative influence of Celtic characteristics on the British peoples. On the battle-field and in the senate, in the works of artists and writers, with diplomatists, statesmen or scientists, certain characteristics are now recognised as evidence of racial peculiarities differing from the more solid Teutonic attributes usually considered as forming their complement. To become more Celtic than the Celts themselves has been the fate of many would-be conquerors. A process that could not have occurred but for the solvent factor of some common racial affinities.

Space does not permit discussing the right to the term Anglo-Saxon of present offshoots from the parent stem in America and the Colonies, beyond saying that whatever grain of truth there is in the claim of the inhabitants of Great Britain there is absolutely no foundation for it once we leave the British Isles. Apart from its insultingly malicious use—apparently the purpose of its invention—the whole theory is too unsuited to a matter of fact and analytical age. It is in short a myth.

IRISH FACTS AND FOREIGN FICTIONS.

THE above title is not writ sarcastically, nor is it an assertion the Irish do not use fictions It is simply a peg upon which to hang a few instances showing that, with an immense quantity of authentic material at disposal, we have omitted to use it in support of that pardonable national vanity other nations have used similar material to promote.

In a recent work attention was drawn to the loss the Irish suffer through not having produced a quasi-historian and nationalist of the type of Sir Walter Scott. The more we know of our national annals the greater that loss appears. Unfortunately for the national reputation, we also suffer much depreciation and misunderstanding through the bulk of our social and historical annals having been written from sectarian or political standpoints. Consequently, instead of giving us a common object upon which to concentrate our national pride and affection, these annals only serve to keep us apart.

Foreign impressions of Irish life and character, when taken from fiction at all, have been those of the early nineteenth century novelists, and a few of their recent imitators. They generally represent a phase of national character no longer existing, or confined to out-of-the-way localities. These at their best were, we are thankful to say, an improvement upon some so-called historical delineations. Where they approached reality was in the expression of that curious atmosphere of gloomy sadness noticeable in the less sophisticated sections of our people. And, more particularly, in that perverse national tendency to tell stories against ourselves rather than miss an opportunity to raise a laugh or say something smart. No one takes seriously that more modern class of fiction

which depicts us as reckless, whisky-drinking, sporting savages—our barbarism relieved only by a confusion of speech and originality of metaphor passing for wit to a stranger, but not intended for home consumption.

What we want to impress upon the reader now is, that this method of portrayal, besides being harmful, is unnecessary, because it prevents or limits the use of that romantic and interesting material we possess so abundantly. Personal incidents and general events in the national life crowd one another off the canvas. In depth of tragedy, intensity of pathos, vicissitudes of fortune, almost miraculous sequence of dangers incurred and thrilling escapes, brave deeds performed and desperate resolutions carried out, the history of our country people, men and women alike, affords examples unsurpassed by that of any other nation.

To those acquainted with Sir Walter Scott's works we need hardly mention that descriptions illustrating the adventures of individual Scots are used at the same time to denote the good national qualities of Scots in general. They are, in fact, pegs upon which to display national virtues, unknown and unsuspected until the Wizard of the North summoned them on to the World's stage as proofs of his nation's superiority in those qualities all peoples like to consider part of their national character.

In the particular field of mercenary soldiers, which Scott used to such effect, the Irish have an unexploited record second to none. If they did not start on the same path quite as soon as the Scots—which has yet to be proved—Irish mercenaries were more numerous, and occupied the cosmopolitan stage longer, than either Scots, Swiss or Germans. Beyond a few more or less perfunctory references, these mercenaries never had any adventitious aid to make their deeds known to the world at large. Yet it was not for being unworthy of such notice. There is no civilized, or for the matter of that semi-barbarous, nation the military annals of which cannot furnish instances of our countrymen's wanderings, military spirit and prowess.

The minarets of Delhi saw Mogul troops led by an

Irishman long before the East India Company had contemplated them with the avarice born of mercantile greed. Later the humble tombs of Irish soldiers were as footprints in the onward march of Empire. In fact the history of modern India might be written from the lives and exploits, warlike and peaceful, of our countrymen. We take no great store by this, because but few care to know it. To go still further East, how little we know of the numerous Irishmen who have worn the pigtail and done loyal and gallant service for native employers in China.

Then if we come nearer home. What writers have used the copious material afforded by the careers of the O'Neills, O'Donnells, Prestons, Plunketts, Butlers and others?—men who carved out rank, titles, and fortunes in the armies and diplomatic services of all the great Continental Powers. If this neglect of literary material ever ceases, and some national writer wants a theme replete with all that fascinates yet horrifies, let him relate the part taken by Butler's Irish Dragoons in the assassination of Wallenstein. Surely there is food for a whole library of romance in this tragic ending to the life work of a great personality, whose career has excited the admiration of the greatest German writers. Nevertheless we know little or nothing of the Irishmen's share in the tragedy from our own annals.

To be brief, from the sixteenth century onwards no nation can point to a more honourable military record on the Continent than the Irish. Yet a small box would hold all that has been written by our native historians on this subject. That is why, if we want to know more than the bare outlines of many epochal achievements, we must go to foreign sources.

Most of us have fallen victims at some time or another to the glamour which still surrounds Stuart attempts to recover their lost Crowns. Many, if not the majority, of those who strove to uphold the fated race were Irish. Nothing that the Scots clans suffered or did in the years '15 or '45 exceeded the sufferings or doings of the Irish during the revolutionary war. For the one, there

is undying renown; for the other, Voltaire's caustic comment: "The Irish behave well as soldiers in every country but their own." There is no use our protesting that Derry and the Boyne, Limerick and Aughrim, all give the lie to this slander. Native accounts are unknown. Foreign accounts are unfair. And it is by the latter we, as a nation, have been judged.

Volumes have been devoted to the fabulous exploits of more or less apocryphal adventurers on the American continent. If we omit the civil war between the States, how little we know of our countrymen in those parts. How many of us are aware of the names even of the Irish adventurers to whom the South American republics in no small degree owe their freedom from European control. Battleships have been named after, cities and provinces called to commemorate, and statues erected to, O'Higgins, O'Connors, Lynchs and others. One Irishman, Barry, has been termed the father of the United States Navy. Another, Brown, the founder of the Navy of Argentine. A novel and a play—"General John Regan"—which lately attracted considerable attention, though supposed to be purely imaginary and intended to burlesque some national foibles, has in reality a substratum of fact. And this without even the clever author knowing it. For there really was an Irishman, Francis Burdett O'Connor, who became a General in the Bolivian army and had a statue erected to him. Not in Westport certainly.

Whatever excuse there may be for ignorance of foreign events, there can be none for not knowing domestic ones. If any reader was asked to mention some famous retreat undertaken against numbers or adverse conditions, his thought might excusably turn to Xenophon's retreat with the ten thousand, the retreat to Corunna, or the French retirement from Moscow. They need not go so far afield. Our own military history has an example.

Towards the close of the Elizabethan wars, O'Sullivan Beare and the survivors of the Munster forces, about eight hundred fighting men and half as many old, sick and wounded men, women and children, fought their way

from Glengariffe to Leitrim. Between daily fights—sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated—want of food, exposure to weather, and the dangers of crossing rivers and mountains during an inclement season, less than a score reached their destination. Though fighting for every foot of the road, the women and children living on the food the wayside yielded, the sentinels frozen to death on their posts, complaints were unknown, talk of surrender unheard. Had this occurred in any other country memorial stones would now mark the daily route. Poets would have sung in undying verse, historians inscribed in imperishable prose, the feats of this valiant band. We treat them with that neglect which is far worse than scorn.

If we turn to more peaceful scenes not less important, not less illustrative of national character, and are asked for a precise instance of voluntary expatriation, of giving up home, friends, property, and position for conscience' sake, for ideas of government as they understood them, we should probably turn to the Pilgrim Fathers. Yet our own history affords a grander and more pathetic instance. When Tyrone and his fellow-refugees stood on the deck of the little French barque that conveyed them from Rathmullen, they also could say their flight was the result of similar feelings and ideas as those which later actuated the English refugees. Thousands, nay millions, have heard and sung that beautiful song, "The landing of the Pilgrim Fathers" (the composition of an Irishwoman). But how many know what our native historians wrote when the greatest Irishman of his century left his native country? Irish poets have sung of impossible Minstrel boys and similar inanities. Not one, in the language of the Irish of to-day, has tuned his harp to proclaim to the vulgar crowd the deeds of the great Earl of Tyrone.

