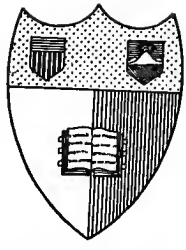

THE LITERARY LIFE AND OTHER ESSAYS

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PREFACE

Canon Sheehan needs no editor's introduction, even to the present generation, though it has lived to see an Ireland vitally different from that so affectionately described in his reminiscent essay, " The Moonlight of Memory "—as different, perhaps, as that rather unheroic epoch was from the time of Sarsfield. That essay and another, " Lenten Time in Doneraile," in which he tells of an aspect of our national life which is splendidly unchanging, were written only a year or two before his death. The rest are of much earlier date. The papers on literature were delivered as lectures some thirty years ago. The political and religious essays are for the most part the work of the same period of Canon Sheehan's life, and any topical allusions in them explain themselves. 1896 is the date of the admirable but discarded preface to " The Triumph of Failure," which was itself first published in 1899. " The Dawn of the Century " was delivered as a lecture in 1904.

In editing this work I have taken no liberties with the manuscript beyond some trifling alterations in punctuation. The editor of a posthumous work is always faced with this difficulty, that he must pass some things, be they many or few, which he feels sure the author would not have allowed to remain as they are : here and there a little roughness or infelicity of expression which would pass unnoticed, or, indeed, be perhaps not out of place in a lecture, must consequently find its way in a permanent form into the published work of a writer who has made for himself his own high place in Anglo-Irish literature. This cannot be helped ; but it is only fair to Canon Sheehan's reputation as a finished writer of English to remind the reader of the form in which these essays were left by their author. And, indeed, it is perhaps remarkable that the number of these evidences of lack of care and polish is so few

E McL.

THE LITERARY LIFE[1]

I

In accepting the invitation of this Society to read a paper for its members, I selected this subject—the Literary Life—as one that might be made not only interesting, but useful. Because it is one about which ceaseless interrogations are put from young and old aspirants, the form of question generally touching the feasibility of making a living by literature, or, at least, of attracting, ever so little, the regards of our fellow men. It is found that some of these queries are pathetic; some, unreasonable; some, pitiful; none, for reasons I shall afterwards detail, altogether condemnable. The replies, given readily by those who have failed and those who have succeeded, are pitched in the same sad key of uniformity. With singular unanimity they seem to warn off all aspirants from a dangerous and thorny path. Some of these sad verdicts are familiar to you, like the mournful lines of Dr. Johnson:

"You know what ills the author's life assail—
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail."

[1] A lecture delivered before the Cork Literary and Scientific Society.

But his successors in modern times, when it is generally presumed an author's life is happier, seem to repeat the same sad threnody.

George Augustus Sala was a successful journalist. His last verdict is :

" Were I a young man, I should certainly not adopt journalism as a profession. With very few exceptions the career leads eventually to premature old age and indigence."

Grant Allen, who was simply omniscient, if we are to judge by the multiplicity of subjects that engaged his pen, says that " crossing-sweeping is better than literature."

Gibbon, de Quincey, Scott, Trollope, Thackeray, may be cited as witnesses to the same effect ; and surely the world has always regarded these as the successful few.

To a correspondent who wrote him on the subject Carlyle replied, " that he had never heard a madder proposal. It was only one degree less foolish than if he were to throw himself from the top of the Monument in the hope of flying."

And to Dr. Crozier, who had come from Canada to London to practise not his profession as doctor but as a lesser light of literature, the same sage replied :

" Na, na, that winna do. Ye'd better stick to your profession, young man. It's time enough to think of literature when you've cleared your own mind, and have something to say."

And, in still more recent times, a writer, whose sad experience lends such pathetic and mournful interest to his words, writes :

" Innumerable are the men and women now writing for bread, who have not the least chance of finding in such work a permanent livelihood. They took to writing, because they knew not what else to do; or because the literary calling tempted them by its independence, and its dazzling prizes. They will hang on to the squalid profession, their earnings eked out by begging and borrowing, until it is too late for them to do anything else—and then? With a lifetime of dread experience behind me, I say that he who encourages any young man or woman to look for his living to literature, commits no less than a crime."

These are sad words, wrung from lips which had tasted disappointment and despair. Are they borne out by facts and experience? Yes! alas! they are only too true. There is no profession, whose borders are strewn with so many wrecks as this of literature; as there is no profession for whose labours honours and rewards come so tardily—very often never come at all, or only come when it is too late. I know you might quote against me such isolated successes as that of Lord Macaulay, who got £10,000 for his *History of England;* Mr. John Morley, who got a similar sum for his *Life of Gladstone;* George Eliot, who received the same sum for *Adam Bede;* Charles Dickens, dying worth £60,000; Victor Hugo, a millionaire; Marie Corelli! But what of Milton—who got five pounds for *Paradise Lost;* What of Chatterton? What of Goldsmith? What of Jane Austen? What of Shelley—expatriated? What of Keats—murdered? What of Wordsworth—ridiculed

and despised for fifty years, and then crowned with laurels, and honoured with academic degrees, when his countrymen should have done penance in sackcloth and ashes, and atoned for their stupid malevolence by respectful and contrite silence? And Coleridge—dependent in his old age on charity; and Jean Paul Richter—labouring on his immortal works for ten years, whilst an ignorant and heedless public refused him bread for his wife and children. And Tasso, Cowper, Comte—in their madhouses; and that vast army of French *Parnassiens* and *Decadents*, from Balzac down to Paul Verlaine and Stephen Mallarme, starving and shivering in the attics of the *Quartier Latin*, and casting immortal works at the feet of grinding and avaricious publishers and a public which thought that the artists, who had given them so freely out of the opulence of their genius, were not worth the few wretched francs that would help to keep body and soul together. To-day, after the lapse of nearly a century, certain generous and cultivated Americans, of the same race and type that helped to place that beautiful monument to our Berkely down there in the Cathedral at Cloyne, are labouring to erect into a museum the house where Keats died in Rome. It is very generous and beautiful; but again a symbol of the tardy recognition the world gives to its immortals!

And what shall we say of the heart-sickness, the disappointment, the despair, that seem to have ever dogged the feet of the great thinkers of the world? History is black with the dread record. Even in our own day I know nothing more pathetic than the

futile attempts of the authors of great works to obtain a little recognition ; of their futile appeals to publishers and public, to give them just one chance. Think of Robert Browning's *Bells and Pomegranates*, absolutely extinguished for twenty years by one word—*Balderdash*—written as a careful and comprehensive review by some truculent idiot in *Tait's Magazine !* And think that the same magazine had absolutely rejected an elaborate review by John Stuart Mill on the same poems ! Think of *Lorna Doone* hawked around London for years, until by the chance accident of the marriage of the Marquis of Lorne with a Royal Princess, it caught the ear of the public. Think of Francis Thompson—a crossing-sweeper in London ! Think of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar lying *perdu* for years, until some intelligent man picked up a frayed copy for twopence in a London bookstall. Think of our own Mangan ! Oh, yes ! We who have inherited the treasures of Mangan's genius ; we think what an honour we would have esteemed it, had we lived in his time, if we were privileged to give him a night's lodging, or a decent cloak. Too late ! Such is the inscription posterity, inheriting the immortal works of genius, has to place with sorrow upon the tomb.

Such, in brief, is the history of this sad but glorious fraternity. And we need hardly wonder that those who have had experience of the vicissitudes and changes, and been embittered by the uncertainties and sadness of the literary life, should warn off all young postulants who might be modest or humble enough to plead for advice.

But it may be asked how does it happen, that with

all these terrible facts and experiences before their eyes, so many are yet anxious to be enrolled in this brotherhood of pain and sorrow? What is the strange fascination which literature exercises over every one who has come under the spell of great authors? It is quite certain that there are few men or women of education and culture who do not aspire to the glory of seeing their thoughts, sentiments, and aspirations in print. The number of students who go to the Bar, or to medicine, or to business, or to engineering, is limited. The number of young ladies who desire to enter the learned professions, or to earn an independent livelihood as teachers, governesses, or Civil Servants, is limited. The number of literary aspirants is legion.

I think the motives which underlie or create this fascination for letters, may be summed up thus :—

"Admiration for great authors and the desire to imitate them; a passionate love for books, and the ambition to create something similar; the craving for what is believed to be a quiet, uneventful, unimpassioned life; the fancy that a life of literature is absolutely free from care; the rapture of composition; the desire of fame; the passion, so universal, for making money as speedily and as easily as possible."

Some of these methods are noble and honourable; some unwise and unreasonable; some base and dishonourable under certain aspects. We shall dispose of these latter first.

I do not for a moment believe, or aver, that it is either unworthy or dishonouring to write for money or for fame. There is no reason whatever why an

author should not seek to exchange his services as poet, novelist, essayist, historian for remuneration similar and equal to that which accrues to the doctor, the barrister, or the commercial speculator. If he wishes to coin his brains, and mint them into gold, there is neither simony nor sacrilege in doing so. The pen of the writer is not more sacred than the scalpel of the doctor or the artist's pencil. Yet there is a certain class of people who seem to think that it is quite a degradation to write for money; and even the legislation about copyright, forced from the hands of unwilling statesmen, and but slowly and reluctantly improved in the course of ages, manifestly supposes that an author's work should be regarded as public property, with the right of every one to enter in and take his share. We hear a great deal about the rights of property, especially in land; and any violation of those rights is stigmatised as theft or confiscation. It is so easy to forget that the first claim or right upon property should be the right of creation or production; and the land is God's creation, and the book is the work of the author. But the idea is that an author, alone of all producers, should be a public benefactor, labouring out of pure philanthropy for men's souls or pleasures, and sacrificing all human and personal rights by reason of his God-given faculty for teaching or pleasing mankind. Slowly and reluctantly the public is losing its grasp on this pleasant theory. The only section that still clings to it is the publishing faculty, who seem to regard the author as a kind of journeyman, who has no rights, only a few attenuated privileges; and who is speci-

ally created by God to furnish his publisher with copy that will swell the yearly dividends, and help him to keep his carriage, or his hunting-box in Scotland. And if an author has the presumption to demand his rights, he is generally greeted with the exclamation of surprise that met poor Oliver Twist, when he had the temerity to ask for " more."

