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CHANGING IRELAND

LITERARY BACKGROUNDS OF THE IRISH FREE STATE 1889-1922

BY

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AUTHOR OF "'BATTLES AND ENCHANTMENTS," ETC.

Their sound is gone out into all lands: and their words into the ends of the world. PSALM XIX. 4

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PREFACE

The title Literary Backgrounds of the Irish Free State applied to a book concerned chiefly with . modern Anglo-Irish literature, requires explanation for those who have not followed closely the development of literary and political Ireland in the past decade. Although it is generally known that many of the leaders in the Irish Rebellion of 1916 were men of letters, comparatively few people realize how intimate has been the connection between Irish political thought and the literary revival. Standish O'Grady, Douglas Hyde, and William Butler Yeats are as truly founders of the Irish Free State as were Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins: O'Grady reinterpreted the glory and the dignity of early Gaelic Ireland; Hyde stayed the decay of Gaelic speech; and Yeats added to the national heritage a beauty partly compounded of ancient things. In thirty years Irish men and women have grown to understand the continuity of their tradition: that they are the inheritors of a highly developed tribal civilization untouched by Roman influences, revealed in a vernacular literature going back to prehistoric times and of a high stage of stylistic development. Behind the work of the creative writers, and even of the Gaelic League, lies the accomplishment of the scholars who have

edited, arranged, and explained the literature written in Gaelic from the ninth to the nineteenth century: this is the treasure-house of the national imagination, literary manner, and polity. Consciously or unconsciously, the Irish writers in Gaelic and in English who have built up the ideal of nationality expressed politically in the Free State have been influenced by their Gaelic

literary heritage. Fully to understand the development of Ireland from 1889 to 1922 requires a knowledge of AngloIrish literature of the period; and to grasp the significance of this literature is to examine it in relation to the older Gaelic; Anglo-Irish literature, though written in English, thus is found Irish in imagination and in style.

The papers collected in this volume are an attempt at such a study, in which the late Thomas MacDonagh, with Literature in Ireland, was a distinguished pioneer. As a rule, books in English by Irish men and women have been considered almost entirely as contributions to English literature; in this book has been kept chiefly in mind their connection with the Gaelic tradition. To the present writer it is of great interest that the temper of Irish literature has altered little in a thousand years: Dunsany, though he invents a country of his own, preserves characteristics of Gaelic style; Ledwidge writes of landscape with the same intimacy as did the monks of remote centuries. If, as George Moore

has suggested, art has been blighted by modern civilization, there is high hope for Ireland, where the literary outlook is unchanged in essentials. Irish authors, moreover, may write in English mt still remain thoroughly national.

The opening essays in Changing Ireland endeavor to give a general idea of the content and the salient features of Gaelic literature by way of necessary introduction to the critical papers that follow. The reviews of books dealing with Irish politics since 1916 are included, not only to show the Gaelic ideal operative in politics, but also to suggest volumes which may be useful in forming a just estimate of the turbulent course of Irish history and to indicate the more moderate opinions. Both parts, it is hoped, will give a true interpretation of the newly awakened and established Irish nationality 1 in its continuity from the past and with its promise for the future.

CONTENTS

PART I

ESSAYS

I

ONE REASON FOR THE IRISH PROBLEM

a Ree stirring of new forces in the world to-day is of good omen for Ireland. Irishmen of all political opinions are agreed that their country was most distinguished during the centuries after the introduction of Christianity, when Irish missioners journeyed to distant parts of Europe,

taking with them the fervor of the Irish spirit, and preaching the Gospel. Now that Ireland again has opportunity for service to mankind in a new world, she must be worthy her noble tradition, appearing with that “walk of a queen” which Mr. Yeats has ascribed to his symbolic Cathleen ni Houlihan.

Most writers about Ireland have concerned themselves with her relations with England; few, even among those loudest in proclaiming her a nation, have discussed Ireland as part of a world family. Yet only when she is considered from the point of view of European history can her story be fully understood; only then does her nationality appear individual and is her contribution to civilization clearly discernible. The endeavor to look at Ireland’s relations with other countries from the Irish point of view involves the effort of looking at the

4]

relations of these countries with Ireland from their point of view.

The Irish were a Christian people long before the coming of the Norman English, in 1169. Saint Patrick had gone to Ireland in 432; the land had had over seven hundred years to develop under the influence of Christianity — this in spite of Norse invasions, which were successful only along the coast. Saint Patrick found a civilization indigenous to the Irish, and he tactfully adapted his missionary efforts to native customs and institutions, with the result that the Irish were easily converted. The first British conqueror was the wisest of all.

What was the social system encountered by Saint Patrick, and how did it express the Irish temperament? The answer to this question is of primary importance, not only for a proper understanding of Irish history, but because it is the foundation of the polity of the Sinn Fein Party. Sinn Feiners point to the Irish past as the source of their inspiration, and they base their programme for future government upon an interpretation of the early Irish state. Fully to comprehend their arguments, whether or not we agree with their conclusions, it is necessary to examine the structure of this ancient state. The fact that it was truly national makes it the logical point of departure for a study of Irish problems, and seems the chief reason why Sinn Fein doctrines have spread so rapidly in Ireland. Only the starting-point of

[5

Sinn Fein is the tribal state; the goal is an Irish republic. While the menace of German imperialism overshadowed the world, Americans were outraged by the talk of an Irish republic, because such distraction from the common interest of the Allies was treason to those fighting for liberty. Now that the war is over, it is possible to dissect the tenets of Sinn Fein, remembering that in every company of radicals some have wished to go too far.

Familiar is the saying that every Irishman is the descendant of a king. This assertion is largely true, because the Celtic state was tribal, and the head of each tribe had the title “King.” The Irish tribe was aristocratic in its officers, but aristocracy was tempered by democracy, for an Irish king was elected by freemen with property, and the kingly office was not necessarily hereditary. Joyce’s Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland thus describes the choice of a sovereign:

The king or ruling chief was always elected from members of one fié or family. . . any freeborn member of the family was eligible, provided that both his father and paternal grandfather had been fiaiths or nobles, and that he was free from all personal deformities or blemishes likely to impair his efficiency or to lessen the respect of the people for him. The successor might be son, brother, nephew, cousin, or other relative of the chiefs

6]

with the object of avoiding the evils of a disputed succession, the person to succeed a king or ruling chief was often elected by the chiefs convened in formal meeting during the lifetime of

the king himself: when elected he was called the sanist, a word meaning second, 1.e., second in authority.!

Above the king of the swath or tribe, which was made up of several clans, were the king of the mor, or great, ‘wath, wherein several tribes were united, the king of the province, and, last of all, the High King of Ireland.

Not only was the early Irish state democratic in the matter of electing an executive head, but the Irish theory of land tenure was that land belonged to the whole tribe, and was lent to those who held it, certain people inheriting land generally conceded as belonging to their families. Land held by a chief or king in virtue of his position descended not to his children, but to his successor as king, this being called descent by fanistry.

About the democratic centre of native Irish institutions was built an elaborate aristocratic framework based upon the clan system, the grouping of families and of clans into tribes for protection. This system of having families from which kings might be chosen is an instance of how the Irish delegated particular powers to particular groups of people. In the same way as the kingship, other offices were hereditary in families, and these families were honored

[7

of one another. All men were bound strictly by custom, the kings being limited monarchs who swore to govern not alone justly but also in accordance with the traditions of their kingdoms. . Perhaps owing to the structure of society, much was demanded of Irish holders of office. As has been said, a king must not be blemished in person or in mind. He must also be a leader and of noble mind; the early text says, “‘a listener in the woods, a gazer at the stars selected for his goodness and for his wisdom, and strength and forces, and valour in fighting.”?

The combination of aristocratic and democratic ideals is reflected in early Irish literature, both in the stories dealing with Cuchulain, and in those of a later date telling of Finn and his companions. As Gaelic literature is the expression of the national consciousness even during years when the Irish were supposed to have no such expression, it reveals apparently paradoxical qualities as of the fibre of the race; and these may be traced throughout Irish history to the present day. The Irish temperament as shown in politics from the time of Henry II to George V has been a striving for the recognition of the combined ideals of democracy and aristocracy.

The noblest thinker of present-day Ireland, A. E., recognized this in his National Being, when he wrote:

There is, I believe, a powerful Irish character which has begun to reassert itself in modern times, and this

8]

character is in essentials what it was two thousand years ago. We discover its first manifestation in the ancient clans. The clan was at once aristocratic and democratic. It was aristocratic in leadership and democratic in its economic basis. The most powerful character was elected as chief, while the land was the property of the clan. That social order indicates the true political character of the Irish. Races which last for thousands of years do not change in essentials. They change in circumstance. They may grow better or worse, but throughout their history the same fundamentals appear and reassert themselves. That peculiar character, I believe, still persists among our people in the mass, and it is by adopting a policy which will enable it to manifest once more that we will create an Irish civilization, which will fit our character as the glove fits the hand.’

The defect of the Irish state was that the central authority was weak; the High King had more distinction than power, and the under kings could often flout his authority, making war upon one another. This weakness of organization has been an advantage as well as a disadvantage to the Irish: when the Vikings descended upon the country during the ninth and tenth centuries, they were unable to subdue it all; if they overcame one or two tribes others were left to conquer — there was no central power which, if overthrown, meant the complete subjugation of the island. The Scandinavians, nevertheless, maintained themselves on the coasts, and to them the Irish owe the cities of Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, [9] and Cork. With the Danes the Irish intermarried, made treaties, and began that process of "conquering the conqueror" stressed by Irish historians. When, however, King Brian Boru, who was a warrior and statesman of no mean order, united the majority of the tribes, he was able to break the Danish power at the Battle of Clontarf (fought on Good Friday, 1014), and thus secure Ireland to the native race for at least another century, and to the Christian faith for all time. Unluckily the High King lost his life in the hour of victory, and the united state relapsed into a collection of jealous tribes.

A century and a half later, Dermot MacMurrough, having carried off the wife of the King of Breffny, was forced to flee from the kingdom of Leinster, and he appealed to the Norman knights of England for aid in regaining his kingdom. In 1169 the Norman English obtained in Ireland a foothold, their power being strengthened in 1171 by the arrival of King Henry II himself, who wished to make certain that his subjects should hold as vassals whatever land they had acquired. Nearly all the Irish kings, overawed by Henry's army of four thousand men, paid him homage; whereupon the English sovereign divided Ireland among his Norman adventurers in true feudal fashion, further strengthening his hold upon the country by summoning at Cashel a council of the clergy, to whom he promised especial privileges.

10]

To-day the majority of Irishmen regard Trinity College, Dublin, as emblematic of English rather than of Irish Ireland. It is, therefore, interesting to find Miss Constantia Maxwell, Lecturer in History at Trinity, speaking thus of the coming of the Normans, in her Short History of Ireland:

It should be remembered that this Norman occupation was an illegal one in the eyes of the Irish. Henry II had no right to the country save that of conquest, and even though the chiefs had temporarily submitted to him out of fear, had surrendered their lands and received them back again as feudal vassals "for them and their heirs forever," these lands were not really theirs to give, but belonged to their tribe as a whole. Thus, no real or binding submission had been made, the assent of the native Irish population having been ignored. The Normans regarded the situation as conquerors and from the feudal standpoint; the Irish believed in their old tribal customs and bitterly resented what they deemed to be the Norman intrusion.'

With the coming of the Normans and the parcelling of the land of Ireland by King Henry II, the Irish concept of a state, the Irish attitude toward a king and toward land tenure, were first brought into conflict with the feudal ideals of a king and of the holding of land. A pamphlet, The Gaelic State, written by Darrell Figgis, one of the Sinn Feiners imprisoned for a time, contains the following reference to this period of Irish history:

[II

Henry of Anjou and England, when he came to Ireland, with a somewhat munificent gesture made grants of large tracts of territory to his underlings. It was nobly done; to make gifts of other people's property to one's friends requires a noble mind.°

These words reveal an attitude too often that of the historian of Ireland; in his anxiety to prove a point he fails to look at facts save from the position of his own time. Much as we to-day condemn King Henry's procedure, he undoubtedly acted in the manner appropriate to a

conqueror of his period. Ireland had lain to the west of the world, outside the countries influenced markedly by the Roman conquest and culture, and it was with these countries and with their learning that Henry was familiar. The word “Roman” held magic for him; but of the word “Celtic”? he was undoubtedly contemptuous.

Neither King Henry nor his immediate successors attempted a complete conquest of Ireland; they were too busy elsewhere. The natives, therefore, were never really subdued. Many of the Norman lords, left alone in isolated regions, came to terms with Irish neighbors as warlike as their so-called conquerors; the Irish social system was enough like the Norman to appeal to men far from their own king. Moreover, Irish legal procedure had been codified in the Brehon Laws. Since, then, the Irish social system was workable and not too different from the feudal, it naturally conquered its conquerors.

12]

A few English settlers of less pliable temper withdrew to Dublin and the surrounding country, where they lived in a district fortified against Irish raids by a palisade and a ditch, and appropriately called “The Pale.” The government established by the English kings, with its seat in Dublin, consisted of a Viceroy aided by a Great Council, an assembly that later became the Irish Parliament. English government in Ireland was thus, as nearly as might be, a replica of the government of England, and it was the object of the government to introduce into Ireland Norman culture and institutions. This met with little success for the reasons already given: that the country was not completely overcome by force of arms, and that many of the Norman nobles, without assistance from England and without a constant influx of new settlers from across Saint George’s Channel, were forced to make an arrangement with the Irish.

Irish history, then, from the time of the coming of the Normans, is a record of the conflict between the English and the Celtic governmental systems. Whenever the English tried to introduce feudal land tenure, the Irish, in nine cases out of ten, unless the feudal lord were the same as the tribe or clan head, recombined, according to their immemorial traditions, immediately upon the removal of the strong arm of the English military forces. The democratic theory of land tenure, and a loyal devotion to the

[43

families from whom officers of the State were drawn, were inborn in the Irish, and the only way to eradicate these would have been to prove the superiority of the English system. The idea of studying the native institutions of a people with whom another nation comes in contact belongs to recent times; it was unheard of in the Middle Ages, particularly when the people to be studied had been uninfluenced. by Roman civilization. The English regarded the Irish as barbarians, and it is not surprising that efforts to civilize them should have taken any form rather than an attempt at understanding.

Without success the viceroys tried to play off one Irish chieftain upon another; Celtic traditions caused defeat. Many times the government passed laws, like the Statute of Kilkenny, wherein Irish customs and intimacy between the Irish and English were banned. Of course an endeavor to obtain the land of Ireland was an inevitable part of the government programme, and there is record of many “Plantations” from the time of the Tudors to that of Cromwell. By the system of giving away Irish land to chiefs loyal to England, or giving land to Englishmen, violent warfare was provoked. The native Irish could not, however, be exterminated even by Cromwell’s policy of “Connaught or Hell,” but often they returned as tenants of property they had once owned.

The Reformation did not help Ireland, because,

14]

although the Irish Church had been late in coming under papal authority, the majority of the Irish, once under the Roman See, remained faithful. The failure of the reformed church was partly due to the fact that the Book of Common Prayer was in English, and was distributed in Ireland neither in a Latin nor in an Irish translation. Since, moreover, until the eighteenth century it was the custom to have a state religion and to persecute other faiths, a reformed church supported by the English government did not aid the settlement of Irish difficulties.

In examining Irish history, one cannot fail to see that Ireland was regarded as a possession to benefit England; little thought was given to making a pleasant homeland for the Irish. Irishmen to-day continually call attention to this aspect of their history; they point with horror to internecine warfare and bloodshed. They forget that to govern a colony with the consent of the governed was a practice scarcely general until after the American Revolution; harshness and force were conventional instruments of rule. It is matter for wonder that a country which has prided herself upon her championship of liberty should have treated a neighbor as England has treated Ireland. The one explanation that can be offered is that England tried to make Ireland accept a system of liberty that the English themselves enjoyed; they did not take into account the native social system of the Irish. To the credit of Ireland

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it is that, in spite of cruel laws, of misunderstanding, her people have clung to their national ideal of a tribal state. Many a man of modern Ireland cannot tell anything of early Irish civilization, but where is there an Irishman who does not reverence family tradition? In what other country is the "old stock" as highly honored? Irish generosity, willingness to help a neighbor in distress (so evident in American political life), are but expressions of the ancient Celtic idea of common ownership, the feeling that by the codperation of individuals the State becomes strong.

The American Revolution had a marked effect upon Ireland: Irish industry at this time was paralyzed, but the rebellion of the American colonists against the unjust treatment of American industries encouraged the Irish. The French Revolution added to Irish discontent; Ireland looked to France as to a friend close at hand. By the end of the eighteenth century, Grattan had freed the Irish Parliament from English control, and Roman Catholics, once crushed by the Penal Laws, had been given a larger measure of liberty. Unfortunately the British Government did not keep pace with advanced Irish thought, and, by reason of British encouragement of religious fears, the Rebellion of 1798 was partial instead of complete. Although the rebellion was the pretext, the need of defence against the rising power of Napoleon really caused the abolition of the Irish

16]

Parliament (then in sad need of reform) and the inclusion of Ireland within the United Kingdom.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there has been gradual improvement in the administration of Irish affairs, an improvement often brought about, to be sure, as a result of violent agitation on the part of the Irish: Roman Catholics have been completely emancipated and given educational opportunities equivalent to those open to Protestants; the Irish language has been fostered; the Irish tenant has been enabled to own his land; poverty has been combated by the Congested Districts Board; the Department of Agriculture has assisted the agrarian population to learn better methods of farming. In spite of these efforts Ireland has remained discontented, and, at the time of the world's stress, some of her citizens rebelled. This was because the policy of improvement had been conducted from without, rather than from within, the country. By this is not meant that it would have been impossible for England to reform the government of Ireland, but that the keynote of such reformation should have been to learn what form of government was most like that of the early Irish State, and best suited to the Irish

temper. Home rule, a step in the right direction, although it became law, was never put into operation, because it was opposed by Irish Unionists, particularly by those living in Ulster.

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To explain the paradox that a section of Ireland objects to the strengthening of Irish nationality, necessitates brief consideration of Irish society today, for which the previous survey of the early social system has formed a necessary introduction.

It will be remembered that English settlers were brought into Ireland by a series of "Plantations." Some of these new arrivals the Irish completely absorbed; the majority were strongly influenced by Irish ideals. In one important respect, however, the Anglo-Irish differ from the descendants of the older population — they look back to an English, not an Irish, past. This has meant that they have kept the Anglican faith of their fathers, a firm bond between them and the English. Thus Irish landed gentry are referred to by most of those outside their number as the "Protestant garrison." The Irish gentleman is drawn to the representatives of the English power, the lord lieutenant and the viceregal court; he has little interest in Irish nationality as expressed either in Gaelic customs or in Gaelic literature. He sends his sons to schools and to universities in England, where young men gain a conception of empire denied most Irishmen educated at home.

A little more than a century ago, when her trade was threatened, Ulster was the rebellious section of | Ireland. Since the Union, her trade and industries have prospered, and she is fearful lest, in the event of Home Rule, the people of the west and south deprive

18]

her of her wealth. Irish history seems to give no foundation for such fear. The pertinacity of the Celtic tradition tends to show that those who have a trade or industry are left undisturbed therein despite changes of government. The misfortune is that a part of Ireland as significant in ancient legend as in modern commerce lacks national consciousness by reason of looking out of the country and not into it. The most important aspect of the Irish question today is how to foster the Irish spirit in all Ireland, to prevent Irishmen from forgetting their nationality. In this way alone can there be unanimity. The Irish problem is one of education rather than of politics.

Upon the outbreak of the World War, the leader of the Irish Nationalists, John Redmond, with a vision characteristic of his country's past, pledged the support of Irishmen in arms to the cause of the Allied nations. Irishmen of the Protestant minority, with their concept of empire, needed little urging, but many others of different religious profession also responded to the call for service to the world. However, a faltering Government failed to recognize the principle of nationality, and refused to allow Nationalists to go to war in a body behind the green flag. A group of young men who had long been intent upon the study of the Irish language and the Irish past set up the despairing cry, "Sinn Fein" (Ourselves Alone). In spite of the fact that Ireland had always shone most bright when of assistance to

[19

others, these Sinn Feiners persuaded many to join the standard of selfishness.

With the founding of the Free State the desire of centuries seems at last fulfilled. Ever among the civilizations, Ireland has again taken her place among the nations of western Europe. May she be drawn into amicable relations with her neighbors, and may the new era bring her the peace which passes understanding!

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i

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THE GAELIC BACKGROUND OF IRELAND'S LITERARY REVIVAL

The Irish Literary Revival began in 1889 with the publication of Mr. W. B. Yeats's now wellknown poem, "The Wanderings of Oisin." Throughout the opening years of the eighteen-nineties, Mr. Yeats and his followers set themselves to the reproduction in English of the subject-matter and charm of style that distinguished the Gaelic literature of Ireland. Scholars in various parts of the world busied themselves with studying and translating Gaelic, and in 1893 Douglas Hyde founded the Gaelic League for the preservation of the Irish language and for the encouragement of spoken Irish. The researches of scholars naturally could not keep abreast of the ardor of literary workers, and the difficulties of Gaelic (particularly in its ancient form) were such that soon poets and story-tellers began to devote more time to describing contemporary life in Ireland than to retelling Gaelic legends, or to original work containing allusions to Gaelic literature. The remarkable pictures of Irish country people drawn by the dramatist and poet, John Millington Synge, gave additional impetus to the sages to portray modern daily life.

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[21

Gradually, however, the Gaelic League made itself felt. In 1909, Joseph Campbell (who often uses the Gaelic form of his name, Seosamh MacCathmaoil) published his Mountainy Singer, wherein allusions to Gaelic literature again appear; and the writings of Padraic Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, represent a still further effort to bring the Irish into touch with their national inspiration. At the present time, the labors of students of Celtic have made accessible good translations of the more dramatic and enthralling of the early Irish stories; and there are two good histories of Gaelic literature, Miss Eleanor Hull's Textbook of Irish Literature and Dr. Douglas Hyde's Literary History of Ireland, as well as T. W. Rolleston's summary of early Celtic civilization and literature in Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race. To-day writers are able to obtain information in regard to original sources far more easily than were their predecessors at the close of the last century. Nevertheless, Irish people are still too much in the dark about the Gaelic background of the Irish renaissance. Few can give even general answers to such questions as: What is the Irish language, and how is it related to other branches of the Celtic family — for instance, Welsh? What are the dates of the early Irish stories and poems that have come down to us, and what are their special claims to consideration? Yet these are questions of interest to all who care for literature, and especially to men and women of Irish blood.

22]

Irish belongs to the main group of Celtic languages known as Insular Celtic, a group subdivided into Brythonic (British) Celtic, and Goidelic (Gaelic). There are three definite languages in each subdivision: Breton, Cornish, and Welsh, in the British; Scottish, Manx, and Irish, in the Gaelic. Irish and Welsh are thus first cousins, Scottish and Irish Gaelic almost the same; in fact, until the eighteenth century they were identical. This does not seem strange when it is remembered that Scotland was early colonized by men from Ireland, then known as Scotia, and its inhabitants as Scots, the country now known as Scotland being called Alba, or Alban.

Many of the writings of ancient Ireland have been lost, owing to the turbulent condition of the country in the first Christian centuries, when the Irish fought among themselves and with the Danes, and later, when they fought also with the English. Nevertheless, it was estimated by a

Celtic scholar thirty years ago that there have been preserved and have come down to us enough Irish manuscripts written before 1550 and still unpublished to fill a thousand octavo volumes of considerable thickness. Since that estimate, enough to fill two hundred volumes has been edited and published, leaving eight hundred books for enthusiasts of the present and the future! Although Irish manuscripts have been edited and, in most cases, translated, there has been

[23

little effort to consider them in relation to their influence upon other literatures, notably English. There has been virtually no attempt, save by Thomas MacDonagh i in his stimulating Literature in Ireland, to examine in relation to its Gaelic background the writing of even the Celtic revival. So thoroughly English a critic as Matthew Arnold, in his essay On the Study of Celtic Literature, published fifty years ago, ventured the opinion that "natural magic" in English literature is possibly of Celtic _ origin. Many interesting problems in literary criticism, therefore, await solution by students with a knowledge of Gaelic.

In common with much of the vernacular literature of western Europe, the stories and poems of ancient Ireland were written down by the best-educated men of their day — the monks. Soon after the coming of Saint Patrick, in the fifth century, Ireland became one of the bulwarks of the Christian faith, and the Irish of the sixth century were a people of remarkable religious fervor. At this time were founded monastic schools, which soon became famous as centres of learning: to Clonmacnoise, Clonard, Durrow, families even in the neighboring island EE Britain sent their sons as we to-day send ours to Princeton, Yale, Harvard. But all Irish clerics were not content to remain at home; filled with missionary zeal, many carried the Gospel abroad, taking with them not only their faith but their language and lit-

24]

erature; record of their achievements is preserved as far afield as Bavaria, Switzerland, Italy. A ninthcentury catalogue of the monastery of St. Gall, in Switzerland, founded by Gallus, an Irishman, mentions thirty books written in Irish, and a manuscript from that monastery includes the earliest fragments of Irish poetry remaining to us to-day. Continental libraries, such as that of Brussels, still contain valuable Gaelic manuscripts.

Before considering early Gaelic literature in detail, it is well to have in mind its salient characteristics. These were defined by Matthew Arnold as "a turn for style, Titanic melancholy, natural magic."

Ancient Irishmen had little idea of telling a story as a whole, — the thread of narrative in an Irish Saga is invariably hard to follow, — but they gave careful attention to detail, even in their earliest writings. Their choice of striking words and phrases shows them masters of the art of suggesting much in brief compass; in fact they are often so compact as to be unintelligible! At its best, however, their terseness adds dramatic effect to their style.

Combined with a fondness for parallel structure, the early Irish showed an extraordinary love for alliteration. Not only were they given to putting together strings of nouns, adjectives, verbs, but they rang alliterative changes first upon one letter, then upon another, frequently in the same sentence. This tendency is more pronounced in late than in

[25 the oldest Gaelic: "Et rothogbatar doiredha, dliu-

the, dighainee, dimora, donnruada, derglasrach da craisechaib crannremra, -curata coigrindi."! (And they lifted up dense, vast, huge, dark-red, and flaming forests of stout-shafted, martial, five-pointed, fire-edged spears.)

When Arnold mentioned Titanic melancholy as the second characteristic of Celtic literature, he evidently had in mind Macpherson's Ossian, the famous eighteenth-century volume that

attracted the attention of literary London and was, quite correctly, pronounced by Doctor Johnson a forgery. These stories are not translations of Gaelic originals: they are merely founded upon Gaelic tales. Titanic melancholy is too strong a term to apply to the strain of pathos which is constantly sounded in Gaelic literature, and, at its loudest, increases to dignified fatalism. Anyone at all intimate with Irish people must have noticed the strong tinge of fatalism in their natures, which makes many of them happy-go-lucky: the Irish are conscious of their own insignificance when pitted against the great natural forces that move the world. However, the Milesian fatalist can hardly be described as plunged in Titanic melancholy; realizing that what must be will be, he usually has merely a strain of sadness which gives his writing wistfulness rather than melancholy. Wistfulness causes the Oisin of Gaelic story to regret the days of his youth and the lost world of Fairy-

26]

land; wistfulness pervades the passage describing Cuchulain leaving Leborcham and the "thrice fifty queens" in order to fight his last fight.'

And Leborcham met him and besought him not to leave them; and the thrice fifty queens who were in Emain Macha and who loved him cried to him with a great cry. But he turned his chariot to the right, and they gave a scream of wailing and lamentation, and smote their hands, for they knew that he would not come to them again.

"Magic," says Arnold, defining the most noteworthy feature of Celtic writing, "is just the word for it, — the magic of nature; not merely the beauty of nature, — that the Greeks and Latins had; not merely an honest smack of the soil, a faithful realism — that the Germans had; but the intimate life of nature, her weird power and her fairy charm." In the last words, the critic has suggested a power of the Celt that includes "natural magic" and more besides — the ability to use figurative language in simile and metaphor more striking than would occur to men of almost any other race, a strange imaginative power that at times is so strong as to become grotesque. This quality is not only apparent in early Irish, but has been part of the equipment of many later Irish writers; it was Swift who conceived the idea of Gulliver's Travels, possibly modelling it on an early Irish tale, The quality is evident

[27

to-day in much of the mysticism of A. E. and of Yeats, and in the poetry and prose of James Stephens. The charm of nature is in phrases like "white as the snowfall of a single night," "red as the foxglove of the mountain her two cheeks," and the statement that the horses of Cuchulain ran so fast that they overtook the wind. It lends grotesqueness to a passage from the account of Cuchulain's last

fight:

So that the halves of their heads, and skulls, and hands and feet, and their red bones were scattered broadcast throughout the plain of Murthemne, in number like unto sand of sea, and stars of heaven, and dewdrops of May, and flakes of snow, and hailstones, and leaves on forest, and buttercups on Moy Bray, and grass under feet of herds on a day in summer.!

Bearing in mind the distinctive beauties of the vernacular literature of the Celts, it is possible to read with enjoyment born of understanding examples taken from the different periods into which the Gaelic literature of Ireland has been divided according to the development of the language. The first period is that of Old Irish (850-1100); the second, that of Middle Irish (1100-1550); the third, that of Modern Irish (1550 to the present).

Of the earliest period little remains, and this is chiefly of a religious character. From the early Old Irish period dates the Hymn of Saint Patrick, more

28]

accurately called ““The Deer’s Cry” because of the

traditional circumstances of its composition. The

hymn is written in what would now be called “free »”?

verse.

Patrick sang this hymn when the ambuscades were laid against him by King Loeguire [Leary] that he might not go to Tara to sow the faith. Then it seemed to those lying in ambush that he and his monks were wild deer with a fawn, even Benen, following them. And its name is “‘Deer’s Cry.”

I arise to-day

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, Through belief in the threeness,

Through confession of the oneness

Of the Creator of Creation.

I arise to-day

Through the strength of Christ’s birth with His baptism,

Through the strength of His crucifixion with His burial,

Through the strength of His resurrection with His ascension,

Through the strength of His descent for the judgment of Doom.

I arise to-day

Through the strength of the love of Cherubim, In obedience of angels,

In the service of archangels,

In hope of resurrection to meet with reward, In prayers of patriarchs,

In predictions of prophets,

In preachings of apostles,

In faith of confessors,

In innocence of holy virgins,

In deeds of righteous men.

[29

I arise to-day

Through the strength of heaven: Light of sun,

Radiance of moon,

Splendour of fire,

Speed of lightning,

Swiftness of wind,

Depth of sea,

Stability of earth,

Firmness of rock.

I arise to-day

Through God's strength to pilot me: God's might to uphold me,

God's wisdom to guide me,

God's eye to look before me,

God's ear to hear me,

God's word to speak for me,

God's hand to guard me,

God's way to lie before me,

God's shield to protect me,

God's host to save me

From snares of devils,

From temptations of vices,

From everyone who shall wish me ill, Afar and anear,

Alone and in a multitude.

I summon to-day all these powers between me and those evils, Against every cruel merciless power that may oppose my body and soul,

Against incantations of false prophets,

Against black laws of pagandom,

Against false laws of heretics,

Against craft of idolatry,

Against spells of women and smiths and wizards,

Against every knowledge that corrupts man's body and soul.

30]

Christ to shield me to-day

Against poison, against burning,

Against drowning, against wounding,

So that there may come to me abundance of reward.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,

Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ on my right, Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when | arise,

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,

Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise to-day

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, Through belief in the threeness,

Through confession of the oneness

Of the Creator of Creation.5

Here is a fragment of a poem written on the margin of a manuscript of serious import from the monastery of St. Gall:

THE VIKING TERROR

Bitter is the wind to-night,

It tosses the ocean's white hair:

To-night I fear not the fierce warriors of Norway Coursing on the Irish Sea.

The golden age of Irish literature was the middle period (1100-1550), for in the manuscripts of these centuries are preserved what are among the most important documents of medizeval times: two great heroic saga cycles, the Ultonian and the Fenian,

[31

There is a third cycle dealing with the myth history of the successive peoples supposed to have possessed Ireland; but as this is small compared to the others and contains much that is difficult to interpret, it requires little more than brief mention here.