We have all read of the Admirable Crichton. With the exception of the gentleman's swashbuckling tendencies, it would be quite easy to match his learning and abilities from one Irish family alone—the Waddings of Waterford. These men were all clerics; we therefore

hear but little of them in secular matters. We only know their pre-eminence as scholars was a matter of European reputation. But we can easily find a compeer for this much belauded Scot, Crichton, amongst our people.

Flitting through official documents, and historical and private records of the seventeenth century, we get glimpses of a certain Daniel O'Neill—a younger member of the great Earl's family. Infallible subtle Daniel, great English nobles called him. Soldier, diplomatist, orator and scholar, he was a not uncommon instance of Gaelic versatility. The trusted friend of Kings and Queens, the associate of Church dignitaries; he would be a man-at-arms one day, a leader on another. Seen in conference with the White Queen in Bohemia, one day, he would be next met at the table of some Irish refugees in Brussels. To-day amicably disputing points of dogma with Archbishop Laud, later he would be met apparelled as an Irishman in the West of Connaught. At a time when religion came before nationality, this O'Neill, a firm Protestant, was the trusted adviser of eminent Roman Catholics. Left for dead fighting for an English Protestant King, he lived to fight for Catholic powers, marry an English peeress, and die the first Postmaster-General of Britain. Surely both an infallible and a subtle man; and to the writer in search of material, a mine of undeveloped wealth.

Foreigners frequently mention the learning of our countrymen abroad. In one now well-known instance this was admitted by the Saxon King, Alfred, when he invited Johannes Scotus (Erigena), after a successful Continental career, to a scholastic position at Oxford. Most of the Continental Universities also knew them, either as students or professors. These references are sometimes ambiguous through those mentioned being termed Scots. We are not without a suspicion that when the deed recorded was favourable they were Scots, and when unfavourable Irish, as in a certain sixteenth century reference to a riot in Paris, when the booksellers' shops in the Latin Quarter were burned down, care is taken to make known the ringleaders were Irish.

A reference to the flight of the Earls has been used as an illustration of our facts being neglected for foreign fictions. We will take another illustration from that same historic event, one which in its incidents supplies a foundation of fact for the otherwise improbable adventures of the girl heroines who figure so largely in historical fiction. Shortly after the flight of the Earl of Tyrconnel, a daughter was born to him in Ireland. Brought up in the house of her grandmother, the Countess of Kildare, this girl became a ward of King James, was given an allowance and promised a dowry. When grown up, Mary Stuart—as she was called—was known to entertain strong predilections for the land and people she knew only from report; the call of the blood we would now say. It was no surprise, therefore, when she fell under suspicion of having aided a young Irish relative to escape to the Continent. Told that she was to be examined by the Privy Council, and that the only way to escape punishment was to become a Protestant and marry one, she determined on fleeing to that refuge of the Irish, the Low Countries. Mary O'Donnel—no longer Mary Stuart—accompanied by a faithful manservant and a girl companion, like herself disguised as a Cavalier, set out by road from London to Bristol. At Bristol, which was reached after several adventures, they obtained a passage in a French vessel to Havre, and from thence, still disguised as men, made their way to Louvain. Baldly as we have narrated this incident, it contains the elements of a thrilling romance. Treated by a Walter Scott, thousands of people would read with feverish interest the adventures of these girls. We can imagine the incidents. The meeting with the inevitable heroes, the perils encountered in their company, the discovery of the sex of the wanderers, the love episodes and splendid marriages. Unfortunately the latter would be pure fiction, for Mary O'Donnel became a Nun.

To illustrate in another way the curious want of proportion or diversion from their right position in the national estimation of some of our most celebrated men, let us take the careers and work of Archbishop Magee

and Sheridan. Wide apart as the poles though they were. Most of us have heard or read some witty saying or remark of Magee's and this usually is all we know of him. The real greatness of the man, his eloquence and Church management is hidden under this ignorance. We know nothing of the qualities which carried him from a County Cork parish to the Episcopal throne in York. Similarly with Sheridan. Most of us know him only as the author of the "School for Scandal," a wit and a gamester. We do not know that many educated people consider his speech on the indictment of Warren Hastings to be the finest example of oratory in the English language. Thousands of our country-people know the last words of Robert Emmet. How many know those words of Edmund Burke an English city has thought great enough to place on his monument?

In other directions our countrymen remain unhonoured and unsung. The desert highlands of Australia contain their bones. Arctic wastes have echoed their footsteps. The Irish do not trouble about such achievements; there is nothing political or sectarian in them. Other nations may honour our great dead; we do not want to. On the other hand, the impossibility of surveying any troubled waters without detecting our country-people taking an active and prominent part in the turmoil, has been generally admitted. That this part has not always been of an honourable character we must also admit. Yet the possibility of making great criminals national characters is proved by the appearance in Scottish fiction of Law, the Mississippi scheme swindler.

Though we have mentioned facts as what we want, it is not always facts that foreign nations have used to keep alive their patriotism. History teems with fables now accepted as national beliefs. The Irish seem to be the only people neglectful of realities, capable only of making their beliefs legends, the legends articles of faith. That we suffer terribly in national reputation for want of a really national school of historical novelists cannot be denied. The national Valhalla should be full of our heroines and heroes. Hundreds are waiting for their

places in it, all of them possessing the necessary qualifications to induce that patriotic feeling our Scots cousins render to the memory of Wallace, for instance. Are we never to contemplate the departed great from any but the sectarian or political point of view? Are we never to ask: Were they great or famous apart from these puerile distinctions? Other nations have done so—nations quite as patriotic as the Irish claim to be. There is one thing certain, until we do so we shall never be a real nation. For the seed of nationality is the pride which believes and carries into action the ideal conveyed in the words, above all my country and people, right or wrong.

CHARACTERISTIC ANECDOTES.

We have before remarked upon the tendency of the Irish to tell stories against themselves. On first thought this may appear a not unusual proceeding, for the Scotch frequently indulge in it. Lancashire also has entered the list as a competitor to this doubtful honour. Notwithstanding, we submit there is a very perceptible difference between Irish stories and those of other countries. Scotch and Lancashire folk tell stories of their people, not to show they are wanting in wit or common sense, but more often than not to illustrate their cunning, independence or frugality, at the worst their oddity of manner. With the Irish these are but details. The story is the main thing. They prefer to tell it even though it prove or presume the subject of it to be wanting in a sense of the fitness of things, or the knowledge of responsibility that a child has. The element of wit must be in the story or the manner of telling it. In proof of this we present the following stories. They are intended to portray the difference in manners, mode of thought and expression, and incidentally, that it is not always the native Irish—for want of a better term—who are really so characteristically Irish. For the authenticity of the stories we can vouch. All are matters of personal knowledge.

Within the lifetime of many now living a very well known man in a part of Ireland not too remote, was disappointed in his hopes of marrying a local beauty. Whilst in the naturally despondent frame of mind inevitable to such a disappointment, on the rebound as it were, he determined to make overtures for the hand of the daughter of a landed proprietor whose estate was not far from his. Having conveyed his intention, he

proceeded to carry it out on the day appointed. The mansion—it would be heresy to call it a house—of the young lady about to be honoured was approached by a long avenue. To the intense surprise of the intending Benedick he found this avenue lined on both sides with the young lady's family retainers and tenants, clad in their Sunday best, and waving large red handkerchiefs on blackthorn sticks. Undeterred by even this formidable reception, he made his way to the mansion, and was received by the young lady and her father, the former welcoming him in most voluble French, not a word of English until they entered the house. Love is said to be blind. In this instance it must have been deaf and dumb too, for the marriage took place and lasted the lifetimes of both husband and wife. This story has often been told amongst the relatives of both parties, but nothing very much out of the way was thought of it, so probably it may be quite ordinary.

