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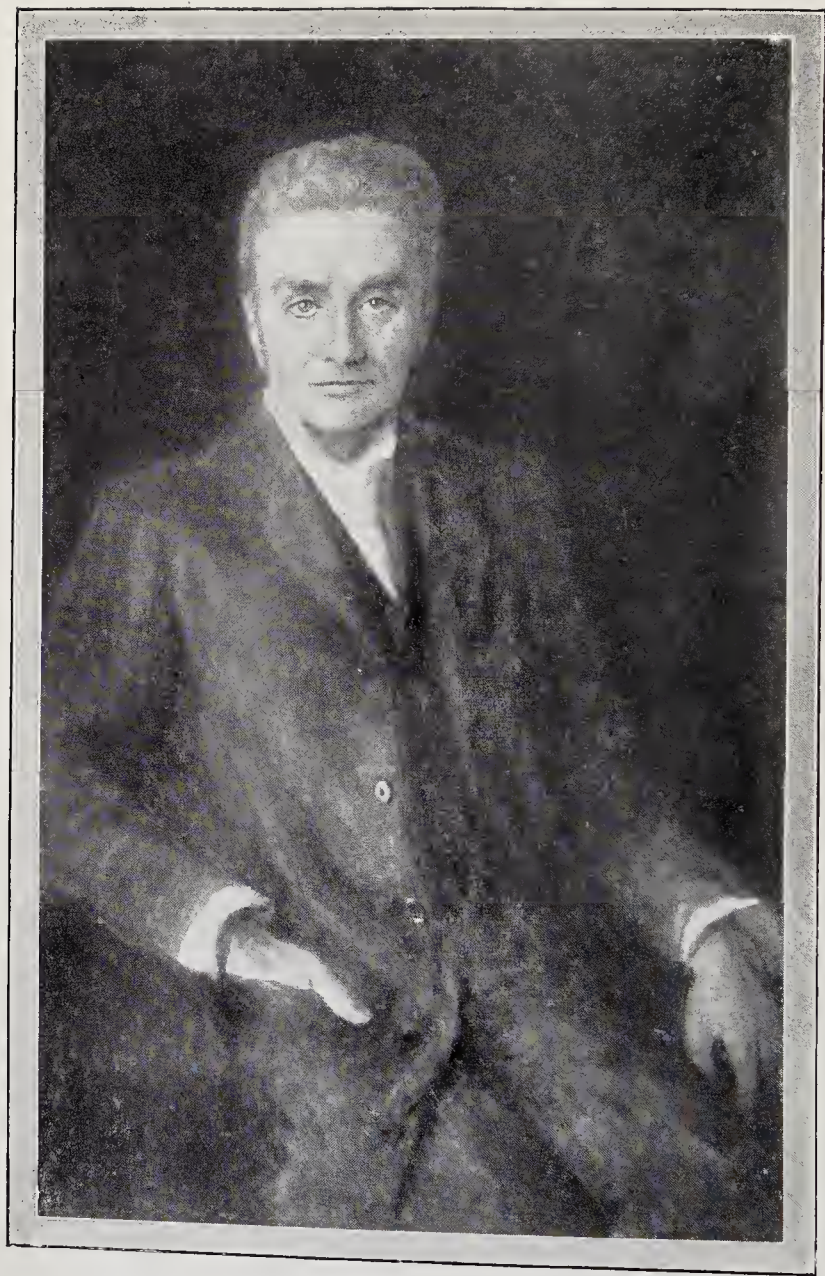
**Selected Essays  
and Passages**





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STANDISH O'GRADY

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*General Editors :* ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES, M.A.  
WILLIAM MAGENNIS, M.A. DOUGLAS HYDE, LL.D.

## STANDISH O'GRADY

### Selected Essays and Passages



WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
BY ERNEST A. BOYD

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## INTRODUCTION.

Standish James O'Grady was born in 1846 at Castletown, Berehaven, County Cork, where his childhood was spent amid such fine, primitive folk and such nature as have coloured his work, particularly those stories of his own boyhood, *Lost on Du Corrig*, *The Chain of Gold*, and *In the Wake of King James*. He was educated at Tipperary Grammar School, and at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated in 1868, after a distinguished career, in the course of which he obtained a classical scholarship, silver medals for oratory and for ethics and psychology, in addition to the Philosophical Society's gold medal for essay writing. In 1872 he was called to the Bar, and went on circuit for a time, but soon he was to abandon all this for the field of activity which has made his name famous in the history of the Literary Revival in Ireland. Thus equipped Standish O'Grady might have joined the almost anonymous host of educated young men whom the Universities add to the ranks of respectable, if unilluminating, journalism. His contributions to *The Gentlemen's Magazine* from

1873 to 1875, when he used the pseudonym "Arthur Clive," are an interesting proof of what the author was, and might have remained, but for a certain accident. The best of these essays, "Walt Whitman : the Poet of Joy," has been reprinted in the present volume. It has, beyond the interest suggested, the further significance of being one of the earliest tributes to Whitman published in England. Standish O'Grady, J. B. Yeats and Edward Dowden were the three friends whom the great American poet had gained amongst his first admirers on this side of the Atlantic, as his letters to Dowden testify.

However interesting these early writings may be, there is lacking in them that fire and energy which characterise the works with which the name of Standish O'Grady is associated. Who, reading the rather formal and conventionally eloquent essay on Whitman, would have divined the epic historian of *The History of Ireland : Heroic Period*, which was published only three years later ? At the very time when he was preparing the articles for *The Gentlemen's Magazine* an event befell him, which was to have the most profound influence upon the author himself, and upon the literature of contemporary Ireland. What this event was may be best described in his own words, taken from an isolated fragment of autobiography entitled, *A Wet Day*, which appeared in



the literary supplement of *The Irish Homestead* in 1899 :—

“ At school and in T.C.D. I was an industrious lad and worked through the curriculums with abundant energy and some success ; yet in the curriculums never read one word about Irish history and legend, nor ever heard one word about these things from my pastors and masters. When I was 23 years of age, had anyone told me—as later on a Professor of the Dublin University actually did—that Brian Boromh was a mythical character, I would have believed him. I knew absolutely nothing about our past, not through my own fault, for I was willing enough to learn anything set before me, but owing to the stupid educational system of the country. I knew Sir Samuel Ferguson and was often his guest, but knew him only as a kind, courteous and hospitable gentleman ; no one ever told me that he was a great Irish poet.

“ I think I was in my 24th year when something happened which has since then governed the general trend of my life, and through me that of others. In a country house in the west of Ireland, near the sea, I had to stay indoors one rainy day, and though my appetite for literature was slender enough then, in default of other amusements I spent the time in looking over the books in the library. So I chanced upon O'Halloran's History of Ireland, in three volumes—the first History of Ireland into which I had ever looked. He wrote, I think, in the second decade of this century and before the rise of the Vallency School. His style was scholarly, eloquent and impassioned ; reason appeared to govern all his statements. To O'Halloran the ' Book of Invasions ' was an authentic historical document, and he had a great deal to say of a seemingly illuminative and quite creditable nature concerning the successive waves of Irish colonisation represented by the Ceasairians, Partholanians, Nemedians, etc. The History of Ireland as expounded by O'Halloran ran back to an age when Greece was still in the cradle. He exhibited his general culture, knowledge and scholarly attainments by synchronising early Irish history with classical history, and showing, for example,

the probability that the Irish were allies of Brennus in his invasion of Italy, and that they took the side of Carthage in the Punic wars. I was greatly interested, perhaps excited. 'How,' I thought, 'was all this interesting history of my own country never brought before my notice by any one?' None of the pastors or masters had ever uttered a hint.

"Returning to Dublin, and with a determination to learn more of this fascinating subject, I found my way—how I don't know—to the Royal Irish Academy, where Mr. MacSweeney, the librarian, was very kindly and helpful to me in my Irish studies. Somehow—I cannot remember why—I first lighted on the products of the Vallency School, General Vallency, Henry O'Brien, himself a man of singular and alluring genius, and Marcus Kane, and for a time I lived in a confused and befogged state of mind, wandering through their queer theories about a Buddhist Ireland preceding the Christian, and to which they attributed nearly all the remains of antiquity in the country. Then, and how I again forget—probably through the advice of Mr. MacSweeney, I lighted on O'Curry's 'Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish,' and his 'MSS. Materials of Irish History.' Here, owing to the numerous and often lengthened quotations in which he indulged, I was introduced for the first time, to the wonder-world of Irish heroic and romantic literature. That, indeed, was a revelation. Theories concerning ancient Irish history, Nemedian, Firbolgic, etc., I then dropped absolutely, and went into the literature itself, whenever I could find it, in the 'New Atlantis,' in the 'Revue Celtique,' in the publications of the Ossianic Society, in Crowe's manuscript translations, or wherever else I could arrive at it. I had not gone far before I discovered that the Tuatha De Danan, whom I had heretofore regarded as a race of conquerors as historical as the Normans, were in fact the gods of the Pagan Irish, and that of course the races preceding them, Partholarians and so forth, were of the same nature, and represented more primitive divine dynasties.

"For the honour of Ireland I beg to state that this discovery was made and printed here in Ireland before it was announced to the students of Europe by M. de Jubainville, the eminent

French-Breton scholar. It was really no great discovery at all, for the fact is quite patent in the heroic and romantic literature ; yet, be the cause what it may, no one ever announced it before. Everyone had rationalised or euphemised the ' Book of Invasions.' Of course, like everyone else who has ever dipped into this antique Irish literature, I could not fail to be deeply affected by the great story of Cuculain's heroic defence of Ulster against the banded host of the rest of Ireland. This story kept simmering in my imagination and finally eventuated in my writing the ' History of Ireland : Heroic Period, vols. I. and II.' Naturally I was a good deal laughed at ; I did not mind that, but certainly was disappointed that so few people bought the book. Nevertheless, time worked in my favour, and after a few years the whole impression, a score or so each year, was quite bought off. I have not had a copy myself for a great many years, and this is the more singular seeing that the price was almost prohibitive, viz., 15s. So my juvenile enthusiasm concerning the ' Heroic Period ' was justified by results. I need hardly add that I could not get a publisher for that work ; I had to print and publish at my own expense.

" Now, though the whole impression was sold off, this did not take place till after the lapse of many years, and, in the meantime, though I still continued my studies in Irish History, I had come to think that writing was not my *forte*. However, though the professors and educated classes in general laughed at or ignored me, a good many young men and young women quite unknown to me did not ; such as Miss Tynan, Miss Eleanor Hull, Mr. Yeats, Mr. Rolleston and others. These young people, growing up and going to London, were good enough to talk about ' The Heroic Period.' So London publishers wrote to me and asked me to send them something for publication, and this is the origin of my other works, ' Finn and his Companions,' the ' Flight of the Eagle ' and others. The fact reminds me of a noble utterance of Finn, who otherwise was a little inclined to the strong assertion of his own incontestable merits. ' Small, in sooth, was my consideration in Erin till my sons and my grandsons, and my gallant nephews and grand-nephews grew up around me.' "

In this little story we have the origins of that impulse which has sent two generations of Irish writers to the sources of national history and legend, and constituted a Revival of literature in Ireland. *The History of Ireland: Heroic Period* was published in 1878, and the concluding volume, with the sub-title *Cuchulain and his Contemporaries*, appeared in 1880. In these two volumes an epic spirit revived the material of heroic Ireland, rescuing from the philologists and antiquarians the wonderful heritage of the Gael, and throwing once more into circulation the Bardic stories of Irish antiquity. Since that date there have been many re-tellings of these ancient narratives; the tragic histories of Deirdre and Naisi, of Diarmuid and Grania, are now familiar to the popular audiences of our Irish Theatre; the mighty deeds of Finn and Cuchulain have become the themes of many a poet and story-teller, but credit must primarily go to him who first revealed the fire and beauty of the bardic imagination. Standish O'Grady is the pioneer, beside whom his successors, in spite of their excellence, must seem of secondary importance. It is only necessary to read the subsequent versions of the heroic stories in order to see at once how he possessed qualities of imaginative sympathy denied to others, so that not even the rhythmic beauty of Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* and *Gods and*



*Fighting Men* can take away from the splendour of Standish O'Grady's *History*. He alone captured the epical spirit of the originals, to which his own nobility of mind responded, infusing a glow and energy into his prose which made it a fitting source for the inspiration of poets and dramatists.

As he himself admits, his efforts met with little appreciation at the hands of the orthodox critics, who were not prepared to welcome an historian of a temperament so unconventional that history lived before his readers, instead of playing into the hands of pedants and tabulators of facts. But the young men who were dreaming and planning a decade later, and have since extended the fame of Anglo-Irish literature over the world—they did not fail to be captured by the appeal of tradition as it is called to them once more from the pages of Standish O'Grady. Almost every notable figure in the world of contemporary Irish letters has recorded a debt to the "Father of the Literary Revival," John Todhunter, W. B. Yeats, Æ, T. W. Rolleston, and the younger writers, have all come under the sway of the brilliant imagination which first illuminated the historical domain in which their country's past threatened to be obscured. Samuel Ferguson had done something to preserve the poetry of the heroic period, but he was not gifted to the degree necessary for the inspiration

of a great enthusiasm. It is significant that Standish O'Grady should have frequented Ferguson's house without ever glimpsing in him the precursor of Ireland's Literary Renaissance with whom Yeats and his contemporaries identified the author of *Lays of the Western Gael* and *Congal*.

In 1881 was published a *History of Ireland: Critical and Philosophical*, which never progressed beyond the first volume. It is interesting now as a curious attempt to crush an epic genius in the restraint of the conventional historian. Having given us two volumes devoted to the exploits of The Red Branch, re-telling the Tain-Bo-Cualgne, interspersed here and there with wonderfully delicate little snatches of legend and folk-lore, O'Grady seems to have bethought himself of the need for a more scientific history. He had written the epic of Cuculain; he had adumbrated his passionate theory of bardic literature in a booklet which links up the two parts of his History, *Early Bardic Literature*, published in 1879, and afterwards included in the second volume. Now the *Critical and Philosophical History* is, so to speak, an elaboration of that booklet, for many passages have been incorporated from it, and there is a brave show of dates and genealogies, with many a learned foot-note, as if to demonstrate the writer's ability to conform to the rules of historiography. Fortunately, his

natural genius is irrepressible, and every now and then breaks through the paraphernalia of scientific tabulation, giving the reader a breath of the spirit into which the earlier *History* was informed.

In what may be termed, for convenience, the field of pure history, Standish O'Grady was to make a more successful and valuable contribution some years later, when, in 1896, he edited *Pacata Hibernia*. His lengthy introduction to this fine work displays his profound knowledge of the period, and he has a real historian's familiarity with the records of Elizabethan Ireland. But just as he was to make his Bardic History the basis of several volumes of epical romance, so, as the historian of sixteenth century Ireland, he found the narrative of adventure the most natural outlet for his historical knowledge and talent. In 1882 he had already re-published a portion of the *History of Ireland: Heroic Period* under the title of *Cuculain: An Epic*, and this was to lead to further developments when, as he relates, his fame had reached the ears of London publishers through the enthusiastic propaganda of his young admirers from Dublin. *Finn and his Companions* appeared in 1892, *The Coming of Cuculain* in 1894, and in 1901 *In the Gates of the North* was published by the author himself, and was afterwards re-issued in popular form. These

books were supplemented during the same period by the stories of Elizabethan days.

These latter works, however, did not spring from *Pacata Hibernia* as the others sprang from the *Histories*, but in both cases the author's historical interests put him in possession of fine literary material. As a fact of mere chronology Standish O'Grady wrote *Red Hugh's Captivity* in 1889, long before *Pacata Hibernia* appeared under his editorship, and even that interesting collection of Elizabethan stories, *The Bog of Stars*, was published in 1893, while the appearance of *Ulrick the Ready* and *In the Wake of King James* was contemporary with that of *Pacata Hibernia*. Nevertheless, we may conclude that once he began to study *The Annals of the Four Masters*, and O'Clery's *Bardic Life of Hugh Roe*, having laid aside Keatinge, O'Curry, O'Halloran and the other sources of his earlier work, his imagination was stirred again to the evocation of a tragic and vital period of Irish history. Whatever may have been his precise intention, his researches eventuated in his writing the romance of another Irish epoch, the last rally of Gaelic Ireland. Taking an age filled with remarkable events and personalities, which were lost or obscured in the more general surveys of the regular historians, he was able to do for it what he had done for the heroic period, to draw the living picture of contemporary men and

manners. Shane O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell move before us as Cuculain, Finn and Ferdiad moved through the pages of the *Histories*.

The first of these Elizabethan romances, *Red Hugh's Captivity*, was hardly a success, because of an apparent inability in the author to shake himself free of the trammels of the mere historic chronicle. But, as time went on, his hand became more practised and he rewrote this first novel, which was issued in 1897 as *The Flight of the Eagle*, and is one of the finest historical romances we possess. Red Hugh O'Donnell's flight from Dublin Castle, the first event of that Nine Year's War which almost changed the course of Irish history, was a theme worthy of the narrator of Cuculain, and as worthily did he succeed in his treatment of it. The eloquent apostrophe addressed to Slieve Gullion is rightly regarded as among the finest prose O'Grady has written, and there is something beautifully appropriate in the circumstances which provoke the rhapsody. The entrancing story of Red Hugh terminates with this evocation of all the splendours of ancient Eire associated with the lonely mountain-lake, Lough Liath, cradled at the summit of Slieve Gullion. The young hero, championing the ideals and traditions of which the mountain is the symbol, pauses at its base before entering, through the "Gates of the North," upon that struggle which

preceded the destruction of the feudal order of Gaelic Ireland. Red Hugh O'Donnell was the last of the line of heroes whose exploits had fired and fascinated the author of the bardic *Histories*. Before achieving the masterpiece of *The Flight of the Eagle* he had etched a few smaller sketches of the same figure in *The Bog of Stars*, which had appeared in 1893.

This work, and *Finn and his Companions*, were for many years the only books of O'Grady which were easily procurable, and W. B. Yeats pronounced the latter his best, a judgment not usually endorsed by his admirers. The truth is that for some time after the launching of the so-called Irish Literary Movement, Standish O'Grady responded to the demand for his works by writing historical, or semi-historical novels which were sometimes revisions of portions of the famous *Histories*, sometimes new inventions. *The Coming of Cuculain* was the most noteworthy of the former, while *Ulrick the Ready* (1896) may be mentioned as an example of the latter. Technically considered, this is perhaps his best written book, the construction is simpler and clearer; he is no longer hampered by the details of his extraordinary knowledge of the sixteenth century achieves. But by that time he had acquired great facility, having previously published two books of boyish adventure *Lost on Du Corrig* (1894) and *The Chain of Gold* (1895), not to



mention *In the Wake of King James* (1896), which was not specifically "juvenile fiction," but childish, it must be confessed, when compared with the writer's best work. Also deserving of mention is that pseudonymous volume *The Queen of the World*, which was presented to the public in 1900 over the name "Luke Netterville." In this book the author succumbs to the temptation of writing the romance of the future, he who had so wonderfully interpreted the romance of the past. *The Queen of the World* belongs to that order of fiction which includes More's *Utopia*, Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, W. H. Hudson's *Crystal Age*, Butler's *Erewhon* and the well-known fantasies of H. G. Wells, with whom "Luke Netterville" may be more legitimately compared. O'Grady was right to keep this volume apart from his other writings, not because it is unworthy of them, for it is not, but because of the utter dissimilarity of the note it strikes in the harmony of his work. *The Queen of the World* is superior to *In the Wake of King James*, but its interest, nevertheless, lies rather in the fact that it is the only Irish contribution in our time to the literature of utopianism.

The political writings of Standish O'Grady are an important part of his claim to rank as one of the greatest figures in contemporary Irish literature. Like all inspired work, they often transcend the

immediate occasion of their appearance, and live by virtue of enduring qualities which do not depend upon local circumstance for their interest. Very little of this work has been preserved, and even less was destined for permanent publication, so that it is left to the curious in such matters to refer to the files of old newspapers and periodicals. Apart from the daily Press, the main sources of references are *The Kilkenny Moderator*, during his editorship; *The Irish Peasant*, *The New Age*, and, above all, that delightful and characteristic periodical, *The All Ireland Review*, which he edited, and wrote for the most part, during the six years of its existence from January, 1900, to April, 1906. This irregular weekly journal must always be a mine of information for those interested, not only in O'Grady, but in the Irish Literary Revival, whose leading writers contributed much to its pages. As a proof of the interest attracted by the Editor's comments upon current politics it may be mentioned that out of one year's issues Lady Gregory was able to piece together the essay entitled "The Great Enchantment," which was published in her *Ideals in Ireland* (1901). In the present volume the same title, which was O'Grady's, has been retained, but a less disjointed selection has been made, with a view to preserving as much as possible of the original articles.



The author himself has published in book form only three volumes of a political interest, unless *The Story of Ireland* be so counted, and these are: *The Crisis in Ireland* (1882), *Toryism and the Tory Democracy* (1886), and *All Ireland* (1898), of which the first and last are hardly more than bulky pamphlets. Unlike as were the circumstances which called them forth, they are identical in purpose, if not in scope. *Toryism and the Tory Democracy* is a brilliant indictment of the financial and other injustices of the Union, in the guise of a plea for Tory Democracy on the lines represented by Lord Randolph Churchill, to whom the book is dedicated. The noble lord is dead as certainly as his policy, yet O'Grady's elaboration of the latter has an enduring appeal. The explanation is simply that he has dealt with tangible Irish problems, many of which still await solution, and his standpoint, if not exactly popular with Party politicians, is one which is original, intelligible and deserves consideration. The famous address to the landlords of Ireland, which has been included in the present selection, contains the gist of O'Grady's politics. He approached political questions firmly convinced that aristocracy was the only natural and tolerable form of government. For all his crises of anarchy, he has been anti-democratic in so far as he has refused to believe in the wage-slave as the hope of the world.

The aristocratic gentry must rule, he thinks, and he is stirred to magnificent eloquence when he surveys their actual conduct in contrast to the ideal he entertains for them, the ideal which undoubtedly is their only *raison d'être*.

His Philippic against the landowning aristocracy of Ireland finds its counterpart in his horror of the imperial plutocracy of England, and this detestation of triumphant commercialism spurs him to a keen consciousness of the anomalies of the financial relations of the two countries. Hence his championship of the All Ireland Movement, which was the occasion of the brochure entitled *All Ireland*, from which that vivid chapter, "The Veiled Player," has been culled. But all through his political writings runs one motive, a lament for the downfall of the Irish aristocracy. This was the theme of *The Crisis in Ireland*, his earliest political work, in which he first addressed the landed gentry, and in the *All Ireland Review* we find him composing another "Address to an Order," of equal vehemence. As time went on, however, he realised the uselessness of this appeal to ears deafened to everything but the gross call of social and party advantage. Then, O'Grady turns to the extreme left; he advocates communism in *The Irish Peasant* and listens impatiently to the wholly sympathetic Æ, who counsels moderation, and endeavours to provide

the potential colony of communists with certain rudimentary elements of government. Finally, the organ of Guild Socialism, *The New Age*, receives him as a contributor, interested in the abolition of wavery and the restoration of National Guilds, as the only alternative to the Servile State, that apotheosis of profiteering.

Thus, at the end of his days, the champion of aristocracy looks to the people for that social reconstruction which he believed at one time must be initiated from above. Not for nothing did Lady Gregory describe him as a "Fenian Unionist," whose ambition it was to capture the British Empire for the greater glory of Ireland. In terms of modern politics he is an aristocratic Radical, and all his work may be explained in the light of that essentially modern epithet. He began with an ideal of aristocracy based upon that noble order in ancient Ireland which so strongly stirred his imagination, and so intimately appealed to his own nature. His instinct was to resist the new order of which Michael Davitt was the spokesman most immediately present to him as a young man studying the Ireland of his day. He believed that, with all their faults, the Irish aristocracy might be moved to impulses of which a more commercialised country was incapable, but he was doomed to recognise bitterly the paralysis of "The

Great Enchantment," and to find that not even in Ireland could the evolution of history be stayed. Nowadays, when few, of the younger generation at least, can comprehend the circumstances which fostered his illusion, all can understand and appreciate the man and his ideals. Standish O'Grady has been called "the Father of the Literary Revival in Ireland," because he filled a fruitful generation of young writers with the proud consciousness of a nationality divorced from mere politics, and sent them back to the sources of national thought and national literature. He is that, and he is more, for he stands before us in his works as a lofty idealist, one who has carried on into our generation that spark of nobility which makes it fitting that he should interpret the heroic age, as it makes the age itself intelligible.

The services of Standish O'Grady to Anglo-Irish literature have been so many and so varied that no epithet can adequately sum them up. Historian, novelist, dramatist, editor and publisher, he has certainly earned the distinction of being regarded as the Father of the Literary Revival, to which he contributed in diverse capacities, maintaining in each relationship the rare qualities of a great personality, akin, it seemed, to those heroes of our antiquity. Yet, it is easy to bring all these activities back to one central and all powerful motive. In a poem, which

raises regrets for the destruction of the volume he might have given us, he confesses his faith :

I give my heart to thee, O mother-land,  
I, if none else, recall the sacred womb.  
I, if none else, behold the loving eyes  
Bent ever on thy myriad progeny  
Who care not nor regard thee as they go,  
O tender, sorrowing, weeping, hoping land !  
I give my heart to thee, O mother-land.

I give my heart to thee, heroic land,  
To thee or in thy morning when the Sun  
Flashed on thy giant limbs—thy lurid noon—  
Or in thy depth of night, fierce-thoughted one,  
Wrestling with phantoms of thy own wild soul,  
Or, stone-still, silent, waiting for the dawn,  
I give my heart to thee, heroic land.

I give my heart to thee, ideal land,  
Far-soaring sister of the starry throng,  
O fleet of wing what journeyings are thine,  
What goal, what God attracts thee ? What unseen  
Glory reflected makes thy face a flame ?  
Leave me not, where thou goest, let me go.  
I give my heart to thee, ideal land.

Love of Ireland and love of the ideal—an admirable and characteristic creed, which expresses the dominant emotion of the life and work of Standish James O'Grady.

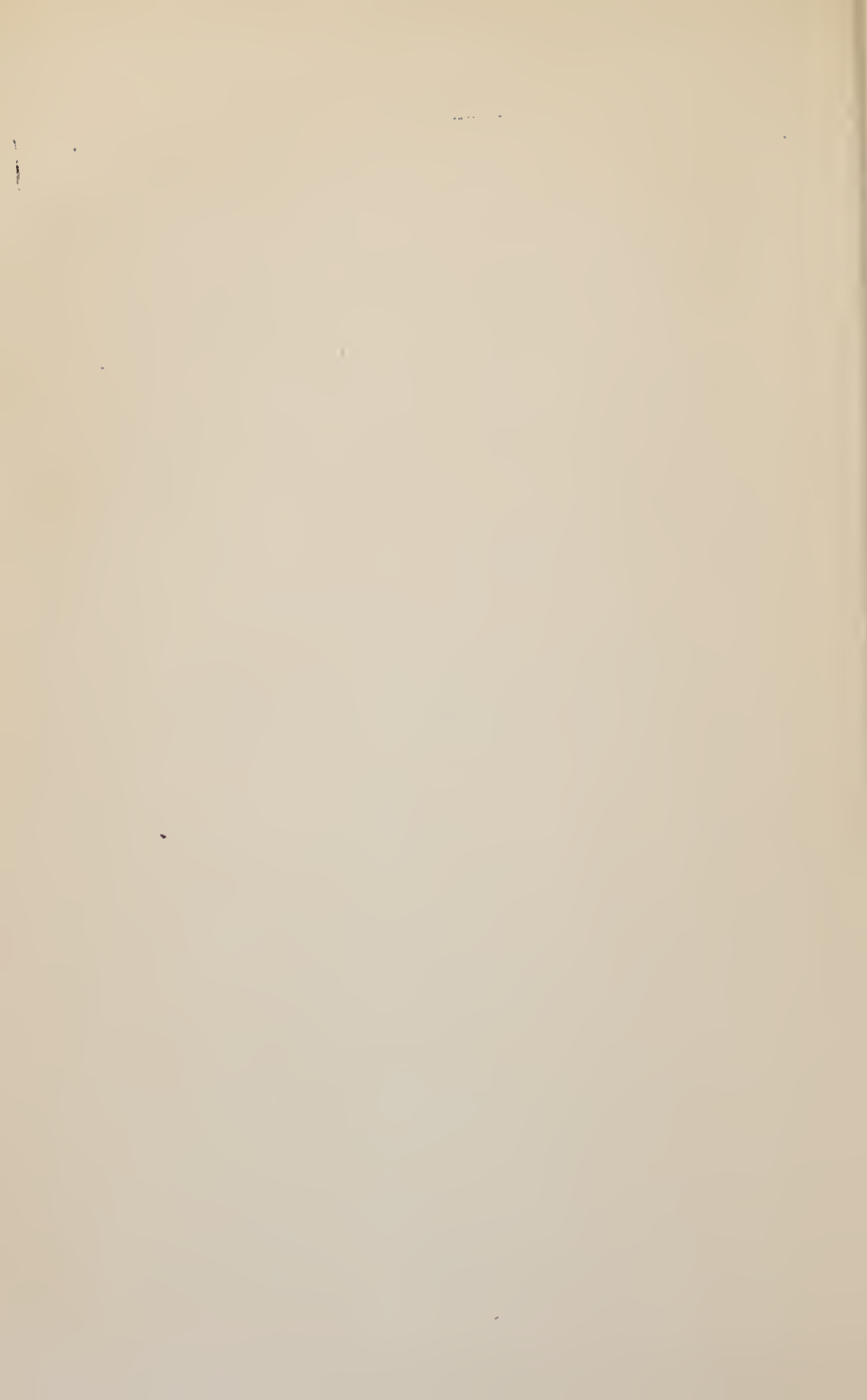
ERNEST A. BOYD.

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# IRISH BARDIC HISTORY.





## INTRODUCTION OF THE BARDIC HISTORY OF IRELAND

### DAWN.

There is not perhaps in existence a product of the human mind so extraordinary as the Irish annals. From a time dating for more than three thousand years before the birth of Christ, the stream of Hibernian history flows down uninterrupted, copious and abounding, between accurately defined banks, with here and there picturesque meanderings, here and there flowers lolling on those delusive waters, but never concealed in mists or lost in a marsh. As the centuries wend their way, king succeeds king with a regularity most gratifying, and fights no battle, marries no wife, begets no children, does no doughty deed of which a contemporaneous note was not taken, and which has not been incorporated in the annals of his country. To think that this mighty fabric of recorded events, so stupendous in its dimensions, so clean and accurate in its details, so symmetrical and elegant, should be after all a mirage and delusion, a gorgeous bubble, whose glowing rotundity, whose rich hues, azure, purple, amethyst and gold, vanish at a touch and are gone, leaving a sorry remnant over which the patriot disillusionized may grieve.

Early Irish history is the creation mainly of the bards.

Romances and poems supplied the great blocks with which the fabric was reared. These the chroniclers fitted into their places, into the interstices pouring shot-rubbish, and grouting. The bardic intellect, revolving round certain ideas for centuries, and round certain material facts, namely, the mighty barrows of their ancestors, produced gradually a vast body of definite historic lore, life-like kings and heroes, real-seeming queens. The mechanical intellect followed with perspicuous arrangement, with a thirst for accuracy, minuteness, and verisimilitude. With such quarrymen and such builders the work went on apace, and anon a fabric huge rose like an exhalation, and like an exhalation its towers and pinnacles of empurpled mist are blown asunder and dislimn.

Doubtless the legendary blends at some point with the historic narrative. The cloud and mist somewhere condense into the clear stream of indubitable fact. But how to discern under the rich and teeming mythus of the bards, the course of that slender and doubtful rivulet, or beneath the piled rubbish and dust of the chroniclers, discover the tiny track which elsewhere broadens into the highway of a nation's history. In this minute, circumstantial, and most imposing body of history, where the certain legend exhibits the form of plain and probable narrative, and the certain fact displays itself with a mythical flourish, how there to fix upon any one point and say here is the first truth. It is a task perilous and perplexing.

Descartes commenced his investigations into the nature of the soul, by assuming the certainty of his

own existence. Standing upon this adamantine foothold, he sought around him for ground equally firm, which should support his first step in the quagmire of metaphysics. But in the early Irish history, what one solid and irrefutable fact appears upon which we can put foot or hand and say, " This, at all events, is certain ; this that I hold is not mist ; this that I stand on is neither water nor mire " ? Running down the long list of Milesian kings, chiefs, brehons, and bards, where first shalt we pause, arrested by some substantial form in this procession of empty ghosts—how distinguish the man from the shadow, when over all is diffused the same concealing mist, and the eyes of the living and the dead look with the same pale glare ? Eocha of the heavy sighs, how shall we certify or how deny the existence of that melancholy man, or of Tiernmas, who introduced the worship of fire ? Lara of the ships, did he really cross the sea to Gaul, and return thence to give her name to Leinster, and beget Leinster kings ? Ugainey More, did he rule to the Torrian sea, holding sea-coast towns in fee, or was he a prehistoric shadow thrown into the past from the stalwart figure of Niall of the Hostages ? Was Morann a real Brehon, or fabulous as the collar that threatened to strangle him in the utterances of unjust judgments ? Was Ferkeirtney a poet, having flesh and bones and blood, and did Bricrind, the satirist, really compose those bitter ranns for the Ultonians ? or were both as ghostly as the prime druid, Amergin, who came into the island with the sons of Milesius, and in a manner beyond all praise, collected the histories of the conquered peoples ?

Or do we wrong that venerable man whose high-sounding name clung for ages around the estuary of the Obōka.

One thing at all events we cannot deny—that the national record is at least lively. Clear noble shapes of kings and queens, chieftains, brehons, and bards gleam in the large rich light shed abroad over the triumphant progress of the legendary tale. We see Dûns snow-white with roofs striped crimson and blue, chariots cushioned with noble skins, with bright bronze wheels and silver poles and yokes. The lively-hearted, resolute steeds gallop past, bearing the warrior and his charioteer with the loud clangour of rattling spears and darts. As in some bright young dawn, over the dewy grass, and in the light of the rising sun, superhuman in size and beauty, their long, yellow hair curling on their shoulders, bound around the temples with torcs of gold, clad in white linen tunics, and loose brattas of crimson silk fastened on the breast with huge wheel brooches of gold, their long spears musical with running rings ; with naked knees and bare crown, they cluster round their kings, the chieftains and knights of the heroic age of Ireland.

The dawn of history is like the dawn of the day. The night of the pre-historic epoch grows rare, its dense weight is relaxed ; flakes of fleeting and uncertain light wander and vanish ; vague shapes of floating mist reveal themselves, gradually assuming form and colour ; faint hues of crimson, silver, and gold strike here and there, and the legendary dawn grows on. But the glory of morn though splendid is unsubstantial ; the glory of changing and

empurpled mist—vapours that conceal the solid face of nature, the hills, trees, streams, and the horizon, holding between us and the landscape a concealing veil, through whose close woof the eye cannot penetrate, and over all a weird strange light.

In the dawn of the history of all nations we see this deceptive light, those glorious and unearthly shapes ; before Grecian history, the gods and demigods who fought around Ilium ; before Roman, the strong legends of Virginius and Brutus ; in the dawn of Irish history, the Knights of the Red Branch, and all the glory that surrounded the Court of Concobar Mac Nessa, High King of the Ultonians.

But of what use these concealing glories, these cloudy warriors, and air-built palaces ? Why not pass on at once to credible history ?

A nation's history is made for it by circumstances, and the irresistible progress of events ; but their legends, they make for themselves. In that dim twilight region, where day meets night, the intellect of man, tired by contact with the vulgarity of actual things, goes back for rest and recuperation, and there sleeping, projects its dreams against the waning night and before the rising of the sun.

The legends represent the imagination of the country ; they are that kind of history which a nation desires to possess. They betray the ambition and ideals of the people, and, in this respect, have a value far beyond the tale of actual events and duly recorded deeds, which are no more history than a skeleton is a man. Nay, too,

they have their own reality. They fill the mind with an adequate and satisfying pleasure. They present a rhythmic completeness and a beauty not to be found in the fragmentary and ragged succession of events in time. Achilles and Troy appear somehow more real than Histæus and Miletus, Cuculain and Emain Macha than Brian Borom and Kincoráh.

Such is the effect produced by a sympathetic and imaginative study of the bardic literature, the critical faculty being for a time held in abeyance, but with its inevitable reappearance and reassertion of its rights, that gorgeous world, with all its flashing glories, dissolves like a dream, or is held together only by a resolute suppression of all disturbing elements. If we endeavour to realise, vividly and as a whole, the early ages and personages of Irish history, piercing below the annals, studying them in connection with the imaginative literature, using everywhere a strict and critical eye, and demanding that verisimilitude and underlying harmony which we look for in modern historical romance, imagination itself wavers and fails. Here is a splendid picture, complete in all its parts, fully satisfying the imagination ; but yonder is another, and the two will not harmonize ; or here is a fact stated, and the picture contradicts the fact. So contemplated, the historic track, clear and definite in the annals, viewed through the medium of the bardic literature, is doubtful and elusive in the extreme. Spite its splendid appearance in the annals, it is thin, legendary, evasive. Looked at with the severe eyes of criticism, the broad walled highway



of the old historians, on which pass many noble figures of kings and queens, brehons, bards, kerds and warriors, legislators and druids, real-seeming antique shapes of men and women, marked by many a carn, piled above heroes, illustrious with battles, elections, conventions, melts away into thin air. The glare of bardic light flees away; the broad, firm highway is torn asunder and dispersed; even the narrow, doubtful track is not seen; we seem to foot it hesitatingly, anxiously, from stepping-stone to stepping-stone set at long distance in some quaking Cimmerian waste. But all around, in surging, tumultuous motion, come and go the gorgeous, unearthly beings that long ago emanated from bardic minds, a most weird and mocking world. Faces rush out of the darkness, and as swiftly retreat again. Heroes expand into giants, and dwindle into goblins, or fling aside the heroic form and gambol as buffoons; gorgeous palaces are blown asunder like a smoke-wreath; kings, with wand of silver and ard-rōth of gold, move with all their state from century to century; puissant heroes, whose fame reverberates through and sheds a glory over epochs, approach and coalesce; battles are shifted from place to place and century to century; buried monarchs reappear, and run a new career of glory. The explorer visits an enchanted land where he is mocked and deluded. Everything seems blown loose from its fastenings. All that should be most stable is whirled round and borne away like foam or dead leaves in a storm.

But with the cessation of this creative bardic energy, what a deposit and residuum for the annalists. Consider

the great work of the Four Masters, as it treats of this period, that strange sarcophagus filled with the imagined dust of visionary hosts. There lies a vast silent land, a land of the dead, a vast continent of the dead, lit with pale phosphoric radiance. The weird light that surges round us elsewhere has passed away from that land. The phantasmal energy has ceased there—the transmutation scenes that mock, the chaos, and the whirlwind. There, too, at one time, the same phantasmagoria prevailed, real-seeming warriors thundered, kings glittered, kerds wrought, harpers harped, chariots rolled. But all that has passed away. Reverent hands, to whom that phantasmal world was real, decently composed and laid aside in due order the relics and anatomies of those airy nations, building over each hero his tomb, and setting up his gravestone, piously graving the year of his death and birth, and his battles. There they repose in their multitudes in ordered and exact numbers and relation, reaching away into the dim past to the edge of the great deluge, and beyond it; there the Queen Ceasair and her comrades, pre-Noachian wanderers; there Fintann, who lived on both sides of the great flood, and roamed the depths when the world was submerged; there Partholanus and his ill-starred race—the chroniclers know them all; there the children of Nemed in their own Golgotha, their stones all carefully lettered, these not so ancient as the rest, only three thousand years before the birth of Christ; there the Clan Fomor, a giant race, and the Firbolgs with their correlatives, Fir-Domnan and Fir-Gaileen—the Tuatha De Danān,

whom the prudent annalist condemns to a place amongst the dead—a divine race they will not die—they flee afar, preferring their phantasmal life ; even the advent of the Talkend will not slay them, though their glory suffers eclipse before the new faith. The children of Milith are there with their long ancestry reaching to Egypt and the Holy Land—Heber, Heremon, Amergin, Ir, with all their descendants, each beneath his lettered stone ; Tiernmas and Moh Corb, Ollav Fohla, their lines descending through many centuries ; all put away and decently composed for ever. No confusion now, no dissolving scenes or aught that shocks and disturbs, no conflicting events and incredible re-appearances. Chronology is respected. The critical and historical intellect has provided that all things shall be done rightly and in order, that the obits and births and battles should be natural and imposing, and worthy of the annals of an ancient people.

And thus, regarding the whole from a point of view sufficiently remote, a certain epic completeness and harmony characterizes that vast panoramic succession of ages and races.

#### RATH AND CAIRN GERMS OF THE HISTORY.

Scattered over the surface of every country in Europe may be found sepulchral monuments, the remains of pre-historic times and nations, and of a phase of life and civilization which has long since passed away. No country in Europe is without its cromlechs and dolmens, huge earthen tumuli, great flagged sepulchres, and

enclosures of tall pillar-stones. The men by whom these works were made, so interesting in themselves, and so different from anything of the kind erected since, were not strangers and aliens, but our own ancestors, and out of their rude civilization our own has slowly grown. Of that elder phase of European civilization no record or tradition has been anywhere bequeathed to us. Of its nature, and the ideas and sentiments whereby it was sustained, nought may now be learned save by an examination of those tombs themselves, and of the dumb remnants, from time to time exhumed out of their soil—rude instruments of clay, flint, brass, and gold, and by speculations and reasonings founded upon these, archæological gleanings, meagre and sapless.

For after the explorer has broken up, certainly desecrated, and perhaps destroyed those noble sepulchral raths; after he has disinterred the bones laid there once by pious hands, and the urn with its unrecognisable ashes of king or warrior, and by the industrious labour of years hoarded his fruitless treasure of stone celt and arrow-head, of brazen sword and gold fibula and torque; and after the savant has rammed many skulls with sawdust, measuring their capacity, and has adorned them with some obscure label, and has tabulated and arranged the implements and decorations of flint and metal in the glazed cases of the cold gaunt museum, the imagination, unsatisfied and revolted, shrinks back from all that he has done. Still we continue to inquire, receiving from him no adequate response—who were those ancient chieftains and warriors for whom an affec-

tionate people raised those strange tombs? What life did they lead? What deeds perform? How did their personality affect the minds of their people and posterity? How did our ancestors look upon those great tombs, certainly not reared to be forgotten, and how did they—those huge monumental pebbles and swelling raths—enter into and affect the civilization or religion of the times?

We see the cromlech with its massive slab and immense supporting pillars, but we vainly endeavour to imagine for whom it was first erected, and how that greater than cyclopean house affected the minds of those who made it, or those who were reared in its neighbourhood or within reach of its influence. We see the stone cist with its great smooth flags, the rocky cairn, and huge barrow and massive walled cathair, but the interest which they invariably excite is only aroused to subside again unsatisfied. From this department of European antiquities the historian retires baffled, and the dry savant is alone master of the field, but a field which, as cultivated by him alone, remains barren, or fertile only in things the reverse of exhilarating. An antiquarian museum is more melancholy than a tomb.

But there is one country in Europe, in which, by virtue of a marvellous strength and tenacity of the historical intellect, and of filial devotedness to the memory of their ancestors, there have been preserved down into the early phases of mediæval civilization, and then committed to the sure guardianship of manuscript, the hymns, ballads, stories, and chronicles, the names, pedigrees,

achievements, and even characters, of those ancient kings and warriors over whom those massive cromlechs were erected and great cairns piled. There is not a conspicuous sepulchral monument in Ireland, the traditional history of which is not recorded in our ancient literature, and of the heroes in whose honour they were raised. In the rest of Europe there is not a single barrow, dolmen, or cist of which the ancient traditional history is recorded : in Ireland there is hardly one of which it is not. And these histories are in many cases as rich and circumstantial as that of men of the greatest eminence who have lived in modern times. Granted that the imagination which for centuries followed with eager interest the lives of these heroes, beheld as gigantic what was not so, as romantic and heroic what was neither one nor the other, still the great fact remains, that it was beside and in connection with the mounds and cairns that this history was elaborated, and elaborated concerning them and concerning the heroes to whom they were sacred.

On the plain of Tara, beside the little stream Nemna, itself famous as that which first turned a mill-wheel in Ireland, there lies a barrow, not itself very conspicuous in the midst of others, all named and illustrious in the ancient literature of the country. The ancient hero there interred is to the student of the Irish bardic literature a figure as familiar and clearly seen as any personage in the *Biographia Britannica*. We know the name he bore as a boy and the name he bore as a man. We know the names of his father and his grandfather,



and of the father of his grandfather ; of his mother, and the father and mother of his mother, and the pedigrees and histories of each of these. We know the name of his nurse, and of his children, and of his wife, and the character of his wife, and of the father and mother of his wife, and where they lived and were buried. We know all the striking events of his boyhood and manhood, the names of his horses and his weapons, his own character and his friends, male and female. We know his battles, and the names of those whom he slew in battle, and how he was himself slain, and by whose hands. We know his physical and spiritual characteristics, the device upon his shield, and how that was originated, carved, and painted, and by whom. We know the colour of his hair, the date of his birth and of his death, and his relations, in time and otherwise, with the remainder of the princes and warriors with whom, in that mound-raising period of our history, he was connected, in hostility or friendship ; and all this enshrined in ancient song, the transmitted traditions of the people who raised that barrow, and who laid within it sorrowing their brave ruler and defender. That mound is the tomb of Cuculain, once king of the district in which Dundalk stands to-day, and the ruins of whose earthen fortification may still be seen two miles from that town.

This is a single instance, and used merely as an example, but one out of a multitude almost as striking. There is not a king of Ireland, described as such in the ancient annals, whose barrow is not mentioned in these or other compositions, and every one of which may at the present



day be identified where the ignorant plebeian or the ignorant patrician has not destroyed them. The early history of Ireland clings around and grows out of the Irish barrows until, with almost the universality of that primeval forest from which Ireland took one of its ancient names, the whole isle and all within it was clothed with a nobler raiment, invisible, but not the less real, of a full and luxuriant history, from whose presence, all-embracing, no part was free. Of the many poetical and rhetorical titles lavished upon this country, none is truer than that which calls her the Isle of Song. Her ancient history passed unceasingly into the realm of artistic representation; the history of one generation became the poetry of the next, until the whole island was illuminated and coloured by the poetry of the bards. Productions of mere fancy and imagination these songs are not, though fancy and imagination may have coloured and shaped all their subject matter, but the names are names of men and women who once lived and died in Ireland, and over whom their people raised the swelling rath and reared the rocky cromlech. In the sepulchral monuments their names were preserved, and in their performance of sacred rites, and the holding of games, fairs, and assemblies in their honour, the memory of their achievements kept fresh, till the traditions that clung around these places were enshrined in tales which were finally incorporated in the *Leabhar na Huidhré* and the *Book of Leinster*.

Pre-historic narrative is of two kinds—in one the imagination is at work consciously, in the other unconsciously. Legends of the former class are the product

of a lettered and learned age. The story floats loosely in a world of imagination. The other sort of pre-historic narrative clings close to the soil, and to visible and tangible objects. It may be legend, but it is legend believed in as history, never consciously invented, and growing out of certain spots of the earth's surface, and supported by and drawing its life from the soil like a natural growth.

Such are the early Irish tales that cling around the mounds and cromlechs as that by which they are sustained, which was originally their source, and sustained them afterwards in a strong enduring life. It is evident that these cannot be classed with stories that float vaguely in an ideal world, which may happen in one place as well as another, and in which the names might be disarrayed without changing the character and consistency of the tale, and its relations, in time or otherwise, with other tales.

Foreigners are surprised to find the Irish claim for their own country an antiquity and a history prior to that of the neighbouring countries. Herein lie the proof and the explanation. The traditions and history of the mound-raising period have in other countries passed away. Foreign conquest, or less intrinsic force of imagination, and pious sentiment have suffered them to fall into oblivion; but in Ireland they have been all preserved in their original fulness and vigour, hardly a hue has faded, hardly a minute circumstance or articulation been suffered to decay.

The enthusiasm with which the Irish intellect seized upon the grand moral life of Christianity, and ideals so different from, and so hostile to, those of the heroic age,

did not consume the traditions or destroy the pious and reverent spirit in which men still looked back upon those monuments of their own pagan teachers and kings, and the deep spirit of patriotism and affection with which the mind still clung to the old heroic age, whose types were warlike prowess, physical beauty, generosity, hospitality, love of family and nation, and all those noble attributes which constituted the heroic character as distinguished from the saintly. The Danish conquest, with its profound modification of Irish society, and consequent disruption of old habits and conditions of life, did not dissipate it ; nor the more dangerous conquest of the Normans, with their own innate nobility of character, chivalrous daring, and continental grace and civilization ; nor the Elizabethan convulsions and systematic repression and destruction of all native phases of thought and feeling. Through all these storms, which successively assailed the heroic literature of ancient Ireland, it still held itself undestroyed. There were still found generous minds to shelter and shield the old tales and ballads, to feel the nobleness of that life of which they were the outcome, and to resolve that the soil of Ireland should not, so far as they had the power to prevent it, be denuded of its raiment of history and historic romance, or reduced again to primeval nakedness. The fruit of this persistency and unquenched love of country and its ancient traditions, is left to be enjoyed by us. There is not through the length and breadth of the country a conspicuous rath or barrow of which we cannot find the traditional history preserved in this ancient literature. The mounds of Tara, the

great barrows along the shores of the Boyne, the raths of Slieve Mish, Rathcrōgan, and Teltown, the stone caiseals of Aran and Innishowen, and those that alone or in smaller groups stud the country over, are all, or nearly all, mentioned in this ancient literature, with the names and traditional histories of those over whom they were raised.

The indigenous history of the surrounding nations commences with the Christian ages—that of Ireland runs back into the pre-Christian. The Irish bards, unlike those of Gaul, Britain, and we may add, Germany, handed over to the monks and mediæval scholars an immense mass of mingled history, tradition, and mythology, which the monks and Christianized bards were compelled to accept, and which to a certain extent, they have verified and established as indubitable.

The literary monuments in which is enshrined the ancient history of Ireland, though chronologically later than the corresponding monuments of Greece and of the Norse nations, are yet in fact more archaic. They cling close to and encircle the mounded tombs of gods and heroes. Other literatures have floated far away from that to which they owe their genesis. They resemble the full course of a stream which has had its source far away. The stream of the Irish bardic literature still lingers in the mountains which gave it birth. It is near the well-head.