The oldest cycle is that of Ulster, which depicts a civilization of perhaps the first century — at least, conditions in Ireland as they were before the arrival of Saint Patrick. The events described occur chiefly in the north of Ireland, centering about what is now Navan Fort, near Armagh. Here, at Emain Macha, dwelt King Conor with a company of warriors calling themselves the Red Branch, and the stories of the cycle are connected in one way or another with the king or his followers. Chief among these men is Cuchulain, whose exploits in defending Ulster single-handed against an invading host from Connaught are the subject of the most important group of stories, having the general title of "The Cattle Raid of Cooley" (Tain Bo Caalgne). The object of the attempted raid is as trivial as the object of many wars, the possession of a brown bull owned by an Ulsterman and desired by King Ailill and Queen Maeve of Connaught. Cuchulain is obliged to defend Ulster alone because the other warriors of the Red Branch suffer from the effects of a curse which for a stated period afflicts them with bodily weakness. The dramatic succinctness of Irish narrative style is

32]

well shown in the account of one of Cuchulain's combats: THE DEATH OF FRAECH

Then they [the invaders] reached Mag Mucceda. Cuchulain cut an oak before them there, and wrote an ogham on its side. It is this that was therein: that no one should go past till a warrior should leap it [the oak] with one chariot. They pitch their tents there, and come to leap over it in their chariots. There fell thereat thirty horses, and thirty chariots are broken. Belach-n-Ane, that is the name of that place forever.

They are there till next morning; then Fraech is summoned to them. "Help us, O Fraech," said Maeve. "Remove from us the strait that is on us. Go before Cuchulain for us, if perchance you shall fight with him."

He set out early in the morning with nine men, till he reached Ath Fuait. He saw the warrior bathing in the river.

“Wait here,” said Fraech to his retinue, “till I come to the man yonder; not good is the water,” said he.

“Do not come to me,” said Cuchulain. “You will die from it, and I should be sorry to kill you.”

“T shall come indeed,” said Fraech, “that we may meet in the water; and let your play with me be fair.”’

“Settle it as you like,” said Cuchulain.

“The hand of each of us round the other,” said Fraech.

They set to wrestling for a long time on the water, and Fraech was submerged. Cuchulain lifted him up again.

“This time,” said Cuchulain, “will you yield and accept your life?”

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“T will not suffer it,” said Fraech.

Cuchulain put him under it again, until Fraech was killed. He comes to land; his retinue carry his body to the camp. Ath Fraich, that was the name of that ford forever. All the host lamented Fraech. They saw a troop of women in green tunics on the body of Fraech Macldaid; they drew him from them into the mound. Sid Fraich was the name of that mound afterwards.’

Of the stories introductory to the T4in, one, that of Deirdre and the Sons of Usnech, is the most famous in early Gaelic literature; it is comparable to the Greek story of Helen. The Deirdre tale has in recent years been the subject of plays by both Yeats and Synge. One of three sagas known as “The Three Sorrows of Story Telling,” this story tells the romance between Deirdre and Noise, wherein Deirdre, who had been brought up to be the wife of the king, runs off with Noise. The youth is slain treacherously by King Conor, and Deirdre finally commits suicide. Of the two best-known versions of the tale, the older is the more poignant; yet there is much beauty in the later and more elaborate one.

The scenes of the second saga cycle are laid in Leinster and Munster, and the tales may have been modelled on those of the earlier group, for they also deal with a company of warriors, here known as the Fiana, or Fenians, from the name of their leader, Finn MacCool. The Fiana were a kind of militia

34]

maintained by the Irish kings for the defence of the country. Keating, an Irish historian who lived about 1630, is quoted by Doctor Hyde as describing them thus:

The members of the Fenian body lived in the following manner. They were quartered on the people from November Day till May Day, and their duty was to uphold justice and to put down injustice on the part of the kings and lords of Ireland, and also to guard the harbours of the country from the oppression of foreign invaders. After that, from May till November, they lived by hunting and the chase, and by performing the duties demanded of them by the kings of Ireland, such as preventing robberies, exacting fines and tributes, putting down public enemies, and every other kind of evil that might afflict the country In performing these duties they received a certain fixed pay.

Other than Finn, his son Oisin (who often gives his name to the cycle), and Finn’s grandson, Oscar, there are a number of Fenian warriors who perform great deeds: Dermot, Cailte MacRonan, Goll MacMorna, Conan.

Although the Fiana, grown too powerful and presumptuous, were finally broken by King Cairbre in the Battle of Gabra, yet Oisin and Cailte MacRonan are imagined in “The Colloquy

of the Old Men" (Acallam na Senorach) as living on into the time of Saint Patrick, when they explain to the Saint and his clerics the names of various hills and

[35

valleys of south and west Ireland by their association with adventures of the Fiana. This is the longest of the Fenian texts.

The sagas of this cycle show, almost without exception, more careful literary craftsmanship than the earlier tales; in the Fenian material are to be found most of the exquisite descriptions of nature which have given renown to Gaelic. The Fenian cycle is the product of a more advanced civilization than that which produced the Ulster cycle, for the stories of the Fenians contain far more sentiment. For instance, the warriors of the Fiana come much more frequently into contact with the Fairies, who were imagined, not as little people but as men and women of ordinary, or even of heroic, size, living sometimes inside a hill, sometimes over the western ocean, sometimes under a lake. Often the Fiana pursue a deer or other animal and find their quarry change into a beautiful Fairy maiden. In the Fenian tales, moreover, is a strain of lament for the glories of a world that is passing, a contrasting of the hardships of human beings with the joy of Fairies; wistfulness is more marked than in the rugged Cuchulain stories, over which shines the ruddy glow of barbarism. Another reason why the later cycle may appeal to readers more than the earlier is that Finn's ancestry is brought into close connection with King Cormac MacArt, one of the kings of Ireland who is known historically.

36]

Doctor Hyde points out that "all the Fenians were obliged to know the rules of poetry"'; therefore it is not surprising that to this cycle belongs much poetry, most of it attributed to Oisin, who is often described as reciting it in dialogue with Saint Patrick; but some of it is also assigned to Finn and to Cailte. The "natural magic" of the Celt is found in perfection in this verse.

IN PRAISE OF MAY (Ascribed to Fionn MacCumhail)

May-Day! delightful day!

Bright colours play the vale along. Now wakes at morning's slender ray Wild and gay the blackbird's song.

Now comes the bird of dusty hue, The loud cuckoo, the summer-lover; Branchy trees are thick with leaves; The bitter, evil time is over.

Swift horses gather nigh

Where half dry the river goes; Tufted heather clothes the height; Weak and white the bogdown blows.

Corncrake sings from eve to morn, Deep in corn, a strenuous bard! Sings the virgin waterfall,

White and tall, her one sweet word.

Loaded bees with puny power Goodly flower-harvest win; Cattle roam with muddy flanks, Busy ants go out and in.

[47

Through the wild harp of the wood Making music roars the gale — Now it settles without motion,

On the ocean sleeps the sail.

Men grow mighty in the May, Proud and gay the maidens grow; Fair is every wooded height;

Fair and bright the plain below.

A bright shaft has smit the streams, With gold gleams the water-flag; Leaps the fish, and on the hills Ardour thrills the leaping stag.

Loudly carols the lark on high, Small and shy, his tireless lay, Singing in wildest, merriest mood,

Delicate-hued, delightful May.®

There are a number of beautiful miscellaneous stories which do not connect themselves with any cycle; many of these are collected in a book which should be seen by everyone who desires to know something of ancient Irish literature, S. H. O'Grady's Silva Gadelica. Herein, for example, is a story curiously suggestive of Gudliver's Travels, the "Visit of the King of the Leprechauns to Emania."

In the writing of the Modern Irish period (1550 to the present) are many sagas of which early versions have been lost: thus, for instance, in modern Irish alone is there the romance of Dermot and Grania, which is second in importance only to the love story of Deirdre. Like the Deirdre story in theme, the tale

is of Dermot's elopement with Grania, who was to have been the bride of Finn, and of how they are pursued by that angry chieftain. Dermot finally is allowed to retain Grania; but later, Finn, nursing his grievance, accomplishes Dermot's death. The story of Oisin's adventures in Fairyland, whither the maiden Niam carries him, also appears onlyin a poem by Michael Comyn, dated 1750. Moreover, in modern Irish are also many newer versions of older tales; therefore one of the best arguments for the preservation of Gaelic is that stories sometimes handed down merely by oral tradition may be saved.

One feature that cannot fail to impress the thoughtful reader is, how little concern the literature of early Ireland has with other countries: early Irish writers praised the glories of their island, its beauty, the valor of its sons, and gave little attention to outsiders, even though warfare with invaders was constantly going on. In the modern Gaelic period, however, there is a change: the Irish sympathize with the misfortunes of the Stuarts; poets sing the miseries of Ireland held by the enemies of the Stuart House; they apostrophize their country as a woman of many beautiful names, Silk 0' the Kine, Cathleen ni Houlihan, the Little Black Rose. The literature of protest finds more and more expression in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the trials of the present dim the splendors of the past.

The object of the founders of the Irish literary revival was to carry into English the charm of the older Gaelic literature; they felt that in the eighteenseventies and eighties too much attention had been paid to political poetry of protest, which had, moreover, become English rather than Irish in temper. A number of the writers of the eighteen-forties were undoubtedly forerunners of the revival: Thomas Davis, editor of the Nation, a paper published in Dublin, stressed the literary heritage of his country; Sir Samuel Ferguson retold several of the sagas; James Clarence Mangan made English versions of other Gaelic poems. These men, nevertheless, had at their command little scientific knowledge of the ancient language, particularly of Old and Middle Irish; therefore it is not extraordinary that they failed to catch, save now and then, the spirit of Gaelic; they had as a rule only certain tricks of phrase. Ferguson invests his retellings of the old stories with the conventionalities of the midVictorian age; Mangan, who could write the beautiful "My Dark Rosaleen," descended to such lines as:

O Woman of Three Cows, agra! don't let your tongue thus rattle!

Oh, don’t be saucy, don’t be stiff, because you may have cattle.

I have seen—and, here’s my hand to you, I only say what’s

true — A many a one with twice your stock not half so proud as you.?®

40]

Here is a modern translation, by Miss Hull, of “Roisin Dubh,” the poem upon which Mangan founded his “Dark Rosaleen.” The phrase “Ros geal dubh” means “Fair-dark rose.”’

ROISIN DUBH

There ’s black grief on the plains, and a mist on the hills; There is fury on the mountains, and that is no wonder; I would empty the wild ocean with the shell of an egg, If I could be at peace with thee, my Ros geal dubh.

Long is the course I travelled from yesterday to to-day,

Without, on the edge of the hill, lightly bounding, as I know,

I leapt Loch Erne to find her, though wide was the flood,

With no light of the sun to guide my path, but the Ros geal dubh.

If thou shouldst go to the Aonach to sell thy kine and stock,

If you go, see that you stay not out in the darkness of the night;

Put bolts upon your doors, and a heavy reliable lock,

Or, in faith, the priest will be down on you, on my Ros geal

dubh!

O little Rose, sorrow not, be not lamenting now,

There is pardon from the Pope for thee, sent straight from Rome,

The friars are coming overseas, across the heaving waves,

And Spanish wine will then be thine, my Ros geal dubh.

There is true love in my heart for thee for the passing of a year,

Love tormenting, love lamenting, heavy love that wearies me,

Love that left me without health, without a path, gone all astray,

And forever, ever, I did not get my Ros geal dubh!

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I would walk Munster with thee and the winding ways of the hills,

In hope I would get your secret and a share of your love;

O fragrant Branch, I have known it, that thou hast love for me,

The flower-blossom of wise-women is my Ros geal dubh. .

The sea will be red floods, and the skies like blood,

Blood-red in war the world will show on the ridges of the hills;

The mountain glens through Erinn and the brown bogs will be quaking

Before the day she sinks in death, my Ros geal dubh! 4

In “The Wanderings of Oisin,’ founded on a dialogue between Oisin and Saint Patrick, Mr. Yeats caught the dignity, the splendor of imagination, and the color of the Gaelic. He used stories from the Gaelic past as the basis of plays, “On Baile’s Stranc, | lhe Kings Threshold “Deirdre.” Synge, in his last play, wrote of “Deirdre of the Sorrows’; although he has made the dialogue somewhat too colloquial, yet as a rule he writes English that closely approaches Irish in construction, melody, and imagery.

We’ll be going now, I’m telling you, and the time you'll be feeling the cold and the frost, and the great rain and the sun again, and the south wind blowing in the glens, you'll not be sitting up on a wet ditch, the way you’re after sitting in the place, making yourself old with looking on each day, and it passing you by.!

Mr. George William Russell (A. E.) poet, painter, and one of the guiding spirits of the codperative

42]

movement in Ireland, is probably the most distinguished of living Irishmen. A mystic by nature, it is natural to find him writing poetry on a mystic theme from Gaelic literature:

Sinend, daughter of Lodan Lucharglan, son of Ler, out of the Land of Promise, went to Connla’s Well, which is under sea, to behold it. That is a well at which are the hazels of wisdom and inspirations, that is, the hazels of the science of poetry, and in the same hour their fruit and their blossom and their foliage break forth, and then fall upon the well in the same shower, which raises upon the water a royal surge of purple.!

CONNLA’S WELL

A cabin on the mountain-side hid in a grassy nook,

With door and window open wide, where friendly stars may look,

The rabbit shy can patter in, the winds may enter free

Who throng around the mountain throne in living ecstacy.

And when the sun sets dimmed in eve, and purple fills the air,

I think the sacred hazel-tree is dropping berries there,

From starry fruitage waved aloft where Connla’s well o’erflows;

For, sure, the immortal waters run through every wind that blows.

I think, when Night towers up aloft and shakes the trembling dew,

How every high and lonely thought that thrills my spirit through

Is but a shining berry dropped down through the purple air,

And from the magic tree of life the fruit falls everywhere.¥

[43

Among present-day interpreters of the Irish spirit none deserves more distinction than Francis Ledwidge, killed in France in 1917. He has left enough poetry to prove him a lineal descendant of the na

ture ia of the Gaelic past.

THOUGHTS AT THE TRYSTING STILE

Come, May, and hang a white flag on each thorn, Make truce with earth and heaven; the April child Now hides her sulky face deep in the morn Of your new flowers by the water wild, And in

the ripples of the rising grass, And rushes bent to let the south wind pass On with her tumult of swift nomad wings, And broken domes of downy dandelion. Only in spasms now the blackbird sings, The hour is all a-dream. Nets of woodbine Throw woven shadows over dreaming flowers, And dreaming, a bee-luring lily bends Its tender bell where blue dyke-water cowers Thro' briars, and folded ferns, and gripping ends Of wild convolvulus. The lark's skyway

Is desolate.

I watch an apple-spray Beckon across a wall as if it knew I wait the calling of the orchard maid.

Inly I feel that she will come in blue,

With yellow on her hair, and two curls strayed Out of her comb's loose stocks, and I shall steal Behind and lay my hands upon her eyes, "Look not, but be my Psyche!"

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And her peal Of laughter will ring far, and as she tries For freedom I will call her names of flowers That climb up walls; then thro' the twilight hours We'll talk about the love of ancient queens, And kisses like wasp-honey, false and sweet, And how we are entangled in love's snares Like wind-looped flowers.}5

James Stephens, author of The Crock of Gold, has rendered into English verse some of the best-known poems of the Modern Irish period in "Reincarnations," and with "Irish Fairy Tales" he has caught as no one hitherto the characteristic charm of the Gaelic in a number of stories drawn chiefly from the Fenian cycle.

That the leading writers of contemporary Ireland should be turning again to the ancient Gaelic for inspiration is of good omen; they will find here not only much that can be wrought into enduring literature, but a field where Irishmen may meet without distinction of faith or of politics; the Gaelic past is the heritage of all Irishmen.

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THE EARLY IRISH FAIRIES AND FAIRYLAND

| (Slane is the country of Fairies. The reason for this is not mere popular superstition, but because in the Gaelic literature that is the inheritance of the Irish race Fairies and Fairyland play an important part. The farmer who sits beside his turf fire telling stories of the little people inherits his imaginings from his ancestors, although his words are usually but a pale reflection of the splendors of the past. In Ireland the Fairies have never been forgotten: Brian Merriman, the last Gaelic poet of prominence, speaks of them as the treasure of his country in time of trouble, and Patrick MacGill, the Donegal poet, expressed the same idea when, amid the terrors of the battlefield, he wrote:

If we forget the Fairies, And tread upon their rings, God will perchance forget us, And think of other things.

When we forget you, Fairies, Who guard our spirits' light:

God will forget the morrow, And Day forget the Night.t

46]

Fully to understand the Irish temperament, therefore, it is necessary to know Ireland's Fairy lore. Since the Fairies are mentioned first and most frequently in the literature written in the Irish language of centuries ago, we must turn for information to the great mass of poems and stories from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Through these old texts, generally printed in

learned periodicals only, we gain an idea of the early Irish conception of Fairies — where, supposedly, the Fairies came from, what were their attributes, and how they differed from human beings.

To the modern reader, the words “Irish Fairy” undoubtedly call to mind a description such as that given by a writer in the Atlantic Monthly:

It was a little thing, sure, no bigger than a thimble. It had a red cap on it and two golden shoes with curly toes. It had on a coat, too, as green as an apple, and its little breeks were as blue as Granny’s eyes.?

To an Irishman of the thirteenth century the little man would not seem a Fairy at all, unless Fairy kinship were suggested by the color of the coat.

The Fairies of ancient Ireland belonged to a race known as Tuatha De Danaan, People of the God whose Mother was Dana, and they were of the size of mortals, or even larger. The Tuatha De Danaan came to Ireland, legend says, from

[47

the northern isles of the world, where they had been learning lore and magic and druidism and wizardry and cunning until they surpassed the sages of the arts of heathendom.?;

They first conquered the people who inhabited Erin, and later were victorious over a mighty race of pirates. The struggle between the De Danaans and the pirates has been interpreted by modern commentators as symbolizing the conflict ‘between the gods of light and those of darkness, for the Tuatha De Danaan, in spite of being treated by early writers as if they were human beings, show traces of divine power; indeed, the gods of the ancient Irish seem to be confused with these invaders from the north. When the De Danaans landed, they burned their ships, “‘so that from this,” the story says, “it was thought they had come in clouds of mist.” They brought with them from their former home four treasures of magic virtue. The first of these was the Stone of Fal, which “was wont to roar under every king who was taking the kingship in Ireland.” ‘This stone is said to have been taken to Scotland, whence, as the Stone of Scone, it was carried to England by Edward I, and now forms the seat of the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey. The other De Danaan treasures were a spear that never lost a battle, an irresistible sword, and the Dagda’s Cauldron, from which no company ever went unthankful. The Dagda himself was more than

48]

human; he had for his cauldron a ladle large enough to hold two people, and he carried a club that required eight men for its lifting. Lugh, another of the De Danaan champions, also possessed attributes of a god; he was evidently an Irish counterpart of Apollo, for he had surpassing skill in all the arts and sciences: he was cup-bearer, leech, harper, poet, and historian. With the De Danaans were associated in the Gaelic tales the god of the sea, Manannan MacLir (who has given his name to the Isle of Man) and the Morrigu, the war goddess. Evidently the Tuatha De Danaan were a border race, gods who had not quite become men.

As the De Danaans overthrew the people they found in possession of Ireland, so were they overcome in turn by the Milesians, a mythical race said to be the ancestors of modern Irishmen. It is fitting that the stately De Danaans should have been unwilling to settle in part of the island only and to remain subordinate to their conquerors; they retired into the green hills, whence they came often to mingle in the daily life of the Irish. From the hills, or barrows, where they were supposed to dwell, the De Danaans acquired a new name, People of the Fairy Mound, or des Side (Ace Shithe, or Shee); a name now shortened, through a change wherein people come to be

called after their dwelling-place, to the familiar word Shee. As clouds are shot through with lightning, so is early Irish literature with accounts

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[49

of the invaders who became the Fairy folk: there are descriptions of their appearance, of the splendor of their Fairyland, and of their deeds. Influenced by the growth of practical knowledge and the advance of science, Irishmen, like other people, have lost much of their sense of wonder; but the Fairies of their ancient tales were too real to be entirely forgotten; they have dwindled to the little people; the superhuman champion has become the little man with the green coat; and the journeying of the Fairy folk on a warlike adventure is now the passing of a gust of wind down a lonely road.

Since the Fairies had some of the magic powers of gods, they were imagined also as having a godlike appearance, the fair brightness usually associated with divinities. They had the yellow hair and blue © eyes admired by the ancient Irish, and they usually dressed with elegance; part of their costume was always green, color of rebirth, symbol of hope and of immortality. Green was so closely identified with the Tuatha De Danaan that early writers frequently neglected to mention directly that a man or woman was of the Fairy folk; they said merely that he or she was dressed in green.

The Fairies came often to take part in the affairs of mankind, and the ancient writers describe them as dressed in the costume worn in primitive Ireland: men appear in the unpleated kilt, with a short cloak thrown over their shoulders, and wearing sandals;

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women have smocks or tunics, and, generally, mantles reaching to their ankles. That the Irish were fond of bright colors and precious metals is shown by this description of a man of the Fairy folk, a fer side:

Green, long, and flowing was the cloak that was about him; his shirt was embroidered with embroidery of red gold, and a great brooch of gold in his cloak reached to his shoulder on either side. Upon the back of that man was a silver shield with a golden rim; the handle of the shield was silver, and a golden boss was in the midst of the shield: he held in his hand a five-pointed spear with rings of gold about it from the haft to the head. The hair that was above his forehead was yellow and fair; and upon his brow was a circlet of gold, which confined the hair so that it fell not about his face.‘

The following portrayal of the maiden, Etain, which is the classic description of a Fairy woman, contains elements that are later conventionalized, but is nowhere else repeated with such wealth of detail. The Irish sympathy with nature makes the author compare Etain’s complexion to flowers and the sea; love of brilliant color is revealed in the red mantle; and the green smock fixes the maiden’s Fairy heritage. She is the heroine of one of the most beautiful of Gaelic stories:

And she had a very bright comb of silver ornamented with gold, she bathing in a silver vessel, and four birds of gold thereupon, and as bright as a little gem, a carbuncle, the rim of that vessel. A waving red mantle

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about her, a fair cloak with a cord of silver and a golden brooch in that mantle over her breast. A long hooded smock about her; this hard, smooth, of green silk, with gold threads and marvellous clasps on it, of gold and silver upon her breasts in that smock; namely, so that to men the shining of the gold in that green silk was apparent in the sun. Then her hair was golden yellow

on her head and a braid with four strands in each plait and upon each lock a globe of gold. Then that maiden was letting down her hair to bathe, and her two hands out through the armholes of her smock; and was as white as the snowfall of one night each of her two hands, and were as red as the foxglove of the mountain her two cheeks. The teeth in her head shone like pearl. Each of her two eyes was as blue as the hyacinth. She had red slender lips. Very high, smooth, and white, her two shoulders. Her lower arms soft, smooth, and white; her fingers long, very white; her fair nails pinkish . . . as white as snow or the foam of a wave was her side, slender, long, silken. Her feet slender, white as a wave. Even were her two eyes, harmoniously fair; her two eyebrows the shining blue-black of the beetle about her eyes. She is then a maiden more perfect and fairer than any the eyes of men have seen before, and was like to them as it were from the Fairies she was.®

How different is this medizeval conception of the ban shee, Fairy woman, from the modern! The banshee of to-day is the invisible woman whose wailing cry is heard as an omen of death. The difference between ancient and modern Irish Fairies is epitomized by the change of meaning in the words dan shee.

52]

In common with other Fairies, those of Ireland had the power of rendering themselves invisible; this they usually did with a device appropriate for dwellers in the rainiest of countries — by enveloping themselves in mist. They also possessed the familiar Fairy gift of transformation: the hero, Lugh, at one time assumed the form of a bird; a Fairy girl changed herself into a fawn to lead the warrior, Finn, to her barrow; the war goddess generally became a crow to fly or perch above the battlefield. Once she threatened by her transformations to bring confusion upon Cuchulain when he should be sore pressed: “I will be an eel, and I will draw a noose about thy feet. . . . I will in truth be a grey wolf against thee.” °

The most beautiful story of this type tells of Angus Og, who seems to have been an Irish god of youth and love. Enamored of a maiden, Caer, he goes to seek her at her father’s palace, where he is told that she is on Loch Bel Draccon under enchantment in the form of a swan:

“She will be in the shape of a bird next summer at Loch Bel Draccon, and beautiful birds will be with her, and there will be 150 swans around her, and I have a feast with them.”

Mac Og went to Loch Bel Draccon, when he saw the 150 white birds at the loch with their silvery chains and golden caps around their heads. Angus was in human shape at the border of the loch. He called the maiden to him. “Come to speak to me, O Caer!”

[53

“Who calls me?” said Caer.

“Angus calls thee.”

“T will come,” she said.

He put his two hands on her. . . . They went from there in the shape of two birds until they were at the Brugh of the Mic ind Oic, and they made a concert so that the people fell asleep for three days and three nights.’

One of these stories of shape-transference combines an element of history with pure imagination, in that its hero is the youth who later became the High King of Ireland known as Niall of the Nine Hostages. During the reign of Niall, the Irish made the foray upon the west coast of Britain in which they carried off the boy who was later to become the great apostle, Saint Patrick. Perhaps the source of Chaucer’s Wife of Bath's Tale is to be found in this Gaelic text, for the changing of an ugly to a beautiful woman through the love of a young man is also familiar in English literature. The symbolism of the story points to conscious literary effort.

Niall and his four brothers are seeking water and come upon a hag guarding a well.

This was the hag: every joint and limb of her, from. the top of her head to the earth, was as black as coal. Like the tail of a wild horse was the grey bristly mane that came through the upper part of her head crown. . . . Dark smoky eyes she had, a nose crooked and hollow. Loathsome, in sooth, was the hag's appearance.

54]

"Art thou guarding the well?" asks the lad [Fergus].

"Dost thou permit me to take away some of the water?" says the lad.

"T will permit," she answers, "provided there come from thee one kiss on my cheek."

"Nay," says he.

[The four brothers go in turn to the hag and refuse to kiss her. Niall follows them.]

"Water to me, O woman," says Niall.

"T will give it," she answers, "but give me a kiss."

He gives her a kiss. But then, when he looked at her, there was not in the world a damsel whose gait or appearance was more lovable than hers. Like the end of snow in trenches was every bit of her from head to sole. Plump and queenly forearms she had, fingers long and lengthy, calves straight and beautifully colored. Two blunt shoes of white bronze between her little soft white feet and the ground. A costly full purple mantle she wore, with a brooch of bright silver in the clothing of the mantle. Shining pearly teeth she had, an eye large and queenly, and lips red as rowan-berries.

"That is many-shaped, O lady," says the boy.

"True," quoth she.

"Who art thou?"

"T am the Sovranty," she answered; and then she said:

"O King of Tara, I am the Sovranty: I will tell thee its great goodness," (etc.)®

Although Irishmen of the past loved fighting and

were outdoor men, like their descendants to-day,

[55

they cherished things of the spirit. It is only natural that what they admired should be reflected in the ideal beings of their imagination, the Fairies. Music was a part of every Irish gathering; so that it is not surprising to find music in its perfection an accomplishment of the Fairy folk; the music of the Shee, indeed, has become proverbial. Strains of melody frequently foreshadowed the appearance of the Fairies, even before they themselves were visible. A Fairy also frequently carried in his hand a branch with blossoms from one of the magic trees of Fairyland; when the branch was shaken, the blossoms sounded wonderful harmonies. To King Cormac there came once a man of the Tuatha De Danaan bearing —

A branch of silver with three golden apples on his shoulder. Delight and amusement enough it was to listen to the music made by the branch, for men sore wounded . . . or folk in sickness, would fall asleep at the melody which was made when that branch was shaken.

The man of the Shee gave the musical branch to Cormac. Later, when the king's son was taken from the palace by Fairy means, —

Weeping and sorrow ceased not after the boy, and on that night no one therein (the palace) ate and slept, and they were in grief and in exceeding gloom. But Cormac shook the branch at them, and they parted from their sorrow."

56]

The most complete revelation of the honor which the early Irish accorded to music is in a passage from a comparatively late story of the heroic days, one which has been worked over by a Christian hand. Incidentally, this brief picture illustrates the belief that the musician was entitled as much as anyone else to be rewarded for his services. Cascorach, the son of a De Danaan minstrel, plays the timpan, or harp, before Saint Patrick.

He took his timpan, tuned it, and on it played a volume of melody the equal of which for sweetness (saving only the dominical canon's harmony and laudation of Heaven's king and earth's) the clergy had never heard. Upon them fell a fit of shumber, and, when he had made an end of his minstrelsy, of Patrick he requested its recompense. The Saint said: "What guerdon seekest thou, my soul?"

"Heaven for myself," he answered, "which is the best reward that is; good luck also to go with my art and with them that shall exercise my art after me." Patrick said: "To thyself be Heaven, and be that art of thine one of the three for the sake of which in Ireland one shall to the latest time procure his own advancement; how great soever be the grudging surliness which shall greet a man of thy science, let him but perform minstrelsy, let him but recite tales, and such penuriousness shall vanish before him, . . . and to them that profess thine art be all happiness, only so as in their function they show not slothfulness."

Then to its case Cascorach restored his implement of music.!!

[57

The occupations of the Fairies were those of chief interest to the people themselves — war and the chase. The Fairies were thus easily imagined as coming from their own country to play a part in mortal affairs. Announced by beautiful music, and enveloped in mist, the Shee not only visited Ireland but often took mortals back with them to help wage the wars or to enjoy the delights of Fairyland, as the heroes Oisin and Cuchulain were taken by the Fairy Maidens Niam and Fand. In what kind of country did these warriors find themselves?

The Fairies took men to a happy Other World, which was a glorified replica of this. Happiness consisted in an abundance of what brought pleasure to men — food, drink, fighting, ease. Thus the Irish paradise resembles the paradise of various pagan peoples, such as the Norse, yet it has a character of its own whereby it gains peculiar distinction and beauty. In the Irish Elysium women are present; they are recognized as of no less importance than in earthly life. Early Irish writers give the romantic a place in their stories, whether these be of contemporary or of Fairy life; they have more complete vision than most writers of the past. Itis significant that the two enduring epics of ancient Greece centre about women — Helen and Penelope; Helen is parallelled in Gaelic literature by Deirdre.

Irish intimacy with nature also vivifies the descriptions of Fairyland, and they are further en-

58]

hanced by the love of splendor. The author of The Voyage of Bran catches the charm of his own Ireland when he paints the Fairy kingdom in four unforgettable lines:

A beauty of a wondrous land,

Whose aspects are lovely,

Whose view is a far country, Incomparable is its haze."

The Gaelic names for the other world indicate its distinctive beauties as imagination understood them: Mag Mel (Plain of Happiness), Tir n-an-Og (Land of Youth), Tir Tairngire (Land of Promise), Mag Findargat (Plain of White Silver), Mag Argatmel (Plain of Silver Clouds), Tir Ban Suthain (Land of Ever-Living Women).

A characteristic of ancient Irish writing is elaborate detail, which nowhere finds better expression than in the account of Fairyland brought back to Cuchulain by his charioteer, Laeg. Cuchulain, requested by a De Danaan king to come to his aid in one of the Fairy wars, sends Laeg to reconnoitre. He proves an admirable emissary, for he overlooks few points of interest:

I came with joyous sprightly steps,

— Wondrous the place, though its fame was known, —

Till I reached the cairn, where 'mid scores of bands, I found Labra of the flowing hair.

I found him seated at the cairn Ringed round by thousands of weaponed men, Yellow the hair on him, beauteous its hue,

A ball of ruddy gold encircled it,

After a time he recognized me,

In the purple five-folded mantle;

He spake with me: "Wilt thou come with me To the house wherein is Failbe Fand?"

Two kings are in the house,

Failbe Fand and Labra,

Three fifties surround each of them, That the full sum of the one house.

Fifty beds on the right side, With fifty nobles [?] in them, Fifty beds on the left side, With fifty in them also.

Copper are the borders of the beds, White are the pillars overlaid with gold; This the candle in their midst,

A lustrous precious stone.

At the door westward

In the place where sets the sun,

Stand a herd of grey palfreys, dappled their manes, And another herd purple-brown.

There stand at the Eastern door Three ancient trees of purple pure, From them the sweet, everlasting birds Call to the lads of the kingly rath.

At the door of the liss there is a tree

Out of which there sounds sweet harmony,

A tree of silver with the shining of the sun upon it, Its lustrous splendor like to gold.