As an instance of pithy wisdom and the characteristic desire to please whether what is said be true or not, the following will be hard to beat. Our gardener, the bearer of a name more Scotch than Irish, some months previous to the incident now to be related, had sent his daughter to the United States to better herself. Naturally the first letter was awaited with some anxious curiosity. When it came, the father, unable to read or write, took it to his mistress, requesting to have it read. This was done. In the letter the young woman gave a glowing account of the situation she had obtained, that she was a nurse to a very rich man's child, lived in a house with marble stairs and most magnificent furniture, fires in the servants' rooms, unlimited food and drink all day long, and other unaccustomed luxuries. Finally, glory of all glories, that she took the air with the child every day in a two-horse carriage, accompanied by a footman. Billy listened very attentively to this magnificent recital. On finishing the letter, his mistress said: "Well! Molly appears to have done very well for herself; what do you think of it?" No judge on the Bench ever looked so wise as Billy did when he replied: "It's aisy to write with a pen." Surely

an epigram unique in concise lucidity, and not to be beaten by even the immortal Mrs. Poyser herself.

Of this same Solomon another story is on record. Sent to the county town to sell a large quantity of honey, Billy satisfactorily completed his task much quicker than was expected. Asked if anything had been said about the honey, he replied: "Well, ma'am, the lady what took it all wanted to know had I smothered or bate (beat) the bees. I didn't know which she wanted so I said I had bate them first and smothered them afterwards, and from the way she laughed I think she was plased."

Away west on the borders of the Atlantic there lived a lady of much family, not as regards quantity but quality. Titles in the family were quite common, and the family abode was a Castle. As is not uncommon in Ireland, the means available to maintain this grandeur was not proportionate to the desire to do so. At the same time, appearances were never forgotten. Early one winter evening a visitor found the lady of the Castle sitting in a large room lit by a solitary candle. On announcing the visitor, the butler was told in a most dignified manner to bring in the "comarade of the candle." The butler later became too rheumatic to get about. Too kind to send adrift an old servant, his employer procured a wheeled chair, by which, with the aid of a small boy, the poor old man was able to take the air on the Castle terrace. Unwilling to lose any chance of adding to the family dignity, whenever a visitor called the butler was wheeled to the terrace in full view of the visitor, and left there until an opportunity occurred to draw attention to him.

Another instance of this striving to keep up appearances, and in the doing so betraying a total absence of humour, is the following. Three elderly ladies lived together in a large house facing the main road. Two were widows; the youngest had never married. The maiden sister had been ill for some time. Knowing the old ladies intimately, a neighbour and his wife went up to call and enquire for the invalid. Ordinary visitors would have wasted their time using the knocker or door bell to attract attention. Not so the intimates of the

family. Close to the door was a large dinner bell. A few minutes' application to this produced a response in the shape of an elderly female cook. The enquiry, "How is Miss Molly to-day?" was answered by "She died last night, but they don't want you to know it yet, I will tell Mrs. Miller you are here." On Mrs. Miller appearing—with a view to save the cook—the enquiry was again made "How is Miss Molly?" "Very quiet and much easier," was the reply. Absolutely astounded, the enquirer faintly remarked, "Did she have a quiet night?" "Oh yes, quite quiet, never more so." Immediately after the funeral the cause of this extraordinary concealment was found to be, some of the windows in the front of the house were without blinds, and until these could be procured from the city, and all decorously drawn, no announcement of the death was permitted.

Illustrative also of a trait said to be particularly Irish is the following. A wealthy landed proprietor in the south was having some extensive improvements made in the approach to his house. When leaving home immediately after breakfast he told his butler—an old and tried servant—he would be away for an hour or two. Recollecting some further instructions about the improvements, he turned back. Unseen he approached quite close, and was thunderstruck to hear the butler say to the workmen: "Take your aise, boys; the Master's sthrong." *i.e.* wealthy. An injunction, needless to say, instantly and cheerfully complied with.

THE IRISH AND THE LAW.

Some three hundred years ago an observant Englishman commented very freely upon some characteristics of the native Irish in relation to the operation of the laws. As, in addition to his position in the official hierarchy, Spenser, the poet, was constantly engaged in litigation with the Irish, there can be no question of his right to be considered an authority.

Familiarity with criminal law at Assizes and Petty Sessions at once compels acknowledgment of the accuracy of Spenser's observation, and the truth so often remarked of the unchangeability of Irish characteristics. The same intense absorption in the conduct of a case, whether the stake at issue be a man's life or a sixpenny fine; the same firm conviction when beaten that a fair trial had not been obtained; the tendency to challenge jurymen, and the curious mental obliquity that cannot recognise the impropriety of intimidating or influencing magistrates or jury, distinguish the Irish of to-day as they did the "mere Irish" of the sixteenth century.

Whilst not seeking to minimise the ill effects frequently attending this exaggerated personal partisanship there is no denying that amusement and instruction can be obtained from watching its manifestation. This may be where the majesty of the law is represented by wigged and gowned administrators, or before the less formal tribunals of the country Shallows. Practically it is in these latter Courts that owing to the greater freedom and absence of legal technicalities the national pastime of contentious litigation is seen to the greatest advantage.

In the smaller towns Petty Sessions days frequently bring a crop of cases for disposal, and an audience

seemingly more interested in them than in the claims of business or labour. From the precincts of the Court House the arrival of the Justices is watched by litigants furbishing up their cases, witnesses receiving final instructions, and the usual number of the general public, many of them regular attendants. For the composition of the Bench is occasionally a matter of importance carefully attended to beforehand. Broadly speaking the justices are divided into groups, socially and politically, Roman Catholic and Protestant, gentlemen and nationalists. Though it would be wrong to assume no gentlemen were Nationalists or no Nationalists gentlemen, this description may be accepted as a working one. Head, and backbone too, for the matter of that, of the Nationalists are the individuals who, from their position on County Council or other local administrative Boards are ex-officio Justices. The other group, usually the least numerous, include retired officers and a sprinkling of County gentlemen. Unfortunately, for many reasons numbers of the latter class now consider it derogatory to sit on the Bench with the present class of Justices.

During a late administration an English Chief Secretary repeated the oft essayed, but never successful, task of bringing peace and contentment to Ireland. This was to be done by conferring on the lower professional, farming and shop-keeping classes the privilege of acting as Justices of the Peace. If that learned politician now requires a subject for reflection he can find it in the knowledge, there was for years no reproach applied to the unpaid magistracy equal to the expression, a Morley Magistrate. And this, notwithstanding some of the best country Justices were included in that term. Listen, and you will hear, as this big florid man evidently not one of the leisured class makes his way into the court " he's a Morley." Cryptic as the words appear without any explanation they convey and are replete with a world of meaning to the shrewd and perceptive crowd within hearing. We once saw a very high judicial dignitary and his court convulsed with laughter at the vociferously emphatic repudiation by an elderly country gentleman, jokingly taxed with

being a " Morley." The excessive indignation of the Justice was not the sole cause of the hilarity. Some of it was the malicious pleasure at the idea of an official Englishman standing godfather to an honour so stoutly reprobated.

Almost equal in importance to the Justices, and certainly more noticeable, are the Royal Irish Constabulary in attendance. Whipping blocks of both political parties, the members of this Force are neither the brutal drudges their enemies maintain nor the blind supporters of landlordism or injustice their natural protectors the Government permit them to be considered. On the contrary, these burly men in dark green uniforms are magnificent specimens of the national politeness, good temper and ability, and, until recently were practically the rulers of the country, standing between it and chaos. Next to, and in many cases before, the Clergy, they were the advisers and arbiters of their districts. And, whether giving evidence in their own cases or throwing light on what otherwise would be an inexplicable occurrence, are usually fair and impartial; placing at the disposal of a frequently puzzled bench their intimate acquaintance with the private and public affairs of the whole countryside. The accurate attention to details and facts which marks the testimony of the Irish police must be the result of training. It certainly is not a characteristic of the class from which most of them are drawn.