But where the degradation certainly comes in is when an author, avaricious of money or ambitious of fame, is prepared to use, or abuse, his talents to please the morbid passions of the multitude. A writer who appeals to passion, sensual or other ; who panders to religious prejudice, or turns a sacred talent into a political agency ; the author who sets the " maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism," or perverts the minds, or destroys the principles of the young, should meet with no mercy. *Corruptio optimi pessima !* And the perversion of a great talent to base and unworthy uses is the unforgivable sin.

So far for the principle. But can an author make money ? Is it a lucrative profession ? We have already answered that question. For the vast majority of writers, who hope to make a living by it, it is the source of unspeakable disappointment. There is only one safe advice for young people who are smitten by a passion for literature, and that is : Let it be your pleasure, but not your profession. It is " an excellent walking-stick ; but an exceedingly bad crutch."

Again, I cannot see why an author should not write for fame. Fame, or rather the thirst for fame, is " the last infirmity of noble minds " ; but it is an honourable infirmity. And it sometimes takes a

shape that makes it akin to the zeal of an apostle. For there cannot be a doubt that many writers take up their pens, not for gain, sordid or otherwise ; not for life-advancement, but purely with the desire of influencing the minds of many unto good—the desire of creating in other souls the high ideas and lofty principles with which they themselves are animated. To wish to have one's name bruited abroad in the press and amongst the public may be a paltry thing, but it is intelligible. To desire to influence the world by the magnetism of great ideas ; to desire to form even one link in the electric chain that stretches down through the ages, magnetising generation after generation with thoughts that thrill and words that burn—this, so far from being ignoble, may assume the sacredness of a vocation and an apostleship. " Cast forth thy Act, thy Word, into the ever-living, ever-working universe ; it is a seed grain that cannot die ; unnoticed to-day, it will be found flourishing as a Banyan-grove after a thousand years."

II

This naturally leads us to consider the higher and more sacred motives that influence so many in their choice of literature as a profession. The first of these I have specified as a love of books and their authors. The highest worship is the worship of imitation. Whosoever sits at the feet of Gamaliel seeks to become like unto Gamaliel. We like to create what we admire ; and whoever has a favourite author or authors, dreams of one day becoming a

source of light and leading unto others, as these authors are to himself. And behind that passion for imitation is the instinct that seems to pervade the whole universe ; that mysterious and sublime impulse which seems almost like an attribute of the Divinity, imparted in measure to finite beings—the instinct of creation or production. You see it everywhere : in the atom, in the mineral, in the cell, in the plant, in the animal. The same tremendous process that rounds a nebula into a sun, carries the pollen of a flower from plant to plant on the wings of a bee or a butterfly ; and the same mysterious instinct that vitalizes a seedling compelled Michael Angelo to lie for nights and days on the summit of a scaffold to paint the frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. And it is the same mysterious force which evolved *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* that is stirring in the heart and brain of every young boy or girl who takes up a sheet of paper for the first time to write the first vapid story or the first immature poem. And vapid though the story may be, and immature the poem, there is, beside the creative instinct that produced it, another instinct even more wonderful, an innate and supersensuous instinct to create only what is perfect and beautiful. This has always seemed to me one of the greatest and most unfathomable mysteries of our existence. So surely as the crystal flakes of snow form and dissolve into facets of the most perfect geometrical proportions ; so surely as the bee creates, with unconscious art, the perfect hexagons of his cells ; so surely as the bird weaves out of garden refuse his most beautiful nest, and the flower develops its painted perfections ; so

surely does the instinct of beauty and harmony animate and inspire the youngest novice in the art of literature. And this passion for the beautiful, or this instinct for creating the beautiful, is innate in the human mind, as it is innate in Nature. Trélat in his *Recherches historiques sur la folie* tells us that "under the influence of insanity an ignorant person will make perfect Latin verses ; a woman will sing Latin hymns and verses entirely unknown to her." Marce records the case of a young married woman, of very ordinary intelligence, " who, under an attack of mania, wrote letters to her husband, which for the eloquence and passionate energy of their style, might easily be placed beside the most fervent passages in the *Nouvelle Heloïse*." Cases of dementia have been known, in which young men of the most ordinary capacity, and who in their sane moments had not the slightest artistic perceptions, have produced sketches, sometimes with chalks, sometimes with pencils, sometimes with a red-hot iron on a piece of board, which experts refused to believe were not the work of supreme artists ; which proves, not only the existence of a sub-consciousness of which we are quite unaware, but also of a latent sense of artistic beauty, which only needs some kind of sudden emotion to be developed into action. Hence I see in the crudest efforts of the pen, nothing but Nature working outwards towards perfection.

But I shall be met at once by the objection that all this instinct, like the blind instincts of Nature, leads but to sad and melancholy waste ; that the process of natural selection holds in literature as in everything

else; that only the fittest and noblest and strong things survive; and that hence it would be much better for poetic young ladies to knit stockings than to make verses; and for moon-struck young men to take up a spade or a hoe, and let the pen alone. True, there is that terrible and unaccountable waste in Nature as in Art. It was the one thing that troubled the intellectual serenity of Tennyson in his old age, and shook the little Christian faith that he possessed.

"So careful of the type she seems. But no!
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries: A thousand types are gone,
I care for nothing. All shall go!"

It is not the origin of things, but the utter depravity of Nature in sacrificing with criminal and profuse prodigality all that is created with so much pain that forms the cardinal puzzle and problem of existence. If the elm-tree produces 300,000 seeds in a year, and only one seed becomes an elm; if but one seed of 200,000 of the purple orchis reaches maturity, we pronounce Nature a shocking wastrel. But it does not follow that the seedling that fructified was more vigorous and healthful than the thousands that perished. Their environments were different, and they fell under the other instinct of destruction. And I say that it is quite a mistake to suppose that in Literature—out of the countless poems, and essays, and dramas, that have been evolved from the creative instinct of the intellect—only the best have survived. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not affirm that any greater epic than the *Iliad*, any greater drama

than *Hamlet* or *Lear*, has gone down the waste-pipes of time into the gulf of oblivion. But I do affirm that to-day countless essays are written, printed, read, and forgotten incomparably greater than the insolent platitudes of Macaulay; and that countless poems are hidden and buried away in magazines[1] that far more justly entitle their authors to a niche in the Temple of Fame than the crudities that were written by the poets whom Johnson deemed worthy of a place in his gallery of mediocrities. Tennyson used to say that many thousands of lines, quite as precious as those he preserved, went up his chimney in clouds of tobacco-smoke; and I have no doubt that many a fine lyric and sonnet has helped in our days the utilities which he anticipated for his "mortal lullabies of pain"—

> "To bind a book, to line a box,
> Or help to curl a maiden's locks."

What then are we to say? This—That, inasmuch as it appears to be the law of Nature to create prodigally, by virtue of the secret and impervious instinct that prompts creation; and that, inasmuch as these creations, again obeying the behests of another secret and imperative law, always round to perfection, even though the vast proportion are doomed to wanton destruction, and perhaps only one solitary specimen of Nature's creative power survives; so is it the law of Nature that the young, the hopeful, and the buoyant shall seek to perpetuate themselves in prose and verse; and that we have no more right to check or destroy that instinct than we have to interfere with the mechanical operations that are fortunately placed

altogether beyond our control. If these pen-productions are doomed to destruction, well, it is only again the law of Nature, even though we may regret it. If they survive, they remain " a thing of beauty, and a joy for ever."

Besides, in all this there is the eternal law of Chance. The same Chance that places a seedling in the beak of a migratory bird and bids it be carried to some ocean-beaten rock, there to create a luxuriant vegetation, may also discover and reveal some hidden beauty and glory in literature. Thomas Gray owes his immortality to one poem ; Blanco White to one sonnet. There are greater poems than the *Elegy*, which never have been heard of. There are incomparably greater sonnets unrecognised in the language than the famous sonnet on " Night." And there is no writer, however humble, who may not stumble on an immortal line, and find a discriminating critic to recognise it. There is a systole and diastole in all human affairs : and the idols of this generation may strew the roads of the next. At one time all Europe went mad over Byron ; and it was seriously debated in Oxford whether Byron or Shelley were the greater poet. No one would dream of asking the question now. The time may come when Shakespeare will be dethroned : for there is a good deal of lying about Shakespeare. And the slaves of to-day may be the kings of to-morrow.

This leads me quite naturally to the next motive I have particularized as an attraction to the literary life—the rapture of composition !

Now it is quite true that for the most part authors have to whip and spur their brains until the jaded or

helpless faculties stir themselves reluctantly to work. Very often authors have to write against time to complete an engagement or to meet the season when books are most in demand. This is the drudgery of literature; and such work, under such circumstances, is mostly poor and transitory. But there come moments in the life of every author—at least, of every author of distinction, when they seem to be lifted above the earth, and to see a sudden opening in the firmament, revealing glimpses of Heaven. Such moments of ecstasy are few and intermittent. They cannot be foreseen or anticipated. They do not come and go with the rhythmic swing of the sea; but capriciously and at unexpected times, flashing sudden lights on the mind, and as quickly snapping and extinguishing them. In such moments not only are worlds revealed; but with the inspiration comes also the language fitted to reveal it—the happy expression—the one word out of a million that adapts itself with a precision that no mere Art could discover. I feel quite sure that Shelley experienced this when he wrote his immortal *Ode to the West Wind*, and stumbled upon such lines as:

"The blue Mediterranean, where he lay
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams
Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay;"

and:

"Thou,
In whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which bear
The sapless foliage of the Ocean, know
Thy voice and suddenly grow grey with fear."