The stone-circle, rath, mound, cromlech, pillar-stone, so far as I know, appear in no literature to-day except the ancient literature of Ireland.

The pre-Christian period of Irish history presents difficulties from which the corresponding period in the histories of other countries is free. The surrounding nations escape the difficulty by having nothing to record. The Irish historian is immersed in perplexity on account of the mass of material ready to his hand. The English have lost utterly all record of those centuries before which the Irish historian stands with dismay and hesitation not through deficiency of materials, but through their excess. Had nought but the chronicles been preserved, the task would have been simple. We would then have had merely to determine approximately the date of the introduction of letters, and allowing a margin on account of the bardic system and the commission of family and national history to the keeping of rhymed and alliterated verse, fix upon some reasonable point, and set down in order, the old successions of kings and the battles and other remarkable events. But in Irish history there remains, demanding treatment, that other immense mass of literature of an imaginative nature, illuminating with anecdote and tale the events and personages mentioned simply and without comment by the chronicler. It is this poetic literature which constitutes the stumbling-block, as it constitutes also the glory, of early Irish history, for it cannot be rejected and it cannot be retained. It cannot be rejected, because it contains historical matter which is consonant with and illuminates the dry lists of the chronologist, and it cannot be retained, for popular poetry is not history; and the task of distinguishing in such literature the fact from the fiction—where there is cer-



tainly fact and certainly fiction—is one of the most difficult to which the intellect can apply itself. That this difficulty has not been hitherto surmounted by Irish writers is no just reproach. For the last century, intellects of the highest attainments, trained and educated to the last degree, have been vainly endeavouring to solve a similar question in the far less copious and less varied heroic literature of Greece. Yet the labours of Wolfe, Grote, Mahaffy, Geddes, and Gladstone, have not been sufficient to set at rest the small question, whether it was one man or two or many who composed the Iliad and Odyssey, while the reality of the achievements of Achilles and even his existence might be denied or asserted by a scholar without general reproach. When this is the case with regard to the great heroes of the Iliad, I fancy it will be some time before the same problem will have been solved for the minor characters, and as it affects Thersites, or that eminent artist who dwelt at home in Hyla, being by far the most excellent of leather-cutters. When, therefore, Greek still meets Greek in an interminable and apparently bloodless conflict over the disputed body of the Iliad and still no end appears, surely it would be madness for any one to sit down and gaily distinguish true from false in the immense and complex mass of the Irish bardic literature, having in his ears this century-lasting struggle over a single Greek poem and a single small phase of the semi-historic life of Hellas.

#### THE MYTHICAL PERIOD.

So absolute is the tyranny of the imagination over the

minds of men, that it is often precisely those portions of the history of a people which are not historical that attract the most profound attention and arouse the deepest feelings. Even within the limits of the historical period it is the imaginative treatment of persons and events which takes the strongest hold upon the world. It is the Socrates of Plato's dialogues, the Marc Antony of Shakspeare's drama and of Plutarch's anecdotes, the Alfred of pretty Anglo-Saxon myths, whom we really see and think of, and not the Socrates, Marc Antony, and Alfred of positive undeniable history. The legend-making faculty, and what is akin to it, never cease and never can cease. Romance, epic, drama, and artistic representation are at all times the points to which history continually aspires—there only its final development and efflorescence. Archæology culminates in history, history culminates in art.

This is true of persons and events falling within the scope of the most undeniable history, but it is when the great permanent universal feelings of a nation or race project themselves into appropriate types of human personality, moving freely in a congenial atmosphere and world, that the power of imagination is rightly known and its profound and penetrating effect fully felt. While perpetually teased and hampered by the critical and historical instinct, it works as it were in chains, and its results are proportionately trivial. To express the whole nature of a race or nation, the artist needs that absolute freedom which is only supplied by a complete escape from positive history and unyielding



despotic fact. Then the results become so typical, and of such enduring value and importance, that not the historian alone, but all eager and vivid minds are irresistibly attracted thither by influences similar to those which attract us in storms, in the sea, in running water, in revolutionary epochs, and in all that seems to indicate abounding life, movement, and freedom.

Such an escape from the actual is supplied to some more favoured or more gifted nations in the possession of a great mythical age lying behind their progress through time, imparting to their lives its own greatness and glory, inspiring life and hope and a buoyancy which laughs at obstacles and will not recognise defeat. The very lawlessness and audacity of conception which characterise such imagined ages are ever welcome. They prove overflowing youth and hope, and point to a maturity of power. The Greek race performed mightier achievements than the fabled labours of Heracles or of the mountain-rending Titans. The gigantic conceptions of heroism and strength, with which the forefront of Irish history is thronged, prove the great future of this race and land, of which the mere contemplation of the actual results of time might cause even the patriot to despair.

To the Greek bards who shaped the mythology of Hellas we must remotely attribute all the enormous influence which Greece has exercised on the world. But for them, the Greece that we know would not have been ; without them the Iliad and Odyssey would never have arisen, nor the Athenian drama, nor Greek art, nor architecture. All of these, as we find them, are

concerned with the gods and heroes who were the creations of pre-historic bards. It was they, namely, these pre-historic unremembered Greeks, who supplied the types, and the fire, ideality, and creative impulses. The great age of Hellas was not an accident, but an emergence into light, and a bursting as it were into flower of that which was generated and nursed in earlier obscurer centuries. Those rude elder forgotten bards were the root of all that floral magnificence of the Periclean and subsequent ages. That this is true of all the imaginative and artistic work of Greece is self-evident ; but I believe it is no less true of Greek philosophy, and of the whole life of Hellas, as it exhibits itself in history. How all-controlling over the pre-historic Greek mind must have been the influence of the bards, the comparative study of the corresponding period of Irish history shows, with a clearness and fulness which cannot be elsewhere found. For centuries of the progress of the Hellenic mind, the great tides and currents were bardic, religious, and imaginative. From those ages it emerges into the litten spaces of history, bringing with it such powers and ambitions as accrued to it during the centuries of the predominance of the bards.

As compared with the history of Greece, that of our own land is of course a small thing, its real greatness lying in the promise of the future, not in the actualities of the past ; of which future, that far off mythic age is a prophecy. But no more than Grecian is Irish history comprehensible without a knowledge of those gods, giants, and heroes, with whose crowded cycles its pre-

historic ages are filled. No such visible results have flowed to the world from the labours of the Irish bards as what has indirectly accrued from those of Orpheus, Musæus, and the other spiritual progenitors of the Greek race. The development of the Irish mind under the influence of the bards was interrupted by the advent of Christianity at a very early age, impelled by the force of all the existing civilization of Europe. Had the intellectual and spiritual sovereignty of the Irish bards continued for a few centuries longer, I, for one, regarding the wonderful imaginative power evinced in the whole conception of that vast epos which forms the bardic history of Ireland, and the innumerable defined lofty or beautiful characters which it contains, feel as confident as one can well be concerning anything not actually realized, that results would have been forthcoming which would now be portion of the intellectual wealth of mankind.

Yet were the labours of the Irish bards considerable and well worthy of attention, and their influence upon the history of this nation deep and far-reaching. In the first place, they have left behind the still extant imaginative literature, monuments of antiquity in the highest degree interesting and important. No other European country supplies records exhibiting phases of thought and civilization so archaic, as are revealed with regard to the Irish race, in this unique literature. Thus a great hiatus in European, and, more particularly, in Grecian history, is partially filled. We find in it a stage of mental and social development corresponding to that

of Hellas in the centuries that preceded the age of Homer, and of which all monuments have been swept away.

Again, we must remember that the intellectual influence exercised by Ireland over the north-west of Europe, during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, is distinctly, though indirectly, traceable to the bards. It is not in the nature of things that a savage and untutored race should suddenly burst upon the world and assume the spiritual control of peoples who had been for centuries in contact with Roman influence. When the Christian missionaries landed in Ireland, they found a people whose intellectual, moral, and imaginative powers had been for many generations stimulated and aroused by their native bards. But for them the Ireland of those centuries would have been impossible.

But perhaps the most valuable work achieved for Ireland by those ancient shapers of legend and heroic tale, is like all that is best done in the world, incapable of being definitely grasped and clearly exhibited. Their best work is probably hidden in the blood and brain of the race to this day. Those antique singing men, with their imagined gods and superhuman heroes, breathed into the land and people the gallantry and chivalrousness, the prevailing ideality, the love of action and freedom, the audacity and elevation of thought, which, underneath all rudeness and grotesquerie, characterizes those remnants of their imaginings, and which we would believe no intervening centuries have been powerful

wholly to annul. 'Theirs, not the monks', was the *perjervidum ingénium Scotorum*.

I would also add when I consider the extraordinary stimulus which the perusal of that literature gives to the imagination, even in centuries like these, and its wealth of elevated and intensely human characters that, as I anticipate, with the revival of Irish literary energy and the return of Irish self-esteem, the artistic craftsmen of the future will find therein, and in unfailing abundance, the material of persons and sentiments fit for the highest purposes of epic and dramatic literature and of art, pictorial and sculptural.

To ignore or despise the bardic literature might have been possible in the last century, but it is not possible now when a wider culture and a more profound philosophy have taught men the lesson of which one would imagine they ought not to stand in need, viz., to respect their fathers. Before the end of the present century, it is probable that the whole of the extant bardic literature will have been translated and published. How far the bardic history and literature enclose positive objective fact is a question of considerable interest and extreme difficulty ; nor does it permit certainly now and probably at no time of a satisfactory or final solution. It is probable that if the authentic traditions of all European nations so far as they related to those nations' remote ancestors had been preserved, they would have exhibited certain common features. In primitive societies the imagination is all in all, and the critical and scientific habit of mind is yet dormant. Nations, therefore, who have not yet

reached the point of scientific and exact criticism, naturally and inevitably regard their remote ancestors as beings of superhuman dignity and power. Such is the universal tendency ; and where the early European literature has been preserved, races of such a belief and of such a habit of mind are invariably manifested.

But the imagination when uncontrolled by the logical faculty is wilful and petulant, and is not consistent or true to itself. Consequently, the literary products of such an imagination are obscure, shifting and self-contradictory. When, however, such a nation, without having its continuity of growth intercepted, becomes logical and accurate, we may expect to see the vast mass of imaginative conceptions gradually reduced to order and teased and tortured in every way so as to bring them into harmony, not only with themselves, but with the tone of thought and feeling prevailing at the time of the last redaction.

In the Irish mythology and the Irish heroic literature, the student is equally astonished, both at the chaos and at the order, at the vast wilderness as of shattered worlds, mere tangle and confusion, and also at the spacious and levelled ways, mountains cut through, yawning gulfs bridged over, embankments which keep back the shifting morass—indications of a bold scientific spirit working bravely amid the chaos. Mediæval Ireland was not scientific, but the elements and germ of science were there. It was logical, orderly, with a thirst for minuteness, chronology and succession, co-ordination and relations,

But the rationalism and logic of mediæval Ireland,



though they deserve gratitude and respect inasmuch as they indicate mental qualities, but for which, doubtless, the mythological and heroic literature would never have been preserved at all, are primarily responsible for the cloud which hangs over our early history. Those monuments of intellectual engineering which traverse the land of gods and heroes do not end there; they travel broadly without break or check into the world of men and facts.

I think Ireland alone among the nations of the world exhibits as to its history the same progress from the mythological and heroic to the mundane, not even excepting that of Greece, which comes next. In the history of Greece there occurs between the two regions an era of mere barren names which indicate that here is debateable and uncertain land. On one side is the purple light of imagination, amid which loom and glitter the heroes and the gods—a land illuminated by the mind of Hesiod and Homer and the great tragedians; on the other the clear dry light of history prevails. We see clearly that one is history and the other fiction. But in the progress of the Irish national record the purple light is never absent. The weird, the supernatural, the heroic, surround characters as certain as Brian Borōm—events as trustworthy as the Norman Invasion. The bards never relinquished their right to view their history with the eyes of poets, to convert their kings into heroes and adorn battles and events with hues drawn from mythology; hence, the great stumbling-block.



Of European countries, Greece and Ireland only exhibit in their literary-historical monuments that regular progression of thought which ought to have if it did not characterize all the rest. The early traditions of Italy seem to have been lost in quite pre-historic times. The Rome that we know started into existence like a seedling out of some pre-existing perished civilization. Those of Spain and France were obliterated by the latinization of those countries. The traditions of Britain, which probably would never have assumed a large national character, owed their extinction to the same cause. Those of Scotland, owing to the predominance of Ireland and Irish thought, were lost or merged in those of this country. The Scandinavian and German still exist of European and world-wide importance indeed, but not so blended and intermingled with the history of any one German or Scandinavian nation as to fill the same place as the Irish and Greek mythological narrative.

Ireland not only escaped subjugation at the hands of Rome, but accomplished such a unity of thought and feeling as impressed upon the traditions a large national complexion, so that her history, like that of Greece, blends imperceptibly with her mythology. The historian is aware of the existence of a point of contact, but he cannot detect it. He may, however, trace back the current of history to a point at which demonstrative proof fails; but it is manifest that it would be most unscientific to declare, that because proof is not forthcoming for what immediately precedes this, mythology then commences, and fact is succeeded by fancy.

In the mythological monuments of Greece, the Olympian gods are preceded by a single race of beings variously known as Titans, Giants, Earth-born ones, beyond whom are seen only Night, Heaven, Earth, Chaos, and such physical entities. In the corresponding literature of Ireland we find the gods, whose name in our monuments is Tuatha De Danān, preceded by various mythological races, beyond whom are no physical entities.

I remark that Grote, in his history of Greece, devotes all his opening chapters to a large superficial account of the mythical ages. Of course, such ages being the product of imagination, or springing from sources far deeper than imagination, namely, that whence religion arises, can be only properly studied in the native monuments, but that the student should be supplied with a cursory and general survey of the whole ground is essential for the right examination of any such monuments, or for the perusal of the results of criticism as it deals with them.

## CEASAIR AND CEASAIRIAN DEITIES.

According to the Irish bards the most ancient name of Ireland was *Inis na Veeva*—the Isle of Woods—possessing therefore a soil which needed a frequent use of the axe ere her plains were rendered fit for pasture-land or tillage. As we travel down through the chronicles we find, at various points, honourable mention of ancient gods and heroes who distinguished themselves as extensive fellers of forests. Indeed, amid all the splendour and chivalry of the heroic, and all the weirdness and vastness of the supernatural races, the humbler and more useful labours of the real or imagined benefactors of the island are gratefully recorded in the strangely interesting literature of the bardic historians, from that ancient god who cleared from forest the plain of the Liffey and fed his flocks upon its shores, to the historic king who relieved the labours of his concubine toiling painfully at the quern, by erecting on the stream *Nemnech*, which flows out eastward from *Tara*, the first water-mill built in Ireland. This one repelled the sea from *Murthemney*, forming the district which is now *Louth*; another taught men to ride on horses; a third first discovered and smelted gold in Ireland; a fourth brought cows and bulls from Britain, when all the cattle in the island were destroyed by a plague. Innumerable are the bardic references to such beneficent works.

To this Isle of Woods first arrived a colony fleeing

out of the east of Europe, the most ancient of those mythical races who preceded the advent of the gods. Bith, Lara, and Fintann were their kings, but, from Ceasair, their Queen, the race has taken its name. It is recorded in the annals as the invasion of Ceasair.

This race, according to the monkish historians, was swept away by the Deluge, but I doubt not that the true ethnic traditions represented this remote Ceasair, and the gods of her cycle, as the root whence sprang all the gods and heroes of later times.

Of these Ceasairian deities, one, Fintann, the patron of poets and historians, survived in the imagination and belief of the people, not only into historic times, but down to the age of the decay of all fairy-lore. In every age and epoch Fintann duly reappears, the long-memoried historian of all the changes and revolutions of the Gael.

The great epos of the bardic history of Ireland opens with the advent of Queen Ceasair and the Ceasairian deities. The true ethnic history and origin of this dynasty is perhaps lost, we seem now to possess but the ashes of the cycle. When in the early historic ages all the bardic cycles and all the topical traditions began to be collected and formed into a continuous sequence, a certain rude knowledge of the geography of Europe, and of the history of great European nations was prevalent. From the time when men knew anything at all of countries and peoples outside of their own, they felt themselves compelled to bring their history into some sort of relationship with them. In the mythical history of Greece, for

example, there is a great deal more in the Trojan war and the derivation of early Greek civilization from Egypt and Phœnicia, than a mere tradition of something that actually took place.

In the bardic history of Ireland the work of this spirit is apparent on every page. The limits of their sea-surrounded home did not supply to our ancestors sufficient scope for the play of imagination and of the sympathies. To gratify this imperative desire, the old narrow traditions are expanded into a sort of world-wide significance, and the old beliefs outraged or distorted when they oppose the working of this generous principle. To be a portion of the human family, and bear a part in the general progress of man and of the world, those bards, ethnic or Christian, who effected the last redaction of our mythical history, regarded as the duty and natural function of the island and the race. Thus England, Wales, and Scotland, Germany, France, and Norway, Spain, Italy, Greece, Scythia, Egypt, and Asia Minor have all, more or less, affected the purer though narrower stream of insular tradition and local belief, producing results grotesque, indeed, but from which we cannot withhold our sympathies, when we remember the spirit which prompted those distortions of the ancient historic or literary monuments. Nor need the scientific inquirer affect any considerable wrath upon the subject, for all those portions of the bardic history which were added, through the operation of Classical and Christian ideas, are as easily separable from the remainder as incrustations of earth from a piece of solid ore.

This Queen Ceasair, who, with her people, first took possession of Ireland, we know did not come from the east of Europe, but was some ancient Irish heroine, expanded by the imagination and spiritual faculties of our ancestors into superhuman and divine dimensions, and was probably an imagined descendant of still more ancient lost cycles of divinities and heroes. Her ethnic pedigree was probably cut short in Christian ages, lest it should conflict with received notions of the age of the world.

The spot where she first touched Ireland was Dunamarc, a small village between Bantry and Glengariffe, at the upper end of Bantry Bay. In the Bardic history, where the operation of those disturbing influences to which I have alluded is not apparent, every recorded fact has its own peculiar significance, arising, as it invariably does, not from the fancies of individuals, but growing out of popular traditions written into the history by men who believed them to be true, and who inherited them from others, by whom they were not consciously imagined. Thus, I will be bold enough to assert, that in the mythical history of Ireland every spot of Irish soil mentioned is either the locus of some ancient tomb or temple, or was once a spot teeming with traditional lore, which thus succeeded in procuring for itself mention in the history. Scholarship, criticism, and archæology, from year to year, continue to justify, in a sense, the unhesitating faith with which our ancient chroniclers passed down from generation to generation the recorded history as it had descended to themselves.



That the Ceasairian legend formed a great national divine cycle is shown from the fact that the landing of Ceasair was in the south-west of Ireland, that the tomb of the chief personage, after herself, was in the east, that the mountains haunted by her father were in the centre, and that her own tomb was in Connaught. The cycle of which Ceasair is the centre, probably, at one time, extended all over the island, and was as national and typical as that which revolves around Queen Maeve in the great Ultonian and Olnemactian heroic cycle of the age of the Incarnation.

In studying these divine cycles, it is interesting to mark how divinities, once famous, often retire into complete oblivion, leaving only a name for the annalists, or sink from national into local significance, or finally degenerate from an immortal god into a mortal hero.

Of this Ceasairian cycle, however, one god, at all events, made good his hold on the bardic imagination, his speciality of poetry giving him an immense advantage over the other Ceasairians in the history-loving bookish ages which accompanied or succeeded the introduction of Christianity. This was Fintann, the poet, patron of bards and learned men, the long-memoried historian of the island.

In mediæval times two theories obtained as to the preservation of the history of the early inhabitants of the isle, one of these was, that Fintann from time to time appeared visibly among the Gael, and taught history to the bards and others. Thus he is represented as coming up from his favourite haunts in the mountains of



Kerry, and relating the history of Ireland to St. Patrick.

According to the second theory, Amergin the Druid, who accompanied the Milesian invasion from Spain, deliberately set himself to the accumulation and preservation of the history of the pre-Milesian races.

Fintann's tomb, by Lough Derg, on the Shannon, did not contain his restless sprite, for he is seen and heard of at many points in the island, and is identified by the bards with the genius of history and antiquity.

Queen Ceasair and her people, write the chroniclers, were swept away in the Deluge; Fintann, however, transformed himself into a salmon, and safely roamed the depths of the ocean until its subsidence. On the hill of Tara he was left dry by the retiring flood, when he renewed his human form.

“I am Fintann the poet,  
I am not the salmon of one flood,  
Where I was raised after that, *i.e.*, the Noachic deluge,  
Was upon the sod-fort of Tara.”

The casual student of the Irish bardic remains will see in this merely a fanciful explanation of how it came to pass that a race swept away by the flood, succeeded in transmitting its history to future ages. This, of course, has determined some features of the story, but the connection between Fintann and the salmon, is an essential portion of the Irish mythology, and the story thus forms an excellent example of what cannot be too much insisted upon, the vital significance of even the smallest and most ludicrous statements in the literature.

None are inventions of individuals ; they mingle with and are part of one great living tissue, having the same life with it, and revealing only their meaning in relation to the whole.

Amongst the mythological ideas of the ancient Irish, one frequently occurring is, that there existed in the Irish rivers, or in the seas around Erin, a salmon endowed with all knowledge, and that to whoever might catch and eat him that knowledge would be communicated. Finn mac Cool, while he studied with the ancient bard beside the pool of Linn-Fecc, upon the Boyne, caught and ate, or tasted this fish. In the sacred wells at the source of the Boyne and the Shannon, and at the time that the mysterious hazel-tree shed its wisdom-giving nuts, this salmon used to appear and devour the fruit, lest any should meet them afterwards floating upon the river. He is the salmon of knowledge, often referred to by the bards, under a set formula, corresponding to the Homeric :—

*Græcé.* " Had I an iron tongue and lungs of brass."

*Gælicé.* " Even if I were the Salmon of Knowledge I could not," &c.

Now, Fintann, the weird bard of the Ceasairian cycle, is identified with the Salmon of Knowledge, and so, naturally, the bardo-Christian story above told, was determined to the form in which we find it. The idea of the Noachic deluge intrudes into the pure ethnic mythus.

The historian of the battle of Moy Lena quotes as his authority for the incidents of the war this Ceas-

airian Fintann, who, on a rationalistic interpretation of the bardic history, ought to have perished some two thousand years before :—

“ As was sung by the Salmon of all Knowledge, the possessor of all intelligence, and the jewel manifestly rich in all history and in all truth, namely, Fintann the prophetic, the truly-acute, and the truly-intelligent.”

The avatars of this god are too numerous to be recorded. Learning, amongst the ancient Irish, was exalted to a height almost if not quite as great as heroism. The ideal monarch, Conairy Mōr, presents the blended appearance of king and bard. Concobar mac Nessa, the great captain of the Ulster Red Branch, unlike the mere heroes, wears the beard of a learned man ; and Cormac mac Art wrote a book of laws and royal precepts. These are the greatest of the ethnic kings, and, to all, the bardic qualities are ascribed.

To such a people this Fintann would, of course, assume proportions of the greatest importance, and be the theme of frequent laudation and reference. In the wars of Cuculain and Queen Maeve, a great northern champion, Cethern, is wounded. Among the physicians who attend him the Ceasairian Fintann appears. Medical science, in those days, was but a branch of druidism, dealing largely in charms and incantations, and therefore in poetry, which accounts for the apparition of Fintann in the character of a physician.

In the war between the gods and giants, that is, between the Tuatha De Danān and the Fir-bolgs, the Fir-bolgs send for Fintann to advise them. He comes

to Moy Tura, with his thirteen sons and gives them counsel.

In the sixth century Dermot, King of Ireland, summons the wisest men in the realm to a council. They decline to advise until Fintann has been summoned too. Fintann subsequently appeared in the council, and related his own history. Of course, at one time, all the pre-Milesian characters were regarded as ever-living, but the idea was associated with Fintann to a later date than the others.

# NATURAL MYTHOLOGY OF THE IRISH.

## ABSENCE OF A WORLD-MYTHUS.

In the fine mythology of the Edda, it is related how the Norse gods, having slain the giant Ymir, fashioned the world out of his body. From his vast skull they made the solid concave firmament. With his blood they filled the hollows of the earth, and called the rolling mass Ocean. His flesh became the earth, and his bones the rocky foundations of the earth, the stones and mountain-ridges, and of his brains they made the fluid and shifting clouds.

Probably, none but children ever believed this myth in the literal sense of the words, but, to mental restlessness, the wild imagination afforded a certain repose. In the present age, though we know rather more than our ancestors, our knowledge is a burthen to us ; no large satisfying world-theory has yet embraced the results of science, and the mind remains dissatisfied and ill-at-rest in the midst of its possessions.

The world-mythus of the Greeks was different. Chaos gives birth to Earth and Heaven, and these produce the early gods. In the Norse, the gods make Nature ; in the latter, Nature makes the gods.

In the great Semitic parable, the spirit of God descends upon Chaos, harmonizes its discordant elements, and creates the world.

That the Ethnic Irish had, at one time, their own world-mythus, is more than probable. The strong, vivid, and all-pervasive imagination, which produced the bardic history of Ireland, must have framed its own theory of the formation of the heavens and the earth. The intellectual development, which, when fired by Christianity, produced results which rendered the island conspicuous for centuries, could hardly have been arrived at without creating on its way some imaginative answer to the great question of origins. Here, in Ireland, too, the old Sphynx sat by the roadside and interrogated the wayfarer.

Unfortunately, the Irish bardic literature has come down to us, having had its last redaction in Christian times and under the influence of Christian ideas. The successive passage of centuries, like waves, over that literature, obliterated nearly all that was offensive to Christian conceptions of the origin of things. At all events, of the existence of such a world-mythus, no trace now remains. The Irish gods have hardly more dignity than the Homeric. They possess, indeed, supernatural power and superhuman stature and beauty ; but, in the still extant literature, they do not appear as having created the world, or as governing the operations of nature, though they at times exercise over it an uncertain and capricious power.

#### LAKE AND RIVER MYTHS.

Now, while the religion, and, probably, the greater features of the Irish mythology, have been lost, and



while the imagination, that doubtless, at one time, embraced earth and heaven, has left behind little or no trace of its existence, we still retain, appearing at many points in the literature, a smaller, but quaint and curious mythology, relating to the formation of various physical features of the island itself. Ireland, as it presented itself to the imagination of the bards who formed our history, was originally an island covered with forests, without lakes or rivers, and wooded from the centre to the shore. What theory was once held as to the formation of the island itself we may not now learn. It was a god who repelled the sea from that plain, which now forms the county of Louth ; whence, we may conjecture, that in the ancient mythology, some similar myth embraced the whole island. Such a feat was not beyond the power of the Irish divinities, even as they appear in the extant literature.

The Irish bards did not represent their gods as possessing divine attributes in their own right, but as having attained their power through means of magic and enchantment. The early Christian writers alluded to Magi, or Druids, who, in the literature, never appear as priests, but as magicians. The gods of the bardic literature were simply ancient heroes, seen through ennobling mists of imagination and fancy, and who, to superhuman size and strength, united a magic power, which rendered them superior to the laws of nature. Thus, behind the gods there existed in nature a source of power, whence, by their necromantic skill, the gods drew their divine attributes. It was to this source that

the bards referred the origin of their lakes and rivers. The bardic origin of the Shannon supplies a good example.

In ancient times there existed, at the source of the Shannon, a mysterious fountain called Connla's well. On the margin of this well there grew a hazel-tree, bearing nuts of bright crimson, which would endow with all knowledge those who might eat of them. An ancient fear, however, invested the well, forbidding intrusion. At length, a goddess, Sinān, a daughter of Lir, yielding to the promptings of curiosity, drew nigh, intending to pluck and eat the fruit, but the fountain rose against her, pouring forth an angry flood, which swept her down to the sea. Ever after, the waters of Western Erin flowed in the channel thus formed, and the river received the name of the too curious goddess, Sinān, since varied into Shannon. Spenser writes the name, Shenane :—

“ The stately Shenane spreading like a sea.”

The origin of the Boyne is similar—the goddess Boanna, or Boan, being in this case the desecrator of the sacred well. Along with the goddess, her lap-dog was also swept down to the sea, and there changed into the rock, which from him was named Cnoc Dabil, at the estuary of the Boyne. To those who personified the Boyne, the fancy that this rock was the Boyne's lap-dog would easily suggest itself.

It was also added that those wells still exist, though undiscoverable, and that at the time of the shedding of fruit, a salmon, the Eo Feasa, or Salmon of Knowledge, appears there, and as each nut drops into the water he

darts up and devours it. The properties of the enchanted fruit were communicated to the fish ; whoever might catch and eat him would know all things.

This legendary hazel-tree, with its wisdom-giving nuts, is often alluded to in the literature. A mediæval poet, Cormac, Bishop-King of Cashel, says : “ I found my nut of knowledge on the Barrow,” implying merely that he was educated on the shores of that stream.

Sinān and Boanna were the water nymphs of their respective streams. The latter was wife of one of the Tuatha De Danān gods, Nuada the Silver-handed. The river was also known as “ the arm of the wife of Nuada,” pure and bright as Boan’s arm.

A somewhat similar origin is given for some lakes. The origin of Lough Neagh is thus told : Eocha, a southern hero, starting from Slieve Phelim in Tipperary, travelled northwards till he reached the Boyne, where he and his people encamped before the Brugh of Angus, the Dedanan god. Angus, enraged at the desecration of his sanctuary, slew their horses that night. Passing thence northwards, he encamped on the Plain of the Grey Copse, when a magic well sprang up. Eocha built a house over the well, giving the key to one of his women, with injunctions never to leave the door open. The woman neglected the command, and a flood broke forth which submerged Eocha and his people, forming the great lake, which from him was called Loch n’ Eocha, or Lough Neagh. Eocha was, doubtless, the god or genius of this lake.

The more common mode of representing the breaking

forth of rivers and lakes is, that at the burial of him or her whose name it happened to bear, the water burst forth. The Drowis, in Connaught, burst forth at the burial of Covac Coel Bray ; Lough Ennel, once Lough Anind, at the burial of Anind. The hero, or heroine, so connected with the lake or river, became its genius or water-sprite.

The legend concerning the Drowis was known to Spenser :—

“ Sad Drowis, which once his people over-ran.”

Usually, the water-genius is represented as having been drowned in the water which he haunted.

Sometimes lakes and rivers are represented as having burst forth for joy. On the night of the birth of Conn of the Hundred Fights, three lakes and rivers brake forth, and remained to be a perpetual adornment of Inis Fail. This, however, is but an example of mythological decorations surrounding a historic king.

Spenser, in his own beautiful way, blending the Greek mythology with the physical features of his adopted country, and incorporating, perhaps some now lost legend, makes the Suir, Nore, and Barrow three brothers, sons of the giant Blomius and the nymph Rheusa.

The myth of Arethusa, *i.e.*, the conversion of a living person into a stream, has some parallels in Irish mythology. The great goddess, the Mōr Reega, enraged with an inferior, struck her with a magic wand, and converted her into the Lake Odras.

The following curious account of a lake god is given

in the tale called the Feast of Bricrind. The right to the champion's seat of Ulster was contested between Cuculain and other Knights of the Red Branch. They referred the arbitrament to Uath of Lough Uath. The god rose out of the lake, bearing a brazen adze in his hand, and decided in favour of Cuculain.

The genii of the waters are not always human or divine beings. Lough Liath, in Slieve Fuad, was inhabited by the great war-horse of the hero Cuculain. There, by the margin of the lake, the hero first seized him. Thither he retired after he was slain. This was the Liath Macha, the weird steed of Cuculain. He had also a stable, so to speak, one of the great mounds on the Boyne.

In the external world there is nothing so beautiful or attractive as water, with its endless and infinite varieties of mood and shape—its suggestions of abounding life, its mingled beauty and mystery. All the poets have exulted in this element. Stream-loving Flaccus found in the splash and ripple of the prone rivulet a type of his sweetly-laughing, sweetly-talking Lalagé; Wordsworth's more serious genius found itself best reflected in broad still lakes. Indeed, I doubt if there has been any poet who has not left some significant allusion to lake or river. That the streams and lakes of Erin, its most remarkable natural feature, should have deeply touched the minds of the Irish bards, and should have played an important part in the mythology, is most fitting and to be expected.

The mythological literatures of all nations teem with references to this element, being, as it is, the most perfect

emblem of the human soul, and reflecting its infinite varieties of mood, whence the imagination naturally attributes to it life.

“How the waters dance and sing, surely they are alive.”

But, in times when the imagination is completely unfettered by reason, the sentiment of life, suggested by lake and river, instead of being diffused throughout its extent, is centred in a living person mysteriously dwelling in its depths. Our ancestors believed that such a weird personage resided in every lake and river, and the legends to which I have alluded, gradually grew into form in answer to the query—how did these persons first come to reside there? Sometimes, doubtless, the name of the river, a name indicating merely its general character and appearance, was afterwards attached to its imaginary tutelary genius, and a legend framed relating his or her history. More generally, the lake or river god was some ancient hero interred beside the river, and whose mound was conspicuous upon its shore. Sometimes, the water-genius dwelt in an adjoining hill. The genius of Loch Liath once wronged Finn mac Cool. In Titanic rage his warriors rent the adjoining hill, and unearthed the god from his magic palace in its heart.

Modern poets personify lake or river in a vague, semi-incredulous manner. Some go still further, adopting, for a moment, certain rural superstitions, and imagine the genius of the water but rather as a spirit, apparition, or water-wraith than anything more substantial. The Irish lake and river gods were real men,



though having supernatural attributes. Were the Fæd Fia removed, they could be seen distinctly, eaten with, fought with, touched, like mortals. Uath, of Lough Uath, walks out of his lake to the call of the Red Branch champions, with his brazen adze in his hand, as real as a man, and addresses the heroes. Cuculain finds the Liath Macha grazing on the shores of his enchanted lake, seizes him by the mane, struggles with, tames, and compels him to draw his war chariot. The great epic contest between Cuculain and Far-Dia was really, and in its original, a strife with the god of the Avon Dia. The river refuses to flow in horror at the mighty duel, and leaves its channel dry, while its god contends with the great northern champion.

I incline to think that the strife between Achilles and the river gods indicates the late origin of that portion of the Iliad. In the primal imagination, the gods would not have been so vague and elemental. They would have risen in armour out of the waters, and resisted the hero.

The most valuable of the Irish heroic literature may be distinguished into three great divisions :—the first, that which relates directly to the wars and adventures of the gods ; the second, the great Ultonian cycle revolving round Cuculain and his contemporaries (*tempore Christi*) ; the third, the Ossianic, referring to Finn mac Cool and the Fianna Eireen heroes of the third century A.D. The latter and the former, to a certain extent, exhibit some mediæval features. In the second. the æsthetic view of nature hardly appears ; but the others reveal something modern in their feeling towards the

beauty and mystery of natural objects. In the second the attention is directed to the genii who inhabit the lakes and rivers; in others the divine suggestions are diffused through the water itself. For example, Finn mac Cool, according to Ossian, delighted to slumber by the great cataract of Assaroe, to listen to the breakers thundering against Iorrus, and the washing of water against the sides of ships. A wizard of the supernatural Fomorian race put the following query to Finn :—

“ I saw to the south a bright-faced Queen  
With couch of crystal and robe of green,  
Whose numerous offspring sprightly and small,  
Plain through her skin you can see them all.”

Finn explains that the bright-faced Queen is the river Boyne; her couch of crystal the shining floor of the stream; her green robe its glassy borders; and her offspring seen through the translucent skin the salmon and trout swimming below.

This pretty thought could not have appeared in the elder literature, and is too ingenious and light-hearted for modern. It is one of those conceits or cleverisms in which primitive peoples delight.

Ireland is so rich in beautiful streams and lakes, it seems but natural and fitting that in the bardic history of Ireland their imagined origin should have been closely and circumstantially related. When the whole of that literature is collected and examined, it will be found that Ireland does not contain a single river or lake of any importance concerning which the imagination of our

ancestors did not evolve some pretty or quaint story. Even certain parts of rivers have their legend incorporated into the national epos. Thus, nearly all the fords have their mythical history. For example, the little stream in the County of Cork, flowing from Lough Crut, westward, to join the Ilan, was forded at a spot called the Ford of the Ash Tree, Augh-na-Finshon. Just below the ford was a deep, dark pool, the Witch's Pool. This sprite was the genius of the stream. She pursued Owen Mōr southwards, when he fled before the wrath of Conn; but was slain here by the southern king. From her ashen goad grew the ash-tree which gave its name to the ford. The local imagination created the water-witch which the bards and historians gradually nationalized and incorporated in the history of the island.

It is plain, that the men who composed the bardic history of Ireland, loved its lakes and streams, knew them well, and thought much concerning them. Indeed, these men were acquainted with the physical character of the country in a way in which Irishmen never again will be. From Dûn to Dûn, from Cemetery to Cemetery, *loci* as they were of the great festive assemblies, they travelled on foot or horseback, noting every physical characteristic of the island—their knowledge not being merely æsthetic, but mingling vitally with what they believed to be the history of the island. Every spot had its tutelary genius, a being powerful, immortal and invisible dwelling there, or was connected with some remarkable event in the history of some well-known monarch or hero.

It is certainly not to the credit of modern Ireland that the only poet whose imagination was touched by the wonderful beauty of our rivers was the Englishman Spenser.

Some streams had magical properties. Thus, when Fingin, the weird physician of Slieve Fuad, was summoned to heal Cuculain after his battles at the Avon Dia, he caused him to drink water drawn from various streams, all enumerated.

The legend of the fountain of youth was, of course, common in Ireland as in all countries whose mythology has been preserved.

The Castalian well of our mythology was on Slieve Gullian. Thither Finn approached once; but the goddesses who guarded it, arose, and in their helplessness and confusion, dashed from the palms of their hands the water of the well against him. From what fell upon his lips the hero acquired the gift of prescience.

The swarms of some lakes seem to have been sacred. The legend of the transformed children of Lir seems to have taken its origin from this circumstance.

#### MYTHS OF FOREST, MOUNTAIN AND ROCK.

The creation of rivers and lakes forms a considerable portion of the early mythical history of Ireland. Their fluid volatile masses, which may be swollen and may disappear utterly or withdraw, gloom or glitter, rave or be still, would naturally seem to the imagination more susceptible of the operation of external and super-

natural influences than the more solid features of the island. With regard to these, the beneficent action of the early gods is confined to the felling of forests and the clearing of plains. The Nemedians especially figure in this industry. The hill of Tara was once forest, till cleared by a god, Caen, whence its first name Droum Caen. The mountains seem to have suggested too much strength, and to belong too clearly to the eternal order of things, to be capable of any such plastic or formative treatment. The gods, indeed, dwelt upon them or within them, but they were not raised by the gods. The only superhuman action of the Greek gods, in connection with the physical features of the mountains, seems to be that of Hercules, who tunnelled the mountains of Arcadia into subterranean channels for rivers, by which to draw off the floods which Apollo indignant had caused to overflow the highland plains of that country.

There are, however, in Irish mythology, some slight traces of such treatment worth mentioning.

Fergus mac Roy, unsheathing, after a long deprivation, the great sword which had been fashioned for him by Mananān the sea-god, wheels it round his head in exultation. In its horizon-sweeping circuit he shears away the tops of three mountains, hurling them into the plains of Meath. These severed mountain crests were known as "the three bald hills of Meath."

Through the centre of Ireland, running east and west, there extends a long gravel ridge, known in the bardic literature as the Esker Riada, whose origin the geologists refer to the action of the sea when Ireland

was submerged. To our wonder-loving ancestors this was the great rampart erected by Conn of the Hundred Fights and Owen Mōr, the southern monarch, when, on the cessation of their second war, they agreed to divide the sovereignty of Ireland by a partition line drawn from Ath-a-Cliah Dub-Linn to Ath-a-Cliah Mara, *i.e.*, from Dublin to Galway.

Conspicuous rocks would naturally be more susceptible of such treatment. In Greek mythology, a great pebble fixed between the clefts of Parnassus, was pointed out as the stone presented by Rhea to Kronos, when he wished to devour the infant Zeus. In Irish mythology, the great stones standing near the ford of Athlone, were smitten from the nearest mountain side by Cuculain, with his sword, and set up there as a memorial of the defeat of Queen Meave and the Olnemacta.

A huge stone, by the mouth of the Boyne, near Drogheda, had been used by one of the giants of Queen Meave's host, in sounding the estuary of the river, during the same war, and then cast by him into its present position.

On the Kenmare river stands a group of rocks, substituted by the goddess Edair for Owen Mōr and his warriors, when Goll mac Morna and his Connaught champions laid waste the southern army.

The pillar stones, which mark so many ethnic tombs in the country, being evidently artificial, would, of course, easily lend themselves to imaginative treatment. At Tara, on the rath called the Rath of the Synods, stands a tall round stone, once famous as the



Lia Fail, or stone of destiny, which has given to Ireland one of its many names. It was removed to its present position to mark the grave of rebels slain there in '98, from a rath further south named Rath Lægairey. Two ancient fables affect to give the history of this stone; according to the first, it was brought by the gods into Erin; according to the second, by the Milesians from Asia into Spain, and thence, by Heber and Heremon, into Ireland.

#### MYTHS OF THE SEA.

It is natural to suppose that in minds so tender and imaginative, and so susceptible to all impressions, as were those in which the bardic history of Ireland shaped itself, the sea should form a considerable source of legend and poetry. In Homer, the sea seems an object of fear and dislike,—the fishy sea, the winedark sea, and other allusions, seem to indicate this, and the motion and sound of waves around the bark of Ulysses, returning from the sacrifice to Apollo, exhibits an equally sombre feeling concerning this element. In the Iliad and the Odyssey, this element was not regarded as in a happy or sympathetic relation with man.

The tone of the bardic literature of Ireland is quite different. One of the noblest thoughts, having reference to the sea, is seen in the oft-recurring notion that it sympathised with and was aware of the dangers surrounding the greater heroes of the isle. In such moments, then, at three diverse points, the ocean roars a note of

warning and sorrow. In the war between Concobar mac Nessa and the returned exiles, the great sons of Usna, Fiechra, son of Concobar, wearing his father's weapons, was hard pressed by Illan the Fair, son of Fergus. Then, Concobar's shield, Ocean, roared, and the three chief waves of Erin roared in reply, the wave of Cleena, the wave of Rury, and the wave of Toth. Then was Conaill Carna at Dûn Sovarchy, and he heard the wave of Toth. "True it is," said Conaill, "Concobar is in danger, and it is not right for me to remain listening." Conaill arose after this, and took his arms and armour and crossed Ulster, and came on to where was Concobar in Emain of Macha, and he found the fight upon the lawn, and Fiechra, son of Concobar, greatly exhausted by Illan the Fair.

How striking is the difference between primæval poetry and modern may be seen from a comparison between such passages and the following, in which Shelley represents the elements as mourning for Adonais, expressing, too, a kindred thought, viz., the sympathy of Nature with the fortunes of men :—

"Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,

And the wild winds flew round sobbing in their dismay."

On this side, modern poetry is mere fancy ; ancient poetry is strong, undoubting belief.

The sentiment which evinces itself in the modern song, "What are the wild waves saying?" is also expressed in a beautiful antique tale of the Ultonian period.

Neidy, son of Adna, wanders by the sea shore of Alba, "for it is by the sea that poets are wont to compose their lays," and listening to the noise of the waves, he addresses to them magic verses, to compel them to translate for him the inarticulate sounds which they utter. Then the sea-spirits inform him that his father has died, and that a stranger is assuming the robe and office of the chief bard of Ulster.

The interpretation of the noise of the waves is elsewhere described as one of the functions of the druids. As Owen Mōr draws nigh to Spain, the king and his chief men and druids feast by night in the royal palace. They hear the billows roaring strangely along the shore. Then prophesied Dadrona the Druid :—

"I hear the waves clamour along the shore,  
The sound is an omen—the harbinger of a King."

These waves more properly roared for the High King of all Ireland. They are represented as welcoming Conn of the Hundred Battles, when he marched against Owen Mōr.

"He who was there was a precious stone, a sheltering tree, a transparent gem, a cluster of vines ; for his march was the rush of a spring-tide, and his journeying the evacuation of territories, and both the sea and land rejoiced in his greatness. And the Monarch was certainly and evidently greeted by the three swelling waves of Fohla, the wave of Toth, and the wave of Rury, and the long, slow, white, foaming wave of Cleena."

Toth and Cleena were goddesses. Rury, as we have seen, was a god of the Partholanian cycle, but appears perpetually in all the divine cycles ; also as a Milesian

monarch 112 B.C., when he becomes the founder of the Red Branch of Ulster. The wave of Toth was the mouth of the River Bann ; of Cleena, the Bay of Glandore, Co. Cork ; of Rury, the Bay of Dundrum, Co. Down.

The full flow of the spring tide was often employed as a metaphor. Thus is described the King Conairy Mōr :—

“ I saw a tall illustrious prince  
Start forth against the bright ground,  
Full flowing in the spring tide of dazzling beauty,  
Of expression gentle, but proportions bold.”

#### THE NUTS OF KNOWLEDGE.

“ And a river went out of Eden to water the garden ; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first river is Pison, and the name of the second river is Gihon, and the name of the third river is Hiddekel, and the fourth river is Euphrates.”—MOSES.

In the heart of green Banba a fairy garden, and in the garden an ever-springing fountain of pure translucent water. But, unseen of the Gæil, that well leaped and bubbled, and the Tuatha de Danān alone beheld it, themselves unseen, a divine race. There for ages it leaped and sprang, feeding the great streams of Fohla.

Around the well grew hazel-trees, seven in number, with leaves of tender green, and berries of bright crimson, and the nuts that grew on these trees filled with knowledge the mind of any who ate them, so that to him the past and present and future were revealed, and the Tuatha Eireen alone had access to that garden, and ate not of the fruit of those trees, for holy fear and ancient prophecy forbade.

But Sinān, who was of the race of Lear, the marine god, having an evil mind, resolved to eat of the fruit, and she approached the fountain by stealth. But the divine fountain arose in wrath with a roaring, with billows and water-spouts and foam, and it caught and surrounded her, and overwhelmed her as she fled, and whirling her along and around, brake forth westward and southward. And, like a dead leaf, it bore her past the Great Ford, and past the city of the hostings and the fairy hills, where Bove Derg had his habitation, and past Limenich, and cast her into the great sea westward. But thenceforward the waters of western Erin flowed along the channel which had been made by the flood which the sacred well-head had cast forth against the granddaughter of Lear, and after her it has received its name.

Unseen by the Gæil the fountain still springs, feeding the great stream of Fohla, and the hazels shed their crimson fruit on the mossy ground, and into the clear water, and beneath the ground it sends forth rills feeding the great streams. But at the time of the shedding of fruit, a salmon, the Yeo Feasa, appears in that garden in the clear well, and as each divine nut falls upon the surface, he darts upwards and devours it. He is larger and more beautiful than the fishes of his tribe, glittering with crimson stars and bright hues ; but for the rest of the year he roams the wide ocean and the great streams of Inis Fail. Now when any of the Gæil excelled in wisdom, men said he has eaten of the nuts of knowledge, and of Cathvah, too, the Ard-Druid, men said this.

## IRISH UNITY.

There is a pleasure in watching the reclamation of desert land—the choking moisture drained away, the sour peat mingled with sand, the stones collected into heaps, the making of roads and the building of fences, and, in the end, the sight of corn-fields where the snipe shrieked, and herds of kine where the morass quaked.

There is a pleasure in watching the dispersion of darkness before the rising sun, the gloom changing slowly into the silver twilight, the twilight ripening gradually into the golden day.

There is a pleasure in watching with the scientist the subsidence of some vast and horrible chaos into a shape of celestial beauty, fulfilling its part in some sidereal system, rolling through space around its sun clear and determinate, a world and a star.

But there is a pleasure deeper, more human and sublime, felt by one who contemplates out of the seething welter of warring tribes, the slow growth of a noble people, the reclamation of a vast human wilderness, seeing how the stormful gloom of ignorance grows less and less dense, shot through by the rays of knowledge, imagination, and love, how the chaos of confusion and aimless strugglings concentrates gradually into the wise and determined action of a nation fulfilling its part in the great national confraternity of the world.



But for the historian of Ireland no such delightful task is reserved ; not for him to trace the track of the many springs and rivulets, to mark how they converge, and, uniting, form the strong undivided current of the history of a nation moving forward between its firm shores, freighted with the destiny of a single people accomplishing its fate ; not for him to limn the slow glorious growth of a nation among the nations of the earth. Beginnings, ever beginnings ; noble actions without end, that shine and vanish, characters as great as any, but resultless, movements full of hope leading no whither, flashing glories ever dimmed and blasted, travail and labour unceasing, expectation and resolution ever baffled ; through all the centuries, Ireland, as in birth-pangs with many cries, labouring to bring forth the Irish nation, and that nation still unborn. “ *Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem.*”

Yet, too, how much has been gained, what public crimes and sins avoided, by a birth postponed into a time when, however dimly, the true ideal of nations is beginning to be understood, and their rights and duties to be prescribed.

No nation has suffered wrong through Ireland, none can attribute to her any portion of his woes. Moreover, the very idea of a nation is yet chaotic and inchoate. An aggregation of individuals ever struggling against one another for mere existence, and legalized anarchy, the highest conception of law and order, does not constitute a nation in any true sense of the word. What man of imagination can with real unalloyed pleasure write the

history of any nation such as nations have up to the present been, aware, as he must be, of the wail of slaves and the downtrodden piercing always through the ostensible sounds, the black depths of fraud and wrong, and futile wrath and bitterness below the glittering surfaces of even the most cherished phases of the history of the greatest nations.

I have said that the Irish never achieved a vital and stable political unity, for those tumultuary movements of the race in the fourth century, which, at the same time, accelerated while they were produced by the failing strength of contiguous Rome, cannot be regarded as indications of real unity, but of an unity ephemeral and fortuitous, produced under peculiar circumstances, and destined to decline.