Apart from the national tendency to conspire and form associations—all the better if illicit—and the national impatience with constituted authority, evidence in Irish courts is frequently liable to be tainted and affected by considerations undreamt of under similar conditions in Great Britain, a peculiarity aggravated by the fact that the Irish are born actors. A certain legal expert, writing on the question of evidence, admitted it was not so much what a witness said as the manner of saying it that influenced him. Fortunately for that gentleman's reputation it was not with Irish witnesses he had to deal.

Gifted with an instinctive knowledge of oratory and expression, no details are too small, no possibility too

remote, to be considered where facts are to be avoided or a wrong impression created. When thus engaged a careless disregard of even probabilities will be coupled with a guileless ingenuousness that compels an apology for disbelief. To consider that if the truth is adhered to in the bulk, minor discrepancies do not matter, is another perplexing idiosyncrasy. For instance, charged with abstracting gravel from the bed of a stream, the offender admitted the offence, but added that it was only " a small tayspoonful " had been taken. As a matter of fact between two and three hundred cart loads had been removed.

This careless indifference with regard to abstract right or wrong is possibly the cause of the fuss always attending the empannelling of a jury. The nature or magnitude of the crime to be investigated doesn't matter; the same performance is always gone through, the Authorities trying for an impartial jury, the accused's advisers wanting as many relatives, co-religionists and political friends as possible. Consequently a too pronounced air of respectability or an English name at once brings an objection from the defending solicitor, the absence of a collar or an aggressively Irish appearance produces " Stand by ! " from the Crown solicitor. Unable to obtain a discharge, the defence works for a disagreement of the Jury, hoping with national optimism to wear down the Crown official's patience with an undesired repetition of those fruitless re-trials which too often discredit the administration of criminal law. Here it is but justice to remark, the disinclination of Irish juries to convict is not always the result of partisanship, political or religious. More often than not it is a feeling that once done, the less said about anything the better; one man is dead, why hang another?

Like the Curate's egg the Irish are not all bad even in law matters. There are times when much is willingly forgiven for the sake of qualities of heart or brain universally appreciated. Times when intensity of feeling induces a suitability of expression which less emotional and clever people are incapable of displaying. During

the investigation of what one of the witnesses described as a " very divil of a fight" between the occupants of neighbouring cottages, it was alleged three of the defendants, sisters, very pretty girls of the southern native type, had without any apparent cause seized one of the complainants and forcibly held his head downwards in a stream of water. None of the witnesses were able to assign a motive for this unique outrage. Nor did the sisters implicated display any interest in efforts to discover it. Eventually the aggrieved man, having described the assault, was asked the reason for it. Before he could reply, the eldest girl, with a passionately disdainful movement of the hands, flashing eyes, and a tone of intensely repellent scorn, ejaculated : " That corbogue (lout) wanted to marry me ! " When the roar of laughter proceeding from the body of the Court—in which, be it said to the victim's credit, he joined heartily—had subsided, both parties realised there was nothing more to be said, and the case came to an abrupt conclusion by the complainant's withdrawal

The practice of using foreign words for abusive purposes is sometimes considered a mark of refinement. If so the Irish are ultra-refined, for it is surprising how native words and expressions conveying the most appalling threats are used by people neither by name nor appearance particularly Irish. Probably the practice is due to the Irish words, from their eerie sound having a more alarming effect.

Our next reference is to a more solemn incident. What appeared a most brutal and motiveless murder had been committed. The victim a young girl of eighteen. Employed as a domestic in the neighbouring town she had been in the habit of returning every Sunday afternoon to her home in the village. These afternoons were invariably spent in the company of the young man who stood charged with her murder. It was the old, old story : two men and one maid. For three days the investigation continued, witness following witness, the accused sitting with downcast eyes an image of despair. Once only during the tiresome march of stereotyped

question and answer did he show any interest, and that was at the mention of another young man's name. Towards the end, when asked if he had anything to say, a change occurred. Then this uneducated and apparently unintelligent boy burst into a moving account of his courtship with the murdered girl. Touching upon the events of Sunday after Sunday, not an incident, not a remark, was unnecessarily noticed or repeated. Everything relevant was mentioned, nothing was omitted. At last the moment of the murder was reached. Sitting on the bank of the stream, in which the body was later found, the unfortunate girl had evidently told sufficient to rouse every demon latent in her lover's character. Pausing for a moment, as if to recall the exact words, the accused fiercely said "No, I will not!" instantly sat down, and refused to say another word. To those present there was no doubt of the feeling which prevented the communication being repeated. With nothing but his own native good breeding this poor boy required no Latin or other proverb to remind him the dead were beyond reproach or judgment. Convicted and sentenced to death, it is a small satisfaction to know the sentence was commuted.

Whilst greatly addicted to taking the law of one another, no people are more lawless in a peculiarly law-abiding manner than the Irish. Offences are committed, not by breaking the law but by ignoring it. What may be termed domestic laws, interfering with old-established customs or introducing new ones, or laws that may be inconvenient at the time, are simply treated as non-existent. Half the work of Petty Sessions Courts consists in punishing acts of omission. Crime in the sense of danger to life or loss of property was until recently not at all prevalent.

To national customs, religious ideas and defective education is due that crimes like burglary, forgery, and bigamy were comparatively infrequent. During an investigation into what proved to be a case of burglary we heard an instance of the poetic diction the Gaelic-speaking inhabitants are said to still retain. Pressed to fix the exact hour in the early morning when a certain

occurrence was noticed, the witness—an old man born to the Gaelic—had not sufficient English at his command to make himself understood. Told to use Gaelic, which was then literally translated, the expression used was "at the flight of night."

The only instance of forgery within our experience was of a nature to warrant belief in the survival of what was called formerly an Irish understanding. At a small country town on a fair day a Bank of Ireland one pound note had been taken and changed by a publican. Apart from the feel of the paper and colour of the ink, the most cursory examination disclosed the lettering had been written not printed. Description, amount, signature, all had been done with a common pen. Yet this very guileless forgery passed through several hands accustomed to Bank notes before being detected.

Bigamy in a Roman Catholic country, is necessarily uncommon. A case wherein three wives figured therefore deserves some notice. A chèf at a large hotel in the South, after a few months' residence, had married a young woman in the same employment. Nemesis, in the shape of another wife—an English woman—tracked him to the new establishment. The exposure which followed led to the discovery that not only had the much-experienced Benedick furnished a house and provided everything necessary on credit, but that he had actually persuaded a priest to marry him on the same terms. A remarkable performance in Ireland under any circumstances. Police enquiries in England brought to light the further fact that a German woman, who had married the man in England, was also looking for him. At the time of this man's trial the three women could be seen amicably sitting on the same form, waiting to be called into Court. Their position did not seem to affect them acutely, for amidst roars of laughter the English and Irish women were trying to explain to their German fellow-sufferer—whose English was small—some reminiscences of their common property—the chèf.

In recording these disjointed recollections we make no attempt to suggest reforming or recasting the law as

administered in Ireland. Any attempt at such change must necessarily take the direction of lessening the number, shortening the duration, of cases, or imposing some hard-and-fast puritanic ideas of the evils of perjury. In either case a doubtful blessing, for it would deprive the people of one of their most constant amusements, and diminish popular opportunities for displaying the national histrionic capacity.

SOME ANGLO-IRISH WRITERS.

Frankly, this title in relation to the nativity of the writers to be mentioned is not correct, nor does it correctly express any style of writing or subject they are considered to represent. For purposes of national classification of writers and their works, numerous methods have been tried. Among others, an American production determines the matter by the writer's residence and subject. As an instance of the pitfall this egregious system opens out, Edmund Burke and Sheridan are represented to be English, and Maria Edgeworth becomes Irish despite her English birth. Another authority, a lady, prefers to let the success or failure of the writers' work settle their nationality. Quite recenly an anonymous writer advanced the theory that nearly all the names of the distinguished men born in Ireland are of English or Scotch origin, and therefore the bearers are presumably descended from settlers of those nationalities. To the student of Irish domestic history no more fallacious generalization can be imagined. Even our native formula, frequently attributed to the great Duke of Wellington, enshrined in the saying, "If you were born in a stable, you would not be a horse," affords no solution. If we accept the legal principle of the determining factor being the father's nationality, then Spenser or Sterne cannot be considered Irish, but in doing so we deprive the early environments and conditions which must have influenced the attainments and product of these writers of the share psychologists now incline to give those factors. In any event it is a difficult question, and, with the remark that the brevity and euphony of our title is some recommendation, we leave readers to choose their own definition.