No mere cudgelling of brains could ever elicit that line :

" Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,"

or that expression :

" The sapless foliage of the Ocean."

And when Keats in his immortal sonnet on Chapman's Homer wrote :

" Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken ;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise
Silent, upón a peak in Darien,"

or in his *Ode to a Nightingale*, broke into what some consider the two most perfect lines in all English poetry :

" Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn,"

he must have experienced something like the levitation of spiritualists, and floated in the air.

And when Carlyle said to his wife, on the completion of his French Revolution : " There ! They have not had for many years a book that came so flaming hot from the heart of any man." It was his rapture at having perfected an immortal work, and an ecstasy of defiance to a heedless or stupid public.

III

But, in the life of men of genius, these, alas ! are transitory, sudden, intermittent emotions. As a rule, authors, especially of the higher type, are very un-

happy mortals. Whether it be the perpetual mental strain producing nervousness and irritability; or whether it be the disappointment of baffled hopes; or whether it be penury, want, or neglect, that shall be alleged as causes, it is quite certain that a literary life is mostly an unhappy one. Sudden raptures mean chronic depression; and the ecstasies of a moment scarcely counterbalance the infelicities of a lifetime. If it had pleased God to give you a brain, the grey cortex of which is so dull and unelastic that no external impression will strike a spark from it, thank God for the favour! Or if you are endowed with such faculties that you can gaze for hours stupidly into the fire; or lean over a village bridge and watch the waters curling beneath; or consume infinite tobacco, whilst engaged in the laudable object of killing man's worst enemy—Time—thank God for it! But if you are dowered with that nervous irritability called genius, throwing out thoughts from the brain as swiftly as the crystal drops are flung from a mill-wheel——ah, well, you may know, from time to time, what is meant by the ecstasy and rapture of composition; but you will never know what happiness means in this life. "Where thou beholdest Genius," says Goethe, in *Tasso*, "there thou beholdest, too, the martyr's crown." [1]

Hence, unquestionably, a literary life is for the most part an unhappy life; because, if you have genius, you must suffer the penalty of genius; and, if you have only talent, there are so many cares and

[1] du das Genie erblickst
Erblickst du auch Zugleich die Martyrkrone.

worries incidental to the circumstances of men of letters, as to make life exceedingly miserable. Besides the pangs of composition, and the continuous disappointment which a true artist feels at his inability to reveal himself, there is the ever-recurring difficulty of gaining the public ear. Young writers are buoyed up by the hope and the belief that they have only to throw that poem at the world's feet to get back in return the laurel-crown ; that they have only to push that novel into print to be acknowledged at once as a new light in literature. You can never convince a young author that the editors of magazines and the publishers of books are a practical body of men, who are by no means fanatically anxious about placing the best literature before the public. Nay, that, for the most part, they are mere brokers, who conduct their business on the hardest lines of a Profit and Loss account.

But supposing your book fairly launched, its perils are only beginning. You have to run the gauntlet of the critics. To a young author, again, this seems to be as terrible an ordeal as passing down the files of Sioux or Comanche Indians, each one of whom is thirsting for your scalp. When you are a little older, you will find that criticism is not much more serious than the bye-play of clowns in a circus, when they beat around the ring the victim with bladders slung at the end of long poles. A time comes in the life of every author when he regards critics as comical, rather than formidable, and goes his way unheeding. But there are sensitive souls that yield under the chastisement, and, perhaps after suffering much silent

torture, abandon the profession of the pen for ever. Keats, perhaps, is the saddest example of a fine spirit hounded to death by savage criticism ; because, whatever his biographers may aver, that furious attack of Gifford and Terry undoubtedly expedited his death. But no doubt there are hundreds who suffer keenly from hostile and unscrupulous criticism ; and who have to bear that suffering in silence, because it is a cardinal principle in literature that the most unwise thing in the world for an author is to take public notice of criticism in the way of defending himself. Silence is the only safeguard, as it is the only dignified protest against insult and offence.

Again, although there is a good deal of good nature and fraternal feeling, and a sense of *camaraderie* amongst authors, there is also sometimes " war on Parnassus." I do not know anything more painful and humiliating than to see a beloved poet or a worshipped author, descend into the arena of vulgar controversy. It is a dethronement of our idols that is akin to loss of faith. Hence, the life of a poet should never be written. The world should be satisfied with the legacy of his immortal works. Hence is Shakespeare happy, in that we know practically nothing about his life. It is not pleasant to see our great saints of literature toppling down to our feet in some wretched wordy squabble. I think Tennyson acted most wisely in excluding from the collected edition of his poems his terrible and scathing reply to Lord Lytton in the *New Timon*. Thackeray is not raised in our esteem by his resentment against Charlotte Bronte for his supposed likeness to Rochester. Nor does

he come well out of his dispute with Edmuud Yates, although, as a man, he has left behind him a most noble character for magnanimity and lordly munificence. I remember, after reading Swinburne's exchanges of compliments with Eric Mackay, about a fulsome poem published by the latter in the *World*, and which ended in an attorney's letter and a cry for the police, I rubbed my eyes and asked myself: Is this the same man that wrote the noble choruses in *Atalanta*, and the sublime elegy on the *Death of Barry Cornwall?* Mr. Froude, an unreliable historian, but an accomplished *litterateur*, did wisely in never answering the fierce onslaughts that were made on him and his works, especially by his brother-historian, Freeman. But his reputation was not served by his *post-mortem* revelations, in which he says with acrimony:

"I never resented anything more than that article in the *Quarterly*. I felt as if I were tied to a post, and a mule was brought up to kick me. Some day I think I shall take my reviewers all round, and give them a piece of my mind. I acknowledge to find real mistakes in the whole work of 12 volumes—about twenty trifling slips, equivalent to *i's* not dotted, and *t's* not crossed; and that is all the utmost malignity has discovered. Every one of the rascals, too, has made a dozen blunders of his own while detecting one of mine . . . . You may have seen Freeman's papers in the *Contemporary*. You will be glad to hear that he is changing his mind on the Eastern question. That I should be on the same side convinces him that he must be wrong."

I quote this to show how unwise it is for aggrieved authors to lift the veil on their feelings, and compel the small world to ask, how such anger can find a place in celestial minds ?

But it proves that the literary life is not all sunshine. I spoke of the eternal and universal law of reproduction. But there is the counter instinct, alas ! also eternal and universal, and only too well developed in the human heart—the instinct of attack and destruction ; and this always finds its object in whatever is most fair and beautiful. Weeds have no parasites. These latter find their way to the under leaf of rose and lily.

I think that here, too, may be found a remote reason for the profound pessimism that seems to be a characteristic of all great geniuses. The little we know of Shakespeare, his temporal prosperity, and his placid bust, seem to mark him as an exception. But no ! The man who wrote *Timon* and *Lear*, and the sad words about adversity and ingratitude, took but a sombre view of life and humanity ; whilst running through the golden web of his Sonnets is a dark line, denoting the profound depression and melancholy of his character. Milton's solemn sadness is everywhere in his poems. Wordsworth expresses his convictions in such lines as :

" The still, sad music of humanity,"

and

" The burden and
The weight of all this unintelligible world."

Byron was a misanthrope for ever railing against his kind. Shelley, in the lines :

> " Yet, now despair itself is mild
> Even as the winds and waters are,
> I could lie down like a tired child
> And weep away the life of care :
> Which I have borne, and yet must bear,"

typifies the same.

I need not quote Carlyle or Tennyson—the two saddest souls of modern times ; nor George Eliot ; nor the host of great thinkers, who, having set out on the journey of life with buoyant hopes and aspirations, closed their eyes on this world, like the ancient prophets, with a *woe* upon their lips.

But, besides the petty annoyances and grinding cares inseparable from the literary life, there was another cause for their pessimism. It was this :

All great thinkers live and move on a high plane of thought. It is only there they can breathe freely. It is only in contact with spirits like themselves they can live harmoniously and attain that serenity which comes from ideal companionship. The studies of all great thinkers must range along the highest altitudes of human thought. I cannot remember the name of any illuminative genius who did not drink his inspirations from the fountains of ancient Greek and Hebrew writers ; or such among the moderns as were pupils in ancient thought, and, in turn, became masters in their own. I have always thought that the strongest argument in favour of the Baconian theory was, that no man, however indubitable his genius, could have

written the plays and sonnets that have come down to us under Shakespeare's name who had not the liberal education of Bacon. How this habit of intercourse with the gods makes one impatient of mere men. The magnificent ideals that have ever haunted the human mind, and given us our highest proofs of a future immortality by reason of the impossibility of their fulfilment here, are splintered into atoms by contact with life's realities. Hence comes our sublime discontent. You will notice that your first sensation after reading a great book is one of melancholy and dissatisfaction. The ideas, sentiments, expressions, are so far beyond those of ordinary working life that you cannot turn aside from one to the other without an acute sensation and consciousness of the contrast. And the principles are so lofty, so superhuman that it is a positive pain, if once you become imbued with them, to come down and mix in the squalid surroundings of ordinary humanity. It may be spiritual or intellectual pride that is engendered on this high plane—intellectual life. But whatever it is, it becomes inevitable. An habitual meditation on the vast problems that underlie human life, and are knit into human destinies—thoughts of immortality, of the littleness of mere man, of the greatness of man's soul, of the splendours of the universe that are invisible to the ordinary traffickers in the street, as the vastness of St. Peter's is to the spider that weaves her web in a corner of the dome—these things do not fit men to understand the average human being, or tolerate with patience the sordid wretchedness of the unregenerate masses. Faust in his midnight study

was a perplexed man, because he was always pursuing the phantoms of the Unknown. Had he touched earth, and then gone back to his books and alembics, he would have become a cynic and a pessimist. He remained on the lower levels, enjoyed all the lower pleasures, suffered all the lower pains, and all the disillusion that comes from contact with humanity. You cannot come down from the society of Plato without being slightly disgusted with John Anderson; nor can you descend from "the sacred everlasting calm" of the immortal spirits of our race without suffering irritation at the petty, frivolous, and stupid things that seem to occupy nine-tenths of the time of some of your acquaintance. And when you draw aside and watch this swirling, turbulent tide of humanity, carrying with it the straws and mud and refuse of the world, it is not easy to take a hopeful or sanguine view of the future of the race. It is easy to understand, therefore, why such thinkers fly to the solitude of their own thoughts, or the silent companionship of the immortals; and if they do care to present their views in prose or verse to the world, that these views take a sombre and melancholy setting from "the pale cast of thought" in which they were engendered. I know but one exception to this universal scepticism—the case of Robert Browning. He was, apparently, a childish, guileless optimist, "believing all things, hoping all things, loving all things." But I explain the singular fact by the theory that Browning, unlike all his great contemporaries, was a society man. He gave as much time to mortals as to the immortals; and the contrast, therefore, was not so painful or pronounced.