Three twenties of trees are there,

Their crests swing together but do not clash, From each of those trees three hundred are fed With fruits many-tasted, that have cast their rind.

There is a well in the noble [?] sidh;

There are thrice fifty mantles of various hue, And a clasp of gold, all lustrous,

Holds the corner of each colored cloak.

A vat there is of heady mead Being dispensed to the household; Still it lasts, in unchanged wise, Full to the brim, everlastingly.

There is a maiden in the noble [?] house Surpassing the women of Eire,

She steps forward, with yellow hair, Beautiful, many-gifted she.

Although Laeg carefully describes the interior of a De Danaan palace, he says little of the exterior; but there is an account of the outside of a Fairy dwelling in Cormac's Cup:

Cormac found himself upon a great plain, alone. There was a large fortress in the midst of the plain with a wall of bronze around it. In the fortress was a house of white silver, and it was half thatched with the wings of

white birds. . . . Then he sees in the garth a shining fountain, with five streams flowing out of it and the hosts in turn drinking its water. Nine hazels . . . grow

over the well. The purple hazels drop their nuts into the fountain, and the five salmon which are in the fountain sever them and send their husks floating down the stream. Now the sound of the falling of those streams is more melodious than any music that men sing."

Still another story intensifies the impression that Fairyland is a country wherein was never food-

[61

controller nor prohibition. Conn, a mortal adventurer, found himself in a Fairy house where he

sat down on the bedside of the hostel, and was ministered unto and his feet washed. And he knew not who had washed his feet. Before long he saw a flame arising from the hearth, and the hero was seized by the hand to guide him to the fire. Then food-laden boards of the house with various meats rose up before him, and he knew not who had given them to him. He saw before him a vat excellent and finely wrought of blue crystal, with three golden hoops about it. And Daire Degamra bade Conn go into the vat and bathe, so that he might put his weariness from him. And Conn did so....A fair cloak was thrown over the king and he awoke refreshed.®

Although the Fairies are known as dwellers in Fairy mounds, yet, with an inconsistency common to Fairy lore, the other world is not always described as inside a hill; a hill is often only the entrance to Fairyland, which may lie over the western ocean or even under the waters of a lake. A familiar folk belief is that paradise is in the west, the land of the setting sun, the country of departed spirits. When soldiers in the late war spoke of a comrade as having "gone west," they merely reiterated a very old popular superstition.

Mortals who were taken to the land of immortality were not always able to revisit the world with-

62]

out paying a penalty; sometimes they had to promise that, after their return to earth, they would avoid the performance of specified acts, such as eating a particular food; sometimes they found that Time in Fairyland had passed far more swiftly than by mortal reckoning and that an absence of a year in the other world had been actually the passing of a century. A visit to Tir n-an-Og was, therefore, not to be lightly undertaken; Cuchulain showed due caution in sending his charioteer ahead of him on a journey of inspection.

When, upon their conquest by the Milesians, the Tuatha De Danaan retired to the hills, a few of the more important men secured barrows of their own. Angus Og, the lover of Caer, was among the fortunate, although he obtained his palace on the Boyne, the now famous Brugh na Boine, by a trick rather than because of his own merit. At the time the barrows were distributed, Angus was absent, and so received none; but his father, the Dagda, received two. Apparently resigned to his loss, Angus asked for the loan of the Brugh of the Boyne for a day and anight. At the end of twenty-four hours the Dagda asked the barrow back, only to be told that, since eternity was composed of days and nights, Angus intended to retain the Brugh forever. There is no record of his having been ousted; in fact, the Brugh of Angus is often referred to in Irish literature,

[63

Such are the Fairies of early Ireland and their immortal kingdom. Never did the Irish harp play more beautifully than when sounding the music of the Shee; and in the Fairy legends the modern world may well find inspiration for new, yet immemorial, song.

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IV

THE RE-DAVISATION OF ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE

OLITICAL conditions in the year 1844 were not

unlike those of to-day. The great struggle with Napoleon had not long been over, and a wave of reform was surging through Great Britain and the Continent. In Ireland, Daniel O'Connell had risen as leader of the Roman Catholics, who demanded the repeal of the legislative Union with Great Britain. Thoroughly in sympathy with the Repeal Association was Thomas Davis, whose renewed influence in Irish letters is the subject of an article, "The Drift of Anglo-Irish Literature," by Mr. Ernest Boyd, in the Lrish Commonwealth. The author declares that Irish writing of the present day is resuming the temper of the time of Davis, concerning itself with politics and with the revival of the Irish national consciousness rather than with ideals exclusively literary. Mr. Boyd writes:

To say that Anglo-Irish literature has been untouched by the war is not to describe it as the cloistered preserve of literary exquisites. . . . It has been subjected to influences which have stirred the Irish as profoundly as the belligerent nations of Europe have been stirred by similar manifestations of national self-consciousness. . .

[65

There is "Davisation" with a difference between the Anglo-Irish literature of the Renaissance and the Anglicized literature which preceded it. Having caught its roots firmly in the Gaelic tradition, the new literature is in no danger of being English in ne See the sentiments uttered.1

Although the statement that Anglo-Irish literature has been unaffected by the war may be questioned when we remember such Irish supporters of the Allied cause as Katharine Tynan, Patrick MacGill, Lord Dunsany, there is ample evidence to sustain the statement that Irish literature is being "Davisised." After the Rebellion of 1916 there were published many books and pamphlets dealing with the reorganization of Irish government, while two new periodicals, the Irish Statesman and the Irish Commonwealth, represent the Irish Dominion League and the Sinn Fein party respectively. The Gaelic Churchman attempts to familiarize members of the Church of Ireland (the Irish branch of the Church of England) with the great body of religious literature written in Irish from the time of Saint Patrick. The Irish past and the Irish future have never been more closely allied. Since Irishmen today are looking back to Thomas Davis, it is well to consider his life, his writings, his ideals, and the problems of his period, in order to judge how far these may be an inspiration for the present.

66]

Thomas Davis was born in Mallow, County Cork, October 14, 1814. His father, of Welsh descent, a surgeon in the Royal Artillery, died before the birth of the boy, Thomas. The child's mother came of an Anglo-Irish family. By birth and ancestry, therefore, Thomas Davis did not seem destined to become an Irish Nationalist; he belonged to the Protestant conservative minority, not to the Roman Catholic radical majority. It is of interest that many of the greatest Irish leaders, Wolfe Tone and Parnell among the number, have come from families with similar traditions.

When Davis was only four years old, his mother moved to Dublin. There the boy was prepared for Trinity College, which he entered in 1831. Although Trinity is generally considered more English than Irish, there have graduated from that ancient university notable workers for the national cause, of whom none was more fervent or more high-minded than Thomas Davis. As a college student he was quiet, apparently not to be distinguished above his fellows, and an omnivorous reader. In these formative years he was coming to the determination which was the object of his life, that of making Irishmen proud of their history and traditions, of making his countrymen not imitators but equals of Englishmen. This purpose dominated his writing: he stressed, as occasion required, first one aspect of nationality, then another, but the several parts make one general

[67

scheme. He had a wider vision for Ireland than merely the repeal of the Act of Union; self-government would be useless unless it began by harmonizing the discordant elements of the country to carry on that government, unless it found an Irish spirit ready to foster and develop native institutions. He said that a lower form of nationhood was before the minds of those who saw nothing but a parliament in

Dublin. He wrote his belief that:

The elements of Irish nationality are not only combining — in fact, they are growing confluent in our minds. Such nationality as merits a good man's help and wakens a true man's ambition — such nationality as could stand against internal faction and foreign intrigue — such nationality as would make the Irish hearth happy and the Irish name illustrious, is becoming understood. It must contain and represent the races of Ireland. It must not be Celtic, it must not be Saxon — it must be Irish. The Brehon law and the maxims of Westminster, the cloudy and lightning genius of the Gael, the placid strength of the Sassanach, the marshalling insight of the Norman — a literature which shall exhibit in combination the passions and idioms of all, and which shall equally express our mind in its romantic, its religious, its forensic, and its practical tendencies — finally, a native government, which shall know and rule by the might and right of all; yet yield to the arrogance of none — these are components of such a nationality."

The means Davis took to give his ideal reality was to associate himself with the founding of a weekly

68]

paper, the Nation, to which he became the chief contributor both of prose and of verse. Launched October 15, 1842, under the editorship of Davis's friend, Charles Gavan Duffy, the new journal was instantaneously successful. The reception of the first number is thus described in a letter quoted in Sir Charles Gavan Duffy's Memoir of Thomas Davis:

The "Nation" sold its whole impression of No. 1 before twelve o'clock this morning, and could have sold twice as many more if they had been printed, as they ought to have been; but the fault

was on the right side. The office window was actually broken by the newsmen in their effort to get more.®

By one of those curious turns of fortune only too common in the history of literature, Davis has been far better known as a poet than as a writer of prose. In point of fact, he took to writing verse almost by accident. In his "Memoir," previously referred to, Sir Charles Duffy thus recounts the circumstances of his friend's first poetic venture.

Ballads and songs founded on incidents of Irish history had been a specialty in the Belfast journal which I edited, and I consulted Davis and Dillon on continuing them in the Nation. Neither of them had ever published a line of verse, but they were willing to make the experiment. . . . It was in the sixth number that Davis suddenly put forth his strength. The night before publication he brought me the "Lament of Owen Roe O'Neill," a ballad of singular originality and power... .

[69

The enthusiastic reception of this ballad by friends whose judgement he trusted was like a revelation to him. He came to understand that he possessed a faculty till then unsuspected.'

Davis's success with metre has been unfortunate for his subsequent literary reputation. Many of his verses, reprinted in a collection, The Spirit of the Nation, attained a great vogue. When Davis wrote in verse, the form almost obliged him to take a decided point of view; he was unable to qualify his position, as he has done in almost all his essays. One who read Davis's verse alone would imagine him just as extreme in his views as the most radical Irishman of the present time. An examination of his prose would, of course, tend to alter such an opinion.

In spite of the honor accorded by his contemporaries to Davis as a ballad-writer, his work will not bear the test of criticism; he was an able versifier rather than a true poet. Small wonder that Mr. Yeats and the poets of the early days of the Irish literary revival paid Davis scant attention, since their ideals were primarily literary.

Thomas Davis was, before all else, a patriot; he wished to weld his countrymen together, to increase in them a national pride that should be tolerant, not bigoted. In the three years that followed the founding of the Nation Davis contributed to it not only political articles but papers on a great variety of

70]

Irish subjects: Irish Antiquities, Our National Language, Ballad Poetry of Ireland, Habits and Character of the Peasantry. The selections from Davis's work which form a volume in Every Irishman's Library consist of ten articles on politics as against thirty-one dealing with history, literature, and other subjects. This is another indication that Davis's purpose was constructive and not destructive; he was concerned more with the Irish people as they lived their own lives than with the relations between Ireland and England.

Since the growth of Sinn Fein, there has been a tendency, particularly noticeable among the Irish in the United States, to assume that anything English is necessarily bad and anything Irish necessarily good. This form of national egotism is entirely contrary to the spirit of Thomas Davis. He was eager to point out to his countrymen their faults. He wrote, "'there is much in Ireland. . . that makes her superior to slavery, and much that renders her inferior to freedom."' In a plea for the preservation of the historical remains of ancient Irish civilization, he closes his essay with the sharp rebuke: "We talk much of Old Ireland, and plunder and ruin all that remains of it — we neglect its language, fiddle with its ruins, and spoil its monuments." He is resolutely opposed to the mob spirit. "We want law and order — we are seriously injured by every scene or act of violence, no matter how transient," he

[71

writes in “Scolding Mobs’”’; while in “Munster Outrages” he begs the people to “‘put down these assassins as they would and could were the weapons of the murderers aimed at their own children.” ®

The toleration that led him to acknowledge the imperfections of those in whose behalf he wrote is what makes Davis more than a local figure; it is what won, and still wins, for him the attention of fair-minded men whatever their racial origin, and gives his writing an appeal to-day. Tolerance and sincerity were the secrets of his power. That authors in Ireland again look to him for inspiration is encouraging. Since, as Mr. Boyd has pointed out, Anglo-Irish writing has “caught its roots firmly in the Gaelic tradition,” and since the poets of the last thirty years have raised the standard of Irish accomplishment, there is little danger that the modern followers of Davis will suffer as he did from a lack of scholarly information in regard to Gaelic and from living at a period when almost anything that rhymed was saluted as poetry. It is greatly to be hoped that Irishmen to-day will read him as a whole, that they may catch the true spirit of one who labored with toleration and with love to heal the dissensions of his countrymen by educating them in nationality.

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Vv YEATS AND HIS VISION 4) Pesuers years ago hardly an Irish author whose

work is distinctively national was known outside of Ireland; to-day books by such Irishmen are read in widely scattered parts of the world; Irish plays are acted not only in Dublin, but in London, Melbourne, and Chicago; and every year Irish lecturers carry abroad the message of modern Ireland. This change is attributable chiefly to the work and influence of Mr. William Butler Yeats.

Through his friendship with an old Irish patriot of Fenian days, — John O’Leary, — later celebrated in the poem, “September, 1913,” —

Romantic Ireland’s dead and gone, It’s with O’Leary in the grave, —?

Mr. Yeats became fired with the determination to create for Ireland a national literature that should differ from the markedly political writing in vogue in his youth; instead of bristling with rhetorical abuse or martial ardor, his own verse should retell the ancient stories of his country, keeping the vividness of Irish imagination, the color and magic of Gaelic style. Irish philological study was in its infancy; but despite his finding fault later with the

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bad translations he had to use, the young poet did not attempt to learn the old Irish language. Fortunately, however, this was the period of the publication of Standish James O’Grady’s histories of ancient Ireland, in which was gathered much of the old saga material, wherein, though Mr. O’Grady had given the traditional tales a coherence and definiteness scarcely justified by modern scholarship, he had caught the splendor of the Gaelic originals.

Since the reading public was clamorous for the pageantry of past times, the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a fitting period for the inauguration of a “Celtic movement.” Therefore, when Mr. Yeats published The Wanderings of Oisin, in 1889, he found an audience ready to be charmed by new poetic imagery, a renaissance of an heroic age; “horsemen with their floating hair,” “bowls of barley, honey and wine,” “feet of maidens dancing in tune,” and the heroes, Caolte, Conan, and Finn. It is small wonder that other Irish writers followed Mr. Yeats’s example, and that poems referring to the Celtic gods and warriors became increasingly popular. In spite of the fact that since then Mr. Yeats has spoken slightingly of his Wanderings of Oisin, it remains one of the most notable retellings of early Irish stories.

But Mr. Yeats was not content merely to write about Ireland; he wished to create a school whose productions should equal in craftsmanship the work

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74]

of the best writers of English. The men and women who had been contributing to the Irish Nation had paid more attention to the sentiment of their verses than to technique; the new poet wished Irish writers of the future to be preéminently artists. He set forth his artistic creed in a number of prose essays, from which these passages illustrate his point of view at this time:

. a new fountain of legends, and, as I think, a more abundant fountain than any in Europe, is being opened, the great fountain of Gaelic legends. . . . "The Celtic movement," as I understand it, is principally the opening of this fountain, and none can measure of how great importance it may be to coming times.?

Our legends are always associated with places. . Our Irish-romantic movement . . . should make Ireland, as Ireland and all other lands were in ancient times, a holy land to her own people.

I believe that the renewal of belief . . . will more and more liberate the arts from "their age" and from life, leave them more and more free to lose themselves in beauty, and to busy themselves, like all the great poetry of the past, and like religion of all times, with "'old fates, myths, dreams, the accumulated beauty of the age." I believe that all men will more and more reject the opinion that poetry is "a criticism of life" and be more and more convinced that it is the revelation of a hidden life.'

If somebody could make a style which would not be an English style and yet would be musical and full of color, many others would catch fire from him, and we

[75

should have a really great school of ballad poetry in Ireland. If these poets, who have never ceased to fill the newspapers and the ballad books with their verses, had a good tradition, they would write beautifully and move everybody as they moved me. .. . If they had something else to write about besides political opinions, if more of them would write about the beliefs of the people, like Allingham,)or about old legends, like Ferguson, they would find it easier to find a style. . . . With a deliberateness that still surprises me, for in my heart of hearts I have never been quite certain that one should be more than an artist, that even patriotism is more than an impure desire in an artist, I set to work to find a style and things to write about that the ballad writers might be better. |

Mr. Yeats's own early prose shows, to be sure, a vagueness of arrangement in the whole composition, but a command of melodious sentence structure that is to be expected of a poet. Perhaps his most charming volume in prose is Reveries Over Childhood and Youth, rambling reminiscences peculiarly suited to his picturesque, discursive style.

Nor did he in this period neglect prose fiction. Under the pseudonym "Ganconaugh," he published, soon after The Wanderings of Oisin, a short novel, Fohn Sherman. This shows immaturity and a stiffness due, perhaps, both to the conventions of the period and to the fact that the form was unfamiliar; but the book contains writing of promise, patticularly in the descriptions of that west of Ireland town

76]

for which the author drew upon memories of visits to his grandparents in Sligo. The novel is thoroughly in accord with Mr. Yeats's main purpose, for it tells of a dreamy young Irishman who leaves his native land that he may begin a business career in London; but the call of his

own country is too strong, and he eventually returns to the quiet of western Ireland and to a young girl, a childhood friend, whom he has gradually grown to love. Since the short story dealing with medizval times was also in vogue, Mr. Yeats wrote concerning medizval Ireland a series of stories, of which the best are the group centring about a wandering poet, Red Hanrahan.

Mr. Yeats has always been interested in magic, alchemy, spiritualism; he makes deliberate use of the supernatural, as when he introduces occult atmosphere in ‘‘The Secret Rose,” and makes Cleena, a Fairy maiden of early Ireland, an important character of one of Red Hanrahan’s tales. Also, during his earlier years, Mr. Yeats published most of the lyric poetry that has given him his greatest fame. Among these poems are, “Down by the Sally Gardens,” “The Ballad of Father O’Hart,” “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” “When You Are Old,” and others scarcely less familiar. Despite the poet’s thorough sympathy with the spirit of his time, he was the adventurous artist, ready to advance the boundaries of song. At the end of the century, his ““Wind Among the Reeds” firmly established his position as a lead-

[77

ing poet. The verse of the nineties had been nothing if not regular in rhythm; the verse of “The Wind Among the Reeds” is-noteworthy for pleasing irregularities that charmed a public already wearying of the monotony of conventional rhythms.

HE WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

Had I the heavens’ embroidered cloths, Enwrought with golden and silver light,

The blue and the dim and the dark cloths

Of night and light and the half light,

I would spread the cloths under your feet:

But I, being poor, have only my dreams;

I have spread my dreams under your feet; Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.5

With the dawn of a new century, Mr. Yeats concentrated his attention upon the drama. In his “Speaking to the Psaltery” he had already announced his intention of writing his longer poems for the stage; he had a keen desire to hear beautiful verses well spoken.

With the help of others, Lady Gregory in particular, he secured the Abbey Theatre, in Dublin, for the production of Irish plays by Irish playwrights, and in the decade from 1902 to 1912 he gave his time to the development of this theatre and its company. He had previously written a poetic drama, “The Countess Cathleen,” produced in Dublin in 1899, and “The Land of Heart’s Desire,” produced earlier in London. He followed these with “The Shadowy

78 [Waters,” ‘On Baile’s Strand,” “The King’s Thresh-

old,” and “Deirdre,” written in verse, and with the prose plays, “Cathleen ni Houlihan,” “The Hour Glass,” and ‘The Unicorn from the Stars.”” Of the plays in verse, all contain poetry of great beauty, but there is a lack of differentiation of character and of arrangement effective for the theatre; in the second volume of his Poetical Works their author has aptly named them “‘ Dramatic Poems.”

Theodore Watts-Dunton, in Poetry and the Renascence of Wonder, speaks of the egoistic and the dramatic imaginations. The imagination of Mr. Yeats is of the former type; he is concerned with ideas rather than with pure illustrative action; his most successful acting play is, therefore, “Cathleen ni Houlihan,” wherein he reveals the attitude toward Ireland of the typical intense

patriot; here the author is less individualistic than is his wont and more at one with the communal spirit.

During this preoccupation with the drama, Mr. Yeats discovered John M. Synge in Paris, and persuaded him to return to Ireland, where he gained inspiration for his vivid plays, of contemporary life among the Irish peasantry, which were soon added to the repertory of the Abbey Players. The encouragement given Synge by the older poet is proof not only of Mr. Yeats's artistic perspicacity but of his generous attitude toward a fellow author. The essays written about Synge are among Mr. Yeats's

[79

most interesting writings, not only in themselves but because they reveal his changing point of view, his increasing concern with contemporary men and women. "Discoveries," written in 1906, expresses a temper different from that of the poet who, in 1897, spoke of the early Irish legends as destined to "give the opening century its most memorable symbols." As always, Mr. Yeats was in accord not merely with the temper but with the more advanced minds of his time. The new tendency was to bring poetry and drama back to the interpretation of everyday life, and the poet was thoroughly conscious of the set of the current.

In The Green Helmet and Other Poems, Responsibilities, and The Wild Swans at Coole, there is a marked change of method; the magic of the Celtic world is replaced by the reality of this. The newer lyrics show not only a greater realism than do the earlier poems, but also increasing freedom of rhythm which, in the last-named volume, at least, approaches that of modern free verse. Moreover, an obscurity, present in the poet's previous lyrics, is intensified. Nevertheless, whatever liberties the author takes, the reader cannot fail to realize that here is the deliberate experimentation of a master. Never has Mr. Yeats painted a picture with more movement and color than the title poem of "The

Wild Swans at Coole"':

80]

The trees are in their autumn beauty,

The woodland paths are dry,

Under the October twilight the water Mirrors a still sky;

Upon the brimming water among the stones Are nine and fifty swans.

ay) 6) be. Yen tease ie Pheu fel s.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,

They paddle in the cold,

Companionable streams, or climb the air; Their hearts have not grown old;

Passion or conquest, wander where they will, Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water Mysterious, beautiful;

Among what rushes will they build,

By what lake's edge or pool

Delight men's eyes when I awake some day To find that they have flown away? ®

"The Green Helmet" is an heroic farce written in couplets, and having for its source the Middle Irish story, "The Feast of Bricriu." Although Mr. Yeats again takes his theme from the heroic past, how different is his manner! Here are shorter speeches than in the earlier poetic plays; here

is a clearer delineation of character, and a robustness that vivifies forgotten centuries. The play is nearer to the spirit of the original than anything else based upon Gaelic that Mr. Yeats has done; only one incident is out of harmony, that when “three black hands come through the windows and put out the torches’’; this is not the magic of Irish druids.

[81

In his latest volume of dramatic work Mr. Yeats has again radically changed; he takes an Irish theme as the subject of his ‘“Two Plays for Dancers,” and treats it in the form of the Japanese Noh play. The poet thus returns to the East, which was the subject of some of his earliest verse, when Indian philosophy attracted him during the Dublin days of his youth.

To exaggerate the importance of Mr. Yeats as a literary and a national figure in Ireland would be dificult. Through his leadership and his creative ability he has established for his native land the beginning of a national literature in English worthy to stand beside the older Gaelic. He has always kept his artistic freedom; whatever the modifications or the changes in his beliefs, he has applied them to Ireland; he has used Irish symbols (if he would mention the beauty of a woman he compares her to the Irish Deirdre, not alone to the classic Helen); in his essay, “Certain Noble Plays of Japan,” he links Ireland and the Orient.

The adventure [of the plays] itself is often the meeting with ghost, god, or goddess, at some holy place or muchlegended tomb; and god, goddess, or ghost reminds me at times of our own Irish legends and beliefs, which once, it may be, differed little from those of the Shinto worshipper.’

In spite of the fact that the efforts of the Gaelic League to restore Irish as a spoken language, the

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researches of Celtic scholars, the writings of the Anglo-Irish school, have been ostensibly separate, they have all been inspired by that love of Ireland and that dream of restoring her ancient spiritual dignity which has been the vision of William Butler Yeats.

1921.

“VI A NOTE ON T. W. ROLLESTON O* the men who have labored during the past

thirty or forty years for the material and spiritual welfare of Ireland, one of the most memorable is Thomas William Rolleston, who has died recently in London. Born in the little village of Shinrone, King’s County, in 1857, Rolleston received his schooling at St. Columba’s College, Rathfarnham, and his uni-’ versity education at Trinity College, Dublin. After leaving the university he lived for a time in Germany, but by 1885 he was again in Ireland, editor of the Dublin University Review, in which magazine, in that summer, appeared “The Island of Statues,” the first printed poem by W. B. Yeats. Like Yeats, Rolleston was filled with ardor for a literary revival in Ireland, and he contributed to the memorable Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland, published in 1888. His first books were, however, the fruit of his university training and of his residence in Germany, for in 1886 appeared The Teaching of Epictetus, and in 1889 his Life of Lessing. In the same year, collaborating with Karl Knortz, he issued a German translation of Walt Whitman’s Leaves of Grass. It is interesting to find the young Irishman turning to the

84]

American poet who more than any other was trying to express nationality and a new spirit.

Mr. Rolleston served his native land not only with his pen but with time and energy. He was the first honorary secretary of the Irish Literary Society, London; managing director and secretary of the Irish Industries Association; organizer of lectures to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in Ireland; and organizer of the Irish Historic Loan Collection at the St.

Louis Exposition, in 1g04 — to mention a few of the positions of trust and honor accorded him. He also had experience as a journalist, for he was leader writer on the Dublin Daily Express and Dublin correspondent of the London Daily Chronicle from 1898 to 1900.

In the year 1897, Mr. Rolleston married as his second wife the daughter of a fellow Irish writer, the Reverend Stopford Brooke. During the next sixteen years he published those books which must undoubtedly give him a permanent place as a leader in the attempt to interpret in English the beauties of Gaelic literature and the peculiar contribution of the Celt to English. With his father-in-law he published in 1900 A Treasury of Irish Poetry, a collection of poems written in English by Irishmen from the closing years of the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. The volume is divided into five books, wherein the work of each of the several poets and poetic groups is preceded by important bio-

[85

graphical and bibliographical data and sometimes by an admirable appreciative essay. A number of the essays, those on the poets of the Nation and on Yeats, in particular, are the work of Mr. Rolleston. This collection has not been superseded. In igog appeared Sea Spray, a slender volume of original verse and translations, followed the next year by The High Deeds of Finn, a group of Irish sagas retold from the versions of scholars. Even without the important Introduction, wherein Stopford Brooke sums up the qualities of Gaelic literature, The High Deeds of Finn would be valuable, for the author has not only retold the old stories with sympathy and with skill, but he has appended a full account of his sources, so that his work may be easily compared with the literal translations — a precedent, unfortunately, not always followed by later craftsmen in the same field. In 1911, he issued his masterpiece, Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race, a summary of the literature of the early Irish and Welsh, conjoined with authentic and legendary history and folklore. Only those who have an acquaintance with Celtic literature are able fully to appreciate the many difficulties Mr. Rolleston surmounted when he put in logical order stories often widely separated in date of composition and scattered through many different publications.

Mr. Rolleston did comparatively little entirely original work; he was that necessary author who,

86]

interpreting the work of others, from old fragments fashions new beauty. Whenever he was inspired by Ireland he was at his best, especially when the impulse was from the Gaelic past. A comparison of those poems in Sea Spray that are not specifically Irish with those that are shows that in his non-Irish verse he could be guilty of the veriest doggerel; but when he sang of Ireland, he knew real inspiration. Two of his poems will last as long as there are men and women who care for Anglo-Irish literature. One of these, from the Irish of Angus O'Gillan, "The Dead at Clonmacnois," is included in The Oxford Book of English Verse; the other, "The Grave of Rury," perhaps less well known, is in The Dublin Book of Irish Verse. Both poems have the Irish sensitiveness to word melody. "The Grave of Rury" exhibits at its best the elegiac power of the Celt. The combination of vowels in the last line suggests the sound of a hurrying, interrupted river:

Peace and holy gloom possess him, last of Gaelic monarchs of

the Gael, Spee by the young, eternal river-voices of the Western vale.

Mr. Rolleston was far from indifferent to the Irish political turmoil of the past five years: in 1917 he issued a pamphlet, Ireland and Poland; in 1919, Ireland's Vanishing Opportunity, an admirable plea for Irish unity upon what he considered the only practical ground, economic development.

[87

In the death of Thomas William Rolleston, Ireland has lost a son who did much for her honor. His was not the path of the political agitator; he was an advocate of the material development of his native land, yet he realized that, after all, her best gift to the world is not material. His attitude toward his country and toward life is perhaps best summarized in a sonnet, “On reading a Dublin newspaper in the train, April 16th, 1904.”

Night falls: the emerald pastures turn to grey, Young stars appear, a mystic beauty thrills The dust above the line of far-off hills,

Where late the splendors of the end of Day,

Sad and majestic, flamed and passed away.

In dust and thunder speeding to the sea The train flies on, yet eve’s serenity,

Great and untroubled, holds the world in sway.

Then, turning from that realm of lofty light, Again my eyes upon the printed page Fall, and again I hear but cries of rage,

Brawlers and bigots, every word a knife;

While Thought, the fair land’s fairest heritage,

Lies drowned in clamor of ignoble strife.?

1921.

VII DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

Y the death of Dora Sigerson Shorter, in Lon

don, on January 6, 1918, Anglo-Irish literature lost one of its foremost representatives. Mrs. Shorter was the daughter of Dr. George Sigerson, the Dublin professor of zodlogy, who will be remembered by Irish scholars as the author of Bards of The Gael and the Gall, poems translated from the Gaelic in the original metres. Mrs. Shorter, however, had a greater lyric gift than her father, and it was natural for her to turn to the folklore of her native land, to her inborn love for Ireland, when she sought poetic expression. She was one of the first women to associate herself with the Irish literary revival, and, in the realm of ballad poetry tinged with the consciousness of the supernatural, she took and held the first place. As a writer of ballads, she has won for herself a prominent position even among the English poets. In all her work is evident a wide knowledge of English balladry. She had the power of suggestion which is part of the endowment of the true balladist, a power usually well developed in the Celt; with this gift she combined a simplicity difficult of attainment for the well-educated poet; in simplicity she surpasses even so distinguished a ballad-maker as

[89g

Dante Gabriel Rossetti; her work is less bejewelled, but the essential color is there. Possibly the differ— ence is due to the Italian extraction of the one poet and the Celtic of the other — the Celt is likely to use familiar imagery because of a keen sympathy with Nature, and because of being vividly impressed with the simple and eternal realities.

In turning to native themes, Mrs. Shorter did signal service to Irish letters. It remains for other and younger poets to follow in her footsteps and to develop the vast amount of ballad material which, in the sagas of the Irish past, awaits exploitation.

A stanza such as,

But had she looked toward the east A maid there was to see, Who bore two daggers in her eyes, Black hate and jealousy,! shows both the poet's skill and her vivid imagination. The atmosphere of the supernatural about her ballads is their most distinguishing feature; her "Donacha Rua" compares favorably with Rossettis ister Helen.'

Although it is as a narrative poet that Mrs. Shorter attained her greatest eminence (her Collected Poems winning a preface from no less a pen than that of George Meredith), she expressed her abiding love for Ireland in a great number of lyrics. Of these the best known is the exquisite tribute which has a place in The Oxford Book of English Verse;

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IRELAND

'T was the dream of a God

And the mould of His hand, That you shook 'neath his stroke, That you trembled and broke

To this beautiful land.

Here he loosed from His hold A brown tumult of wings, Till the wind on the sea

Bore the strange melody

Of an island that sings.?

Although she always wrote with assurance, Mrs. Shorter's lyrics, save for certain notable exceptions, are less successful than her ballads. They reveal the interest in Nature that is a Celtic characteristic, but they more often than not lack the throb of true emotion. Mrs. Shorter is above all a narrative poet; intellect finds slight expression in her verses. To this there is a striking exception in the rarely penetrating lines:

I AM THE WORLD I am the song, that rests upon the cloud; I am the sun;

I am the dawn, the day, the hiding shroud, When dusk is done.

The other souls that, passing in their place, Each in his groove;

Outstretching hands that chain me and embrace, Speak and reprove,

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"O atom of the law, by which the earth Is poised and whirled;

Behold! you hurrying with the crowd assert You are the world."

Am I not one with all the things that be Warm in the sun? All that my ears can hear, or eyes can see,

Till all be done.