First in point of time and, if the novelty, absence of models and genius displayed be considered, first also in literary merit Edmund Spenser's—the poet of poets—claim to appear in our list we propose to justify. Born in London, Spenser came to Ireland in early manhood, and for eighteen years, with short intervals, lived here. The effect of the political and sectarian disputes of the time is reflected in his prose writings. His attitude on these questions can be seen from the treatment he received from, and feelings he engendered in, the minds of the Anglo and Native Irish. That attitude was decidedly hostile to the natives.

As secretary to Lord Grey, the Lord Deputy, and later as a public servant, Spenser expected, like his colleagues and contemporaries, to derive tangible profit from the opportunities the state of the country afforded. That he did so his perpetual law-suits concerning land, prove. But land-grabbing alone would not account for the local hatred Spenser inspired. The busy official, the polished and diligent writer and poet, the comrade of Raleigh, could have had nothing in common with his lawless neighbours English or Irish, his whole nature was antagonistic and repellent to the conditions of Elizabethan Munster, his whole life one long dispute with its inhabitants. That life, as far as concerns Ireland, culminated in the death of one of his children in the burning of his residence at Kilcolman and his return to London, Spenser being "one of the many illustrious victims to the madness, the evil actions and vengeance of an ill-treated and ill-governed people." That is the generally received idea of Spenser's life in Ireland. Is it entirely correct? We read that he was of a gay, pleasant and loving nature, and that he enjoyed some of his time in Ireland. Otherwise the description of his peaceful and pastoral life in *Colin Clouts come home again* must have been the very malignity of sarcasm. We doubt the contemporary narrative of Spenser's life, and consider the surviving local dislike of him as largely mythical. No disappointed, or thoroughly disgruntled man, could have written such love verses as Spenser wrote. No man dead

to the natural beauty of his surroundings could have revelled in the love of nature and plenitude of form and description he habitually used. We can imagine—more definite knowledge is debarred—what went on during Sir Walter Raleigh's constant visits to Kilcolman, and that the human isolation Spenser experienced led to his converse with inanimate nature and scenery becoming more intense and familiar, but we cannot imagine Spenser as a ruthless tyrant and bigot. That Spencer's residence in Ireland affected his compositions is indisputable. Living within the constant sound of running water from rivers and streams, and with the ever present sight of mountains and forests, would explain the frequent allusions to those natural objects, as well as the delightful rhythm and drooping cadence of much of his poetry. Witness the couplet at the end of each verse in the Epithalamium: That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

It is admitted that to Spenser's Irish exile, with its peculiar conditions and environment, may be ascribed if not the original idea, at least the circumstances under which was carried out his greatest work, the Faery Queene, not merely colouring it but imparting some of its special and characteristic features. In either event we can claim that the first great English poem of modern times, the first creation of English imaginative power, since Chaucer, and like Chaucer, as throughly and consistently English, was written in Ireland. Let us be content with this cosmopolitanism of genius and take Spenser as we now find him. Forget the official in the poet. Remember that the harsh judgments of the Irish he knew are to some extent discounted by the undying fame he earned from his association with them, and give credit to the man whose extraordinary self-detachment enabled him to produce literary work of such Arcadian simplicity under such nerve-distracting conditions. With Spenser's departure from the vicinity of the Golden Vale of Munster his life practically closed. Poor and unbefriended he died soon after in London.

About the time Spenser was leaving England for

Ireland a young Irishman—Thomas Campion—of whom very little appears to be known, was making the reverse journey. Born in Dublin about 1567 Campion's parents were Dublin citizens. When about twenty years old he left Dublin and became a student in Gray's Inn, London. From thence his career affords one of the earliest instances of that versatility and many-sidedness, with the spirit of contradiction, so nationally characteristic. From his connection with Gray's Inn we presume he was a lawyer. It is said he was a physician also. That he was a composer of "Songs and Ayres," and lyrics, and wrote masques we know. Campion's "Observations on English Poesie" are cited as proof that "though he still persisted in denouncing rhyme he sufficiently confuted his own argument by the splendid harmonies of his own rhymed lyrics."

That Thomas Campion was some relation to Edward Campion, the learned and highly esteemed Jesuit, who suffered under the laws against Roman Catholics in Elizabeth's reign, there is every reason to believe.

Nearly a century had to elapse before we come to another great Anglo-Irish writer, the protagonist of a form of literature and political thought the very antithesis of the Elizabethan Poet and his work: Jonathan Swift, the great Dean of St. Patrick's. Then, following in rapid succession we have Steele, Sterne, Burke, Goldsmith, and Sheridan. What manner of men do these names represent? When we pry into the lives and works of great men who have left marks on their times and country, and appraise them according to present ideas and conditions, that is, by standards which should more properly be applied to our contemporaries, do we always create the right topical atmosphere? All thought is a product of its time; never more so than in the instances we are about to mention. Later generations have found a secret satisfaction in the knowledge that Swift changed his party; Steele was a paid scribbler and was expelled from the Commons; Sterne was a cold-hearted Lothario; Burke became a bore, and was called a dinner-bell, from the alacrity with which members trooped out

when he rose to speak; Sheridan was always in debt, lost his seat in the Commons, and died comparatively neglected; and that Goldsmith was called an inspired idiot. Nevertheless, they were giants in intellect, supermen of their time, and what appeals to us, prototypes of much we fondly believe to be typical of our countrymen, Anglo or native Irish.

Of English extraction, Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin. With the exception of an involuntary absence resulting from his abduction by a nurse was reared and educated there, and in Ireland spent two-thirds of his long life of 78 years. It has been said Swift looked upon Ireland as a place of exile. Probably in the early part of his career, when his ambition appeared likely to be realised, that was so. Yet much of his absence from Ireland was in fact due to his indispensability to England. To say also that his heart and habits were English is quite unwarranted. Petulant outbreaks in one of his stormy character must not be taken too literally. There is no proof of this English inclination in his actions, while his habits were those of any man similarly circumstanced. At first the necessity of maintaining himself, of relieving others from providing his daily bread, forced him to migrate to England. Then, like Goldsmith, Burke, and scores of their country-men the consciousness of ability and power demanding for their display a larger field and more congenial and powerful audiences than Dublin afforded, forced him to push his fortunes in London. Most of Swift's biographers blame him for entering the Church. They contend that the author of the "Tale of a Tub" and other too plainly expressed effusions should have chosen some other profession. Swift came of a clerical family. In all branches of the Protestant Church instances of successive generations making the Church a profession are common. Ireland even now is studded with their descendants; not wanting either in the loaves and fishes. Moreover, in Swift's case the most insistent call of all—want—had to be considered. Sterne, Goldsmith and Sheridan also were either of or connected with the Church.

Dangerous as it was, exclusive as it was sought to be kept, the career of politics was the most fascinating and lucrative of all during the eighteenth century. Small wonder then that it drew to itself the youthful talent of the most politically minded of peoples; Swift, Steele, Burke and Sheridan were all politicians. They were not all of the same cast of thought. But they were of the class which governs or should govern politics. Barring Sheridan, they all started the battle of life without advantages, with nothing in their favour, neither rank nor wealth. Yet they all became political stars or literary authorities of the first magnitude. Three of them became both. Burke and Sheridan achieved high social position also. Both Swift and Burke strove to politically educate the people, the Dean by picturing their slavery and degradation in metaphor, parable, and lampoons, the Parliament man by reason and logic couched in English that admitted of but one meaning. Even the vitriolic pen of Junius (Sir P. Francis), another Irishman, contrary to the received practice of Irishmen dealing with their countrymen, could find no flaw in Burke's teaching. Magnificent as Burke's writings were, the pre-eminence of the Dean's political works have never been questioned. They certainly laid Ireland under an inextinguishable debt.