IV

Perhaps you will be surprised, after this enumeration of the many trials and drawbacks in the literary life, when I draw the strange conclusion that I most earnestly recommend it to those whose tastes lead in that direction; but always with the condition that it is regarded not as a profession or means towards an independent livelihood. And I recommend it for a threefold reason: First, as a resource and pleasure in those hours of depression or *ennui* that come to all; second, as a refining and exalting influence; third, as a possible Apostolate.

There is certainly no greater or more lasting mental resource than a taste for letters or the literary life. Music palls upon many; social pleasures are not always available or desirable. But the art of composition, once acquired, is never lost, and never wearies; and you can pursue it without extraneous aid and in that solitude that is so dear to those who try to think deeply. "I know no greater pleasure," wrote Jean Paul, "and few more refining, than for a young man to open his portfolio, and walking up and down his room, strive to spoil that virgin page with words that may be immortal." And if you are fortunate enough to get into print, so much the better.

It seems to me that Reading Circles or Guilds in our chief towns and cities might help materially, not only the cultivation of literary tastes, but the calling or vocation to a literary life. Such Circles exist, and are productive of much good, in all the great cities of

America; and are carried on through the summer months in the summer schools at Lake Champlain and elsewhere. At these meetings not only are the great classics discussed and read, but also individual efforts on the part of members are encouraged by being brought forward, and eagerly criticised. It is quite possible that with that sarcastic vein that runs through the Irish temperament, and in the absence of that gentle, serious tone that makes so much for harmony, that a game of bridge or bezique might be better adapted to sustain these amenities that go so far to make our social intercourse tolerable. But it would be a decided impulse towards literary production if there could be established in our midst a few little coteries where a young author might be heard before coming in front of the footlights. I am aware that philosophers who have studied the intricacies of human nature think otherwise. Leopardi says, that the reading of compositions is "a social scourge, a public calamity, and adds a new terror to life"; and he quotes the opinion of a learned friend, who said that if it be true that the Empress Octavia fainted away while Virgil was reading to her the sixth canto of his *Æneid*, we may be sure that her swoon was caused, not by the poet's pathetic allusion to the fate of Marcellus, but from sheer fatigue and weariness of the poet's reading. And it is no violent stretch of imagination to suppose that in a witty city like this, some young censor might, like Diogenes of old, lean over the shoulder of some unhappy reader and exclaim as he saw the blank spaces at the bottom of the page "Courage, my friends, I see land at last!"

But if it is a daring thing to suggest the formation of Reading Guilds in our midst I am about to do a desperate thing in suggesting, as an incentive to a literary life, the establishment of a purely literary journal. We are so deluged with journals and reforms, and methods of reform, that I am sure at the very suggestion you will cast up your eyes and say, "Yet another!" But on the one hand, there cannot be a doubt of the steady decadence, and even extinction, of these literary tastes in our midst, which originated fifty or sixty years ago in the hedge schools, and which, helped by the tone of the public journals, constituted quite an Augustine age in our literature. On the other hand, it is quite useless to look to our schools or educational system for such a revival of tastes as would place us on a level with the cultured classes of other nations. But no one can deny that the literary talent requisite for working successfully a great literary journal is available in Ireland. One Dublin magazine, if it were limited to purely literary, scientific, or artistic subjects, would have all the elements of a great literary organ. And a small quarto paper, published some years ago in Dublin, commanded, it was quite clear, the highest literary talent amongst us; but it was steered, from the day it was launched, right on the rocks and shoals of religious and political controversy, and, of course, suffered shipwreck! But I suppose I am a dreamer of dreams, and we shall let it pass.

I hold in the second place that a literary life is necessarily a life of refinement and culture. I cannot see how it can be otherwise. I cannot see how any

man or woman, living habitually with the prophets and seers of the race, can descend willingly to the lower levels of sense or self-interest. And I again repeat that no man can attain conspicuous literary success, or become a light to his generation, unless he has sat an obedient pupil at the feet of the great masters in his art. I know you may quote against me certain poets and philosophers who preached or sang divinely and lived diabolically. But *que voulez-vous?* The *diva*, who at ten o'clock, in yonder theatre, is raising you to the third heavens on the wings of her voice, will sup at twelve on oysters and champagne. You cannot, alas! dissever the human from the divine. But I cannot see how anyone who has been reading, say, the *Dialogues* of Plato; or who has just finished that chapter, "The Everlasting Year," in the Third Book of *Sartor Resartus*, can be greedy at a restaurant or can join in a circle of scandal, or cheat his neighbour at whist. Of course there is the danger of ultra-refinement, of looking down upon "the man in the street." But this danger is remote, except, as I have said, in the pessimism of great authors. Most others will come down from Olympus with only Infinite Pity in their hearts for poor, sordid, struggling humanity.

Lastly (and I am sure you are as well pleased with the word, as when you hear in Church, "One word more, and I have done"), there is the Apostolate of Literature. It is a subject that might be developed not only into a Lecture, but into a Book; and I am acting unwisely in giving it but a paragraph at the end of a paper. But I shall address myself only to one aspect of it.

I feel that I am contravening the opinions of each and every section into which modern Ireland is divided when I say, that in the work of nation-building the chief requisite would be architects of large, liberal ideas, gathered from the world's chief thinkers, and assimilated so perfectly that they would be manifested in firmer judgments, wider speculations, more generous sympathies, and larger toleration than we find in our little world of to-day. And I do not know where that knowledge and experience are to be acquired, unless at the feet of "the masters of those who know," in every age, of every country and clime. And whilst I am very proud of being an ardent propagandist of the Gaelic League, I cannot sympathise with those who think, I am sure honestly and sincerely, that we should only read Irish books, and write on Irish subjects; and who speak with some contempt of Anglo-Irish writers and cosmopolitan patriots. If such ideas had been accepted in other countries, I wonder where the literary glories, nay, the political triumphs of England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy would be to-day? If Shakespeare had not ransacked the world for subjects, where would be *Julius Cæsar* and *Coriolanus*, *Hamlet* and *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet?* If Milton had limited his ideas within the British seas, we would not have had *Paradise Lost* or *Samson Agonistes*. Byron, Shelley, and Keats would be represented by one sonnet or lyric and an angry diatribe. Swinburne would not exist, except in some political harangue. If Tasso, Dante, Alfieri, had followed a similar prin-

ciple, Italian literature would be almost limited to Petrarch's Sonnets. And if the great French tragedians had not gone to antiquity for subjects, the names of Racine and Corneille would be practically unknown. In a word, you would blot out the world's literature if you only regarded what was purely racial or national in the productions of the great masters of literature, in every age, and country, and clime.

Nor is it reasonable that it should be otherwise. There is a certain fund of original thought stored up in the written archives, the unwritten traditions, and the daily habitudes of every race. And if thought is the parent of thought, and language its vehicle, I think that that nation would soon be starved which would limit itself to the creations of its own children. Even if it be said that home thoughts are the best thoughts, well, they will become more valuable by being appraised by comparison with the ideas of others. But certainly in our days, when we may be on the eve of tremendous changes, I would wish for systems of education, based on broader principles than we now possess ; and as that seems almost beyond the horizon of our hopes, I would wish to see literary tastes more widely extended and more liberally developed, to the end that, with larger views and freer sympathies, we might be able to view the present condition of our country, as it were, in the perspective, the true perspective of solid judgment, and unbiassed and unprejudiced sympathies. And as we cannot, as a nation, go outside ourselves without courting self-destruction, the only thing that seems possible and feasible is to take our stand, side by side, with the master-

thinkers of the ages, and try and look at ourselves with their eyes. I think if we did so we should see many things in a different light from that in which they now appear; and that our views of men and their institutions, their laws and habits, their history, and their present political and economic conditions, their relations to each other, and to the world with which they are brought into contact; their social, religious, and political antipathies, narrowed and concentrated in the focus of great cosmic principles would seem to us capable of much emendation; that is, if we were really prepared to emerge from the toils of factions and parties, and walk in the broader way of free and unfettered principle. And as education cannot come down to the masses of the people, and there is no pedagogue system so wide as to embrace a whole nation, nothing seems to remain for us in Ireland but an apostolate of Literature, where books will be our University, and each man a teacher unto himself.