One day the song that drifts upon the wind I shall not hear;

Nor shall the rosy shoots to eyes grown blind Again appear.

I shall arise, and like a shooting star Slip from my place;

So lingering see the old world from afar Revolve in space.

And know more things than all the wise may know Till all be done;

Till One shall come who, breathing on the stars, Blows out the sun.'

The advance of English poetry during the last decade is shown clearly by a comparison of the lyrics in Mrs. Shorter's Collected Poems with the lyrics now published in the average magazine

or anthology on either side of the Atlantic. Madge Linsey and Other Poems, published in 1913, and the last collection of entirely new work issued by the poet, is proof of the vitality of her poetic imagination, These

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poems can scarcely be conceived as the work of the same woman who wrote the Collected Poems, the lyrics in the new book are so much more in touch with modern life and there is such gain in poignancy of thought, which, in turn,infuses Mrs. Shorter's new poems with a more throbbing emotion. The ballad of Madge Linsey is instinct with the times, showing the influence of Masefield upon the poetic current of his day. Although this volume is a marked step forward from the poet's earlier work, the fact does not lessen the accomplishment of the Collected Poems and of the volumes next succeeding; it is evidence merely of the author's power to progress, a proof of her keenness of mind and of temper.

In a recent number of the Sphere, a magazine edited by the poet's husband, Mr. Clement Shorter, there is a memorial article accompanied by a photograph. A glance at the sensitive face, the broad brow, deepens the feeling that a poetic personality is gone away to that mystic "Ireland, Ireland, Ireland" she ever sang. May she have won the wish voiced in her own lines; may her spirit have been sounded home by horns of Elfland to the island of her heart; and may she now be one with the mellow

sunshine and the changing mystery of the Irish hills!

CHANGING IRELAND

When I shall rise, and full of many fears, Set forth upon my last long journey, lone, And leave behind the circling earth to go

Amongst the countless stars to seek God's throne,

When in the vaporish blue I wander, lost, Let some fair paradise reward my eyes — Hill after hill, and green and sunny vale,

As I have known beneath the Irish skies.'

1918.

93

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MODERN ANGLO-IRISH POETRY

ie Ireland, political events of recent years not only have been closely connected with Irish literature, but have affected its course. Thirty years ago, Irish writers attempted to carry over into English the style and the temper of Gaelic literature, and, simultaneously, scholars interested in the study of Gaelic and its revival as a spoken language did much to stimulate the spirit of nationality among men and women of Irish blood. The literature of the past quickened the imagination of the present; because it is not far wrong to say that Mr. W. B. Yeats and the poets associated with him in the early years of the last decade of the nineteenth century sowed the seed that has blossomed into the Irish Free State; an examination of the ideals of the Irish literary revival, and a study of its development, give the spiritual background for an understanding of political events.

The revival aimed to bring back the beauty and charm of the Gaelic past; but the vision soon dimmed, to brighten again in the last few years. The Irish literary movement has swung in a circle, and now, fully conscious of its purpose, confidently awaits a new era of development.

[95

The Irish poets who wrote in English during the early nineties were, almost without exception, ignorant of Gaelic, save, perhaps, of a smattering of the modern speech, and for early Irish material they had to depend upon translations by Celtic scholars. Although some of these learned men wrote verse, their activities and those of the poets may best be summarized and contrasted by rewording a famous sentence of Macaulay's: The poets were not scholars and the scholars were not poets. It is natural that poets should gradually have lost their enthusiasm for a language accessible only in translations, — and these not always accurate, —or after much study, and that other and easier ways than the use of ancient material should have been found for the voicing of Irish nationality in English. The Gaelic League, founded in 1893, influenced young men and women completing their education rather than those who had begun to follow literature as a profession. Consequently it is not strange to find poems of the Irish past gradually supplanted by poems of contemporary Irish life.

The verse of Nora Hopper, whose books first appeared in the nineties, may be taken as typical of the spirit of the Celtic revival. To-day she suffers from neglect, as a poet belonging to a period of artificiality, but her verse brings a real breath from Ireland. The notes supplied by her husband, Mr. W.H. Chesson, to his wife's Selected Poems show Nora

96]

Hopper's conscious attempt to make use of traditional themes and Gaelic words. Her poetry has the wistfulness that is often part of the self-revelation of the sympathetic Irish heart, and is remarkably free from the conventional prettiness of her time. It well represents the Irish literary movement, for the poems deal with the three themes expressive of Irish nationality: the Irish past, the Irish peasant, and Irish patriotism.

No subject could be more characteristic of Ireland, whether ancient or modern, than "The Passing of the Shee," which is so treated that the poem might, save for a single phrase, belong to any century of Irish history.

THE PASSING OF THE SHEE

And did you meet them riding down A mile away from Galway town?

Wise childish eyes of Irish gray,

You must have seen them, too, to-day.

And did you hear wild music blow All down the boreen, long and low, The tramp of ragweed horses' feet And Una's laughter, wild and sweet?

Oh, once I met them riding down A hillside far from Galway town, But not alone I walked that day To hear the fairy pipers play.

The lighted down, the kindly Shee;

They builded castle-walls for me.

They built me bower, they built me bawn, Ganconaugh, Banshee, Leprecaun.

[97

They builded me a chamber fair

Roofed in with music, walled with air,

And in its garden, fair to sight, : Grew wallflowers, windflowers, brown and white.

Bouchallen bwe, if you should see One riding with the happy Shee, One with blue eyes and yellow hair, Less light of heart than many there,

Ah! tell him that I'm seeking still Our fairy hold by fairy hill, Following the fairy pipes that play Over the hills and far away.}

The Irish love of Nature, the Celtic sense of color, sound, and movement, are in

AUGUST

Red blossoms to the rosy earth I bring:

The sharp-thorned briar for me is all aflush.

I set red hollyhocks a-blossoming

Rosier than ever hawthorn flowered in spring, And every bush of mine's a burning bush.

*Mid sworded leaves the gladioli push

Scarlet and crimson; damask roses fling

Red leaves upon my pathway. Musicking Before my pageant goes the enamoured thrush; There is no pause of beauty, of song no hush. Red admirals fly about me, wing on wing,

And love-lies-bleeding for my garland grows With spicy southernwood and gipsy-rose.?

The peasant of modern Ireland, ignorant of booklearning but sensitive to natural beauties, is skilfully mirrored in "A Connaught Lover's Lament":

98]

O lips forgetful and kindness fickle, The swallow goes south with you: I go west Where fields are empty and scythes at rest. I am the poppy and you the sickle; My heart is broken within my breast. Nora Hopper expresses the patriotic fervor of her countrymen in her lines about Ireland personified as

"Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan."

O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, your face is like a star,

Your face has led me to your feet o'er wastes and waters far; Your face has made a day for me where only twilights are, O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, my star! ¢

The appearance of the dominating personality of Synge, his work both as dramatist and as poet, gave tremendous encouragement to those who wished to interpret the Ireland about them rather than to concern themselves with the ancient legends; however, few of his followers realized that the secret of his success was not alone his subject, the portrayal of contemporary life, but also his style, the use in English of constructions common to Gaelic writing from the ninth to the twentieth century. Although Synge learned modern Irish in the Aran Islands, he had previously obtained some acquaintance with early Irish at the Sorbonne; he was able thus to look at Gaelic in its continuity and to interpret what was traditionally Irish rather than what belonged only to a particular period; he is really closer to the Irish past than to the Ireland of his own time. His successors and followers have rarely made the traditional

[99

lore of their country the subject of their writing; their attitude toward the past is summed up by Seumas O'Sullivan's lines:

IN AN IRISH THEATRE

We are not kingly born:

Why should we mourn

The sons of Usna left companionless?

Surely it fits us better to be gay

In this our little day,

And singing dance, and flash our midget wings Over the surfaces of things,

Until the sorrow-heavy years return

Bearing full many a sorrow, many an urn Wherein earth's kingliest ones so long have slept Austere, unwept.

For it may be when we have danced our round And known all joys that are above the ground, That we too will be taught in some sad school How to mourn for the kingly and beautiful.

James Stephens, Seumas O'Sullivan, Padraic Colum, and many other poets born in the seventies and eighties of the last century, have confined themselves chiefly to the Ireland of their day, though their more recent work shows signs of the new influences (which are the old) stirring their countrymen.

James Stephens, born in 1882, was originally a protégé of A. E., the well-known painter and author who has given inestimable service in behalf of the material and the spiritual welfare of Ireland. Stephens began his literary career by writing verse, but

100]

it was his rambling, discursive book of prose, The Crock of Gold, that brought him fame. This won the Edmond de Polignac Prize for the best book published in England during the year 1g10. The success of The Crock of Gold and of Mr. Stephens's succeeding books of prose led to a reissuing of his early verse and to the publication of new. Reincarnations, his latest volume of poetry, shows the result of the present interest in Gaelic, for Mr. Stephens has here turned Gaelic originals into English. He has sarcasm such as characterizes the verse of Synge, combined with a whimsy and a fantasy bordering upon the grotesque which take away much of the bitterness of his pungent commentaries. The defect of his verse is that it seems consciously wrought. An example of his shorter and more typical poems is

THE TWINS

Good and bad are in my heart, But I cannot tell to you

(For they never are apart) Which is stronger of the two.

I am this, I am the other, And the devil is my brother. But my father He is God, And my mother is the sod; Therefore, I am safe, you see, Owing to my pedigree.

So I shelter love and hate

Like twin brothers in a nest, Lest I find when it's too late That the other was the best.®

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Strangely enough, Stephens's most finished poem, although on an Irish theme, has little about it distinctively national; it is in the elegiac tradition of English poetry. 'The Spring in Ireland, 1916," is a moving tribute to the dead leaders of the Dublin insurrection. Their fate drew attention not only to their political beliefs but to their literary ideals, which are already making themselves felt in AngloIrish poetry. Padraic Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, and Joseph Plunkett were all young enough to come under the influence of the Gaelic League; they studied Gaelic; they translated, and sometimes wrote, verse in Irish; therefore they became acutely conscious of their Gaelic heritage from the past. A few passages will show the dignity and the beauty of this threnody:

Do not forget the charge, I beg of you:

That of what flow’rs you find of fairest hue And sweetest odour you do gather those

Are best of all the best — a fragrant rose,

A tall calm lily from the waterside,

A half-blown poppy leaning at the side

Its graceful head to dream among the corn, Forget-me-nots that seem as though the morn Had tumbled down and grown into the clay, And hawthorn buds that swing along the way, Easing the hearts of those who pass them by Until they find contentment — Do not cry, But gather buds, and with the greenery

Of slender branches taken from a tree

Well bannered by the spring that saw them fall: Then you, for you are cleverest of all

102]

Who have slim fingers and are pitiful,

Brimming your lap with bloom that you may cull, Will sit apart, and weave for every head.

A garland of the flow’rs you gatheréd.

Be green upon their graves, O happy Spring, For they were young and eager who are dead; Of all things that are young and quivering

With eager life be they rememberéd;

They move not here, they have gone to the clay, They cannot die again for liberty;

Be they remembered of their land for aye; Green be their graves and green their memory.

If we had drums and trumpets, if we had Aught of heroic pitch or accent glad

To honor you as bids tradition old,

With banners flung or draped in mournful fold, And pacing cortége, these would we not bring For your last journeying!

We have no drums or trumpets; naught have we But some green branches taken from a tree,

And flowers that grow at large in mead and vale; Nothing of choice have we, or of avail

To do you honor as our honor deems,

And as your worth beseems.

Sleep drums and trumpets yet a little time:

All ends and all begins, and there is chime

At last where discord was, and joy at last Where woe wept out her eyes: be not downcast, Here all is prosperous and goodly cheer,

For life does follow death, and death is here.”

To speak of Stephens is to be reminded of one of the youngest of Irish poets, Robert Graves, born in

[103

1895. He shares the tendency toward the grotesque that characterizes the older writer. Mr. Graves is one of the six sons of Alfred Perceval Graves, dean of Irish authors, who lives in London and has long been prominent in the affairs of the Irish Literary Society of that city. Young Robert Graves went from school into the army and took an active part in the recent war.

In 1916, he published through the Poetry Bookshop of London a slender volume of verse, Over the Brazier. Some of the poems in this collection were reprinted later in Fairies and Fusilters, a book published on both sides of the Atlantic. This was followed by a third volume, Country Sentiment, and, in 1921, by The Pier-Glass. The poetry of Robert Graves became known in this country partly because Mr. Graves was a friend and comrade-in-arms of two well-known English poets who have lectured in the United States, Robert Nichols and Siegfried Sassoon, but more for its unusual fancies, coupled with a simplicity that belongs to extreme youth. The young poet is a realist; he has the Irish ear for rhyme; much of his verse is written in short lines that remind the reader of the Tudor poet, Skelton, famous for his Merry Margaret As midsummer flower

Gentle as falcon Or hawk of the tower.

A poem called “Free Verse,” is unlike most free verse, because, though many of the lines vary in

length, yet there is constant rhyme and a marked pattern.

I now delight,

In spite

Of the might

And the right

Of classic tradition,

In writing

And reciting

Straight ahead,

Without let or omission,

Just any little rhyme

In any little time

That runs in my head; Because, I’ve said,

My rhymes no longer shall stand arrayed Like Prussian soldiers on parade That march,

Stiff as starch,

Foot to foot,

Boot to boot,

Blade to blade,

Button to button,

Cheeks and chops and chins like mutton. No! No!

My rhymes must go

Turn’ee, twist’ee,

Twinkling, frosty, Will-o’-the-wisp-like, misty; Rhymes I will make,

Like Keats and Blake

And Christina Rossetti,

With run and ripple and shake. How pretty

To take

A merry little rhyme

In a jolly little time

[10s

And poke it,

And choke it,

Change it, arrange it, Straight-lace it, deface it, Pleat it with pleats, Sheet it with sheets

Of empty conceits,

And chop and chew,

And pack and hue,

And weld it into a uniform stanza, And evolve a neat, Complacent, complete, Academic extravaganza! 8

Seumas O'Sullivan, born in 1879, is a Dublin man whose real name is James Starkey. His work, little known in this country till recently, is much esteemed by his compatriots. The title of one of his books, The Twilight People, admirably suggests the quiet tone of his writing. His themes are the Dublin life about him and the Irish countryside; his earlier work dealt more with the city, but of late, in company with other poets, he has taken rather more interest in landscape. He has the quick Irish ear for vowel sounds. "Nelson Street" illustrates one theme and

his "Lullaby" the other:

NELSON STREET

There is hardly a mouthful of air

In the room where the breakfast is set, For the blind is still down though it's late, And the curtains are redolent yet

Of tobacco-smoke, stale from last night. There's the little bronze teapot, and there

106]

The eggs on the blue willow plate,

And the sleepy canary, a hen

Starts faintly her chirruping tweet

And I know, could she speak, she would say, "Hullo there — what's wrong with the light? Draw the blind up, let's look at the day."

I see that it's Monday again,

For the man with the organ is there;

Every Monday he comes to the street

(Lest I, or the bird there, should miss

Our count of monotonous days)

With his reed-organ, wheezy and sweet,

And stands by the window and plays, "There's a Land that is Fairer than This." ®

LULLABY

Husheen the herons are crying Away in the rain and the sleet, Flying and flying and flying

With never a rest to their feet.

But warm in your coverlet nestle,

Wee bird, till the dawn of the day,

Nor dream of the wild wings that wrestle In the night and the rain and the grey.

Come, sweetheart, the bright ones would bring you By the magical meadows and streams,

With the light of your dreaming they build you

A house on the hill of your dreams.

But you stir in your sleep and you murmur, As though the wild rain and the grey

Wet hills with the winds ever blowing

Had driven your dreams away.

And dearer the wind in its crying, And the secrets the wet hills hold, Than the goldenest place they could find you In the heart of a country of gold.

[107

Padraic Colum, born in Longford in 1881, has been a resident of the United States since early in the World War. He was a founder of the Irish National Theatre, and for a time editor of the [rish Review, a Dublin periodical to which many of the younger Irish writers contributed. Some years ago, he published a book of verse, Wild Earth, which has since been reissued with additions but without change of title. In this respect he has followed the precedent set by Whitman in Leaves of Grass. Mr. Colum deals with the West of Ireland peasant; he has an eye for the beauty of simple, everyday things and an ear for melody.

A CRADLE SONG

O men from the fields! Come gently within. Tread softly, softly, O! men coming in.

Mavourneen is going From me and from you, Where Mary will fold him With mantle of blue!

From reek of the smoke And cold of the floor, And the peering of things Across the half-door.

O men from the fields! Soft, softly come thro' Mary puts round him Her mantle of blue."

108]

In the autumn of 1922, Mr. Colum published Dramatic Legends.

With Colum may be compared Patrick MacGill, the Donegal author who began life as a navvy. In 1g12, when he was but twenty-two, he published Songs of the Dead End, which deal with his early experiences. Two years later he attained prominence with the publication of a realistic novel, Children of the Dead End. His service in the World War resulted in Soldier Songs, a graphic picture of life in the trenches, illuminated with flashes of his dreams of Ireland and her lore. His verse shows poetic gift, and the Irish power of connotation.

Worthy of special attention, though he is little known in America, is James H. Cousins, at one time a schoolmaster in Dublin. Mr. Cousins has published a number of volumes, among them The Bell Branch, Etain the Beloved (wherein the title poem is founded on an early Irish saga), and Straight and Crookéd. The last volume contains his best work; he is an uneven writer, who often allows mysticism to obscure his meaning and who is sometimes a careless craftsman. Two

poems in his latest collection stand out from the rest: ““The Bubble Blowers,” and the title poem of the volume, which rivals Stephens in grotesqueness and at least equals him in metrical skill.

[10g

STRAIGHT AND CROOKED

I passed a stunted, crookéd tree. It pushed its wizened arms at me. I muttered as I passed along,

I will not put you in a song.

I passed a crookéd, stunted man.

He smudged me with his black tea-can. I said, as down my brows I drew,

I will not make a song on you.

I'll sing of hills, clouds, flowers, and wings, Of beautiful and distant things

Where God and Art are reconciled.

A something somewhere slyly smiled.

The hills drew down the heavy cloud. The rain hung round me like a shroud. Flat lay the wild sweet violet.

No wing could shield me from the wet.

I saw the stunted, crookéd tree;

It stretched inviting arms at me.

I put my hand against its bole,

And shivering thanked it from my soul.

And when the crookéd, stunted man Held out to me his black tea-can, I drank a draught of liquor warm Would fight the blackest fairy storm.

What happened then I cannot tell,

But man and tree began to swell

And stretch like Granuaile’s white spars, Until they touched the windy stars.

I never in my life did see

So tall and straight a man or tree;

And I began a song to make,

But laughter seemed the earth to shake.

110]

I tried to catch a flying thought, But only far and thinly caught

A whisper through the twilight dim: The straight and crooked are in him.”

But the poets coming after Synge could not indefinitely neglect the great body of Gaelic literature which chronicles the history of Ireland and preserves the work of Irish imagination through many centuries. In the verse of Joseph Campbell, a poet who sings the folk of the field, reappear Gaelic names and phrases; he himself uses the Gaelic form of his name, Seosamh MacCathmaoil. Although born in Belfast, he has for some time lived in County Wicklow, a district which has given its ancient name as the title of the poet’s latest book, Earth of Cualann.

Like his brother John, who has been for several years past in the United States, Joseph Campbell is an artist, and he has illustrated some of his poetry. Both he and his wife, Nancy, have contributed verse to Miss Harriet Monroe's magazine, Poesry.

One of Mr. Campbell's latest volumes, Jrishry, has a poem on the Fairies which contains references to Eber, a mythical hero of early Ireland, and to Guaire, a king often mentioned in early and in modern Irish writing:

THE FAIRIES

When Eber came to Kerry, When Guaire gave his gold, Then were we young and merry Who now are old.

[Lit

The green and the grey places, Then were they green and grey; We saw but shining faces

And open day.

We saw but shining faces, The sickle moon of night, Banners in royal places And torches bright.

We heard but beauty spoken, Red war and passion sung, Music on harp-strings broken, When we were young.

What is the morning plougher To us, whose ancient dream Is as a fallen flower

Upon a stream?

Even in "The Cobbler," a faithful reproduction of a modern cottage interior, there is mention of the

traditional Well That flows over the edge of Day,'4

and of the leprechaun, or goblin cobbler, who, although of somewhat modern origin, suggests Ireland's traditional Fairy folk.

With the increasing interest of poets in the complexities of modern life had come a decreasing interest in landscape for its own sake. Although landscape background appeared particularly in poems of the exile type, where the Irish man or woman longed for the homeland, yet Nature had become of second-

EL2 [ary importance. In the poetry of Joseph Campbell

landscape again begins to assume prominence; the opening poem of Jrishry refers to earth as

THE MOTHER

The hearthstone broods in shadow, And the dark hills are old,

But the child clings to the mother, And the corn springs in the mould.

And Dana moves on Luachra, And makes the world anew:

The cuckoo's cry in the meadow, The moon, and the early dew.

The verse of Miss W. M. Letts has points of similarity with that of nearly all the poets previously mentioned; she shows great range of subject. Realistic pictures of city and country life, poems of homesickness, of Nature, make up what is perhaps her most delightful collection, Songs From Leinster, now in its fifth edition abroad. No woman singer of present-day Ireland can surpass Miss Letts; not only has she the Irish gifts of fancy, imagination, humor, and keen sympathy with her fellow men and women, but she has also finished craftsmanship; behind her work the reader feels constantly the best traditions of written English.

Miss Letts is the daughter of a clergyman living at Blackrock, County Dublin. She took an active part in the World War as a nurse at a hospital in England, and yet found time to write and collect

[113

much of her war poetry in a book called by the title of one of her poems widely known and admired, The Spires of Oxford. Howéver, her most typical Irish verse is in Songs From Leinster, where she is particularly happy in her ability to suggest Irish dialect without making her poems difficult to read. In “The Kerry Cow” she gently satirizes her countrymen’s tendency toward exaggeration.

It’s in Connacht or in Munster that yourself might travel wide,

And be asking all the herds you’d meet along the countryside,

But you’d never meet a one could show the likes of her till now,

Where she’s grazing in a Leinster field — my little Kerry cow.

If herself went to the cattle fairs she’d put all cows to shame,

For the finest poets of the land would meet to sing her fame;

And the young girls would be asking leave to stroke her satin coat,

They’d be praising and caressing her, and calling her a dote.

If the King of Spain gets news of her he’ll fill his purse with gold,

And set sail to ask the English King where she is to be sold.

But the King of Spain may come to me, a crown upon his brow.

It is he may keep his golden purse — and I my Kerry cow.

The priest maybe will tell her fame to the Holy Pope of Rome,

And the Cardinals’ College send for her to leave her Irish home;

But it’s heartbroke she would be itself to cross the Irish sea,

’T would be best they’d send a blessing to my Kerry cow and me.

114]

When the Ulster men hear tell of her, theyll come with swords and pikes,

For it’s civil war there’ll be no less if they should see her likes;

And you’lI read it on the paper of the bloody fight there’s been,

An’ the Orangemen they’re burying in fields of Leinster green.

There are red cows that’s contrary, and there’s white cows quare and wild,

But my Kerry cow is biddable, an’ gentle as a child.

You may rare up kings and heroes on the lovely milk she yields,

For she’s fit to foster generals to fight our battlefields.

In the histories they'll be making they’ve a right to put her name

With the horse of Troy and Oisin’s hounds and other beasts of fame.

And the painters will be painting her beneath the hawthorn bough

Where she’s grazing on the good green grass — my little Kerry cow.!6 ©

No less deftly than she shows the hyperbole of the Irish, Miss Letts interprets their love of country in a poem that at the same time reveals her ability to portray significant details in realistic description.

THE HARBOUR

I think if I lay dying in some land Where Ireland is no more than just a name, My soul would travel back to find that strand From whence it came.

I’d see the harbour in the evening light, The old men staring at some distant ship,

The fishing-boats they fasten left and right Beside the slip.

[115

The sea-wrack lying on the wind-swept shore, The grey thorn bushes growing in the sand,

Our Wexford coast from Arklow to Cahore — My native land.

The little houses climbing up the hill, Sea daisies growing in the sandy grass,

The tethered goats that wait large-eyed and still To watch you pass.

The women at the well with dripping pails, Their men colloguing by the harbour wall, The coils of rope, the nets, the old brown sails,

I’d know them all.

And then the Angelus — I’d surely see The swaying bell against the golden sky,

So God, Who kept the love of home in me, Would let me die.”

The poet has caught the spirit of wind in her

beautiful THE WEST WIND

Last night the air was cold and still, No breeze was moving in Glendhu; The golden beech leaves scarcely stirred Above my head as I went through. From every cottage rose the smoke, An’ not a breath its column broke.

Brown in the glen the bracken grew, No broken leaf or stem you’d find. But after dawn the gale awoke,

The world seemed rocking in the wind.

Across the Wicklow hills he came, The herdsmen felt his great wings beat; The waves of Lough Nahanagan

116

However, neither Miss Letts nor Campbell has quite the sense of intimacy with Nature that was possessed by the early Irish scribes. For example, there is a difference between the poetry of our two contemporaries and these lines translated from the Gaelic written by an unknown monk many centuries ago:

CHANGING IRELAND

Were ruffled by his flying feet;

The Vale of Clara felt him pass Swift-foot across the meadow grass; They heard him where the waters meet, He made the pines and larches sway; He crossed the stream at Glenmacnass, And blew the falls to silver spray.

They heard his pipes in Glenmalure,

He sang a song of western seas;

The withered leaves in Glendalough Rose up and rustled round his knees; He shook the beeches of Glendhu

To golden rain as he passed through. He bent Glencullen's tallest trees,

His breath was rough on bird and beast, Across the mountain tops he flew

To take his pleasure in the east.

Oh, wild wind from the distant west, Be still again and give us rest.!8

FIRST WINTER SONG

Take my tidings! Stags contend; Snows descend —

Summer's end!

[117

A chill wind raging;

The sun low keeping, Swift to set

O'er seas high sweeping.

Dull red the fern; Shapes are shadows; Wild geese mourn O'er misty meadows.

Keen cold limes Each weaker wing. Icy times — Such I sing! Take my tidings!

The direct descendant of the ancient nature poets is Francis Ledwidge, whose three books of verse brought out during the World War were later republished as one volume, together with the original Introductions by Lord Dunsany. In spite of the fact that many of the poems of Ledwidge were written while their author was on active service, in the Balkans, in Greece, and in Flanders, they nearly all express the poet's tender affection for "the silence of maternal hills' — hills he was never to see again, because he fell in action. In Ledwidge's work people play little part; landscape is everything. He excels not merely in giving the details of a scene, . but in conveying its peculiar atmosphere. Since he has the secret of "natural magic," he is truly a national poet; he has carried on the great nature tradition of the Gaelic past.

118]

A SONG OF APRIL

The censer of the eglantine was moved

By little lane winds, and the watching faces

Of garden flowerets, which of old she loved, Peep shyly outward from their silent places. But when the sun arose the flowers grew bolder, And she will be in white, I thought, and she Will have a cuckoo on her either shoulder,

And woodbine twines and fragrant wings of pea.

And I will meet her on the hills of South,

And I will lead her to a northern water,

My wild one, the sweet beautiful uncouth,

The eldest maiden of the Winter's daughter. And down the rainbows of her noon shall slide Lark music, and the little sunbeam people,

And nomad wings shall fill the river side,

And ground wings rocking in the lily's steeple.2°

BEHIND THE CLOSED EYE

I walk the old frequented ways

That wind across the tangled braes, I live again the sunny days

Ere I the city knew.

And scenes of old again are born, The woodbine lassoing the thorn,

And drooping Ruth-like in the corn The poppies weep the dew.

Above me in their hundred schools

The magpies bend their young to rules, And like an apron full of jewels

The dewy cobweb swings.

And frisking in the stream below The troutlets make the circles flow,

And the hungry crane doth watch them grow As a smoker does his rings.

[IIg

Above me smokes the little town,

With its whitewashed walls and roofs of brown And its octagon spire toned smoothly down

As the holy minds within.

And wondrous impudently sweet, Half of him passion, half conceit, The blackbird calls adown the street

Like the piper of Hamelin.

I hear him, and I feel the lure

Drawing me back to the homely moor, I'll go and close the mountain's door

On the city's strife and din

There is now every indication that Irish poets have returned to the reinterpretation of the Gaelic past. Not long ago Austin Clarke based his 4dventures of Fionn on ancient Irish stories, and James Stephens has lately retold Early Irish Fairy Tales; Ledwidge brought back the ancient Irish feeling for the countryside. More recently there has been the suggestion that Gaelic should supplant English as the language of all Irish literature; this, however, seems unnecessary, for the devices by which the old Irish writers gained their effects,—parallel structure, frequent use of the verb "to be," connotation, — can easily be employed in the more widely understood English tongue. The Irish sense of intimacy with Nature should long continue to enrich English literature.

As a result of modern scholarship, the enormous amount of prose and verse that is the heritage from

120]

early Ireland is now accurately translated, and is far more easily accessible to laymen than it was in the closing decade of the last century; instruction in Gaelic literature is now offered by a number of universities in the English-speaking world. Irish poets have also been in the forefront of the recent attempt to rid poetry of useless conventions, of insipid prettiness; it is likely,

therefore, that they will be able successfully to interpret for their generation the ancient literature of Ireland.

Ix | SOME IRISH POETS OF THE ALLIED CAUSE IN THE WORLD WAR

| cased has long been distinguished for her soldiers and her singers. Throughout hundreds of years there has been hardly a war in which men of Irish blood have not played gallant parts. The bravery of Irish troops in Flanders in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and again in our own Civil War, was fully equalled by the bravery of Irish soldiers after Mons, in Serbia, and at Gallipoli.

During the early days of Irish history, armies were accompanied by poets, whose duty was to record and celebrate the valorous deeds of the clans to which each might be attached. Standish O'Grady, the historical writer (not to be confused with the author of Si/va Gadelica), says that the poet went on a campaign as well mounted as a chief and as well attended. Though he himself wore no arms and never fought, he had men of war to wait on him; his function was not fighting, but the causing of others to fight well. "He went to the wars as an observer and watcher, and men feared him. Somewhere. . . in the neighbourhood of the battle such bards,

122]

mounted on fleet steeds, watched the progress of the fray, noting who were the heroes and who the poltroons."

As one of the official historians of the World War, Mr. John Masefield occupied a position analogous to these early Irish bards; but the fact that in this war young poets of promise also served as combatants points to changed customs.

Since not only fighting but the making of war songs has been traditional with the Irish, it is natural to find a goodly company of Irish men and women among the singers of the most terrible of conflicts. The number of these men and women is realized by few Americans. This is possibly because many Irish writers live outside Ireland, in England, in Canada, in Australia, and bear names of un-Gaelic origin, such as Graves and Fox-Smith, and because the work of the poets who fell in the Dublin Insurrection of 1916 was widely advertised by sympathizers in the United States. Poets of the Rebellion monopolized the stage to the exclusion of poets loyal to the War. Nevertheless, war poetry by those of Irish blood deserves to be well known, for it compares favorably with any other poetry written in English from 1914 to 1918; it has the same defects and the same merits. Ireland's soldier-poet, Francis Ledwidge, wrote verse that is worthy to stand beside that of England's Rupert Brooke or America's Alan Seeger.

[123

To give any idea of the subject-matter or of the value of Irish verse of the World War requires the setting-up of arbitrary standards. Poems should be chosen not alone because of distinct poetic excellence but because they represent the reactions to phases of the struggle, and to internal conditions in Ireland, of men and women of various traditions, religious and political beliefs, and of varying degrees of education.

The natural starting-point is the opening of the Mare» the: Irish Brigade, 1914," "by "stephen Gwynn, a Nationalist Member of Parliament who resigned his seat to enter the army, expresses the thrill of pride felt by the author when he read of the gallantry of Irish troops in France, and his conviction that the cause of Ireland was one with the cause of the Allies. When the poem was printed in Battle Songs of the Irish Brigades, issued in collaboration with T. M. Kettle, another Irish Nationalist and former Member of Parliament who enlisted in the army, the authors wrote in their preface: "For the first time an Irish Brigade is formed within Ireland's four seas in the name of the Irish nation. . . the separate existence of the Irish Brigades is a thing

to dwell on, for they are the living symbol of the truth that this war is Ireland's war."!* The rhyme and the rhythm, the appeal to martial glories of the past, the idealistic outlook, make Captain Gwynn's poem one to quicken the blood,

124]

THE IRISH BRIGADE, 1914

From Fontenoy, from Landen, the message runs again, Once more the fields of Flanders are strewn with Irish slain, And once again, oh! once again, the herald thrills to tell How gloriously an Irish charge avenged the brave who fell.