But, that such was, from the remotest times, the ideal of the race, and the goal towards which the genius of the land ever impelled the country forward, is evident from the whole tenor of the bardic literature. Imaginative conceptions, though invariably wrought upon the past, are painted with hues fetched from the future. In individuals, hope is a stronger spring of life than memory, and it is the same with nations. Nations as well as individuals live even more in the future than in the past. One of the most striking features of the bardic literature is this dominant conception of the Irish race, as forming a single homogeneous nation, owing allegiance to a single sovereign, and governed by edicts issuing from one centre of rightful authority, namely, Tara. In spite of the spectacle perpetually presented

to the eyes of the bards, of an island ever convulsed with the struggles of warlike and hostile tribes, the past, at all events, the remote past, always reveals to them a single nation ruled by one legitimate king. Thus, Ceasair, Partholān, Eocha mac Erc, King of Fir-bolgs, and the Dagda Mōr, are ever represented as ruling over the whole island. Thus, too, what was certainly contrary to the fact, the early history, including the long roll of Milesian kings, has ever regard to Ireland as a whole. The main current of tradition and bardic narrative does not break into various and diverging channels, but runs in one strong undivided stream.

Yet, certainly, at some remote time, the bardic records were not national, but local, though perpetually tending in the direction of nationality. Every district in the island had its topical gods and heroes, and its local traditions embodying what was believed to have been their character and achievements. What held these traditions together, and rendered them enduring and famous, was the periodical games and fairs held on the spot where those ancient heroes were interred. Over the inurned dust and bones of the hero his people raised a great mound, and instituted recurring games. There were held the public assemblies of the tribe for purposes of war or peace. Thither naturally came the merchant and all who had goods to dispose of, and, thither, too, the bards and story-tellers. Other worthies of that small realm were interred there too, and, by degrees, was formed one of those cemeteries, those strange groups of raths, mounds, pillars, and cromlechs, which supply

the key to immense volume of semi-historic bardic tradition. As intercourse increased between the various nations and septs, and as the bards passed to and fro, from assembly to assembly, the topical hero became of provincial, if not national importance. No bard, not stationary and attached to a single tribe, would obviously be qualified to exercise his profession without an acquaintance with the accepted history of the gods and heroes honoured in the localities which he visited. Now, though the kings and warlike tribes regarded strife and conquest as the chief end of existence, the bardic class was, to a considerable extent, relieved from martial duties. To engage in war was ever unbecoming to a bard, though acquaintance with the bardic art was held honourable in a warrior. Thus, the bards of ancient Ireland were enabled to form themselves into a fraternity—a great national guild. Cæsar records this of the Gaulish druids, and the fact is equally patent in the history of Ireland.

It is, therefore, easy to conceive under such conditions a local hero of more than ordinary fame, arising sometimes from the celebrity of the assemblies held around his mound and sometimes from the prowess and conquests of the tribes who held him in honour—growing to the dimensions of a national hero ; though his achievements may have been local, yet, their recital would have become or have tended to become national. I believe that the chief heroes of all the more important cemeteries, or groups of mounds, were well known amongst the bards of the island as a confraternity. Unconsciously then and

unceasingly in the homogeneous bardic mind ever tending towards the conception of a single and uniform national existence, these fell naturally, and in the course of centuries, into their places, as dominant successive monarchs of Ireland. Others not so important and famous, became, for obvious reasons, kings of provinces and territories ; and others, chief warriors, druids or bards, attendant on such kings. All the celebrated local traditions of the island were swept into the treasure-house of bardic memory, and in process of centuries under the stress of such influences as I have described, fell into that order which we find in the annals and which needed a period of some two thousand years for regular chronological arrangement. Such is the genesis of this astonishing bardic history of Ireland. The great topical heroes have not been set down as contemporaneous within the limits of a few centuries preceding the historic period, but as successive monarchs of Ireland. Not but that the bardic account does not, to a certain extent, preserve the true fact as to various successive classes of heroes. For instance, the heroes worshipped as Fir-bolgs preceded those known as Tuatha De Danān, being as they were ancient deities overpowered by younger rivals, as the Greek gods dethroned the Titans. Again, those heroes who, through their remoteness and the mass of ancient legendary fame surrounding them, ascended to a divine character and were known as Tuatha De Danān, preceded those who were known as mere warriors or monarchs ; and the Knights of the Red Branch appearing in the dawn of

history, and in the first century of our epoch, were certainly more ancient than the Ossianic heroes who fill the third century—an age in which the fundamental assertions of our annals and chronicles are certainly correct.



## CUCULAIN, SON OF SUALTAM.

The student of Irish history, arrived at this point, may not be inaptly compared to one who, after journeying through some sombre and intricate forest, whose gloom is not wholly unrelieved by small moonlit glades and the cheerful tinkle of living streams, amid whose shadows are seen passing shapes weird and unearthly, now, suddenly emerging, finds around him the night, indeed, but such a night ! flashing, as with stars and northern lights. Now, all over and on every side the bardic firmament glitters with bright-burning fires, heroic names and deeds innumerable, amongst whom, stars of the first magnitude, shine out the Champions of the North, the Red Branch Knights, Children of Rury.

Heretofore the student has beheld Ireland producing her great names sparingly, but now, approaching the age of the Incarnation, he beholds how the island starting, as if from some magic slumber, all the deep fountains of life suddenly unsealed, teems as with some vast parturition. Out of the ground start forth the armies of her demi-gods and champions—an age bright with beautiful heroic forms, loud with the trampling of armies and war-steeds, with the roar of chariot-wheels and the shoutings of warriors—in the North the Red Branch, in the South the Ernai or Clan Dēga, in the West Queen Meave and her champions, and in the South-east that

mysterious Half-Red Meave and her martial grooms. From what dragon's teeth and when sown sprang forth this warlike crop. An Irish bias may possibly affect my judgment in this matter, though I should be sorry, indeed, that truth should, in any way and for any object, suffer through this cause, but I cannot help regarding this age and the great personages moving therein as incomparably higher in intrinsic worth than the corresponding ages of Greece. In Homer, Hesiod, and the Attic poets, there is a polish and artistic form, absent in the existing monuments of Irish heroic thought, but the gold, the ore itself, is here massier and more pure, the sentiment deeper and more tender, the audacity and freedom more exhilarating, the reach of imagination more sublime, the depth and power of the human soul more fully exhibit themselves.

To understand and test the force of my words the literature itself must be studied, if not in the original, then, in exact translations, for, neither here in this superficial sketch, nor in the more full and minute narrations of my epic series, in which the literature has been toned and condensed into the uniformity and homogeneity of a single integral composition, as I am well aware, is full justice done to the subject.

Here, in this age which surrounds the Incarnation, start forth the pre-historic or semi-historic demi-gods and champions of the Irish race.

Now, to Sualtam and Dectera is born Setanta, surnamed Cuculain, whose glory fills the whole bardic records of the age. During his career he bears the weight

of the vast epos into which the history of the times has resolved itself. Wild and improbable as is the whole narrative, weird with incursions from the supernatural world, with wizardry and enchantments, spurning the laws of nature, of space, and time, dazzling with the wild light of incredible heroisms, loud and agitated with the rush and noise of gigantic shapes writhing in superhuman battles recalling the fabled wars of gods and Titans, or the Miltonic strife of celestial and infernal powers, the profound and vital humanity with which the whole is instinct, touches and stirs the spirit with the strangest and most unapprehended emotions. Like the moon, when through some wild obscure sky, ploughing her path amid the driving scud, a moment seen and then deep buried in the entombing clouds, but only to emerge undimmed, flooding the night with her glory ; so through the spaces of that bardic sky, so through the shifting chaos of obscure epic tale, and the broken fragments of antique ruined verse, ever flashes on the eye the wonderful glory of this extraordinary hero, till on the plains of Murthemney it sets for ever in enduring night.

Yet, once again, in the unsubduable imagination, which ever accompanies the course of Irish history till the extinction of Irish independence, four centuries later a vision of the hero strikes upon the eye. St. Patrick, preaching at Tara to the assembled kings, declares that the hero and his comrades of the Red Branch, though types of all that is great and admirable to his hearers, now suffers the torments of hell, shut in for ever with the damned. Lægairey, son of Nial,

refuses to believe, and challenges the apostle to the proof. Straightway an icy blast sweeps over the plain of Tara, cutting to the marrow of the bones with its keen fierce breath. "What means this icy blast?" cried the shuddering King. "It is a blast out of hell," answered the Saint. "Her broad gates are opened." "I see far away, eastward, a vast and snow-like mist that covers the face of the whole land. What is this, O Talkend?" "It is the Red Branch loosed from hell. The mist is the breath of their mighty men and war-steeds, and the steam of their sweat suspended above their host, and they are concealed in its folds." "Through the mist I see dark flying flakes, resembling the flight of dark birds innumerable." "They are the clods cast upward from the swift hoofs of their war-steeds," answered St. Patrick. Then, through the mist, emerge the champions of the Red Branch, and, conspicuous above all, the form of the immense hero, Cuculain, borne in his magic war-chariot, guided by Læg, armed as the bards ever described him, and drawn by the Liath Macha and black Shanglan, sweeping over the plain like a shadow along the slopes of some mountain range. In the ensuing interview Cuculain utters these words: "I am he who was called the Hound of Ulla. I was not a Hound for the guarding of cattle, but a Hound for the protection of territories and the defence of nations."

I have said it is the profound and vital humanity of his career, even more than his greatness, which touches and stirs the reader. We see him as a little boy, with his sword of lath and toy shield, escaping by night from

his mother's palace, eager to commence his warlike education under his uncle at Emain Macha ; not creeping like snail unwillingly to school, but with his little brazen hurle driving hockey-balls before him, casting forward his toy javelin and running to catch it ere it fell, overflowing with eagerness and hope. We see him downcast and gloomy at the thought of leaving his comrades and his games, though invited by the High King and the great Knights of Ulla to feast along with them. We see him knighted, the wild wayward boy, exerting his terrible strength before the hosts of Ulla, smashing the offered war chariots and breaking the best weapons into fragments. We mark how he confounded the great champion Conaill Carna, and laughed back at him discomfited, going southwards alone to wet his weapons in the blood of southern enemies, his chivalrous modesty and innocence when the naked queens bar his mad path against Emain Macha, his defeat and contumely when Curoi mac Dary cut off his long warlike tresses, after which, with boyish vanity and shame, he retired into lonely places in the North. His love for Emer and the hope long deferred, his education in the isle of Skye under northern warrioresses, and the strong friendship there formed with Fardia the great Fir-bolgie champion, his wars against Queen Meave, when deserted and alone, wetting nightly his sylvan couch with his tears ; in single combats, ceaseless, ever renewed, he barred the gates of the North against the four provinces of Erin ; his strife with Fardia, the most profoundly tragic scene in all literature, and his lamentations over his slain

friend ; his reappearance, as if from death, at the battle of Gaura, bound with bandages and sick with wounds, when he led the beaten Red Branch to victory, sweeping the armies of Queen Meave across the Shannon ; his battles over all Erin, labour and suffering unceasing in the cause of his nation, the thick coming omens of approaching doom, the broken *geise*, the singing of the weird god of death, the weeping of all the queens of Ulla for his impending fall, the return of the Clan Cailitin armed with all the powers of hell and darkness to effect his overthrow, the departure of the Red Branch, and Cuculain once more on the plains of Murthemney resisting the Four Provinces, and through that last red battle his pupil and protégé advancing against him already overwhelmed with numbers, and then the end—Cuculain dying, having made himself fast to a tall pillar-stone, “ that he might not die in his sitting or lying, but that he might die in his standing ” while his blood ran down to the lake, where the unconscious otter lapped up the noblest blood in all the land. Through his whole career, in war and peace, in the world and out of it, in spite of all the cold dictates of reason and logic, the heart of the reader is stirred and his imagination inflamed by the contemplation of all that terrible and superhuman heroism, and the knowledge of those deep wells of pity, tenderness, and love, whence sprang those gentle deeds and words which, even more than his heroism, go to the formation of the noblest character ever presented in literature.



## THE KNIGHTING OF CUCULAIN.

Then in the presence of his court, and his warriors, and the youths who were the comrades and companions of Cuculain, Concobar presented the young hero with his weapons of war, after he had taken the vows of the Red Branch, and having also bound himself by certain *gaesa*. But Cuculain looked narrowly upon the weapons, and he struck the spears together, and clasped the sword upon the shield, and he brake the spears in pieces and the sword, and made chasms in the shield.

“ These are not good weapons, O my King,” said the boy.

Then the King presented him with others that were larger and stronger, and these, too, the boy brake into little pieces.

“ These are still worse, O son of Nessa,” said the boy, “ and it is not seemly, O Chief of the Red Branch, that on the day that I am to receive my arms I should be made a laughing-stock before the Clanna Rury, being yet but a boy.”

But Concobar Mac Nessa exulted exceedingly when he beheld the amazing strength and the waywardness of the boy, and beneath delicate brows his eyes glittered like glittering swords as he glanced rapidly round on the crowd of martial men that surrounded him ; but amongst them all he seemed himself a bright torch of valour and war, more pure and clear than polished steel. But he beckoned to one of his knights, who hastened away and returned,

bringing Concobar's own shield and spears and sword out of the Tayta Brac, where they were kept an equipment in reserve. And Cuculain shook them and bent them, and clashed them together, but they held firm.

"These are good arms, O son of Nessa," said Cuculain.

Then there were laid forward a pair of noble steeds and a war-car, and the king conferred them on Cuculain. Then Cuculain sprang into the chariot, and standing with legs apart, he stamped from side to side and shook and shook, and jolted the car until the axle brake, and the car itself was broken to pieces.

"This is not a good chariot, O my King," said the boy.

Then there were led forward three chariots, and all these he brake in succession.

"These are not good chariots, O Chief of the Red Branch," said Cuculain. "No brave warrior would enter the battle or fight from such rotten foothold."

Then the King called to his son Cowshra Mend Macha and bade him take Læg and harness to the war-chariot, of which he had the care, the wondrous grey steed, and that one which had been given him by Kelkar, the son of Uther, and to give Læg a charioteering equipment to be charioteer of Cuculain. For now it was apparent to all the nobles and to the King that a lion of war had appeared amongst them, and that it was for him that Macha had sent these omens.

Then Cuculain's heart leaped in his breast when he heard the thunder of the great war-car and the mad whinnying of the horses that smelt the battle afar. Soon

he beheld them with his eyes, and the charioteer with the golden fillet of his office, erect in the car, struggling to subdue their fury. A grey long-maned steed, whale-bellied, broad-chested, behind one yoke, a black tufty-maned steed behind the other.

Like a hawk swooping along the face of a cliff when the wind is high, or like the rush of the March wind over the smooth plain, or like the fleetness of the stag roused from his lair by the hounds, and covering his first field, was the rush of those steeds when they had broken through the restraint of the charioteer, as though they galloped over fiery flags, so that the earth shook and trembled with the velocity of their motion, and all the time the great car brayed and shrieked as the wheels of solid and glittering bronze went round, for there were demons that had their abode in that car.

The charioteer restrained the steeds before the assembly, but nay-the-less a deep purr, like the purr of a tiger, proceeded from the axle. Then the whole assembly lifted up their voices and shouted for Cuculain, and he himself, Cuculain, the son of Sualtam, sprang into his chariot, all armed, with a cry as of warrior springing into his chariot in the battle, and he stood erect and brandished his spears, and the war-sprites of the Gaeil shouted along with him, for the Bocanahs and Bananahs and the Geniti Glindi, the wild people of the glens, and the demons of the air, roared around him, when first the great warrior of the Gaeil, his battle-arms in his hands, stood equipped for war in his chariot before all the warriors of his tribe, the kings of the Clanna Rury and the people of Emain

Macha. Then Cuculain bid Læg let the steeds go, and they flew away rapidly, and three times they encircled Emain Macha. Then said Cuculain—

“Where leads the great road yonder?”

“To Ath-na-forarey and the border of the Crave Rue,” said Læg.

“And wherefore is it called ‘the Ford of the Watchings?’” said Cuculain.

“Because,” said Læg, “there is always one of the king’s knights there keeping ward and watch over the gate of the province.”

“Guide thither my horses,” said Cuculain, “for I have sworn not to lay aside my arms to-day until I have wetted them in the blood of one of the enemies of my tribe; and who is it who is over the garrison this day?”

“It is Konal Karna who commands there this day,” said Læg.

Now, as they were drawing near the ford, the watchman heard the rolling of the chariot and the trampling of the horses, and they sent word to Konal that a war-chariot was approaching from Emain Macha, but Konal came out of the Dûn with his people, and when he saw Cuculain in the war-car of the king, and his glittering weapons around him, he began to laugh, and said, “Is it arms the boy has taken?”

And Cuculain said, “Indeed it is, and I have sworn not let them back into the Tayta Brac until I have wetted them in the blood of one of the enemies of Ulla.”

Then Konal ceased laughing and said, “You shall not do this Setanta, for you shall not be permitted,” and he

held back the horses, but Cuculain forced the horses onwards, and Konal fell back.

Then cried Konal to his charioteer, "Harness my horses, for if this mad boy ventures into the territory of the enemy and meets with hurt I shall never be forgiven by the Ultonians." Now the territories of Mid-Erin were hostile to Concoibar through the expatriation and defeat of Fergus.

But the horses were quickly yoked, and Konal Karna dashed through the ford, and straightway he came up to Cuculain and drove for a while abreast of the boy, urging him to return. Then Cuculain stood up on both feet with his legs apart in the car, and raising high above his head in his hands a large stone which Læg had picked from the highway, he dashed it with all his force on the pole of Konal Karna's chariot, and the pole was broken in twain, and the chariot fell down, and the chief of the Red Branch, Konal Karna, the beauty of the Ultonians, was rolled out of the chariot upon the road, and was defiled with dust.

"Do you think that I can throw straight?" cried Cuculain; "and now that you remind me, it is one of the vows of our order never to go out with insecure trappings, rotten chariot-poles, or the like."

Then Konal got up out of the dust, and swore that if a step would save Cuculain's head from the men of Meath he would not take it.

But Cuculain laughed again, and Læg urged on the steeds. Now as they drew near the Boyne and the point where it receives the waters of the Mattok there was a great Dûn. In this Dûn lived three brothers, the three

sons of Nectan, renowned amongst the tribes of Meath for valour and strength. Then as they drew nigh the Dûn, Cuculain shouted insults and challenges with a loud voice, for the brothers had seen the war-car of Concobar Mac Nessa far away, and their own chariots were prepared, and they had despatched messengers on every side to cut off the retreat of the men of Ulla. Then Læg checked the horses, and Cuculain descended upon the ground, and fitted an iron bullet to his sling, and he slung and killed the first of the warriors, and slung again and killed the second, and he slung the third time with all his might against the warrior, who was almost upon them, his strong shield held before him, while he crouched down in the chariot, and the iron bullet passed through the bronze shield and through his forehead, and went out behind. Then Cuculain drew his sword, and ran and cut off the heads of the slain, and sprang into the chariot, and Læg flogged the steeds, who flew northwards again, swifter than the wind, for already they saw signals and fires, and horsemen galloping across the country to intercept their passage to the north. But they escaped out of the jaws of the enemy, and reached Ath-na-Forary, and when Konal saw the heads of the men of Meath, and recognised who were those warriors, he was filled with wonder, and he sent men-of-war to conduct him back to Emain Macha, and the whole city came out to welcome the young knight. Then his arms were hung up in the Tayta Brac, but Cuculain himself went back to his comrades, and he slept with them, and did not go out with the Red Branch.



## THE DUEL OF CUCULAIN AND FARDIA

Then arose Cuculain, the unconquerable, striding through the forest, and he wondered which of the great champions of Meave should be brought against him that day ; and when he came out into the open, he beheld the whole south country filled with a vast multitude, as it had been the Ænech of Taylteen or the great Feis of Tara when the authority of the Ard-Rie is supreme, and all the tribes of Erin gather together with their kings. But he saw not at first who was the champion that had come out against him, and he advanced through the willows, and came to the edge of the ford, and looked across, and he saw Fardia, son of Daman, of the Fir-bolgs, and Fardia looked upon Cuculain, and Cuculain looked upon Fardia.

Then Cuculain blushed, and his neck and face above, and his temples waxed fiery red, and then again, paler than the white flower of the thorn, and his under jaw fell, and he stood like one stupefied ; but Fardia held his shield unmoved, with his spears resting on the ground, and beneath the heavy cath-barr his brows stronger than brass.

But Cuculain sent forth a voice hoarse and untuned, and said :

“ Is it Fardia Mic Daman of the Fir-bolgs, for there is a mist before my eyes ? ”

But Fardia answered not.

Then said Cuculain :

“ Art thou come out to meet me in arms to-day, seeking to slay me ? ”

And Fardia answered sternly :

“ Go back, O Cuculain, to thy own people, and cease to bar the gates of the north against our host, and I shall not slay thee or dishonour thee, but if thou remainest, I shall slay thee here at the ford. Therefore, I bid thee go back into the province.”

But Cuculain answered him, and his voice became like the voice of a young girl, or the accents of one seeking an alms.

“ And is it thou alone of all this great host that has come out against thy friend, seeking to slay me or dishonour me. There are the battle-standards of all the warrior-tribes of Erin, save only the Ultonians, the banners of the children of Ith and Heber, all the far-spreading clans of Herēmon, the children of Amargin and Brega of Donn and Biela, and the Desie of Temair ; there are the warlike clans of the Fomoroh, and the remnant of the people of Partholân, the Clanna Nemedh from the great harbour southwards, the children of Orba, the Ernai, and the Osree, the Gamaradians, and the Clan Dega. Could no champion be sought out of this great host that covers the green plains of Conaul Murthemney to the limits of the furthest hills to come out against me, but that thou alone shouldst stand forth against thy friend. Persist not, O son of Daman, but retire, and I will meet three champions instead of one from this day forward. We parted with

mutual gifts and with tears, why does thy spear now thirst after my blood, and why dost thou seek to dishonour me ? ”

And Fardia made answer :

“ Other champions, by their prowess, bear away many gifts, why should I ever have my hands empty ? Bright as the sun is the brooch of Meave, which she has given me, the Royal Brooch of Cruhane, emblem of sovereignty amongst the Gaeil. Gems glitter along the rim. Like a level sunbeam in the forest is the shining delg of it. I shall have honour while I live, and my clan after me shall be glorious to the end of time. Therefore, prepare for battle, O son of Sualtam ; I remember thee not at all, or as one whom years since I met, and straight again forgot. Therefore, prepare thyself for battle, or I shall slay thee off thy guard.”

And Cuculain said :

“ O Fardia, I believe thee not. Full well dost thou remember. Beneath the same rug we slept, and sat together at the feast, and side by side we went into the red battle. Together we consumed cities, and drove away captives. Together we practised feats of arms before the warrior-queens, grieving when either got any hurt. Together we kept back the streaming foe in the day of disaster, when the battle-torrent roared over us, either guarding the other more than himself.”

Then beneath his lowering brows the hot tears burst forth from the eyes of the son of Daman, and fell continuously from his beard, and he answered with a voice most stern, but that held within it a piteous tone like a vessel

in which the careless eye sees not the hidden flaw, but at a touch, lo, it is broken. So sounded the stern voice of the warrior.

“Go back now, O Cuculain, to thy pleasant Dûn—Dûn Dalgan upon the sea. Go back now, for I would not slay thee, and rule over Murthemney and the rough headland of thy sires, and Meave will not waste thy territory or injure aught that is thine. And care no more for the Red Branch, for they have forsaken thee, and given thee over to destruction, who have conspired against thee, trusting in thy great heart that thou wouldst be slain on the marches of the province, holding the gates of the north against their foes, for Hound is thy name and Royal Hound thy nature. Therefore, go back, O Cuculain, and save thy young life; return now to thy infant son and thy sweet bride. Go back, O Cuculain, for sweet is life, the life of the warrior, and very dark and sorrowful and empty is the grave.”

“I will not go back, O Fardia Mic Daman, but here on the marches, while there is blood in my veins, and while reason like a king rebelled against but unsubdued, holds the sovereignty of my mind, shall I contest the borders of my nation, though forsaken and alone. My people have indeed abandoned me and conspired for my destruction; but there is no power in Erin to dissolve my knightship to the son of Nessa and my kinship with the Crave Rue. Though they hate me, yet cannot I eject the love out of my heart. And not the kings alone and the might of the Crave Rue, but the women and the young children of Ullá, are under my protection, and all the unwarlike

tribes, and this the sacred soil of Ulla upon which I stand. And this too well I know, that no power in the earth or in the air can keep the Red Branch my foe for ever, and that loud and deep will be their sorrow when the red pyre flames beneath me. And seek not to terrify me with death, O son of Daman, for of yore, too, our minds did not agree, for dark and sorrowful death is not, but a passage to the land of the ever young, the *Tiernanōg*. There shall I see the *Tuatha* face to face, and there the heroic sons of *Milith* and himself, a mighty shade, and there all the noblest of the earth. There hatred and scorn are not known, nor the rupturing of friendships, but sweet love rules over all."

"Go back, O *Cuculain*, go back now again, for I would not slay thee. Think no more of the son of *Nessa* and the Red Branch, than whom the race of *Milith* hath produced naught fiercer or more baleful. Rooted out and cast down shall be the Red Branch in this foray, whether thou, O *Cuculain*, survivest or art slain. Go back, O son of *Sualtam*, return to thy own *Dûn*. Once indeed thou wast obedient to me and served me, and polished my armour, and tied up my spears submissive to my commands. Therefore go back; add not thy blood to the bloody stream."

"Revilest thou my nation, O son of *Daman*. Talk no more now, but prepare thyself for battle and for death. I will not obey thee or retire before thee, nor shalt thou at all dishonour me as thou has most foully dishonoured thyself. This indeed I well know, that I shall be slain at the ford when my strength has passed

away, or my mind is overthrown ; but by thee, O son of Daman, I shall not meet my death. Once indeed I was subservient to thee, because I was younger than thee. Therefore was I then as a servant unto thee, but not now ; and which of us twain shall die I know, and it is thou, O Fardia, son of Daman."

Therewith then they fought, and Cuculain had no weapon save only his colg, for the Gae Bulg, the rude spear which he had fashioned, he dropped upon the shore, and Fardia discharged his javelins at the same time, for he was ambidexter, and quick as lightning. Cuculain avoided them, and they stuck trembling in the thither bank, and quick to right and left Cuculain severed the leathern thongs rushing forward. Then drew Fardia his mighty sword that made a flaming crescent as it flashed most bright and terrible, and rushed headlong upon Cuculain, and they met in the midst of the ford. But straightway there arose a spray and a mist from the trampling of the heroes, and through the mist their forms moved hugely, like two giants of the Fomoroh contending in a storm. But the war-demons too contended around them fighting, the Bocanahs and Bananahs, the wild people of the glens and the demons of the air, and the fiercer and more blood-thirsty of the Tuatha de Danān, and screeched in the clamour of the warriors, the clash of the shields and the clatter of land and meeting colg. But the warriors of Meave turned pale, and the war-steeds brake loose, and flew through the plain with the war-cars, and the women and camp-followers brake forth and fled, and the upper water of the divine stream



gathered together for fear, and reared itself aloft like a steed that has seen a spectre, with jags of torn water and tossing foam. But Cuculain was red all over, like a garment raised out of dying-vat, and Fardia's great sword made havoc in his unarmoured flesh. Three times Cuculain closed with the Fir-bolg, seeking to get within the ponderous shield, and three times the son of Daman cast him off, as the cliffs of Eyrus cast off a foaming billow of the great sea ; but when the fourth time he was rushing on like a storm, he heard as it were the voice of Læg, the son of Riangowra, taunting and insulting him, and himself he saw, standing in the river ford on the left, for he was accustomed to revile Cuculain. Yet this time too the Fir-bolg cast him off, and advanced upon Cuculain to slay him. Then stepped back Cuculain quickly, and the men of Maeve shouted, for Cuculain's shield was falling to pieces. But again rushed forward the hound of Ulla, stooping, with the Gae Bulg in his hand, using it like a spearman in the battle, and he drove Fardia through the ford, and upon the hither bank, pressing against the shield, but Fardia himself too retreated back. But when the Fir-bolgs saw what was done they feared mightily for their champion, and raised a sudden howl of lamentation and rage, and rushed forward, breaking through the guards. Which when Fergus Mac Roy beheld, he sprang down from his chariot shouting dreadfully, and put his hand into the hollow of his shield, and took out his battlestone, and smote Imchall, the son of Dega, with the battlestone upon the head, and he fell rushing forward amongst the first. But Cormac Conlingas and Mainey

Lamgarf ran thither with the queen's spearmen restraining the Fir-bolgs.

But, meantime, Cuculain lifted suddenly the Gae Bulg above his head, and plunged it into Fardia ; but it passed through the upper rim of the brazen shield, and through the strong bones of his breast beneath his beard, and he fell backward with a crash, and grasped with outstretched hands at the ground, and his spirit went out of him, and he died.

But Cuculain plucked out the spear, and stood above him, panting, as a hound pants returning from the chase, and the war-demons passed out of him, and he looked upon Fardia, and a great sorrow overwhelmed him, and he lamented and moaned over Fardia, joining his voice to the howl of the people of Fardia, the great-hearted children of Mac Erc, and he took off the cathbarr from the head of Fardia, and unwound his yellow hair, tress after bright tress, most beautiful, shedding many tears, and he opened the battle-dress and took out the queen's brooch—that for which his friend had come to slay him—and he cursed the lifeless metal, and cast it from him into the air, southwards over the host, and men saw it no more.

## A HOSTING OF THE SIDHE.

A swift word had traversed all Erin, coming upon the cold blasts of the wind to every fairy rath and glen and sacred hill, and the ancient plains of tomb and temple, and with one accord the happy Shée came forth out of Fairy Land, out of Tiernanōg where they live in bliss, consuming the “feast of age.” From Wisna, and Tlatga, and Taylteen; from Cruhane, and Tara, and Awlin; from Gowra, Knock Ainey, Dûnamarc, and Bru Liah, Adair, and Lahran, and Oileen Arda Nemed; from Brugh-na-Boyna, and Tu Inver, and Fionaháh, of Slieve Few, Slieve Blahma of the Layhees, and Slieve-na-man Fion of the Osree; came the Shée of the ancient Fomoroh out of the west, and the Shée of the Fir-bolgs; came Kasár, the hoary queen, paling, melting into the air, before the growing glory of the Tuatha de Danān; even she, though smit to death, wan and faded as the moon struck by the beams of the rising sun, came with her waning sovereignty to comfort the guileless Cuculain.

From the Shannon, where the hills are dark above the waters of the Red Lake, came Bove Derg, endlessly grieving for his grand-children, the cruelly transformed. They indeed came not, for the cold waters of the Moyle detained them where they wandered swanlike—Æd and Fiechra and comely Conn, and Finoola, their sister maternal, though so young. They themselves came not,

but from the north out of the sea proceeded slow, sweet fairy music, most heart-piercing, most beautiful. Came Lear of the Shee Fionaháh, on Slieve Few, whose were the sweet children. His dominion was over the sea, and he lorded it over the lawless sea. Came Mananán, the son of Lear, from his isle, eastward in Nuirnuict, traversing the soft waves in his chariot, drawn by fairy steeds that brake not a bubble nor severed the wavecrest. Came the warrior queens of the Gaeil Bauv, and Macha, and Moreega, relaxing their stern brows above the couch of Cuculain, and the three sweet sisters Eire and Fohla and Banba, whose gentle names are upon Inis Fail. They met and welcomed the children of Milith, what time having consumed their ships they marched inland to subdue the island. Came Brihid, adored by the singing tribe, and Angus-an-Vroga, dazzling bright, round whom flew singing-birds, purple-plumed, and no eye sees them, for they sing in the hearts of youths and maidens. Came Goibnen, the father of craftsmen, and Yeoha Macerc, surnamed Ollav Fohla, and the Dâda Mōr, who ruled over all the Tuatha De Danān, from his green throne above the waters of the Boyne. Came Ogma, the inventor of letters, and Coirptry Kin Kaeth, surnamed also Crom and Cruag, "the stooping one" and "the stern," whose altar was upon Mah Slact when the Talkend, cross-bearing, with his clerics, came to Inis Fail, and many more of the Tuatha De Danān came to visit Cuculain that night; but there also came the Fianna of ancient Erin, the most ancient of all before the Fomoroh and the Clanna Nemed, before the paling queen, Kasár, they viewless possessed Inis

Fail, honoured widely by the Gaeil, and their fame is among the tribute-paying peoples this day. Came Fion, the son of Cool, the serpent-slayer, whose hair was like silver ; huge Oscar of the gentle heart, Kayilta Mac Ronan, Diarmait, dusky-haired, pearl-toothed, with light laughter and fearless heart ; bald Conan, corpulent, laughter-moving ; and Ossian, the warrior-bard. All the blessed Shee throughout Erin came that night to honour the Hound of Murthemney, and Cuculain saw them all plainly, face to face, as a man speaking with his friend, benign countenances and venerable, high hearts made pure and noble by death, out of Fairy Land, where they dwell in bliss, controlling and correcting the minds of the Gaeil. And as when to a child weeping in the night, his parents appear with soothing hands and words, so above the mighty Cuculain appeared the blessed Shee, speaking words of comfort and of praise, and Cuculain conversed with the Tuatha De Danān, being noble of heart like themselves. And Læg saw them not, but he felt the awful presence, and crouched back among the shadows, veiling his eyes with his hands, for he feared lest he should be smitten with blindness or struck suddenly dead, seeing with his eyes the Blessed Shee. But after this, Cuculain fell into a deep sleep, without a dream, that lasted for the space of a day and a night.

## THE PROWESS OF CUCULAIN.

Few were the champions of the world who would have faced the son of Sualtam, whom merely to behold, men trembled, for there was Panic in front of him, and Terror issued out of his countenance ; and he ran out upon the chariot-pole of the chariot, and stood with one foot on the pole and one on the back of the Liath Macha, and laughed in the fierceness of his wrath, for not like a mortal fighter was the hero that day, but like a genius of war. Long had they laid the hero under spells, fairy-stricken and enfeebled, by the force of druidic arts. But now, as out of the caves of death, he arose again in his invincible might, shaking off that magic sorrow and the oppression of the enchanters. Then flapped his warlike tresses, even as a sail flaps, sharp-sounding in the blast, and he quaked in his anger like a bulrush in the river, when swollen by spring rain the brown torrent rushes headlong to the sea. Out of his countenance there went as it were lightnings, and showers of deadly stars rained forth from the dark western clouds above his head, and there was a sound as of thunder around him, and cries not his own coming from unseen mouths, and dreadful faces came and went upon the wind, and visages not seen in Erin for a thousand years were present around the hero that day, and there was a clamour as of a multitude following behind, when the son of Sualtam went forth into the great battle.



Loud then pealed the voice of the Hound, for with his the Ioldāna mingled his voice of power, as then, when at Moy Tura, he brake the ranks of the Fomorian giants. Then sprang Queen Meave from her chariot, and fled away upon her feet ; then were the Maineyes confused, and Cet, with the chivalry of Moyrisk, swerved southwards ; then were the war-horses of the Tàn terrified, and the familiar spirits of Queen Meave put to flight.

Moreover, as they went, Læg ran out in front the great chariot-spear, through its loops beneath the pole, and made it fast at his feet with the brazen clasp, and with a lever on the right hand and the left, he unfolded the battalion-rending scythes, to see if they would work freely, so that like some vast bird of war, with outstretched glittering wings, that chariot seemed to skim the ground.

Now was it that, from their lethargic rest, awaked the earth-demons, even the nether gods, through whose dark chambers sub-terrene echoed the thunder of the war-steeds' hoofs, and the roof of whose dùn profound was shaken with a mighty oscillation. Loud then through the realms of gloom reverberated the voice of Orchil, the sorceress, summoning Fowart and her sisterhood of the deep, a dim consistory, and the earth-fiends arose against the son of Sualtam. Like the billows of the sea, the firms plain uplifted itself against Cuculain, so that the chariot-wheels sank into the ground, progress was retarded, and their draught distressing. Which seeing, Cuculain addressed his steed, and he said :—

“ O Liath Macha, it was not thus that thou didst bear into battle thy divine mistress what time she went out

against Fomoroh, but swiftly through wet places and dry, thou didst urge thy course ; and O Liath Macha, the eyes of all Erin are upon thee and me this day."

Thereat the noble spirit of the Liath Macha was grieved and against the yoke mightily he bent his broad chest with the strength of twenty horses, and out of the earth by main force he drew black Shanglan and the war-car, and then those peerless horses exerted their terrible strength, and through marble and whinstone crashed the revolving wheels of the war-car as the great steeds went on. Behind them the track of the chariot-wheels was like the mearing of a territory. Then saddened and astonished, the earth-demons sank into their deep abode, and again Læg urged on the steeds of Cuculain straight forward into the thickest throng of the battle.

Far out in front of the chariot then sprang Cuculain, holding the Gae Bolg in his right hand, and before him the Clanna Rury divided to the right and to the left, for here they were again retreating before the men of Meave. First, then, Cuculain slew a mighty champion of the Dergtheena, a prince among the nation of Curoi Mac Dary, who from their great dûn in the hills of Slieve Mish ruled a wide territory. Him holding the battle-plough of the Roscathals Cuculain smote through the shield and the left breast, for on his arm the shield still lay, while with mighty hands he grasped the ironwork of that warlike instrument. Then it was that Cuculain saw Lewy Mac Conroi, who was hesitating in his heroic mind whether he would advance against Cuculain, in pro-

tection of his people, and meet at his hands a hero's death, and test that dim southern prophecy which said that by his hands should fall the Hound of Emain Macha.

But as he deliberated, Cuculain, seeing him, said :—

“ O Lewy Mac Conroi, submit thyself now to me and I will not hurt thee. I have slain thy father, and will not slay thee.”

Loud then in reply rang the spear of the southern hero on Fabâne. Nevertheless, though mighty was the strength of the great son of Curoi Mac Dary, harmless with bent point and splintered tree rebounded the spear of the warrior.

Then ran forward Cuculain, and disarmed him with his irresistible hands, and the companions of Cuculain took him captive.

After that Cuculain slew two other of the champions of that nation, and before him dispersed the Clans of Slieve Mish. Also he routed the descendants of the ancient Luhara, who dwelt by the hill-enfolden lakes of Locha Lein, and thence southwards to Inver Scēna and were surnamed the Flaming ; also, a strong battalion from Assaroe, where their territory meared with Ultonians, and the children of Lægairey, of the Bloody Altars. So Cuculain routed all the left-centre of the host of Meave, and standing, beckoned Læg to approach. Bright then with the light of valour was the countenance of Cuculain, as he sprang into the chariot beside Læg, and sent forth his taunts against the Olnemacta, exulting in his invincible prowess, for not yet was his manhood confirmed, but such was his age, as when youth and manhood join, and still

untouched by the razor were his lips, and, for all his heroic greatness, the unbridled wantonness of youth was strong within him. Moreover, now he had saved the life of his king, and repelled Dûvac Dæi Ulla on the north, and had routed the battalions of Meave over all the left centre of the Clanna Rury, and there gathered round him and after him his ancient comrades, and school-fellows, and dear friends and the remnant of the Clans of Coolaney and Murthemney, who were subject unto him, and loved him, and a warlike glee and wanton exhilaration filled his spirit. Therefore, when he stood beside Læg in the chariot, he said :—

“Guide now the steeds to the right centre of the battle. And this shall be as it were a race of chariots at Tailteen ; so shall I mock and deride the host of the Four Provinces. Therefore, give to me my balls of jugglery.”

And Læg said :—

“Thou art a witless idiot, O Setanta. Is this a time to indulge thy mad freaks, when the Olnemacta are routing the Ultonians over all the right centre. If thou carest not for thyself have at least a care for thy charioteer, who, shieldless, has no protection save what lies in thy skill and warlike prudence, of which right little dost thou possess. Verily, if I return to Emain Macha in safety, never more will I be charioteer of thine. Truly my brothers made a wiser choice.”

And Cuculain answered :

“When I took thee to be my charioteer, O Læg, I then said—‘Not beside me or over me shalt thou be

smitten by a hostile weapon, but through me,' and in our many battles, hast thou ever yet received any wound ? ”

Then was the mind of Læg troubled when he remembered the never-failing care with which his master watched over him in danger, and he gave Cuculain the balls of glittering brass, and urged on the steeds. Across the plain then they flew, between the Clanna Rury and the Olnemacta, and where they went the men of Meave shrank away. Through a field of slaughter dashed then the war-car, and reddened the tires of the wheels and the spokes. But above the head of Cuculain there was as it were a bright circle, so did he with a single hand cause those eight balls to revolve, watching warily, nevertheless, lest a spear or a bolt from the men of Meave should smite his charioteer or himself, and the Clanna Rury laughed when they beheld him ; and afar off Concobar Mac Nessa, wounded, but vigilant, watched his career and antic feats—but the men of Meave were the more terrified.

Nevertheless there came out a great champion of the Olnemacta, and he said that now surely would the Hound fall at his hands, and that he would acquire great renown. Therefore, when Cuculain was looking southwards and upwards, he ran forward from the Olnemacian ranks to slay Cuculain as he passed. But Cuculain, not turning his head aside, but looking straight before him, darted one of the eight balls through his brain, and continued his juggler's wheel with seven.

“ I swear the oath of my territories, O Setanta,” cried Læg, “ that a prettier feat of war thou hast never yet performed.”

Now the name of the slain man was Cuir, the son of Dalot.

Then Cuculain cast the balls high aloft, and as they fell, dropped them one by one into their place, and he changed the Gae-Bolg from the left hand to the right and again sprang forth upon the chariot-pole. It was then that Cuculain heard sobbing voices and a sound of the muffled lamentation of women, and he said :—

“ O Fathâne and Colla, why do you weep ? My end is not yet. I shall this day advance the Red Hand of my nation over all the nations of Eiré, and I shall cause to flourish the fair fields of Ulla. Why do you weep ? ”

And there answered him voices out of the air :—

“ Like a child playing on a tide-surrounded isle art thou this day, O Setanta, upon whom night descends, and the great sea arises irreversible with mutterings and noises, and hungry eyes glare around him from the deep. Against thee now the mighty Cailitin and his wizard sons embattle themselves. Nations they have ruined, and kingdoms made desolate. Yea, against them the high gods wage vain war. As the bright wave, foam-crested, glittering, which the hollow cavern, loud with fearsome echoes, and peopled with abominable shapes, draws within its depths, so shalt thou descend into their pit. Go not southwards, Cuculain. Stay now thy destroying hand, and let the Clanna Rury work their own salvation.”

And Cuculain answered :—

“ Surely I shall go southwards, O fairy queens. Not to husband ignobly for my own pleasure have I this great strength which lives within me to-day. Now am I not



my own, but I am sent forth by unseen kings, and whither they guide me I will go."

Swifter than hawks then southward flew the steeds of Cuculain, and before him the men of Meave fled to the camp. Clear seen from afar stood the son of Sualtam, the destroying hawk of the Tàn, speeding southwards to where, in the right centre, still raged the hottest battle, and there, like clashing tides, the Olnemacta and the Red Branch contended. Then was it that the Clan Cailitin embattled themselves against Cuculain.

Meantime the son of Sualtam had sprung out in front of the chariot, advancing against the men of Meave, but there withstood him Fraech, the son of Fiach, advancing through the ranks of the Olnemacta.

Glorious indeed was the appearance of that hero. With a tinkling he ran through the host, for on his spear there were rings that rang forth a sweet faint melody as he ran. He it was who had come to Rath Cruhane as a suitor of Fionavar, leading in his train those weird harpers of whom men often spake, but never before saw. Vain then and since had been his suit, though he boasted that his mother was the goddess Bē-bind. Musically now over the shoulder of Cuculain rushed the spear of the western champion, but in return Cuculain pierced him through the very boss of the shield, and through the middle of his breast where the breast bones join.

After that there came against him Lon, and Uala, and Dil, and along with them three warrioresses. All these practised druidic arts, but their arts availed not against Cuculain, and he slew them all with the Gae-Bolg

and with Cruaideen. Then it was that the dear son of delicate Uala ran forward to avenge his father, but his courage fell when he saw the giant spear of Cuculain dropping blood, and beside it the face of the hero, haggard, terrible, raging in his destructive wrath, and quickly he shrank back amongst the ranks of the Olnemacta.

There Cuculain routed the host of Meave on the right centre of the Ultonians, and kept moving southwards to meet Conaill. From him Cet and the sons of Maga retreated. Bravest he in all Erin after the son of Sualtam, nevertheless he and his brethren went back before Cuculain, which to him was the most renowned of his achievements. Nevertheless, there came against him two warrior druids, Imraen and Imroe, trusting in their magic power, but they were slain by the son of Sualtam and by Lu Mac Æthleen.

Meantime Læg kept moving after him, not silently, for while Cuculain was routing the foe, Læg perpetually shouted. Then returned the warrior to his chariot; around his lips there was a foam, and from his forehead down upon his neck the great veins had swollen out like ropes. Thereafter Læg unfolded the left scythe and charged southwards, and where he went the battalions of Meave were confused, and chariots and fighting men were cast in heaps, and rolled over one another inextricable.

Which seeing a brave southern hero, Liathān, said to his charioteer :—

“ O Mulcha, let us stay now this destroying hawk. The hero does not live who can meet him in single combat ;

but come now, charge against his chariot, and haply in the confusion I may find an opportunity to slay him."

Then the charioteer gave reins to his steeds ; and, on the other side, Læg, being very wary and vigilant, and looking all around under the borders of Fabâne, saw him, and calling to Cuculain, gave rein to the steeds. Like thunder was the roar of the wheels on both sides, and the trampling of the galloping steeds as they closed, and elsewhere the battle was still while the chariots drew nigh. But Læg kept perpetually guiding the chariot-spear, so that it might pierce the breasts of one of the steeds ; and Mulcha, on the other side, guided so as to avoid it, for of glittering brass it extended in front of the chariot-pole. But as they closed, the horses of Cuculain rose against the others, and trampled them into the ground, and passed over them, and the great war-car crushed like rotten timber the chariot of Liathān, and that warrior was slain by his own chariot, and by the trampling of Cuculain's steeds. Then Cuculain made much of his horses, and said :—

" O Liath Macha, thou hast not done a more gallant deed since the day that thou slewest the steed of Ercoill, on that day when we went to be judged by him, and all others fled before him and his terrible fire-breathing steed."

So they went southwards, and Cuculain lifted up his voice and Conaill answered, for he was much exhausted fighting all day against the great southern nations under Cathir, son of Eterskel, and Cairbré the fair and great. Seeing Cuculain, the great son of Conairy Mōr leaped from his chariot, and his brother, Oblinni, whose foot was yet

unhealed, guarded the steeds. Him Cuculain missed, and the spear stuck trembling in the ground behind ; but ere the southern could cast, Cuculain sprang upon him with the battle-mace. With the first blow he stunned his arm within the shield, and with the second he slew him. He also slew Oball, his brother, who endeavoured to draw the spear from the ground. For he and Oblinni struggled with it, endeavouring to withdraw it and retreat amongst the ranks of the Clan Dēga. Then Cuculain slew—a cause of great grief in the south of Erin. Here with his battle-mace he routed the nations of the Ernai, also the men of Hirna, whose footmen were swifter than their chivalry, and the nations of Boirné, until fair-visaged Corc gave hostage to the Clanna Rury, for the conquered appealed not in vain to Cuculain for mercy. There, too, against Cuculain came an ancient comrade, Fir-bē, a prince of the Olnemacta. With 505 warriors he had come to the hosting, and Cuculain, enraged, cast his spear lengthwise at him and slew him, for the mighty beam struck him in the mouth and brake all his jaws.

Then sounded in the ear of Cuculain a voice which he knew, and it said :—

“ Now, O Setanta, strengthen thyself, for against thee the powers of hell embattle themselves. Hid in dark clouds Cailitin and his mighty brood are upon thee.”

But Cuculain looked up, and he saw a darkness moving towards him from the camp of Meave, and a deadly chill transfixed his heart as he looked, and a wild horror overspread his face. And again the Ioldāna spake :—

“ Not alone for the Red Branch shalt thou now fight,

but for all the nations of Eiré, who, thee beaten, will no longer yield men and heroes, and fair peaceful fields, but her fens shall be enlarged, and dragons shall dwell there, and slimy unnameable monsters, and all manner of foul creeping things and few and base shall her people be."

Then by his magic art Lu spread a vision before the hero, and Cuculain saw his native land, sea-girt, like a picture, with all her tuaths, and mōrtuaths, and, like silver threads, he saw her everlasting streams; south-westward the mighty Shannon running from its source at Connla's Well, where glistened the sacred hazel, and the fairy queens who guarded it, and he saw the Three Waters starting from Slieve Blahma glittering through mid-Erin as they ran; the noble Slaney, too, he saw, and the Liffey returning to its source; the lordly Boyne crowned with woods, and the palaces of the immortal gods; the Bann with its sacred estuary; the Drowis, and the Lee silver-flowing, untroubled, like a dream, and the sacred mountains of Eiré, and her plains and many woods, her sea-piercing promontories and storm-repelling bays. And Cuculain saw her warlike tribes dwelling afar, and heroic forms in all the territories, and over Eiré all the peoples raising to him high memorials, and hymning his name in songs. Also, the god caused him to see strange lands with mightier streams and fiercer suns, and the race of the ancient Gæil there dwelling, and his name there renowned.

Then the vision faded, and Cuculain saw before him a sword, the haft towards him. Like glittering diamond it shone and the handle was inlaid with wondrous pearls,

and on its starry sides were there graved verses in such an Ogham as Cathvah never taught to Ultonian youths. True was that sword and pure, and the hero seized it and went on against the Clan Cailitin. On the edge of the moving darkness strode Glas Mac Dalga, and Cuculain cried with a voice warning—"Son of Dalga, thou art not of their race, come forth from amongst them." And three times Cuculain called to him, and three times he refused. Then went on that mighty hero against the weird brood, fearless, alone, and a silence and terror fell on all the hosts of Erin. Alone went the hero, him nor god nor tutelar spirit, nor any of his power accompanied, repelled afar by the might of the Clan Cailitin. From their hills and grassy thrones remote, the gods of Erin watched him : Bove Derg from his cloudy turrets above the waters of the Aherlow ; the great Dagda from his fairy palace by the Boyne, over against Ros-na-ree. Alone went the hero, while around him nations trembled ; but into his heart the Ioldāna breathed his own lavish soul, and that fierce wrath, begotten of solitary thought, and outrage, and sacred pity, with which in the ancient days he led the arisen gods against the Fomoroh, laying waste at Moy Tura their accursed ranks. Far flashed around him a starry radiance ; he went swiftly, moaning as he went, and his voice was like the low brool of distant thunder heard behind hills, when the storm-spirit murmurs in his wrath ; from the depths of his soul, shaken with a mighty rage, arose the black-bird of his valour, and floated in a visible shape above his head ; gigantic waxed thy stature, Riastarra ! Alone he went down against the



Clan Cailitin, as one who goes down into hell, the darkness gathered him in.