I do not despair of seeing yet in Ireland—in its populous centres, which ought to become luminous points, radiating light all around; and its quiet, country places, where all the surroundings are favourable to peaceful thought and meditation—large circles of thinkers, devoted to literature, and science, and art, and insensibly leading up the masses of the people to their own regions of high thought, and refined and exalted sentiment. I feel sure that outside the storm-belt, the torrid zone of political life, there must be many of both sexes who desire to live more gentle lives in the temperate regions where passion

has no place, where there is no intriguing, no statesmanship (as the euphemism has it), no contention, except the academic striving after literary success, or a calm and passionless debate about a point of art, or a subtlety of expression. Such a literary, shall I say ideal, world must not expect recognition. Nothing is recognised in Ireland except what is entangled in the meshes of politics. The last trump of doom would sound before we would think of putting up a monument to such a thinker as Bishop Berkeley. It is quite different with other nationalities, who look at things with " larger, other eyes " than ours. The great, generous American people do not ask if a dead poet were a Democrat or a Republican, whether he was enmeshed in the toils of Tammany or other political organisation. They only ask : Was he a Poet ? and they recognise his worth accordingly. The great German nation acknowledge as the " bright, particular star " of its firmament, Goethe, who was decidedly unpatriotic in our sense of the word. It would seem difficult to defend the man who was so absolutely indifferent to the fate of his country during the Napoleonic invasion that he was engrossed in fossil-hunting at the very time that the battle of Zena was raging outside the walls of his dwelling. But, because he was the supreme artist and interpreter of his nation, he has obtained the first place in the Temple of Fame, which is so well and honourably crowded with the effigies of artists and men of letters, scientists and politicians, statesmen and orators, in the Fatherland.

I cannot recall just now any public recognition of

genius in Ireland—of genius as such, and apart from political services—except that most brilliant and honourable episode in the history of Trinity College, when, on the 15th August, 1835, in the presence of three hundred members of the British Association, and all the Fellows of Trinity, assembled in the dining-hall of the College, a young Professor and Fellow, of twenty-seven years, William Rowan Hamilton, was suddenly summoned by the Viceroy and knighted, " not," as his Excellency said, " as conferring a distinction, but as setting the royal and national mark on a distinction already acquired by genius and labour."

But this is not the point. I am contemplating a condition of things where literature will be pursued for its own sake, and for the effects it must necessarily have on those who are happy to be its votaries. I do not yet despair of seeing a shelf of books in every labourer's cottage in the land. I do not despair of seeing our artisans seeking their evening recreation and their Sunday pleasure in the company of great thinkers and sweet singers. I hope I may see the time when one could say " Dante " or " Browning," without inducing the dread silence of an earthquake panic in the higher circles of the land; and when one might say " Turner " or " Botticelli " without incurring the suspicion of affectation or pedantry. The day may be remote; when it comes it will usher in a Golden Age, fraught with vast possibilities for the social, religious, and political welfare of Ireland. For our social advancement—inasmuch as it may raise the tone of daily life and bring an atmosphere

of refinement and gentleness where now there is too much persiflage and frivolity. For our religious well-being—because the deeper we read the stronger becomes our hold on those cardinal dogmas and principles that are common to all Christian creeds. "The contemplative Atheist," says Lord Bacon, "is rare. A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to Atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds around to religion." For our political welfare—for a commonwealth founded by a people of large knowledge, trained understanding, quickened perceptions, and solid principles, that will not sway to every wind of speech, will have elements of stability and permanency, with "Freedom slowly broadening down, from precedent to precedent."

As yet we live by hope: but we must work on, humbly and hopefully straining after an ideal, doing our duty in the narrowest social and parochial surroundings, and trusting that an aggregate of effort will achieve success in more spacious times and more gentle surroundings than it is our lot to experience at present.

OPTIMISM

II

IN LITERATURE

The clever agent of a circus-troupe—sent in advance with bills and flaming posters to excite the curiosity of the young, and it may be, of the old—generally has some latent charm, hidden away under some obscure and unknown phrase, to stimulate all the more the curiosity of his future clients, and assure himself of their sixpences. Somewhat in the same way I was awfully tempted to call this lecture by some mysterious name, so that, if you were not tempted to come for the lecturer's sake, you might come through that universal and insatiable little vice—curiosity. And I had no trouble in finding such a phrase; for, as Robert Browning is my ideal of an optimist poet—indeed the only optimist poet of our generation; and as Robert Browning's verses are synonymous with everything that is obscure, involved, or—to use a word that has a special interest at present through Dr. Jameson and Oom Paul—outlandish, I had only to open this little duodecimo volume and *presto!* here is the word, ready, cut, and dry—"Pippa passes." Not to keep you too long on the tenter-

hooks of expectation, let me say at once, that Pippa is a little Italian girl, working in a silk factory in Asolo, and Pippa has got a holiday. It is a rare event; and she is determined to enjoy it to the uttermost. She will not squander a wavelet of it; no, not "one mite of her twelve hours' treasure." Now Pippa, like all Italians, can sing; and she goes around the vine-clad hills, and down the singing valleys, with a carol on her lips, and lightness in her heart; and the burden of her song is this:

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

Now, it happens, as she goes along, four distinct groups of persons, unseen by her—four groups, who are contemplating either crimes or critical balances in their lives, are so affected by her simple artless song, full of hope and trust, that they pause—some stricken by remorse; others, appalled at the step they were about to take. And all, touched by the simple faith of this child, are moved to change into better and hopefuller things; and consciences seared with sin, and hearts hardened in iniquity, spring towards better and loftier things by the tender faith of this guileless child.

Now the burden of her song :—

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world,

is the burden of all Browning's poetry. He is essentially—Browning the optimist. " All's right with the world." This note runs through all his poems. In Nature, in Man, in Science, in Social life—everywhere, there is either some good, or some tendency towards final good. He will not see gloom anywhere ; and should a passing cloud darken his sunlight, he looks only at the silver lining. You remember the melancholy of Tennyson : and how he made the lonely mere, the sombre sky, the cold grey stones of the sea, etc., typify his own sombre spirit. Browning will not have this.

" The lark
Soars up and up, shivering for very joy ;
Afar the ocean sleeps ; white fishing gulls
Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe
Of nested limpets ; savage creatures seek
Their loves in wood and plain—and God renews
His ancient rapture ! "

The same spirit pervades all his poems. Where others spell failure, despair, despondency, Browning spells success, hope, and that lofty elevation of spirit that passes from mere human joy to the highest dreams of inspiration. Of course there are flaws in the handiwork of creation ; but they only show the grace and beauty of the rest of the work, and they in turn will be filled up and polished into perfectness. There are discords in the music, but they only

emphasise the harmony ; and life, with all its sorrows, is very sweet and good, and a gift from Heaven, and can be rounded into perfect form by our own efforts, that is, if we are generous, hopeful, and true.

In strange contradiction to all this is the melancholy, the despair, the pessimism, that is the knoteey- of all other philosophers and poets. And, as I have here introduced a new word, let me define it, or rather, let me define my contradictories. Optimism is the theory that, " all that is, is right," that it is a glorious world, full of all fine possibilities, and that mankind is ever moving onward, onward, to the goal of perfect happiness. Pessimism, on the other hand, is the sad and terrible doctrine, that life is, at best, a miserable business, to be terminated as soon as possible by annihilation ; that all this thing called progress is really retrogression, and that the sooner it is all over the better. Of course, this dismal teaching was known to the philosophers of old ; but in our century, it has permeated all literature, the poem, the novel, the historical work, the treatise on philosophy ; and its chief apostles were Schofenhauer and Hartmann, in Germany ; and a poet, named Leopardi, in Italy. One, however, could be disposed to forgive and forget these idle dreamers, but the evil theory has infiltrated down into the lives and souls of men, and made miserable very beautiful and lofty spirits, whose words and deeds have been, instead of a gospel of humanity, a sad legacy of the untruthfulness of despair. It runs like a black warp through all Carlyle's philosophy. " England consists," he says, " of thirty million people —mostly fools." And such expressions as everlasting falsities and negations, want of verity in public men,

wind bags, and all the rest of the intolerable coarseness of a poor, diseased mind, which the world will have us believe was a philosophic one, forces itself on you at every page, and makes you believe at last that if ever there was a sham philosopher it was Carlyle; and if ever there was cant and humbug it is in the twenty odd volumes which a misapplied industry has left the world. You will find the same in all his successors—in Clifford, Spencer, Martineau. They all set out with the original faith—that science means progress, and that the whole race is moving onward and upward to perfection. Then the disillusion comes with experience: and when the zeal and heat of youth is over, it gives place to the blackness of despair.

I think I could forgive this in the philosophers. But how can you pardon it in the poets—the world's singers and prophets? What a frightful deordination it is, that they, whose music should lift up the weary heart of humanity, sing but to depress it, and bring into the lives of men not the songs of gladness and hope, but the threnodies of anguish and despair. And despair, despair, is the dominant note in all the grand organ-music of the nineteenth century. As I have said of the philosophers, so do I say of the poets. No matter what songs of gladness burst from their lips in the morning of their lives, it soon dies away into one melancholy monotone of sadness and regret. You might forgive Tennyson that lovely lyric:—

"Break, break, break
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea,
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me."

But how can you forgive him for these :—

" There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

Or this :—

" Sooner or later I too may take the print
Of the golden age—why not ? I have neither hope nor trust ;
May make my heart as a mill-stone, set my face as a flint ;
Cheat and be cheated, and die ; who knows ? we are ashes and dust."

And if you protest and say : He rose above all that, even in that poem from which you have quoted (" Maud "), and wound up his awful phillipics against society by declaring :

" It is better to fight for the good than rail at the ill ;
I have felt with my native land. I am one with my kind ;
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assigned."

Yet he retracted again in his extreme old age, and passed his final sentence of eternal reprobation against humanity in the very last extended poem which he wrote.

The same is true in even a more intense sense of a still more delicate and refined nature—Matthew Arnold. Many more modern critics will place his

name even higher than that of Tennyson ; and it is more true of his poetry than of Tennyson's that one long wail of sadness runs through it all. In that well-known poem *Dover Beach*, he, too, makes the eternal sea re-echo his own despair :—

" The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

" Let us be true
To one another ! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain ;
And we are here, as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and fight
Where ignorant arms clash by night."