And we who sit at home and read — the tale rings in our ears,

We know our part, we claim our right, in those victorious cheers,

We boast our splendid heritage in the old fighting race:

Yet, have we marked the cry that comes from each dead soldier's place?

Half-overwhelmed, they rallied fierce: they bled, yet held their ground,

Though three to one the German hordes outflanked and hemmed them round;

But, oh! exultant hearts who praise their valor, must it be

That Ireland leaves her sons to fight for ever one to three?

Must English fill the Rangers' ranks? Welsh pad the Munsters' line?

Where stood the Dublin Fusiliers, Scots give the countersign?

Or where the Inniskillings faint, shall Sikhs the trench re-man?

Pathan and Gurkha finish what the Irish Guards began?

No shame for comrades' help to seek; but when the Irish fall, To Ireland for more Irishmen first comes the clarion call. Who says she cannot spare her sons to pay her honour's debt? Poor Ireland is poor Ireland still — but abject, never yet.

One vast adventure shakes the pulse of Europe far and near,

Young gallant hearts leap up in pride the battle-cry to hear,

Yet now, when Fontenoy's Brigade unfurls the flag anew,

What wakes on shores where the Wild Geese soared up and wheeled and flew?

[126

They fought for Louis, fought for James, for every despot's throne:

Shall we not fight who may defend a freedom of our own?

To choke the spoiler from his grip on ravaged homes and land —

God, to what nobler enterprise could chivalry set hand?

Or must we seek a counsel from the poisoned hiss of hate? Our neighbor burns, we laugh, and, lo! the fire is at our gate. Ah, tardy then the penitence, bitter the reckoning then,

But now, but now, the day is ours to take our part like men.

A Sarsfield lies there, fallen, — an O'Brien — an O'Neill.

Wake the trump in Tipperary! down the Shannon let it peal!

Raise the slogan in Tyrconnell, send the call across Tyrone,

Over Munster, Leinster, Connaught, be the battle-music blown.

Clare's Brigade! what ghosts are stirring on the stony hills of Clare?

Let the cry go out through Galway, in Mayo let bugles blare.

Shall the Decies, or shall Desmond, to the muster-roll come late?

From Kildare to dauntless Wexford rouse the heirs of Ninetyeight.

Set the standard up on Tara, plant it on the cairn of Maeve;

From the birthplace of Columba speed the cross to Patrick's grave!

On Slieve Donard, on Croaghpatrick, on the Galtees, on the Reeks,

Waken memory, waken vision, by the beaconed mountain peaks.

Not for ourselves, but for our sons, and for the blessed sake Of Ireland and of Freedom, be the high resolve we take: The work begun cannot be done, our warfare may not cease, Till on the hearth of Liberty we have established — Peace.?

126]

Contrast with this ""The Men of Ulster,' which dwells on Ulster's dependence upon Great Britain, and realize that we have a glimpse of Ireland for a time united. The author of "The Men of Ulster," Professor Frederick S. Boas, is a well-known authority on the Elizabethan drama.

THE MEN OF ULSTER (September, 1914)

What of the men of Ulster? Will they merely stand in the gate,

On watch and ward for the Province, in the hour of England's fate?

Would they be men of Ulster were such their Captain's call,

To reck of naught but themselves alone, though the Empire stand or fall?

Dear to the men of Ulster are her sunlit fields and bays,

The whirr of the loom, and the hammer's ring, and the harvest of toiling days;

And dearer yet is the birthright, won by their sires of old,

Their heritage forever, not to be bought or sold.

But dearest to men of Ulster is the Empire's far-flung line,

Where her sons have sped, and toiled and bled, 'neath the palm-tree and the pine;

Where White has fought and Dufferin wrought, and their spirits hover still,

Bidding to deeds of high emprise, and valor, and iron will.

So, forward the men of Ulster for the Empire and the King!

Though their own fate be in debate, no thought of wavering!

The sword half-drawn on her own behoof in Ulster's red right hand

Will leap from the scabbard, and flash like fire, for the common Motherland.

[127

What of the men of Ulster? Hark to their arméd tread,

As they turn their back on the Province, and face the front instead.

And wherever the fight is hottest, and the sorest task is set,

Ulster will strike for England — and England will not forget.

As to men war brings a vision of possible glory, to women it brings the dread of probable sorrow. The severing of human relationships is the burden of war poetry by Irishwomen, and is well expressed by Katharine Tynan in these lines, describing the West Kent regiment leaving Dublin in August, 1914.

JOINING THE COLOURS (West Kents, Dublin, August, 1914)

There they go marching all in step so gay! Smooth-cheeked and golden, food for shells and guns. Blithely they go as to a wedding day, The mothers' sons.

The drab street stares to see them row on row On the high tram-tops, singing like the lark.

Too careless-gay for courage, singing they go Into the dark.

With tin whistles, mouth-organs, any noise, They pipe the way to glory and the grave;

Foolish and young, the gay and golden boys Love cannot save.

High heart! High courage! The poor girls they kissed Run with them: they shall kiss no more, alas!

Out of the mist they stepped — into the mist Singing they pass.'

128 [Ruth Duffin poignantly expresses the threefold

sorrow of women — the sorrow of the mother, of the wife, and of the betrothed, the last of whom pays her

toll of hidden tears For love that perished ere the web was spun, And children that shall never see the sun.®

Florence M. Wilson gives a picture of a plough girl of the north in verses which close

Yet, an' I would n't wish him back, for the gun that fits his han'

Luks bether than an ould plough'd do, an' the Lord will farm the lan'.®

Jane Barlow, who died during the War, left a penetrating portrait of an old Irishwoman, Theresa Nolan, praying for her son, Michael, who is at the front. Because of his name, Theresa addresses her prayer to Saint Michael, known as the Irish Archangel, from which appellation the poem takes its title. The old woman kneels on the chapel floor before a stained-glass window depicting the saint, and speaks with the garrulousness, the quaint familiarity, of an aged peasant. The unconscious humor enforces the pathos of the situation.

[129

THE IRISH ARCHANGEL

(Michaelmas, 1915) Ah, Michael, Michael, listen, aes asthore!

Ah, Bee Michael, many's the time wae T have seen you shining there athwart the light, With those grand wings on you, all glistering white, Like sailing clouds, when in at yonder door From beneath the sun we'd step, half blind — 't was ere The Big War took our lads — and then the sight Did my heart good, so strong you stand to scare The Devil's own self, and drive him down his lair. But now this trouble's on us, let him be: There's worse folks loose about the world than he.

. . . But Lords and Kings Might easy put a hand to better things Than raising up a war, that ere 't is done Strikes thousands dead, and each a mother's son;

Piled up heap on heap,

Like fluttered leaves you see the cold blasts sweep Below the trees, the Dead are lying flung Where Mick is fighting now. Ah, Michael, keep An eye on him and sort him out among

The rest, for many a Mick is soldiering there, And every one of them a decent lad,

But Micky's all the sons that ever I had — You'd get none kinder if you searched Kildare. And he a gossoon yet; a while ago

Scarce any size on him, the creature, or sense, Just playing around, or maybe coaxing pence For sweets. — My grief that ever I said him no. So mind him, Michael, that's a Michael too, And make a shift to bring him safely through

130]

And home to me before they 've laid him low.

. . Keep, and you'll do right, The flourish of your blazing sword to blind The ugly villain aiming at my Mick. And dreaming I do be of the guns they wind The bullets out of with a handle quick, To riddle hundreds while a clock would tick; And poison-clouds the poltroons send to choke Our lads' lives out, far off, with stifling smoke — 'T is at the thought of them my heart grows sick. For if 't was fighting fair with sword or lance, Or, say, shillelaghs, or a blackthorn stick, One with another gets an even chance; But when that hail of Hell is pelting thick, The best man counts for naught, and strongest arm, Unless some grand good luck he has indeed; Or a great one like yourself 'twixt him and harm,

Aye, Michael, I misdoubt yourself that see From high above thinks little of Mick and me As if some old gray hen had lost her chick, Went clucking after it: Micky, Mick, avic!

Yet, Michael, listen now — I'm hoping still

In all your grandeur you'll contrive a plan

To help us on a sudden, ere they fill

The world with graves. For, surely, if you've got The wings itself, at heart you're just a man;

You won't delay till all the lads are shot.

Troth, Id ne'er grudge the worst you'd blast and ban Those miscreants of the world that first began

The killing; but save poor Mick whate'er befall, And every Mick among them, if you can —

Aye, bring the lads home, Michael, bring them all."

[131

The vivid imagination of Miss Barlow is outdone by that of a young poet who has happily survived the War, Captain Robert Graves, son of Mr. Alfred Perceval Graves, dean of Irish letters and one of the founders of the Irish Literary Society, London. Grotesqueness has often been an element of Irish imaginings; one who recalls in Gaelic literature the severed heads that talk, the strange, changeable figure of the Irish battle-goddess appearing now as a bird, now as a hag, is not too startled by the striking imagery and intense realism of Captain Graves's books, Over the Brazier, and Fairies and Fusiliers. Both are filled with the ardor of youth; the many oaths give the impression of a conscious attempt to shock the sedate:

And there's one thing that I know well, I'm damned if I'll be damned to Hell.

Captain Graves is at his best in "The Dead FoxHunter," which not only gives a vivid picture of a modern battlefield, but turns upon a half-humorous conceit thoroughly Celtic.

THE DEAD FOX-HUNTER

We found the little Captain at the head; His men lay well aligned. We touched his hand — stone-cold — and he was dead, And they, all dead behind, Had never reached their goal, but they died well; They charged in line, and in the same line fell.

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The well-known rosy colours of his face Were almost lost in grey. We saw that, dying and in hopeless case, For others' sake that day He'd smothered all rebellious groans: in death His fingers were tight clenched between his teeth.

For those who live uprightly and die true Heaven has no bars or locks,

And serves all taste. . . . Or what's for him to do Up there, but hunt the fox?

Angelic choirs? No, Justice must provide

For one who rode straight and at hunting died.

So if Heaven had no hunt before he came, Why, it must find one now:

If any shirk and doubt they know the game, There's one to teach them how:

And the whole host of Seraphim complete

Must jog in scarlet to his opening Meet.'

It was to be expected that modern war poets in the ancient island of saints and scholars should express their religious faith. Miss Letts, Mrs. TynanHinkson, Professor Kettle, have all written verse inspired by belief in the teachings of Christianity. The loving fatherhood of God has never been more beautifully interpreted than in Katharine Tynan's "The Great Mercy," effective because of its sim-

plicity and connotative power.

THE GREAT MERCY

Betwixt the saddle and the ground Was mercy sought and mercy found.

Yea, in the twinkling of an eye, He cried; and Thou hast heard his cry.

[133

Between the bullet and its mark Thy face made morning in his dark.

And while the shell sang on its path Thou hast run, Thou hast run, preventing death.

Thou hast run before and reached the goal, | Gathered to Thee the unhoused soul.

Thou art not bound by time or space: So fast Death runs: Thou hast won the race.

Thou hast said to beaten Death: Go ¢e// Of victories thou once hadst. All's well!

Death, here none die but thee and Sin. Now the great days of Life begin.

And to the Soul: This day I rise And thee with me to Paradise.

Betwixt the saddle and the ground Was mercy sought and mercy found?

Lieutenant Thomas Kettle, as has already been said, enlisted in the army during the first months of recruiting, and assisted Captain Stephen Gwynn in writing and editing Songs for the Irish Brigades. He was a Roman Catholic, a Nationalist, and a former Member of Parliament; at the outbreak of hostilities he was Professor of Economics at the National University, Dublin; but after being in Belgium when the Germans invaded that country, he hastened home to enlist in the British Army. His volumes, The Day's Burden, and The Ways of War, show him to have been one of the most gifted of the younger Irish writers of prose, and sustain his repu-

tation as a wit. Lieutenant Kettle's death in action was a grievous blow to Irish literature and Irish life: he fell leading his men, of the Ninth Dublin Fusiliers, in a victorious charge. No one has left finer parting words than his sonnet to his daughter Betty, written in "the field before Guillemont," only four days previous to his death. With the Celtic heritage of foreknowledge, he prophesies his fate.

TO. MY DAUGHTER BETTY, THE GIFT OF GOD (Elizabeth Dorothy)

In wiser days, my darling rosebud, blown

To beauty proud as was your mother's prime,

In that desired, delayed, incredible time,

You'll ask why I abandoned you, my own,

And the dear heart that was your baby throne, To dice with death. And oh! they'll give you rhyme And reason: some will call the thing sublime,

And some decry it in a knowing tone.

So here, while the mad guns curse overhead,

And tired men sigh with mud for couch and floor, Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead, Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor,

But for a dream born in a herdsman's shed,

And for the secret Scripture of the poor.

The attitude toward the war of Ireland's most widely known poets, Mr. W. B. Yeats and A. E., was thoroughly characteristic. Mr. Yeats is above all else the artist; he is little concerned with the outside world save as it touches his art. A story told by a fellow voyager across the Atlantic illustrates the

poet's point of view. In conversation with an Englishman interested in shipping, Mr. Yeats was asked his opinion of a project to run steamers between Youghal, on the east coast of Ireland, and the United States. "Shipping!" he replied. "What do I know of shipping? I am a lyric poet."

It is not strange, therefore, that a poet of such aloofness writes, in his latest book of verse, the following:

ON BEING ASKED FOR A WAR POEM

I think it better that in times like these

A poet keep his mouth shut, for in truth

We have no gift to set a statesman right;

He has had enough of meddling who can please A young girl in the indolence of her youth,

Or an old man upon a winter's night.1!

However, the volume also contains verses in memory of Major Robert Gregory, Lady Gregory's son, who was killed in action:

Soldier, scholar, horseman, he, Our Sidney and our perfect man.

Likewise A. E., although a loyal citizen of Ireland, is above all a citizen of the world, a theosophist who longs to see mankind united; and it was in scorn, not unmixed with dismay, that he wrote of the embattled nations. “Gods of War” is typical of this poet.

GODS OF WAR

Fate wafts us from the pygmies’ shore:

We swim beneath the epic skies:

A Rome and Carthage war once more,

And wider empires are the prize;

Where the beaked galleys clashed, lo, these, Our iron dragons of the seas!

High o’er the cloudy battle sweep The wingéd chariots in their flight. The steely creatures of the deep Cleave the dark waters’ ancient night. Below, above, in wave, in air

New worlds for conquest everywhere.

More terrible than spear and sword Those stars that burst with fiery breath: More loud the battle cries are poured Along a hundred leagues of death.

So do they fight. How have ye warred, Defeated Armies of the Lord?

This is the Dark Immortal’s hour;

His victory, whoever fail;

His prophets have not lost their power: Cesar and Attila prevail.

These are your legions still, proud ghosts, These myriad embattled hosts.

How wanes Thine empire, Prince of Peace! With the fleet circling of the suns

The ancient gods their power increase.

Lo, how Thine own anointed ones

Do pour upon the warring bands

The devil’s blessings from their hands.

Who dreamed a dream ’mid outcasts born Could overbrow the pride of kings? They pour on Christ the ancient scorn.

His Dove its gold and silver wings Has spread. Perchance it nests in flame In outcasts who abjure His name.

Choose ye your rightful gods, nor pay Lip reverence that the heart denies,

O Nations! Is not Zeus to-day,

The thunderer from the epic skies,

More than the Prince of Peace? Is Thor Not nobler for a world at war?

They fit the dreams of power we hold, Those gods whose names are with us still. Men in their image made of old

The high companions of their will.

Who seek an airy empire's pride,

Would they pray to the Crucified?

O outcast Christ, it was too soon For flags of battle to be furled While life was yet at the hot noon.

Come in the twilight of the world: Its kings may greet Thee without scorn And Crown Thee then without a thorn."

The three Irish poets who wrote war verse of the most distinction are Winifred Letts, Patrick MacGill, and Francis Ledwidge. All played an active part — Miss Letts as a hospital masseuse, MacGill as a rifleman, on the Western Front, and Ledwidge as a lance corporal, first in the East and then in Flanders, where he was killed by a shell in the summer of 1917. Miss Letts's war poetry is to be found in The Spires of Oxford, and Other Poems (first published as Halloween and Other Poems); Patrick Mac-

138]

Gill's in Soldier Songs; and Ledwidge's in his Complete Poems. In the verse of each of these poets are found characteristics distinctly national, in that they appeared in the early Gaelic literature of Ireland. Miss Letts has a remarkable power of suggestion with a few words, a rich vocabulary, a quick sympathy for nature; MacGill shows the Celt's "revolt against the despotism of fact"; he can write exquisitely of his home land while he is yet in the trenches; Ledwidge reveals to a remarkable degree the Celtic feeling for the magic of Nature. There is no better example of the Irish sense of the value of the unsaid than these four stanzas of Miss Letts's poem: THE SPIRES OF OXFORD (Seen from a Train)

I saw the spires of Oxford As I was passing by,

The grey spires of Oxford Against a pearl-grey sky;

My heart was with the Oxford men Who went abroad to die.

The years go fast in Oxford, The golden years and gay;

The hoary colleges look down On careless boys at play,

But when the bugles sounded — War! They put their games away.

They left the peaceful river, The cricket field, the quad,

[139

The shaven lawns of Oxford To seek a bloody sod.

They gave their merry youth away For country and for God.

God rest you, happy gentlemen, Who laid your good lives down,

Who took the khaki and the gun Instead of cap and gown.

God bring you to a fairer place Than even Oxford town.¥

The poet's association with hospital work has borne fruit in "Screens," "To a Soldier in Hospital," "What Reward?" Of these the last is the most unusual; no one has more vividly described a sufferer

from shell-shock:

WHAT REWARD?

You gave your life, boy, And you gave a limb:

But he who gave his precious wits, Say, what reward for him?

One has his glory, One has found his rest.

But what of this poor babbler here With chin sunk on his breast?

Flotsam of battle,

With brain bemused and dim, O God, for such a sacrifice

Say, what reward for him? ¥

Miss Letts's religious faith is fittingly expressed in .

140]

EPIPHANY, 1916

The Kings still come to Bethlehem Though nineteen centuries have fled; The Kings still come to Bethlehem To worship at a Baby's bed. And still a star shines in the East, For sage and soldier, king and priest.

They come not as they came of old On lordly camels richly dight; They come not bearing myrrh and gold And jewels for a king's delight. All battle-stained and grim are they Who seek the Prince of Peace to-day.

They bring not pearls, not frankincense To offer Him for His content. Weary and worn with long suspense With kingdoms ravished, fortunes spent, They have no gifts to bring but these — Men's blood and women's agonies.

What toys have they to please a child? Cannon and gun and bayonet. What gold? Their honour undefiled. What myrrh? Sad hearts and long regret. For they have found through bitter loss That Kings are throned upon the cross.

The Kings still come to Bethlehem

With broken hearts and souls sore-vexed. And still the star is guiding them

Through weary nights and days perplexed. God greet you, Kings, that you may be New-crowned at His Epiphany.

Miss Letts's most notable achievement, however, is her sonnet sequence, ""Ad Mortuum" ("To One

[141

Dead"), wherein she not only has employed successful variations of the sonnet form, but also, in dealing with the simplest and most familiar things, has produced poetry of great spiritual exaltation.

ALIVE

Because you live, though out of sight and reach, I will, so help me God, live bravely too,

Taking the road with laughter and gay speech, Alert, intent to give life all its due.

I will delight my soul with many things,

The humours of the street and books and plays, Great rocks and waves winnowed by seagulls' wings, Star-jewelled Winter nights, gold harvest days. I will for your sake praise what I have missed, The sweet content of long-united lives,

The sunrise joy of lovers who have kissed, Children with flower-faces, happy wives.

And last I will praise Death who gives anew Brave life adventurous and love — and you.

Before the war, Patrick MacGill had attracted attention by a realistic novel of Donegal, Children of the Dead End. Born in the humblest circumstances, and at one time a navvy, or longshoreman, he nevertheless shows that ability in writing often natural to the Irishman. His poetry has technical excellence and real poetic feeling, though necessarily lacking in such a literary background as that of Miss Letts. In realism it is akin to the verse of Captain Graves.

142]

THE FLY

Buzz-fly and gad-fly, dragon-fly and blue, When you're in the trenches come and visit you, They revel in your butter-dish and riot on your ham, Drill upon the army cheese and loot the army jam. They're with you in the dusk and the dawning and the moon, They come in close formation, in column and platoon. There's never zest like Tommy's zest when these have got to die: For Tommy takes his puttees off and strafes the blooming fly."

Many of MacGill's songs of trench warfare are full of vivid pictures, but his Irish nationality asserts itself most strongly in poems such as

DEATH AND THE FAIRIES

Before I joined the Army

I lived in Donegal,

Where every night the Fairies Would hold their carnival.

But now I'm out in Flanders, Where men like wheat-ears fall, And it's Death and not the Fairies Who is holding carnival.18

Not only does Ireland's fairy lore hearten him in the midst of desolation, but he looks forward passionately to returning to his beautiful country:

[143

IT'S A FAR, FAR CRY

It's a far, far cry to my own land, A hundred leagues or more, To moorlands whefe the fairies flit In Rosses and Gweedore, Where white-maned waves come prancing up To Dooran's rugged shore.

There's a cabin there by a holy well, Once blessed by Columbcille,

And a holly bush and a fairy fort On the slope of Glenties Hill,

Where the dancing feet of many winds Go roving at their will.

My heart is sick of the level lands, Where the wingless windmills be,

Where the long-nosed guns from dusk to dawn Are speaking angrily;

But the little home by Glenties Hill, Ah! that's the place for me.

A candle stuck on the muddy floor Lights up the dug-out wall,

And I see in its flame the prancing sea And the mountains straight and tall;

For my heart is more than often back By the hills of Donegal.

Like MacGill, Francis Ledwidge was born of peasant folk. He grew up in the lovely country of the ancient province of Meath, not far from the Hill of Slane, where Saint Patrick lit the Paschal Fire, and near the Boyne, even more famous in ancient

144]

legend than in modern history. Ledwidge first sent his poetry to Lord Dunsany, whose chief seat is in Meath, and the result was the appearance, in IgI5, of Songs of the Fields, with a preface by Dunsany. By that time both authors were in the army, one with a commission, the other a non-commissioned officer. In 1917 was published Songs of Peace, and in 191g, after the poet's death, Last Songs, both also with introductions by Lord Dunsany. These three volumes are now collected in one, with the title, The Complete Poems of Francis Ledwidge.

The world is indebted to Lord Dunsany for his interest in Ledwidge, who has interpreted, as no other poet writing English, the peculiar charm of Irish landscape. If there is truth in Mr. Robert Frost's definition that poetry is but the weaving of new images, how excellent a poet is Ledwidge, who continually creates new and beautiful pictures! He begins a poem, "From its blue vase the rose of evening drops," and speaks of the poet "Bound to the Mast of Song." Even during the trials of active service, Ledwidge is preoccupied with landscape; sometimes it is the landscape where he finds himself, as in "Autumn Evening in Serbia," or in the description of the homing sheep in Greece; more often it is the flowing Boyne, and the misty greensided hills of his own country. Not only in the East, or in hospital in Egypt, but amid the terrible devastation of France and Belgium, he dreams of Ireland.

[145

Here is a poem dated January 6, 1917, and called oy Lite Rushes.::

The rushes nod by the river

As the winds on the loud waves go, And the things they nod of are many, For it's many the secret they know.

And I think they are wise as the fairies Who lived ere the hills were high, They nod so grave by the river

To everyone passing by.

If they would tell me their secrets

I would go by a hidden way,

To the rath when the moon retiring Dips dim horns into the gray.

And a fairy-girl out of Leinster In a long dance I should meet, My heart to her heart beating My feet in rhyme with her feet."

In a letter to Mrs. Hinkson, Ledwidge writes:

You ask me what I am doing. I am a unit in the Great War, doing and suffering, admiring great endeavour and condemning great dishonour. I may be dead before this reaches you, but I will have done my part. Death is as interesting to me as life. I have seen so much of it from Suvla to Strumnitza, and now in France. I am always homesick. I hear the roads calling and the hills, and the rivers wondering where I am. It is terrible to be always homesick."

Ledwidge seems destined to be cherished by Irishmen as Rupert Brooke by Englishmen; therefore it

146]

is significant to find, in "Songs of Peace," this tribute by the Irish to the dead English singer:

EVENING CLOUDS

A little flock of clouds go down to rest

In some blue corner off the moon's highway,

With shepherd winds that shook them in the West To borrowed shapes of earth, in bright array, Perhaps to weave a rainbow's gay festoons Around the lonesome isle which Brooke has made A little England full of lovely noons,

Or dot it with his country's mountain shade.

Ah, little wanderers, when you reach that isle Tell him, with dripping dew, they have not failed, What he loved most; for late I roamed awhile Thro' English fields and down her rivers sailed; And they remember him with beauty caught From old desires of Oriental Spring

Heard in his heart with singing overwrought; And still on Purley Common gooseboys sing."

Lord Dunsany and Katharine Tynan bear witness to Ledwidge's exceeding gratitude for the slightest favor, to his modesty and simplicity; he had an inborn fineness. There are both deep religious spirit and touching prophecy in these lines:

ASCENSION THURSDAY, I917

Lord, thou hast left Thy footprints in the rocks That we may know the way to follow Thee. But there are wide lands opened out between Thy Olivet and my Gethsemane.

[147

And oftentimes I make the night afraid Crying for lost hands when the dark is deep, And strive to reach the sheltering of Thy love Where Thou art herd among Thy folded sheep.

Thou wilt not ever thus, O Lord, allow

My feet to wander when the sun is set;

But through the darkness, let me still behold The stony bye-ways up to Olivet.8

In spite of Ledwidge's tender longing for Ireland, he was not one to regret the step he had taken.

And then I left you, wandering the war, Arméd with will, from distant goal to goal, To find you at the last free as of yore,

Or die to save your soul."

It is too late now to retrieve A fallen dream, too late to grieve A name unmade, but not too late To thank the gods for what is great; A keen-edged sword, a soldier's heart, Is greater than a poet's art. _ And greater than a poet's fame A little grave that has no name.

1920.

xX LORD DUNSANY: IRISHMAN

ORD Dunsany — peer, soldier, and man of letters — exemplifies qualities admired by the Irish and considered typical of their race. Reverence for family tradition is part of the Irish nature, a relic of the ancient clan system — and Lord Dunsany's family has long been associated with his native land, his peerage being one of the oldest in the country, he himself the eighteenth baron. The family name, Plunkett, is well known in the service of Ireland, for Lord Dunsany's uncle, Sir Horace Plunkett, is founder of that Irish Agricultural Organization Society which has done more than any other institution of the past thirty years to improve the condition of the poorer Irish farmers. Prowess in arms has always been honored by Irishmen, and Lord Dunsany is a veteran of two wars, that with the Boers, and the World War. He was with the Tenth Division (Irish) at Gallipoli, and he fought in Flanders. Wounded, he "paid with his body for his soul's desire," to use an apt phrase of Theodore Roosevelt's. The work of his imagination is enhanced by the fact that he was willing to fight for his dreams. As author, Lord Dunsany is further distinguished

[149

among his countrymen, for from the earliest days men of letters have been esteemed above their fellows by the Irish: a poet in ancient Ireland could claim equality with a king. Although the public has come to think of Lord Dunsany as a prose writer and dramatist, yet he wishes to be considered a poet. Since by birth and by calling Lord Dunsany thus combines what is admirable to Irishmen, it is natural to ask if his work shows racial characteristics. All his readers know that he has invented a country of his own, wherein he has laid the scene of most of his stories and plays. He has given this country a mythology set forth in his first book, The Gods of Pegana, and elaborated in later volumes. Country and gods recall the East of long ago; about them clings the strange charm of Persia, of Babylon. The nomenclature of the gods, and of the cities, the mountains, the rivers, of this imaginary land, suggests sometimes classical literature, particularly Greek; sometimes characteristics of the deities of places named; and sometimes both. Thus Skarl is the god who beats a drum; Slid, the god of the sea; Wohoon, the Lord of Noises in the Night; Alderon, a valley; Eidis, a river. Story after story deals with these fabulous dominions, their gods and men. The sustained imagination with which the author has presented the various aspects of his dream land, the fantasy he manifests, are qualities long associated with the Irish mind. In early Gaelic literature there

150]

are, for example, the various islands visited by Bran in his voyaging, the extraordinary transformations of gods and men.

As is the vigor of his imagination, so is the type of his plots an indication of Lord Dunsany's nationality. The Celt has ever been conscious of the laws of Nature which he cannot control; Change and Death fascinate and terrify him. In many cases, this feeling, which lends a wistfulness to Celtic music and to Celtic poetry, rises to fatalism. "They went forth to battle, but they always fell," is the motto chosen by Matthew Arnold for his famous essay, "On the Study of Celtic Literature." The queens left behind by Cuchulain when he goes to his last fight set up a cry of lamentation; before the birth of Deirdre, a druid declares that evil deeds will be done because of her. In no other modern writer of English is the consciousness of an inexorable universe more strong than in Lord Dunsany. This is suggested by the title of his second book, Time and the Gods, and is clearly enunciated in that wellsustained tale, "In the Land of Time," as well as in many other instances.

The gods know not yet whether it be true that THE END is waiting for the gods, and him who might have told Them, They have slain. And the gods of Pegana are fearing the fear that hath fallen upon the gods because of the vengeance of men, for They know not when THE END shall be, or whether it shall come.}

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In one of Lord Dunsany's more recent books, Fifty-One Tales, the same awe of Time constantly reappears, as in "Time and the Tradesman":

Once Time as he prowled the world, his hair grey not with weakness but with dust of the ruin of cities, came to a furniture shop and entered the Antique department. And there he saw a man darkening the wood of a chair with dye and beating it with chains and making imitation worm-holes in it.

And when Time saw another doing his work, he stood by him awhile and looked on critically.

And at last he said: "'That is not how I work," and he turned the man's hair white and bent his back and put some furrows in his little cunning face; then he turned and strode away, for a mighty city that was weary and sick and too long had troubled the fields was sore in need of him.?

A poignant realization of Death is given in “Death and the Orange”:

Two dark young men in a foreign southern land sat at a restaurant table with one woman.

And on the woman’s plate was a small orange which had an evil laughter in its heart.

And both of the men would be looking at the woman all the time, and they ate little and they drank much.

And the woman was smiling equally at each.

Then the small orange that had the laughter in its heart rolled slowly off the plate on to the floor. And the dark young men sought for it at once, and they met suddenly beneath the table, and soon they were speaking

162]

swift words to one another, and a horror and an impotence came over the Reason of each as she sat helpless at the back of the mind, and the heart of the orange laughed and the woman went on smiling; and Death, who was sitting at another table, téte-a-téte with an old man, rose and came over to listen to the quarrel.’

Lord Dunsany is concerned with the simplicities of life, with what is common to men wherever they may live, and in whatever age. This preoccupation is a Celtic characteristic, but it is also the charm with which the writer touches those beyond the boundaries of his native land, and becomes universal. Everyone who understands English can enjoy such pictures as “The Coming of the Sea” and “A Legend of the Dawn.”

A third characteristic of Lord Dunsany gives him kinship with his Irish predecessors. In no way does his poetic temperament show itself more than in his tender feeling for Nature. Knowing this, we can easily comprehend how he became the patron of Francis Ledwidge, the poet of the Irish countryside. To Lord Dunsany, machinery and the thousand and one devices associated with modern life are abominations, interfering with the beauty of pasture and of stream. His point of view is revealed in the closing sentences of “Time and the Tradesman.” There was never more magic in any picture than in this from “A Tale of the Equator”:

[153

Yea, I behold this palace, for we see future things; I see its white wall shine in the huge glare of midsummer, and the lizards lying along it motionless in the sun, and men asleep in the noonday, and the butterflies floating by, and birds of radiant plumage chasing marvellous moths; far off the forest and great orchids glorying there, and iridescent insects dancing round in the light. I see the wall upon the other side; the snow has come upon the battlements, the icicles have fringed them like frozen beards, a wild wind blowing out of lonely places and crying to the cold fields as it blows has sent the snowdrifts higher than the buttresses; they that look out through windows on that side of thy palace see the wild geese flying low and all the birds of the winter, going by swift in packs beat low by the bitter wind, and the clouds above them are black, for it is midwinter there; while in thine other courts the fountains tinkle, falling on marble warmed by the fire of the summer sun.‘

Not only in mind does Lord Dunsany show himself a Celt, but in technique: he is a master of words and of sentence structure, though his sense of rhythm is such that he sometimes arranges words in patterns that obscure their meaning; but this tendency to overdo is less apparent in his later than in his earlier work.