Like another Irishman who sought and found fame in London, under a repellent manner Swift concealed much whimsical eccentricity, the eccentricity generally accompanying genius of an original and exalted kind. That in youth he was described as of a frank and ingenuous nature, and through life gained the devoted affections of three women, and made and hardly ever lost friends in all ranks and conditions of men, causes a doubt as to his alleged misanthropical tendencies. His knowledge of one part of Ireland and its people was peculiar and deep. Constant journeyings between Meath and Dublin had familiarised him with a rich and fairly prosperous country, sparsely populated, exhibiting in its inhabitants contrasts as distinct as his Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians. The squalor and poverty of the native tillers of the soil, the

overhoused, extravagant living, and domineering haughtiness of the clerical and landed proprietors of everything. The same conditions met the Dean in the city. It is impossible to imagine decency, comfort or cleanliness in the purlieus of St. Patrick's Cathedral in his time. We can therefore conclude the ferocious sarcasm and defiance of every human feeling shown so often by Dean Swift, was not all the result of disappointment and disease. Probably it was too often the effect of conditions that even he, with all his power and popularity, could not alter. Take for instance the diatribe against large families in the "modest proposal for rendering poor children beneficial to their families," *i.e.*, eating them. Apart from its savage humour, it expresses the Dean's disgust at what he was personally acquainted with, the destitution and hardship resulting from large families and improvident marriages. Some of his theories would be now termed State maxims of a socialistic nature.

Dean Swift's religious principles and belief have usually been made to fit in with his supposed character. One of his closest observers spoke of him as of uniform piety and respect for religious observances. We maintain this to be the truth. In all his writings there is no instance of jesting with true religion. As a reformer in political and Church matters he did not spare his opponents, or the abuses and hypocrisies which placed them in that position. He smote them with scorpions. He could not, and did not, expect them to retaliate by flogging him with daisy chains. He was an aristocrat in intellect, and had the contempt of such for the grovelling ideas and methods of his more common associates. These in return retaliated with the only weapons in their power. To be held up as a moral bigamist, a contemner of the religion he was paid to preach, and an unbeliever, were but some of the long series of calumnies he suffered from. Though the author of the "Tale of a Tub" and the "Project for the advancement of religion" was not considered fit for the lawn sleeves of a Bishop, his clerical brethren trusted him as their advocate and representative.

Swift, the author of two treatises upon manners, has

been censored by Dr. Johnson (above all people) for his manners, and, in company with Sterne, by later critics, for grossly coarse and indecent writings. Without attempting to palliate this grievous offence it must not be forgotten these writings reflected the existing tone of a large section of society. The language, allusions and subjects both parsons used and considered ordinary, were ordinary, and what the writers and their public were used to. They were a sign of the period, more a habit than a disease. Nevertheless, their calling required them to be reformers of, not connivers in, what was manifestly wrong. Of the two offenders we think Swift was the least culpable. He wrote from hatred of cant and humbug, Sterne from mere pruriency.

Sterne's personal knowledge of Ireland was short and restricted. The company baggage wagon and the barrack wall were not conducive to the observation of externals. From another master of English prose, who, a century afterwards was at Clonmel under similar conditions to Sterne, we get a better idea of the adjacent country and its inhabitants. Sterne's lachrymose disposition—he was given to tears on the slightest provocation—bears no resemblance to George Borrow's keen perception and love of naturalness, delight in the native speech and, to their rulers and the classes above them, the esoteric life of the speakers. The monstrous sentimentality of Sterne—the transport of grief over a dead donkey, a not uncommon sight in his Irish marchings—ignored everything that did not give an opening for it. Sterne was a Cockney, a travelled one if you like, still a Cockney, and despite his environment there is nothing reminiscent of the soil in his character or work. We feel inclined to agree with Goldsmith in slighting his wit and poking fun at his manner. Sterne's attack upon Smollett affords a fair indication of their respective styles and character. Smollett wrote as, and was, a fearless, honest man of the world; Sterne's writings, with a few delightful exceptions, stamp him as a conventional old woman in a Parson's wig and bands.

Not for a moment would we say this of Richard Steele.

Leaving Ireland when very young, he was sent to the Charterhouse School, and from thence to Oxford, which he left without a degree, and became soldier, member of parliament, public official, knight, editor and playwright. Steele, like Swift, had the honour and advantage of having many of his letters preserved by a woman—an honour he repaid in anticipation, for he was the first to introduce publicly the modern estimate of women. These letters, as with his more pretentious writings, are graceful and tender, and almost pathetically self-descriptive to those knowing the man. Combining great sensibility with close and accurate observation, Steele introduced a fashion in literature which has preserved its vogue until the present. It is as an essayist Steele shines, his political writings bearing no comparison with his Tatler and Spectator effusions. Even in these he suffered some depreciation when he called in Addison to assist. Fortunately it is from his writings Steele has been judged; otherwise his claim to a niche in the temple of fame would hardly have been admitted. The author of "The Christian Hero" was a very weak Christian and nothing of a hero in daily life. The writer of comedies with the object of reforming the prevalent morals of the time cannot escape the imputation of being a common swindler. With all his good nature we are afraid Dicky Steele was quarrelsome in his cups. For he quarrelled with everybody, including his life-long friend, Addison, and, unfortunately for his own reputation, with Swift, who scathingly satirised him. Steele had much in common with Goldsmith. They were both curiously frank, incapable in money matters, quite unable to say no, and uncommonly versatile. In general estimation Steele was considered the cleverest. Later critics dispute this. Certainly Goldsmith was the most likeable, though both were typically Irish. We confess to sharing that liking for "Goldy," the most lovable of all our writers. It is said that on hearing of Goldsmith's death, Burke burst into tears. We can believe it.

Like Swift, Goldsmith made a very poor appearance at Trinity College. His education, desultory to say the

least, was partly picked up abroad, and is apparent in his works. The writer of a comedy which challenges the supremacy of Sheridan's; he is without compeer or rival in "The Vicar of Wakefield." Whilst the "Citizen of the World" bears the true stamp of the author's mind, the "History of the Earth and Animated Nature," embracing everything from a sketch of the Universe to zoophytes, bears the impress of a pot-boiler. Of this miscellaneous collection of curiosities—the illustrations of animals alone are a fund of amusement—a critic remarked that Goldsmith hardly knew an ass from a mule or a turkey from a goose—an expression not to be taken literally of a boy brought up in an Irish village. All Goldsmith's works are characteristic and highly imaginative. We can gather this impression from the effects of his travels in Italy and Switzerland as shown in various works. One might search Longford with a microscope and fail to find the Deserted Village, for the Ireland Goldsmith pictured never existed, whilst the Ireland that he and Miss Edgeworth knew with its profuse, indiscriminate hospitality, and its recognition of obligations to the poor passed away with the great famine.

We cheerfully subscribe to Dr. Johnson's estimate of Goldsmith, that he would have been a great man had he known the real value of his own internal resources. That this was so, although it is not the common opinion, is supported to some extent by the fact of all accounts agreeing that Goldsmith was a poor speaker; nevertheless we are told that he was wont to earn his board by learned disputations at the Universities and Monasteries he met with in his Continental wanderings.

To the end of his short life Goldsmith retained a strong sense of the virtue of charity, not the least pleasing recollection of him being the hunted debtor incurring more debts to relieve the necessities, frequently fictitious, of his miscellaneous crowd of followers and dependants.

If Goldsmith presents the depths a poor man of genius may descend to, to what heights have we to ascend with

Edmund Burke; an Irishman without reproach, a model of all the virtues. Burke, after graduating at Trinity College, Dublin, left Ireland when about seventeen years old and entered the Middle Temple. Eighteen years later he began a public career without parallel at the time and seldom rivalled since, making a mark on the political history of his time and on the English language, never to be effaced so long as either last. Few have written more delicately and with better taste. None has spoken better. Bolingbroke, only, wrote equal political wisdom, but, unlike Burke, failed to act in accordance with his own maxims. Burke, like Swift, was one of those great intellects in advance of their generation. Both consequently were misunderstood. But they had much to do with shaping future events. As a talker Burke did not fear to tackle the great panjandrum, Dr. Johnson. His manner of disputation may be gathered from the words of his admirer, Goldsmith, "winding into the subject like a serpent."