And so on, through pages of " most musical, most melancholy verse."

Of course I have not quoted Byron, who was a professed pessimist ; nor Swinburne, who tries to infuse into his poems a Greek lightness and joy, and would have succeeded but that the curse of Paganism is on all he wrote, and his pages are floating into the waters of Lethe. Nor do I quote John Ruskin, who,

as you know, thinks we are all rushing, on the wings of modern science, to certain damnation. Neither shall I mention any of our modern novelists, but to say, that if any lingering doubt remained in the minds of men, that our literature is also in a state of decadence, I need only quote *Trilby* and the far worse abominations that pour forth from men and, alas! women-novelists, until one is inclined to believe that this awful flood of prurient literature will sweep away every old and venerated landmark of decency and propriety. But as I half share Ruskin's detestation of the ravages on the face of Nature made by modern science, here is a rather sharp echo and confirmation of his worst predictions.

All the valleys of the Meuse and Moselle are sullied with factory smoke and blasting powder.

The Bay of Amalfi and the shore of Posilippo are defiled by cannon foundries.

All the Ardennes are scorched and soiled, and sickened with stench of smoke and suffocating slag.

The Peak country and the Derwent valley are being scarred and charred for railway lines, mines, and factories.

What has been done to Venice is such an outrage that it might wake Tiziano from under his weight of marble in the Frari Church, and call the Veronese back from his grave.

The finest torrent in Scotland is about to be diverted from its course and used for aluminium works.

The fumes of these aluminium works will, when they are in full blast, emit hydrofluoric acid gas which will destroy all the vegetation on Loch Ness for miles.

The lakes of Maggiore, of Como, and Garda, are all being defiled by factories and steam-engines. Thirlmere and Loch Katrine have been violated, and all the other English and Scotch lakes will be similarly ravaged. Fucina has been dried up as a speculation, and Thrasymene is threatened. The Rhone is dammed up, and tapped, and tortured, until all its rich alluvial deposits are lost to the soil of Provence.

So says "Ouida" in the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1896. And so all the beauty and grandeur of the old world is blighted and poisoned by the insatiable lust of men and peoples for gold. It is a dismal prospect; and some will think that amongst the few consolations we have left us in Ireland, we may number the probability that our blue skies will never be blackened by belching chimneys, nor our fair vales seamed and scarred as are the sweetest spots that the Great Artist, God, framed and beautified for the delight of the children of men.

And so the litany of despair goes on. In science, in literature, in the relations of great powers towards each other, in the impending and inevitable cataclysm that will rend Europe from the Ural mountains to the Atlantic seaboard, in the total absence of honour and sincerity amongst nations as amongst individuals, in the new ideas that are being advanced about social, parental, and marital relations, in the lust of the rich for more wealth—for wealth is insatiable—in the subterranean thunders that herald a terrible revolution amongst the working classes—above all, in the ever-growing indifference to religion in Protestant lands,

and the substitution of some new codes of ethics for the eternal gospel of Christ; in all these things the prophets of despair—and they are legion—forecast a future pregnant with possibilities that may not be imagined, and full of doubt and gloom that should make sick at heart anyone who thought well of his race, or yet entertained a lingering regard for a humanity that appears to be bent on destruction.

Where now is little Pippa :—

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world?

Where is the great optimist poet who sings :—

" Grow old along with me !
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made,
Our times are in His hand
Who saith : ' A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God,
See all, nor be afraid ! ' "

You will ask, however, very naturally here, where is the point for discussion : what is your thesis, which we are to support or contradict ? It is simple, apparently, a very easy question for solution; yet I venture to say that you never discussed a question in this hall which is so many sided, or which leaves the decision so uncertain. The thesis is :—

The optimistic, the hopeful view of the world and humanity, is the view that commends itself to us, as

fraught with the larger and higher possibilities for our race.

The contradictory thesis is :—

The pessimists are the thinkers that really—and in very deed, by their criticism, their dissatisfaction, their sublime restlessness—are pushing on the race towards the very perfection in which they do not believe.

OPTIMISM IN DAILY LIFE

But before you argue the question it may well be asked what practical bearing has such a discussion on daily life, or the real progress of the race. It would be unkind in us, who owe so much to our poets and philosophers, to ask what influence do they exercise on the first movements and the generic ideas, which are the well-springs of all human actions. There are thinkers who trace every revolution, progressive or reactionary, to our sages of the attic and the closet, on the theory : Give me the making of a nation's ballads, and I will leave you the making of a nation's laws. But, apart from all that, does not this vital question enter into our daily life, colouring all our ideas, and giving a bias towards all our emotions and actions. You will ask : But we never have met your optimists and pessimists in daily life. Have you not ? Let me come down from the Olympians for a moment, and challenge the man in the street.

When you are down below zero in spirits, unable to meet that little bill at the bank, with your child sick at home ; when you walk under dripping December skies, your hands stuck deep in your pockets—a picture of misery and despair, do you know the man that comes up with a smile, slaps you on the back till you gasp for breath, shouts at you to cheer up—that

the banker will be considerate, that your child's sickness is a trifle, that the sun is shining somewhere away behind those leaden clouds, etc., etc.? Well, that's an optimist.

Do you know the man who tells you, just as you are starting on that picnic in the middle of June, with high hopes and presages of the good time you are going to have, that it will rain cats and dogs before twelve o'clock, that you will eat your muddy sandwiches and watery pies under dripping umbrellas; and that you need take no water to dilute Jameson. He even will supply it by the gallon! There's your social pessimist.

Do you know the man who buttonholes you on the street, when you are rushing for a train, asks you how many miles to Sirius, and would trouble you to calculate how long an express train (just coming in to your station) at 45 miles an hour, would take to touch the nearest fixed star. Do you recognise the same idiot who asks you how many microbes there are in a spoonful of milk, and how many will there be if you leave it standing for twenty-four hours in a temperature of 77 Fahrenheit? Do you remember your delight, when he informed you that you have 24,176,348 microbes waltzing around your mouth, and that is only the advance guard, lying in ambush for the countless legions that you swallow every time you sit down to a meal, for that innocent spoonful of milk contains 10,548,000 microbes, and in twenty-four hours, if you have the courage to swallow it, you will add to the population of your interior 17,402,000,000 of the same fertile and interesting subjects? Is it

the same individual who informs you that early in the 20th century you can carry all your meals in your waistcoat pocket—breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and supper; and that when you wish to breakfast, you just take out a capsule, as you now take a pinch of snuff, and, presto, here is the concentrated essence of a breakfast, two rashers of bacon, two poached eggs, two cups of tea, and several cuts of toast? And when you invite your friend to dine—no more courses, no more waiters, no more napkins, nor knives and forks, nor flowers, nor glass, nor silver; no toasts, no after-dinner speeches! You touch an electric button, and lo! you have a delicious heat, and a soft lambent light playing around the room; you take out your silver box, tap it, ask your friend to take a pill, and—he has done in a moment and in a simple way all that we do through the long hours and exquisite tortures of an eleven course dinner *à la Russe*. He expects you to be enthusiastic. But if you are still dull and uncomprehensive, he will excite your imagination by fairy stories of flying machines, kinematographs, telepathy, earth-inoculation, ether-electricity, etc., etc. Space annihilated, time reduced to minutes by surpassing volume and elasticity. You want to see Rome? Touch a button, here in your study; and lo! you're in Rome, walking down the Appian Way, studying statues in the Vatican, or treading the pavement of St. Peter's. You'd like to see Calcutta? Here you are. Blazing sun, ill-smelling Hooghly, black Hindoos, yellow Musselmen, bells ringing from the temples, lamps floating on the stream. Let's see Chicago! Presto! Here's Chicago—Porkopolis!

Tramcars ringing, men and women pushing along on the side-walks, the white walls of the Exhibition mirrored in the black waters of Lake Michigan, pigs squealing as they pass into the machines, and come out hams and sausages. Sausages put into the other end of the machine, and out comes a lively porker! Madame Patti (or rather her great successor, for Madame Patti is not immortal—however, stop there, science will make her so) is singing in Manchester to-night. Very well, we shall hear her. You touch a button here, sitting down in your armchair: and lo! her wonderful voice comes floating over the wires, and you sit enchanted—but you'd give all the world to see her. Certainly. The good genie of science is here. You call up another number. Your little study and arm-chair and books and pictures float away: and ecce! here is the vast theatre, the stage with its footlights, the gorgeous scenery, the orchestra, the box-stalls, the wonderful dresses, the man standing up to go out to see a friend, etc. Isn't science wonderful? My dear fellow! but your train is gone, and you are tempted to be profane. Do you know the demon? Well, that's your scientific optimist!

But don't you know that man that damns science, wishes back the good old times when it took four days to go to Dublin, dilates on the morning coaches *à la Dickens*, the early breakfasts on cold beef and tankards of ale, the bugle cheerily waking up the sleepy passengers, the glorious scenery by wood and lake and river, the new towns you come to, the curiosity your arrival excites, the glorious dinner of veal pie, pigeon pie, legs of mutton, sirloin of beef, oceans

of claret, and plenty of time to eat it and digest it ; not like your leather sandwich and your boiling coffee, and a whistling engine, and a shouting guard—Ah ! the good old times, when science was unknown—when men and women were fine, healthy, God-fearing beings, living on wholesome food, and not on your deleterious Oriental drugs of tea and coffee—when disease was practically unknown—when science had not invented stethoscopes and electric batteries—when there was no neurosis, or neurasthenia, and no man knew he had a liver—when we were clothed in good old Irish frieze, not in Manchester shoddy—when there were no newspapers, but you could talk for six months about a wedding or a christening—when, in a word, the world of each man was a small world, and we were more interested about our neighbours than about naked savages in Matabele, or what is to be done with the " sick man " in Constantinople. Don't you know him—the scientific pessimist ?