His skill in details of technique is nowhere better shown than in the passage quoted from “A Tale of the Equator”: how much is conveyed by the verbs “floating,” “glorying,” “dancing”! The variety of

154]

the picture described in this brief paragraph is given unity by parallel arrangement.

A particular merit of the author's writing either in tale or in play is his sense of climax. His style, however, sometimes has the defect of the Gaelic to which it is kin, in that the thread of the narrative, nearly always slight, is obscured by over-much attention to detail. Fifty-One Tales leaves a far clearer impression than the earlier Time and the Gods. Lord Dunsany concerns himself with the essentials of a story; he rarely develops a situation beyond what is necessary to convey a swift impression.

The predilection for brevity is especially noticeable in his plays. "The Gods of the Mountain," although in three acts, takes less than an evening in performance; the same is true of "The Laughter of the Gods." The dramatist, like the story-teller, concerns himself merely with essentials; there is only enough characterization to enable the audience to understand what manner of men and women are before them, to discern types rather than individuals. If there were more development, more incident, the plays would probably have a wider appeal, because the characters could be more strongly individualized; nevertheless, the playwright's sense of situation and of suspense enables him to hold interest in the theatre. The feeling of impending disaster grows increasingly ominous in "The Gods of

[155

the Mountain''; no situation could be more ironical than that at the close of "The Tents of the Arabs," when the King aids and abets the attempt to deprive him of his throne.

Dunsany sees the world with the eyes of a poet. His work in prose is full of poetry. There is poetic glamour in:

But although in the prison houses of earth all memories must die, yet as there sometimes clings to a prisoner's feet some dust of the fields wherein he was captured, so sometimes fragments of remembrance cling to a man's soul after it hath been taken to earth. Then a great minstrel arises, and, weaving together the shreds of his memories, maketh some melody such as the hand of Shimono Kani smites out of his harp; and they that pass by say: "Hath there not been some such melody before?" and pass on sad at heart for memories which are not.®

Lord Dunsany shows in "The Assignation," "The Songless Country," and "The City," that he is fully aware of the attitude of the world toward poets; nevertheless he is content to be one. Many readers on both sides of the Atlantic will rejoice that he was able to write:

I met with Death in his country, With his scythe and his hollow eye,

Walking the roads of Belgium. I looked and he passed me by.

156

IgI9.

CHANGING IRELAND

Since he passed me by in Plug Street, In the wood of the evil name,

I shall not now lie with the heroes,

I shall not share their fame,

I shall never be as they are,

A name in the lands of the free, Since I looked on Death in Flanders And he did not look at me.é

XI

alee production in America by the Irish players from the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, of Lennox Robinson's comedy, The White-headed Boy, reawakens interest in a neglected decade of AngloIrish literature, — 1911-1921, — and _ particularly in Mr. Robinson's own work, most of which falls within that period. During the World War it was natural that little attention should be given to the progress of writing in Ireland; the Rebellion of 1916, in which Irish poets played prominent parts, and the death in Flanders of the nature poet, Francis Ledwidge, were occasions of momentary exceptions. But the work of Irish authors in the last ten years should be familiar to all who would follow and understand the changing temper of Ireland. No Irish writer more faithfully interprets this time than the realist, Lennox Robinson.

Still in his thirties, he is one of the most noteworthy of the coterie influenced by Synge to turn their talents to the interpretation of contemporary Irish life. Like Synge, Mr. Robinson has done the greater part of his work for the theatre. At the outset of his career he showed unusual dramatic ability,

and he has now developed firm technique. Even ten years ago Lady Gregory and Mr. Yeats had so high an opinion of the young playwright that they asked him to accompany them to this country; he has since become manager of the Abbey Theatre, and his new play not only has been given in Ireland but has been one of the recent successes in London. Lennox Robinson is a dramatist of assured position.

Mr. Robinson's plays may be divided into two groups: those describing rural and small-town life in Ireland, and those dealing more or less remotely with Irish politics. To the first group belongs his earliest play, The Clancy Name, succeeded by The Crossroads, Harvest, and The White-headed Boy, the last produced originally in Dublin, on December 13, 1916. Between The Crossroads and The Whiteheaded Boy come the political plays, Patriots and The Dreamers. Mr. Robinson's latest play, The Lost Leader, is likewise of this class. The author's only novel, 4 Young Man from the South, and his Eight Short Stories were also published in this later period, although the novel was written before the Easter Rebellion.

Both prose volumes complement the plays. The novel is a penetrating study of a young man of Southern Unionist heritage in evolution from intense political conservatism to the physical-force radicalism of the Sinn Fein Party; the short stories are mainly accounts of life in that southern Ireland

where Mr. Robinson himself was born, the son of a clergyman in County Cork. The novel gives pictures of intellectual society in Dublin, and of the relations between unionists and nationalists, invaluable to the historian of the psychology behind the 1916 Rebellion; the identification of characters is, perhaps, as the foreword suggests, idle, but the fictitious Isabel Moore clearly suggests the Countess Markievicz, and other figures in the book bear resemblance to well-known persons in the Irish capital. Of the short stories, '"The Chalice" is a charming, though brief, psychological study of a priest of the Church of Ireland in a southern community. As is to be expected, the author's prose fiction is dramatic in method; for the subject of novel or sketch Mr. Robinson chooses one or more striking situations, and develops his theme largely by means of dialogue; so that the best idea of his powers is to be gained by studying him as a dramatist.

The Crossroads, his first long play, indicates Lennox Robinson's natural aptitude for suspense, situation, and climax. His plays are not closet drama. The Ibsen-like touch at the close of The Crossroads (in which the heroine is on the point of leaving her husband for her lover) becomes merely a device for complicating the suspense. Harvest and The Clancy Name are instinct with

dramatic irony; there is a poignancy in Harvest suggestive of Synge. Although more melodramatic and less universal in theme, The

160]

Clancy Name may be compared favorably with Riders to the Sea. The political plays, Patriots and The Dreamers, show their author's growing command of technique: the final act of Patriots is of extraordinary emotional intensity; while The Dreamers, based upon Robert Emmet's abortive rebellion in 1803, in proving the author's ability sharply to differentiate among forty characters, marks him as possessing the power that distinguishes dramatist from playwright, the power of creating men and women with the semblance of reality. The fantastic Lost Leader, dealing with a reincarnated Parnell, is the work of a finished craftsman experimenting. It is surprising that any American manager should have attempted to produce in this country a play requiring for its comprehension so intimate a knowledge of the intricacies of Irish politics as does this subtle satire on Unionist, Nationalist, and Sinn Feiner. Mr. Robinson portrays not only the hardships of Irish life, of peasant farmer, small shopkeeper, politician, but the idealism of Irish character, often a prey to its own defects. Timothy Hurley, in Harvest, because he has brought himself to the verge of ruin by educating his children and starting them in positions in life superior to that he occupies, burns his own property to obtain the insurance; the idealism of James Nugent's associates in Patriots is undermined by material prosperity. By showing Irish-

[161

men dissatisfied with their condition in life, with their fellow countrymen, yet struggling to hold a vision always before, although beyond, them, Mr. Robinson helps to explain why Sinn Fein, despite contradictions and illogicalities, has made such headway in Ireland. He is the dramatist of Irish discontent.

A comparison between Robinson and Synge has already been suggested. Both have written of the Ireland of their day, yet Mr. Robinson is the more faithful realist, for he does not stamp his personality V upon his dramas as did Synge. This may be due somewhat to the greater variety of people in Mr. Robinson's plays; he writes not only of the country but of the town,)whereas Synge dealt almost exclusively with peasant life in remote districts. Synge, moreover, was always a protestant against circumstance; in all his work he stressed the aspirations rather than the failures of his characters; in the last analysis he is a romanticist, or an idealist, rather than a complete realist Mr. Robinson, on the other a hand, although he shows the dreams of his characters, shows with equal emphasis their thwarting; he stands outside his people, almost indifferent to their fate; circumstance leads them whither it will. Perhaps Synge's extraordinary ear for prose cadence was partly responsible for the emphasis he placed upon the imaginings of his people, who speak in ff language that is a garnering of picturesque phrases

162]

rather than a faithful rendering of common speech. Nobly struggling against Destiny, Synge's figures have passionate poetic utterance; crushed by the monotony of every day, Mr. Robinson's men and women confine themselves to the less vivid words of familiar intercourse.

It is, however, interesting to find that the younger writer's finest play is The Dreamers. In this, like Synge in Deirdre of the Sorrows, the author writes of an earlier Ireland, in which he also most closely approaches the romanticism of his great predecessor. Amazing that, after the production of this play, and its publication with its outspoken preface, in 1915, the Government should have been surprised by the Rebellion of 1916: but of such is the obtuseness of governments. The theme was certainly suggested by the shaping of events in Ireland at the time. The preface also notes the author's attitude toward his material:

There is fact in this play and there is fancy, and only the student of those dreaming days will know where the one merges with the other. He is scarcely likely to approve of this attempt to recapture the emotion of an historical episode by means that are very often unhistorical; to his trained mind any study of Robert Emmet's insurrection which ignores Owen Kirwan, Anne Devlin and many another is unworthy of serious consideration. But selection and rejection of incidents and characters is the beginning and end of all playmaking;

[163

even in plays dealing with imaginary people there must always remain the country on the dark side of the moon, unknown to the audience but as vivid to the playwright as the side that shines on the stage. How much more crowded must that dark side be in an historical play when into a few acts must be crushed the emotions and actions of hundreds of people during several months? That is the only defence I can offer to his just criticism on the omissions in the play.

He will also, probably, quarrel with the title of the play and say that Robert Emmet was practical in all his qualities, a soldier, a tactician, a most able organizer. IT agree. But all these things were fused together for one purpose by the most practical quality of all— his dream. Dreams are the only permanent things in life, the only heritage that can be hoarded or spent, and yet handed down intact from generation to generation. Robert Emmet's dream came down to him through — how many? — generations. He passed it on undimmed.

-It is being dreamed to-day, as vivid as ever and — they say — as unpractical.

The skill with which Mr. Robinson has in The Dreamers created a large number of characters, has already been referred to. The third scene of the second act, where the stage shows a room in the White Bull Inn, Dublin, on the night of Emmet's rebellion, may be taken as a good instance of the dramatist's mastery of situation, dialogue, and character:

164]

[Hannay, Muuiican and Peter FREYNE are still there. Hannay is sober, the other two are slightly drunk. The room is quite full of men drinking, talking, smoking. When the curtain rises almost everybody is talking at once, and for half a minute there is a babble of undistinguishable conversation. It is nine o'clock on the evening of Fuly 2}.

Hannay. It's what I said myself to Mister Emmet, I would n't trust my life to them.

Puitips. I don't understand such things myself, but them cannons look good weapons.

Hannay. Cannons! Moyah! Bits of an old tree hollowed out, do you mean? I tell you what, Jackeen, I'd rather be in front of them than behind them when they're fired off.

Puitips. What d'ye mean?

Hannay. Mean? I mean they're damned ugly, dangerous things, and 't is as likely they'd kill the men behind as the men in front.

A Suritt Voice. I told him up to his puss I could feed a horse as good as himself.

ANOTHER Voice. True for you.

A Sma.u Crear Voice. The time of the last rising my a'nt had a dream —

MUuL ican (shouting across the room). For God's sake get us something to drink. Mangan, screech down to Julia.

Puiuips. *T is all right for young fellows to be going about with pikes and the like, but I'm a settled man with a wife and family.

A Mean-.Looxine Man. In course, 't is n't to be expected of you.

[165

FREYNE (loudly, rather drunk). I'm as ready as anyone to strike a blow when the time comes. Did anyone say I was afraid?

Voices. Yerra no. Quite yourself, man, quite yourself.

[PETER FLYNN comes in.

Peter (/oudly). Are there any of Mister Emmet's friends here?

Voices. Ay, we're all friends. What do you want?

Peter. You're wanted below in the Depot.

Hannay. We're doing all right where we are.

Perer. You are not. It's in the Depot you're to assemble. Don't you know that?

Hannay. I know as much as you do and maybe a trifle more.

PETER. Come on so.

Hannay. We're doing all right where we are.

Perer. You are not. Is it afraid you are?

Freyne. Who's afraid? D'ye think I'm afraid?

Prrer. You can't see the signal here.

Hannay. They'll pass within a stone's throw of the window. We'll join you, never fear.

Peter. The orders are to assemble at the Depot.

Mancan. Orders! Moyah! Whose orders?

Peter. Emmet's.

Mancan. What right has he to order us?

Puitips. Are n't we men the same as he?

Mancan. Ay, and a deal older than him for the matter of that.

A Voice. That's so.

[4 cheer is heard from the street.

166]

Peter. There! They're off! Are you coming, men?

Voices. What's that? Is he out? Yerra no. I tell you he is. Look out the window, Mike. Can you see anything?

MIKE (at window). It's Emmet sure enough. He's his sword drawn. There's a crowd after him."

The act closes with continued indecision and cowardice on the part of the men at the inn.

From what has been said, one might imagine Mr. Robinson's plays devoid of humor; the supposition would be far from the truth; humor gleams constantly through his realism; but it was not until late in 1916 that he produced the comedy of The Whiteheaded Boy. This is in marked contrast to The Dreamers, for, perhaps as a result of reaction to the grave events in Ireland during the spring, it is also devoid of politics. In power of characterization the dramatist has advanced even beyond The Dreamers; the dialogue sparkles; upon these the play depends, for the plot, although adequate, is slight.

The White-headed Boy is the old-fashioned comedy of Irish life raised to real artistry, yet having a serious purpose — keen satire of those who educate their children, without consulting them, for a station beyond their birth and for which the young people themselves may have no inclination. Mr. Robinson had already touched the theme in Harvest, but there it is swallowed up by the tragedy of Mary; here it

[167

forms the background of the romance of Denis; it is of such universal application that, coupled with the dramatist's masterly delineation of the foibles of human nature, it makes The White-headed Boy a comedy that can be appreciated in any country. In the stage directions of the printed version, the author has adopted the device of commenting upon his characters. There follows the opening of the play, the scene the interior of Mrs. Geoghegan's house in an Irish village:

[You can see from the appearance of the room we're looking at they're not wanting for comfort. Mrs. GEocHEGAN — poor WILLIAM's widow (that's her behind the table setting out the cups) — 1s a hearty woman yet, and, after all, I suppose she's not more than sixty-five years of age. A great manager she is, and, indeed, she'd need to be with three unmarried daughters under her feet all day and two big men of sons. You'd not like to deny Mrs. GEocHEGAN anything, she's such a pleasant way with her, yet you know she's not what I'd call a clever woman, I mean to say she has n't got the book-knowledge, the "notions" her husband had or her sister Euten. But maybe she's better without them, sure what good is book-knowledge to the mother of a family? She's a simple, decent woman, and what more do you want? That plain girl behind, pulling out the drawer, 1s the eldest daughter Kate. She was disappointed a few years back on the head of a match was made up for her and broken afterwards with a farmer from the east of the county. Some dispute it was about the for-

168]

tune, and he married a publican's daughter in the latter end. 'T ist likely Kate will ever marry, she's up to thirty-six by this time, with a grey streak in her hair and two pushing sisters behind her, but she's a quiet poor thing, no harm in her at all, very useful in the house, I'm told. I'm sure the mother'd be hard set to manage without her.

You're admiring the furniture? 'T was got five years ago at the Major's auction. ... Wt.11am bought the piano when he got married, I'm told it was old Doctor PurceL's. Anyway, it is areal old piano; the youngest girl, Baby, is a great one for music. The table's mahogany, the same as the chairs, only you can't see it by reason of the cloth. Theyre after setting the tea; they got that lamp new this afternoon, is wt it giving great light? Begob, there's a chicken and a shape and apples and a cake — it must be the way they're expecting company.

Oh, the old one? That's Hannan. There's not a house in the village she hasn't been servant in. She was at a hotel in Cork once. Two days they kept her.]

Hannan. Will I bring in the ham, ma'am?

Mrs. Geoc. Do. Reach me down the silver teapot, Kate. [I is n't real silver, of course, only one of them white metal ones, but catch Mrs. GEOGHEGAN calling it anything but the purest silver. She's smelling it.| There's a sort of musty smell from it.

Kate. Sure we have n't used it since Denis was here in the summer?

Mrs. Geoc. I'll make Hannah scald it. . . . God help us, is that the kitchen clock striking six?

[169

Kate. Ah, that clock is always apt to be a bit fast. Anyway, the train is n't due till the quarter, and it being market day, 't will be a queer thing if it's not ten minutes late, or more.

[Hannah's in again with the ham.

Mrs. Geoc. Put it there. Now run across to Mrs. O'Connell's, like a good girl, and ask her to oblige me with a couple of fresh eggs. Tell her it's for Denis they are, and she'll not refuse you.

Hannan. There was a duck egg left over from the dinner.

Mrs. Geoc. A duck egg! Is n't it well you know Denis has no stomach at all for coarse food? Be off across the street this minute.

Hannan. I will, ma'am. [And off with her.

Mrs. Geoc. Where's Baby?

Kate. She's above in the room, writing.

Mrs. Geoc. Musha! writing and writing. Is n't it a wonder she would n't come down and be readying the place before her brother?

Kate. Ah, what harm? 'T won't take us two minutes to finish this.

[This tall girl coming in is JANE. She has a year or two less than Kate. A nice, quiet girl. She and DonoucH Brosnan have been promtsed to each other these years past. Is it chrysanthemums she has in her hand 2

Jane. These are all Peg Turpin had. She stripped two plants to get them.

Mrs. Geoc. They're not much indeed, but Denis always had a liking for flowers. Put them there in the middle of the table.

170]

Jane. That's what Peg was saying. She remembered the way when he was a little child he'd come begging to her for a flower for his coat, and never could she refuse him.

Mrs. Geoc. Refuse him! And why would she refuse him? . . . Bring me the toasting-fork, Kate. Ill make the bit of toast here; 't will be hotter.

[Kate's off to the kitchen now. Amn't I after telling you she's a great help to her mother?

Jane. I met Aunt Ellen up the street.

Mrs. Geoc. For goodness' sake! Did she say she was coming here?

Jane. She did.

Mrs. Geoc. Oh, then, bad luck to her, what a night she'd choose to come here! Where are we to put her to sleep?

Jane. If we put Denis to sleep in the room with George and Peter —

Mrs. Geoc. You'll do no such thing. I'll not have Denis turned out of his room. The three of you girls must sleep together in the big bed; that's the only way we can manage. . . . What crazy old scheme has Ellen in her head this time, I wonder?

Jane. She did n't tell me, but by her manner I know she's up to something.

Mrs. Geoc. God help us! And Denis will be making game of her, and maybe she won't leave him the bit of money after all. ... There's a man's voice —'t is Denis.

[What a hurry she's in to open the door!*

[171

Like other writers, in his youth Lennox Robinson was chiefly impressed with the difficulties that beset men and women; but in maturity he is more than ever conscious of the humor that leavens human suffering; with time has come completer understanding of the stuff a dramatist's dreams are made of.

1922.

PART II

REVIEWS

A CELTIC PSALTERY

| fa spite of the preoccupation of nearly all the younger writers of modern Ireland with contemporary life, two men have retained their interest in the earlier literature that was the source of inspiration of the Celtic revival. These two men are Douglas Hyde and Alfred Perceval Graves, President of the Irish Literary Society, London. Mr. Graves has followed and been a friend to all the forms of self-expression practised by the Celt: he has studied folk-music, the old poems and legends, and the life of present-day Ireland as mirrored in prose, poetry, and drama. He has given his attention not only to the literature of his native Ireland, but to that of the kindred Wales. Lately he has published a book that will be of inestimable value to the student and lover of Celtic, as well as to anyone who cares for poetry, particularly poetry of the Middle Ages or earlier. This volume is 4 Celtic Psaltery, being chiefly a collection of poems translated from early Irish and Welsh originals.

The wealth and the beauty of the religious writings of ancient Ireland have long been known to scholars, but until comparatively recent years the reading public has had little idea of these poems and stories. Not long since, they formed the subject-

175

176]

matter of Lady Gregory's Book of Saints and Wonders, while Professor Kuno Meyer has translated them faithfully into either free verse or prose in his Reliques of Ancient Irish Poetry; but between the prose of Lady Gregory, who is not imaginatively akin to the unknown or forgotten Irish writers, and the careful scholarship of Kuno Meyer, an essential something has been lost — the salt is, as it were, without savor. Anyone may verify the truth of this assertion by examining Miss Eleanor Hull's Poem Book of the Gael, wherein she has gathered (with admirable literary discrimination) verse translations, many of them rhymed, from the Irish. These translations into rhymed verse really convey an impression of the beauty of the originals.

Worthy to stand beside The Poem Book of the Gael (which includes, by the way, some of Mr. Graves's own renderings) is 4 Celtic Psaltery, wherein the author has remarkably preserved the flavor of Celtic speech, together with certain characteristic literary conventions. He himself says in his valuable preface that

the latter attempt can be only a mere approximation, owing to the strict rules of early Irish verse both as regards alliteration and vowel consonance. Still, the use of the "inlaid rhyme," and other assonantal devices, have, it is to be hoped, brought my renderings nearer in vocal effect to the originals than the use of more familiar English verse methods would have done.!

[177

The early Irish translations are grouped under the heads: Irish Poems, Lays of the Irish Saints, Lays of Monk and Hermit, Invocations and Reflections, Lamentations. Among the poems are several more or less familiar to the reader who cares for Celtic, such as "The Breastplate of

Saint Patrick" and "Saint Patrick's Blessing on Munster"; but there are other poems which I do not remember ever seeing attempted before, notably the very fine "' Devil's Tribute to Moling," which begins:

He is pure gold, the sky around the sun, A silver chalice brimmed with blessed wine,

An angel shape, a book of lore divine, Whoso obeys in all the Eternal One.?

The skilful method of the author, his use of alliteration and of internal rhyme, is best illustrated by a stanza taken from "King and Hermit":

The bees, earth's small musicians, hum, No longer dumb, in gentle chorus.

Like echoes faint of that long plaint The fleeting wild-fowl murmur o'er us.

Of his translations from the Welsh, Mr. Graves says in his preface:

The same metrical difficulties [as in the Irish] have met me when translating the Welsh sacred and spiritual poems. ... But they have been more easy to grapple with — in part because I have had more assistance from ... Welsh scholars — in part because the later

178]

Welsh poems which I have rendered into English verse are generally in free, not "strict"? metres, and therefore present no great difficulty to the translator.

The selections cover the period from the bard Aneurin, in the sixth century, to the living writers, Elvet Lewis, Eifion Win, and W. J. Gruffyd. The Welsh translations are in general more successful as English poems than the translations from the Irish, perhaps for the reasons just quoted from the preface, but also, undoubtedly, because of the modern note. The translation of Eifion Win's "Flower Sunday Lullaby" is a distinct addition to English poetry.

The remainder of the volume is devoted to original poems by Mr. Graves, arranged in these main divisions: Old and New Testament Studies, Church Festivals, Good and Faithful Servants, Personal and Various. The group devoted to Good and Faithful Servants gives opportunity for the inclusion of the now famous "Father O'Flynn," and of a ballad hardly less deft and humorous, "'Old Doctor Mack." Among the other poems, the most interesting are the dignified stanzas in memory of Earl Kitchener, and the color and movement of "Earth's Easter." For the translations, however, 4 Celtic Psaltery will be longest remembered, since Mr. Graves has again rendered permanent service to Celtic letters, and has likewise added to the treasury of English poetry.

1918.

[179

JHE BATOER OF THE CREUTIC RENAISSANCE

OX of the earliest of Gaelic poems is addressed to "'Aed, great in kindling splendor." The phrase might well be applied to Standish O'Grady, whose three books, The Coming of Cuculain, In the Gates of the North, and The Triumph and Passing of Cuculain, have recently been published in this country, thus giving American readers easy access to writing which had a marked influence upon the earlier years of the so-called Celtic renaissance. Since Mr. Yeats and others have acknowledged their debt to Mr. O'Grady, it seems strange that many of the critics who have written of the Celtic revival should show little or no first-hand acquaintance with the work of the author of Jrish History: Heroic Period, Early Bardic Literature, and Irish History: Cuculain and his Contemporaries. 'These books were published between 1878 and 1881; that is, the last of them came out eight years before Mr. Yeats's Wanderings of Oisin, which is usually taken as the starting-point of the Celtic renaissance. The three volumes now published contain

material from the earlier books; that these reprints should appear at this time indicates that Irishmen are again taking an interest in the earlier literature of their country; there will be new writers to carry on the ancient tradition.

180]

As their titles indicate, the new books deal with Cuchulain (a more usual spelling of the name), the hero of the oldest Irish saga cycle, the champion who, single-handed, defended Ulster against invasion. Mr. O'Grady has relied for his facts chiefly upon the epic tale, "The Cattle Raid of Cooley," although, in order that the picture of the hero's life may be more fully delineated, he has, properly, drawn upon other texts. No one who reads the books will fail to understand the spell they have laid upon Irishmen; the author's writing has the power mentioned in the old poem about Aed. Not only does Mr. O'Grady kindle the splendor of Ireland's heroic past, but he stirs the reader's enthusiasm for it; the narrative has vividness, color, sound, movement. Of course much of this is due to the wealth of detail — unusual in other early literatures — which distinguishes Irish, but much also is to be attributed to the modern author. He makes abundant use of a device thoroughly appropriate to epic narrative — simile; and his figures are happily chosen, since nearly all depend for their effect upon Nature, and, therefore, do not have an exclusively modern flavor; the atmosphere of antiquity is well sustained. In the great hall of Cuchulain's father, " Ever as evening drew on and the candles were lit. . . the instruments of festivity and the armour and trophies. . . shone in the cheerful light," and the youthful hero appeared "over against his father. . . very fair and

[181

pure, yellow-haired, in his scarlet bratta fastened with a little brooch of silver, serene and grave beyond his years, shining there like a very bright star on the edge of a thunder cloud." * The noise of Cuchulain's chariot was such that "over every territory through which he flew. . . penetrated the brazen din, for around him there arose the manysounding musical tumult of bells that rang, and brazen traces that clanked," as "Across the Calan he rushed, while the foaming spray flew high above the trampling steeds," and "'along the reedy shores of Muckno," and he rumbled "Between the echoing woods and the gleaming lake." ®

However, Mr. O'Grady's great achievement is that from the obscure, confused, incoherent narrative of most of the early Irish texts he has made a connected story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The extent of his accomplishment is seen by comparing his rendition with a literal translation of the original. For example, the Gaelic account of the meeting between Cuchulain and Conall Cernach (when Cuchulain wishes to leave the Province of Ulster that he may seek warlike adventures), contrasted with Mr. O'Grady's retelling, gives an idea of the difficulty the author has surmounted in bringing out clearly the motive of the action, which is merely suggested in the Irish. Conall, says the modern author, in attempting to prevent Cuchulain from crossing the Ulster boundary, lays hands upon

182]

the steeds of the hero's chariot; but Laeg, the charioteer,

at a nod from Cuculain .. . let the steeds go, and Conall sprang aside out of the way, so terrible was the appearance of the horses as they reared against him. "Harness my horses and yoke my chariot," cried Conall, "for if this mad boy goes into the enemies' country and meets with harm there, verily I shall never be forgiven by the Ultonians."

His horses were harnessed and his chariot yoked,.. . and Conall and Ide in their chariot dashed through the ford enveloped with rainbow-painted clouds of foam and spray, and like hawks on the wing they skimmed the plain pursuing the boys. Laeg heard the roar and trampling, and looking back over his shoulder, said, —

“They are after us, dear master, namely the great son of Amargin and my haughty brother Ide, who hath ever borne himself to me as though I were a wayward child. They would spoil upon us this brave foray ase

“O Laeg,” said Cuculain,. . . “that champiod will be an impediment to us in our challengings and our fightings; for when we stop for that purpose he will overtake us, and, be our feats what they may, his and not ours will be the glory. Slacken the going of the horses, for we must rid ourselves of the annoyance and the pursuit of these gadflies.”

Laeg slackened the pace, and as they went Cuculain leaped lightly from his seat and as lightly bounded back again, holding a great pebble in his hand, such as a man using all his strength could with difficulty raise from the ground, and sat still, rejoicing in his purpose, and grasp-

ing the pebble with his five fingers.

[183

Conall and Ide came up to them after that, and Conall, as the senior and the best man among the Ultonians, clamorously called to them to turn back straightway, or he would hough their horses, or draw the linch-pins of their wheels, or in some other manner bring their foray to naught. Cuculain thereupon stood upright in the car, and so standing, with feet apart to steady him in his throwing and in his aim, dashed the stone upon the yoke of Conall’s chariot between the heads of the horses and broke the yoke, so that the pole fell to the ground and the chariot tilted forward violently. Then the charioteer fell amongst the horses, and Conall Carna, the beauty of the Ultonians, the battle-winning and ever victorious son of Amargin, was shot out in front upon the road.”

Contrast with this intelligible narrative the literal translation:

They come to Sliab Fuait. They meet Conall Cernach there. To Conall then was the protection of the province that day. Because each warrior of the Ulstermen will have his day in Sliab Fuait for the protection of anyone who comes with song or to fight with a man, in order that it should be met together with him, so that no one should come to Emain without warning. “For prosperity indeed, that,” said Conall; “it should be for victory and triumph.” “But go thou, O Conall, to the fort, and leave me on guard here notwithstanding,” said Cuchujain. “That will be enough,” said Conall; “if it be for the protection of one with song; if it be for fighting with a man, you are too forward.”

“Perhaps that has not been at all necessary,” said Cuchulain. “Let us go meanwhile,” said Cuchulain,

184]

“until we see before us the bank of Loch Echtrae. It is customary, the resting of the warriors of the Fene there.” “That is good to me,” said Conall.

They went onward then. He throws a stone from his sling until he has broken the shaft of the chariot of Conall Cernach. “What are you throwing stones at, O Boy?” said Conall. “To try my hand and the directness of my cast,” said Cuchulain. “And it is a custom to you Ulstermen not to travel beyond peril. Go back again to Emain, O Father Conall, and leave me here at my: sentry duty.” “Good with me, then,” said Conall. Conall Cernach did not go then beyond the place.

Not only has Mr. O’Grady made his story clear, but he has thoroughly steeped himself in the history, social customs, and literature of the Irish past, so that, in retelling the Gaelic narratives, he is able to make additions and changes which are in the spirit of the originals; above all, he has the gift of arranging his material for dramatic effect; each one of the many combats of

Cuchulain piques the attention, and the pitfall of monotony is almost entirely avoided. He fully understands the value of suspense.

The author's style has the sweep appropriate to an epic; but his books suffer from defects which may be attributed partly to their sources and partly to the time in which they were written. Monotony lurks dangerously in the background; there is also a tendency toward over-elaboration, which is not

[185

merely a Gaelic heritage, but an earmark of the writing of the eighteen-nineties. Likewise, the stories are marred by unfortunate attempts to orientate the morality of pagan Ireland with that of the reign of Queen Victoria. Greater accuracy would have ensured the preservation of fine passages which have been sacrificed, notably in the Deirdre story, and that striking bit from the story of Cuchulain's death where the hero goes to his last fight while the queens put up a cry of wailing and lamentation because they know the hero will not come again. There is also much carelessness in regard to details of good English: clauses out of place interfere with essential clearness, as do pronouns vague in reference. Nevertheless, these books are a successful working-over of early Irish; they possess a vitality not shared by many later and supposedly more faithful accounts.

Of Mr. O'Grady's influence upon the young men of the eighties, A. E., the eminent poet and economist, writes in an introduction to the first of the three new volumes, The Coming of Cuculain. Never has A. E. produced prose of more melody and charm than this introduction, which should be read by every person interested in contemporary Ireland, for it is an unusually clear interpretation of Irish nationality.

The setting forth of the Cuchulain story in these books should be examined by those who wish to

186]

know the history of the Irish literary revival; here is a definiteness lacking in the literal translations of scholars, so that it would be safe to hazard a guess that the work of O'Grady was for the young Irish writers of the eighteen-nineties far more of a source than was the work of more learned men. Moreover, this early work proves Standish O'Grady, now in his eighty-first year, to be still a dominant force in contemporary Irish literature.