Differing as their upbringing and daily lives did, we see in Burke, as in Goldsmith and Sheridan, the same love of justice and humanity, the same desire to remedy wrongs. Burke, the great advocate of peace with the revolted Colonies, the denouncer of the murderers of the French Queen, found fitting expression for all that is greatly excellent in no less suitable words in the Essay upon the "Origin &c., of the Sublime and Beautiful."

Towards the close of Burke's political career he was intimately associated with one, as an orator said to have been his only equal—Sheridan. Both made their greatest speeches in the House of Commons, and together were responsible for the most enlightened attempt at political justice during their century—the impeachment of Warren Hastings. In one other respect also these two were alike. Burke nearly ruined himself by profuse hospitality. Sheridan added this characteristic to others less excusable.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan was the son of that unlucky preacher, Thomas Sheridan, the perpetrator of an "Irishism" beside which the worst in the son's

comedies are but as naught, when he choose for his text on the first Hanoverian King's birthday: Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Sheridan left Ireland when quite a child, entering Harrow at eleven years old, an advantage no doubt which stood to him in after life. He shares with Congreve (another Irishman) the distinction of having by splendid wit and political taste set so high a standard to British Comedy as to injure it. And, with Miss Edgeworth, the credit of a crusade against Absenteeism. In association with Charles James Fox he advocated the reform of the representation, universal suffrage, and annual parliaments—thus anticipating another Irishman, the Chartist leader, O'Connor—and with Burke the granting of religious liberty. In his last speech of any importance in the Commons Sheridan used the memorable words: "I will never give my vote to any administration that opposes the question of Catholic emancipation."

We all admire Sheridan's comedies, we all forget the comedy his whole life really was. Always in want of money, he lived for years as one of the richest set in the most wealthy country in Europe. He eloped with Miss Linley; to prevent her being abducted by another man. He married her twice; the second time to prove that he had married her previously. He fought two duels with the would-be abductor; the second to explain the first.

Of course Sheridan has been accused of plagiarism. Every man who says two and two amount to four is also a plagiarist. Of that confusion in speech, and peculiarity of metaphor and description, with an absence of any sense of the ridiculous said to be peculiarly Irish, Sheridan has made some of his characters unapproachable. For this he has been taken to task. One lady critic seems to think it is a mistake to describe as characteristically Irish the wit and eccentricity attributed to many Irishmen. With all due respect we submit it is the Irishmen who have given the vogue to these characteristics. They would have been eminent without them, but without the Irishmen the wit of English literature would have been

much poorer than it is. That the English sense of humour of the period required enlivening is evident from the fact that at Weymouth when George the Third was bathing from a machine and splashing about in the waves, he was followed by another machine full of fiddlers playing "God save the King."

But it is not only in Sheridan's case we meet with this denial of everything except degeneracy in those the Irish claim as countrymen. We are being taught the Irish Celt is of an inferior race, and that every eminent man born in Ireland was of foreign descent. An outbreak fittingly described as the recognition by stupidity of cleverness.

Apart from a certain amount of pride in the political and literary reputations and work of these Anglo-Irish writers, and occasional references to them as national examples of wit, eloquence, and courage we do not trouble much about them. We never appreciate adequately the irretrievable loss our nationally subordinate and insular position compels until we strive to fathom its extent in connection with the absenteeism of genius they enforce. The men we have discussed were not the only ones adversely affected by the internal insignificance of their country. Nor were they the last.

A NATIONAL DELUSION.

NOTHING more aptly illustrates the uncertainty and inconsequence of public, or rather national, feeling in Ireland than the attitude of a very large number of its inhabitants towards Imperial ideals and responsibilities. It is not a recent characteristic, this of voluntary detachment and abstention from what other peoples prize and cherish. For centuries it has been their national way of contemplating foreign affairs and relations, until we are forced to conclude that if interest or pride in what has been accomplished by previous generations be the hallmark of patriotism then the patriotic fervour which is said to exist so strongly in small communities was never more than verbally existent in Ireland.

The vagaries of political movements, especially later ones, are not the only manifestations of this peculiar attitude, nor is it entirely the outcome of them. Apart from these, it can be traced through what may be termed the national literature and read in the daily Press, whilst its effects can be detected in almost everything calculated to appeal to popular sympathies. An exclusive nationalism and sectarianism, despite private and local interests, has obscured or distorted, not only present knowledge, but the recollection of many triumphs and sufferings which accompanied Irish participation in the making of the British Empire.

It is to account for this unusual attitude we shall now endeavour.

From time immemorial the Irish have been wanderers upon the earth, a Pariah amongst the Nations. As with other peoples in a circumscribed or restricted cultivable area, unable through natural or artificial causes

to support a large population notorious for unusual fecundity, the Irish have been compelled to migrate—a process rendered more thorough by their country's geographical position. In addition they have suffered from causes seldom found operating against one and the same people at the same time. Causes, political and sectarian, of a nature calculated to render intimate local communication and the corporate pride which results from common achievements almost impossible. The nearest approach to any similarity with other nations is with the Poles; though differing that in the Polish case absorption in foreign kingdoms never resulted in a common language and partnership with the people by whom they were subordinated.

From compulsory emigration and partial legislation the Irish have suffered heavily, and though the peoples displacing them contributed largely to the formation of liabilities and responsibilities which should have induced an Imperial spirit, they have not succeeded in dispelling the attitude we have mentioned, have rather to some extent adopted it.

The effect of the Penal Laws, overstated though they have been, was indeed destructive of national life and identity of interests and ideals. Unable at home to secure the education their opinions and means rendered necessary and congenial, numbers of young Irish people were sent abroad. To many the exile was for life—to all it was to their country's loss. Others again, debarred from employments adapted to the national genius or personal desires drifted into the military and civil services of foreign Powers. Others, as in the case of the Wild Geese, followed the same course as the least of two evils. The situation of France in the latter part of the seventeenth century is sometimes said to resemble that of Ireland. Historians never tire of dilating upon the blind imbecility which then deprived France of hundreds of thousands of her best citizens. But whilst the French agony lasted for a few years they forget that of Ireland was prolonged for a century and a half. When reprobating the policy, and condemning the methods which

forced this analogy upon Ireland we must in common fairness admit she gained appreciably from the French loss by the influx of numerous capable citizens bringing their trades with them. As if during a process of blood-letting, transfusion from another body was also taking place. But the circumstances of this gain in no sense tended towards a wider outlook, rather the reverse. The proportionately large number of clerics supplied by Ireland and the celibacy rigidly enforced by Catholic tenet and custom, not only sent Irish people all over the world, but prevented any possible return of a later generation or the formation of friendly links with the motherland.

Far-reaching and exhaustive as these causes were, they were not the sole ones. National circumstances had their effect also. The desire to evade the penalties of open rebellion or association with secret societies, with the restraints of a prescribed faith, filled the ranks of foreign armies and left the bones of Irishmen in every quarter of the globe. The result of the Revolutionary wars in Ireland added considerably to the military strength of France, Spain, and Austria. The rebellion of 1798 helped to fill the ranks of British regiments in the Napoleonic wars. Fifty years later the great famine, and political disturbances about the same time, had a similar effect in the Russian war and Indian mutiny.

The feeling of patriotism, seldom an affection where absence makes the heart grow fonder, naturally became weaker exposed to these distractions. The ordinary man being more inclined to feel kindly to the land which affords him sustenance than to entertain romantic feelings about a country only a memory, and that a bitter one. It further made the Irish cosmopolitan and ultra-sectarian. In many instances more sectarian than racial. No man asked whether another belonged to the same country but whether he was of the same faith. The prevalent spirit was that so wittily reproved by a French lady on a compatriot remarking he was a Catholic before a Frenchman: How clever he was to have been baptised before he was born!

The national pugnacity, desire to see the world and escape from the soul-cramping routine of country life, had their share also in the national restlessness. To nothing else can be attributed in later times the flocking of Irishmen to the Spanish peninsula and the South American States. When, amongst other instances, Francis Burdett O'Connor (Bolivar's friend) and his companions left Cork for South America they had no idea they were destined to assist in forming large and populous republics, and earn statues and more useful rewards for themselves.