And the educational optimist—with his piles of statistics about the Intermediate Examinations—5,340 boys and girls passing in Botany, Mineralogy, Mettalurgy, Trigonometry, Physiology, Differential and Integral Calculus, Latin, Greek, Italian, German, French, Gaelic, etc. Ah ! my dear sir, what advantages young people have now that we never enjoyed ! And what a glorious future lies before our country when these young people grow to manhood and womanhood, and form the commercial and professional classes—the backbone of the country ! Educate! educate ! educate ! Take your stand amongst the nations of the earth, and sweep away the curse of

illiteracy! We are doing it. In Primary, Intermediate, and, very soon, in University Education, we will come into line with the best intellects of England, Germany, and America; and then the rest is easy. Ireland's future is assured!

But here, suddenly, as the stream of optimistic eloquence flows on, a big block is flung across it by the no less fervid but denunciatory eloquence of the pessimist:—

Education! there's no such thing in Ireland! There are not ten educated men in Ireland, from Malin Head to Cape Clear. Your systems of education are a mockery, a delusion and a snare. You cram for examinations, as turkeys are crammed for Christmas: and your boys and girls are consequently suffering from intellectual plethora and indigestion, resulting in mental atrophy and paralysis. Take any of your gold-medallists or exhibitioners three months after examination, and he cannot translate a line or sentence in the very books in which he passed with glowing colours. And if he goes up for a bank examination, or some minor office in the Civil Service, he cannot pass in the elements of grammar, or the rudiments of Geography or Arithmetic. He will talk of Homer, and believe that Troy was in N. America; he will tell you that Mount Parnassus was in Ireland, and that the Nile flows into St. George's Channel; that Cæsar was killed at Clontarf, and that the battle of the Pyramids was won by Brian Boru. In other words, he is a conceited ignoramus, despising everyone, and despised by all. And it only stands to reason. You cannot cram a boy's head with all this learning to any advantage. Meat for man; milk for

babes. But you want the babes to fatten on roast-beef. You don't know that over-feeding, as any doctor will tell you, is but another word for starvation God be with the good old times, when the hedge-schoolmasters were as plentiful as blackberries in Ireland, when the scholars took their sods of turf under their arms for school seats; but every boy knew his Virgil and Horace and Homer as well as the last ballad about some rebel that was hanged, and every farmer's son could survey his father's land by merely looking at it—when the Kerry peasants talked to each other in Latin; and when they came up to the Palatines in Limerick, as harvestmen in the autumn, they could make uncomplimentary remarks and say cuss-words *ad libitum*, before their master's face, and he couldn't understand them, for they spoke the tongue of Cicero and Livy—the language of the educated world. These were the times when Irishmen knew well what they did know; when every Irishman knew three languages perfectly. Voster from cover to cover, the six books of Euclid, the science of mensuration; how to season a hurley for the Sunday game, and how to polish the pike-head for——?[1] But we are degenerates. And what's the purpose of it all. Look at the way you educate your children in the National Schools. Listen! Here is a logical proposition. Any system of education is a dismal failure that does not supply the means towards the end. Now, the end of education is to fit pupils for the spheres they shall occupy in life. But the spheres that most pupils occupy in life are

[1] "The Muster in the Valley, beside the singing river, at the rising of the Moon."

either spheres of menial or manual labour. Therefore, the education of your children should be a literary education by accident, but a technical education by necessity. Yet we adopt the opposite course. There is no such thing as technical education in Ireland, and the literary education is far beyond the necessities, mental or social, of nine-tenths of the children who attend our primary schools. What, for example, does a poor girl, who has to earn her bread as house-maid, want to know about free-hand drawing or perspective? And what does a factory hand want to know about the intricacies of the Tonic-Sol-Fa System, the science of Transposition, the Modulator, or the humming song? And what's the result? Our country overwhelmed with professional men, clerks, secretaries, teachers, etc.; and the further result a complete dearth of business men and skilled artisans, and the further result of the decadence of Cork and Dublin and all purely Irish cities, and the advance by leaps and bounds of a half-Scotch, half-American city, like Belfast!

There is your educational pessimist. Who does not know the political pessimist?

"The country gone to the dogs—Ireland once more on the dissecting-table—the spirit of faction dominant—the world laughing at us—the country flung back fifty years, etc., etc." It's all well if he does not quote poetry, and tell us :—

"Thy treasure with taunts shall be taken,
Thy valour with jibes be repaid,
And of millions who see thee, now sad and forsaken,
Not one shall step forth to thy aid.

Thou art doomed for thy tyrant to toil,
  Thou art doomed for the proud to disdain,
And the blood of thy sons and the wealth of thy soil
  Shall be lavished, and lavished in vain.
Thou art chained to the wheel of the foe,
  By links that the world cannot sever,
With thy tyrant through sunshine and storm shalt thou go,
  And thy sentence is: Banished for ever."

Who does not know him, particularly in these latter days when hardly a rift appears in an ever ominous and darkening sky?

But is there not a political optimist who tells you, cheer up! the darkest hour is just before the dawn. We don't want mechanical unity. Better Ireland free, than Ireland united. *Ca ira*! all will come right Wait till you see the scattered battalions re-forming on the floor of the House of Commons; and the *reveille* of the new campaign sounded, and the fighting-men putting on their armour, and all opposing forces marshalled together for the fiercest, bravest, angriest Session yet recorded in the annals of the British Parliament—*Ay de mi!* says the pessimist.

We had one such magnificent optimist in Ireland—always, of course, excepting our own inimitable Thomas Davis—in the awful gloom of '48. If ever there was a time when men's hearts were in their boots, through fear and trembling of the awful tribulation that lay upon the land, surely it was then. But one great trumpet-voice echoed from end to end of Ireland in that awful gloom; and it was the voice

of a woman—a great optimist, full of hope and courage—Speranza. You remember that " Year of Revolutions " !

I have now drawn portraits of these two classes, into which, in the aggregate, humanity may be divided. And now comes the important, and by no means easy question : which class best promotes the interests of humanity ? Naturally, one's sympathies go out, at once, to the optimists who sing, like Pippa :—

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world.

We feel a powerful attraction towards those bright, sunny souls, who hold their heads aloft, with an eternal *sursum corda* on their lips. We feel a no less powerful repulsion against these sallow, cadaverous, dyspeptic, despondent cynics, who are for ever railing against the world, and clamouring for the better things in which they have no hope. But when we come down to reasoning, perhaps the case differs. For, after all, shorn of his benevolence, what is your optimist but the easy, self-satisfied lover of good things, who hates to have his rest disturbed and who has ever on his lips the watchwords of reaction and retrogression : " Can't you let well alone ? " " Aren't we just as well where we are ? " " What was good enough for our fathers, is it not quite good enough for us ? " etc., etc. And is there not something inspiring even in the despairful, yet lofty dissatisfaction which protests : " Certainly not ! Everything is not right in your stagnancy and self-posses-

sion. You must rise up, and onwards. *En avant!* Everything is wrong, and we shall try to right it, though we should fail. Better failure a thousand times than to see without protest the lies that are daily before us, in men's lips and in their lives. Better one sharp struggle, though it end in failure, than the ignoble faith of those who stand up with folded arms, and witness the eternal tragedy that is going on around them."

"Troublesome fellows, dangerous fellows, revolutionaries," says the optimist, "These fellows will upset all decent society, ruin our digestions, bring down our stocks and shares, and scatter to the wind all our dreams of present and possible happiness."

"No matter," says the pessimist, "anything is better than to live a lie. Come, you sleek hypocrites, and look at the world. Here, in the midst of your civilisation, human beings are rotting in misery and hunger, whilst their souls are in the grasp of the Evil One. Can you sit down to your comfortable dinner, and know that thousands of your fellow-beings are starving? In want and ignorance, in sin and sorrow, half mankind live out their weary lives, and you say this is the best possible world for them and you."

"Yes! but you say you cannot correct it?" says the optimist. "Where's the use in beating the air?"

"Where indeed?" And so the eternal discussion goes on—the one side maintaining that it is best to let well alone, and enjoy life as best you can; the other, that the progress of the race is due to the sublime dissatisfaction, the eternal restlessness, the issuing in healthy or unhealthy revolution. For "out

of the black smoke cometh flame," say they ; and out of the brooding thunder-cloud the lightning that breaks the burden of the storm ; and from the hot hearts of angry men the thoughts that shaped themselves into burning words. And from the words came deeds, fraught with the germs of all the great things, and all the noble things, and all the inspirement, that drew man from the beast and pushed him ever higher and higher, until now he can see in the future that looms before him——

" What ? " says the optimist.

And he must acknowledge with bent head and faltering tongue that all his visions and dreams, all the apocalyptic splendours of his hopes and fancy are blotted out, like a shower of fireworks on a black, frowning sky, on which is written in lurid light one word—despair !

Meanwhile Pippa, tired out, lies down to rest—

" God bless me ! I can pray no more to-night.
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right

All service ranks the same with God—
With God, whose puppets, best or worst,
Are we ; there is no last, nor first."