1920,

JAMES STEPHENS AND THE IRISH SAGAS

Gees speaks of the solace of education remembered by men in trouble. The power of remembrance comforts the old with memories of the pleasures of youth, consoles the unfortunate, inspires the poet. He who has remembrance has a cloister wherein he may walk untroubled by the jangling of the world.

No people has had a livelier remembrance than the Irish. Their native tribal government was based upon tradition; their scribes carefully preserved the genealogies of kings and great men. When the country has been in terrible material distress, Irishmen, ignoring things temporal, have concerned themselves with preserving their spiritual treasures, the records of their sovereigns and their saints, their

[187

old poetry and tales. Irish writers are again revolting from the despotism of fact, and, in the midst of political turmoil, are finding inspiration in the splendid inheritance of the Gaelic past. Two years ago, James Stephens published Reincarnations, adaptations in verse of Gaelic poetry.

Now he has issued in prose a volume of Irish Fairy Tales, which have their sources in the work of students of Irish during the last thirty years, chiefly in that memorable collection by the late S. H. O'Grady, Silva Gadelica.

The advance of Irish scholarship within this period is of inestimable advantage to all who would make creative use of ancient material; writers today are able to gain a much more accurate knowledge of the Irish past than had Standish O'Grady when he wrote his Bardic History of Ireland, inspiring the Irish renaissance. Looking backward, it does not seem strange that Anglo-Irish writers of the nineties soon abandoned a literature incompletely translated, that they might interpret the life of their own day, with which, moreover, the Gaelic heritage was inextricably woven.

In the National Library of Ireland Mr. Stephens may have found all the material that he needed for his present book, and in Dublin he could have the advice and assistance of some of the most distinguished scholars. It is unfortunate, therefore, that in the arrangement of his volume he does not give greater heed to the various cycles in which nearly all

188 .]

Irish stories belong. The tales Mr. Stephens has chosen deal, for the most part, with the hero Fionn and his followers. Why, then, does the author insert in the midst of a series of tales about Fionn and his companions the independent story of "The Wooing of Becfola"? If Mr. Stephens wished the story in this place, he should have connected it in some way with the narratives that precede and follow it. This, since he has treated his sources freely, he might have done. 'The Story of Tuan MacCairill" has nu relation whatever to the rest of the book, save that it is a legend of Irish myth-history. A craftsman of Mr. Stephens's taste and ability should have associated it more closely with the succeeding tales.

But a certain lack of unity is almost the only defect of the book. Mr. Stephens has retold Irish legends in a volume that should take a permanent place in literature. As his earlier writings indicate, he is interested primarily in character; he vitalizes his heroes and heroines; their love affairs, their struggles with one another and against magic wiles, are for the moment as real as the tribulations of our daily lives. He emphasizes the imperishable human interest of Irish story, deftly smoothing out inconsistencies in the original texts, supplying motives, enlivening the narrative with sprightly dialogue. Great as is the author's constructive skill, this would count almost as nothing were it not that he has also caught the temper of early Irish writing;

[189

his style echoes the Gaelic. Here are the short sentences, the piling-up of picturesque details, the figurative language based upon the outdoor world, the fatalism, the sententiousness, that are distinctive features of the old Gaelic literature. Furthermore, Mr. Stephens has employed simple, dignified words; he has not confused the reader by the interpolation of modern dialect, the speech of uneducated country folk of present-day Ireland.

Indeed, Fionn loved Saeve as he had not loved a woman before and would never love one again. He loved her as he had never loved anything before. He could not bear to be away from her. When he saw her he did not see the world, and when he saw the world without her, it was as though he saw nothing, or as if he looked on a prospect that was bleak and depressing. The belling of a stag had been music to Fionn, but when Saeve spoke, that was sound enough for him. He had loved to hear the cuckoo calling in the spring from the tree that is highest in the hedge, or the blackbird's jolly whistle in an autumn bush, or the thin, sweet enchantment that comes to the mind when a lark thrills out of sight in the air and the hushed fields listen to the song. But his wife's voice was sweeter to Fionn than the singing of a lark. She filled him with wonder and surmise. There was a magic in the tips of her fingers. Her thin palm ravished him.

Her slender foot set his heart beating, and whatever way her head moved, there came a new shape of beauty to her face.

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Mr. Stephens is a literary descendant of the unknown scribes of the past; much that pleased them delights him. Here are the whimsy, the humor, the almost grotesque imagination, that marked The Crock of Gold. The description of the four daughters of Conaran shows the author at his best:

Their hair was black as ink and tough as wire: it stuck up and poked out and hung down about their heads in bushes and spikes and tangles. Their eyes were bleary and red. Their mouths were black and twisted, and in each of these mouths there was a hedge of curved yellow fangs. They had long scraggy necks that could turn all the way round like the neck of a hen. Their arms were long and skinny and muscular, and at the end of each finger they had a spiked nail that was as hard as horn and as sharp as a briar. Their bodies were covered with a bristle of hair and fur and fluff, so that they looked like dogs in some parts and like cats in others, and in other parts again they looked like chickens. They had moustaches poking under their noses and woolly wads growing out of their ears, so that when you looked at them the first time you never wanted to look at them again, and if you had to look at them a second time, you were likely to die of the sight.!

This may be equalled by the vigor of the account of a giant running:

Then he sprang up, and he took to a fit and a vortex and an exasperation of running for which no description

may be found. The thumping of his big boots grew as

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continuous as the pattering of hailstones on a roof, and the wind of his passage blew trees down. The beasts that were raging beside his path dropped dead from concussion, and the stream that snored from his nose blew birds into bits and made great lumps of cloud fall out of the sky.

By his absorption in characterization Mr. Stephens has perhaps neglected to envelop his stories with enough of the color that one finds in the Gaelic, and to give the quaint charm of a remote age. Standish O'Grady's renderings of the adventures of Cuchulain are still the Anglo-Irish masterpieces of color, and Fiona Macleod, in his retelling of the story of the children of Lir, casts over it a magic veil of distance through which the figures shimmer in beauty. Mr. Stephens might have added to his stories splendor without lessening their vitality. He has, however, done well to realize that to-day readers are interested as never before in men and women. His legendary people become real. He has made the dry bones of scholarship live.

1920.

192]

LADY GREGORY: FOLKLORIST | free GREGORY has proved her love of country,

her desire to make Irish literature as a whole more widely known, by her willingness to edit and publish the work of others. She began her career as an author with retellings of tales of the Irish past, and in her latest book, Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland, she has collected from the lips of her Galway neighbors testimony of their conviction that the Fairy world and the Fairy people are not far off; indeed, Fairies mingle in mortal affairs and mortals take part in the games, the festivities, the toil of Fairyland. From this it may be imagined that there is a close resemblance between the Fairies of modern superstition and the stately Tuatha De Danaan who are described in the sagas dealing with the ancient Irish heroes; but such a conclusion is

erroneous. If Lady Gregory has tried to make her readers believe that the Galway Fairies are survivors from mythical Ireland, the evidence she brings forward will not convince any but the most blindly enthusiastic. In the few cases where Fairies are mentioned as wearing garments that seem. to be the kilts or the cloaks of early Ireland, the speaker has usually been shown beforehand a modern painting depicting the Tuatha De Danaan. As a rule, the Fairies of contemporary western Ireland are dressed

[193

as most people would expect: the men, in ordinary clothes, and often with the conventional high hats; the women, in the red petticoat of the country; and the behavior of both smacks of roguishness far more than of dignity. Their most important point of likeness to their ancestors is that they are generally of human size, not invariably the "little people" of the present-day Fairy book.

Although Visions and Beliefs is primarily a contribution to the science of folklore, in these days of interest in the occult the book will probably find many readers who will desire to compare the unseen dwellers in the Irish hills with the spirits of other worlds. The spiritualistic side of the stories is developed by Mr. Yeats in his notes (which would be more valuable did they include page references) and in two essays, "Witches and Wizards in Irish Folklore," and ""'Swedenborg, Mediums and the Desolate Places," one of which is contained in each of the two volumes. Since the tales themselves have been taken down from the conversation of more or less uneducated men and women, they have little value as narrative, though there are notable exceptions. To offset this, Lady Gregory has grouped them together under various headings, such as "'SeaStories," "Appearances," "The Unquiet Dead," and she has added introductions to the several sections. Never has she written more happily than in these prefaces, which are filled with characteristic

194]

Celtic realization of the vast forces that sway the world. "Astray, and Treasure," in the second volume, begins:

"Mr. Yeats in his dedication of "The Shadowy Waters' says of some of our woods: Dim Pairc-na-tarav where enchanted eyes Have seen immortal mild proud shadows walk; Dim Inchy wood that hides badger and fox

And martin-cat, and borders that old wood Wise Biddy Early called the wicked wood.

"T have heard many stories of people led astray in these by invisible power, though I myself, although born at midnight, have lived many hours of many years in their shades and shelters, and, as the saying is, have 'never seen anything worse than myself.'

"Last May a friend staying with us had gone out early in the afternoon, and had not come back by eight o'clock dinner-time. As half hours passed we grew anxious and sent out messengers riding and on foot, searching with lanterns here and there in the woods and on Inchy marsh, toward which he had been seen going. It was not till long after the fall of darkness that he returned, tired out with so many hours of wandering, and with no better explanation than ' Yeats talks of the seven woods of Coole, but I say there are seventy times seven.' It was in dim Inchy and the wicked wood it borders he had gone astray; and many said that was natural, for they have had a bad name, and May is a month of danger. Yet some unbelievers may carry their incredulity so far as to believe that the creator of

[195

Father Keegan's dreams may himself have dreamed the whole adventure."

After each introduction comes the phrase “I was told by,” which ushers in the testimony, now of a fisherman from one of the Aran Islands, now of a cottager near Lady Gregory’s demesne. The evidence given varies from a single sentence to several pages, and each selection bears the name of the speaker, fictitious when that person or his relatives are still alive. It will be illuminating for American readers to find that the power of seeing people from another world does not desert the Irish who have come to live among the practical activities of our towns, as this story about Boston shows:

There was a man had come back from Boston, and one day he was out in the bay, going toward Aran with £3 worth of cable he was after getting from McDonagh’s store in Galway. And he was steering the boat, and there were two turf-boats along with him, and all in a minute they saw he was gone, swept off the boat with a wave and it a dead calm.

And they saw him come up once, straight up as if he was pushed, and then he was brought down again and rose no more.

And it was some time after that a friend of his in Boston, and that was coming home to this place, was in a crowd of people out there. And he saw his friend coming to him, and he said, “I heard that you were drowned”’; and the man said, “I am not dead, but I was brought

196]

here, and when you go home, bring these three guineas to McDonagh in Galway for it’s owed him for the cable I got from him.” And he put the three guineas in his hand and vanished away.®

Bacon said that some books are to be tasted, others to be chewed and digested. Visions and Beliefs is of the former class; folklorists will use it as a work of reference (although scholars would find it more valuable were it supplied with a good index), while those seeking entertainment only will enjoy chiefly Lady Gregory’s interpretative passages.

1920.

CURTIN’S IRISH FOLK TALES W HEN the authoritative history of Anglo-

Irish literature is written, there will have to be a chapter devoted to the contributions of men and women living in the United States. In this chapter, Boston and its environs will be prominent, for Harvard University first offered regular instruction in the early Irish language; Louise Imogen Guiney, Boston poet, published a volume of selections from the poetry of James Clarence Mangan, one of the most noteworthy precursors of the Irish literary revival; and Jeremiah Curtin, folklorist and linguist, issued in Hero-Tales of Ireland one of the most important collections of Irish folk stories published during the early days of the renaissance.

[197

Though in his lifetime he was popular chiefly as the translator of Sienkiewicz, since his death Mr. Curtin seems destined justly to be remembered for his work in preserving the folk legends of his ancestors.

The first twelve “Hero-Tales” are now reprinted, with illustrations, by the former publishers, and are offered to youthful readers. The present volume cannot be too highly commended, since the folk tales have not been “adapted,” but are given as they were originally written. Mr. Curtin passed a number of years in Ireland taking down stories from the lips of the peasantry; as a preserver of traditional tales he deserves to be named with Douglas Hyde, with whom he shares also a feeling for literary style, a gift noticeably absent in many recent narrators of Irish stories. Curtin’s renderings have many points of similarity with their Gaelic sources; not only is the parallel structure common to the Irish vernacular here in evidence, but the splendor of the Irish imagination burns brightly, often becoming grotesque, as firelight casts weird shadows upon a

wall. The lack of coherent plot — also a feature of early Irish stories —is a defect that, even if noticed by the young people for whom the book is intended, will not seriously interfere with their enjoyment, for details are carefully elaborated. Elements familiar in fairy and folk stories of other countries appear in nearly all these Irish tales: giants, princesses, heroes forced to undertake seemingly insuperable

198]

tasks; yet the well known is almost always given an unusual turn. For instance, breadth of conception changes this fundamentally trite description into something well-nigh original:

A long time before it was prophesied that young Conal, son of Gulban, would cut the head off the Yellow King, so seven great walls had been built around the castle, and a gate to each wall. At the first gate, there were seven hundred blind men to obstruct the entrance; at the second, seven hundred deaf men; at the third, seven hundred cripples; at the fourth, seven hundred sensible women; at the fifth, seven hundred idiots; at the sixth, seven hundred people of small account; at the seventh, the seven hundred best champions that the Yellow King had in his service."

Here is a striking variation upon the giant who calls for human flesh:

I find the smell of men from Erin; their livers and lights for my supper of nights, their blood for my morning dram, their jawbones for stepping-stones, their shins for hurleys! ¥®

The student of early Irish literature will find much to interest him in noting the changes these stories have undergone in their passage through the centuries; they are not in a primitive, but in a late, stage of development: deities have been transformed into champions, Christianity is interwoven with paganism, striking touches of description are conventionalized, medizeval courtesy and pageantry

[199

have softened rude customs. However, the title of the earlier volume, Hero-Tales, does not belong properly to this partial reprint, for, with the advance in the knowledge of early Irish literature that has come since Curtin's original book was published, in 1894, the word "hero-tales" is now correctly used to designate only stories that may be connected with the great saga cycles, such as deal with Cuchulain or with Finn; none of the stories in this book may be so grouped.

But these matters of comparative criticism will rightly have little concern for most readers of this book, who could have no better introduction to Irish writing than these stories abounding in imagery and vitality, with a charming simplicity and directness in spite of the elaborate detail, and, above all, finely phrased. Hero-Tales of Ireland will be a particular boon to teachers in search of supplementary reading, for with authority it combines human interest.

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AN IRISH "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"

RITICS of the Irish literary revival have often asserted that Ireland has produced recently little prose fiction equal to her contemporary poetry and drama. However that may be, in the last eight or ten years there have been several novels of Irish

200]

life that rank above the ordinary — for instance, St. John Ervine's Changing Winds and Lennox Robinson's 4 Young Man from the South. To this group must now be added Conquest, by Gerald O'Donovan, whose earlier book, Father Ralph, a study of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, aroused interest nearly a decade ago. Those who remember Father Ralph will expect

from Mr. O'Donovan a thoughtful, well-written volume, and they will not be disappointed. In this new book dealing with the farreaching Irish question, he has contrived a plot and created characters that enable him to present the points of view of the several political parties as expressed by the country gentleman, the farmer, the worker in Sir Horace Plunkett's coéperative movement, the Nationalist M.P., the inflexible Sinn Feiner. In the way in which Mr. O'Donovan lets his characters voice individual opinions, he shows somewhat of the dramatist's aloofness, but he also makes clear that he is not on the side of the ultraconservative; indeed, the word "conquest" stands for the statesmanship of the older politicians of the period before the World War as opposed to the ideals of the younger men who themselves served in it. Mr. O'Donovan stands above faction; he looks with tolerance upon conflicting beliefs, and toward an understanding between England and Ireland wherein sympathy and love shall replace distrust and hatred. He seems to frame his own hope in the passage:

[201

Arabella folded up her sewing, her eyes on a turbulent little stream that merged quietly near the bridge into the broad, smooth-flowing Owneybeg. It was so that hatred sometimes lost itself in love, gently, almost without effort. How she had ignored Theobald, despised him, hated him—and then? 'There was her father-in-law with his little bundle of hates; and her own father at Lissyfad with his: mere bundles of Green and Orange misunderstandings and pitiful spites. They were blind and could n't see. How alike they were, too, in all essentials, generous, lovable, different though they thought themselves. Would love, the solvent, ever do for them what it had done for her? '®

Unlike many Irishmen, especially those who touch the tangled skein of politics, Mr. O'Donovan does not allow his emotions to overbalance his intellect, but he fully realizes how emotion and imagination influence the political outlook of nearly all his fellow countrymen. By adopting the form of the novel, he is able to indicate more clearly than the average historian the interplay of religion and politics in the daily life of Irishmen; he conveys the impression that, though complicated by religion, the Irish question is not fundamentally a religious issue. A Roman Catholic peer is an out-and-out Unionist; the daughter of a Protestant landowner is an ardent Sinn Feiner.

Since the evident aim of the author is to interpret the Irish difficulty, he may be expected to sacrifice plot and characters to his purpose; but this he has

202]

done to a surprisingly slight degree. He is always an able craftsman; the first of the five "Books" into which he has divided Conquest proves that he can create lifelike characters, and that his mastery of south of Ireland dialect is almost the equal of St. John Ervine's mastery of the dialect of the north. Like Mr. Ervine in Changing Winds, Mr.O' Donovan sets forth his story chiefly by means of dialogue and by explaining the thoughts and feelings of his imaginary people. He allows his readers to be present at a series of dinners, house parties, and family conferences, from the year 1896 to the era of military rule in Ireland. At these gatherings there are frequent political discussions in which the speeches are sometimes unnaturally long. There is, moreover, an occasional tendency to submerge individuality by portraying mere types. His plot, however, fits naturally with recent Irish history, and is far from lacking in incident. Cleverly he implicates his figures in the drilling of the Ulster and of the National Volunteers, and the gun-running of the Nationalists, during the days immediately preceding the outbreak of the World War. To readers in the United States, the most interesting part of the book will probably be the description of a visit of the hero to New York during the spring of 1916, wherein Mr. O'Donovan gives an accurate and penetrating account of the attitude of Americans of Irish blood toward Ireland and England at the time of the Easter Rebellion.

[203

Although the author's narrative method, stressing characterization and dialogue, resembles that of Mr. Ervine, in one respect Mr. O'Donovan rounds out his story more completely than has been the custom of his distinguished contemporary: he gives in Conquest a background of landscape almost entirely lacking in Mr. Ervine's novels. Here is the description of Jim Daly's return to Ireland after an absence of fifteen years:

He saw Ireland first as a grey trail on the horizon, scarcely distinguishable from the soft haze. A hill or two stood out more solidly. He tried to identify them. No, he had never really seen them before. . . .

As the sun rose higher out of the sea, in the wake of the boat the thin curtain of mist seemed to waver and break. ... The islands were Lambay and Ireland's Eye, and the bold headland was Howth. The smoke smudge in the flat was Dublin. Bray Head was the sentinel on the left. The blaze of glittering light between was the series of little terraced towns, Dalkey, Killiney, Kingstown, Blackrock, their windows reflecting the sun."

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of Conquest without quoting at least one of the political commentaries. Kenrick, an American lawyer, thus analyzes the Irish question as it affected American politics just before the Dublin rising of 1916:

Those fellows tell me they want a union of the English-speaking race. It's a climb down for the British

204.]

lion, and if she wants it, she's got to pay for it by some straight thinking. The Irish question means a great deal tous. It's been cutting for years across our own politics. . . . It'sa damn nuisance. I have no bitter memories of England. I come of Episcopalian Ulster stock, and have no reason to hate England. My feelings towards her are only those of the average American. But it's different with the great majority of the Irish in America. The iron has bitten into their blood, and they feel ten times more bitter against England than the most extreme Sinn Feiner in Ireland. They're the great bar to America's not coming sooner into the war. They'll stand in the way till doomsday of any real understanding between America and England unless England plays the game decently with Ireland. They'll go into the war because they're Americans. But up to the day America goes in they'll intrigue against England. They 'll hate her while they're in, and they'll work against her with increased fervour when they get out.8

It may readily be admitted that Conquest is not a novel of the highest order; nevertheless, the story has interest, humor, romance, and characterization sufficient to make it worth reading apart from its concern with one of the important problems of the English-speaking world to-day. The analysis of the Irish question is so penetrating, lucid, and impartial that the novel must immediately become an outstanding book, to be recommended to all thoughtful people. It may indeed become the Uncle Tom's Cabin of Ireland.

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[205

IRELAND AND ENGLAND ey history has long been a fertile field for the

propagandist. Whatever a man's political opinions, there are facts of Irish history to support them. The resuit is that laymen outside of Ireland have become more and more confused as to the Irish question, some regarding it with the amused tolerance of auditors at a musical comedy, others seeing tyranny unexampled in modern times — a great and supposedly liberal nation taking unfair advantage of a smaller. There has long been need of a book which should examine

Irish history and the statements of political writers; particularly has this need increased during the last six years, more especially during the last six months.

Ireland and England: in the Past and in the Present, by Edward Raymond Turner, Professor of European History in the University of Michigan, is the longdesired book. Professor Turner gives a full, clear account of Irish history from tribal days to May, 191g. With judicial mind and sympathetic heart he examines in detail the arguments of the several political parties, Unionist, Nationalist, and Sinn Fein. Since he is an American, he looks at the Irish question with the aloofness of an outsider; yet his South Irish blood quickens his sympathy, and his

acquaintance with England enables him to under-

206]

stand the English point of view. There are traces in the author's style of his Irish heritage: he makes frequent and deft use of quotations from the Irish poets, and of parallel structure, which is characteristic even of the earliest Irish prose. Professor Turner's writing has a warmth often absent from the prose of Americans without Celtic blood. One of the most appealing features of his book is the use of passages from various Irish writers of the past and present, which are placed at the beginning of the several chapters. These quotations, often in antithetical pairs, make an admirable introduction to the discussion which follows.

Notwithstanding these merits, style is the least satisfactory part of Ireland and England: in spite of clearness and flashes of excellent writing, there is lack of sustained distinction. In extenuation is the possibility that the increasing interest of Americans in Ireland has urged author and publishers to issue the book sooner than they had originally intended.

Ireland and England is divided into three sections: Power and Subjection; The New Age: Atonement and Redress; Irish Nationality and the War. The five opening chapters contain a summary of Irish history until the Parliament of Grattan, this summary giving a clear picture of the miseries of Ireland, but at the same time treating Irish history in comparison with the contemporary history of the

[207

rest of the world. The true causes of misfortune for Ireland are thus frequently substituted for the apparent, and happenings of centuries ago are not judged entirely by modern standards of political morality. Of the close of the Middle Ages, Professor Turner writes:

What England had accomplished in Ireland was mostly an evil thing. She had not really conquered it, but she had been able to retard its own development, keep its people from their heritage, whatever that might have been; and she had sowed evil seeds for the future. As one peers far back into this old time, he is oppressed with sadness more than with anger, for here was the result of circumstance, ignorance, and incapacity, rather than malevolent intention."

The author keeps his tolerant point of view in the three remaining chapters of the first part, which carry the history of Ireland through the time of the Fenians.

One of the most noteworthy points about the book is that, even in his account of early history, Professor Turner constantly draws parallels between the past and the present, thus making his book not only timely, but enabling the reader to trace the continuity of certain phases of the Irish problem. Part of the discussion of the union of Ireland with Great Britain admirably illustrates the author's method.

208]

When the rebellion of 1798 was ended, the younger Pitt. . . was confronted with problems much greater than those concerning Ireland alone. One of the things to be noticed by the student of

Irish history is the narrow views of a great many of its writers. Recently advocates [Sinn Fein and Nationalist]. . . have seemed to take into consideration nothing but the affairs of Ireland alone, and seemed to care little for the effects upon England and the rest of the world. ... So the... writers who tell the story of the union of Ireland with England expatiate with horror upon the fraud and corruption and violence which brought it about, without intelligent study of the conditions which prevailed then, and tell the story with reference solely to Ireland, recking little . . . that then also England was locked in struggle with one of the mightiest of her foes. . . . Irishmen, justly discontented, were inviting Frenchmen to invade their island, as in 1914 some others sought assistance from Germans. Then as now a hostile Ireland, giving base for the enemy's flank attack, might have been fatal...

There were other considerations. Under Grattan's Parliament the aspirations of many Irishmen had been very fine, and they had struggled manfully against fatal and evil conditions. . . . It is true also that reactionaries both in England and in Ireland had tried to make them fail. The fact was, however, that Ireland under her own parliament had not achieved union of the peoples or solution of the problems that vexed them. Had there been no international dangers, and if the best men of Ireland had had a longer time and a fairer chance, perhaps all of these difficulties would have been re-

[209

moved, in the end. But while the ardent and discontented now may describe merely the iniquity of wrongs in the past, statesmen at the time had to deal with things as they were."

The second section of Professor Turner's book treats of the relations between Ireland and England from the days of the Fenians until the opening of the World War. There is an account of Land Legislation; of the Agricultural Renaissance, associated with Sir Horace Plunkett; of the Government of Ireland, and of the Struggle for Home Rule. The illuminating chapter, Arguments About Home Rule, is introduced as follows:

In this chapter I purpose to sum up the arguments used in the Home Rule struggle. . . . In expounding them it is necessary to deal with many matters highly controversial, with statements exaggerated, spoken in bitterness and passion, many of them greatly offensive to one side or the other, often seeming cruel and untrue. In this chapter I hold no brief. . . . I neither defend nor vouch for the truth. It is my purpose to expound the things which were said, which the contestants desired men to believe.?!

Part Two closes with a thorough account of the position of Ulster.

The last section of the book, Irish Nationality and the War, will be of the widest interest to-day. It is appropriately introduced by a chapter on the Irish Language and Literature (both in the vernacu-

210]

lar and in English). While open to objection as literary criticism, there is shown justly the relation between the literary revival and the growing spirit of Irish nationality. The origin and growth of Sinn Fein, and the relations of Sinn Fein, the Nationalists, and England are carefully and clearly explained, and in such a way that the great good accomplished by Sinn Fein in fostering fresh enthusiasm for Irish culture remains in the reader's mind distinct from the Sinn Fein political programme. The author says: "Sinn Fein and its idea of the complete independence of Ireland I have tried to discuss sympathetically from the point of view of Sinn Fein."?? In a comparison between Robert Emmet and Padraic Pearse, first "'President of the Irish Republic," Professor Turner has written on an earlier page: ''For his [Robert Emmet's] immediate failure he paid with his life, and like Padraic Pearse, another one great of soul and of kindred spirit a hundred years later, he died an enthusiast and pureminded martyr.''*s Of the

others who perished in the Easter Rebellion he asks: '"What judgment shall be given upon them? Certainly they were not wicked or depraved; but were they not sometimes childlike and foolish, seeing only a little of the things in this world, and seeing that little with such terrible ardor that brain and heart were on fire?" *4

Professor Turner has produced an admirable

book. For the method of the propagandist he has

[211

substituted that of the historian. In footnotes he states exactly the sources of his quotations, and adds to his work a bibliography of ten pages, wherein nearly every volume listed is briefly described. His exposition will be welcomed alike by scholars and by laymen. To Americans at the present time it will be invaluable, for the author tells without prejudice the whole story of the relations between Ireland and Britain. That whole story Americans must understand if they would have a true opinion of the Irish question and, by force of their opinion, aid in the solution of the Irish problem.

An American supporter of Sinn Fein made the extravagant statement that Mr. Creel's book on Ireland was "worth an army" to Ireland's cause. Perhaps he meant the German Army? If that sweeping statement were true, then Ireland and England would be worth the armies of all the Allies. Wherever men and women cherish good-will toward Ireland Professor Turner's book will find friends.

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PRELATE AND PROFESSOR ON IRISH POLETMCS

a Irish National Bureau in Washington would have us believe that there are but two political camps in Ireland to-day: the Sinn Fein, or Republican Party, advocating the complete separa-

219]

tion of Ireland from the British Empire, and the Unionist, of which the majority is in northeast Ulster, urging the maintenance of the present legislative union with Great Britain. Nevertheless, there are Irishmen who desire for their country selfgovernment within the Empire; in the House of Commons at Westminster still sit members of the old Nationalist Party, and the newer party, which favors dominion government as the solution of the political difficulty, has for its organ a paper the equal of such distinguished English weeklies as the New Statesman and The Spectator — the Irish Statesman. Among supporters of self-government as opposed to independence are found the names of Irishmen long eminent as servants of their country in politics, in letters, and in war. To this group belong Lord Dunraven, who accomplished much in establishing just relations between landlords and tenants; Mr. W. B. Yeats, the poet who has done more than anyone else to attract the attention of the world to contemporary Irish literature; Captain Stephen Gwynn, and a goodly number of other volunteers who fought for the Allied cause in the recent war.

Despite the whirlwind assertions of Sinn Feiners in the United States, it is the still small voice (as in Biblical story) which brings conviction. That authoritative voice speaks in two new publications by men who have long held important and entirely different positions in Ireland, yet have come to the

[213

same general conclusions in regard to their country. These men are: the Reverend Walter McDonald, D.D., Prefect of the Dunboyne Establishment, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth; and Grenville Cole, Fellow of the Royal Society, Member of the Royal Irish Academy, and

Professor of Geology (at the College of Science, Dublin) since 18g90— that is, during the whole period of the Celtic Renaissance, or revival of interest in the Irish language, literature, and ancient customs. These authors have written, respectively, Some Ethical Questions of Peace and War, with Special Reference to Ireland, and Ireland the Outpost. Burns and Oates, the well-known Roman Catholic publishing house, has issued Father McDonald's book, and the Oxford University Press, Professor Cole's.

Father McDonald is Professor of Theology at Maynooth, a seminary revered the world over by Roman Catholics of Irish blood; therefore his book, which has the further authority of the Imprimatur of his church, commands particular attention. The volume is the outcome of a discussion of the tenets of Sinn Fein by a group of priests. These tenets Father McDonald examines as one well versed in philosophy and theology, and giving scholarly references to his authorities. Lest his opponents should first of all condemn him as not of Gaelic blood, he disposes of this objection in his preface. He states further: ""Of my forbears, moreover, none, as far as

214]

I can learn, ever took service of any kind under the English, or got any special favour from them. . . . To my own people, of the Gael, is due the best I have.

To make his reasoning clear, the author reduces the Sinn Fein argument to this syllogism:

No fully independent nation ceases to be so de zure, except by the free consent of its people; but Ireland never freely consented to resign that status; therefore she is de iure fully independent now.

Here we have as major premise what purports to be a universal principle of Ethics, particularised in the minor by two statements of facts."

With these statements of fact Father McDonald deals first, and has little difficulty in bringing forward an array of scholars competent to show that Ireland has always lacked what many people deem the most important element of nationhood — the unity that comes from a strong central government. In proving this, he quotes from the published writings of Professor Eoin MacNeill, himself a Sinn Feiner. After this striking use of admission against interest, the author takes up Ireland's acquiescence in the loss of her independence, and shows, with reasoning supported by numerous varied authorities, that

St. Laurence O'Toole, Hugh O'Neill, Roderick O'Donnell, the Confederation of Kilkenny, Owen Roe

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O'Neill, and the Patriot Parliament of 1689, all had their being before the broken treaty of Limerick; and all professed allegiance to the kings of England. . . . And in the later period, since the Union. . . the priesthood not only gave up Repeal for Home Rule, but taught the people to regard the English government as legitimate, under pain of excommunication and eternal death."

In these days of Sinn Fein violence it is worthy of notice that the decree of excommunication just mentioned still holds, and that "the authority against which the Sinn Feiners plot is the present government of Ireland." The words of the decree are quoted: "Those who get enrolled in the Masonic Sect, or any other such association which plots against the Church or legitimate civil powers, incur excommunication ipso facto." 8

Passing from these questions of fact to the ethical principle of the major premise, the falsity of this premise is proved in two carefully reasoned chapters which show wide acquaintance with history, and, of course, with the Roman Catholic writers on ethical questions. The illogical and

false position of Sinn Fein thus revealed, the remainder of the book goes to enforce the earlier arguments. In the few other instances where the author modestly departs from ethical questions to consider facts, he is no less convincing than in his own sphere. For instance, after discussing the report of the Childers Commission and Sir William Harcourt's Death Duties Budget,

216]

he states a fact which he declares to be generally accepted as true, "that in the years immediately preceding the great war, our country, being poor, was run at a loss to England." This, I believe, directly controverts assertions of the Irish National Bureau, which has also insisted that the Union of Ireland with England has been responsible for a serious decrease in the Irish population and industries. An Appendix deals with this last point: the British Government is not entirely exonerated, but other causes than the Union are shown to have been chiefly operative in the decline of Irish population and industries. For instance, the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the opening of the Mississippi Valley, which resulted in "low prices at home and abundance oversea," the development of steampower, are given as the main causes of emigration.