Later again the combination of all these factors with economic defects and bad legislation had their share in populating the United States. In this connection it is necessary to mention that the exodus of farmers and others from the northern province in the early years of the eighteenth century had much to do with diverting Irish sympathies and activities from more domestic subjects. This became more noticeable when the southern and western provinces, to an even greater extent, became involved in the emigration.

To an ordinary people this enforced cosmopolitanism, wandering spirit, and foreign activities, with the accompanying transferrence of new interests and obligations would have induced a less provincial spirit; a larger, more world-wide, view. No doubt as the population of Ireland decreased, the thoughts of those remaining at home turned in the direction their kinsfolk had gone. But at the same time they treasured in their hearts and bitterly resented the wrongs, real and imaginary, the slights, open and implied, of a despised nationality and denounced faith until the bare thought of association, of common intercourse, with all that was held responsible for their grievances, became hateful.

That it is we believe which has made one of the most imperial and adaptable of small nations the most individualist of all. That it is which makes the people with a relatively larger share in the greatest of Empires pin its faith to a shibboleth denoting nothing beyond

the merest provincialism. The nation whose forbears largely assisted to acquire and whose kith and kin are now largely helping to maintain the most splendid of all national inheritances is the one appearing not only to have forgotten, but to disclaim, all reference to any property in it.

At times we feel inclined to ask these advocates of a still stricter exclusiveness, these dwellers in a small island geographically and politically isolated, do they really wish to abandon the national heritage in our great Empire? Have they no pride in the glory and honour of the past? No care for the opportunities of advancement and maintenance that Empire and its world-wide field of activities affords? Is all this nothing to them?

It was with no small racial pride that we once became aware of the fact that at a time, a few years ago in India, when all the senior officials, civil and military, (with one exception) of a province larger and more populous than Ireland, were Irishmen the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief were of the same nationality. To come to present times, how many Irish people give a thought to the coincidence that in the districts where the blood of their countrymen was so freely shed in the late world war not one yard of the ground they marched over but had within the last three centuries been watered by the blood, had echoed to the footsteps, of previous generations of Irish. That whilst efforts were being made to rescue one Irishman and his command in the far east of Asia, efforts were also being devised to rescue another and his command from the Antarctic regions. It is not a mere figure of speech but an illuminating fact to say that as the birth history of the South American republics might be written from the lives of some southern Irishmen, so might the annals of our great dependency, India, be compiled from the biographies of about a dozen men from our northern Irish province.

Truly the activities of Irishmen have been and are world wide. Can this have produced a species of national myopia? A shortness of vision not extending beyond

the parish pump. Must refuge be taken in admitting that those Irish people so vociferous in their shibboleth, so narrow in its application, know nothing of events, past or present, outside their own small ambit—that in fact ignorance pure or assumed is responsible for their attitude of renunciation. It cannot be racial antagonism or sectarian exclusiveness, for to both this attitude would be suicide. Whatever the cause it will be interesting to know: will the Irish always persist in the small nation cry, continue to flaunt a township badge rather than the imperial regalia? We believe they will until—readers must supply the remainder of the sentence from their own consciousness!

"THE IRISH LORD LIEUTENANT."

"I WOULD rather be called the Irish Lord Lieutenant than go down to posterity as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland": a distinction with a very great difference only to be comprehended by another remark of the same person, "My old friends and countrymen, the Irish."

Both remarks are from the pen of that very much misunderstood Englishman, Lord Chesterfield—the writer of the "letters" so very often quoted, so very seldom read. The desire thus gracefully expressed was gratified, and Lord Chesterfield came to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant. If similar sentiments of goodwill to the Irish have not been more frequent from those occupying the same exalted position, before their term of office, it has not been for want of opportunity. For many and various Lord Lieutenants have come and gone. Few have escaped the contempt of the people they ruled. None have failed to reap the harvest of some unpopular policy. To give them their due, few have had the same opportunities to ingratiate themselves with the people that Lord Chesterfield had. The transference of the government and of the National Court of criticism and appeal from Dublin to Westminster; the use of the purely political medium of a Chief Secretary, in hourly communication with and forming one of the Cabinet responsible for the policy of the Empire, has altered the status and responsibilities of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—altered not only the Governors but the governed.

We confess to a doubt whether any Statesman of the calibre of Lord Chesterfield would under present conditions accept the manacled position he filled so ably.

The grave of reputations is not to be cleared by a person bound hand and foot. The man who flouted the King, fought—politically—Walpole, and declined a dukedom and a red ribbon was not of the class to be sent across the Irish Channel as a mere figurehead. Nor was he. The difficulty of communicating with London, the impossibility of submitting plans requiring immediate decision, gave a freedom of action to the King's Deputy now unknown and unnecessary. But it found Lord Chesterfield equal to the occasion. He accepted the opportunity, and initiated and carried through a policy which kept Ireland quiet and contented when Great Britain was convulsed by the Stuart rebellion; and in doing so earned the commendation of his contemporaries if not of posterity. He moreover proved himself a man to be feared, a leader to be followed—one who really (not nominally) governed, repressed jobbery where possible, and established schools and manufactures, at the same time performing the far more difficult task, even then, of holding in check the Orange and Catholic factions while meting out equal justice to both.

When admitting the general ability which thus marked the most brilliant and useful part of a long career, we naturally ask, What was the attraction the Irish held for such a grand seignieur as Lord Chesterfield? That his administration, short as it was, was eminently sympathetic is proved by its success. But what was the cause, the origin of this sympathy? It was not a usual feeling before or since. That he was the friend of Dean Swift, and must have known by reputation at least some of the members of that galaxy of Irish talent which then added lustre to London's literary world, will not account for it. We cannot say the attraction was the result of intercourse with the Irish, for he wanted the Lord Lieutenancy before he knew them, asked for it in fact, and if his letters truthfully reflect his feelings, never regretted having received it. Long after returning to England he lost no opportunity of speaking well of the Irish. Even the national diet of potatoes was praised for forming the food "of the healthiest and strongest

men I know in Europe." It was not from insular ignorance, for his knowledge of other nations was not confined to Great Britain. He had seen and studied most Continental peoples.

With all due deference to the great Chams of criticism, we venture to assert Lord Chesterfield's attitude to the eighteenth century Irish arose from a similarity of disposition and mentality. Chesterfield was a pronounced Parliamentarian, studied oratory and spoke well, wrote voluminously, and was not above using a lampoon, was a wit, and the sworn enemy of dulness and formality always ready with word and gesture that pleased, and inclined to practise that mild form of deceit which considers truth subservient to good manners. His fearlessness in criticism—imagine the audacity of criticising Voltaire—and general literary combativeness may also be considered congenially Milesian. We have a very fair idea of what Dublin society was like in his Lordship's time, and can appreciate how it would appeal to one who dreaded stupidity worse than the plague.

Owing probably to the undeserved stigma caused by the letters to his son, and to the dislike due to the quarrel with Dr. Johnson, there are few British statesmen considered less—in its smug English meaning—respectable than Lord Chesterfield. To many people he is only one whit less infamous as a teacher of youth than Machiavelli. His very creditable Irish services alone should have saved him from this fate, to say nothing of other public services and his connection with the alteration of the calendar. That they have not is certain. The dispute, it can hardly be called a quarrel, with Dr. Johnson is usually considered from the Doctor's point of view only. The letter refusing the Peer's patronage for the Dictionary, delightful though it be, is too harsh and quite unjustified. The same may be said of Dr. Johnson's coarse remark upon the "letters." It is too severe. They were not intended for publication; they were private letters between father and son, when the latter was of an age to be advised; they contain nothing more than is now considered necessary for communication

to young people. The claim of the learned Doctor to have written two of the best speeches attributed to the Statesman amounts to no more than that, as with other speeches Johnson reported for publication, they were what in his opinion Lord Chesterfield would have said, or did say, upon the subject matter. Other contemporary critics do not agree with Johnson's implied censure. In any event, Lord Chesterfield's appreciation of the Irish he knew cannot be held to be the cause of his position in popular estimation. We cannot help thinking therefore that from the descendants of those so unusually appreciated some expression of gratitude is due, and this we willingly tender.

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