Within as from far distance there arose reverberations and horrid echoes as from deep caverns, and voice calling to voice, as of troop encouraging troop, and a noise of a crash, as of giants falling, a clangour of brass, and the thunder-pealing cry of the son of Sualtam amid the deafening uproar. Through rolling clouds there gleamed lurid lightnings, revealing things nameless, not to be described. From their tombs brake forth the ancient dead at the noise of that strife like the shock of worlds, for the earth stirred herself, and the dead arose out of their sleep of ages. Then time gave up her secrets and births to be, and her veiled nations and generations arose rank behind rank. Like a torrent's fall their voices sounded from afar, summoning him to their deliverance, their thin voices unheard in the crash and roar of that awful strife.

Then were the hosts of Erin disordered, and the battalions clashed together; then sprang champions forth out of their chariots, and the steeds were panic-stricken, and flew through the plain with the war-cars. Now, too, was heard the voice of Cuculain, and he cried :—

“ I know thee, O Mōr Reega. Four-footed thou dost not deceive me. What doest thou here in the shades of hell, thou queen of the mountain-dwelling gods? When wilt thou cease to persecute me, for I fear thee not? ”

Thereafter arose the sound of a boy's voice, shrieking, being pursued, and then silence. Slowly then, like a

mist, that magic darkness melted into the air, till that last inky blot had vanished, and on the reddened sward lay the enchanter, and his twenty-seven sons together, and further west, by himself, towards the camp of Meave, lay Glas Mac Dalga, and the hero stood alone, swordless, but with Fabâne still on his left arm.

## THE DEATH OF CUCULAIN.

More terrible than at any other time was the son of Sualtam in those battles which he entered in the naked majesty of his irresistible strength, shorn of his glory, and having lost his magic attributes, for this time he went to war like one who has devoted himself to death. Around him the shadows thickened, but like a light in darkness, his valour shone the brighter as before his fast-lessening warriors he charged the armies of the great Queen. Over the plains of Murthemney, between Dûn-dalgan and the Boyne, pealed the voice of the son of Sualtam, shouting amid his warriors, and ever the southern host gave way before him, and their battalions were confused.

Then northward in the hills collected the people of Ulla, the unwarlike tribes, seeing afar that one hero, and the fast-lessening ranks of the Ultonians, where the great champion of the north fought on against the immense overflowing host of the Four Provinces.

But as the Ultonians grew less in the dread conflict, the southern warriors precipitated themselves upon Cuculain, and like a great rock over which rolls some mighty billow of the western sea, so was Cuculain often submerged in their overflowing tide; and as with the down-sinking billow the same rock reappears in its invincible greatness, and the white brine runs down its stubborn ribs so the son of Sualtam perpetually reappeared

scattering and destroying his foes. Then crashed his battle mace through opposing shields ; then flew the foam-flakes from his lips over his reddened garments ; baleful shone his eyes beneath his brows, and his voice died away in his throat till it became a hoarse whisper. Often, too, Læg charged with the war-car, and extricated him surrounded, and the mighty steeds tramped down opposing squadrons, and many a southern hero was transfixéd with the chariot-spear, or divided by the brazen scythes.

It was on the eighth day, two hours after noon, that Cuculain raising his eyes beheld where the last of the Red Branch were overwhelmed, and he and Læg were abandoned and alone, and he heard Læg shouting, for he was surrounded by a battalion, and Cuculain hastened back to defend him, and sprang into the chariot, bounding over the rim, and extended Fahâne above him on the left. There he intercepted three javelins cast against the charioteer by a Lagenian hand ; but Erc, son of Cairbré Nia-far, pursued him, and at the same time cast his spear from the right. Through Cuculain it passed, breaking through the battle-shirt and the waist-piece, and it pierced his left side between the hip-bone and the lowest rib, and transfixéd Læg in the stomach above the navel. Then fell the reins from the hands of Læg.

“ How is it with thee, O Læg ? ” said then Cuculain.

And Læg answered :—

“ I have had enough this time, O my dear master. Truly thou hast fulfilled thy vow, for it was through thee that I have been slain.”

Then Cuculain cut through the spear-tree with his colg, and tore forth the tree out of himself ; but meantime, Lewy Mac Conroi stabbed black Shanglan with his red hands, driving the spear through his left side, behind the shoulder, and Shanglan fell, overturning the war-car, and Cuculain sprang forth, but as he sprang, Lewy Mac Conroi pierced him through the bowels. Then fell the great hero of the G  l.

Thereat the sun darkened, and the earth trembled, and a wail of agony from immortal mouths shrilled across the land, and a pale panic smote the vast host of Meave when, with a crash, fell that pillar of heroism, and that flame of the warlike valour of Erin was extinguished. Then, too, from his slain comrade brake forth the Liath Macha, for, like a housewife's thread, the divine steed brake the traces, and the brazen chains, and the yoke, and bounded forth neighing, and three times he encircled the heroes, trampling down the host of Meave. Afar then retreated the host, and the Liath Macha, wearing still the broken collar, went back into the realms of the unseen, and entered his house upon the Boyne, where, since the ancient days was his mysterious dwelling-place.

But Cuculain kissed L  g, and L  g, dying, said :—

“ Farewell, O dear master, and schoolfellow. Till the end of the world no servant will ever have a better master than thou hast been to me.”

And Cuculain said :—

“ Farewell, O dear L  g. The gods of Erin have deserted us, and the Clan Cailitin are now abroad, and what will happen to us henceforward I know not. But

true and faithful thou hast ever been to me, and it is now seventeen years since we plighted friendship, and no angry words have ever passed between us since then."

Then the spirit went out of Læg, and he died, and Cuculain, raising his eyes, saw thence north-westward, about two hundred yards, a small lake called Loch-an-Tanaigté, and he tore forth from himself the bloody spear, and went staggering, and at times he fell, nevertheless he reached the lake, and stooped down and drank a deep draught of the pure cold water, keen with frost, and the burning fever in his veins was allayed. After that he arose and saw northwards from the lake a tall pillar-stone, the grave of a warrior slain there in some ancient war, and its name was Carrig-an-Compan. When Cuculain first saw it there was standing upon it a grey-necked crow, which retired as he approached. With difficulty he reached it, and he leaned awhile against the pillar, for his mind wandered, and he knew nothing for a space.

After that he took off his brooch, and, removing the torn bratta, he passed it round the top of the pillar, where there was an indentation in the stone, and passed the ends under his arms and around his breast, tying with languid hands a loose knot, which soon was made fast by the weight of the dying hero. But the host of Meave, when they beheld him, retired again, for they said that he was immortal, and that Lu Lamfáda would once more come down out of fairyland to his aid, and that they would wreak a terrible vengeance. So afar they retreated, when they beheld him standing with the drawn sword in his



hand, and the rays of the setting sun bright on his panic-striking helmet. So stood Cuculain, even in death-pangs, a terror to his enemies, and the bulwark of his nation.

Now, as Cuculain stood dying, a stream of blood trickled from his wounds, and ran in devious ways down to the lake, and poured its tiny red current into the pure water ; and as Cuculain looked upon it, thinking many things in his deep mind, there came forth an otter out of the reeds of the lake and approached the pebbly strand, where the blood flowed into the water, having been attracted thither by the smell, and at the point where the blood flowed into the lake, he lapped up the life-blood of the hero, looking up from time to time, after the manner of a dog feeding. Which seeing, Cuculain gazed upon the otter, and he smiled for the last time, and said :—

“ O thou greedy water-dog, often in my boyhood have I pursued thy race in the rivers and lakes of Murthemney ; but now thou hast a full eric, who drinkest the blood of me dying. Nor do I grudge thee this thy bloody meal. Drink on, thou happy beast. To thee, too, doubtless, there will some time be an hour of woe.”

Then to Cuculain appeared a vision, and he deemed that he saw Læg approaching, riding alone on black Shanglan, and he was glad therefore, and he deemed that Læg applied healing salves to his wounds. And Cuculain said :—

“ Go now straightway to Emain Macha, O Læg, and say to Concobar that I here in Murthemney will contend till I perish against the invaders of Ulla, and give my

benediction to my uncle, the great King of the Ultonians, and to all the Red Branch ; and go to Emer and tell her not to weep for me, but to let her grief be of short duration, and that I will remember her while life endures."

Then to Cuculain it seemed that Læg, frowning, said :—

" Surely, O Cu, thy peerless and noble wife, beautiful Emer, thou wouldst never forget."

After that Cuculain dreamed that Læg went off to Emain Macha, and that he heard the sound of the hoofs afar, going northwards, and a terrible loneliness and desolation came over his mind, and again he saw the faces of that wandering clan, and they laughed around him and taunted him, and said :—

" Thus shalt thou perish, O Hound, and thus shall all like thee be forsaken and deserted, and they shall perish in loneliness and sorrow. An early death and desolation shall be their lot, for we are powerful over men and over gods, and the kingdom that is seen, and the kingdom that is unseen belong to us, and they ringed him round, and chanted obscene songs, and triumphed.

Nevertheless they terrified him not, for a deep spring of stern valour was opened in his soul and the might of his unfathomable spirit sustained him.

Then was Cuculain aware that the Clan Cailitin had retired, as though in fear, and there stood beside him a child, having a strange aspect, and he took Cuculain by the hand, and said :—

" Regard not these children of evil, O my brother, their dominion is but for a time."

And Cuculain said :—

“ What god art thou who hast conquered the Clan Cailitin ? ”

Thus perished Cuculain—“ mild, handsome, invincible, cœv, aulin, cinláca.”

## THE VISION OF QUEEN MEAVE.

“ I see indeed a confused multitude of flying birds of every kind, small and great, flying thitherward as though terrified, from beyond the forest, and they break to the right hand and the left, but some fly towards us, and over us, and they seem to me like sea-birds which flee before an ocean-racking tempest when on the horizon, yet still, and against a clear sky they, with redoubled speed, are seen fleeing shorewards, for the islands and the sheltering recesses of the crannied lofty rocks.”

“ And now that these have passed away, borne swiftly on panic-stricken wings, seest thou yet aught, O High Queen of the Olnemacta,” said Fergus gazing, as he spake, upon the bright-eyed forward-bending Queen.

“ Northward, beyond the dark forest, I behold a vision, lovely indeed and beautiful to look upon, and like a work raised by magic power, serene and fair ; a soft, white, délicaté mist, like most pure wool many times refined ; or like fairy snow shed afar over the land ; or like the very white upper clouds of heaven unmoved against the blue canopy of the stainless sky. Moreover, from its level floor, as from the face of some beautiful lough, there arise, as it were, tufted isles, with that soft sea poured around their base, and never, O Fergus, have I a sight more beautiful beheld.”

“ Make keener now thy far-seeing eyes, O wife of Aileel, and tell me what thou seest.”

“ That so serene and still, seems to me, so now no longer, but still with the stillness of some intense and endless life, for within there appears to me, to exist a rush, and movement, and commotion, to be felt more than seen. Moreover, I now distinguish innumerable faint twinklings as of stars in the gloaming of the night, and quick sudden flashings, and rapid flashings and rapid fires that burn and go out, and are illumed and extinguished, and cross one another's paths through all that snow-like fairy mist, also spots of blackness that move in curved ways and cease not.”

“ And now, O mistress of many warriors, in this silence of thy own host, already divided into regiments and nations, which stand armed and expectant, hearest thou aught from that far distance, O sovereign of the Tàn ?”

“ I hear a vast confused hum like the murmur of some gigantic hive, when in the spring-time there is a noise of preparation amongst its populous youth, an endless roar like the far away roaring of the sea, when in the still moony night its long waves roll up some vast unbroken sand, and I hear, or hardly hear, voices as of gods and giant heroes, and a faint ringing as of brass amid that mysterious mist, and now, more clearly I distinguish the flashings, and the stars, and the rapid fires. Amid the mist there is the beckoning of a gigantic hand, blood-red, and around it, as it were, lightnings. It is the Fomoroh, or the people of Marc Erc, raised by sorcerers from their tombs, or the high gods of Erin descending visibly out of

Tir-na-n-ōg, and the realms of the dead. Stay me not, thou false son of Rossa Roe ; take from me thy strong hands, I shall not here await the blasting of the great children of the ancient Nemedh."

For the great Queen, trembling, had screamed in her terror, and was hastening in the inner recesses of her pavilion to the shelter of darkness and secrecy, and the protection of her idol-gods. But her Fergus forcibly detained, soothing her terror-stricken soul, and he said :

" Fear not, O mighty Queen, whom spears a hundred thousand defend, and the flower of the warriors of the four provinces of Eiré. What unwarlike panic is this of thine, O mighty sovereign of the Tân—thou, who art the battle-standard of our warriors. It is not the ancient gods of Erin, nor yet the victorious and mighty children of Dana, but men of mortal frame like ourselves whom, when spears pierce through, they perish, and the flame consumes them, or the dark earth enfolds for ever. Yet truly, O my Queen, not with vain-glorious confidence ought we to meet those warriors who come down against us out of the north, concealed in that phantom mist, for champions, the noblest and greatest beheld by the all-seeing sun, march hitherwards in its fairy folds. It is the children of Rury whom thou seest ; the giants of the north, collected afar out of their fort recesses and their palaces palisaded and trenched from the Red Cataract in the west to the Ictian sea ; heroic champions who fear naught created ; the gathered might of the great Red Branch of the Ultonians, led on by that proud ruthless



monarch of Emain. For, as for that white fairy mist with which, like a fleece of purest wool, thou hast seen the land enwrapt, it is the breath of the valiant, and the steam of the breathing of the mighty men of Ulla, and of their gigantic steeds inhaling the sun and wind into their lungs, and expelling it again in steam, and the steam of the sweat of heroes, and from the wet, foamed sides of horses as they run, and owing to their distress in running, above them in the still air, it hangs suspended, and they are concealed in its folds. And this is that white fairy mist which thou hast seen.

“ And the tufted isles which thou likenedst to the isles that rise from the face of some still gleaming lake—these are the peaks of the northern hills and the tops of the mountain ranges of the north, standing above the suspended steam of their host. Such are those tufted isles, and such the white sea that encircles their base.

“ And the lights like quick-glancing stars, the moving fires and flashes of sharp flame—they are the shining of innumerable helmets with their gem-like decorations, the burnished rims of chariots, and the extremities of the poles glittering between the breasts of steeds, and the burning points of spears, and the faces of the moving shields, and the eyes of their innumerable warriors bright with the light of valour, these are those starry twinklings, flashes, and rapid flames. And those swart spots moving in curved ways are the clods cast from the swift hoofs of their galloping steeds, which escape the dash-board of the chariot, and are flung aloft behind the warrior and the charioteer, as their youthful chivalry career, to the right

and the left, in front of the host, exulting in their swiftness and might, or gallop forward and await the running ranks of the spearmen.

“And now, O Queen, thou knowest what is that confused roar like the roaring of the sea, for it is the noise of the movement of the host, the screech of innumerable wheels revolving on their brazen axles, and the sound of the tread of the warriors and the trampling of the hoofs of horses, the converse of the host as they march, and the war songs of the tribes, expressing their war-like glee as they march, singing, with open mouths, sonorous songs. And as for those more distinct sounds, it is the shouting of mighty captains, and the roar of the bellowing of gigantic kings, far-strident amid the din, when they shout among their nations, and divide the ordered ranks and the squadrons of the chariot-fighting chivalry, and the clash of spears upon hollow-ringing shields, when some mighty clan responds to its captain, or gives vent to its own warlike glee.”

“And as for that red hand, like lurid flame seen afar through the smoke of a burning dùn, it is the Red Hand of Emain Macha, the warlike symbol of the North. It has been woven by immortal hands in a banner white as snow ; and now for the first time has that banner been brought forth to war, nor shall it ever be seen in battle again any more to the end of time, and around it then are portents, the shrieking of bauvs and battle furies ; the wives of Ned are there, and the spirits that delight in carnage, and dreadful faces and the flashing of lightnings. And worthy, indeed, of divine presences are

those warriors, for they are such as never yet have been collected in Erin since the days of old, when, at Moy Tura, gods with giants contended for the sovereignty of Fail. The Mōr Reega is there, too, far-striding in their midst, and there Lewy, King of Ultonian Fir-bolgs, and the Clan Humōr with the Fir-bolgs of the isles."

Then far-off beyond the forest appeared distinctly the mighty host of the Clanna Rury, and men saw the northern terror extending from the east westward, the gigantic spearmen and war horses, the flashing chariots and weapons, and the whole face of the land was lightened with their glory. Then Meave rejoiced, seeing the great intervening forests, saying that the Ultonians would make a huge circuit; but even while she spake, there arose a crash, and a noise of a continual down-rushing, and black chasms were seen in the forest, pale under the light of stars. And Queen Meave said:—

"What is this crash, and this noise of continual down-rushing, and this agitation of the forest, and the black valleys therein which I see?"

And Fergus said:—

"It is the noise of the felling of forest trees, where the mighty men of Ulla hew roads through the forest for the passage of their chariots."

But while he spake, there appeared on the plain northward, in front the forest, the huge forms of armed men, where the spearmen and footmen of the Clanna Rury, having passed through the forest, were emerging on the starlit plain. Then shouted the men of Meave, and the

Northern host shouted in reply, and the starry firmament rang with that roar of the heroes of Eiré.

That night the host of Concobar Mac Nessa encamped on the edge of the forest, and the plain northwards was bright with their innumerable fires.

## NIALL MŌR OF THE NINE HOSTAGES.

Niall, son of Eocha Moymodōn, the greatest historical figure ever produced by this country. Doubtless his, like all merely political and military fame and power, is to be attributed to his own ancestors, to the character of the nation over whom he ruled, and to the fortuitous concourse of circumstances which enabled him to play the great part which he did in contemporary history. But what human glory can escape if we peer too minutely into the sources whence it has been fed. Yet a man who was able to hold in subjection the proud military aristocracy over whom he was called to rule, who, though the youngest of his brothers, was elected to the Ard-Rieship of Ireland ; who defied Stilicho and the Romans, nor met with any decisive reverse ; who led his armies through Britain, and twice, if not oftener, plundered Gaul, must have possessed more than the average share of heroic and kingly attributes. How eagerly the mind desires to penetrate through the mist of ages, and see what manner of man was this whose mere outline and impression we perceive moving to and fro in the north-west of Europe, to hear the sound of his voice, observe his manner and haviour, to know what he thought and did, what he projected, what suffered, how and with what words he addressed his warriors, and how in his Dān he conversed with those of his own fireside. In vain : Niall Mōr of

the Nine Hostages is but to us a name round whom sounds a dim remote murmur of great applause. King of the Irish in the age of their military power, when that long slow wave whose remote inception we have seen, whose swelling volume traced, culminated and broke with a sound reverberated as far as Rome, recalling twice the great Stilicho from Gothic wars, and deluging the border nations, whose shrieks and cries resound yet so pitifully through the pages of the chroniclers of the subsequent ages ; we hear, as it were, the roar, and perceive the form, in some sort, through three centuries, ever swelling to such a culmination ; but who can tell, who even suggest, the nature of the deep undiscovered tide out of which it arose, from and by which it was impelled, the heroes nameless or mere names, the unknown pieties and loyalties, the loving care, the suffering of mothers, the family affection, the industry and patient labour of the servile, the magnanimity of the free, the fatherhood of princes and kings, the forgotten enthusiasms of forgotten bards, the inventions and useful innovations, all the manly resolves broken, the manly resolves accomplished, the purity and idealism of young aspiring minds, the yearning for light and right, all that was vital, true, loving, and brave—lost to sight, sunk in Time's dark hollows, never again to see the light. Behind Niall and his warriors, his bards and druids, all this ; in them—all this, while even on themselves the lamp of history sheds but a struggling ray revealing only their existence and greatness, and so little else.

Such and so dimly seen the ship-borne warriors of Ireland row and sail from Irish ports in the track of the



Romans' retreating steps, with behind and beyond that illuminated bard-created world, a glorified back-ground ever present to the mind and spirit of these men, significant gestures and looks of gods and heroes, voices monitory or inspiring, the mighty and the brave of yore, whose flesh was now dust, urn-sheltered beneath many a massive cairn, many a wall-encircled rath, but whose memory sent blood quicker through the veins, inflamed many a mind, and gave strength and fire to many a heroic appeal and indignant or approving word. The body of their past was dead, but its soul was alive and strong.

How then can any man possessing the least right feeling, the least natural piety, dismiss these generations of Irishmen with the supercilious rapid phrases dear to our conventional historians, "savages," "barbarians," etc., passing thence hastily forward, as from something quite revolting to the refined modern mind?

But for these despised where would we now be, or our boasted civilization? Then, as since, mothers with many pangs brought forth and tenderly nursed and tended those who became our ancestors; these brave men held and transmitted the common natal stock, preserving and passing forward all that had from remoter times been sent down to them. The Picts and Scots—how raw and cold is every reference to them in our text-books. Of the Picts, indeed, ancient literature, tradition, and history record little or nothing; to us their lives are veiled. Yet for them I would imagine that the North Britons, their posterity, should entertain some loving filial regard, should, in their tombs and

monumental remains seek to discern what manner of men were they, and how fed and cherished that unity and that prowess which in this age made them famous, and should endeavour to connect their lives, too, with all that is known of the spirit prevalent in North Europe in these days, and feel that beneath their breasts, tattooed and branded, beat that heroic loving heart whose throbs we feel in the antique literature of the Irish, their friends and confederates, and in the remnants of Teutonic Scandinavian, and Icelandic sagas.

But of the Irish, the Scoti, who can now speak in words of sudden, hasty repulsion, perceiving in that, their Bible, the ancient songs and tales of the race, how therein lie, firm and deep, all the elements, all the organic impulses which go to the formation of heroic and beautiful characters? The men who adored those ancient gods, who loved and worshipped those great Ultonian heroes and heroines, and those later of the Ossianic age, and who adorned with myths, touchingly beautiful and tender, every mountain, plain, bay, stream, lake, and promontory of their native land, were not savages, or, if they were, such savagery as theirs, in its inherent spirit, as distinguished from its archaic simple form, who would not recall? What a world of magnanimous thought and delicate sentiment underlies the whole narration no intelligent reader can fail to perceive. The attribution to heroines of a sweet voice, so common,—is this savage?—the attribution to them of divining, protecting instincts, how, save in literary form, finish, and direction, does the Shakspearian literature differ from theirs? Cuculain

sparing three times the life of his fiercest foe, a woman, guarding her retreat against the pursuing Red Branch ; Oscar, who never wronged woman or bard—have we not here all the finer and more gracious elements of mediæval chivalry ? Cuculain, the prime hero of the Gael, who spake no boastful word, and esteemed himself and comrades as far inferior to his ancestors, is the moral side of our own civilization, so far in advance of this ? Lu Lamfáda, the god-patriot, siding with the weak and poor against the strong and arrogant ; the Ossianic heroes, whose proudest boast was that they spoke the truth ; then, the heroic friendships, the scorn of death, the sympathy with personal beauty, the love of nature, the love of music and poetry, and the recognition of their magical, wonder-working power, the elevation and dignity of thought, the overflowing hilarity, the laughter riant, perpetual, like the laughter of the sea with its fathomless moving tides—forget the literary form and remember the inherent spirit, and the worst enemy of the Irish will learn to traduce no more.

Such, and so encircled with a world of splendour and sublimity of heroism and magnanimity, of tenderness and loyalty, this warlike race entered upon their conquering career. Dim as are the records of the fourth century, and few the definite facts of the Irish invasion of Britain, the other and far more important side of our history, the history during these ages of the Irish mind is revealed in the light of that great mythic world through which I erewhile conducted the reader, the magnified glorified semblance of the spiritual realities of this age of Niall

and his successors, concerning the material realities of which history so feebly and sparingly stammers forth its truths and half truths.

These truths and half truths, however, let us now consider with that attention which all evidence, no matter how slight, deserves, when it treats of an age so remarkable in Irish history, and a man the greatest of all the historic figures in the annals of this land and race.

Whether the ascription of great personal beauty to Niall be a representation of fact or not we cannot with certainty determine, but he is so well within the historical period, contemporary as he was with St. Patrick and his captor, that I rather incline to think it was. Of Niall, some ancient poet supposed, but not with adequate reason, to have been his tutor, Torna, thus sang :—

“ When we used to go to the assembly  
 Along with the son of Eocha Moymodōn,  
 As yellow as the blossom of the sovarchy was the hair  
 That was on the head of Niall, son of Cairenn.”

Cairenn, alias Carinna, was a Saxon princess. Thus we see the bardic literature harmonizing with the verses of Claudian, in which he seems to refer to an alliance thus early between the Irish and the Saxons. The *sovarchy* was the St. John's-wort. Even the monkish Latin writers allude to him as *Niallus Magnus capitis nitidi capillis*, Niall the Great of the head of glittering tresses.

This Niall is the greatest historic figure at any time appearing in the annals of Ireland, meagre as is our information concerning him. Doubtless the nature of

the times in which he appeared contributed much to this result, but we may be sure that his uninterrupted reign of twenty-seven years of prosperity and military success was not reached without the exhibition on his part of great personal superiority'. He was the youngest of the sons of his father, and therefore his election, by itself alone, would prove the possession on his part of conspicuous royal qualities. In one of that class of homely stories which also illustrate the characters of the Saxon Kings of England, we perceive an estimate formed by his contemporaries as to his physical strength and personal daring. When a boy, the forge of his father's chief smith being in flames, he and his brothers rushed through the smoke and fire to rescue the contents of the forge. The other boys brought out respectively the bellows, the forge instruments, and a chariot, but Niall, the youngest, raised up and bore away the great ponderous anvil.

Of Niall's foreign wars the bardic literature so overlays fact with romantic embellishments that we can accept little with reliance, save the great fact testified to by Bede, Nennius, St. Patrick, the Roman writers, that under him, or during his floruit, Ireland was the dominant power in these islands, and that its power was seriously felt even in Gaul. As I have said, scholars are generally agreed that it was in Brittany that St. Patrick was taken captive, which, having been in the reign of Niall, must have been undertaken by himself in person or by his generals. That this invasion, plundering expedition, or what not, was carried on upon a large scale, St. Patrick's



reference to the thousands of captives brought along with him into Ireland plainly shows.

Unfortunately, the classical history of this age, as it affects Northern Europe, is most meagre and confused.

All the Irish authorities concur in stating that Niall was slain in Gaul, and by an expelled Irish king, seemingly with the support of the Picts. It is strange that the date of Niall's death, A.D. 405, coincides, within a year, with the second appearance of Stilicho in this part of Europe. That Niall was slain in an intestine war of the Scoto-Pictic confederacy on the occasion of this expedition, and that this war was in some way due to Stilicho, is probable. The bardic story states that Eocha, son of Enna Kinsalah, slew him with an arrow, discharged across the river Loire, in Gaul, and that he was there interred. It is remarkable that of his successor, Dathi, also slain on the Continent, the remains, probably the cinerary urn with his ashes, were brought back to Ireland by his warriors, and interred with lamentations and funeral games at Rathcrōgan, in the west.

I know no portion of our history which would better adapt itself to epical treatment than this reign of Niall, the very absence of minute historical evidence being, in itself, to a certain extent, an advantage, by enabling an author to shape the characters and events so as to elucidate in the most dramatic manner the great features of the age. The historian would have as an absolute basis of definite fact the great Niall himself and his warlike sons, well-known, definite characters in Irish history, then this headlong, progressive Irish race, heroic, high-



tempered, brave, mettlesome, with all its inspiring memories, its daring and proud consciousness of adherence to its own standard, of what was right, chivalrous, and manly, defective and crude as that standard, no doubt, was. He would also perceive throughout the island, appearing, too, in Niall's armies, and in the conversations of the bards and the better educated, the dawning light of Christianity and the slow growth of new ideals of life and conduct ; and he could so shape the epic as to bring into bold contrast the two great conflicting types—the saintly and the heroic.

On the other hand, there would be the failing power of Rome relaxing and growing faint, the luxurious and effete civilization of the Britons, the wealth of their wealthy, and the misery of their poor ; the general incapacity for resistance to the terrible power now bursting upon them.

The Saxons, too, would fill a side of the epic—brave and manful, fair-haired, stubborn, but all too gross ; without literature or chivalrous ideals, without the fierce, headlong ardour of the Irish or their refinement, but having, withal, substantial qualities, which would wear well and blossom nobly, if not for many centuries. The Irish and the Saxons were at this time good friends, as, doubtless, they will be again, when the political quarrel is adjusted. At the Court of Conairy Mōr, on the night on which he was slain, we have seen three beautiful Saxons, youths in fosterage, and the mother of Niall Mōr was a Saxon Princess, Carinda by name.

The Picts, secondary to the Irish in a political and

military point of view, and of a more archaic and ruder civilization, would, doubtless, require more care and thought. The hosting of Niall's warriors throughout Ireland, under their many kings ; the animated scene in the harbours covered with transports and ships of war ; the devastation of Brittany, and the capture there of a certain patient, thoughtful boy of sixteen, soon a slave to herd cattle on the hill-sides of Dal-Aradia, enduring meekly his hard fare, having his lonely nights to himself for prayer, would occupy many an inspiring canto ; the whole ending with the assassination, or the death in battle of the renowned Niall.

The man who can do this, and do it well ; who can make us see and feel the great Irish King, and the other chief personæ of the epoch, and, as we read, breathe the spirit of the age, impregnated with its many strange odours, will, in my opinion, have written a truer history than any conventional historian can write, and one which will take simultaneous possession of the heart, the imagination, and the intellect. At the same time such a work should not be lightly attempted, nor without the most adequate and thorough accumulation of all that antiquarian research has brought to light.

IRISH POLITICS AND POLITICAL  
HISTORY.



# IRISH POLITICS AND POLITICAL HISTORY.

## “PACATA HIBERNIA.”

*Pacata Hibernia* is one of the most interesting and important monuments of Anglo-Irish history ; being the work of a man who himself participated in the events which he describes ; and from his own point of view describes those events with great frankness. Yet its full historical value can only be appreciated by one who has also studied the State Papers, and reads it in the light which that study yields. The *Pacata* embraces altogether only a period of less than three years, and is concerned only with events occurring in a single province—that of Munster. And yet, when rightly read, it will be found to throw much light upon all those convulsions, tumults, and rebellions with which Irish history in this century so teems. It commences with the joint entrance of Lord Mountjoy upon the Viceroyalty of Ireland, and Sir George Carew upon the Presidency of Munster in 1600 and ends with the suppression in 1603 of the Munster insurrection, which was excited by the landing of the Spaniards at

Kinsale. But its atmosphere, unlike that of any modern book treating of the times, is the atmosphere of the age ; in every sentence we breathe the air of actualities, face to face with real and actual men, can almost hear them speak, and feel around us the play of the passions and the working of ideas and purposes so characteristic of that age, so foreign to our own. Such an experience must bring enlightenment. *Pacata Hibernia* once well read is certain to produce a lasting effect upon the mind of the reader. The book deals with the stormy conclusion of a stormy century, the lurid sunset of one of the wildest epochs in our history.

Whence arose those cruel throes and unexampled convulsions, that agony of bloodshed, of wars and massacre, and ruthless devastation, extending with hardly a break over a lapse of time which embraced three generations of men ? In 1172 the high king of all Ireland, the petty kings and the Church accepted Henry II. as their lord. Thenceforward for some two centuries the kings of England governed Ireland, so far as the feudal system, modified here by Irish manners and customs, permitted a country to be governed by its acknowledged ruler. This state of things, owing to a variety of causes, chiefly the terrible confusions wrought in Ireland by the two Bruces, Robert and Edward, was interrupted in the fourteenth century, and the authority of the kings of England as lords of Ireland reduced to the narrow dimensions of what is known as the Pale. Outside that small straggling and ever-shifting area the whole country was governed by independent Norman-Irish nobles and by Irish chief-



tains, who in their own language called themselves kings, and who in fact were kings.

So when the Tudor dynasty succeeded the Plantagenet, the kings of England, though titular lords of Ireland, were so only in name. In fact, at the commencement of the sixteenth century the Crown had hardly any power in Ireland. The country was governed by eight or ten great lords, under whom were from sixty to eighty minor lords ; dependent to some extent on the great ones, but practically independent within their own domain. Ireland was a nation of nations—the seat of nearly a hundred distinct governments. Even in the Pale the Crown only maintained itself by committing the Government to the head of one of the great families ; usually the representative of the House of Kildare. This was a state of things which could not last. So the Crown almost inevitably came into collision with the dynasts. The history of the century is the history of the wars between the Crown and the great lords—always *Rex* or *Regina* versus *regulum* or *regulos*—though the great issue was complicated by many minor issues, and religion too, and patriotism possibly helped to embroil the situation. The House of Kildare precipitated the controversy by seeking to wrest from Henry VIII., the government of the Pale, the only portion of Ireland which he even pretended to govern. In the collision that great house fell as ruinously as the House of Douglas fell before the King of Scotland, fell with a crash never to rise, and the noise of its great and quite unexpected downfalling shook Ireland. The chieftains perceived that a new power had arisen in Ireland, a power too to which

they were aware, traditionally, that their allegiance was due. Rejoicing, they hastened to welcome it. In solemn parliament assembled they proclaimed their Lord Henry no longer Dominus Hiberniæ, but Rex, converting his shadowy lordship into an actual sovereignty. They swore themselves the King's men accepted State titles at his hands, undertook to pay royal rents to keep his peace and follow his war, "rising-out" with foot and horse to all his occasions.

From the consequences of that solemn act neither they nor their successors, however they may have repented it, were ever able to shake themselves free. Thenceforward Ireland looked to the Crown as the lawful centre of order and authority and the fountain of honour. As for the chieftains, they still remained virtually kings, each man governing his own people, and with a gallows on his lawn to enforce observance of his will.

Now, obviously, this state of things, so highly obnoxious to the genius of the century, could only be temporary and transitional. In one way or another it was necessary that this host of petty kings should be converted into ruled subjects, and, no other centre of authority showing itself, all those converging forces which were compelling the race towards unity, internal peace, and all those institutions, good and bad, which we collectively sum up under the term "civilization," rallied round the power which the chieftains themselves had so solemnly acknowledged. A masterful king like Henry, endowed with a certain degree of common sense and a certain manly sympathy with men, might have guided the country

bloodlessly through the great social and political revolution which was now inevitable, and the outcome of which could have been no other, in any event, than a chieftainry converted into a *noblesse*.

From Henry's death we seem to see the State not steered or sailed, but drifting, labouring through seas of blood, not guided to its destination by a human understanding, but blindly reeling thither, driven by purblind elemental influences which, for want of a better name, we may call the genius of the age. From wars and rumours of wars thenceforward the island was never free, fratricidal wars, and such wars ! murderous, devastative, sparing neither the poor unarmed peasant, nor the bald head of the ancient, nor the bald head of the infant, nor the woman heavy with child. The Shane O'Neill wars and the Desmond wars are somewhat familiar to all readers, but to what extent the State embroiled itself with the chieftains and the chieftains resisted the State will be realized when I mention the fact that, in the time of which our text treats, there was no chieftain or considerable lord in the island who had not been at some time in his career out in action of rebellion. For the chieftains often gave as much as they got, and many of them had beaten the State and wrung their own terms from the Government by sword and fire, and oftentimes the Government shrank from the challenge and permitted the stripped and indignant chieftain to have his own way. Whence, as may be imagined, consequences ensued. Consider too the significance of such an entry as the following in our annals :—

“ Ulick, Earl of Clanricarde, Captain of the High Burkes, terribly at war this year with his brother Shane of the Clover, but both at peace with the Government.”

Of the many insurrections and wars which the conduct of this great controversy made inevitable, the most formidable and successful by far was that which was raised in 1593 by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and the great lords of the North. Tyrone worsted many times the Queen's armies in the North ; notably in the Battle of the Blackwater. His ally, the celebrated Hugh O'Donnell, repeated those victories in the West. In short, the State was found quite unable to suppress Tyrone and the confederated lords who supported him. FitzWilliam, Lord Russell, Lord Burrowes, and the Earl of Essex, successive Viceroy, all failed. Then the Queen appointed Mountjoy as Lord Deputy of Ireland, and the President of Munster having been recently slain in battle by the southern insurgents, nominated Sir George Carew to the Presidency of Munster, the province being at the time in full rebellion. It is at this point that the writer of *Pacata Hibernia* begins his very singular tale.

Who wrote the book ? Thomas Stafford, who is responsible for the publication, only gave himself forth as Editor. The MS., he tells us, was found amongst Carew's papers after his death, with an intimation that it had been drawn up under Carew's direction, and with the aid of documents supplied by him. Internal evidence proves that it was not the work of mere scribes and secretaries working under Carew's supervision. *Pacata Hibernia* was plainly written by one man, a man who was

through the Munster wars with Carew, who was very close to his person, and entertained for him a great and sincere personal admiration. It is the outcome of a single mind ; the uniformity of the style, the simplicity and unity of the point of view prove that. It is also the work of a soldier, not of a civilian ; of one to whom war was a trade, and who always treats of it with a soldier's downrightness and grim hard emphasis. Veracious, too, it is to an unusual degree, though we must always make allowances for the man's point of view. Also, it was written shortly after the events, and long before its first publication in 1636. The battle-smoke clings still to the pages—the wrath of the soldier fresh from scenes of blood burns there still. He still hates his foes ; applauds anything and everything done for their destruction ; cannot see or even suspect that there was any good thing in any of them. A Lieutenant Thomas Stafford served under Carew, and is mentioned once only, at the storming of Dunboy. He was almost certainly the writer of *Pacata Hibernia*. If so, what an amazing suppression of self ! Consequently, the book has that interest and value which always belongs to the writings of a man who was himself an actor in the events which he describes. Those events, too, led up to and include the Battle of Kinsale ; one of the grand turning-points in Anglo-Irish history. Indeed, it might well be reckoned amongst “ the Decisive Battles ” of the world's history. Had its event fallen out differently all Ireland would have joined the Spaniards ; for there was not in the island another Queen's army, nor the means of raising one ; and it was certainly the purpose of Spain



to "entertain" the Irish nation, at the time extremely warlike and full of veteran soldiers, for the invasion of England, where a great Catholic party was ready to co-operate, and that, too, with the Queen on her death-bed. Spain could not have governed Ireland; but Spain could very easily have formed into a great army for foreign service the multitude of first-rate soldiers with whom the island teemed.

And yet *Pacata Hibernia* is by no means so valuable from the conventionally historic point of view, as for the light, often a most unwelcome light, which in a hundred ways it sheds upon the manners of the Irish nobility, chieftainry, gentry, and people of Ireland at this time, and upon the methods, policy, and personnel of Queen Elizabeth's Irish officials and military commanders, of whom Carew may be regarded as quite the *ne plus ultra* in certain directions. When one passes from the pure and ardent out-pourings of the "Four Masters," in whose pages every Irish magnate, and even every conspicuous Englishman serving in the country figures with something of the port of an ancient hero, to that Irish world or section of it which has been illuminated for us by Stafford's prosy but veracious pen, we are conscious of a sore sense of disappointment—nay, of dismay and even shame. The same tale of almost subterhuman baseness and wickedness is revealed by the contemporary State Papers; of a brutal soldiery, more like chartered stout-thieves and robbers than soldiers, murderers more than warriors; of wily Machiavellian statesmen, most false and perfidious, all, or almost all, familiar with the dagger and the bowl



as short cuts to their ends ; of a native aristocracy, almost every man of whom had his price, frankly posting up that price in the secret market kept by the State for that vile traffic ; men whom no oaths could bind, or any public or religious principle control ; Earls, Barons, great territorial chieftains, belted knights, and high gentlemen offering for money or land to betray their cause and their comrades. Slowly but surely the monstrous criminalities of the men of this age, evidenced by testimonies gradually accumulating as one pores over the contemporary monuments—usually letters written by their own noble-ignoble hands—rises before the mind of the amazed reader. For money or land there appear to have been few things to which even the greatest of them would not stoop ; stoop lower even than the basest men of our own time. From reputation after reputation the perusal of these documents, now brought to light out of the dark archives of the State, strips away all the glamour and glitter, revealing, not men greater than ourselves, but—at least as judged by modern standards of private honour and public principle—a great deal worse. Examples sufficient will be forthcoming in this work of Stafford's ; yet Stafford does not tell the worst. He does not tell, for example—apparently he did not know it—how Carew and the Lord Deputy of Ireland despatched James Blake into Spain, with instructions to poison his friend and associate the brave and chivalrous Hugh Roe.

Take now on the other hand a quite typical example of the ignoble depths to which our “ great gentlemen ” would stoop for the achievement of their purposes. The

reader will recognise his type in a great many of the southern territorial magnates with whom the text is concerned. Brian Ogue O'Rourke, of the Battleaxes, the O'Rourke, high lord of all Leitrim, is a character in the *Pacata Hibernia*. It was he who gained the brilliant victory of the "Battle of the Curlew Mountains" over Sir Conyers Clifford and the Queen's forces. In the "Four Masters" his appearances are always characterized by a certain greatness; and from the pages of *Pacata Hibernia* he passes forth unscathed. Once I regarded him as one of the few stainless, simple, and heroic characters of the age. But alas! very few indeed are the reputations which can stand the fierce light shed by the letters recently unearthed from the archives. Brian Ogue was the oldest son of Brian na Murtha O'Rourke, Brian of the Ramparts, of whom it was recorded that "a prouder man walked not the earth in his time." In 1589 Brian na Murtha went into rebellion, recalling his son, Brian of the Battleaxes, from Oxford to join him. Brian Ogue (junior) fought in that war, and did some brilliant feats as lieutenant to his father. Eventually the old proud chieftain was taken prisoner, brought to London, and there beheaded at Tyburn. Hardly had his father's head fallen when Brian Ogue wrote a letter to the Privy Council, informing them that in his opinion his father had met with a fit punishment for all his "fractiousness," and inviting the Government to appoint to his father's seignory such an excellent and dutiful young man as himself; flattering his father's murderers (for as such, of course, he regarded them), in the hope that they would give him his father's land and

rule. When the Queen and Council, recalling the recent record of this young Oxonian, did not see their way to this, Brian Ogue became a chief pillar of the Tyrone rebellion. One is not surprised to find him afterwards proposing to betray the Catholic and dynastic cause to Sir Conyers Clifford, President of Connaught ; for the confederated chieftains were generally playing that game, being, as I have said, nearly all in the market. But the baseness of this letter reveals the yet lower depths of ignominy to which our " great gentlemen " could descend in their dealings with the State. And the affair, too, exhibits a ludicrous aspect as well as a dismal ; for the young man had been quite as " fractious " as his father ; had preyed and burned far and wide ; and killed or half killed a sheriff among other feats. Indeed, I believe that since the publication of our sixteenth century State Papers, all well-informed Irishmen have ceased to look for patriotism or any sort of public spirit in any of these sixteenth century insurgent lords—save only in the chief ones, Tyrone and Hugh Roe.

But then, in their own way, which was a different way, the statesmen and officials were just as bad, or worse. We shall find Carew in the following pages writing decoy letters, crammed with such phrases as " God," and " Christ," and " holy keeping," hiring a man to assassinate the brave Sir John of Desmond, and generally holding a market for assassins. In his private correspondence with Mountjoy we find him relating with glee how his creature, James Blake, tracked the brave Hugh Roe O'Donnell into Spain, and there poisoned him under

the guise of friendship. The phial of the cowardly was in as much request as the dagger of the bold. Ratcliff, Earl of Sussex, and Viceroy, sought to poison Shane O'Neill when Shane beat him in the field. Perrott, Viceroy, tried to poison Feagh MacHugh, the Wicklow chieftain. Bingham suborned a cut-throat to kill the proud O'Rourke, lord of Leitrim. Mountjoy employed Thomas Fleming to assassinate O'Neill. Why multiply instances? All the Viceroys and Presidents and chief military men sought to assassinate, or were willing, should the occasion arise, to assassinate insurgent lords whom they were unable to conquer. Froude, who is not easily shocked, expresses a manly horror at that attempt to poison Shane O'Neill; but comforts himself with the thought, to which he gives vehement expression that *only once* was that short cut *via* Hell adopted by British statesmen. But Froude had a way of his own of reading State Papers; and an extraordinary faculty for not seeing what he did not want to see. I do not impute unveracity—only reckless, headlong reading and violent preconceptions.

When so many instances stand out we may conclude, indeed must conclude, that the assassination of insurgent lords was a settled and fixed State method. Nor can we be at all sure that sixteenth century statesmen did stop with insurgent lords. Walter, Earl of Essex, father of Robert, whose ears the Queen caused to tingle, was, as he said himself on his death-bed, poisoned by English hands, presumably set to work by the husband of Amy Robsart. I believe the history of Europe in general in

those times reveals the fact that assassination, as a safe and economical method of getting rid of inconvenient persons, was universally practised ; and that there was no occasion at all for Froude's elevated hands of pious horror relative to the poisoned wine which Master Smith of Dublin, by the direction of the Viceroy and consent of the Queen, administered to Shane O'Neill and his household.

Nor can we defend these people by reference to contemporary moral standards. These men *were* worse than the rest. Outside the little group of State initiates and their hired ruffians, there were few English or Irish gentlemen of that day who dreamed that such things were being done, or who, hearing of them, that they were done, would not have been struck with horror. The statesmen of the sixteenth century *were* worse than their contemporaries who were not statesmen ; and, like all bad men, shrouded their proceedings in a cloak of darkness. The paper in which Carew relates the assassination of Hugh Roe was written in cypher. Had Cromwell and Ireton been educated in Tudor methods they would have poisoned Charles the First in prison, written letters steeped in tears to all the courts of Europe ; and celebrated his obsequies with a splendid funeral. That was what Burleigh would have done. Henceforth we shall have to dismiss a great many of our conventional notions with regard to the men of Elizabethan times. Mr. Froude's picture of the upright, God-fearing, and civilized Englishman contending against a flood of Celtic barbarism, is doubly untrue, for the Englishmen were the reverse of

saints ; and as for the flood of Irish barbarism, nothing is more evident on the very surface of our history than that, in the great controversy between the Crown and the dynasts, it was this very flood of Celtic barbarism which sustained and bore forward the ship of State. In less metaphorical language the Crown, in all its struggles with the great dynastic houses, always had the majority of the Irish nation on its side. For the controversy was not at all England *versus* Ireland, but the Crown, *plus* the majority of the nation, *versus* the great lords.



## IRISH CONSERVATISM AND ITS OUTLOOKS

Until recently there has been in this country one class to which reformers might address themselves with at least some chance of success. By the nature of their position, by inherited right, by defined law, the territorial proprietors were Ireland's rulers, and with some prospect of success might have been approached by a strong reformer within or without their own ranks, and summoned to fulfil their function, and called upon to rule well, and with a strict eye to the national welfare. They were men of education, more or less, personally gentlemen and men of honour, men of leisure, supplied by their position with this, and strictly with no other function. They had wealth, viz. the rent of all Ireland; status, authority, and the faculty of command born with them or bred in them, and more or less loyally recognized by the people in general. The grand opportunity was theirs of harnessing, biting, and bridling this wild, tameless democracy—tameless, but tameable, and in its heart desiring to be tamed—of controlling it, and by methods democratic inevitably, as belonging to these centuries, but aristocratic too, leading forward this people to higher and ever higher stages. It was theirs, and they threw it away. Of what use to appeal now by written articles to this class—still I maintain our best and the fittest of all

to bear rule, if they but would. The opportunity is gone. The water is past. The mill will never grind again with past water. Their power, in conjunction with the like doomed class in England, they have surrendered to a hungry, greedy, and anarchic *canaille*, and I think their property is not long for this world as the times go. Property follows power, and I think King Lear discovered, as others yet will, that parchment rights were nugatory when he surrendered his sceptre.

To what other strong class, section, or interest can one now appeal, urging any high claim on behalf of this people? The politicians plainly are the new quasi-sovereign power. These unpleasant personages, who, too, are mere bubbles, blown up by the popular breath, stand as Goneril and Regan to the foolish dethroned king, who loved hunting and roystering too well, and his royal cares and responsibilities too little. And the politicians, though a seeming power, are really no more than an exhalation and steam of the unloosed democracy, of these mining and counter-mining interests, mad with mutual anger and suspicion—madly pursuing the main chance. There is no capacity for ruling in them. Rule implies, as one essential element, force—the power and the will to chastise. I would like to see one of these politicians, in whose nostrils the popular favour is as the breath of life—is, in fact, the breath of life—for a day oppose the wishes of the majority, or even try, or dream of trying, to bridle the people to his will. They live by the people and on the people, and at every point the democracy will hurl them aside the moment they cease to fulfil the essential function of their

position, which, as I have suggested, is that of a mere exhalation of the democracy, indicative of its existing condition, and of nothing else.

Where then rests the tribunal to which the reformer can appeal. Plainly somewhere in the breast of the democracy itself—this waste, dark, howling mass of colliding interests, mad about the main chance—the pence-counting shopkeeper ; the publican ; the isolated, crafty farmer ; the labourer tied to his toil, or tramping perhaps to the polling booth, as an enfranchised citizen, a member of the sovereign people, a ruler in the land, with the wolf on his right hand, and the poor house on the left, and in front, at his *disposal*, the whole property of the island. Ducks and drakes he will make of that same property—may be, upon it one good meal, may be not, and supply in his own person a good meal for the wolf. For as sure as the earth under law rolls, so surely do all men need control, and most of all the poor labourer ; and the goal of democracy, as interpreted by the politicians, is not only to leave him uncontrolled, but to make him who cannot control himself master, and put every kind of interest under his control. The people at large cannot be appealed to for any really good purpose. You may wake them up with some fetching revolutionary cry that seems to jump with their prejudices, passions, or apparent interests. I think I realize as well as any the noble qualities of this people ; but, by the way of moral suasion, I know that not a prophet working miracles could get them to see the course that is right, and induce them to pursue it—not the angel that St. John saw in the

sun, though he stood astride the channel, and spoke in thunder. A mass of sections and classes, each pursuing its own interests, how by any possibility can the legislative and administrative resultant be just. Swift laboured all his life to teach an aristocracy the right course, and in vain ; for the right course involved self-sacrifice, heavy labour—a martyr-like suppression of self. Can we expect that men whose lives are spent mainly in manual toil, though we had another Swift to teach them, would enter hard, rough paths, while their demagogues are conducting them into smooth ones ? They will do as their betters did—as their betters have taught them. The labour class, like every other class that has preceded them in the tenure of political power, will pursue its apparent material interest. Just now its apparent material interest seems to demand the root-and-branch destruction of a class, and the seizure, in one way or another, of the soil of the country. It is their apparent material interest to do so, and no other consideration can even momentarily cross their minds. It is not in such a temper and under such conditions that even the shadow of justice can be perceived. Without justice, I suppose, no nation ever was, or ever will be, strong and happy ; and the bare possibility that Ireland will be justly ruled is taken away when the lowest and most dependent class becomes sovereign. But this class will produce premiers, statesmen, secretaries, etc.? Yes, as the boiler sends up scum.