I do not see how it would have helped if we had been allowed to put a tariff on imported corn, unless it were put on corn imported into Great Britain, where our market had been; and, if we were completely independent, we could hardly expect to be allowed that.

The decline of industries Father McDonald assigns not so much to lack of business opportunities under the Union as to inherent lack of commercial enterprise in the Irish people as a whole.

Belfast, in the first place, flourished mightily under the Union, without any special favour that I can dis-

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cover. . . . Soof our flour mills, the ruin of which is so often ascribed to the Union, while the true source of rot is to be found elsewhere. . . . This industry was revolutionized by the introduction of the roller. . . . Where the new method was adopted it made fortunes. .. . The Bolands succeeded in Dublin, wonderfully; Mosses, Pilsworths, Brownes, in County Kilkenny; Shackletons, Odlums, and others, in the Midlands; Hallinans, Russells, Furlongs, Goings, and Smiths, in the South; McCanns, Pollexfens, elsewhere.*!

Particularly interesting at this time is it to find Father McDonald's suggestions for the solution of the Irish question in general agreement with the plan recently outlined by Premier Lloyd George in the House of Commons — the giving of separate parliaments to Ulster and to the rest of Ireland.

For Americans, the implicit information in regard to Irish Separatists is perhaps the most valuable part of Some Ethical Questions of Peace and War. One cannot read this book without coming to realize that Sinn Feiners were eager to aid Germany in the recent war, and that the Sinn Fein agitation is in general a destructive agitation somewhat like Russian Bolshevism. That Ireland is at heart sound, we may believe from the statement in regard to the elections of December, 1918, "wherein not much more than one third of the electors voted for an independent Republic; while it is well known that, of those who voted that way, a considerable number

218]

did so merely to oust the old Parliamentary Party or to secure a fuller measure of Home Rule." " Although, as written English, Father McDonald's book leaves much to be desired, no such accusation can be brought against Professor Cole's Ireland the Outpost, which has a beauty of

style rare even among those who make belles-lettres their profession. With the knowledge of a scientist the author combines the temperament of a poet, and an acquaintance with the contemporary poetry of his country. When he speaks of the geological formation of the glens of Antrim, he remembers the songs of Moira O'Neill. His pamphlet of some eighty pages describes "the influence of geographic conditions on the current of affairs in Ireland."' He mentions the need for correlation between the geographer, the anthropologist, and the historian, and himself makes abundant use of the work of scholars in allied fields. With the aid of maps and photographs he enforces his written exposition of the geological connection between Ireland, Britain, and the Continent of Europe, while his use of Irish history and antiquarian research shows unusual insight and carries conviction. The delightful story from Froissart summarized on pages 50 and 51 reveals Professor Cole's thorough understanding of the Irish temperament; indeed, nowhere has the heart of the Irish problem been more clearly disclosed than in this short pamphlet. Four sentences, two from the preface and two from

[219

the conclusion, sum up the question as well as could many pages of disquisition:

At times she [Ireland] catches the light that floods across from Europe, and adds to its brightness the ardent glow of her response. At times the sea-mist gathers along her mountain-barriers, and she sinks back into the haze of the Atlantic, elusive as the Fortunate Isles. . . . The gate of Ireland is at Dublin, and the gate stands open to the dawn. Westward stretch the gulfs of the Atlantic; eastward lie the friendly and the narrow seas.

Both these books should be welcome in the United States: Father McDonald's because it is an intimate revelation of Sinn Fein from a Gael who has passed his life in Ireland, and Professor Cole's because science and scholarship are interpreted with the vision of the artist. The two authors are more than Irish party men, more even than Irish citizens — they are Irish patriots. Well are they described in the lines quoted by Professor Cole from A. E.:

We would no Irish sign efface,

But yet our lips would gladlier hail The firstborn of the Coming Race Than the last splendour of the Gael. No blazoned banner we unfold — One charge alone we give to youth,

Against the sceptred myth to hold The golden heresy of truth.¥

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590]

AN IRISH LEADER AND A SINN FEIN PLEA

URING the Great War no Irishman had to

make more difficult decisions or undergo keener mental anguish than did John Redmond. Pledging his followers to the Allied cause at the opening of the war, he saw himself betrayed by lack of coéperation on the part of those upon whose faith he relied, and repudiated by a large number of his countrymen. At the moment when there seemed an eleventh-hour opportunity of re-creating a united Ireland, he was deserted by one of the most notable of his followers and by three of the bishops of his church. Small wonder that he could not survive this bitter disappointment, and that he died soon afterward. He has about him a melancholy splendor akin to that which surrounds the dying hero of early Ireland, Cuchulain.

The haze of distance, combined with necessary censorship of news while the war continued, has left Americans uncertain as to the exact history of Mr. Redmond's relations with his political adherents and opponents in his last years. Particularly have people in the United States been

interested in Irish recruiting, wishing to know whether, as some persons allege, Ireland sent fewer men than she should have done to fight for world freedom; why there

[221

should have been hesitation among Irishmen in living up to Mr. Redmond's generous offer of their services; or whether Ireland's contribution to the soldiery of the British Army was adequate. These questions are clearly answered by Captain Stephen Gwynn in Fohn Redmond's Last Years, a book remarkable for its lack of personal bias when it is remembered that Captain Gwynn was for many years one of the Irish Party in Parliament. The fact that he fought in France with an Irish division gave him the advantage of understanding the point of view of the Irish soldier as well as that of the Irish statesman. Moreover, the author had access to Mr. Redmond's papers in preparing this book, which is one of the important contributions to the recent history of Anglo-Irish relations.

Captain Gwynn has planned his volume admirably: he gives only enough of Mr. Redmond's personal history and of his place in the Irish Party before 1914 to enable the reader to follow the story of the remaining chapters. He delineates a definite picture of the manner of man that Mr. Redmond was. In the preface to 'ohn Bull's Other Island Mr. George Bernard Shaw has vigorously asserted his belief that the Irishman far more than the Englishman is the practical man with a clear comprehension of facts. Such an Irishman was John Redmond. He endeavored to argue logically always, and his ability to grasp and to state the essentials of a question is

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shown to have been extraordinary. Mr. Redmond was, moreover, a good strategist; when he was unable to attain his object completely, he made wise concessions; little by little he brought Home Rule nearer to fulfilment. As a leader, his chief defect was one of temperament rather than of character; he discounted the emotions of his countrymen; never could he fully understand the appeal made to them either by the Gaelic League or by Sinn Fein. Ironical is it that his greatest moment of idealism, when he pledged Ireland to stand by England in the war, brought about the destruction of his hopes. Readers of Fohn Redmonda's Last Years cannot fail to form definite opinions as to the reasons for the present chaos in Ireland: they will place the blame in chronological order, first, upon Sir Edward Carson and his followers in Parliament, and next, upon the British Government and the War Office, particularly upon Lord Kitchener. Englishmen are prone to boast of their sporting spirit, but any openminded person who reads Captain Gwynn's book must see that in regard to war-time Ireland the British Government did not "play the game." They delayed; they hedged; they refused to follow the straight path. The chapter, "The Raising of the Irish Brigades," 1s illuminating; it shows a stupidity in the War Office that would seem incredible did not one understand the suspicion that exists among Irishmen; they apparently take savage delight in

[228

defeating one another — the Irish Lord Kitchener neglected the Irish John Redmond's plan to aid recruitingin Ireland. Captain Gwynn's fairness is nowhere better illustrated than when he explains Lord Kitchener's unwillingness to take advice from Mr. Redmond as the natural distrust of a professional soldier of Unionist sympathies when dealing with a Nationalist civilian. The author mentions particularly Lieutenant-General Sir Lawrence Parson, an appointee of Lord Kitchener's, and in command of one of the two Irish divisions in the new British Army, but he extends the scope of his remarks to deal with the higher officer.

Captain Gwynn leaves the reader with the impression not only that the Ulster faction, the Government, and the War Office were chiefly responsible for such opposition as there was to recruiting in Ireland, but that their attitude encouraged the growth of Sinn Fein, which had little

influence as early as August, 1914. He quotes one piece of evidence, especially, which supports the conclusion that forces without rather than within Ireland fostered the Separatist cause. This is a speech by Padraic Pearse (a leader in the subsequent Irish Rebellion) delivered in March, 1912, at the time of Mr. Redmond's tour in Ireland to support the Home Rule Bill, which became a statute in 1914. Pearse's words have, as Captain Gwynn says, "strange significance in retrospect."

224]

"There are as many men here as would destroy the British Empire," said Pearse, "if they were united and did their utmost. We have no wish to destroy the British, we only want our freedom. We differ among ourselves on small points, but we agree that we want freedom, in some shape or other. There are two sections of us — one that would be content to remain under the British Government in our own land, another that never paid, and never will pay, homage to the King of England. I am of the latter, and everyone knows it. But I should think myself a traitor to my country if I did not answer the summons to this gathering, for it is clear to me that the Bill which we support to-day will be for the good of Ireland and that we shall be stronger with it than without it. Iam not accepting the Bill in advance. We may have to refuse it. We are here only to say that the voice of Ireland must be listened to henceforward. Let us unite and win a good act from the British; I think itcan be done. But if we are tricked this time, there is a party in Ireland, and I am one of them, that will advise the Gael to have no counsel or dealings with the Gall [the foreigner] for ever again, but to answer them henceforward with the strong hand and the sword's edge. Let the Gall understand that if we are cheated once more there will be red war in Ireland."

The chapter on the Rebellion shows how few were the numbers of the insurgents and how little sympathy they received from the people at large until executions glorified a new band of Irish martyrs. The result can best be expressed by recording the experience of one Sinn Feiner who was captured

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in the fighting. While the military escort was taking him through the streets to his place of confinement, a crowd gathered and ran along, consisting of angry men and women who had seen bloodshed and known hunger during those days. They shouted to the soldiers to knock his brains out there and then. Three weeks later he was again marched through the streets on his way to an English prison, and again a crowd mustered. But this time, to his amazement, they were shouting, "God save you! God have pity on you! Keep your heart up! Ireland's not dead petl7".28

It is easy to magnify the part played by religion in keeping the Irish problem unsettled; nevertheless, it is noteworthy to find Captain Gwynn pointing out that the Irish Convention of 1918 (which has since been bitterly condemned, especially in the United States) would, through the tact and diplomacy of Mr. Redmond, have come to the "'substantial agreement" desired by Premier Lloyd George, had it not been for the influence of the Roman Catholic bishops. The author thus comments upon this final defeat: "The Ulstermen had more than once expressed their views that if Home Rule were sure to mean Redmond's rule, their objection to it would be materially lessened. Now, they saw Redmond thrown over, and by a combination in which the clerical influence, so much distrusted by them, was paramount."

226]

One adverse criticism of Captain Gwynn's work can be made: the author has striven so hard to be judicial, uninfluenced by his personal predilections, that his book lacks the warmth which should enliven an appreciative biography. However, since emotion often overbalances the logic

of argument in books about Irish politics and politicians, what in a biography of a non-Irishman might be a defect, in Captain Gwynn's book seems almost a virtue.

No one will read 'ohn Redmona's Last Years without coming to have an admiration for a man who followed with loyalty and tenacity what he deemed the right course; Mr. Redmond's failure may in the end mean the triumph of his principles.

Irish soldiers desirous of self-government for their country have placed the British Government in their debt; will the Government make an honest effort to pay that debt, or will it add another dishonorable act to the history of the relations between England and Ireland?

Ireland a Nation, by Robert Lynd, has the warmth lacking in Stephen Gwynn's larger volume; Mr. Lynd, however, is not so much concerned with facts as is the older author; he endeavors 'to reveal what has often been more important than the facts of Irish history — the temper of Ireland. If Sir John Maxwell had understood that temper, Padraic Pearse and Thomas MacDonough would not have

[227,

faced a firing-squad. Mr. Lynd has succeeded in arousing sympathy with the demand for selfdetermination for Ireland; had all advocates of the more radical Irish party shown as much good taste and good humor as the present author, the Irish problem would be much nearer solution.

Hatred is one of the ancient passions of human nature, but it is a deforming passion and outside the circle of holy things. At the same time it is an inevitable passion in certain circumstances for all but the saints, and the Irish would have been less than human if the attempts of Queen Elizabeth to exterminate them or of Cromwell to destroy them had not filled them with ruinous thoughts.

One feature that will commend Mr. Lynd's book to Americans is that the author manifests his entire sympathy with the Allied cause in the recent war, and he praises without hesitation the patriotism of T. M. Kettle and Francis Ledwidge, the two distinguished Irish authors who fell in action. Since Mr. Lynd writes of Ireland a Nation he has necessarily to concern himself with Irish history; but since he is by profession a critic, and literary editor of the London Daily News, it is not to be expected that he should have the acumen of the trained historian or political economist. Although his account of Irish history is generally just, there are important points wherein he apparently misses the correct relation between cause and effect. For instance, he

228]

says: "There have been few more terrible episodes in history than this, as the Irish regard it, Government-caused famine." *® While the attitude of the Government undoubtedly aggravated distress in Ireland, there were other causes, such as the toorapid increase of population, that must in fairness be mentioned in explaining the famine. Again, in discussing the strategic importance of Ireland to England, the author writes: "If Ireland were hostile, whether under the Union or whether in enjoyment of the widest independence, she could no doubt give assistance to German submarines in her many bays. But no Irish state would ever tolerate that.' #° The last statement requires proof which Mr. Lynd does not try to give. One more instance of weakness in argument may be quoted: "An Ulster Party in a Dublin Parliament would be proportionally far larger and more powerful than an Irish Party in the present British House of Commons." For Americans, at least, this statement requires explanation.

Not only does Mr. Lynd exhibit, though to a lesser degree, the failure common to advocates of the Irish Radical Party, — a failure of logic, — but he does not outline a tangible constructive programme for the conduct of an independent Ireland. Although, as he points out, the words

"Sinn Fein" mean "Ourselves" rather than "Ourselves Alone," yet he can hardly deny that the practical application of the words has hitherto given ground for the com-

[229

mon mistranslation. The self-reliance preached by Sinn Feiners has amounted to lack of coéperation; otherwise there would have been no split in the National Volunteers, and Irish Nationalists would have gone to the war after Mr. Redmond's famous speech of 1914.

Mr. Lynd's chapter on Sinn Fein is an admirable summary of Mr. P. S. O'Hegarty's slender volume, Sinn Fein: an Illumination, which well represents the best the party stands for; but the closing sentences leave the reader still vague as to how an Irish republic would actually work.

Sinn Fein at present contains both reactionary and progressive elements, and as a party it might conceivably develop in either direction. At present it is neither conservative nor democratic, neither clerical nor anticlerical, neither capitalist nor labourist. It 1s an attempt to unite men of conflicting schools of thought on the common policy of rebuilding the Irish nation with Irish brains and hands, and of organizing the people to work out their own salvation on the soil of Ireland. In another aspect, it is a denial of the right of England to rule Ireland and a policy of refusing to acquiesce in English rule by attending Parliament, entering the Army, or recognizing the right of English-appointed judges to sit in trial over Irishmen.*

Sinn Fein remains what it has always seemed — a negative rather than a positive approach toward a settlement of the Irish question.

230]

In one particular respect Ireland a Nation is of outstanding importance. A Gaelic scholar as well as a literary critic of discrimination, the author has approached modern Anglo-Irish writers with true understanding of their relation to the Gaelic literature of the past; he sees how they have carried on the Irish national spirit. Moreover, he is one of the first modern critics to point out the connection between the national spirit in literature and in politics. The hundred pages which he devotes to literary criticism not only are valuable in themselves, but have a proper place in his book.

Ireland a Nation is not so much a contribution to a solution of the Irish problem as it is a valuable interpretation of the present state of Ireland. Even those who do not agree entirely with Mr. Lynd's point of view will hardly withhold King Agrippa's appreciation of Saint Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me!"

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CHESTERTON ANALYZES THE IRISH QUESTION

PPROPRIATE is it that the modern master of paradox should write of Ireland, the country of paradox. Mr. G. K. Chesterton is able to understand the Irish as few Britons can, and his observations concerning the country when, with the hope

[231

that he would encourage recruiting, he was sent to Ireland in 1918, have the penetrating truth of vision — vision which has been lacking in nearly every statesman who has dealt with the Irish problem. The title of Mr. Chesterton's book, lrish Impressions, is apt; the author gives the temper of Ireland rather than direct information, yet his conclusions agree closely with those reached by historians, such as, for example, Professors Ernest Barker and Edward R. Turner. Mr. Chesterton has caught the spirit of the Irish.

Irish Impressions fittingly comes after a series of books, published since midsummer, 1920, which aim to tell Americans the facts concerning Ireland; Mr. Chesterton provides the savory at

the close of the banquet. His entertaining volume should be read not by itself but in connection with others — unless his readers are already fairly well informed as to the recent history of English and Irish politics and know something of the machinery of British government; it is to these readers that the author primarily addresses himself. For instance, he says: " Now in the political bargain with the English, the Irish simply think they have been cheated. They think Home Rule was stolen from them after the contract was sealed; and it will be hard for anyone to contradict them. If /e Roz /e veult is not a sacred seal on a contract, what is?" By using the Norman French words with which the King of England gives

230]

the royal assent to a bill passed by Parliament, Mr. Chesterton says in metaphor that Home Rule became law in 1914. Figurative language is characteristic of the author's style: every chapter contains a figure; sometimes, indeed, the reader becomes lost in following the mazes of imagination and uncertain of the point at issue, a confusion unfortunate in a book dealing with a political question of the day, where clearness and insight are qualities which not only may but should exist side by side. Nevertheless, the author manages to distil the essence of the Irish problem; it is possible to turn to others for statistics and for the sequence of events; Mr. Chesterton expresses the intangible; he gives the atmosphere of Ireland. In this volume, as always in this author's prose, is to be found a happy use of antithesis, suggesting that the resemblance between Chesterton and Doctor Johnson is more than skin deep. Moreover, this book abounds in humor; and truths, dressed brilliantly, lose nothing. For example, the religious difficulty in Ireland is epitomized in a statement which will be in the mind when pages of disquisition are forgotten: "The Protestant generally says, 'I am a good Protestant,' while the Catholic always says, 'I am a bad Catholic.'" # In spite of the fact that Lrish Impressions may be called somewhat "journalistic," giving evidence in a number of places of having been written hastily, there are also many passages of great beauty. These

[233

sentences from Mr. Chesterton's defence of Ireland as a nation are incisive, and proceed to an admirable climax in the paraphrase from Mr. Yeats's play, Cathleen ni Houlthan. .

Now it is this sensation of stemming a stream, of ten thousand things all pouring one way, labels, titles, monuments, metaphors, modes of address, assumptions in controversy, that make an Englishman in Ireland know that heisinastrangeland. . . . If he has any senses, he soon finds them unified and simplified to a single impression; as if he were talking to a strange person. He cannot define it because nobody can define a person; and nobody can define a nation. . . . We can only say, with more or less mournful conviction, that if. Aunt Jane is not a person, there is no such thing as a person, and I say with equal conviction that if Ireland is not a nation, there is no such thing as a nation. . . . I will claim to know what I mean by an island and what I mean by an individual; and when I think suddenly of my experience in the island in question, the impression is a single one; the voices mingle in a human voice which I should know if I heard it again, calling in the distance; the crowds dwindle into a single figure whom I have seen long ago upon a strange hill-side and she walking like a queen.®

However, most people will read Irish Impressions to find out what Mr. Chesterton thinks rather than merely to be entertained by his style, and the matter may profitably be considered apart from the manner of his writing. Although an Englishman, the author does not hesitate to blame his country as the chief

234]

offender in the matter of Irish discontent, and he feels strongly that the Government broke faith with the Irish by failing to put into operation the Home Rule Bill passed six years ago. He

quotes an Irishman in this connection as saying, “And now we will not give you a dead dog until you keep your word.” While strongly condemning England, he has no sympathy with those Irishmen who, to spite their ancient aggressor, wished Germany to succeed in the World War; next to his chapter on “The Mistake of England” comes that on ‘The Mistake of Ireland.” He agrees with the majority of recent writers in wishing to see the troublous island made a selfgoverning part of the British Empire. The chapter on “The Family and the Feud”’ shows the author’s understanding that the Celtic idea of the family (which was the foundation of the early Irish tribal state) persists, and has much to do with the divergence between Englishmen and Irishmen in their concepts of government, interfering also with a satisfactory settlement. Mr. Chesterton would be untrue to his championship of the Christian faith did he not emphasize the Irish contribution to the world as other than material. He closes his book with this paragraph:

As the long line of the mountain coast unfolded before me, I had an optical illusion; it may be that many had had it before. As new lengths of coast and lines of heights were unfolded, I had the fancy that the whole

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land was not receding but advancing, like something spreading out its arms to the world. A chance shred of sunshine rested, like a riven banner, on the hill which I believe is called in Irish the Mountain of the Golden Spears; and I could have imagined that the spears and the banner were coming on. And in that flash I remembered that the men of this island had gone forth, not the torches of conquerors or destroyers, but as missionaries in the very midnight of the Dark Ages, like a multitude of moving candles, that were the light of the world.

1921.

AN APOLOGIST FOR SINN FEIN

if is easier to espouse the cause of one of the Irish political parties than, after weighing conflicting statements, to find the right and wrong of the Irish question. Only the impartial historian, who carefully examines facts, and gives clear references to his authorities, can arrive at a just conclusion. Professor Henry, of Queen’s University, Belfast, in his An Apologist for Sinn Fein, adopts the easier course; he traces the growth of the Sinn Fein Party in its conflict with Irish Nationalism and with the Dublin Castle Government, always keeping before the reader the Sinn Fein point of view. His book is a plea before a jury (the jury in this case being the reader) rather than an attempt at reasoned argument, for he deals hardly at all with the objections to Sinn Fein, and then only in the chapters where

this is necessary in order to show the divergence between Sinn Fein and the old-time Nationalists.

Throughout the book Professor Henry writes with an admirable detachment; he indulges in none of the impassioned rhetoric and emotion that has marred much Irish political writing. It is not to be wondered at that men of Sinn Fein sympathies already regard this book as a classic. But for all his detachment, Professor Henry is partisan. Though he does not declare himself a Sinn Feiner, he carefully keeps out of his book anything that might seriously damage the Sinn Fein cause, which he sedulously interprets in the best light. He quotes freely from Sinn Fein newspapers and periodicals, but he fails to supply his book with footnotes which would enable the reader to consult the original sources. Such inaccuracy vitiates the publishers’ claim on the jacket that the writing “remains. . . carefully historical throughout.”

As an exposition of the Sinn Fein point of view, Professor Henry’s book cannot fail to interest Americans who read it without prejudice, particularly those with some knowledge of Irish

history. There has been in this country recently an unreasoning intolerance toward the idea of an Irish republic. Nothing is wrong or ignoble in the idea; the objections to it may, and should, be based upon entirely different grounds: they are implicit in Irish history.

Professor Henry has divided his book into ten

[237

sections. In the first, he endeavors to show that "The Irish Nation cannot be said to have at any period abandoned its claim to independence." With this statement it is possible both to agree and to disagree, for there is ambiguity in the phrase "Irish Nation." Does Professor Henry mean by these words a nation with a distinct and well-recognized government, or merely a body of people having a common language, literature, and customs? In the latter sense the Irish have long been a nation; in the former, never. It is well known to students of Irish history that, save during the reign of Brian Boru, Ireland never had a central government, with power to enforce its will; if the English had usurped a strong government, they could have conquered the country, and this they were unable to do. Individual chiefs might flout the power of the English; the Irish people might fight with, scorn, and absorb the foreigner, but certainly during the Middle Ages and the early years of modern history no central Irish government made "'a claim to independence." The real movement for Irish liberty came after the American Revolution; from the time of Wolfe Tone, at the close of the eighteenth century, to the present, there have been Irishmen believing in the complete separation of their country from Great Britain. It is almost impossible to bolster the claim for Irish independence by reference to early Irish history; the attempt really discredits the Sinn Fein cause with

238]

thinking people. Sinn Fein should take its stand upon the beliefs of republicans of the nineteenth century, and upon the many blunders made by the British in Ireland.

Professor Henry's book shows clearly how the shortsightedness of the British Government played into the hands of Sinn Fein; no matter how welldisposed toward Britain a reader may be, he will, when confronted by this evidence, find himself doubting even the sincerity of contemporary British statesmen in their dealings with Ireland. Indisputably, many Irishmen have aligned themselves with the Sinn Fein Party because of despair over the treatment of the Nationalist members of Parliament. But disgust with the government of Ireland is not the same as belief in the principles of Sinn Fein. None can read the history of Sinn Fein polity without seeing that from its inception its adherents have been unwilling to compromise; nevertheless, through compromise alone will come a solution of the Irish problem. Surely there are few rational thinkers who believe that England will be persuaded to abandon all claim to Ireland, a country to which an Irishman invited her, and where for many centuries she has controlled such government as there has been. Sinn Fein has seldom codperated with others working for the future of the country; even when Mr. Redmond seemed on the point of accomplishing Home Rule, the Sinn Fein Party, though it

[239

indeed ceased criticizing the Nationalists, gave them no real help. The patriotism commended by Sinn Fein is of such a type that those who adopt it become almost fanatical; their absorption with Ireland dominates their political horizon to the exclusion of a just consideration of other countries. It is doubtful whether men of this intensely limited vision can be trusted to consider Ireland in relation to the family of nations. The attitude of the party during the recent war does much to confirm this point of view: Sinn Fein could not see that the issue between the Allies and Germany far outshadowed the issue between Ireland and England. Sinn Feiners apparently thought that they could remain neutral, and that neutrality was the same as the lack of support of

the Allies in a country protected by them. Sinn Fein went farther. Professor Henry quotes (on page 209) a notice posted in Wexford and reproduced in a Sinn Fein paper.

People of Wexford, take no notice of the police order to destroy your own property and leave your own homes if a German army lands in Ireland. When the Germans come they will come as friends and put an end to English rule in Ireland. Therefore stay in your homes and assist as far as possible the German troops. Any stores, hay, corn, or forage taken by the Germans will be paid for by them.“

An Apologist for Sinn Fein reveals to the impartial and the logical reader the weaknesses of many

240]

political parties; the English Liberals, the Ulster Party, the Parliamentary Irish Nationalists. Also, and unwittingly, it reveals the weakness of Sinn Fein.

Ig2I.

IRELAND FROM A MODERN POINT OF VIEW

ROBABLY no event in modern Ireland has

proved to be of more far-reaching importance than the founding of the Gaelic League in 1893; for, through the efforts of this society, not only has the Irish language been rehabilitated, but Irish men and women have been brought to a real consciousness of their national heritage from the past in customs, polity, and thought. Of course, foreign scholars have seconded ably the endeavors of the League to point out that there is an Irish civilization. The Germans particularly lost no opportunity to discover the splendors of Gaelic antiquity, with a purpose made clear only in the summer of 1914, and not yet understood by many Irish people, especially in these United States. It was the well-known Heinrich Zimmer who, as long ago as 1887, published in the Preussische Fahrbucher his now famous essay on “The Irish Element in Medieval Culture.” Thanks to such various and cumulative researches and impulses, Irish people are now becoming universally

[241

aware of the continuity of their culture and their traditions.

The Gaelic formula, to coin a phrase, is only beginning to be applied to the study of Irish history. The present writer first found it suggested five or six years ago in a pamphlet written by an Oxford historian, Ernest Barker, lreland in the Last Fifty Years; the first attempt to apply the formula in an extended treatise upon Irish history is undoubtedly in the recently published Short History of the Irish People, by Mary Hayden, Professor of Modern Irish History, National University of Ireland, and George A. Moonan, Special Lecturer on History, Leinster College of Irish. The volume, — short in name alone, for it contains 559 closely printed octavo pages, — is both interesting and illuminating as a reflection of current thought in Ireland and as an historical study. The authors have combined political and literary history, for the account of the events of a period is followed by a summary of the literature of the time; thus the reader is given a conception of the interdependence of thought and action. The political chapters have been written chiefly by Miss Hayden; the literary by Mr. Moonan. In spite of the statement upon the titlepage that the history extends to the year 1920, events after I1g00 are summarized, not interpreted, as is the case in the earlier chapters.

242]

The authors’ approach to their material is indicated by the following sentences from the Preface:

This work embodies the results of a varied experience in assisting students to acquire a clear view of the history of the development of the Irish People. Its only claim to originality is with regard to the manner of presentation, the method of arrangement, and the general treatment. It endeavours to unfold the story of a neverceasing movement of living forces in which remote causes produce ultimate results, rather than to present a series of unconnected historical sketches. The study of our history is regarded as one of dynamics and not of Statics.

While writing from a frankly national stand-point, the authors have made every effort to attain accuracy and avoid prejudice.

In this Short History the struggle between Irish and Norsemen, Irish and English, and the internecine wars, all of which are so confusing to the reader of the average history of Ireland, take on real significance. For instance, Hugh O'Neill and Rory O'Donnell, in Elizabethan times, appear as not merely self-willed tribal chiefs, but leaders who had a vision of a united Irish Ireland. Irish history, through the able interpretation of Miss Hayden and Mr. Moonan, is clearly shown as a conflict between civilizations rather than as a series of instances of the malignity of nations and of individuals. The authors are remarkably free from prejudice; the discussions

[243

of religion are frank and clear, particularly as regards the Reformation in Ireland; such slight bias as is present of course favors the Roman Catholic Church, for the National University, with which Miss Hayden is connected, is Roman Catholic. The chief defect of the book as history is that the English policy in Ireland is not frequently enough related to the general European situation. This is especially true in the explanation of the Act of Union, where there is scarcely a hint that one of the reasons for its passage was the desirability of binding together the British dominions against the increasing power of Napoleon. The old saying that

He who would England win Must first with Ireland begin

is completely ignored. Almost the only attempt to relate Irish and European history is in the list of important dates given at the close of the several chapters; here are included in italics important events of contemporaneous European affairs. Because of lack of breadth in point of view, the present volume is unable to supplant even such a brief history as the trained historian, Professor Turner's, much less detailed Ireland and England.

Another, and less important, defect of the Short History is in the first of the two books supplied by Mr. Moonan, wherein the author gives what is perhaps too rosy a picture of the early Irish State. In

spite of the assertions of the Preface, he does not make entirely clear the difference between what may be and what really is authentic history. In spite of the honor accorded to learning and the arts, the Irish State was tribal and primitive, hardly a State at all in the sense in which the word is used today. Itisa paradox of Irish history, and one not yet fully understood, that there has long been an Irish nation, with customs and a culture of its own, but almost never a well-defined and strong Irish central government. For this reason, it has often been comparatively easy to overthrow Irish political power, but hitherto impossible permanently to conquer the Irish nation.

From what has been suggested already, it will be seen that the chief feature of 4 Short History of the Irish People is the thorough familiarity of the authors with their material, which has enabled them to present the panorama of Ireland through the centuries clearly and with admirable emphasis upon general tendencies. The arrangement of the volume in six books, subdivided into

chapters, and the chapters again divided into sections, is excellent. There are still other subdivisions, indicated by introductory phrases printed in bold-face type, so that the student may use the book easily for reference. Maps, plans, and genealogical charts also add to an understanding of the various and frequent changes in the predominance of families and in the ownership of

[245

land. If the authors' powers of expression had only equalled their gifts of clear thinking and arrangement, 4 Short History of the Irish People would be memorable; but, unfortunately, there is little grace of style. The English of the book cannot receive higher praise than the adjective "workmanlike"'; there are many sentences incoherent and even ungrammatical. The paragraphing is likewise none too sure. Such defects prevent a book, admirable for sincerity and enthusiasm, from being literature as well as history. Nevertheless, it cannot be neglected by anyone interested either in Irish history or in Trish literature, and as a revelation of the mind of progressive thinkers in contemporary Ireland it is invaluable.

1923.

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INDEX OF NAMES

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