The political personages whom Ireland has recently sent to the top don't seem to me a very beautiful class of men. But I say deliberately that we will have worse.

Poverty, simplicity, religion, including respect for priests and bishops, and perhaps, above all, the pursuit of one idea, which is not material interest—national independence—have still kept our representation comparatively good. As current tendencies develop—as democracy runs its fatal course, worse and worse will ever emerge, ranting, bawling advocates of this thing and of that, tipsy pot-house politicians, gadders to and fro, men who have neglected every duty for the spouting pleasure, and of hearing the applause of the mob-men with hearts and foreheads as hard as brass, without rank and wealth of course, which often keep even bad men steady ; without conscience, and with tongues to whom nothing is sacred—tongues “ set on fire of hell.” They are coming as sure as I write these words—men with whom the worst of our present representation would scorn to hold any intercourse. Archbishop Croke, who has himself done so much to send this ball rolling, perceives already whither it is bound. I think if he lives long enough he will wonder at the viper-brood which he has hatched under his own ecclesiastical wings, dreaming no harm. For this is the worst feature of our times, that men by no means bad themselves, and really desiring the good of the nation, are in every direction helping forward the downward process. Eager to destroy things they know to be wicked and unjust, they do not hesitate to unchain the power that will most speedily suppress and abolish them—the unchained, masterless democracy. They may evict a devil indeed, but only to prepare the house for the reception of seven devils worse than the first.

Fortunately this wild Irish democracy is joined in harness with an English ditto, stronger and heavier—one well trained and broken in in old times, and not disposed, for a while at least, to break through fences. Of the English democracy, that section called Tory—and whose cardinal quality seems this, that while maintaining and reforming the more essential features of the old *régime*, it will consult nevertheless the solid interests of the mass of the people—seems to suggest some *possibility* of wise action. What preaching and teaching could never do sheer fear is now doing. The English aristocracy—the most intelligent of them—do at last perceive whither this democratic movement is travelling. Time and events are bringing them face to face, not with plutocratic interests now, but with the manual toiler of the country. The dream of Charles Kingsley's life, the alliance of the gentlemen of England with the workingmen of England seems destined in the remote future to assume some shape of reality. And it must be a real alliance, if it would have a chance of success, not a courting of the votes and a flattering of the prejudices of the low by the high, with hypocrisy on one side and ignorance on the other. But such a vital alliance means much. It means, amongst other things, the radical reformation of a class; the cheerful acceptance by them of hard, strenuous labour, not of the political sort, but far different. Under the control and compulsion of an intelligent and resolute statesman, I can imagine work done of a kind that would lead the stupidest to rub their eyes, and think they had been dreaming when they



talked of the "social revolution," and the paradises to be got out of that.

I may be asked of such a party, what do I conceive should be their method? Well, with regard to Ireland, I will explain. Granted the existence of a strong Conservative Government, their policy would not be political, but of an utilitarian and industrial character. The sorest grievance of Ireland to-day is the fact, which I know well to be a fact, that decent men and women are unable to find steady employment, and at wages which would permit them to live in a human way. Such a Government would organize services for various projects connected with the material development of the country, draining off into wholesome occupations all our waste labour. It would put a summary end to the brutal poor law system, intensely unpopular as it is in this country, in addition to being a radical absurdity, and worse. The last excuse for its existence would be gone when all willing hands were offered honourable work. Irish charity may be trusted to take care of the orphans, the aged, and the otherwise incapacitated. Relief works have ever been bad and demoralizing. These State services must be organized on the principle of stern discipline. The power of dismissal would probably provide sufficient means of enforcing discipline. The standard of wages all over the island would straightway rise to or near the Government level, and the sight that Burns called the saddest under the sun—a willing workman with no work—would be unknown. For the control of these men the Government would require officers, engineers, accountants, etc.,

and in our upper and middle classes would find as good material as the world affords. The services of women, too, would be required. Women suffer more than men in the present condition of things, being most abominably remunerated. Ireland, drained of its young men of the upper and middle classes, possesses an abundance of unmarried ladies, well educated, refined, with the instincts of command, pining for something to do, some honourable, independent career. Our Tory administration can have these to control their women stitching, cooking, etc., for the workers in the male services. I believe they could find numbers who would act as volunteers, and for country's sake and the cause's sake refuse payment.

The workers would be entitled, after a period of honest service, to an honourable pension.

The work done would be national property. All Governments hitherto, when they do anything useful, seem to consider it necessary to hand it over, in one form or another, to private individuals. There is nothing so binds a nation together as the possession of things of common interest. The forests planted, the bogs drained, the railways and tramways constructed, would be national property. The services would be, of course, national services. We should soon take a pride in our men ; and, true to their salt, they would be proud of their Government, of their country, and of their work.

The Irish are a sociable people. They like acting in concert. Karl Marx complimented us on our revolutionary fire—a curious compliment. Doubtless it is revolutionary and destructive, but it may be creative and

preservative if our Conservative Government care to have it in that form.

Is there anything impossible in such a programme? Here is the waste land, the waste capital, the waste labour, and the waste talent, and here is the Government which can bring them together. It is no mighty feat, yet it would lead to mighty and the mightiest results.

# THE GREAT ENCHANTMENT

## I.

In primitive literatures we read much about enchantment ; in our own instance those who come readily to mind are " The Stupefaction of the Ultonians," and the enchantment of Finn and his Fianna in the weird palace of the Quicken Boughs. I always thought such tales to be mere exercises of imagination, but it is not so. Enchantment is a fact in nature. Through suggestion or self-suggestion a man may be flung into such a condition that his senses will cease to discharge their normal functions ; in a stone he will see a flashing diamond, and in a flashing diamond a stone ; in discord he will hear music, and in the sweetest music a jarring discord. Nations, too, like individuals, may, as the punishment of their crimes and follies, find themselves flung into such an enchanted condition, and suffer that worst loss of all, the loss of reason.

The political understanding of Ireland to-day is under a spell and its will paralysed. If proof be demanded for this startling assertion, how can proof to any good result be supplied ? It is the same spell-bound understanding which will consider the proof. The instance and the demonstration will be presented to minds still under the dominion of the spell, therefore incapable of perceiving facts or of recognising the truth ; and yet there is a way

by which the reason may be reached. I invite the reader to pass with me out of the present, with all the potent illusions and delusions emanating from the source of the spell, whatever it may be, and consider that startling assertion in the more tranquil region of the past ; for the illusions of our ancestors are not quite ours, the mode of action of the enchantment varying from year to year, and more noticeably from generation to generation. Was or was not the political understanding of at least a great portion of Ireland under a spell in the year 1853 ? In that year, while the country was still staggering under the continued effects of the great Famine and of Free Trade, the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and their people maintained a political party—the notorious Brass Band or party of Faith and Fatherland—which enabled the British Statesmen to impose upon this country financial burthens which have resulted in the direct loss to Ireland of from 100 to 150 millions of pounds sterling, and the indirect loss of an amount which is incalculable. The agrarian agitations and their horrors, the flight of our people, the destruction of our aristocracy, the general impoverishment and degradation of our land, are perceived now clearly by all thinking men to be the consequences of that great betrayal of Ireland under a spell in the year 1853 ; and men see that, and know it for a truth, who are quite capable to-day of committing political crimes and follies as great as that of the Brass Band and of the hierarchy and priesthood and the poor deluded shouting Irish multitudes who sustained them. For the enchantment only changes its mode of action—it does not cease to act—from gene-

ration to generation and from year to year, in the night time and in the day time, this horrible obsession knows no abatement of its power ; it lies as heavy on the land to-day as in the decade that witnessed the great betrayal. Nay, it is more potent to-day, and exerts a mightier sway, as if dimly conscious of the coming of the hour of crisis—the hour when Ireland must either break the spell or sink for ever into the abyss prepared for all the nations who have forgotten the source of their life, who have loved lies and hated the truth, welcomed darkness and shrunk from the light. That fatal hour is drawing nigh.

Like a poisonous fog the great enchantment broods still over the whole land, paralysing the understandings of the wise, melting to water the hearts of the brave.

What I work against—for my fighting days, if I ever had any, are, I think over—is this “ Great Enchantment,” whose modes of operation are past counting and whose subtlety transcends the human faculties to discern.

Our ancestors, from the date of the Battle of the Boyne down to 1882, were under the dominion of an enchantment emanating from something that called itself the King, but which was in fact the genius of mercantile greed en-Throned and wearing Sceptre and Crown, under whose control, they destroyed a great Irish industry and exterminated three hundred thousand Irish Protestant weavers. Still, as of yore, the punishments that track such sins are terrible. For now observe the fate which has overtaken the descendants of the men who then led the nation to victory, and gave Ireland independence, prosperity, and power.



To-day we are surrounded by the wrecks and fragments of this great Irish order, which did such mighty things, and then sank into slavery to phantoms of their own creation, so that even adversity could not teach them . . . .

Surely we are a great people and deserve to get on ! Now these ludicrous breaks-down—or whatever we must call them—these incredible lapses and aberrations, exhibited by a people not only as intelligent and spirited as the average, but more intelligent than the average, at the time of their occurrence only filled me with amazement and consternation. I had not then traced to its source all that folly, nor quite realised how it was the inevitable outcome and resultant of a cause, operative, in different forms, through all our tragical history ; nor did I connect it with a national fault, perhaps a national crime which has checked our progress from century to century, which has brought about the destruction of aristocracy after aristocracy, and which bids fair, as I write, to involve us in one common ruin, and leave this land free for the exploitation of tourist touts and commercial syndicates formed for the promotion of sport in waste countries. For if things continue to go on as they are going on to-day in Ireland, the Bullock, which is now superseding man, will himself be superseded by the wild beast, and the wild bird, which the British and American sporting plutocracy will pleasantly shoot and pleasantly pursue, sustained by a little host of Irish uniformed Gillies.

In such a country, and dominated by such potent

spells and enchantment, how can any man of understanding and self-respect take part in a political propaganda of any kind. Spells and enchantments of a kind so potent are not to be shaken off by words, no matter how eloquent. They will and can only be removed by shocks.

There is nothing to be gained by lamenting over the broken pitcher. In 1898 collapsed the best and most promising Irish political movement since 1782, and we may leave to the historian the task of explaining that collapse which, I think, he never will until he explain first the nature and source of the Great Enchantment of whose power and dominance it furnishes so far one of the most memorable proofs. In 1898 the unknown dealer in his distribution of the cards filled our hands with winning cards, yet we could not table them, so great was the power of the spell. I perceive that our ancestors from the date of the Battle of the Boyne up to about 1779 were under the control of a political enchantment somewhat similar. Under that control they assisted in the destruction of their own woollen trade and ocean-going commerce. Protestant Ireland starved or expatriated some 300,000 Irish Protestant weavers, for the spell was heavy in the land. Patriotic historians attribute things like this to the wickedness and greed of a neighbouring people. It is not so ; like the collapse of the Financial Reform movement they spring from ourselves. We worship phantoms, and phantoms powerless *per se* once worshipped—so they tell me—become endowed with a terrible and malignant vitality and activity. We know that is so with regard to idols, in themselves only sticks

and stones. Did not our own ancestors slay their poor little children in honour of Crom, a shapeless hulk of stone ?

Heavy as lead, cold as death, the Great Enchantment obsesses the soul of the land, and not one but all classes lie supine under its sway—supine under the fanning of gigantic wings.

It covers the whole land, every class and order of men in this Island are held inescapably in the grip of that dead hand. With such a document in our possession as the Report of the Childers Commission, with such a preponderating political power as is ours, and with such hosts of good British friends, why can we do nothing?—strengthless, purposeless and resourceless, as were the Ultonians sunk under the curse of the great mother and queen whom they had outraged, drowned in the avenging tides of that fountain of their life which they had polluted.

The Childers Report gave us our opportunity. We had concentrated not a handful of our people, but the whole of Ireland and a noble reinforcement of British friendlies, upon the enemy's point of weakest resistance. His fiscal system left naked and exposed by the Childers Report—viz., by the withdrawal of the hitherto extended Imperial approbation and sanction—was obviously his weakest point, his naked and exposed flank upon which we then concentrated the greatest possible amount of Irish force ; upon it we concentrated the combined forces of high and low, rich and poor, Protestant and Catholic, North and South, clerical and lay ; upon it we concentrated the social prestige and glamour of the pen, and the gross physical

power and voting strength of the democratic masses of our people. . . . .

It was perfectly evident to any one who had the least practical understanding of politics that we had the flank of the enemy, and had only to press on to crumple up and destroy his whole line. Then, and when victory was, in fact, in our hands, the Great Enchantment, whose dead hand had for one brief moment relaxed, began to operate anew with all its power. The source of that enchantment is the Imperial Parliament. The time drew nigh when that seemingly august yet really absurd assembly would begin to sit. The *débacle* set in ; we, all of us, began to be afraid of the great purpose for which we had come together, and so broke rank to pursue certain small purposes which we suspected might be more pleasing to the idol, and better calculated to secure his approval ?

Aristocracies come and go like the waves of the sea ; and some fall nobly and others ignobly. As I write, this Protestant Anglo-Irish aristocracy which, once owned all Ireland from the centre to the sea, is rotting from the land in the most dismal farce-tragedy of all time, without one brave deed, without one brave word. Our last Irish aristocracy was Catholic, intensely and fanatically Royalist and Cavalier, and compounded of elements which were Norman-Irish and Milesian-Irish. They worshipped the Crown when the Crown had become a phantom or a ghost, and the god whom they worshipped was not able to save them, or himself. They were defeated and exterminated. They lost everything ; but they never lost honour ; and because they did not lose that, their over-

throw was bewailed in songs and music which will not cease to sound for centuries yet.

“Shaun O'Dwyer a Glanna,  
We're worsted in the game.”

Worsted they were, for they made a fatal mistake ; and they had to go ; but they brought their honour with them, and they founded noble or princely families all over the Continent.

Who laments the destruction of our present Anglo-Irish aristocracy ? Perhaps in broad Ireland not one. They fall from the land while innumerable eyes are dry, and their fall will not be bewailed in one piteous dirge or one mournful melody.

They might have been so much to this afflicted nation ; half-ruined as they are, they might be so much to-morrow ; but the curse that has fallen on the whole land seems to have fallen on them with double power—the understanding paralysed, the will gone all to water, and for consequence a sure destruction. None of them noticed it, but I did, that during the six weeks' financial agitation, when they seemed to be giving the country a lead, not one of the anti-landlord newspapers of Dublin touched the land question, or uttered an unfriendly word concerning them. The war of classes stopped—stopped utterly. As a class our landed gentry were becoming popular—nay very popular. The people thought they were about to lead them, and upon a matter concerning which all Ireland was in virtual unanimity ; a great question—great, essentially, and involving gigantic issues. This marvel-

lous opportunity, thrust into their hands by kind Destiny, they flung away, and for what ? For the Fry Commission. If it be asked what hope I now entertain regarding them, I would answer that I have none ; but do think that here and there I may be able to touch individual members of the class, and one man of the right kind, if awake and alive, might do much.



# THE GREAT ENCHANTMENT

## II.

### A STORY AND A MORAL.

It is not generally known that the famous Blue Beard, still so well remembered as an affectionate and indulgent husband, was also a sporting character, and M.F.H. in his county. He had, among others, one fine pack of hounds of an ancient and famous breed, of whose exploits many things are recorded. He did not himself breed or collect his pack, which was a sort of heirloom and ancestral appanage of Blue Beard Hall, where it is believed that he was a usurper, and kept the true owner under lock and key, though he affected great devotion to her, and pretended to govern all by a deputed authority. That pack of hounds he committed to the care of a kinsman of the lady, retained under lock and key, with orders to keep them well in hand, feed sparingly, and flog well, "and if you want any help, my dear boy," he said, "rely on me." Nevertheless, the huntsman and the hounds soon understood each other, and all the more so when it became apparent that Blue Beard was withholding from both their fair share of provisions and other needful supplies, for Blue Beard was something of a miser, and also something of a coward, and, ere long, began to be afraid of the

hunter and his hounds. "What if they should all turn on me some day?" he meditated, and so resolved to starve all into an abject and spiritless condition." "That will make them harmless," he thought, "and it is plain," he added, "that by putting them on short commons I can save a great deal of money." Now, by the ancient laws and constitution of Blue Beard Hall, the hounds and their hunter had as good right as Blue Beard himself to a sufficiency of food. After the starvation process had lasted some time, and when famine and despair reigned in the kennel and in the hunter's quarters, suddenly the latter recalled to mind those ancient laws and constitutions of the Hall, and, becoming very angry, indeed, one fine morning he called out his lean, fierce pack, and led them upon Blue Beard himself, who, on that occasion, only escaped by climbing into a tree, and swearing by all his gods that in respect of food and all manner of proper accommodation, plenshings, etc., he would faithfully restore the laws of the Hall. So peace was restored, and all went well till a great quarrel broke out between the hounds and the hunter. When attracted by the uproar, Blue Beard and his people broke in, they found the hunter and his boys victorious, but exhausted, and the hounds in a very mangled and torn condition, and no voice was raised, when, with joy, he again took a full control of the kennel. The old starvation system was now renewed, but with greater exactness and rigour, and on a system so plausible and so nicely graduated that this time neither hunter nor hounds quite understood the reason why they were becoming

daily more weak, spiritless, and gaunt. Such, indeed, was their condition that they became the sport of the country-side, and Blue Beard himself would sometimes point the joke, for the old gentleman had a little coarse humour. At last the hounds reduced to the doors of death by this system, and famished for want of food to the point of not caring what they got, provided only that it was food, set upon the huntsman himself, and, indeed, not to put too fine point upon it, hoped to eat the poor man. On this occasion Blue Beard, who still believed that the huntsman might be of service to him, intervened again—he and his men—drew off the hounds, and sternly rated the huntsman for cruelty, selfishness, oppression, and so forth. He bade his men throw him down and bind him, and, having cut off one of his legs, he flung it to the hounds to eat. It was not much, but it pacified the hounds for a while. Then they became hungry again, Blue Beard's dole of rations being so exceedingly small, so much so that the weak and sick hounds were actually eaten by the strong. This time, when he intervened, it was with a smiling and sympathetic countenance. Nevertheless, he chopped off another leg, which the hounds ate, too, but with little outward improvement in their condition. If it be asked how the huntsman took this unkind treatment, we reply that curiously enough he loved Blue Beard during the whole operation, calling him "Uncle" and "dear cousin," and other such names, and begged him, if he would cut, to cut below the knee, and be careful to staunch the effusion of blood. For Blue Beard was a great enchanter, and cast spells over the mind of the huntsman.

So that though Blue Beard did not love the huntsman one little bit the huntsman loved Blue Beard much. The power of the spells, too, was greatly increased by the fact that Blue Beard always affected to act by the name and authority of that great lady whom he kept under lock and key. Indeed, but for her, it is thought his life would not be worth one hour's purchase at the Hall ; and well Blue Beard knew the fact, and very cunningly he always used the name of the high lady whom he kept so strictly immured.

So whenever the hounds became hungry he continued to fling down the poor huntsman, and chopped off a limb for the hounds till at last there was no more left of him than was to Dagon lying prostrated before the ark, only the trunk of the poor huntsman was left, and that very thin and shrivelled, as lean and bony as a snipe in frosty weather. When Blue Beard made these periodical visitations to the huntsman's quarters, he would come either with a scowl or a smile. When he came with a scowl it was what he called " my radical face on," when with a smile it was " my conservative face on." But whether he came scowling or smiling the result was the same for the unfortunate huntsman ; it was always a limb off ; and with what singular feelings the wretched huntsman watched himself being eaten one can imagine. Once when the power of the spells and enchantment was for one moment lightened there flashed through the mind of the huntsman some dim memory of that former time when he and the hounds held Blue Beard in chase, and he shouted the old cry mechanically. The hounds did not

quite understand it, nor did he himself, and the power of the spells again settled upon his soul. But Blue Beard heard it in his bed, and sat up quaking. There was no more ; but Blue Beard saw now very clearly that it would be far safer to make an end of the huntsman altogether at the very first opportunity, who, as a mere shrivelled trunk, could be of no further service to him, and might possibly some day set the hounds upon him again. So the next time the hungry hounds lifted up their voices Blue Beard intervened for the last time, and flung the poor huntsman bodily to the hounds. Yet, so great was the power of the spells, it is recorded that when Blue Beard raised him in his arms for the purpose of flinging him into the kennel, the huntsman kissed Blue Beard and thanked him for all his goodness and kindness. And of those who witnessed this extraordinary scene, it is recorded that the majority laughed, but that some few wept. This passage, excerpted faithfully from the annals of the Hall, is perfectly true, and quite historical. You land-owning gentlemen of this country, you are the huntsman, and, as sure as God lives, you will be flung to the hounds, unless, at the eleventh hour, you can break the power of the spell.

## THE VEILED PLAYER

We must habituate ourselves to thought that politics are an art, like the art of war, and governed by much the same kind of laws ; or a game, like chess, with move and counter-move. Have any of us yet realised that we are being played *against*, that at the other side of the table sits one who does not talk or clamour, a being unitary and self-contained, who calculates and considers, and sees always one, or two, or three moves ahead, yet that is so. He sits there always and plays against us. And the stake ? It is not money ; though pyramids of gold glitter on the board. It is an ancient, famous, unfortunate, and not wholly undeserving nation playing for its life, playing in confusion and distraction against one who is neither confused or distracted, but imperturbed, plays always the right piece to the right square. Who is the player ? It is the genius of a mighty Empire ! We play against him.

In this great game we have all the strong pieces, while he has only pawns ; but what of that if the movement of the pawns be directed by understanding, and that of the strong pieces by—somnambulists, shall we say ?

Politics are an art, like the art of war ; governed by rules. Hitherto no one could apply these rules to the conduct of Irish politics for the same reason that no one can apply the rules of the art of war to a mob. Moltke himself would be powerless in the midst of a mob. But



this our mob of Irish factions is slowly, steadily, inevitably resolving itself into a host. Soon it will be ready to move like one man at the word of command. He, our opponent, plays in his imperturbed passionless manner to divide our combining forces, aiming always, aiming ceaselessly at the capture of our Parliamentary representation, our Queen. That purpose he pursues as relentlessly as the weasel hunts the one rabbit, overground and underground, knowing that with the neutralisation of our constitutional power we are undone, and at his mercy. And there are many of us who would help him to the capture of our one strong piece, for the political understanding of Ireland still slumbers, nor can we even apply the plain rules of commonsense to political situations.

Assume now that my many fears and forebodings are unfounded. Assume that we have sufficient sagacity to play our game and not his, sufficient to perceive that we must stand by this All-Ireland combination and permit nothing whatsoever, be it as alluring as it may, to interfere with that combination. Then, if we have really reached this degree of wisdom, the game from a constitutional point of view is in our hands ; we can play at our leisure. We can then proceed quietly with the regeneration of Ireland, building up here on strong foundations, a great Power, solving one after another our domestic problems, and to that end, utilizing the opportunism of British public men and parties, their greed for votes, their internal dissensions, the wealth of the Imperial Treasury, and the all but limitless resources of the Imperial credit. But,

can anyone believe that the typical British statesman, the inheritor of such traditions, the depositary of the ideas and purposes of the old kings and rulers who have created this great Empire ; can anyone believe that he, being what he is, will sit down for ever, tied by constitutional pack-thread, while we, using English parties as our tools, build up here a great power which many will teach him to regard as an Imperium in Imperio ?

It will be long before Mr. Bull, honest man ! can realize that here, in this despised island, a people and a power are growing up of a character which he can consider formidable. His stupidity, his immersion in vast Imperial problems and complications, his attention to his own growing and huge domestic problems, his honest desire to see us, on the whole, doing a little better, and the hypnotization exercised over his mind by his own public men—public men whom we control—will supply us, it may be for many years, with opportunities which we must utilize to the utmost, for those years will surely come to an end. One day Mr. Bull, blown upon, perhaps simultaneously, by all his newspapers, in some slack season, when Ireland seems to present a promising theme to the editorial mind, or aroused by some more patriotic or less opportunist of his statesmen, will look this way with a surly and dangerous countenance. And remember that Mr. Bull is far, indeed, from contemptible, and that in his deep heart and stomach there is at all times a terrible power of self-assertion, and an utter indifference to ways and means, provided only his enemy, real or imaginary, be trampled to nothingness or swept out of his path.

For Mr. Bull's Parliament and current political methods we are justified by long experience in entertaining the profoundest contempt. That Parliament and those political methods are at our mercy. But Mr. Bull himself, ached to the throat, consolated to the chin, shared to the throat, and with the anti-Irish passion of the masses to play upon, is something by no means so easily dealt with.

But our Constitutional power is enormous !

It is. Within the Constitution an intelligent Irish lad, with an understanding unclouded by political superstition, might manipulate to the confusion of whole Cabinets of British statesmen, the illimitable power which is ours.

And, now, upon what is our Constitutional power built ? Nothing, or, if something, paper ! Between us and the deep there is only paper.

Within the Constitution we can beat the British statesman as much and as often as we like. And then, what is to prevent him, whenever he likes, from driving us out of the Constitution ? There is nothing.

As I thought of these things, and remembered how this was a game, and that we were played against, I saw somewhere, somehow, a vast hall ; a silence rested over it like the silence of Eternity. In the midst of the hall was a table and chess-board, where players played. At one side of the table sat a Veiled Figure, with his back to a wall pierced by many doors, all closed, and bolted strongly with broken bars. On the other side sat a group of men, pale, with bowed heads and knitted brows and strangely glittering eyes, who murmured low together, and took

deep counsel before every move. Their leader moved, and the rest consented.

On the table, on one side lay a paper of printed laws of the game, of perfect caligraphy, emblazoned ; and on the other side a pyramid of gold ; and yet I was aware as I looked, that the gold was not the true stake—that the Veiled Figure and the men played for their lives, and that it was a duel to the death ; and beyond the silence, too, I was aware of the brooding presence of a super-incumbent Destiny, and that all this was his doing, and carefully prepared for from before the foundation of the world, and that I assisted here at the unfolding in Time of the councils of mighty gods, and that it was the ending of great things accomplished, and the beginning of great things to be.

Move by move I saw the game go against the Veiled Figure, for he was overmatched both in number and power of the pieces and in skill and knowledge of the game.

After a long pause the Figure shifted its position slightly, and moved.

“ Against the law,” said the men all together. Their leader laid a forefinger on the rule, and looked up. The Figure started to its feet, snatched the paper in its hands and rent it in two. He upset the table, and, with a harsh voice, which rang above the clanging of the gold upon the iron floor, shouted for his “ guards.”

The doors flew open, for the brazen bars were a fraud—they hung on loose staples—and armed men poured into the hall.

“ Bind me these men,” he cried, “ and thrust them into the deepest and surest of my Imperial dungeons, and gather the gold into my Treasury. Ha ! ”

Behind the men, as the vision faded, I thought I heard a noise as of a multitude, a trampling of innumerable feet, and a cry ; but whether it was the shouting of a host or the shriek of a fallen people, and whether they ran to succour or whether they fled, I could not tell, for hearing, like sight, failed me as the vision faded.

Men of Ireland ! Gentry and people, high and low, wise and simple, leaders and led, what are you prepared to do when the Veiled Figure seeing the game lost, ends the rules, upsets the table, spills the gold, and shouts for his “ guards ? ” And he will do it ; trust me he will. For this Veiled Figure is the genius of a mighty Empire, based upon the lust of gold and the lust of power, the intelligent principle of a giant Plutocracy dominant at home, rampant abroad, and reaching round the world to-day with a thousand hands towards universal dominion.

Given a man of that temper, will he suffer himself to be baulked in his purposes, and stopped upon his path, by rules written on paper ? And is a system, a corporation, an Empire more scrupulous than a man ?

In our own time a *coup d'état* was executed in Parliament upon an Irish Party. It was a small *coup* and aimed only at an Irish annoyance. It was executed, nevertheless, and the great London dailies applauded the act. Our's will not be a small Irish annoyance, but great, and the greatest. We come before him who is the presiding genius to-day of the British Empire—the

incarnated Plutocratic principle—and who is governed by two master passions, lust of gold, and of material power—we come before him demanding the restitution, upon a mighty scale, of that which is his life, and the reform of a fiscal system which sustains his power. In doing so, whether we use a threatening word or not, we do in fact menace him with dim perils and the fear of “ new things ” in his own house. We raise up for him again the hundred-times-laid spectre of the intervention of a united Ireland in his domestic affairs, a united Ireland operating and acting in the very centre of his whole Imperial system. Will he, being what we know him to be, endure all this, when it needs but one touch of the giant finger to reduce us once more to impotence? Will one hesitate to crush the stinging gnat? For so he will regard us while we exert against him only the force which is ours according to paper.

Our quarrel with this dread being—the incarnated genius of the British Plutocracy—is to the death. Has anyone realized his dread attributes? Let me give an example. That noble-hearted Englishman, Mr. Plimsoll, year by year, and for many years, sought to dissuade him from the annual murder of British seamen by the thousand in his overloaded and over-insured mercantile marine. And he could not. Why? Because the Plutocracy loves gold, and takes no thought of men.

“ A man shall be more precious than a wedge of gold.” That is the law, but it is not his law. His is the reverse. “ A wedge of gold shall be more precious than a man.” And the principle pervades his whole system of legislation,



of administration, of foreign and domestic policy—nay, of his political philosophy and economic philosophy. And, therefore, all the children of light, born in his own household, are his enemies, open or concealed, and they hate him with an inextinguishable and deadly hatred.

And we, the leaders of the younger powers in his hoary Olympus, the heralders of the new day and the growing light, we come up inevitably armed with the principle which, from the beginning of the world, has been in deadly antagonism with his—"Gold is the servant, and man is the lord: A man *shall be* more precious than a wedge of gold."

It is his very life that we aim at—though all unconsciously to-day—and he knows it, or will soon know it. For he is fearful, too, as well as dreadful, and fear and insomnia are twins, and the worshipper of gold sleeps, if he does sleep, like the hare, with open eyes and ears unsealed, and a heart that trembles, like the grass, for he is a tyrant and he is a coward.

One day a tyrant Administration, representing, perhaps, the combined might of England proper, sitting at ease in the midst of its aroused, angry, and inflamed millions, and of that mighty reticulation of wealth and power and material resources, which we call the Empire, will rend the Constitution with strong and rebellious hands, and, laughing at our Act of Union, declare the game ended. Why should you doubt it?

In the Union debates, Pitt, Prime Minister of England, was asked what guarantee would he give to Ireland that her financial rights under the Act would be respected by

the Imperial Parliament. He replied—what did he reply ?

“ The honour of England.”

And in fifty years, and at the first opportunity that offered, the Imperial Parliament violated our Charter, not as an act of self-defence against a younger and formidable power arising like ours with new ideals inconsistent with its own, but through sheer rapacity and greed of gain, against Justice, against the Law, and under circumstances which argued on the part of the violators an incredible degree of callousness or of cruelty.

Will this Power now when touched to the quick—we shall have to touch it to the quick—the Power whose inherited rule of policy has for 700 years enjoined the neutralization of Ireland, a Power now far more dominant, far more Plutocratic, therefore more Tyrannical and more unscrupulous than it was in the days of the imposition of “ equal Taxes,” and profoundly and justly alarmed both for its treasure and its authority—will this Power permit paper to bar its way ?

If we are determined, as I hope we are or soon will be, to play this game right through, like men, and like Irishmen, we must be prepared, at some time, to defend the law and the Constitution with something stronger than words.

And we can do it—we Irish Loyalists standing for the Law, standing for Throne, Peers, and Commons, and the rights and privileges of the High Court of Parliament as by law and solemn precedent established. We can do it, and even with ease, by planting ourselves strongly upon

the lines of the Constitution with a clear purpose and full determination, obeying the law at every point, and maintaining the law, and enforcing the law. We have great allies, greater than any one can see to-day, and no tyrant Administration, how passionately soever it may long to do so, will be able to expell us from the Constitution. Our enemy, if he attempts it, will but outlaw himself, and enable us to bring to bear upon him the whole power of the State, the Crown included :—its immense, now veiled Prerogative.

Observe again, and never forget it, we are not rebels and law-breakers and seditious men. We stand for the law and for the legal rights and privileges of the Throne, the Lords, and Commons of this United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Our Fenians when they see the great game and understand it, will swear the oath of allegiance to the Throne, and they will keep it.

Our ancestors stood for the Law and the Constitution in 1782. From the Crown they received their military commissions. They stood for the Law, the Constitution, and the State, and they conquered, gloriously.

We can beat our enemy, within the Constitution, and if, in his hate and fear, he would change the venue, preferring an extra-Constitutional verdict, we can beat him outside of the Constitution too.

Time and events are bringing wondrous things to pass. Marvel upon marvel is about to be revealed, for there are great powers moving to-day in Ireland and executing purposes for whose fulfilment we may now dimly see that our strange history has been one long preparation.

“ Great are Thy counsels, O God Most High ! God, above all gods ! Who of men can understand them ! ”

To-morrow, or the day after, or the day after that, the New Ireland goes forth conquering and to conquer. At last she appears, the Isle of Destiny, *Inis Fail* !

# IRELAND AND THE HOUR.

## I.

TO THE LANDLORDS OF IRELAND, AND WITH A LESS  
IMMEDIATE SIGNIFICANCE TO THEIR TRANS-CHANNEL  
COMPEERS.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I hope that by this time you clearly perceive the very steep nature of the incline along which you and your cause have been for the last six years sliding, and along which to-day you still slide. It is now nigh four years since I took the liberty to point out where tobogganing of this sort, not so pleasant as the Canadian, was sure to terminate, you sitting still in that easy traditional attitude of yours. The termination, as you now see, is a precipice, the edge of the abyss down whose throat you will all disappear, carrying so much else with you, and no one bother himself about you any more. Well, you have sat still—very still. The precious years are gone, but the steep incline is not gone or the law of gravitation, obeying which—for certain laws must be obeyed—you still keep your course downward, velocity increasing, while all the air grows darker, traitorous friends steering aside to the right hand and the left, faces not friendly multiplying, and voices far from kind. You

have sat still. But you have done more. In this curious tobogganing, which, too, is a race for your properties, and perhaps for your lives, you have not been quite idle ; you have steered—steered straight for the precipice. For so, and not otherwise, must we regard your Land Corporations, your ceaseless plots and plans to get bought out by English gold, your anile and fatuous vituperation of your enemies, your desertion of the weaker members of your own order, your boyish devotion to boyish amusements, and your transferences of yourselves and your quadrupeds across the Channel to pursue said boyish amusements there with the more comfort. All these ineptitudes, and others not mentioned, seem to your friends so many pats and variations of the steering-paddle by which you keep the nose of your sledge straight as a rifleman's aim for the edge of the abyss. Straight down—is it not so ? Velocity increasing—can you doubt it ? The faces not friendly and the voices—they multiply, don't they ? The air—is it not a little darker than when I last addressed you ? The precipice—surely you see it now ? Yes, it is quite so ; and yet, for all, here you sit tobogganing and steering straight—the sorriest and most ovine set of men that the encircling sun looks down upon to-day. Alas ! I believe there never will be, as I know there never has been within the cycle of recorded things, an aristocracy so rotten in its seeming strength, so recreant, resourceless, and stupid in the day of trial, so degenerate, outworn, and effete. You have outlived your day. In the normal course of things, in the natural growth of nations, I see now you should have been wiped



out of existence some half-century since—would have been, but for England ; long since would have fallen down and been forgotten, but for the Imperial crutch. It was a fatal crutch, that English one. You were a strong man till you took to it, and it has crippled you. Leaning upon it, you indeed kept the road like other wayfarers, but in the first tussle with that sturdy Land League thief you go down like a ninepin ; sturdy thief uppermost, patrician cripple below, and bellowing for help. The corner of Mr. Bull's farm upon which this dreadful deed is being done resounds, of course, with the most horrible outcries, lamentations, and appeals. But curiously enough, Mr. Bull, who three years ago collared and drew off the sturdy thief, though not until after he had given you a bad fall, declines now to do more than look out at the window or show himself in an agitated way upon the doorstep. Mr. Bull, I think, is now pretty well resolved to let the precious couple settle the business according to their respective strengths, which, for my part, I believe will be rather a boon to the victim.

Yes, indeed, it is a shocking thing that a gentleman of your quality should be so treated by one of his own servants. Shocking, indeed, and clear against all custom and the law. Shocking, but scarcely unheard-of. Indeed, I have witnessed on the historic stage the appearances of such a sturdy thief too often to feel in the least surprised, or to look upon him as anything else than one of the ordinary products of Nature. The weak to the wall has been ever the rule of the road along history's highways, and the ancient laws and ordinances under which we

live are as true to-day as when the heels of the Goth passed in Roman blood, or when your Norman ancestors broke through the ill-knit anarchic chieftainry of the Celt, or the Papist aristocracy surrendered land and rule to those very sturdy thieves your fighting Protestant forbears.

“ Yes ; of course many violent, unjust things were done in old barbarous times. But how dare you attempt to justify the things which are being done to-day, in the midst of civilisation and under the imperial ægis of England, by reference to that savage and even brutal principle, the weak to the wall ! ”

Well, I do justify it ; and the principle is by no means savage and brutal, but infinitely beautiful and just. For consider, the weakness of a ruling class is not the physical weakness of a child or of a woman whom ruffians may maltreat. Their weakness is neglect of duties and responsibilities, love of pleasure, sport, and ease, lack of union and public spirit, selfishness, stupidity, and poltroonery. These weaknesses, you see, are moral ; and the law by which such land-owning, rent-consuming and *quasi* man-ruling castes and powers have got, by one method or another, to disappear, is as just and sacred as the Bible itself, in which you will find that law laid down in every other page and intimated in every other word. You won't find it in the political economists, I admit, or in the pages of your favourite newspapers, but it is the world nevertheless. If I drop this pen it will fall. Do you think the mechanical law of gravitation is to hold good for ever, and the law by which corrupt aristocracies fall,

crumble, and disappear—a law much older than the Reeks of Kerry or the Mourne Mountains—has been abrogated to suit the convenience of an ease-loving and unheroic race of Irish landlords? No, indeed; you may bet a thousand to nothing upon that.

“ But you know nothing about us, or you most foully misrepresent us, and play into the hands of our enemies, when you describe the landlords of Ireland as a corrupt aristocracy. Man for man, we are as good, and a great deal better, than those who would destroy us.”

Pardon me. I do know a good deal about you, directly and indirectly; and I do not say that as men you are not better, and a great deal better, than those who are now leagued against you, compassing your destruction. You are still the best class we have, and so far better than the rest that there is none fit to mention as the next best. You are individually brave men and men of honour, and, man by man, and as private citizens, merit no such doom as that which even the purblind may feel, if not see, advancing to complete your career. But as an aristocracy, as a class of men owning the soil of Ireland, and gathering the rents of Ireland, strict Justice, weighing your merits in the scales against your demerits, sees the last go down like lead and the former, starting up like a rocket, kick the beam.

“ But we love ease and pleasure no more than other men. The rich shopkeeper sails out from Kingstown in his gorgeous yacht, and his sons hunt with the Wards. The brewer and distiller, the successful manufacturer and contractor, the stock-broker, and even the well-to-do

tenant—National Leaguer though he be—they all love pleasure as much as we, and spend their incomes in its pursuit quite as regardless of general consequences."

That is so ; and the forms of luxury they affect, their ostentations and their pleasures, are doubtless less human and refined. As you say, and for all these too there is a rod in pickle, so to speak, and against all these an enemy is perpetually advancing. But the rod has been taken out of pickle for you first—do you perceive ?—and the enemy has closed with you, while that other walks still abroad exulting and complacent. You stand first in the paths of avenging justice because you are the owners of the land, and the rent-collectors of the land, and because, as such, you are the rulers of this land and people, and you have not ruled. Your duties and responsibilities as an aristocracy were immense, and you whittled them away to next to nothing. Your means of ruling, your land-revenue, was enormous, and you gave half of it to the usurers and the remaining half you have spent with as little regard to the principle of *noblesse oblige* as if you had been retired shopkeepers, instead of a conquering and dominant caste. The shopkeeper having counted pence, fawned and smirked, having lied in the newspapers, and cheated his neighbours for thirty years, may live so ; he may sing, " I am now retired leisure, I may be found in trim gardens," and enjoy the sad end of his ignoble career so. But leisure and trim gardens were not for you, and could not have been for you who in old times were planted in this land, and planted yourselves as the leaders

and rulers of the Irish nation, and on no other terms than those of leadership and rulership could continue here. Wisdom, had you and your forefathers consulted her, would have thus laid down the law of your position in this island : “ You will be the masters of this people,” so she would have counselled, “ or, as sure as I live and you live, you will be their prey. And this law of all aristocracies will press with double severity upon you because you are Protestant and they are not.” Labour, care, and suffering, from generation to generation, were the lot appointed you—though with alleviations many, and the natural pleasure attached by nature to all noble lives—loving comradeship amongst yourselves, organisation, discipline, central control ; the correction, punishment, and excision of rotten members, love of country, regard for the people and their true interests, the creation and maintenance amongst them of loyal adherents, and for the rest stern mastery and control, pretermittting no industry, growing city or town. Had you done so, you would be to-day as irremovable as the mountains, and girt round by the loyalty and devotion of a great and happy nation, leading I have little doubt, in the van of European and the world’s progress.

But so far from fulfilling your duties better than other aristocracies, you have fulfilled them worse. You provoked rebellion before one century of acknowledged sway had drawn to a close, and then terrified took to the crutch, leaning upon which you have grown to be the most curious cripple of your kind ever witnessed, and now with a dismal outcry awake the echoes matched in unequal

conflict with that before-mentioned sturdy thief, left alone with him in the lane.

All that you and your advocates have urged from the conventional and politico-economic points of view, are in my opinion rational and conclusive, and those of your enemies the reverse. The principles invoked to effect your destruction are principles that lead straight to anarchy and a region of bottomless confusions. Curiously brittle, indeed, are the arguments which yet seem strong enough to do the work of your enemies. They break as we handle them, like ancient paper. Sound and conclusive, rigidly conclusive from common premises, are those employed by you. I know the logic walls surrounding you and your properties very well, and I know that logical men cannot with consistency overpass the same. The Land League editor does not pay judicially determined wages to his compositors, carriers, and office-boys, but wages fixed by competition's brazen law and the market value of labour. Neither is the compositor, rooted in the office, and strong in his fixity of tenure, enabled to snap his fingers in the face of his employer and insult him as he pleases without fear of dismissal. Certainly a hanging gale consisting of six months' arrears of his contracted work wages, regularly paid the whole time, is seldom enough permitted by any employer of labour. Nor again, when the employee by an extra exertion of ingenuity or zeal effects an improvement in his master's business—a thing which workmen are perpetually doing—can he enforce by legal process his claim to be to that extent a partner in the concern. Not at all.



His extra exertions enure for the behoof of the employer. How many flourishing firms in Cork, Dublin, and Belfast owe at this moment their prosperity, perhaps existence, to the uncontracted, unpaid for conscientiousness, fidelity, and toil of workmen, alive or dead? Yet the latter and their children have no right to the improvements. Quite the contrary. A week's notice is sufficient to procure their eviction from the premises, which is just as likely to be a sentence of death as any rural eviction. Beat round the question on every side, and you will find that the case against the employer of labour is at all points stronger than that against the landlord. If in bad years there are rural evictions, are there in bad times not more numerous and more heartless dismissals? If the peasantry have to stint themselves to make up the rent, are not starvation wages more frequent, are not the children of labouring men and women starved to death in our cities? The poorest farmer seldom fails to bring up his. If the farmer and his family have to work hard, what of the men, women, and labouring children of the cities? If those who work for the landlord have to live in cabins, how many that work for employers, our Land League editor included, have to live in slums, and in one room in the slums? No landlord in Ireland ever drove his tenants so hard as do the average employers of labour. No estate in Ireland ever cast off or secreted so much wretchedness as is every week secreted and cast off by the capitalists and employers of any considerable town. Arguments of the kind that are said to make the very asses weep, are all that have been urged against the Irish

landlords, and these but the nucleus of a huge cloud of lies and rant, with floods of abuse, personal and general.

Now mark, these arguments, brittle as old rotten paper, were yet sufficient for the purpose of those who used them. The Land League editor, against whom they might be employed with twofold force, sees the Imperial Parliament give to them legislative effect as against you, and not against him, and now amid his triumph is preparing to employ these arguments again, and effect another and greater confiscation of your property. You perceive now—you must perceive—that by the weapons of reason and logic you will be as surely defeated in the future as you have been in the past. You had the best of the argument but the worst of the dispute. In the future you will, I hope, relinquish arguments to fools, and betake yourselves to some other course—action of one sort or another.

Now, let me remind you that in this province, that of action, your behaviour during the past five years has been characterised, to put it mildly, by weakness. Two or three public meetings, a few vapid speeches, two rent-collecting machines, constructed by Dublin attorneys, and a still-born Land Corporation, as curious a freak of folly as was ever seen. Beleaguered landlordism might, I think, procure a more serviceable defence than a strong bodyguard of bullocks.

Indeed, your lordships, you cannot imagine, unless you know, in what terms your behaviour for the last five years is daily described by numbers of your best friends. It is not pleasant to be charged with stupidity,

poltroonery, and selfishness, but you may rely upon it from me that such language with epithets has been daily held concerning you by men who would go a long way to serve you, and would see you triumph over your enemies with as much joy as yourselves. Heaven grant that some one whom you cannot ignore will ere long hold before you a faithful-mirror. The image meeting your heavy eyes there will not wear a heroic aspect.

And yet you have done heroic things, too, and not so long since. As the last century drew to a close, all Ireland seemed for a while as if banded against you—Ulster and all—for it may have missed your recollection, this last fact. All Ireland seemed knit against you, and you put down all Ireland. How? By English troops? Not a bit of it. By your own valour, by the friends you had kept or had retained for the crisis, and by your hired soldiers. The first English regiment, the Buckinghamshire, landed on the day the battle of Vinegar Hill was fought. Then, in a panic, and as if terrified by your own prowess, you asked England to have the keeping of you, and she has kept you as they keep Strasbourg geese, which are kept, I am told, till the birds cannot stand without support, and are so sleepy that, according to some, they are not aware when they are killed. Or, if you require a more elegant simile, as Rome kept the Britons, fattening them for the Picts and Scots, that is to say for the Scotch and the Irish, who had had no keeping by foreigners, but who kept themselves. You, after eighty years of Strasbourg treatment, show now considerably more than that leanness and hardness of the

Union times—land-values multiplied by three—much better worth the killing now, and more easy to the killer, hardly awaking at sight of the knife.

“ But would you have us resist the law by force and raise rebellion ? ” No, gentlemen, I merely recalled a historic and not remote event to show that your great-grandfathers, threatened by the like danger, had the sagacity to see their best course, and the courage to follow it, and that county by county they leagued themselves together under central control, a compact, disciplined body of men, obeying orders. Where is your league to-day ? Indeed your league would be a small one. Your great-grandfathers had friends, and they put down united rebel Ireland because they had friends. In the district in which I was born the most conspicuous landlord had 200 foot and 30 horse ready to march. I was looking at his name only the other day in the list of the yeomanry. The principal landlord now lives in London, and I rather think not a dozen men could be got to join there a landlord league for even the mildest purposes. It is not so bad that you are few. But you will agree with me that to be few and friendless is very bad. Your great-grandfathers took care to have friends, and let me add that their friends were men and not bullocks.

Eighty-five years have passed since then. That gracious respite was granted you, ample time for preparation to meet the next mutiny or to cut down and abolish the sources of all mutiny, and make Ireland yours in fact as it was already yours in law. Revolution number two is upon you, and finds you—what the United Irishmen did

not find your great-grandfathers—friendless. You have spent the rents of all Ireland without making new friends, while you have lost those you once had. You have spent in rent and taxes, I should say at least some two thousand millions of pounds, and you have spent that vast sum upon anything rather than in the making of friends. You are few and friendless, and let me add, hated. It is painful for me to write as I do, but I tell you the truth, and rely upon it, a rough fact is a far better travelling companion for you than the smoothest and most agreeable of lies. You are hated to an extent that you can dimly conceive. Some two years since I read before a Nationalist club in Dublin a lecture in defence of Irish landlords, and added various considerations that ought, I fancied, to carry weight with men of the artisan class in Dublin, who, as I endeavoured to show, would be seriously injured by the destruction of the landed interest. Referring to the extreme and unjust language of the agitators, I quoted Mr. Davitt's assertion that the landlords did not deserve in the way of compensation the price of their tickets to Holyhead. A fierce burst of cheering followed in favour of Mr. Davitt and that gentleman's compensatory scheme. "Yes, the rag-tag and bob-tail of the Dublin slums." No, gentlemen, not at all. Decent, well-clad artisans and clerks were these, and teetotallers into the bargain. Not tenants looking for low rents, or agricultural labourers wanting land, but neutrals in the land quarrel, and intensely, implacably hostile to you and your cause.

The fact set me thinking, and forced me to realise, which I did not before, the depth and universality of the



hatred which you have succeeded in contracting. This nation is united against you as it was never united against you in the last great convulsion, and in the normal progress of things will wipe you and yours off the face of Ireland as the school-boy sponges figures from his slate. That cheer made me see that by argument and reason your cause was hopeless, and that Ireland had done with you for ever. Few, friendless, hated, and imbecile, is in these current years that so powerful, absolute territorial class in whose hands the Irish nation once lay like soft wax ready to take any impression and conform to any moulding upon which you determined, and out of this soft wax you have moulded—a Frankenstein before which you flee.

Friendless ! In the long generations of your ancestors and predecessors there was not one who was without friends, and that was no accident or good fortune, for they all took exceeding good care that they should have friends, and spent the rents of Ireland with a very strict eye to the creation and preservation of friends. And so the commons of Ireland have no history, or none that is not subordinated to and merged within the history of you. All had friends sufficient for their purposes, until Time has at last revealed you as comical and also as tragical a set of figures as Fate ever presented for the pity and laughter of men.

With whatever difficulties and dangers your ancestors had to cope, and they had to cope with many, the apparition of such a foe as now, metaphorically speaking, kicks you down the hill, never troubled even their dreams. They knew at least how to keep their herdsmen and del-



vers to their work, paying their just rents in due season. "Barbarians!" I wish you had but a tithe of their barbaric energy and pluck. Of those countless generations of Irish nobles, not one provoked a servile revolt, or one that they could not quell. Combination against rent, indeed! I can imagine with what a face the Desmond would have listened to a report of such a resolution, passed at Thurles or the Abbey of Feal, and the black look of his household troops, *amhus* so called, going down to administer such a harrying to the Land Leaguers as their children's children would remember. For mind you, the Desmond did live in Crom, Co. Limerick, and he did have his household troops, whose brawny limbs and loyal hearts were fed with Desmond's rents and the warm sunshine of his presence, and, if necessary, he had his war-tenants as well, lightly taxed, holding by military tenure, bound by oath, by custom, by inclination, and by interest, to gather round his standard, once the war-summons was sent round. Do you think it was by playing the fool that for four long centuries he maintained his sovereignty? Do you think if he had spent the rents of Desmond from the Shannon to the Southern Sea on his own vile body and its belongings, or sold the half of them to usurers, and spent the rest in London, he would have held his lands for four hundred years? Very quickly, I think, the McCarthy in the West, the O'Brien, the Butlers, and the Le Poers, would have carved out and divided his kingdom amongst themselves. For in those old times punishment followed so close upon the heels of folly that the fool was never allowed a fair start. The

rod made for such backs as his was too near. A great owner of Desmond confiscated estates lives to-day in England, never saw his tenants, or his lands, and is great, I understand, in *heraldry*. Punishment in these settled centuries has got lame of foot, has fallen some two hundred years behind the caitiff, but, indeed, never lost the scent, as that heraldic patrician, much to his surprise, doubtless, is learning to-day. Civilisation, centralisation, Imperialism, ignorance, servility, custom, etc., have arisen tall barriers between the bloodhounds of Destiny and their prey. But the scent, always breast-high, never failed, and although that unseen, mysterious pack, with their unseen huntsman, had to wind and wind and at times travel rearward, avoiding the barriers, now, in these current years, how they give tongue—the bell-toned cry, savage and strong, how it strikes even the sensual ear !

And see, if you can at all understand, which I fear you can't, how even the average intellect has been stolen from you, against whom a dark doom has been pronounced, that you might hasten all the quicker to the end. With your household troops and war-tenants you once ruled and regulated and gathered in your rents, spending them again in a manner mainly human and rational. Then with the growth of civilisation, unity, and central authority, you transferred to central power such slender duties of rule and regulation as you deemed it desirable to observe, and to the same quarter the command of the armed men necessary to secure the payment of rent. This done, you then, with a stupidity all but subter-human, transferred into the hands of the rent-paying and subject-classes that

same central authority, the legislative and administrative control of things, and at the same time the power of the sword. Pleasure is pleasant, no doubt, but unpermitted pleasures make men stupid as well as vicious.

Perhaps I was wrong in stating that never before in Ireland was there known a successful servile revolt. One such, on the dim borderlands of history and tradition, has found a place in our chronicles. Whatever history you know, and you know very little, your ignorance of the history of your own country and class is singularly capacious. Indeed, in this respect you yield to no aristocracy that ever lived in the most thorough and self-complacent ignorance. Of the great modern facts of Irish history you know nothing and care less ; therefore I may presume ignorance concerning the little and the remote. The following curious entry will be found in the " Annals of the Four Masters." (They were a quartette of learned and industrious monks, who in the Elizabethan days when everybody seemed doing something, and Irish landlords were not above countenancing Irish historians, compiled from old documents the Chronicles of Ireland ) :

" Anno Christi 10.—First year of the reign of Cairbré Cat-Head, after he had killed the nobles, except a few who escaped from the massacre in which they had been murdered by the servile tribes," viz., Aithech-Tuatha ; *Latinè, gentes plebeianorum.*

" Evil was the condition of Eirin during his reign "—why not ?—reign of anarchy, crowned and sceptred ?—" fruitless the corn, fishless the streams, milkless the cattle, and no fruit upon the trees," for we are still in the

bardic mythus-making era, and divine nature withholds her gifts from anarchic kings. It is a doctrine very old. Truer, perhaps, than we think. You will find it in Homer, too, who expounds it through the lips of the many-counselled, much-experienced Ithacan. Judge from the foregoing whether mutiny and servile rebellions were dear to the old chroniclers and bards.

Cairbré Cat-Heat, prick-eared, satyr-like mutineer, has had a tolerably long sleep, a sleep of some two thousand years ; but he is out once more, alive and strong, with roaring multitudes at his heels. For indeed he is not at all mortal or useless in the economy of things, and, like the devil, is but kept in chains to become in due time the scourge and abolisher of corrupt aristocracies, when patient Justice at length delivers judgment and the clock tolls the hour of execution. He is out once more, bawling upon platforms, glozing in the Senate, boycotting, maligning, and lying, full of greed and envy. He is the Old Anarch met once long since by a certain bad traveller, tourist, pursuer of big game, or what not. His home is in Chaos. He is known by many names in many lands, and everywhere hated even by his multitudes when his work is done. Wise Homer called him the ugliest man that came up to Troy, and Moses had a tough wrestle with him, triple-headed, in the wilderness of Hormah. But ugly though he be, this never forget, that he is part of the eternal system of things, the scavenger who makes away with things dead and corrupting, the vulture that pounces on the dying.

Of the causes of the rebellion of Cairbré and the rent-

paying tribes there is no record. Of this, however, we may be certain, that in some essential respects the doomed aristocracy had failed to rule wisely and well. Secure in long predominance, they had suffered the rent-payers to develop industries and occupations which they were themselves too lazy to control and regulate or guide, or oppressed them with unfair rents, or, quarrelling amongst themselves, admitted the others to a share of power, or, currying popular favour, permitted them to carry weapons like their lords. Surely enough, the reign of the Cat-Head was preceded by some form of stupidity or class corruption on the part of the nobles. But, after the first surprise, the remnant of the nobles rallied, summoning their friends to their standard, for the much-abused feudal system was then in the land, and there was no Irish landlord who had not at least some friends, friends quite ready to perish in his quarrel if need be. Steadily they subdued the land before them, so the tradition ran. Then followed many wise arrangements and regulations, chief amongst which it is worth marking, was the stern suppression of absenteeism on the part of heedless and pleasure-loving lords. Everywhere in the midst of the rent-paying tribes the nobles, the lords of the soil, sat down with their war-tenants and armed retainers, and so disposed over the country that there was effective communication between their several strengths. Personal residence, class organisation, a sufficiency of loyal and devoted friends. Such were the barbaric methods adopted in those barbaric days by your class, confronted by contemporary Land Leagues. Fortunately for themselves,



there was then no daily Conservative press, perusing whose vituperation of the wickedness of Cairbré they might be comforted, while it was a far and foolish cry to Cassibelaunus, Roman Agricola, or whoever then managed or mismanaged transpontine affairs. Nor will I deny, that you, too, in spite of your long record of folly and worse, had you six years since, when the revolt began, been taken wisely in hand by one who could compel you to obey, would have as effectually suppressed your own mutineers. For mutiny is not dear to the heart of man. But even then, the road was strait, the path rough, steep, laborious, and the enchanted land was nigh, coercion-strewn with soft invitations to ease and sweet slumber. Well, you have slept, slept to be awakened rather terribly, and, awakening, to find the road six times straiter, and the path six times more rough and laborious. Yet, till the life is out of men's bodies, there is hope, and I will not say that it is even now too late to recall the lost years. Had I thought so, I would not have written this book.\*

But before I treat of what is yet possible, provided you screw your courage to the head, shunning no peril and shirking no duty, however rough, let me remind you of what, as a class, you have lost, what splendid opportunities thrown away, what a glorious heritage wasted seeking that sort of pleasure which, like the prophet's scroll, is so sweet in the mouth and so bitter when eaten. The average ground rental of all Ireland, cities, towns, town parks included, can hardly have been less during the century than twenty millions a year. Why, the revenue

\* *Toryism and the Tory Democracy.*



of Imperial Rome, you will find if you look into your Mommsen, was not so great. And out of her revenue, world-conquering Rome had to pay her soldiers and sailors, her civil service, and judiciary. All these expenses your feudal ancestors, the Geraldines, De Courcies, and MacWilliams, defrayed out of their rents. But you, having trundled one crown into the roaring mob outside Whitehall, and kicked another into the Boyne, having struck away the strong royal hand that in old times restrained you, put all these charges upon the people at large as indirect taxation, retaining the rents as private and personal income. Now consider for a moment what you might have effected with that income had you been a real aristocracy, true shepherds of the peoples—the phrase is wise old Homer’s—looking to the welfare of your flocks, and not only to the wool and the mutton. The revenue would have maintained an army of at least 300,000 men, making ample allowance for superior provision and reasonable luxuries and amusements for yourselves as the officers and captains of the same—say a quarter of a million of men, devoted to you as were the old personal retainers of the mediæval aristocracy, and free to be directed upon all noble and salutary tasks which the times might call upon you to attempt. So ruling, you might have brought under cultivation every rood of cultivatable land in the island, interlaced it with railways running free to all, completed your harbours, planted all plantable moors and hill-sides, established a national emigration service with Irish colonies governed like the old land at home, written the history of your island—a

history, let me add, intensely loyal to you and your order, redolent as is its every page of aristocracy, chieftaincy, tanistry, kingship, of rule and of obedience. To those and such ends governing you would have stood to-day girt with a loyal and devoted nation, leading, as I have said, in the van of European and the world's progress, leading whither I know not—for who can even guess?—knowing only that it would be onward and upward. Such opportunities the reward of abundant heroism on your part in old times, the reward of wakeful nights and laborious days, of wise counsel and valiant action, of blood shed like water, and life, ease, pleasure, valued at a pin's point when Duty called and propitious Chance led the way, of these and such like those opportunities the reward. You had them and you lost them. Benign Fortune and your own merit put into your hands the absolute rule and mastery of this island. Benign Fortune, Destiny, Providence, or whatever you choose to call it, then inaudibly whispered, so: "You have not ended your work. Indeed, you have only got your tools and a fair field to work in. For you now the real struggle begins. You stood pain, toil, and the shock of war, and triumphed. See how you will stand pleasure, her soft but deadly arrows flying night and day perpetually. You smote the Papist Apollyon, batwinged monster of the deep, and trembled not for the roaring of many lions; see you sleep not on the Enchanted Ground. Battles you have won, cities sacked, storms overridden, but lo—the Sirens." Well, this Irish aristocracy of yours, like so many others great and brave, did cast anchor off that

pleasant isle, listened, well pleased, to the sweet song. In due time your bones will whiten with the rest round the feet of the enchantresses. Three aristocracies I find have come and gone in Ireland, three distinct, yet closely knit, the second heir of the first and the third of the second, like father, son, and grandson. This way all three have fared over these stormy Irish waters. The first, the Celtic, struck upon the rock of anarchy, and went down. The second, Hiberno-Norman, loving darkness too well and light and freedom too little, sailed away for Cimmeria and extinction by the way, brave Sarsfield last seen at the helm. The third, Anglo-Irish, putting into the isle of the Sirens ; all too plainly in these days have determined to leave their bones on the strand, a historic monument to the power of those immortal maidens.

Those who climb or are wafted to high places had need take heed to their footsteps ; the law of gravitation, so friendly to the plain men, being so very dangerous for all climbers. Not less virtue is required by the high than by the low, or as much, or a little more, but a great deal more. I say that even still you are the best class in the country, and for the last two centuries have been ; but see, the event proves that you were not good enough, had not virtue enough. Therefore you perish out of the land, while innumerable eyes are dry. For all your follies and sins you have crowned with an insolence incredible to coming generations. At Ireland and all things Irish you girded till, like the doomed suitors, you are forced to laugh with foreign jaws as this beggar nation, ragged and mendicant, whose substance you devoured and whose

house dishonoured, springs like the revealed demi-god of yore upon the threshold and twangs the new-strung bow. It sings sweetly, does it not? Like the swallow. And yet in this Irish history, whose monuments have rotted under your care or accumulated like a mountain of waste paper, lay for you the key of safety had you but known it, and secrets more precious than equipped armies, or favouring laws, or any Imperial countenance. It is not the friend of this waste, howling democracy, strong only because you are so very weak and poor. This land-leaguering democracy has, then, no representative, not even a Tyler or Cade, anywhen back to the dim days of the Cat-Head, let them rave as they please of Silken Thomas or Red Hugh, or any worthy they please to choose and dub him theirs. Red Hugh, I think, would have offered but a short shrift to a committee of modern patriots going down to organise his tenantry on National League principles—that same lame, tameless fighter and harrier of the North-West. What nation, I ask, with the spirit of a rabbit would bear for ever such an aristocracy as yours, devouring its substance and sneering into the bargain?

And now at the first brunt of the fight it is discovered that even the strength of that little rodent is not yours. You bleat and maa like a beaten sheep crying to your shepherd for help, and the shepherd becoming so unconscionably hard of hearing on that side of his head. Your career is like some uncouth epic begun by a true poet, continued by a newspaper man, and ended by a buffoon; heroic verse, followed by prose, and closed in a disgusting farce. Then *plaudite*, and *exeunt omnes*. The curtain

falls on two centuries of Irish history, and such centuries. The paraphernalia are removed. A new act begins with new actors.

I believe there is no example in history of a lethargic, effete aristocracy such as yours getting reformed from within, and yet as against such a reform I can perceive no very serious obstacle, save the extreme shortness of the time still left you and the strength of the evil habits which you must abandon. He who leaves the right road has little difficulty in returning if he soon discovers his error. A few steps to the right hand or the left, and he is once more upon the way. But you now for some two hundred years have been travelling all awry, travelling like that pilgrim who at the end of his journey on smooth and level ground found himself at length right beneath an impending mountain, from which thunder rolled and fire flashed. You, too, trusted the smooth glozing words of Mr. Carnal Wise-man, declaring that in the town of Morality lived one Mr. Legality, who had much skill in easing men of those burthens to which all flesh is heir. Well, you have long since taken up your abode with that same smooth-spoken gentleman, and know now that Mr. Legality is a quack in spite of his clean brass door-plate and suave demeanour, and the *Mountain*, as once against that noblesse whose skins were tanned at Meudon, comes closer and closer. Do you know anything of Thomas Carlyle, "The writing fellow? Was there not something in the newspapers about his wife?" Christ save us all! You read nothing, know nothing. This great modern democratic world rolls on with its thunderings, lightnings, and voices, enough



to make the bones of your heroic fathers turn in their graves, and you know nothing about it, care nothing about it. You sit in the easy-chair of Mr. Legality, with your title-deeds on the table, and comfort your souls with the very unfavourable opinion that that cock-sure gentleman has formed of the Mountain. Yet one stood by you not so long since, grim of aspect and strange of speech, though indeed he spake plain English too, and said this : " Put not your trust in parchments. Though you have parchments enough to thatch the world, these combustible, fallible sheepskins will not save you." And even if you should now, winged with terror and pricked by sharp conscience, hasten back to the right road—narrow and rough, but the right road for all that—what a way you have to travel, skirting the edge, nay, rather through the bowels of that flaming Mountain !

Of you as a class, as a body of men, I can entertain not the least hope ; who, indeed, can ? If the times with their words of thunder do not alarm you, do not send you flying like one assailed by murderers from that same snug solicitor's office, parchment-strewn, I know that my words will not, that the words of no man will. These words of mine you will not read, or reading, will not understand. Your enemies will read them, and in the main understand ; but you will do neither. For even those of you who have had the grace to remain in the land have grown as earthy and dull as the earth itself. A respectable Dublin publisher informed me recently that he seldom or never received an order from a country gentleman for a new book. " Such new books as I sell



are bought," he added, " by Dublin professional men." You have hunted the fox till, like that old red hunter, you have come to despise your birthright, and all that treats of it, and cultivated crops, till the very clay of the earth is more intelligent than yours. Your serious talk is of bullocks, and, in short, "*Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*" Your ancestors, who raised the noble classic buildings of Dublin, loved a Latin quotation. The less ignoble Siren of classicism and culture they were not beyond admiring. Of you now I doubt if one in twenty could translate that hackneyed newspaper phrase. For so, by easy stages, aristocracies run or slide downhill. The heroic ardour goes first, culture and intellectual refinement come and depart. Loyalty to even your own class in due time disappears, and personal worth, the simple cardinal virtues of the private citizen, last of all. These, indeed, still remain with you, and while they last Pandora's box is not empty.

Of you, as a collective body of men, even those of you who have still the grace to remain with us and stick to the sinking ship, I entertain not the least hope. It is for individuals here and there I write this book, knowing that even a very few, such as one might count on the fingers of one hand, if of the right mettle and the right calibre, may be able even now to awake you from your slumbers, and breathe, which I and men like me cannot, some breath of life into your nostrils. Here and there, such men, I believe, are in Ireland, men who look with shame and dismay upon your astonishing stupidity, men of finer mould, more subtle intelligence, of more

patriotic spirit and class spirit, of a conscience not seared, of a soul not altogether dead in your trespasses and sins. To you, here and there over Ireland, or outside Ireland, and though but one, or two, or three, I would now address myself, and especially to the young, whose hearts are not yet hardened by contact with the rest or worn out by that grinding attrition.

## IRELAND AND THE HOUR.

### II.

#### TO AN INDIVIDUAL.

I would in the first place point out one false, inviting road that lies before you, smooth, in a sense, and loud, with multitudinous voices of the most sweet sort, a road with many attractions for the young, generous, and imaginative. Quite recently I have seen a youth, I should say of high promise, set upon that bad way his young and confident feet, and heard the loud acclaim of the most sweet voices and the flattery of grandiose, applaudive editorials. For the young are peculiarly susceptible to flattery and the applause of their fellow-countrymen, especially when their immature and generous instincts proclaim almost as loudly from within as the most sweet from without that this is the road travelled by the old dead patriots and the orators of yore. *Egalité* and the best of a historic *noblesse* just as cheerfully set foot there, but it hindered not the coming of Fouquier Tinville, and the era of troubles, and the present vile plutocratic Republic rots and will rot, slowly, heroic France. If you are quite satisfied to lose all that you have inherited, to be stripped naked, and in the slime to wrestle with dragons and gorillas hereafter for some morsel of official income which you will not get, then travel that way.

If you are satisfied to see all the worth, virtue, personal refinement, truth, and honour which you know to be inherent in your own order wiped, as with a sponge, out of Ireland—may be with a bloody sponge—then travel that way. If you wish to see anarchy and civil war, brutal despotisms alternating with bloody lawlessness, or on the other side, a shabby, sordid Irish Republic, ruled by knavish, corrupt politicians and the ignoble rich, you will travel the way of *Egalité*. And this way, too, you may be sure to be wrong, on account of the sweet voices and the flattering editorials. By the rarest of rare accidents are they ever right ; and when they chance to be right you will find on examination that it has been by a fluke, just as a madman or a fool may once in a way give sound advice, but take him after that as a travelling companion to advise you further, and where will you be ? And it is a thousand to one that he is not right at all. Would you take the advice of a mob, or of the editorial constructed as an echo of the mob's voice and strictly with no other purpose, concerning any earthly thing in which you are keenly interested outside the mad world of politics ? And be sure that politics which, after all, is the science of Justice as applied to the affairs of men and nations, is a region where, more than anywhere else, a man must think for himself, examine, and reflect most carefully, intensely, and conscientiously. And, once more, the right road never could be, and surely in these times can by no possibility be, anything but most rough, toilsome, and laborious. The right way is the rough way : of that you may be very certain.

The young and generous, and often enough even when owners of "large possessions," regard with favouring eye the ways of Radicalism and Revolution. They promise so well, they seem to the inexperienced mind to lead to such paradises, they seem, too, so skilfully and wisely engineered. And very clever engineers, I know,—the best now going—in language most plausible and alluring, have passed in their reports, declaring that they have well surveyed the ground and planned the ways, and have even, as with the bodily eye, caught sight of the Elysian lands and of men walking there, with crowns on their heads. Alas ! I believe the very best of our young men are those who give heed to the words of those double-damned impostors and self-deluders. Land nationalisation, Socialism, one for all, all for one, etc. Dear friend, trust them not. I cannot now explain at large how it happens that those paths lead down to reigns of terror, fratricide, destruction, national death, abolition of all good things ; but trust me that they do. I know well that they do, and some day may explain how and why. Just now I ask you to take my report on trust.

I return to the immediate practical questions affecting you personally here and now in your native land. Consider then, your situation as an Irish landlord, one of a class that has drifted far out of its course, drifted to the edge of this sucking, whirling maelstrom of agrarian and national revolution. You are friendless with the rest in this country, surrounded by a teeming and hostile population, and by a population that has every right to be

hostile. They are hostile by a law of Nature. They are hostile because your class has consumed, in personal gratification, the rents of the country—rents designed by Nature for very different purposes ; because, in such a course, they have lost the control of the rent-payers and the rest, breeding mutineers, anarchists, and rebels. They are hostile to you because you and your class would not become frankly and loyally Irish on those your Irish estates, and in the midst of an Irish people. Then, too, and as a result of all this, there is the envy, malice, and uncharitableness with which fallen human nature contemplates those who are high and lifted up, and who seem happy and rich. And there is, moreover, the religious question—you Protestant, they not—though this, in these times, believe me, is the smallest and least important of all, and year by year grows smaller. Indeed, this fierce agrarian agitation, by concentrating men's minds upon the good things of this world, has lessened to a crack or fissure the once yawning gulf that roared between the sects. A little care on your part and that crack will be a seam, and where the gulf yawned, firm ground will support your feet. Not superstition or fanaticism is the peril of the future, but Materialism—a brutal apathy towards all things divine and holy. Religious hate, these times and in Ireland, is a sleeping tigress, sleeping towards her last sleep. Beware how you awake her ! Let her die !

Now the problem set before you to solve, does not seem, on paper at least, a difficult one, though its successful solution in fact, is, I admit, a work of heroic magnitude.



You are friendless. That is the grand central fact in your position, seen from the outside and from a quasi-political point of view, and you are, moreover, hated, envied, and despised. The outcome, all this the result of vices and follies innumerable on the part of your order. Plainly, then, you must multiply the number of your friends and diminish the number of your enemies, and this end you must compass by wise and brave conduct, by the straight road, not by crooked ways and cuts short but not sweet. Thus landlords of the silly and ignoble type, popularity-hunters, as they are called, endeavour to secure friends by a variety of vile devices. Such would placate the National League by rent reductions and rent remissions—concessions contrary to justice, and which they know to be so. Like the cowardly pre-Norman Saxons, they would pay Danegelt to their enemies. In some instances they even join the National League and contribute to its funds, an act of baseness incredible but that we know it to be done. Or they flatter popular and influential priests, or local popular leaders, or give large and lavish employment to men who are National Leaguers to the tips of their fingers, and whom they take no pains and incur no contumely and misrepresentation in the endeavour to make less so. Plainly, such landlords are traitors to their class, foolish and cowardly in an eminent degree. Instead of multiplying their friends, they diminish them. Instead of diminishing the number of their foes, they increase them. To the hatred with which they have been before regarded and the hunger with which their fatness has been contemplated, they superadd contempt. Such

short cuts to the end aimed at are not permissible, and lead straight to destruction.

You who are bent on surrounding yourself, to begin with, by friends, will do so by the efficient discharge of your duty, be that course ever so hard—and hard indeed it has become in these days. You will, therefore, sit down upon your estate and work no longer from a distance and by deputy, but in person and on the spot. Do you think that if you live in London, and we in Ireland only hear of you through the Society papers, you will make friends? Without personal contact that is impossible. You will sit down, I say, here at home in the land where your fathers' dust mingles with its mother-earth, where your fathers' blood was shed and their great deeds were done; and in many respects too, I think, you will find that their example is the one which you must pursue.

Those landlords of old times spent their rents in the maintenance of friends spear-armed, or with crossbow, matchlock, or musket. Be the weapons of your friends what they may—of this hereafter—you will do the same. The average modern landlord, when his rents are not spent abroad or in personal sensuality, or as usury to the usurer, is proud of his house, grounds, gardens, horses and equipage, balance at the banker's, or what not. The old were proud of their men, their beauty, valour, loyalty, and their equipments. Crichton and Archdale riding into Enniskillen with their armed tenantry; Thomond descending out of Clare across the Shannon; Silken Thomas and the rest, they were prouder of their men than of aught else. They spared and they saved

that they might have loyal men and true around them. Some families built no castles, as well perhaps for other reasons as for this, that the money and labour spent on building might be better spent on men—

A castle of bones

Before a castle of stones—

and doubtless pointed the moral with reference to the assassination of the great Hugo de Lacy, slain while contemplating with pride the erection of his fine castle at Durmagh.

You, too, then, will make small account of all dead and material things, offering no more incense than is necessary even to the dread god Apis, and spend your all upon men, and you will not surround yourself with easeful and luxurious appliances, or incur the least breath of censure that way, remembering that these, so to speak, are war times, needing on your part war manners. Gordon starved with his men at Khartoum—"his beautiful black troops." Skobeloff ate soldiers' black bread conquering Khokând. All great captains and all soldiers' heroes do the same in hard times, and unless at a pinch they can do it, never attach the worshipping loyalty of their men. Stonewall Jackson was the best beloved of the American generals of the great Civil War. On one occasion he sent some regiments on what seemed to them some fool's errand, and without tents. They camped in their cloaks, and the snow fell and covered them while they slept. Cold and miserable some troopers awoke in the gray morning, with imprecations on their general who, somewhere snugly housed himself, had made his soldiers

pass such a night in the open and tentless. Just then a gaunt figure emerged from the white ground, shook the snow from his cloak, and cheerily exclaimed : " A fresh, bright morning, lads ! " It was the general himself, who with his staff had ridden up during the night and lay down to sleep with his men under the falling snow. What hundreds, what thousands, of Irish gentlemen did the same, and worse, in the old brave days, never, too, thinking themselves heroes or anything in particular, taking it all as in the day's work. These old mouldering manuscripts and mountains of paper-rubbish unedited, unexplored, are full of their bravery, sufferings, and labours. And their people loved them—ay, that they did—and the spear sprang from the peg and the musket from the rack when the war-summons of those landlords went round. For I tell you again and again that all Irish history is on your side, every page redolent of captaincy and soldiership, of strong rule, and of allegiance and loyalty to the death.

With your rents, like your fathers, you will maintain men, and to that end will surrender personal luxuries such as might stir even the least breath of censure. But, unlike your fathers, your men, when you get them, you will not arm with Winchesters or any weapons of war. For consider, the time for all that, even if at any time in this modern epoch it were desirable, has gone by. Do you think the Power into which the legislative and administrative authority of Ireland has now virtually passed would tolerate under its very nose the growth of incipient armies, commanded by men essentially hostile to themselves. Before you had properly begun your

work you would be snuffed out and abolished, so far have Irish landlords now carried it in their fools' game, so low down has their cause fallen. For this fact you must take along with you as cardinal, that in a short time the Imperial Parliament will prove friendly not to your order but to the power known as the National League, and that the might of England and the edge of the Imperial sword will be at its beck and call. And here you can perceive the incredible folly of those Ulster men who meditate, if they do, an appeal to the armed Protestant Democracy of the North. Religious war, the most awful curse that ever fell upon any land, passions that will not spare the pregnant women or the speechless infant, a very opening of the gates of hell, follow in the wake of such war. But the wickedness of those men is only equalled by their folly. The might of the empire they have suffered to pass into the hands of their enemies, and the armies of England would pour westward to stamp out with bullet and cord all insurrectionary attempts. Keep well clear of gunpowder, my friend, in these ticklish times, and wear a very deaf ear to Northern swaggerers, the blatant, untimely Protestantism of that fire-breathing Northern chimæra. Arm your men, not with Winchesters, nor breathe into them the slightest hint of war at your peril, for a very vigilant foe is this with whom you have to deal, seeing through more eyes than Argus, and gathering to himself all power in this island for a season.

But your friends, when you have them, must not be idle. Idleness, bad for you, is worse for them. They must pay for their keep in honest labour, honest labour



directed upon good, salutary, and even remunerative things. For apart from all else, they so working will increase your revenue and enable you to employ more and increase the number of your adherents. Let us suppose, what I hope is true, that you are a scion of an old and distinguished family, for birth tells even now, and have got, as clear income, some ten thousand a year. At the rate of thirty pounds a year per man, which is far more than the farmers pay their labourers, you could keep a little industrial army of 333 men, or say 300. With the economies possible when providing for such a number, you could make their wages go much farther than the same wages as normally expended, and be enabled to enliven their existence and make life brighter and happier, so all the more attaching to you and your service the fidelity and affection of your men. But the labour of that little army, wisely directed and on wise purposes, ought year by year to bring in at least their wages. The expense of their keep you should be able to realise, and a good deal besides. All wise employers of labour make at least as much as will meet their labour bill, and consider it a disastrous year if they do not. But granted that you make at least the labour bill, the result is that if you spend it not in personal luxury or ostentation, you have in the ensuing year your original income of ten thousand, and ten thousand besides, the value of your men's labour. You have then twenty thousand for the next year, which you can expend either in doubling your little army of labourers, or in land and plant for an expansion of action, or in rendering still more attractive, still brighter and happier



the lot of your men. I do not affect mathematical accuracy in these calculations, but you will perceive that moving on these general lines the argument is sound.

Look now at the situation from the following point of view. The common commercial employer of labour pays, say, thirty pounds a year to his men. Only over the men in his immediate employment does he possess any influence or control. The wages which they receive they pay out again in a variety of ways to persons quite outside the influence of their own employer. They buy their liquor from one, boots from another, clothes from a third, groceries from another, hats from a fifth, etc., etc. Now, since it is your aim to gather as many as possible under your influence, you will perceive that there is outside the region of your direct employment a considerable zone of society which you should be able to, as it were, annex. You can have your own canteen, tobacco store, shoemakers, tailors, food distributors, etc., may even find it advisable to start a cloth factory, or essay other manufacturing industries. Of course, here you will be guided by circumstances, and the advice of competent persons, whom, wisely selected, I hope you will succeed in very early collecting round you. What I wish to emphasise is the fact that your industrial regiment of three hundred men need not even in the first year be limited to that strength.

Now, the commercial employer, in all normally-conditioned countries, and even to-day to a certain extent in Ireland, does wield a certain influence over his men. The task that now lies before you is to make that influence strong, as strong as and stronger than the feudal feeling

between chief and clansman, stronger than the devotion of soldiers to a brave and popular general. The commercial employer cares nothing for his people. What he cares for is their labour, or rather the marketable value of the results of their labour. The drunkenness of a skilled hand, who four days out of the six can turn out saleable work, is nothing to him. The dirty habits of another, the slouch and hangdog look of a third, the cruelty and selfishness of the home-life of a fourth, are nothing to him. He does not value men as men, but as machinery for the turning out of saleable commodities. Consequently, between him and his labourers the growth of the feudal feeling, one of the most natural and instinctive in the heart of man, is killed at the root—dies in the very germ. If he cares not for his men they care not for him ; and when the heart is empty of love it will soon be tenanted by anger, envy, mutiny, and suspicion. Such is a primitive law of human nature. The house empty, swept, and garnished, unsanctified by the presence of good spirits, is certain ere long to become a nest of devils. You can see the truth of this law by personal observation on a small scale, and upon a large scale in the truceless war now universally waged between capital and labour, the universal growth of a revolutionary spirit amongst the proletariat, true offspring it of capitalistic cynicism and greed. You will therefore forget and ignore the practices of the world in this respect, and consult instead your own heart and conscience, the feelings of one and the edicts of the other. You will care for your men as men, and not as machinery. Therefore, that authority which has been

given you, by the fact of employment and wage-distribution you will exert for the good of your men, their bodies, and their minds, always doing that which, as a man yourself, you know to be just and not what the world, *i.e.*, the commercial employer, calls just. Thus, gently but firmly you will inure your men to habits of cleanliness, frightfully wanted in this country, to smartness and tidiness in dress, perhaps, too, as you see they can stand it and see in it nothing of the servant, to something indicative of uniform. You will have your hospital or medical man for the sick, and pensions for those maimed in your service, and, if you can hold your ground so long, for your veterans. You will encourage, and if necessary enforce, sobriety, even upon non-working days. You will see that your men are decently housed, and that they do not wrong their families if they have any. You need, too, the assistance of ladies, good women, women of tact and delicacy, to supervise that spindle side of your services. Many a good man is spoiled by a slatternly, drinking, scolding, and undomestic wife. I should say, too, that wages ought to be in proportion to men's needs. This, of course, is a frightful heresy according to newspapers and political economists, but if you consult yourself, and the primitive undebauched instincts of the heart, you will find it just. The natural law of wages, is, I think, very different from the so-called economic. Above all you must inure your men to strict discipline and obedience, submission the promptest to all orders from yourself or those whom you put in authority, stern dismissal for the intractable and indocile. You will not

find it so hard to enforce discipline, setting about it in the right way. When men feel that they are treated with justice and kindness, when they know that they are managed towards some good end, not towards the accumulation of pelf, they will submit, and that with alacrity, to the most rigorous discipline. Moreover, I presume that your gangers, bosses, or whatever your officers may be called, will, like yourself, inspire a personal affection, a personal respect and fear. Till you have effected this you have effected nothing. The power of dismissal being your only Mutiny Bill, you will have to work by methods nobler, if for some natures less effective than those of the brutal drill-sergeant, *i.e.*, by methods worthy of free men. Yet, without the lash, the treadmill, solitary confinement, or the death-sentence, you will find that you can, if made of the right stuff, apply and maintain discipline more rigorous and more gladly endured than that kept up by physical force. I can imagine your men dreading a word from you, or a look more than a cut from a whip. These things, thank God! are in human nature, though deep down there all unsuspected, and it is your task to bring them out. You can only evolve feelings of the kind on the old conditions—conditions well understood by all the great captains and natural leaders of men; well understood, too, by all that old fighting chieftainry of Ireland, and, if holy Ireland is not to go back to bogdom and wolfdom, must be understood again. Your men will love you and fear you if you have sufficient mettle of the right sort, and are leading them by just methods towards high and generous ends. Once provoke that

personal affection and that personal fear, two primitive passions of human nature, passions which man exults in being conscious of, and of feeling stir within him, and you will do what you please with those men. You will play upon them as a master artist on his violin. Do you remember the Tenth Legion weeping? Why? A word, no more; their general called them *Quirites*. It makes no difference that heretofore almost exclusively those strange passions have been evoked only by military chiefs and for purposes of war. The digger and ditcher, hewer and stitcher, are as human as the soldier, and only to boys, novel-readers, and sham statesmen is the rifle a whit more heroic than the spade. The purpose is the grand thing, and when the spade shines for a noble end it out-glitters the flashing of any sword, and spade-men will obey you and fear you, conquering back this island as no sword-men ever feared and obeyed any Geraldine or O'Neill in the old fighting times.

And, with regard to this matter of discipline, concerted action—men massed, instructed, prompt to obey orders, you will find on reflection that there is nothing more than this in which human nature delights. From the little boys who drive each other in harness along the footpaths, and the children's procession in the Kindergarten, to Volunteer movements and the military evolutions on the Curragh and in Phœnix Park, you will find deeply implanted in human nature this love of orderly, harmonious movement, unity in multiplicity, general harmonious submission to central guiding will. It is part of our common sensibility to music, one of the forms



in which a deep radical principle of human nature becomes expressed. Thus, appropriately, music accompanies concerted action. Such is the refrain of sailors heaving the anchor, the solemn music of religious processions, the martial music of soldiers. Devils with devils damned, according to the wise Milton, march to music :—

“Anon they move  
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood  
Of flutes and soft recorders.”

And you, too, will most wisely bring the power of this elemental demon to bear on your task of harmonising the discordant, peevish, and mutinous, stimulating the lazy, smoothing rough natures, and refining coarse. Why should men march upon deadly work, regimented, and to the sound of pipes and cymbals, and shamble along silent and separate to work that is vital? National Leaguers, mutineers and anarchists though they be, taught by nature and instinct, are more wise. They have their bands and banners. As you feel your way forward, you will not neglect this.

Above all you will attend well to the education of the children, and think no pains too much for that branch of the work. The best and wisest of men and women procurable you will procure for that. The *Kindergarten* system seems now the most promising, what the old wise Greeks called “music,” the harmonising and refining of the young soul through the arts, with processioning, marching, dancing, melody, singing, pleasant games invented each with a purpose. Stick to the young, my friend, and never forget them. And let me remind you,



too, of an old Irish custom which I look to you to revive. It was the custom of the Irish gentry, in the solid and serious old days, to entrust the education of their growing boys, not to vile pedagogues or even, very considerably, to priests, but to chiefs, and barons conspicuous for their wise management of men and just and prudent rulership of their territories. Of the youths so educated, some returned to rule over their own estates, some took service under their foster-fathers. Your ancestors got the best education going in those times. I wish I could say the same of you. And apart from all else the foster tie, so sweet, refined, and heroic, like threads of divine light, ran like a network of interlacing crossing beams, Celtic pattern, through the anarchies and darkness of the age. How often, how suddenly, the student's eye catches that strange light !

Your little realm, too, will be a school, not of the pedagogic sort, far from it. To you the best fathers will send their sons, and to them, if worthy, you will open careers so sadly wanted in those times by the young.

Returning again to the immediate and present you will perceive with me that under the Land Act your tenantry are gone, the connecting links between you and them are cut for ever. They are free of you, intend to be more free, and all the contemporary political forces are driving them farther and farther from your side. It is waste of time, trouble, and money, endeavouring to call them to their allegiance. Let them slide, and follow their leaders till they chop off their heads or otherwise sever that very unenduring connection. You, through the sins and

follies of your order, have lost your tenantry, squandered away their loyalty—a treasure which, even in strict arithmetical calculation were worth all the output of Californian mines. You stand naked and alone. You must begin again at the beginning, as the Norman began before you ; and by pure wisdom and bravery build up, as did the Butler and the MacWilliam, and by similar methods a loyal following of your own. Do you think the Butler found the kingdom of the Ossorians drop into his mouth like a ripe pear. Never dream it. Love, labour, sorrow and fighting, fosterages far-ramifying, reflection, consultations many with the wise, close intense study of the characters of men, recruitments and dismissals innumerable, were needed before he could write the proud title, *Capitanus suæ nationis*, have a nation of which to be captain, and a territory on which to sustain his nation. Fierce storms, you be sure of it, shook the Butler tree ere it shot strong roots downward and lifted branches to dally with the sun and the wind. The tenant is gone, gone down the wind. That tasselled gentile you will not whistle home again, whistle you never so wisely. But what of that ? While you have a heart and a head and £10,000 a year, you can gather around you 300 loyal men, 300 to begin with. Raymond the Fat began with less. Such will be the beginning of your kingdom, and of this nation no man can prevent you being the captain.

Consider further how by such tactics you inevitably, and from the start, strengthen your position and prolong your power even as a landlord, a rent receiver. Apart from all else see how, by such tactics, you drive a wedge

through the now solid organisation of the League upon your estates, dividing effectually the labour interest there from the farming interest. The former you attach to yourself, the latter you weaken and disorganise so far as human ingenuity can and the means and ways at your disposal will permit. The foolish landlord, who lives in London or elsewhere, and spends his rents away from his estate, has plainly no hold upon any body or interest of men there. The less foolish, who resides at home, but spends there only a small proportion of his land revenue, has seldom such a control over men as would enable him to overshadow or overpower the organisation of the League. You, I expect, will spend all, or nearly all, your land revenue in the direct employment of labour. Now, as the direct employer of some three or four hundred men, you will perceive that to such an extent you have a power as interested as yourself, as interested proportionately as any Irish landlord, in the honest payment by your tenantry of their rents. If the latter strike, they strike at the subsistence not of one man but of three hundred ; and the former, I think, would be scarce human if they would not be as eager as yourself to know the reason why. Indeed, during the Land-League agitation, two or three local landlords, who had by no means put their hands to the plough in the thorough style that I expect from you, but who merely gave considerable employment, were able to coerce a refractory tenantry. The moral pressure exercised by their labourers was sufficient. "Employment," said the landlord, "must cease on this estate unless the rents, which feed the employment, are

forthcoming." Employ all your rent-revenue so, give no handle to your enemies by the maintenance of any sort of expensive state, or by indulgence in expensive personal luxuries and amusements, and do you think your men will permit themselves to be cast upon the world because the farmers won't discharge their just obligations. You are not now one man, you are three hundred strong; and the moral pressure exerted by your industrial force will be quite sufficient to check any exorbitant or unjust demand on the part of the farmers.

Once more, when the average Irish landlord gives reductions, the money so lost is lost irrecoverably. It is worse than lost, for the tenantry who, in the old days, might have been grateful for the kindness shown, will now almost universally construe the reduction as mark of weakness or funk, and be all the readier to demand larger reductions hereafter. You, with your works open and your service open, can offer to your tenants the alternative of working off personally, or through their sons and others, the value of their rent reductions, by labour in your service, labour so distributed in time as not to interfere with their own necessary agricultural operations. You will not then have lost your rent, but will have changed its form from that of money into solid labour results of some kind—your property. The proposal would be so fair and equitable that, though the farmers might grumble, they would certainly not meet with any sympathy from the people in general. After a little experience of this kind you may feel assured that they will claim no rent reductions save such as their circumstances imperatively require.

Moreover just now, in the work of detaching labour from the now solid League, a very good opportunity lies before you. The labourers all over Ireland are anything but passionately devoted to the National League. They are envious, angry, disappointed, and complain with reason that the labour interest generally has been used as a cat's-paw to pull chestnuts out of the fire for the farmers.

The men with whom you will have at first to deal as an employer of labour will be no doubt in the beginning mutinous and disorderly enough, scamping their work, cheeking those set over them, breaking rules, disobeying orders, threatening or accomplishing general strikes. Apart from many other causes of demoralisation, the chief of which, always remember, has been that long-standing and inveterate evasion of duty on the part of your own order, the current revolutionary movement has diffused through all ranks a mutinous, insubordinate, and greedy spirit. Even if you pay your men five shillings a day they will growl at you because you do not pay seven-and-six. Many a bad quarter of an hour you will have with them indeed, and be often inclined to curse the day you were born, the time when I or your own conscience set you on that thankless business of the management of men. For this is no child's play or pretty pastoral idyll in which I invite you to figure, but hard and ugly work, work fit to break hearts not made of the right heroic stuff. Hard, ugly work indeed, in which for aught I know, you risk even your life, for if on the one side you are kind, considerate, and forgiving, on the other you must be stern and relentless. Only so can men be managed. For the



best of us mildness alone won't do, and for the average man must be plentifully supplemented with severity. Clamours, *émeutes*, threats, strikes, outrages, you will have to face, not shrinking, and move on to your purpose without hesitation or swerving, that purpose being first and before all the establishment of discipline, the creation of a body of men who will obey orders with military promptness and alacrity, who will love you indeed, but who will also fear. If you would be loved, you will love your men, but if you will be feared you will *not* fear them. You will dismiss right and left on fit cause shown, and weed out the refractory with relentlessness. You will give your orders and make it perfectly evident that if you have to disband and dismiss all and stand alone in the midst of angry multitudes, those orders must be obeyed. The power to dismiss is your sole Mutiny Bill : you will of course be chary of its exercise, but will exercise it relentlessly on due cause shown, and begin again even if you have to import the new hands and they police-protected. If you are doing the right thing, the just thing, you will find opinion closing round you and supporting you. Of this people it was once said, " There is not on the face of the earth a nation that better loves and respects equal and impartial justice," and there is a good deal of that sentiment here still. Indeed, I need hardly suggest the many and innumerable vital and strengthening influences which, for you bravely pursuing this right path, will attend you as you go. The tree planted well in fit soil, how many gracious, mysterious influences from above, from beneath, from around, curiously conjoin, convene



harmoniously and fructify in it. The blowing breeze, falling rain, sunshine and shade, and curious and inscrutable properties of earth, air, and water, life-giving, strength-giving, steal into its heart. Even the howling storm and December's sharp frosts are of service, compelling it to drive deeper roots, to put forth protecting sheaths. Do you think that Nature, seen and unseen, takes such loving care for a tree and does not take an infinitely greater care for the work into which a good and brave man puts his life. You won't think so, I know well. For what I say here in plain modern language is the doctrine that lies at the bottom of all Bibles and Gospels, is the very open secret of this world.

For you, as I have said, the grand difficulty is at the beginning. Once you have your nucleus or core of loyal men of the right sort, the task of breaking in recruits will not be so great. There will be an assimilative absorbing force proceeding then not from the will of one man but of many, a strength of surrounding opinion which will bend the minds of the most refractory, a morale, *esprit de corps* code of honour upheld and maintained by the men themselves. You will, therefore, be most cautious and careful at the start, gathering around you in the first instance the very best men that you can procure, imparting to them your purposes and infusing into them something of your own spirit.

Your nucleus will be men of approved good conduct, and your men in authority gentlemen. Believe me it will be long before in Ireland, outside of the mad world of politics and newspapers, that labouring men will not

more gladly obey gentlemen than members of their own class. At all times the Irish aristocracy, landed interest, and professional classes have been casting off more or less well-bred youths of just the type that you need, and who, heretofore emigrating, have been lost to Ireland, or remaining at home have gone to the devil for sheer want of such a friend and benefactor as you. In the troublous times coming or come the members of these and of ruined landlords will increase. These, if they approve themselves worthy of the service, you will collect around you. Upon their honour at least you can rely. You require them, and as it were in the nick of time comes calamity driving them to your side. The last of the Desmonds had five hundred gentlemen in his service.

Your officers, I say, will be gentlemen all the better if of high and acknowledged rank. In spite of all the Republican rant of modern literature and politics, society is as a matter of fact based still on orders, classes, and degrees. "A man's a man for a' that." Yes, that clarion-song of Burns sounds in all true men's ears like the voice of Eternal God, audible again in these modern days. It is the expression of eternal truth. So is the doctrine that a right line is the shortest distance between given points, yet rivers wander, and well-engineered roads wind this way and that. Rank and birth are very solid facts, which you will not ignore, because as a matter of fact men, your men, are born, not in the white ideal of eternity, but in the many-coloured, varied, complicated practicalities of time, and the modern Irishman, in spite of all his political rhodomontade, does very deeply respect

rank and birth. You will, I hope, in all things, exhibit no love for the fantastical, for fads, crotchets, and theories, but always a sure and vital appreciation of the facts of things, consulting, before all books, ever, the best men who have themselves successfully, each in his degree and place, handled things and managed men. This book of mine you, once embarked in your career, once you have well taken your business by the throat, will forget and ignore. I mean it as nothing but the initial impulse. I but sound this in your ears, "Awake, sleeper." Well, awake, the situation itself will teach you better than any man, certainly better than any man like me.

You will find, too, that like your feudal ancestors, you must avoid modern exclusiveness. There will be no gulf between you and your men. The landlord of old times did not feed in selfish and savage isolation, giving a big dinner once in a way to his tenantry—an ugly and hypocritical farce, as I can't help regarding the practice. The feudal landlord dined with his people and saw his ale go round, in days before men had learned to prate about Liberty and Equality. We are all very free now, one man as good as another, if not a great deal better, yet the small shopkeeper and his wife would see their errand-boy damned before they would let him sit at their table. For it is a very mad world this modern democratic, ranting of Liberty, while it grows every day more slavish ; of Equality, while it develops the most inhuman modes of caste ; of Fraternity with fratricidal lips and the heart of old semi-human cannibals ; of Progress, while it marches straight as a ruled line into primæval barbarism,

a barbarism ten times worse than that of the savage. And these fine words we write with capital letters and rave about as if a four-fold modern revelation, the four-sided figure of God, the square divine. As you enter upon your work, and as through experience the actual handling of facts—Nature's one true schoolmaster for you—you by degrees learn the law of the situation, you will discover, if I mistake not, that this matter of the public mess is not a little thing, but one of the most essential. All the wise men of the earth have known it. In all the Doric States of old Greece the ruling military class dined together, not casually or by mutual invitation, but compelled by law. So the wise founders of States ordained elsewhere, and especially in Lacedæmon. The diggers and delvers, the *periæci* or tenants, much less the helots, had indeed no place at those tables, but your diggers and delvers will at yours—a vast difference, the difference between the old era and the new. The common mess. It has played a mighty part in the history of the world. He who came eating and drinking knew its value, though his suppers—dinners, really—have long since degenerated into a superstitious rite. The feudal chiefs and barons had the secret, and well practised it in their stone halls or rude wattled palaces, eating and drinking with their men, so taught, not by historians and students, but by facts and close actual acquaintance with men and things. The king dined with his swine-herds, literally so, much as it may surprise the modern mind. See O'Curry's "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish," vol. iii., page 145, where some ancient bard describes Ireland's

High-King, *Ard-Righ Erenn Uile*, banquetting in Glan na Smole, Dodder-banks, with his people. Amongst those who sit and eat under the king's eye, mentioned quite casually, are the king's swine-herds. Duff, Donn, and Dorchá, the swine-herds, feast there too, the instruments of their profession racked above them and behind, on the wall, like the shield and spear of the warrior. Your men, if I see at all clearly the lines along which your work must expand and advance, will dine with you and your officers, and forget the rigours and sternnesses of the past and of the day in the glow and fraternity of the well-spread evening board. And let me add another little touch of old-world wisdom :

“ Tell me, O grandson of Conn, what are the tokens of a fool ? ”

“ A laughing face in the council, and a serious one at the feast.”

Wise and witty this, I think. Such as might have been uttered by some laconic sage of the unwall'd city, pleasant and sarcastic over his black broth, by him said, and recorded by old Plutarch. Compare the stupid dinner-party of the moderns with the joviality of Parliament, revelling into the small hours. For, indeed, there has been a great deal of wisdom as well as valour and goodness in this poor distressful country, and her history, when you, or men such as you, dig it out like gold from the depths of our manuscripts and printed archives, will prove, in a sense you can now little realise, veritably a light to your feet and a lamp to your path, and more, far more than their Bible was to the heroic Puritan race, whose



blood, too, flows in your veins. The spirit of old Noll, too, is here alive to-day, and works for ever in the heart of this Irish nation—that spirit so brave, tender, and refined, of whom some of us might cease telling lies, and with benefits innumerable draw near to and study, last and greatest of Christian men.

And of this, too, be certain, that of you so working, and though far away from the noisy and inane world of politics, the light will not be hidden but seen afar and approached from all sides. Consider the growth of the great mediæval monasteries, renowned centres of learning and piety. St. Kevin, sick of the world and the world's ways, fleeing from the wrath of God, hies him to the wild fastnesses of Glendalough, there to study, pray, and till the earth. But he cannot be hid. Men in this sixth century, searching for wisdom, as now men search for hardly anything, even diamonds, find him out in his solitude, will not let him rest, he must teach them, guide them, rule them, a little band of godly brothers. And so their small fraternity grows and grows, becomes a famous monastery and school, and from all lands students in thousands flock thither, crossing mountains and stormy seas, seeing the light from afar. Pleasant Thackeray laughs, as he well might. Very weak he, in mediæval history, very incredulous of mediæval nobleness and enthusiasm. Let other laughers look into their Bede, Irish history lying still immured in her own archives and manuscripts. The spirit that filled St. Kevin, and that peopled the wilds of Glendalough with multitudes, so different from those who now in ceaseless droves, stung



by some gadfly, rush thither perpetually to gape at the mountains and the lakes, has long since withdrawn, or passed elsewhere. The swarming life there, the noise of the schools, the converse of the wise, the hymning and chaunting all silent now, teacher and student alike vanished, as their wooden huts and wattled booths vanished, as one day will vanish the huts of the great common of Kildare, where the incredulous New Zealander will perhaps see or believe in nothing but the rolling billowy green.

To you, too, now, the times call trumpet-tongued, a rotten anarchic world calls, to run for its salvation a kindred course, exhibit kindred virtues. You, too, will turn your back on this devil-ridden world, and in wastes and solitudes, with a spirit like theirs, but for purposes truer and nobler, form there a power with which you may conquer back Ireland in the first instance. Where you lead many will follow. Your light, so it be pure and fed on the right fuel, will not be hid, will in turn beget kindred lights ; stars of heaven's own fire, here and there over a benighted land, as here and there, Patrician or Columban, the old saints lit theirs, till the land shone, and dwellers by the Baltic and the far Danube saw it and blessed it, and from remote Iceland and the banks of the Nile ardent youth ran thither to learn, and pious elders came here to die. And as far and farther travelled Irish saints, kindling fire as they went, across Cimmerian Europe—Europe still dimly recognising the fact.

For I would not have you forget that, in a sense, your mission is a world one, and by no means exclusively for

your own order, or even your own nation. The plough to which I invite you to turn your hands, with forward-looking eyes, is the same plough to which the Son of Mary, so called in our monuments, set His, and drawn by the same immortal steeds. You will plough, harrow, and sow, not for yourself, or this Irish nation, but for all kindreds and tongues, as, once rightly at work, you will ere long perceive. For not alone will your industries, small and commonplace at first, send out shoots in directions most unexpected, ramifying afar, and in modes astonishing to yourself, but co-operation and aid will come from unknown quarters, and the most distant lands. So labouring, you will find that, begrimed though you be with the black of Mayo bogs, and though breaking your heart amongst awkward and mutinous squads of the Paddy-from-Cork species, inevitable Necessity, on her side, has been lacing to your strong shoulders, not the burthen of your afflicted class and ruinous nation, but of the whole world. St. Christopher undertook to carry a child across the stream—only a little wailing infant. But it was no child. And if this utterance seems hard and inexplicable to you, mind it not. Just do your duty in the plain sense in which you understand it.

For the path of duty which leads so far, to heights and depths mysterious and terrible, in this mysterious existence of ours, has always too a significance the most commonplace, and a meaning apprehensible by the most ordinary understanding, issues which more often than not figure as pence or things that can be seen, felt, handled, tasted, and found good. And this right path which I

invite you to enter needs for its justification no reference by me to things remote or for ulterior purposes. The commonest common sense, the most evident and familiar prudence, supply a sufficient justification. If you would make hay while the sun shines, and put money in your purse while money is procurable, you will act so, pretermittin', perhaps wisely ignoring, for the time, all thought of ulterior aims. In a few years at most those rents which constitute the revenue of your little kingdom or industrial republic will have ceased to flow. This agrarian democracy now with great strides advancing to absolute power, will, on one pretext or another, have whittled them away. If you are wise you won't spend them upon sport or vice, dissipation or aimless hospitalities, upon dogs, horses, bitches, yachts, elections, foxes, or flunkies, nor roll them together with unmanly parsimony, hoping hereafter to utilise them as capital in a far-off land, where you, an exile, may, under strange conditions, begin a new life, these precious years all gone. You will use them here and now in the creation of personal property, and in the building up of a force that will defend you and it. As I forecast the future of Ireland, while I see that real property will melt, will be ravaged away from its owners, at least in the form of rent, I perceive with equal clearness that personal property will, amongst us, and so far as it harmonises with the interests of any considerable number, be conspicuously secure. In countries like England, filled with a vast wage-receiving proletariat, personal property is not secure—anything but. If you spend your rents in the employment of labour and the creation

of personal property you will do well, and if you employ your labour, not on commercial principles, but on principles of justice, you will do better, for around that property and around yourself you will have erected a defence, not of stones or of dykes, perishable, planted with perishable hawthorn or quickset, or of mere parchment laws of the piecrust kind, but a defence of favouring opinion, a living enduring rampart, true and loyal men.

So far with regard to yourself and your interests, the policy which you shall most wisely adopt, in order that you, upturn as a landlord, may again drive deep roots in your native land, not borne seaward on the whirling flood. But simultaneously, and while you labour for yourself, see what a well-fenced city of refuge amid the revolutionary deluge, you will have provided for the scattered waifs and remnants of your class, fleeing for their lives, to those at least of them who may show themselves worthy of an open gate, or who on trial may be found reclaimable and fit for your service.

And of this be sure, that even amongst Irish landlords, amidst this ignoble herd of men, transformed to hogs, sheep, donkeys, around the feet of the enchantress Circe, brave men and true are there, though transformed. Though now with such dull brute faces they gaze from their styes and stalls misnamed places, castles, halls, etc., still under such bestial disguises beat human hearts, warmed yet by many a scarlet rivulet of the old heroic blood, throb still human brains from which the cup and rod of the enchantress have not yet erased will, intellect, and shame. Very sad are those faces that look out on

me and you—yearning, wistful, unfathomably expressive, full of an unspeakable sorrow, standing there enchanted, as with a dumb but terrible cry, calling for deliverance. Dear friend, you must deliver them ; you, or no man. You will, in your own person, by your own courage and strength, the grace of God assisting, conquer the enchantress and deliver your brothers and comrades. Reject the cup. It all lies in that. You know the old story.

You, or no man. Through you must be breathed the breath of life into this dead and fossilised Irish patriciate. Not a prophet working miracles, but an archangel calling in thunder, could do it—but you can ; you, or no man. Who, ever again, while the world rolls, will speak as to the princes and rulers of Jewry spoke the son of Amos, or as he who walked and prophesied by the river Chebar ? And, after all, what availed their thunderings and threatenings, their immortal fire blazing as heaven's lightnings ? We, too, have Moses and the prophets, and what boots it ? Not from man's mouth, I clearly understand, blows the breath that can make dead things live. It exhales from deeds done, from a life led, exhales mysteriously from the body and soul, the actual living personality of brave men doing bravely brave things, doing wisely wise things. The spoken word, the written word, are here ineffectual, idle as the waste winds that howl and hiss across this Irish valley of the dead. Will these dead bones live ? The answer is with you. The deed done, the life led, the actual living presence of one strong brave man, doing faithfully, doing conspicuously the work those remnants of humanity and their sires so



fouly shirked. This is the key, and this alone is the key which will unlock the divine gates, and loose for them the breath of life.

Without solicitation from you, now from this county, now from that, brought back miraculously to life by you, brave men like yourself, the charm undone, will start as if from tombs and do likewise, hearing your cry as on the ears of runaway soldiers strikes the cry of the standard-bearer, hidden amid the ranks of the foe, the call, not of an orator or a writer, but of a man quitting himself like a man in a man's work, bearing the standard, facing death with the standard in his hand. Here and there all Ireland over will arise, never doubt it, men whose voices will not be heard on platforms, or whose letters seen in the newspapers, and who will give politics and politicians a very wide berth indeed. A very ugly animal is the politician. "*Fænum habet in cornu.*" Mad, my masters, or worse. By degrees you will find out your true friends, or they will find out you, with much mutual help arising out of the recognition and much mutual encouragement. If one is overwhelmed by local anarchy, the spirit of mutiny and disorder too strong for him, you will send your trained men to help him, or he will do the same for you ; or you will help each other in funds or otherwise, gradually combining, coalescing, join together under central control. Though you and they should perish, as sure as God lives, your work will not ; though your bodies be riddled with bullets or your brains strewn on the earth from the spades of savage hinds, be sure that no bullet can end its life or savage hinds destroy. So felt and so worked the old



Christians and the great English Reformers. "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley ; we will this day light a fire in England which the world will never quench," and to a task greater than theirs I summon you. Paganism is dead and gone this many a day, slain here by a man as brave and good as ever trod the earth. Consider in what spirit he wrought, the son of Calpurn here too on this Irish soil. These are his words—sealed by deeds :

"I beseech Him to grant me that with these proselytes and captives I may pour out my blood for His name, even if my body should be denied burial and be miserably torn limb from limb by dogs or fierce beasts, or though the birds of the air should devour it."

And again :

"I daily expect either death or some treachery or slavery."

And once more, and touching the principles on which he expended his money, and he seems to have been rich—rich enough to have hired little armies for the defence of his proselytes, of noble birth, too, and high connections.

"For although I have baptized so many thousand men, did I expect even half a screpall (scruple) from them ? Tell me, and I will restore it to you. Or, when the Lord ordained clergy through my humble ministry and services, did I not confer the grace without reward ? If I have asked of any even the value of my shoe, tell me and I will repay ; I rather spent for you as far as I was able."

And so around and after this man arose the Irish nation like the moon-stirred tides of the sea, or as in the Greek

fable stocks and stones followed that primæval chanter of celestial melodies, for truth and courage, love and justice, and the perception and enactment of the divine laws are the deepest music and the strongest. The other that enters through the ear is but a type and an echo. The spirit in which the Reformers worked you know. Well, Paganism is long since dead, and mediæval superstition, swollen up these modern times as with dropsies, is dying. She has been to the wars, the termagant, and come home, not with victory perched on her banners. She carries lead in her heart ; never mind the galvanic contortions. Now and here the foes with whom we are called upon to grapple as for life and death are so different. Anarchy as wide as the world, shoreless and bottomless, not here only but everywhere. Materialism, the gross and sensual perception of things grossly and sensually pleasant, and of those alone ; and like a thin bright varnish, Hypocrisy, political, commercial, social, and religious, concealing from the vulgar eye whither all these things tend. A world, rotting from top to bottom and from centre to surface, with hardly a part or atom where the stream of life still throbs, summons you to its aid, and not at all generally, but here in your own land, where moulders the dust of so many generations of brave men, your ancestors, who in their time did actually do the work to which the times called them. For unless you approach this work in the same spirit as that which filled the saints and heroes of old, better not approach it at all.

Once well entered on your task, aiding influences innumerable will be on your side, influences good and bad,

but all of which, I hope, will be good to you. This foolish modern world, stuffed with newspaper views of things, and drunk with novels and sham poetry, is ever ready to fall into maudlin ecstasies over any indication of generosity and unselfishness, especially if exhibited in men at all conspicuous for rank and birth. High birth at all times implies high worth, and a life, as poet Keats writes, "high-sorrowful" with noble labour for noble things. All this was once taken as a matter of course. The ceaseless, heroic energy of the old barons and chiefs, fighting, ruling, organising, till the flame of life flickered down, was nothing thought of by others or themselves. It was all in the day's work, like the praying of the monk and the digging of the hind. Nowadays if a Gordon throws himself into a dangerous position and exhibits some quaint Christian qualities, or a Shaftesbury tries to run a drain or two through the Dismal Swamp of London pauperism and vice, the world falls into a trance and delirium of exquisite emotion. There are rich old women of both sexes who would pour out a very Pactolus of gold for men of rank doing the work to which I invite you. Of funds for your work there will be no lack, depend upon that. If your rents are not sufficient to develop your enterprises, gold enough will come to you from all points of the compass; gold, till you cry: "Hold, enough!" This pecuniary side of the business is really the smallest, its importance hardly of the bigness of a speck. Of far more importance to you, and of infinitely more value, will be the volunteers, the brave and the good, who will gather around you. They are born everywhere. Fecund Nature pours

them from her deep womb in ceaseless streams. They issue for ever upon the earth, and generally in these days go to the devil in one form or another. Some become Anglican clergymen or monks, following those old will-o'-the-wisp lights till they perish in worse than Serbonian bogs ; some take to politics, Radical politics generally, and Mr. Henry George, inflamed with visions of revolutionary paradises presided over by a Prince of Peace ; some to literature, poetry, and art, and lay their bones around the feet of that Queen of the Sirens,

She who rose  
The tallest of them all and fairest.

Others, baulked, crossed, disappointed, unable to harmonise heroic imaginings with a most unheroic and scornful world, take to whisky and water, or set sail for the Isle of Paphos, where just now, if we except the whisky opening, lies the broadest and most inviting of the avenues to Avernus. All perish for lack of a career, for lack of men braver, stronger, and wiser than themselves, who will lead them and rule them. For they are all children of the light, not of the dark ; youths who see the light, its beauty, and feel its sovereign vital lamp, though without guidance, loving care, chastisement too, they cannot walk in it. Volunteers, I say, of all kinds and types will flock towards you ; youths brave and bold, high-spirited, of mettle and honour, gracious, too, and gentle, the man-ruling born captains of the world ; youths with plotting, planning, deep-calculating brains, scientific or otherwise ; tongues of fire, that can inflame men with their own burning zeal, tongues dropping words

of wisdom in the secret ear ; youths studious and literary (don't forget this one great task of the future Ireland's history) ; men and minds of many types and of all types, see that you make yourself fit to be their king. As sure as I write these words they will gather to you from the north, the south, the east, and the west, out of Ireland, and out of all lands.

There are many other things which I would like to bring under your notice, but the subject has a sort of infinite character, branching off in directions numberless. For the present, at least, I have perhaps written sufficient ; and I know that little, very little, depends on the extent or power of the language used by me. All will come from the heart, conscience, and imagination of you, your courage, energy, and wisdom, the good grace assisting of Him who fashioned of old—surely for some high purpose—this sea-girt land of ours, here in the wild Western main, and has guided so far upon its road this wayward Irish race, ever onward and upward—guided and also compelled, driven many times as with fiery whips, for it is a tameless people this, none on the earth's surface in such need of the whip and rein, having, indeed, much of the wild ass in its composition—ever onward and upward through the centuries, as I clearly see ; but whether upward still or straight down to perdition will depend, I say it most seriously and deliberately, on you, dear friend, to whom He has given understanding and material power, and to whom sent for final warning this last and most terrible of all prophets—Revolution-prophet and executioner in one. Ireland and her destinies hang upon you, literally

so. Either you will re-fashion her, moulding us anew after some human and heroic pattern, or we plunge downwards into roaring revolutionary anarchies, where no road or path is any longer visible at all. And, dear friend, a word at parting : Make haste.



## MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS



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### WALT WHITMAN: THE POET OF JOY

A spirit of melancholy pervades modern society. It is not superficial or ephemeral. It has got into the blood and penetrated to the bones and marrow. The modern man habituates himself in black, and hates gay colours as the owl hates the light of the sun.

There is an almost complete absence of joyfulness in our literature. What do our books tell of life? Do they represent existence as a boon? Do they bless the world and declare it a good thing to be alive? No. Our intellectual masters and pastors take a lugubrious view of the situation. They are overwhelmed with a sense either of the nothingness of things, or of the vastness of the weight which destiny has laid on our shoulders. What light-hearted but imaginative and intelligent person can read Carlyle or Ruskin without rejecting all *gaieté de cœur* as a sin and disgrace in this world of awful eternal verities. These doleful prophets, with minds so constituted that in the broad sunshine they must see darkness, are our accepted teachers. Once a person accustoms himself to the reflection that in all beauty something ugly lies hidden, the thought of ugliness will be presented every day and every moment. Ruskin

is evidently more affected by the oyster shells in the stream than the pretty stream itself, and the sombre and funereal imagination of Carlyle extends itself over the whole universe. Read the "French Revolution." Who in perusing that powerful performance could imagine that France was a sunny country? Thick darkness seems to brood over Paris, lit now and again by a glaring and unnatural light revealing wild features and rushing crowds with the tocsin sounding wildly through the gloom. The fact being that there were probably during the whole time of which he treats only a few dark days, while the rest were as sunny as the pleasantest day in June amongst ourselves.

The invasion of melancholy has been prepared from afar. It began with Byron and his contemporaries. Their predecessors were happier. Even poor Cowper was prepared to take a cheerful view of things if only fate would let him. He was wretched in himself; not because he deemed the world a place unfit for happiness. With what honest and wholesome satisfaction he portrays rural life, not as a source of high and grandiose thoughts and emotions, such as Wordsworth describes himself as enjoying, but simply because it was delightful to live in the country! How genuine and human is the way in which he speaks of common household pleasures—the making and pouring out of the fragrant lymph, the arrival of the newspapers and letters, and all those common sources of satisfaction which a man can always enjoy without the fear that he is doing anything foolish! After Cowper came a solitary and doleful brood:—Shelley: a stricken

hind, a wandering Jew ; Byron : a great secluded soul darkly communing with the cloud ; Wordsworth : trudging over the hills by himself, commercing in thought with the spirit of the universe, but not particularly polite or agreeable ; Coleridge : logician, metaphysician, bard, but so wretched that he had to consume narcotics ; Keats : bent, indeed, on perceiving beauty, but only as an idealist, and with a view to poetic purpose—" a slovenly slack-looking youth." These be our gods. They were undoubtedly men of genius and of a high and remarkable nature, but we have all our faults, and that of these men was melancholy, a tendency to solitude, whose evil effects even men of genius are not suffered to escape any more than common people. They did not go freely with " powerful, uneducated persons," to use the strange language of the man, whose name stands at the head of this paper. Except Shelley and Byron, they were all rather unfit for general society, and if not communing with the stars, and engaged in looking down upon the world, preferred the company of persons like themselves—persons suffering more or less from depression, and not likely to laugh at them or their follies.

A taste for melancholy once acquired remains long. Dark, sombre, or ghastly personages rise to take the place of those who have retired, and the literature of gloom does not seem likely to die out from among us yet. Poetry, like all art, should be the flower and blossom of things. At present it seems a mildew and rot, attacking the vigour, if not the existence, of the plant of which it ought to be the crowning excellence.

In such an epoch and in such a country the appearance of literature which expresses happiness and communicates happiness ought surely to be a welcome event, at least to all those who see the fatal defect in current books.

I shall not waste words in the endeavour to prove that Walt Whitman is a poet, and one of high order. In the first magazines and by the first literary persons in this country he has been saluted as such. I desire to call attention to the nature of his distinguishing merits, and first and beyond all others I would set this, that he always represents life as a boon beyond price, and is ever ready to invoke a blessing on his natal day. Doubtless he, too, has doleful moments, but these, and thoughts arising from these, he refuses to allow to stain the richness and beauty of his work. What will gladden and invigorate the mind is that which he undertakes to give expression to, and he has charged himself "to sing contentment and triumph."

Poets, doubtless, are to a considerable extent liars and palm off occasional moods as the prevailing temper of their minds ; but after a long and close study of Whitman it is my opinion that the character of his life is reflected in his poetry as truly as that of any modern poet has been reflected in his. It is this in Whitman that is most admirable and most beneficent.

Here at last is happiness and delight in this our sub-lunary existence. To Whitman the world is no vale of tears. After all, deny it who will, this universe, to a person of a perfect organisation, mental and bodily, is infinitely and inexpressibly glorious, and when it appears



otherwise, as to John Mill, we argue some obliquity of mind.

Whitman is unceasingly gay, and fresh, and racy. He speaks of common things, and men, and the common sights of everyday life, and yet he is always artistic. The things he observes are significant and such as arrest the eye and mind, and make a deep mark in the memory. He expresses more than happiness, he expresses exultation. The two hemispheres of the soul he describes as love and dilation or pride :—

I was Manhattanesse, friendly, and proud.

And so he often uses the word arrogant in a good sense. His poems teem with such words as superb, perfect, gigantic, divine. At his touch the dry bones of our meagre humanity are transformed, and man starts forth like a god, in body and in soul superhuman. The blurring, concealing mist peels away, and we see a new heaven and a new earth. It is no longer a mean thing to be a man. From a hundred points he comes back always to this, that man is great and glorious, not little and contemptible. For you to-day who read my poems he reminds us, this noble planet that travels round the sun gradually cohered from the nebulous float, and passed through all its initial and preparatory stages. He must be of importance for whose reception preparations so vast—preparations that extended through millions of years—have been undergone. Now at last the guest has arrived, and that guest of the Universe is the reader.

Or again, he will ask us if we think that the music exists in the catgut, and the hollow of the flute, or in the keys

of the piano. And his answer is No, it is in your self the music is. You are the real source of the harmony. These things external to you only serve to awake it in your own soul, where it slumbered. Why do you think those creeds and religions of such enormous importance. They grew out of you as the leaves out of a tree. You shook them from you as the tree shakes away her dead leaves. It is you that are so great, not the religions, for out of you they have all proceeded. Are you enamoured of mighty architecture, or of the splendid appearance of nature—the vast sea, the noble rivers, the waterfalls, the forests?—all these are but manifestations of your own soul. Something external to you affects the eye and the soul, and this is the result. It is your own body and mind which have given birth to these glorious appearances. It is you that are the wonder, not they.

But even exultation is not enough to satisfy the boundless ambition of this man. There is in him a suggestion of something enormous, something bursting the limits of mundane existence and pouring around on all sides, invading the supernatural world, in which, unlike most literary men, he seems fully to believe. The supernatural world is not to him a vague far-away sphere with which we have no practical connection. It is around him and its inhabitants are around him; they are only a sphere beyond. Man passes into that world carrying with him all that he has acquired in the body and in the soul in this world. To express this he employs a remarkable metaphor. "Not the types set up by the printer return their impression, the meaning, the main concern,

any more than a man's substance and life, or a woman's substance and life, return in the body and in the soul indifferently before death and after death."

Thus death is more the beginning than the end. What it includes is glorious, but what it begins is divine. Whitman is a mystic. He pours a glamour over the world. From the supernatural sphere, so natural to him, strange light is shed that transfigures the universe before his eyes and before ours.

The sympathy of Whitman is boundless—not man alone or animals alone, but brute inanimate nature is absorbed and assimilated in his extraordinary personality. Often we think one of the elements of nature has found a voice and thunders great syllables in our ears. He speaks like something more than man—something tremendous. Something that we know not speaks words that we cannot comprehend. He is not over-anxious to be understood. No man comprehends what the twittering of the redstart precisely means, or can express clearly in definite language the significance of the rising sun. He is too elemental and a part of nature—not merely a clever man writing poems.

It is said of Hugo that his praises of Paris are not meant to be true of the actual city ; that it is the ideal Paris he lauds so roundly—Paris as he would have her, as her sons ought to make her. Doubtless there is also a great deal of that spirit in Whitman's praises of America. His Poems will hold up a beautiful ideal to which the people shall aspire.

The splendid promise of those huge states has excited

in him admiration and wonder of the deepest and sincerest character. The practical acknowledgment of a quality in all relations of life, enormous territories over which the Flag of the Union floats, the terrible war so bravely fought and the excision for ever of the canker of slavery from American soil, the perpetual influx of immigrants from all parts of the world, the energy, vigour and intelligence of all native Americans, the combination of central and local government, the enormous and rapid advance of material civilisation, the noble cities that start up in desolate regions within the compass of a few years, the numerous ports and maritime cities and the vast mercantile marine necessary to support the rapidly increasing commerce of the country, the mighty rivers that traverse the land, and the vast uninhabited territories of the interior and the West, which the ploughshare and the woodman's axe are rapidly invading—all this has wondrously stirred and fired the imagination of Whitman.

Whitman lays strong emphasis on physical happiness and those forms of spiritual pleasure which are most closely allied with the physical. This has been to many a stumbling block and rock of offence. Scholastic and monkish views have evidently not yet disappeared. In real life the importance of physique and of physical health and the irresistible attractions of mere beauty are always recognised. They must be recognised. They make their mark as irresistibly as gravitation or any of the known laws of nature. Yet in our higher literature all this has been neglected for sentiment and the cultiva-

tion of pure and delicate emotions. A return to nature has been imperatively called for ; and Whitman, not a moment too soon, has appeared singing the body electric.

The intellectualism which has marked the century—the cultivation of sentiment and the emotions—threatened to enfeeble and emasculate the educated classes. The strong voice of Whitman, showing again and again, in metaphors and images, in startling, vivid, memorable language, the supreme need of sweet blood and pure flesh, the delight of vigour and activity and of mere existence where there is health, the pleasures of mere society even without clever conversation, of bathing, swimming, riding, and the inhaling of pure air, has so arrested the mind of the world that a relapse to scholasticism is no longer possible.

And yet Whitman, though he cries out for “ muscle and pluck,” untainted flesh and clear eyes, is very far from being a mere lover of coarse material pleasures. He is a poet and that says enough. His eyes see beauty, his ear hears music, all things grow lovely under his hand ; deformity, ugliness, and all things miserable and vile disappear. His touch transmutes them. I have said he is elemental and more than once, the wonder he expresses at the sight of Nature transforming things loathsome into beauty by her own sweet alchemy excites the thought that this poet desires to exert the same influence. The vast charity of the earth has struck him as it has struck one other, and the sight of the rain falling on the fields of the unjust as well as on those of the just. He, too, will

be compassionate and impartial as Nature, making no mean and invidious distinctions. As the sun pours down his light on poor and rich, educated and uneducated alike. His sympathy embraces all, but especially those that work with their hands and spend their lives in the open air. He wanders along the docks and stops to watch the ship carpenters work, seeing each tool employed and learning the nature of each operation, and so wherever he goes his sympathy is attracted principally by persons who labour at manual tasks. In our own country, where Democratic ideas have never leavened the whole population, in which Republicanism and the sentiment of equality are more a conscious effort than well understood and universally recognised principles, the labouring classes cannot be expected to produce as many interesting specimens of humanity as the American masses can supply. Whitman talks frequently of their fine bearing, their bold and kindly manners, the look they have as of men who had never stood in the presence of a superior, the fluency of their conversation, the picturesque looseness of their carriage, the freshness and energy of their countenances. I think that, making all allowances for poetic licence, there is and must be a great deal of truth in this. Could any Englishman describe the labouring classes of England in such terms? In the carriage of the English workingman there may be stolidity and pluck, but certainly no picturesque looseness, certainly none of that bold, careless, frank, audacious, talkative disposition which Whitman claims for his countrymen.

Have you ever remarked that an animal is always graceful,



that all its movements and attitudes are beautiful. However the horse stands or moves he is always beautiful to look at : whether falling asleep before a forge-door, or pricking back his ears, or turning round his head to look back, or grazing in the field, or stooping to drink, or struggling up a steep hill, the great masses of muscle on his thighs quivering and writhing. He is never awkward or disagreeable to look at. So also in the workman is there always a certain *naïveté* and picturesqueness. There is something in his movements and words comparable to the beauty and gracefulness of animals. This it is that has so affected Whitman. Words simple as grass, lawless as snowflakes, sun-tan, freckles, unshorn beards, the beauty of wood-boys and all natural persons, the fisherman in the shallow water supported on strong legs, the butcher's boy breaking down in his repartee, the dark countenances of the miners, the vast native thoughts seen in smutched faces, the giant negro lolling on the car-load of corn—all the simple employments and operations in which the common people are engaged, and the different aspects they present, perpetually recur to him and arrest his mind at all times. It was this that first produced the impression that he was an uneducated man. On the contrary, no English poet, except perhaps Shelley, was so well acquainted with all that could be learned from books. But they give expression to their learning in widely different ways. Shelley's knowledge did not appear in his poetry, it went to feed his idealism and egotism. Whitman's appears as a natural growth. He alludes to the solar system and the formation of the

earth, and to what he has learned from travellers and ethnologists as he alludes to the apple-blossoms or any other common thing. No poet ever assimilated his knowledge so well as Whitman or so vitalised it with his own large and joyous life.

Thus beyond all others he is the poet of the day. He knows all that can be known by one person of the stored accumulation of the *savants*, and this knowledge appears in his works as poetry. The extraordinary raciness of his language—the love of nature and of common things and men—deceived the world at first, and the opinion went abroad that he was himself a member of the labouring classes and utterly untinged by books.

Whitman thinks little of learning and culture as such. He believes strongly in the superiority of the present time over all other times. It alone exists. All other times, past and future, with all that they have produced, are but the decorations and ornaments of the time which now is, the living, breathing, speaking man; the living moment as it flies, is the reality—the thing of importance. Remote literatures, past times and events, buried nations, and all that is not present, circle subservient around this. The apostrophising school creeds, literatures, and the language-makers on other shores in other times, he commands them to retire for a space and let him and America speak out now with original energy, with a vigour growing directly out of the present, incarnating the actual moment as it fleets by, inspired with the time-spirit and the genius of the hour. Every simile, thought, word which does not seem to him to represent the genius of the hour, which

does not incarnate himself and America, he rejects, and words which all others reject find their place in his poems, as acts and persons ignored by others appear there too. They represent Nature and the realities and actualities of our mundane existence, and he has vowed to all Nature to speak out now, with "original energy," and to trust for guidance to her and to the artistic sense, which, as a poet, he must possess. And so in his poems we have learning indeed, but strangely transfigured—not the learning represented by the stuffed birds and animals and preserved lizards of the museum—no dry and withered accumulation of facts, but a knowledge instinct with the freshness and beauty of real life.

There seems in Whitman to be this detraction from his genius that he works after ideals and models in a conscious manner. His notions on the subject are singularly profound and just, but one is prejudiced slightly against poetry which may be the result of effort, and the striving after a preconceived ideal. Whitman sees that in everyday life one must be natural in order to please, that there is an indescribable charm and freshness about persons who are natural. And so with industry prepense he labours to be so and to appear so. The master-artist is he who unites simplicity to genius. "You shall not contemplate the flight of the grey gull over the harbour, nor the mettlesome action of the blood-horse, nor the tall leaning of the sunflower upon his stalk, nor the appearance of the sun journeying through the heavens, nor the appearance of the moon afterwards, nor any greater satisfaction than you shall behold him." This is true;

but alas ! the more one is resolved to sleep, the more does sleep fly from the eyes. Simplicity is unconscious, while a strong resolution is eminently the reverse. Certainly one cannot detect affection in Whitman. He has at all events attained honesty. But the simplicity which would make him welcome to that class in the community which he more particularly affects he has not attained. The common people, whom he likes most, and who most like him, are not those who can comprehend or care for his poems. The young woodman will not be as ready to take "Leaves of Grass" with him as Whitman fondly deems, and however affected by the charm of "the red-faced girl," will but poorly relish the Adamic poetry.

Whitman professes to condemn culture and education, yet he is a perfect representative of both. It is the cultivated classes who receive and recognise him, and it is to them that he is beneficial. He is subtle, profound, psychological, a mystic. He is nothing if not metaphysical, nothing if not erudite. "Grey-necked, forbidding, he has arrived at last to be wrestled with as he passes for the solid prizes of the Universe" ; but the wrestlers will be the literary man and the scholar. He tries the muscle of the brains of young men, but only muscles that have been previously developed in literary and intellectual exercises. For the educated classes he is a splendid exercise, but to them, and to them alone, does he belong. He sees everything with the eye of a cultivated poet and philosopher—with the eyes of a man who knows much and can give a reason for the faith that is in him.

Of the new ideas which Whitman has cast as seed into

the American brain the importance which he attaches to friendship is the most remarkable. This appears to be a subject over which he has brooded long and deeply. It is not possible that Whitman could have written as he has upon this and kindred subjects if he were merely a cultivated brain and nothing more. A thin-blooded, weak-spirited man may, doubtless, like Swedenborg, strike profound truths through sheer force of intellect, or may use violent and swelling language with little dilatation in his spirit ; but there is a genuineness and eloquence in Whitman's language concerning friendship which preclude the possibility of the suspicion that he uses strong words for weak feelings. It must not be forgotten that, though now latent, there is in human nature a capacity for friendship of a most absorbing and passionate character. The Greeks were well acquainted with that passion, a passion which in later days ran riot and assumed abnormal forms ; for the fruit grows ripe first, then over-ripe, and then rots. In the days of Homer friendship was an heroic passion. The friendship of Achilles and Patroclus was for many centuries the ideal after which the young Greeks fashioned their character. Nowadays friendship means generally mere consentaneity of opinions and taste. With the Greeks it was a powerful physical feeling, having physical conditions. Beauty was one of those conditions, as it is now between the sexes. In the dialogues of Plato we see the extraordinary nature of the friendship formed by the young men of his time. The passionate absorbing nature of the relation, the craving for beauty in connection with it, and the approaching



degeneracy and threatened degradation of the Athenian character thereby, which Plato vainly sought to stem both by his own exhortations, and by holding up the powerful example of Socrates.

There cannot be a doubt but that with highly developed races friendship is a passion, and like all passions more physical than intellectual in its sources and modes of expression.

I will sing the song of companionship, I will show what  
finally must compact these (the States).

I believe these are to found their own ideal of manly love  
indicating it in me.

I will therefore let flame from me the burning fires that were  
threatening to consume me.

I will lift what has too long kept down these smouldering  
fires.

I will give them complete abandonment. I will write the  
evangel-poem of comrades and love. For who but I  
should understand love with all its sorrow and joy ?

And who but I should be the poet of comrades ?

This is strong language and doubtless genuine. Pride and love, I have said, Whitman considers the two hemispheres of the brain of humanity, and by love he means not alone benevolence and wide sympathy and the passion that embraces sexual relation, but that other passion, which has existed before and whose latent strength the American poet here indicates as a burning and repressed flame. Elsewhere he speaks of the sick, sick dread of unreturned friendship, of the comrade's kiss, the arm around the neck—but he speaks to sticks and stones, and the emotion does not exist in us, and the language of his evangel-poems appear simply disgusting.



Too much has been said both by me and others on Whitman's admiration of physical beauty, and of his love of muscle and pluck, of his hymns in honour of common things, common pleasures, and labouring men. To attain a just conception of the scope and objects of Whitman it is necessary to read all his works, for he more than other poets contradicts himself and baffles those who would pluck out the heart of his mystery at the first introduction. The "Democratic Vistas" should be read by every person who desires to understand this poet. There he will find none of the muscle and pluck doctrine, but an eager brooding, anxious pondering over and statement of the great problem of how to spiritualise and refine the gross, crude, vulgar American mind, with its wealth of material power and vigour and of mental rapidity and cunning, and its indescribable poverty of sweetness and depth of soul. Here is put strongly forward a side of Whitman's nature which the attentive reader might know to exist from his perusal of the "Leaves of Grass" and the "Passage to India," but which the careless student could hardly suspect. In the whole of that magnificent composition not one word is uttered in praise of muscular development and personal beauty and vigour; but the requirements of the American soul are eloquently expounded and declared. It is there that occurs the extraordinary passage in which, with the scathing fire and indignant scorn which animated the Hebrew bards, when they denounced the wickedness of Jerusalem, he lays bare the depths of the degradation, moral turpitude, and rottenness which lie hid beneath the

splendour and beauty of the great city of New York—the gorgeous shows of the merchants behind vast crystal plates, the sparkling and hurrying tides of Manhatta, the forests of masts that line the quays, the tall façades of marble and iron, the splendid works of the engineers, the crowding millions of well-costumed, well-fed, well-housed people, and under all that, a soul hard, cold and dead.

Under a mask of extravagance, of insane intensity, Whitman preserves a balance of mind and a sanity such as no poet since Shakespeare has evinced. If his sympathies were fewer he would go mad. Energy and passion so great, streaming through few and narrow channels, would burst all barriers. His universal sympathies have been his salvation, and have rendered his work in the highest degree sane and true. He is always emphatic, nay violent, but then he touches all things. Life is intense to him, and the fire of existence burns brighter and stronger than in other men. Thus he does his reader service : he seems out of the fulness of his veins to pour life into those who read him. He is electric and vitalising. All nature, books, men, countries, things, change in appearance as we read Whitman : they present themselves under new aspects and with different faces.

No poet since Shakespeare has written with a vocabulary so fruitful. Words the most crude and remote, words not quite naturalised from foreign countries, words used by the lowest of the people, teem in his works, yet without affectation. You can take away no word that he uses and substitute another without spoiling the sense and marring

the melody. For where Whitman seems roughest, rudest, most prosaic, there often is his language most profoundly melodious.

He is not always picturesque or pathetic or indignant : he does not always affect the beautiful or always the sublime. He changes rapidly. Moods alter like the melting moving clouds in the noble and profound poem entitled "Walt Whitman." The passionate intensity of the address to the "mad, naked summer night" is of an eloquence and power unequalled.

He is enigmatic. One can never say one quite understands him. He is incomprehensible but not confused. He has no hard statements, no frantic twaddle. He glances at what another would strike coarsely and violently : he plays and coruscates around his theme, but instead of sharp jets of light and keen scintillations he sheds abroad gorgeous changing lines that transfigure the cold earth. We forget that it is the place of graves, nay, more, we deny it. The muddy vesture of decay, the vale of tears, the mystery and the cruelty of things, move away like mists before the rising sun. He raises a paean—a note of gladness, clear and joyful as that of Chanticleer when he salutes the dawning day. His thoughts are the hymns of the praises of things. Old age is to him the noble estuary where the stream of life broadens and swells grandly to meet the infinite sea.

Whitman is pathetic. There are touches of pathos profounder and more tender in him than in any modern poet. One recalls the poem on the steamship *Arctic*. Going down—the thought of the last moment as it

drew on—the women huddled on the deck, then silence and the passionless wet flowing on—that idealism of wildest sorrow concluding with tears, tears, tears—the low voice and sob which he heard in a lull of the deafening confusion when the embattled States met in deadly conflict—the soldier's funeral, flooding all the ways as with music and tears, while the moon, like a mother's face in heaven grown brighter, looked down—the picture of the hospital and its fearful sights, and the flame that burned in the heart of the impassive operator, the deep sympathy with suffering and degradation at all times. If Whitman finds it a good thing to be alive it is not because he refuses to see the evil side of life, but because he would see the whole. "*Omnes, omnes*, let others ignore what they may."

Beautiful and perfect as the world appears, Whitman yet never regards it in the light of a house. Life and the world are always a wonder and a mystery to him. Vague influences, benign but awful, hover over and around him. The sound of the sea at night, the pale shimmer of the moonshine, the tossing of white arms out among the waves and the wash upon the shore exercise a weird influence upon his mind as on that of common men; a subduing, softening influence forbid a tone too familiar concerning the Universe and concerning man. Though Whitman professes to despise the slow, melancholy tone which he says pervades English literature, yet, too, like all the Northern races, he has the craving for sorrow. "Knowest thou the joys of the tender and lonesome heart?" He speaks with praise of the "proud and

melancholy races," and there is a very luxury of melancholy in "Word out of the Sea," and the lone singer on the shore of Panmanok wonderful causing tears. Strange, unapprehended influences pour themselves into the words of that great poem, which have never before found expression. Melancholy as one surfeited with joy to whom sorrow is now a deeper joy, woe with a heart of delight, flickering shadows that seem to live and hover beckoning over the scene, voices as from another world, blank desolation which we desire to be no other than it is, suffering and despair, though somehow it seems better than they should be: a poem whose meaning cannot be fathomed, whose beauty cannot be fully tasted—a mystic, unfathomable song.

Whitman says that they who most loudly praise him are those who understand him least. I, perhaps, will not come under the censure, though I do under the description; for I confess that I do not understand this man. The logical sense of the words, the appositeness and accuracy of the images, one can indeed apprehend and enjoy; but there is an undertone of meaning in Whitman which can never be fully comprehended. This, doubtless, is true of all first rate poetry; but it must be applied in a special sense to the writings of a man who is not only a poet but a mystic—a man who thoroughly enjoys this world, yet looks confidently to one diviner still beyond, who professes a passionate attachment to his friends, yet says that he has other friends, not to be seen with the eye, closer and nearer and dearer to him than these. The hardening, vulgarising influences of life have not

hardened and vulgarised the spiritual sensibilities of this poet, who looks at this world with the wondering freshness of a child, and to the world beyond with the gaze of a seer. He has what Wordsworth lost, and in his age comes trailing clouds of glory—shadows cast backward from a sphere which we have left, thrown forward from a sphere to which we are approaching.

He is the noblest literary product of modern times, and his influence is invigorating and refining beyond expression.



## AN EVENT OF WORLD HISTORY

The greatest event in all history occurred silently one night in the early summer of 479 B.C., in hollow Lacedæmon, on the banks of the Eurotas and in the little scattered, wide-lying, unwall'd City of Sparta. It happened quietly, naturally, like the bursting of a bud or the breaking of a wave.

Envoys from Athens had arrived with an urgent request from the Athenians to the Ephors to despatch an army into North Greece to defend them against the Persian enemy.

In the previous year, Xerxes, leading back his millions into Asia, had left behind him 300,000 men under Mardonius. In league with him, too, were Macedonia and the whole of North Greece, except Athens, and Mardonius was about to invade Attica.

The envoys were very urgent, passionately eloquent in their entreaty. The five middle-aged Ephors listened impassively. They wore rough home-spun clothing dyed the national colour, a deep red.

"He offered us the noblest terms," cried the envoys. "He promised to repair generously all the injuries inflicted upon us by Xerxes in his recent occupation and devastation of our country, promised to extend our territory and to receive us into his friendship and alliance as a Sovereign equal and independent Power."

Though unable to make resistance, we replied that "so long as the Sun held his course in the Heavens we would not desert the cause of the Greeks."

The middle-aged men demanded time for consideration three days. It was a grave request. Sparta did nothing without due deliberation. On the fourth they required three days more : it was a very grave request. Sparta had never before put forth her strength beyond the Isthmus.

On the eighth day they had not yet reached agreement. The patience of the passionate Athenians was worn out.

"If you do not give us a reply to-morrow at the rising of the sun we leave Sparta on the instant, and we shall counsel our countrymen to make terms with the foreigner."

They withdrew, raging, to their quarters. That day, far and wide, there was a certain movement, motion : the Spartan Empire was astir. That night there marched through and out of Sparta into the North 5,000 Spartans and 35,000 Helots, for war purposes as good as the Spartans, trained in their drill, and 10,000 Periæci, free men of famous Achæan stock, and 10,000 Helots of the Periæci. 60,000 in all, first-rate warriors ; the best men upon the Globe, perfect at their drill and weapons, and to whom, Helots and Periæci and Spartans alike, it was unlawful to leave the battlefield alive : contrary to the Law and therefore unthinkable.

The Athenians did not see them or hear them as they passed.

"Not hear ?"

"No. The sixty thousand went silently, like lightning. There was no sound of trampling from those 120,000

feet. Shoeless and sandalless were these antique braves, so trained as men and boys and children. It was one of their few laws."

The Moon was at the full : Sparta could only act then ! They passed in enomoties of twenty-five, eight a-breast, and the enomotarch : corselets, shields, helmets, the rows of long, sloping spears—enomoty after enomoty without end : a living torrent of drilled human valour, but unlike a torrent, silent : not a sound.

And the Sun rose, and the Athenians pale and determined, as silent and grave now as any Laconian man, hastened to the Ephoralty, and demanded an immediate answer to their ultimatum.

" We sent the army," replied the Ephors. " It marched in the night, and is already over the Arcadian frontier."

" Its strength ? " enquired the delighted Athenians, near weeping with joy.

" Sixty thousand," replied the crimson-clad, " having the due complement of peltasts (archers and slingers). There are more to follow."

The well-informed and intelligent Athenians were dumbfounded. Never before had such a force, or half or a third of such force, been put forth on Greek soil. The strength of Sparta was unknown : it was known now. The veiled war power stood unveiled, ready to act, and acting ; on the instant.

Sparta had been slow, seemingly, sluggish, inert, and apathetic ever since these Persian troubles began : motionless, like a boulder stone on a mountain side, like a cloud resting quietly and as if for ever on one of the peaks of

her own Taygetus. Then the hour arrived, and the moment, and the word of command from the Ephoralty, and Sparta went—like a thunderbolt.

The issue of the war for Mardonius and his 300,000 Persians was at that moment as sure as the fate of a heron held in chase by an eagle. The fate of Mardonius was sealed.

“ You speak of the Spartan Empire. The phrase is new to me. What was its extent ? ”

About the size of our County Mayo.

“ But it must have had vast wealth derived from commerce and manufacturing industries to support such a power.”

No. Not a seaport. No exports or imports at all.

“ You speak of their Laws as if known and familiar to all. I suppose they were writtten out and the MSS. studied in the schools.”

No. They were not written at all. They were alive, in men's hearts. No one in the Empire was able to read or write. The Ephors may have had a slave as their foreign secretary ; I don't think they had.

“ The Spartans were uneducated ? ”

Yes ; all illiterates. They would have been excluded from our polling booths, and from Australia. There was not a Primary School amongst them or an Intermediate, or a University. And the mothers of the 60,000 had been, as girls, brought up in a similar state of ignorance.

“ I think you cannot be quite serious.”

I am.

“ You surprise me speaking as you do about the Helots. I thought they were a poor wretched lot of down-trodden serfs, made to get drunk as educational object lessons, and so forth.”

So did I.

“ Their Helots, too, you say would not leave a battlefield alive.”

Yes. Consider this. Every one knows about Leonidas and his 300. It is not generally known that around Leonidas at Thermopylæ there perished not only the 300 Spartans but also 3,000 Spartan Helots ! Xerxes counted the slain, found them 4,000. There were 300 Spartans, 750 Thespians, a few Thebans : the rest, 3,000, were Helots.

“ If what you say is correct History would seem to be a kind of liar.”

A snob rather. Carlyle calls her “ a poor slut.”

“ The Spartans seem to have been a strange people.”  
Very.

## THE SILENT RACE

When Byron was brooding over the possibility of an insurgent and resurgent Greece, he thought especially of the Dorians, whether any true Dorian blood still ran there to answer the call of the captains, and thought there did.

“ On Suli’s steep and Parga’s shore  
Exists the remnant of a line  
Such as the Doric mothers bore :  
And here perhaps some seed is sown  
The Heracleidan blood might own.”

“ Heracleidan,” for the Doric-Spartan Chiefs claimed descent from Heracles.

When Milton saw the Satanic hosts pass in review under the eyes of their dread commander, their visages and stature as of gods, their order and discipline, their intricate rhythmic martial combination and separations, and felt in every sympathetic nerve the presence there of death-defying courage, of silent, resolved loyalty and bravery, he, too, thought of the Dorians :

“ Anon they move  
In perfect phalanx to the Doian mood  
Of flutes and soft recorders.”

Who were the Dorians ?

A little to the north of Delphi on the map of North Greece you will find a small, vacant white spot, showing



clear in the midst of the darkly-marked surrounding mountains. There a bowl-shaped hollow in the hills supplies the husbandman with a field for his labour. It is an alluvial valley and plain, good for corn and kine, for the apple and vine, the olive and the fig, a green land fit for the sustenance of man and beast, and traversed by many streams and rivulets descending from the hills which gird it round upon all sides. That little valley was the cradle and nursery of one of the world's great races, the mountain eyrie of an eagle brood.

At some time far beyond the reach of history, a little Greek Clan who called themselves Children of Dorus—and so the Dorians—in one way or another got possession of the valley and called it after their own name, Doris. Like all the Greeks, they seem to have come down out of the north-west, from Illyria. They established friendly relations with the neighbouring Hellenes, with the Phocians, the Aetolians, the Ozolian and Opuntian Locrians, especially with the sacred families who held and administered holy Delphi where Apollo dwelt and gave oracles, chief counsellor and adviser of all the Hellenes in his time. He was especially dear to the Dorians. Their ancestor, Dorus, was his son.

In that little plain in the hills the Dorians lived, thrived, and multiplied, utterly ignored by the great Hellenic world outside, known only, but creditably known, to their own neighbours. The civilized Greek world knew nothing about them. Homer, who has celebrated those more ancient neighbouring nations, was quite ignorant of the strong, quiet little nations that dwelt here, hidden

from all eyes, like a child unborn. Here, nevertheless, was generated, conceived, and grew to birth, adolescence and maturity, one of the greatest of Earth's human races, that one, too, which, strangely enough, had the least to say about itself. But for their deeds and but for that rare gift of speech which was enjoyed by other Greek races we would to-day know nothing at all about the Dorians.

That bowl-shaped depression in the hills above Delphi, the cradle and nursery of the Dorians, was no greater as to area than an Irish barony or English hundred. A man might stroll across the Dorian territory from boundary to boundary between sunrise and noon in a leisurely manner, pausing often to observe the mountain scenery, vine plantations, and corn-fields, and to converse with the people, responding not too copiously in their clear, pure Doric Greek. But in this small space a great people were being fashioned by destiny, and carefully guarded there in that remote fastness from the influences which were elsewhere corrupting and destroying Hellenic peoples once as noble as themselves. I do not believe that the little original Clan coming down hither out of Illyria, with their mules and donkeys carrying their small possessions, fought their way. I believe they bought it. Brave as any, the insane war passion was never strong in any of the Hellenes. All we know is that the Dorians came and made their home there, and that no one was able, or even perhaps willing, to make them go away. The little Clan soon threw out sub-clans, branches of the parent stock, till the valley all over was dotted with

villages, patriarchal small states of the primitive village-commune type, united like one family in a bond of common blood and traditions, inter-alliances by marriage, friendly mutual services, and the enthusiastic common worship of Apollo, who, unseen, was always in their midst.

Then out of these scattered villages of the tribe, according to an instinct common to all the Greek race, there emerged four city states ; four or six villages combining to create a city with a great satisfying civic life not attainable through villages. But the four Dorian cities were friends, though each had its own distinct life, four queens, but also four sisters, hence the historic Dorian Tetrapolis, the four-citied state of Doris. These city states were Pindus, Erineum, Cytinium, and Borium.

Favoured by God and Man the Dorians multiplied and prospered, till the time came when they felt an oppressive need of expansion, that the time had come for the bursting of those mountain barriers, the sending forth of a new nation. The Dorian hive swarmed.

All the wild surrounding regions, held too by friendly neighbours who regarded them with affection and respect, perhaps with awe, did not supply a country fit for settlement. There were two ways by which they might break forth into the outer world ; one northwards through the country of the Opuntian Locrians to the Ambracian Gulf, and thence to the Thracian coast, the Hellespont and the Black Sea. The other lay southward through the country of the Ozolian Locrians to the Corinthian Gulf, where the whole Mediterranean lay before them. They chose

this last way. But the Dorians, sheer inlanders as they were, ploughmen and vine-dressers and shepherds, knew nothing of the sea. They had no ships, and did not know how to build them. But that was nothing : Greek lads, the quickest, most intelligent and versatile of mankind, could rapidly learn to do or to make anything in reason, and the Dorians were as Greek as any.

Dorian lads crossed the hills, came down to the port of Naupactus (it means the place of the making of ships), and there from older and wiser men, the native Naupactian ship carpenters, soon learned how to build ships—big transport ships and long, swift brazen-beaked, deadly-looking war ships, penteconters with twenty-five oars on each side. The trireme, with her three banks of oars on each side, had not yet been invented. There the young Dorians learned rapidly how to build ships, and row them and sail them, and the whole art of marine navigation as well, till the inland agricultural and pastoral Dorians became as familiar with the Sea as with the Earth, and exchanged the lowing of kine and the **bleating** of sheep for the roaring of waves and the howling of storms. Soon the Dorian mountaineers became the most daring, experienced, and far-travelling of all seafaring nations.

You, young men and lads of my own time, who intend to play a brave part and to be yourselves the founders of nations, do not forget the lesson of Naupactus and the Dorian boys learning seamanship there. When you have well founded your inland food-producing industrial commonwealth, let the first colony, or one of the first, be planted by you upon the seaboard, and

establish there your own Naupactus, well supplied by you of the interior with food, timber, tools, raw materials, and everything that a stirring Irish Naupactus might require.

Meantime at home, the Dorian Boulé, the Chiefs of the Nation, having consulted deeply with travelled men and sailor-merchants, decided upon Elis in the Peloponnesus as the site of the first settlement. They sent ambassadors thither and arranged terms with the Eleans. The great Hellenic expansions, the Æolian, the Ionian, and now the Dorian, were, upon the whole, peaceful, conducted everywhere mainly by treaty, presents, exchanges, and contracts.

When all was settled and the sanction of the God at Delphi obtained, the new nation, perfectly organised from the start, equipped already as a Sovereign State, lacking only land, with hearts glad yet sad, left the little valley and climbed the mountain passes leading towards Naupactus.

I call attention to a religious feature of the emigrant procession, not this time to the sacred fire which was there, too, taken from the ever-burning National Dorian fire of the Tetrapolis, but to something else of a religious nature not so easily understood in our time. At the head of the bright, many-hued column which wound its way through the brown mountain passes, was borne on high an upright severed section of a tree trunk, always in the van. It was upheld upon a frame through which long poles passed and the whole rude structure carried upon men's shoulders. There were no roads here, only foot-



paths and mule tracks. Before it and behind went youths and maidens singing joyfully and playing upon flutes and three-stringed lyres.

What was this wooden upright pillar, borne so carefully and besung so loudly and gladly? It was the God of the young Nation. The young Dorian Nation was going forth into the wide, wide world, but not by themselves, not unbefriended or uncared for. Apollo himself was going with them. He was in their van and at their head. The wooden pillar was Apollo.

Very strange, indeed, and to us all but incredible. Nevertheless, all such primitive peoples, so taught, as it would seem by Nature herself, had some such way of symbolizing for themselves things that they could not express in words. It was so universally. The religions of Europe to-day, however, august and superior to rude symbolism, had an humbler original than men suspect.

See Gen., c. 28, v. 22, the story of the sacred pillar stone at Bethel: "And this stone shall be the house of the Lord"; that is, the Lord's dwelling-place. Also, Joshua, c. 24, v. 27, where Joshua speaks of a similar pillar stone as hearing and bearing witness.

Young Ætolia joined the Dorians in that first Peloponnesian settlement. It resulted eventually in the Ætolo-Dorian absorption of Elis, the creation there of a new people soon to become famous over the whole world as the guardians and presidents of the great Pan-Hellenic Olympian festivals of Supreme Zeus.

The greatest human-divine figure ever carved by the hand of man was the Statue of Zeus at Olympia. It was



the work of Pheidias, made by him to the order of the descendants of the men who came up out of the little mountain valley bearing before them that shapeless an-iconic pillar, and hymning their bit of timber, calling it Apollo, God, Father and Friend.

But the people who worshipped the bit of oak or ash or pine, calling it their Father, Friend, Captain, and Protector, singing loud and clear their choral songs, were better, braver, purer and nobler by far, by very far, than the highly civilized, cultured and cultivated people who, in the great temple of Olympian Zeus on the banks of the Alpheus, worshipped, or thought they worshipped, the august, unsurpassed figure carved by Pheidias to be the wonder of the whole world.

The Dorian hive, as I said, swarmed ; also it kept swarming. The native virtue, vitality of the race, continually re-created the oppressive sense of numbers and periodically impressed on the Dorian mind the necessity of expansion. And so generation after generation, and century after century, the Dorian swarms took wing up through those mountain passes and down into Naupactus out of that miraculous teeming hive in the hills above Delphi, down and out over the Corinthian Gulf, southwards, always southwards, gradually taking possession of, annexing, absorbing, Dorizing every country in which they settled. They were not so civilized, so cultured, so clever, perhaps, as were the other contemporaneous Greek races, but they had in them, more than all the rest, something which, for want of a better name, we may perhaps call character

The Dorians remind one much of a somewhat kindred modern race, the Normans. The Normans starting from a little territory in the north of Norway under Rollo the Ganger, spread themselves far and wide over Europe, annexing and Normanizing many lands by virtue too, I think, mainly of character. They were simpler, braver, sincerer, in a word, more downright honest, I believe, than their contemporaries.

After Elis the stream of Dorian emigration aimed towards the fertile plains of Messeina, the next Peloponnesian land to the South, pouring in there through "Sandy Pylos," so celebrated as the home of old Nestor in the heroic ages. Here, now, the young northern nation kept continually arriving, steadily absorbing, Dorizing all the old Achæan clans there.

From Messeina pioneer scions of the race made their way up the passes of Taygetus, got down into Laconia, settled there on the banks of the Eurotas, and emerged into History as the ever memorable Spartans or Lacedæmonians.

Other swarms passed round the Peloponnesus in ships, entered and took possession of Argos and the Argolid, took possession of Corinth, of Megara, of Ægina, of Salamis on the Attic Coast.

They went to Crete and made Crete half Dorian.

All the rest of the coast of Asia Minor being already colonized from Greece they aimed for the South and colonized there the Carian, Lycian and Pamphylian coasts and the adjacent isles. Pamphylia is a Dorian name.

Then, remember that out of all these various countries

the Dorian City-States there began soon themselves to organize and send forth equipped new nations, of their own, founding new City-States far and wide over the Mediterranean from Sardinia to the Black Sea and the Sea of Azof, hundreds of them, nor would it be an exaggeration, I think, to say thousands, great and small, and, as we know, a Greek State could be very small indeed. For example, near twenty Cities were daughters of Corcyra, which was a daughter of Corinth, which was a daughter of the little far-off ancient mother in the hills above Delphi. Some of these Dorian daughters of daughters become very powerful and illustrious, Byzantium, Tarentum, Naples, Syracuse.

Now, having looked well at all these great, extensive, famous regions annexed, absorbed by this astonishing people, turn back again and consider the little blank spot above Delphi in the midst of the darkly-marked mountains, the little Dorian Tetrapolis across whose territory a man might stroll in leisurely fashion between breakfast and lunch.

Looking myself again at it and at the countries of the great and famous nations which derived from it, a quaint thought occurs to me. Sometimes, in the course of my life, I have seen, and perhaps you have, a frail, slight, sweet-faced, white-haired old lady in the midst of her tall daughters and gigantic sons, all fond of her, playing with and petting her. Here, too, in our map we see the little ancient genetrix of a giant brood. And this brood of great nations too was ever loyal to the little genetrix. Presents and gifts and kind messages were sent to little

Doris from afar by her far-scattered children, and when they, too, in their day time equipped and sent forth new nations they derived their captains of the same, *Ækists* as they called them, from the old home in the Locrian mountains. On each occasion the little ancient *Tetrapolis* supplied the *Ækists*. Then at last the little mother failed and faded. The Dorian *Tetrapolis* remained, known to historians and geographers, but Doris had fulfilled her destiny. The little mother had borne, nursed, educated, and sent out into the world her great children. But when Doris was in her youth and prime was there a country then on the earth's surface which could be compared with her? No. Not *Babylonia*, in spite of her hanging gardens, her towering walls, *Chaldee* armies, her subject states; not *Assyria*, her cruel devas-tative kings; not *Egypt*. The greatest spot on the earth was little Doris, had away folded from harm in the embrace of the Locrian mountains. Little Doris and her God were going to beat them all.

If it were my good fortune to be able to visit Greece I would go first, not to the sad graveyards of the dead civilisations, but to that hidden valley with its ramparts of ever-during hills, ever-springing greenery, ever-living fresh waters, where the heroic little mother raised her great children, with everything all round still fresh and pure and living, and with holy nature, the ever young, still queen and mistress of all. To-day, perhaps, in some such quiet spot, making no noise at all in the newspapers, the good angel of mankind may be preparing some such people to be the saviours of the World, free, as the

Dorians were not, from the little unnoticed seeds of crime and insanity which, in their germination, first maddened and then destroyed that great race and all the Hellenes.

The Greeks loved liberty more than any other people in history, and hated war more than any other people. They loved beauty so much that they almost made both beautiful ; but, in the end, the crimes which they had tolerated destroyed them.

## PAGANISM—GREEK AND IRISH

Laegara, son of Nial, King of Ireland, swore by Sun and Wind that he would never again seek to exact the Boromean rent—violent extortion of their wealth and property—from the men of Leinster.

He violated his oath, and, at the head of a great host all intent, like himself, upon the exaction and division of that plunder, marched southwards from Tara.

But, on the banks of the Liffey, the Sun and Wind, whose names he had taken in vain, and whose divinities he had outraged, met him and slew him in the midst of his marching host, whose battle-axes and swords were powerless to defend him on that occasion—met him and slew him, and went upon their way.

His people brought back their slain king to Tara and interred him there, and made a great lamentation over him.

I know the spot where his angry gods met and slew the King of Ireland. It is the angle made by the meeting of the Liffey and the Rye. Here, the Liffey, rushing out of the west over a bank of great boulders, stills his perturbed spirit as he moves forward to meet the gentle Rye, coming down quietly out of the North through a lively winding glen. Here the Sun and the Wind met and slew the impious king. Thenceforward it was tabu—or Gaelic, a *geis*—for any King of Ireland to sleep “with head declined” in that fatal angle. Edmund Spenser,



the great English Poet, was here, in his time, three hundred years ago, and gazed with his bright poetical eyes on the Liffey tumbling white over those boulders, and, afterwards, flowing forward, quietly, between green pastures to meet his gentle consort. Out of what Spenser saw then, and felt then, he made a line for his great poem, a line for all time :

The royal Liffey tumbling down the lea.

Had Spenser known that bardic tale, it would surely have inspired an additional silver-sounding stanza of the *Faery Queen*.

I may add that the Rye means the " King's River " (Abhain Righe), and that the Liffey, earlier in his career, is joined by another " King's River," " tumbling down " out of the Wicklow mountains.

Laegara, who flourished about 430 A.D., was the last Pagan and the first Baptised King of Ireland. He was the son of Nial of the Nine Hostages, Imperator of a great Scotio-Irish, Scotio-Caledonian and Pictish Confederacy, which broke down Roman civilisation in Britain. Of that stirring warrior, I recall some historical bardic verses, perhaps worth insertion :

A challenge of battle between Corc and Nial,  
Whether near or far distant.  
Fierce the tramp on every shore  
Of Nial, the son of Eocha Moymodoin.

When we used to go with Nial upon our forays,  
Yellow as the flowering blossom of the Sovarchy  
Were the bright tresses that flowed from the head  
Over the broad shoulder of my hero.

He has been identified, correctly I think, with a British Pretender to the Roman Empire, the date of whose death coincides with that of Nial.

His son and successor, Laegara, was, unlike his father, dark-complexioned, nor had he the same spread of body or of mind as his ambitious and far-journeying sire. Like many a man conscious of not doing well abroad he was resolved to be at least master in his own house, and to assert all his purely Irish regalities with a high hand, especially that very profitable Boromean tribute : and was apparently an angry, stubborn, determined, and rather stupid man.

That Boromean tribute was indeed most profitable, whenever it could be exacted—for the Leinstermen never paid it without a battle. It consisted of 6,000 cows (whence the name, cow-tribute—*bo-roma*) ; ditto swine ; ditto mantles ; ditto swords ; also slaves, 6,000 fine boys and good girls. The King of Ireland was extremely happy when he recovered the Boroma ; but he did not recover it very often ; and never without a battle ; we were never at any time very fond of paying rent. Indeed the Boroma was never anything but sheer violence, tyranny and brute force.

St. Patrick preached to the King of Ireland at Tara ; on which occasion the illustrious apostle worked several astonishing miracles.

Also he explained to the King of Ireland that his great Empire-sacking sire, and all his ancestors and fore-runners, Finn and his famous hunters, the Heroes of the Red Branch, and the sons of Milesius : in short, every

one whom the Pagan man had been accustomed to love and admire were now one and all in Hell !

" Show me Hell, and I will believe," said the Pagan man.

" I will," said Patrick.

An ice-cold wind blew out of the North, chilling the King to the bone.

" What is it ? " cried the frightened King, shivering like a poplar leaf.

" The cold breath of Hell," said the Saint. " The gates are now opened."

" I see a dense mist towards the North," said the King ; " it is filled with noise, tumult and confusion. I hear shoutings there, and see flashings that come and go like the glittering of the weapons and armature of armed men."

" They are damned," replied Patrick.

Then the damned, the Pagan Irish, swept past Tara ; but one of them, the greatest and most famous, checked his rushing steeds, and, from his chariot, preached a convincing sermon to the frightened Monarch.

Though a very angry, stubborn and stupid man, King Laegara was not proof against proofs like this.

The new religion conquered Europe in different ways, Charlemagne had to hang stubborn Pagan Saxons, some four thousand of them at a time. The saintly King Olaf battle-axed a multitude of his Thanes and Bonders before the rest could be got to understand. Paul had to quote Pagan poetry at the Intellectuals of Athens. Other Irish saints—and this must not be forgotten—

converted Pagan Kings and Peoples by just quietly separating themselves from them, going out into remote and wild places, and there, quietly, repeating the life of their God.

King Laegara was, in this manner, converted ; and allowed himself to be baptised at a little well which I was shown once on the westward slope of the hill of Tara.

But it is hard to drive Paganism out of one who has drunk it with his mother's milk, has been fed with it, clothed with it, has been breathing it, like the vital air, ever since the day he first stood upon his feet, and astonished the household.

Smitten to death by the unseen shafts of his angry gods, Laegara, King of Ireland, gave a charge to his Captains ; natural enough, no doubt, but not quite what one would expect from the first Christian King of Ireland.

" Bury me," said Laegara to his comrades, as the angry gods, looking back upon their victim, passed on, with bows unstrung, and hearts somewhat, just a little, appeased :

" Bury me in the south rampart of the great Rath at Tara ; erect, in my armour ; my shield on my breast, my war-mace in my hand ; my spears upright, beside me, upon the right hand ; and with my face set south against the Leinster men, so that, in the great day of the Resurrection, I may fight one more fierce last battle with my arch-enemy, with Dundaling, son of Enna, High King of the Lagenians. He burned the women's quarters in Tara, and all that were there. Bury me in that manner, dear comrades."

Thus spoke the first Christian King of Ireland.

Grim, honest, whole-hearted old Pagan ! You were at least no Hypocrite. That speech sounds as honest as the baying of a hound, or the scream of an eagle : as natural as the roar of a waterfall. How comes it—it is worth enquiring—that Hypocrisy is not, and never was, a vice of Paganism, while it has always flourished under Europe's professed Religion ? The Pagan has always been very much in earnest about his religion. Take a great historic instance of this extreme religious seriousness of the Pagan :

When the Persians under Datis and Ataphernes invaded Greece and landed at Marathon, the Athenians, before marching to meet them, despatched their swiftest runner to Sparta to summon the Spartans to their aid. The fate of all free Hellas was at the moment trembling in the balance ; and all knew it. The Spartans knew it. The fate of Europe was trembling, then in the balance.

“ We cannot,” replied the Spartans. “ It is contrary to our religion to go upon a campaign before the moon is full.”

What an answer, what an attitude, and at such a crisis ! They put their religion before everything else. They were right. Men ought to put their Religion before everything else. They knew all just as well as the swift runner from Athens could tell them. They knew that if the Northern Greeks were conquered, they of the Peloponnesus were doomed.

They knew, too, being an extremely intelligent Nation, almost the most intelligent of the Earth, that they, the Spartans, as the leading Nation of the Peloponnesus, could

bring to that War some one hundred thousand men, the best kind of men that ever were, and sweep the Persians to perdition. But they would not stir. It was contrary to their Religion.

It is indeed extremely difficult for us to sympathise with or understand such superstitious folly as this. Here was a gréat and very intelligent Nation deliberately courting National destruction at the hands of a hated and despised, though world-conquering foreign power, rather than disobey that strange religious tabu about not marching before the moon was full.

On the other hand, these awfully brave Spartan people had a reverential feeling towards Nature, which feeling, owing to their lack of knowledge, found expression in foolish rules and national customs, like not marching while the moon was not full.

Another bit of Spartan history illustrating the same simplicity and sincerity, and naïve childlike trust in divine protective powers :

The Phocians, about to wage war on the Ætolians, sent to their allies the Spartans, asking them for military assistance.

" We cannot afford you an army on this occasion," replied the Spartans, " but we will lend you Castor and Pollux for the campaign ! "

The divine Twins—our Gemini of the Zodiac—might be trusted to fight well, not only for their chosen people, but for the allies of their chosen people. That promise of assistance meant a real self-sacrifice on the part of the Spartans. The Spartan man would feel lonely and



bereft while his two Gods were far away, in North Greece, fighting the battles of his Phocian allies. But such feelings were universal.

Before the great sea-battle of Salamis the assembled Greeks, confronted by the huge Persian fleet, despatched a swift Trireme to Ægina to bring to their assistance the two Heroes, Ajax and Teucer. They are only Heroes in Homer ; but they were the local Gods of the Island of Ægina. The Trireme, with the two Æginatan Gods on board, returned just in time to take her place in the order of battle. Her coming was welcomed by a heaven-ascending shout of joy from the whole of the Greek fleet. The simplicity and sincerity of the Hellenic mind in this age, when the Hellene was at his noblest, are, I think, very touching ; associated as that naïve religious sincerity was with so much domestic and political virtue, and with an astonishing degree of intellect and a beautiful heroic modesty. As to the latter grand quality recall the inscribed tablet standing above the tomb of Leonidas and his 300 Spartans at Thermopylæ :

O stranger, tell the Spartans that we are here, having obeyed their laws.

Or, again, that over the Corinthian heroes who fell at Salamis. The inscribed stone has been lately discovered. See how there is not in it one boastful word :

O stranger, the Island of Salamis holds us now who once dwelt in the City of Corinth between her waters.

That is between the two seas of the Isthmus. In our own Irish heroic Age we were not without that manly

modesty which many vainly imagine to be quite a feminine attribute. Of the greatest of our Heroes some ancient bard sang :

He spake not a vaunting word  
Nor boasted he at all,  
Though marvellous were his deeds.

I may add here that in my own representation of this Hero, I drew the keynote of his character from these lines.

Another example of that strange Greek simplicity and sincerity—this time recalling their unique and quite unsurpassed love of pure uncorrupted Nature.

That very swift runner whom the Athenians despatched to Sparta before the battle of Marathon, an awfully swift runner, was named Philippides—it means Son of Man who loved Horses. His journey led him through primitive Arcadia, a land of mountains, glens, and forests, of goat-abounding, heathery highlands. As Philippides ran through a lonely Arcadian glen he suddenly heard himself called by name “Philippides !”

Philippides stood, panting, and looked all around. He saw nothing but trees, rocks, fern, and heather ; heard nothing but the roar of the mountain streams.

Philippides, a stranger in this strange wild region, was alarmed. A religious awe, such as we all feel, a little, in such remote, wild, lonely and beautiful places where Nature is quite uncorrupted and undefiled, stole over his Hellenic mind. Again he heard the voice calling. It said :

“Philippides, bid the Athenians honour me, and I

shall give them the victory over the Persians. They honour many gods but have forgotten me."

"Who are thou?" said Philpides.

"I am Pan," answered the voice. "The wild places of the Earth are mine."

When Philpides announced that potent and marvellous Arcadian experience of his to the Athenians, then in camp at Marathon, they at once erected an altar to Pan. They were encamped at the time in an intricate mountainous and forestine region. Upon the altar they burned a kid, and cakes of flour and honey, and poured out libations of wine, while their trained singers, chosen youths, danced round the altar and sang loud hymns in honour of the wild God. And Pan heard them, and was pleased; and he came down out of his native Arcadia into their camp; and in the ensuing battles he roared with his widely-echoing voice against the Persians; and sent a disastrous panic terror through the great Persian host! And ever after, the beautiful Athenians, though a quite agricultural and Imperial and a maritime people, never failed to worship duly the wild god of the wild places of the earth. They made him one of their national Gods, and provided for him a house on the south side of the Pnyx; which was probably visited by St. Paul when five hundred years later he wandered round Athens, observing and considering.

We smile, I hope kindly and indulgently, at the legend, but must feel that under all its strange forms and modes of expression, there is something eternally true and right in such a feeling. The wild places of the earth, the

mountains, and mountain glens and forests, the unploughed, unpolluted highlands ought to be dear and sacred always, though we will not slay poor little kids in honour of the genii of such places.

Shelley was wrong, misled by a false etymology, when he wrote in *Adonais* :

And universal Pan, 'twas said, was there.

Modern scholarship finds that the name has nothing to do with the word signifying "All." It means feeder or grazier. Pan was the divine goat-herd worshipped by Arcadians, shepherds and goat-herds. Is not the God of Europe a shepherd ?

We have seen the sincerity and devotedness of Greek Pagan men, how at a supreme crisis, with national extinction and slavery before them, the Spartans would not march a furlong, not budge an inch out of Sparta, while the Moon was crescent, not yet at her full—fearing to incur the wrath of the bright Queen of the Night ; also, generally, the absolute trust in and devotion to their gods, of Hellenic men, before the philosophers and savants began to loosen the foundations of their faith. How then came our Irish Heathen King to defy, and so flagrantly, the divinities of Sun and Wind ? Well, his new religious instructor, a man out of sympathy with Nature, had taught him that the Sun and the Wind were not gods at all, and the self-willed Monarch—mad for his Boromean tribute I dare say—half believed him. Three religions, in fact, were, just then, competing and conflicting in Ireland, and King Laegara did not, as well as I can

understand, believe frankly in any of them. He was not Pagan enough—the savants would say animistic enough—to feel the divineness of the Nature that surrounded him. He was not Heroic enough, not Man enough, to understand that—Gods or no Gods—a man and a King ought to stand by his pledge word. He was not Christian enough to know that the new God coming then into Ireland was not a warrior, and that, to him, rapine, spoliation and murder was abominable.

How the Bardic historians who told this tale of the death of the last Pagan Irish King were partly right and partly wrong. They were right in believing that the Sun and Wind are divine realities, and that, if insulted and offended, they can and will kill. They were wrong in imagining them as superhuman men, and affected by vulgar human emotions ; wrath at injury ; a thirst for vengeance ; a sense of honour ; and so forth.

But they had the root of the matter in them—those old Irish Bardic historians. The Sun and the Wind are divine beings, and those who insult them will be killed ; surely. They insult the Sun who live away from and out of his Light ; they insult the Wind who pollute it, and breathe the Air which they have polluted. Look around and consider. See all the great and proud Nations of the Earth, how they deliberately insult the innocent pure Air and the divine Light. And, if you look again, you will see that they are being slain ; slain more slowly, indeed, but quite as effectually as was the last Pagan Irish King in that little angle made by the junction of the Liffey and the Rye.

Yes ; the Sun and the Wind are divine ; and they will kill, not wrathfully, like man, but, inevitably, fatefully, like mighty Gods. The Sun and Wind will kill the men and the nations that insult them. They will kill them and pass upon their way, leaving their carcasses to be interred by the nations who not yet insulted them, or in the same degree.

England has insulted the Sun and Wind, the Light and the Air ; and England is going to be destroyed, surely. The Sun will shine over the place that was London, and the pure wind blow feeding the grass and flowers that will cover the ruins of Liverpool.

Man, in his madness, can insult Nature, for a while, and with apparent impunity ; but only for a while and *not* for a long while.

Boys and Girls of Ireland and of Britain, and you mature Men and Women who are charged with the care of the young Boys and Girls, will you trust me ?

The first grand and great commandment of Nature, that is of your whole Being, is this (I am only translating what Nature, what your whole Being says) :

“ Live in my beautiful Light. I have made the Light for you, and I have made you for the Light. I am Nature, the universal Mother. I love you all, only I cannot bring you out of this trouble that you have brought upon yourselves. So long as you despise my beautiful Light I cannot help you. Live in my Light, and all will be well. If you do I shall help you. I shall bear you on to the fulfilment of your glorious Destiny. I am the Eternal Mother. I am speaking to you out of Ireland, out of the mouth of a man who loves me.”



That is my message from the Universal Mother ; and not to you only, Boys and Girls of the Britannic Isles, but to all the Boys and Girls anywhere, and to all the mature who are taking care of our Boys and Girls and our Children.

You will find a Revolution wrapped up in this plain-looking and evidently true statement as to the manner of life for which great Nature intended you.

You will see that what is good and right for you must be good and right for all. You will therefore refuse to use your power—and property of all kinds is power—to compel others to live in the dark, in the dusk and in the shade, while you live in the Light, in the Air, out on the beautiful unpolluted Earth.

If you understand, you will seek the earliest opportunity of withdrawing yourselves from all complicity in the great exploitation of Man by Man now engirdling the whole Earth, which by a euphemism is called Civilisation.

## AN IRISH SUNRISE

“AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT ; AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT THAT IT WAS GOOD.”

I write these lines on the side of one of our Wicklow mountains looking eastward over the Irish Sea, beyond which, faintly outlined, the Welsh Hills swim in mist. Beyond those quiet hills, unseen but unforgotten—who can ever forget him?—the great industrial English giant, roused by his hooting sirens, is just now awaking, to renew his endless labour—the mad Titan raging amid his huge industries, and beset by problems huger than his industries. As I look I seem to hear again, this transparent dewy morning, what I have heard so often in the black and dark night, that fierce, insistent, heart-torturing hoot, and hoot, and hoot of his sirens shouting for him to come work ; and, afterwards, the thunder of his million-footed armies rushing to battle. To battle? With whom? Or with what? Or why? Or to what end? Why are those mad millions rushing to battle, those wild sirens hooting—all in the dewy morning?

The sun, not a foot above the horizon, lets me gaze my fill with undazzled eyes at his glowing disc. His intolerable meridian brightness is still veiled by the morning : I saw him set last night ; saw him set, yet no night succeeded.

*Mira cano. Sol occubuit: nox nulla secuta est.*

Through the few fragrant twilight hours of the Monarch's absence he let us know that he was not far away. We saw the light banners of his radiant host borne round the northern horizon where he travelled, he and his armies, eastward, ever eastward, to the scene of his new red birth and diurnal glorious avatar.

*Sol invictus!* The unconquered Sun!

Why should Man choose one day out of the seven and call it his, when every one of them is his already? Is he not the daily creator of the day? Every day is the Sun's day.

Through those few hours of luminous shadow there was silence; and yet not silence; for the grouse were talking in the heather, and the night-jar reeling, for ever reeling, as he wheeled—beautiful singing creature, heard by all, seen by none—and at midnight a reed-warbler sang, and then, always, our little mountain streams kept tinkling, playing with liquid tender fingers upon their stony lyres. I distinguished the separate notes of three of them—the sweet innocents! And twice the cheerful cock announced to the world that all was well, and distant dogs barked: “’Ware, thief! I, the dog, am here. I am on guard.” Then the glad lark soared, singing, from his bed in grass or heather, and the early crow intent on breakfast flew croaking past, and the brave blackbird and the cheerful thrush awoke and lifted up their voices.

Then, so heralded, so welcomed by glad singings pouring forth out of millions of innocent throats, the bird peoples of the Earth; Dawn, the silver-skirted, silent

swift-runner Sol, advanced without sound out of the Orient, in her beauty stripped the shy earth bare, and unshadowed the world as she flew, sending out before her, her own millions and octillions of avant couriers clad in pearly grey. The beautiful, beautiful Dawn ! the ever-pursued but never captured Dawn, for ever bride, but for ever virgin bride of the morning Sun ; type, for ever, of the loveliest thing that the world knows ; girlhood, its sweetness, beauty, purity and goodness !

Girls of Ireland, beautiful daughters of the Dawn, will you help me ? For I see and know that you can save us, save the world and liberate mankind, if you only will. I shall tell you clearly the why and how in due time. I see the great prophecy fulfilled, the Hero born of Women with His heel on the Serpent's head. Remember, and do not fail me.

And as the Dawn passed westward, scattering the blanket of the dark, stripping Ireland bare, reaching out beyond Ireland, out westward over the Atlantic, then suddenly the flaming cause of all that vanguard of music and beauty, alike that of the dim, mysterious night and of the silver-skirted fleeting dawn, arose in his glory and looked benignantly over all his world, pouring forth over all his creatures, insect and bird and beast and Man, over all things animate and inanimate, the boundless floods of his light and fire. The warm light falls everywhere : over England's sooty Cities, over this gleaming Channel, over Ireland's vast Savannahs, following the Dawn over the Atlantic, silent everywhere. And, just as quietly and impartially, the lovely warm light falls upon this little

sheet of white paper on which I write ; on which I try to set down in stammering prose some weak echo of that half-heard, strong hymn of love and praise, which, if I could, I would so gladly utter with a full throat in thy honour, O most mighty, unfathomable fountain of living power. Yet who of men can praise thee rightly, praise thee at all in days like these, when the nations, each in proportion to its imagined greatness, have conspired to despise thee, seeking with dense material curtains of clay and stone to exclude thy blessed light, and hide themselves from thy vital ray ? Obsessed, night-mare driven, insane ; who grope for wealth in the dark, and for happiness in obscure dens.

The wild seer of the Apocalypse in his vision of the coming of the great Judge and Avenger, saw the nations fleeing from His presence and heard them calling upon the rocks and mountains to cover them. But we actually and with our eyes see something still more wonderful. We see great nations, not alarmed by the coming of any judge or avenger, not as yet, laboriously concealing themselves from the loveliest and gentlest and most life-giving thing that we know, which is the Light. We see them rushing, as if panic-stricken, into their dens and hiding-places, seeking shelter everywhere, provided only that they may so be able to escape from the light of thy glorious face, O Sun ! And they call to each other, encouragingly, hoping by their clamour to subdue a little the universal terror.

“ Come ! hasten ! It is day. Let us go down into the earth in our millions, into the holes that we have

digged. Let us in our millions go into our smoke-begannered tall factories, and serve well our iron demons there. Let us go into our dim offices and turn on artificial lights there and worship well the great god, Mammon. He will save us : a few of us."

Here, out of Ireland, in the light of the great Ascending Sun, I declare that the civilisation which drives men to do such things and which blinds them as to their horror, is impious, unnatural, and accurst, and is doomed to perish, surely. I say that Nature meant Man to live in the Light that he ought to live in the Light, and that he knows that he ought. He knows when the Sun rises and he himself leaves his couch, refreshed with sleep, and crosses the threshold of his home, Nature never meant him to go indoors again and spend the bright day there.

You know that I am speaking the truth.

Everything that lives loves the Sun, some very few things excepted, which Nature has made nocturnal, such as bats and moles, things of twilight and the dusk. They, in evading the light, follow loyally the law of their being. Man is not one of them. He belongs to the order of things that delight in the day and rejoice in the Sun. Excepting those nocturnal things, all creation delights in the light. The flowers open their hearts to the Sun, and for him pour forth their sweetness. The trees—why they are embodied sunlight, the Sun's fire miraculously transmuted. See the trees hewn, divided, and on the earth ; now the imprisoned flame which through their myriad green leaves they once drank in at the fountain of fire—now it shoots forth, filling the home with kindly



warmth and gay light, like a captured and escaping god ; which perhaps it is. When the little Greek child heard the kindled timber crackling on the hearth, he used to cry :

“ Hark ! Hephaistos is laughing.”

Our own children, to whom the romance of life and such nature poetry are forbidden, cannot be prevented from being happy in the morning at the incoming of the light, and happy round the quivering flames of the hearth.

Earth and ocean rejoice in the Sun. The earth like a bride unveils all her beauty for him, her lord and lover. The sea, struck by his rays, shines and lightens—the myriad wavelets laugh and dance before him.

Why does man, only, flee from him, and at his coming bury himself in his dens of brick and stone ? Why ?

He loves the Sun surely ; Nature has so made him that he must. Love of the light is born in him. But something has intervened, some unnatural thought or desire grown passionate, furious, reckless of consequences, has compelled him to expel this great natural and divine love of his heart, and to admit and cherish, in its stead, some other conflicting passion which drives him helpless into his dens, and to mean and joyless labour there till the Sun sets, when he is free to come forth again, he and the bat ; Man, and the beetle, and the bat.

He cannot help it ; some demon is driving him. Who or what is that demon ? Look around and consider.

What is it that Man loves and worships more than the Sun ? Is it not something which, like the Sun, is round, a disc ; and which resembles the Sun somewhat as to its

colour? It wears the hue of the crocus and daffodil, while not alive like them, or like them fragrant, and, unlike those transitory fair daughters of the Sun, it is always in bloom. It is deader than the idols of old; but, like the idols of old, it, too, has a certain deadly power. It can drive men by millions into factories, offices, and shops. It whips the little child indoors out of the light, and chains to his desk the powerfully built athletic man in the prime of life, and the grey haired veteran of sixty. See the millions of its slaves, respectable decoy slaves, bowed over their desks the Planet over, chained to their desks as securely as ever were galley slaves to their oars.

And it can make murder respectable too, this all-but Almighty God; respectable and also glorious. See how it feeds, clothes, and trains other millions, the best human material it can get, and young and brave, and intelligent and loyal, and equips them with the costliest and most terrible engines of destruction, and drives them on to mutual fratricide, and the creation of widows and orphans and cripples.

It is the God of the earth; literally so. What other God is, or ever was, able to do such things. Then, too, it is an absurd God, the absurdest that men in their madness ever bowed down unto and worshipped. You can take this God and spin him upon the table with your thumb and forefinger! and he will spin! You can put him in your pocket and take him out again, and lay him on a counter, and he will stay there, till he is removed—this God of the whole earth; terrible heir of all the old extinct gods and demons, devils and idols, of old time.

And I want you, young men of Ireland, you before the rest, to begin the inevitable war against this brutal all-but Almighty God of the whole earth. Face him and he will flee before you : nay, face him and he will vanish. For he is at the same time all-but almighty and nothing ! A phantom, a figment of the imagination of Man. Somewhere upon the round earth this inevitable holy war, divine strife, this latest and greatest and last of all crusades will begin : I want it begun in Ireland, my own country, land of the Heroes and the Saints : Inis Fail. For I think that Destiny with its whips and scourges, and inflicted sufferings and punitory and purgatorial preparations, has better equipped us than the rest to take the lead here and begin the great Exodus. You especially, young men and young women of Ireland, boys and girls of Ireland, my appeal is chiefly to you. And I want you who are not young, and who for different reasons cannot share in that war, to arm and equip the young for that strife. I shall tell you how and exactly before I have done.

To return—my young host—he is only nineteen—emerges now from his hut, wearing his nocturnal loose pyjamas, a towel flung over his shoulders, and a big sponge in his hand. With a gay salutation to this scribbler he stalks up the hillside to enjoy his morning bath, where he has deepened, widened and lined with concrete, a little natural pool made by one of the streamlets which I heard tinkling through the night.

Some one has made him a present of this bit of the Wicklow Highlands, and here he has built himself certain small huts, not indeed astonishing forms of architecture,

though I tell you that the Partheum began with something like this ; but good enough for youngsters like him, having some hardy Spartan fibre in their composition. I have myself slept soundly and well in one of them.

To my young host his small mountain estate, of some thirty acres, is little more than a toy, a place to spend holidays in, and his habitat just a lodge whence he sallies forth to slay speckled trout in lake and river, while the pure air purges the city soot out of his lungs.

I long to expand before him a vision of the great things that he might do—he and his friends ; if they only would. But I dare not. He would not understand. The world and the world's God have been before me and pre-occupied the ground.

When I was a young barrister, and in daily attendance at the Four Courts in Dublin, I remember how my coevals and myself, not yet broken to that yoke, used to fume and fret, and kick vainly against the pricks. Sometimes when the beautiful sunlight streamed down on us through the glass roof of the Library, one of us would say to the rest :

“ Well, boys, is it not a sin to be here on a day like this ? ”

And some one would reply : “ Ay, it is that,” the while he expanded his brief and dipped his quill in the inkpot.

And it was a sin surely ; and is : a sin against Nature, and a deadly sin. And we dimly suspected the same, but believed ourselves powerless to resist the great necessity which drove us on, gay delusions out in front of us and fierce whips behind.

My young host, still a student, is aiming towards one

of those respectable callings, all of which conduct young men indoors and keep them there.

He would not understand me were I to talk to him as I do here. He would set me down as "cracked," or having "a bee in my bonnet"; and the parents and the sisters and the cousins and the aunts would never forgive me for attempting to put "such foolish notions into the boy's mind."

And you who read, and cannot at first understand, please remember that ever since you were six years old, and even before, the God of the world has been teaching you, and deceiving and compelling you to love and trust him and to despise the Power that made you. Remember that you are reading me through spectacles steeped in a solution of gold! If to-day you could see things as they are it would be a miracle.

From the Lowlands now a rustic procession crosses the field before me on their way up to the mountains; they are a shepherd, his little grandson, Dannie, and a handsome intelligent sheep dog, called Point. The shepherd is seventy-two years of age. but erect and hale, and walks with long, strong steps. The grandson is, I hear, a good scholar, and has, I know, a bright face.

"Good-morrow, Brady. Going to be a grand day."

"A grand day, thank God," replies the shepherd.

Now, I know that if it were raining cats and dogs, Brady would say:

"A fine soft day, thank God."

And if it were tempestuous, he would say:

"A fine blowy day, thank God."

And if the snow were deep on the earth, he would say :

“ Fine seasonable weather, thank God.”

For Brady is a primitive Irish peasant, not yet quite corrupted by civilisation, and his feeling towards Nature is religious. He will not abuse or use bad language about any kind of weather which it may please God to send. Where did he get this pious feeling towards Nature ? Partly it is natural and instinctive. Partly it has come to him by descent and tradition from his remote Pagan ancestors ; from men to whom all Nature was something divine, spiritual, semi-human. Our philosophers call this state of mind “ Animism.”

Animism or not, it is also the state of mind of the poet. Wordsworth, for example, was a thorough-going Animist. But all the poets are made much in the same way.

Now Brady did not get this religious feeling towards Nature from his professed religion, which is hostile to it. Our ancient literature is steeped in that feeling. The Irish heathen bard could not or would not say, for example : “ And next day,” but “ Then when the Sun rose flaming, from his red-flaming couch.” Some such language seemed to him only decent when speaking of things so august. In all our prayer-books, liturgies, and hymn-books, you will not find a trace of this spirit. The primitive Israelites had it, indeed ; a great deal of it ; a great deal of that beautiful instinctive natural piety. Much of their Old Testament is steeped in it ; but growing gloomy and fanatical they brought it into their Synagogues and quenched it there.



The real religion of Europe is, of course, the worship of the crocus-coloured Idol. The professed religion came to us out of the Synagogue and out of the cities of the later Greeks, and regards with hatred and fear all the things that God made and blessed, and declared to be "good."

"Dannie grows fast," I say. "He is at least two inches taller than when I saw him last."

"And he's good at his books, too," replies the shepherd proudly.

The God of the world is as potent here as on the Stock Exchanges of the great Cities. Brady already sees his bright little grandson with a starched shirt front, wearing a black coat, and rising in the world. Why not, being so good at his book?

So they pass; and presently I hear Brady's voice raised, and Dannie's: also Point's. At 10 a.m. precisely, Dannie will be indoors for six hours, getting himself filled up and blown out with divers kinds of vanity. The light will soon fade from his face and the bloom from his cheek.

Now, just to finish this sketch of an Irish Sunrise—unearthliness of early morning disappears in the day, pillars of smoke ascend from many a homestead, human voices and sounds multiply. Near by, the fragrance of coffee floats in the air and the odour of something frying; and, true to time, a visitor from the valley comes ambling across the field. The visitor is a superannuated sheep-dog, once, I hear, second to none on this hillside; now a pensioner and enjoying a well-earned leisure. He arrives punctually at meal times, and can be trusted to bolt a bone with any dog in Ireland.

## SLIEVENAMAN

This mountain, a *mons fabulosus* if ever there were such, was known by several different names in the heroic and romantic literatures. It was the Mountain of Aiga, son of Ugainey. It was also Sidh-Femen, the tomb of Femen, and, besides Slievenaman Fionn, was also Sidh-na-m-ban Fionn, or Sheenamaun Fionn, *i.e.*, the Tomb of the Beautiful Woman; and each of these names represents considerable tracts of our literature, the extent, variety, and richness of which are almost incredible. The word Sidh is one impossible to translate in English, such was the depth of meaning attached to it by our ancestors. It seems to have meant both a tomb and a temple, and also still more, a gateway into the supernatural world in which dwelt in bliss all the countless gods and genii whom our Pagan ancestors worshipped, and in whose existence both our Christian and Pagan ancestors firmly believed, and whose names and generations they have recorded as conscientiously and scrupulously as those of their mundane kings and chiefs. Sometimes they are called the Tuatha de Danan sometimes the Sidhe (pronounced Shee), which is the same word that appears in the familiar compound Banshee; *sc.* Bean Sidhe.

Slievenaman may be pronounced either Slievenaman or Slievenamaun. If pronounced Slievenaman it means the Mountain of the Woman, if Slievenamaun, the Moun-

tain of the Women. In the books the name always appears with the word Fionn, beautiful, subjoined. Now amongst the endless tales and traditions connected with this mountain there is one which supports the singular pronunciation, and would seem to make it the home and haunt of one woman, of unsurpassed and unsurpassable beauty.

Fionn, as may be remembered, saw the Fairy Maiden of Slievenaman descend the hill, fill her silver pitcher at a well, ascend again, and enter a sparkling and shining Dun. He thought to enter too, and demand a stranger's right to hospitality ; but before his eyes the door of the fairy palace became the sheer face of an immobile and unresponsive cliff. We now happen to know a great deal more, but by no means all, about this beautiful woman. She was Sabia, daughter of Bodbh Derg (pronounce as if Bove), who was son of the Dagda, and the presiding genius and tutelary god of Slievenaman. The Mountain of the Beautiful Woman bore that name, we are told, because "there was not in the whole world from Taprobane in the East to the gardens of the Hesperides in the West a more beautiful woman than she, namely, Sabia, daughter of Bodbh Derg, son of the Dagda." And if any one will tell us the site of Taprobane, and its meaning in this connection, we shall be very much obliged to him. We all know something about the Gardens of the Hesperides ; but Tiprobane in the East looks as if it were going to beat us. From what we know of the genius of our literature we feel sure that "Tiprobane" will be found elsewhere and in other stories

or poems. The other names, Sabia, Bodbh Derg, and the Dagda are not mere names. They stand for characters, personalities, who play a great part in the ancient literature. As for the Dagda, he seems to have been the supreme god of the Pagan Irish, the Jupiter of our Olympus. The very beautiful woman who gave its name to Slievenaman was, therefore, the grand-daughter of the supreme god of the Gael.

Our Irish poetry and prose, queer, strange, and out-of-date as it may appear, is the inspiration which is to-day urging intellectual Ireland into a position in which she is bound, I think, to become a new creative centre in modern English literature ; and for us poor editors of newspapers to ignore such things as these going on around us, for fear of being laughed at, would be absurd and fantastic poltroonery. Now, the supernatural races who in modern times, and in English and Anglo-Irish literature, generally, have been called fairies, were in the middle ages regarded as angels—fallen—and, in the purely Pagan ages, bore the name of Tuatha de Danan. The first word in this compound means peoples ; the second, gods ; the third of “ Dana,” and the whole expression may be translated the “ god races of Dana,” *i.e.*, the gods, children of Dana. Dana again is a compound word meaning the goddess Ana ; and so we have in an ancient Irish dictionary the word Ana, and over against it the memorable explanation, *Mater deorum Hibernensium, i.e.*, “ the Mother of the Irish gods.” Now the fairy maiden, Sabia, daughter of Bodbh Derg, son of the Dagda, met by Fionn on the slopes of Slievenaman, was nearly related

in descent to Ana, "the Mother of the Irish gods." Those who take any interest in such strange lore will remember that "the Mighty Mother" of Greek mythology, Mother of gods and men, was also ANA; and will observe that the Celts when they conquered Ireland brought into this land in which we dwell to-day a religion which by conquest or otherwise—probably by conquest—they, or some of their Indo-European cousinry, introduced also into Greece, and which became there the source and inspiration of Greek literature, Greek art, and Greek philosophy.

And so we see that Slievenaman, in East Tipperary, does not stand by itself, or unrelated, but is of one kindred with Olympus, and Ida, and Delphi, and Hymettus, and all the famous Hellenic mountains—famous for thirty centuries, and all the world over, for so far there is no land so famous as Greece. And Slievenaman may yet—all depends on our poets—be more famous than ever was Olympus, or Delphi, or Ida. And it is our own; looking for ever, eastward, over the plain of the Three Waters, westwards, where the men of Ormond held the Tipperaries, North and South.

## SLIEVE GULLION

Well, indeed, might Hugh Roe draw rein and stare silent and wondering at this weird mountain, the most famous and mythic of all in that vast bardic tradition which was the Bible of the Gael, and, in vindication of which, far more than as champion of the "Dark Rosaleen" of our modern singer, his sword is soon to flash in the North, and his "gun-peal and slogan-cry wake many a glen serene." Thoughts, ideas, emotions, not to be told, hardly to be suggested, surely thronged in this lad's heart and brain, as he gazed at the great brown mountain capped with solid vapour, and along whose sides slow-journeying the white fog-phantoms crawled.

Here lived and reigned Fuad, the far-off Milesian druid king, till his glory faded, as all things will. The mountain was Cuculain's sign-post, when, a little boy driven forth by the war spirits, he secretly left his home and his dear mother, seeking Emain Macha. Here the sentinels of the Red Branch from their white watch-tower, Carn Fion, scanned afar the mearings of Ulster. Here Ossian's sire slew the enchanter Almain, son of Midna, who once every year, to the sound of unearthly music, consumed Tara with magic flames. On this mountain Cuculain seized the wild fairy steed, the Liath Macha, new risen from the Grey Lake, ere steed and hero in their giant wrestlings and reelings encompassed Banba, and in the quaking night



the nations trembled. Here, steeped in Lough Liath's waters, Finn's golden tresses took on the hue and glitter of radiant snow. From the spilled goblet of the god sprang the hazels, whose magic clusters might assuage that hunger of the spirit which knows no other assuagement. The Faed Fia was shed around them. Here shined and trembled the wisp of druid-grasses, from whose whispcrings with the dawn-wind pure ears might learn the secrets of life and death. Here beneath those hazels, their immortal green and their scarlet clusters, sprang the well of the waters of all wisdom. Three dreadful queens guarded it. Sometimes they smile, seeing afar some youth wandering unconsoled, o'erladen with the burthen of his thoughts, rapt with visions, tormented by the gods, a stranger in his own household, scorned by those whom he cannot scorn, outcast from the wholesome cheerful life of men—they smile, and, smiling, dart from rosy immortal fingers one radiant drop upon his pallid lips, and, lo ! the word out of his mouth becomes a sword wherewith he shears through mountains ; with his right hand, he upholds the weak, and with the left prostrates powers, and tyrants tremble before the light of his mild eyes.

Names, deeds, gray legends, dire happenings and becomings without number, or the spiritual force and power of them, touched with awe the boy's heart as he gazed on the haunted hill, so long familiar in his mind as a thought, as a name, now a great visible actuality looming before his eyes, crowned with cloud, crawled over by the travelling mists. Save with the mind's eye the boy

could not see Lough Liath, which crowns the height of Slieve Gullion; enfolded now and swathed in that white cloudy tiara—the many-storied lake. Others have, and regarded with awe its dark waves, more mythic than those of Avernus, sounding as with all the sorrows and all the far-soaring aspirations of our race.

O melancholy lake, shaped like the moon ! lake uplifted high in the arms of Slieve Gullion ; boggy, desolate, thick-strewn with grey boulders on thy eastern shore, and on thy western, regarded askance by thy step-child the rosy heather, ruddy as with blood—aloof, observant of thy never-ending sorrow ; unfathomable, druid lake : home of the white steed immortal : bath of the Caillia-Bullia, the people's dread ; thy turbid waves aye breaking in pale foam upon thy grey shore strewn with boulders and wrecks of the work of men's hands ; horror-haunted, enchanted lake ; seat of dim ethnic mysteries, lost all or scattered to the winds ; with thy made wells, and walls and painted temples, and shining cairns, and subterrene corridors obscure—walked once by druids gold-helmeted and girded with the Sun ;—scene of religious pomps, and thronging congregations hymning loud their forgotten gods obscene or fair ; what mighty tales, what thoughts far-journeying, Protean, sprang once in light from thy wine-dark, mystic floor, Lough Liath ! Sky-neighbouring lake vexed by all the winds ! mournful, sibilant, teeming fount of thy vast phantasmal mythus, O Ultonia !



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