AN UNPUBLISHED PREFACE

III

In the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* for September, 1881, an article, entitled *Religious Instruction in Intermediate Schools*, appeared. It professed to be a warning to those immediately concerned, that the system of education just then introduced, if not sdirectly levelled at the subversion of the religiou beliefs of the vast masses of Irish students, would at least have the tendency to throw into the background those studies which are presumed to be of overwhelming importance in the education of Catholic youth. I do not know whether—in the fierce rivalry for honours and emoluments which then originated, and which has grown more intense as the years sped by—that article was even glanced at by the superiors of our colleges and academies; but it was deemed of sufficient importance by the London *Tablet* to be transferred, almost *in extenso*, to its columns, and it probably led to the establishment of a system of diocesan inspection in one or two places in Ireland. The experience of fifteen years has not lessened the apprehensions of the writer; and the yearly reports, submitted by the managers of schools to the public, have rather tended to confirm them. These reports read more like the returns of the headmaster of some Parisian Lycée to the Minister of Public Instruction

than the account rendered by Catholic teachers to their Prelates of the scrupulous care of the students' highest interests, and the conscientious discharge of the lofty and onerous stewardship they have undertaken. The answer, of course, is: This is what the public require, and this is what we must give. Perhaps so. But there is no loftier ambition than an ephemeral success in secular teaching; or rather, is there not some *minimum* of Christian teaching that might be expected, and that ought to be enforced? Unkind people are censorious enough to assert that, in our efforts to prove our liberalism in education, we may run the risk of eliminating Christianity from it altogether. And still more uncharitable critics have gone the length of insinuating that amongst the many causes that retard the conversion of England may be mentioned the ignorance of dogmatic truth, and the indifference to Catholic interests, that obtain amongst a good many of our people who are thrown into direct contact with earnest and inquiring minds.

That minimum I take to be:—

(1)—A dogmatic training on all those points of Catholic doctrine and discipline which are controverted by those outside the Church.

(2)—A knowledge of at least all the salient events in the Church's history which are of importance, or even interest, to the students.

(3)—A clear understanding of all the rites and ceremonies of the Church; their meaning, their suggestiveness, and the mysticism that underlies them.

(4)—An acquaintance with the Church's hymnal and sacred music.

(5)—And most important, that impression on the emotional nature of boys, through ceremonies, music, prayer, lectures, etc., that shall last through life, when perhaps principles are in danger of being forgotten.

Under this conviction, therefore, I supposed that the time had come when a similar warning might again be directed to those who were responsible for the education of our Catholic youth. But, as an ephemeral essay in a Review is merely glanced at, and leaves but a light impression, I determined to use as a vehicle for this idea that most potent of all modern agencies for the diffusion of ideas, namely, the story—the novel. And to avoid hurting the sensibilities of men, whose responsibilities make them keenly alive to criticism, I threw the story back a quarter of a century, localised it in a college that has long since ceased to exist, and peopled it with characters, that, under no possible circumstances, could be identified with any existing persons. I thought I had taken the most scrupulous care to exclude the possibility of the identification of Mayfield with any existing institution. In discipline and method of studies, in its tutorial system, in every single detail, that College is no more like any existing college or school in Ireland than it is like Dotheboy's Hall on the one hand, or Christ Church, Oxford, on the other. Yet, with singular perversity, Mayfield was found to have its prototype in half a dozen Irish colleges, and some of my *dramatis personæ* were supposed to be easily recognised in certain well-known professors. On the other hand, although admitted to be real and intense in its presentment of the distinguishing fea-

tures of Mayfield, as it existed, by the professors and students of that institution who still survive, it was called visionary and unreal, and "too extravagant even for fiction," by those who had never heard its name; and, worst of all, with that peculiar inaccuracy and habit of generalising from very minute particulars, which is not the worst effect of that system of education under which we are just now labouring, one of my characters was made an infidel, another a profligate, and the grave imputation was extended, by lively and not too scrupulous imaginations, to the entire body of Irish students. Thus a book which was intended to be, and *has been*, a stimulus to Catholic education, was described as being, to use the dishonest criticism of the *Month*, "an attack on Catholic institutions." And thus a secret and insidious attempt was made to wreck the sale of the book, whilst not one of its secret critics had the manliness to come forward and contravene what was palpably the main, and, indeed, the only thesis advanced. If I could be assured that I was wrong in my surmises, and that Catholic education in the Primary and Intermediate Schools of Ireland was all that could be desired, I should gladly make every *amende* in my power. But the pile of letters that have poured in on me from all sides forbid the assumption that I was altogether wrong.

With singular unanimity the Catholic press of Ireland and America interpreted the book as a plea for a more thorough system of Catholic education in our Colleges; and all took it for granted that the plea was a timely one. Some faint demurrers were

whispered by one or two professors who, daily surrounded by a corona of guileless students, may be supposed to be happily unconscious of the storm and stress of human passion that sweep up to the very walls of their citadels. But the men of the world—missionary priests, journalists, professional men, whose fingers are on the pulses of humanity, and whose doors swing open every minute for those messages of sorrow and crime that are for ever sent out from the masses of tempted souls, had but one opinion of the book—that the circumstances of the times demanded it, and that it erred only in being too feeble a presentment, or too timid and irresolute a call.

But I owe a great deal of gratitude to our own Catholic journals for the honesty with which they interpreted my ideas; and if there be any gleam of hope in an ever darkening and ominous sky, it will be found in the facility with which great public organs gauged the importance and far-reaching influences of such a presentment of Catholic principle as I ventured to put forward; and in the fidelity with which, in the face of much irritability and super-sensitiveness, they admitted the correctness of my statements and the opportuneness of the warning which, with all diffidence, I ventured to utter.

The sequel to *Geoffrey Austin: Student*, which I promised, I now put forward. It is again a history of two lives, running in parallel lines—the one on the high mountains of faith, the other in the darkness and mists of the valleys of irreligion, but not unbelief. I have attempted to show how exalted was the one,

how pitiful and depressed was the other. The many readers who followed the career of Geoffrey Austin and Charlie Travers up to the " parting of the ways " will, I hope, with an equal interest, read the subsequent history of their lives up to the happy *denouement*. They were both very ordinary types of students. Amongst the many absurd things that were said of these two lads, probably the climax was reached in the statement that I had made Charlie a drunkard, because once he had yielded to temptation under pressure of great despondency ; and that I had made Geoffrey an infidel because he neglected his prayers and became absorbed in the classics. And if, in this volume, I have cast a faint halo of the supernatural around Charlie's career, let me anticipate all criticism by saying that I am one of those who believe that a spiritual world is all around us, that we are for ever touching the fringe of mysteries that elude us ; and that perhaps it needs only a little less materialism in our concepts and desires to enable us to hear the rustling of angels' wings over our heads, or touch the garments of the dead beloved ones as they sweep by.

It is quite probable that the usual objection that all this is ideal, visionary, and unreal, may be launched against this book as against its prelude. Yet the critics of *Geoffrey Austin* will perhaps be more careful in the use of such adjectives after what has been stated in this preface, and their own riper experience. But is it not true to say that a writer of fiction must aim at being not only a dramatist, but a creator ; not a mere delineator of types, but an architect and framer of personalities, which may not exist just now ; but

which, it would be rash to say, are beyond the domain of possibility? I think this is the larger vocation of the artist. The greatness of any work depends on the idea, as well as upon its execution. The great dreamers of the Italian school are somewhat beyond the portrait painters of England and Spain. And the fame of the great English academicians of to-day will not depend on their portraits, though perhaps their existence did, but on the creations of their fancy, and the higher sublimations of their art. In the same way, the creator of ideals in fiction is more than a mere delineator of existing types; and when it is said that "such a character is not true to Nature," it is only meant that the particular taste or imagination of the speaker does not reach so far. Whether this creation of new types is altogether for the benefit of the reading public may, of course, be controverted. But no one will deny that society just now is based on rather low levels; and that it is almost a public benefaction to lift it, through new creations, ever so little. We have had quite enough of Pagan realism in the squalid and nauseous literature of the last few years. Let us try the effect of Christian idealism; and let us try the experiment at home. The literary instinct has died out in Ireland since '48. Our colleges and universities, with one or two notable exceptions, are dumb. The art of conversation is as dead as the art of embalming. And a certain unspeakable vulgarism has taken the place of all the grace and courtesy, all the dignity and elegance of the last century. Everyone admits all this, admits it to be deplorable; deplorable above all in its consequences, and in its

worst consequence—the loss of dignity and self-respect that is so observable. If I have painted other things, and placed a modest picture of a Christian Hypatia in Dublin, and gathered around her feet some young emotional students, I do not pretend that every drawing-room in Dublin is a theatre for the display of high erudition, or an Academia of more than Grecian culture. So, too, if Charlie Travers is an Irish Ozanam (the idea that excites so much the contemptuous hilarity of the *Month*), I do not pretend that you will find his counterpart in every professional man in Dublin. I only desire that these things should be so. And I beg leave to say that such creations are by no means impossibilities, and that such work as his lies at our own doors. Perhaps this modest volume may be the means, under Divine Providence, of developing such desirable types of Irish character. That the material is there, no one can for a moment doubt.

Let me say, however, that no one can be more keenly aware than I that the execution of this work falls very far short of the ideal. Here again I am only repeating the experience of every one that has painted or written, chisseled or sung. The Divine idea of the worker never yet came forth from the marble or the canvas. This very imperfection has been taken by many as a proof of our immortality. In eternity only shall we realise our ideals. But from a literary standpoint I have had the ambition (1) of writing an Irish story without peasants or policemen, believing that the best material for Irish fiction—in the little dramas of our cities and towns—lies still untouched.

(2) I have tried to write an interesting tale without that mawkish and ridiculous sentimentality which is so revolting to Catholic instincts. (3) I have tried to write a Catholic tale that may escape the fate of most Catholic books of our generation. For, assuredly, our Catholic literature is smitten with the curse of barrenness. We have produced no great poem since the *Divina Commeddia* was written; our philosophy lies mouldering under pig-skin covers and brass clasps. But two or three writers in our century—such as Lacordaire and Pere Gratry in France, and Father Faber in England—have popularised Catholic theology. In our own language, the *Blessed Sacrament* of the latter is the high-water mark of Catholic achievement—the culmination of Catholic poetry, philosophy, and theology. Our other writers have not touched the masses. They have written for the select few, and the select few, under an affectation of contempt, but ill conceal the dread they have of being brought face to face with truth. But, assuredly, for the most part, error—and such error—has been endowed with a fatal fascination, with which truth, Divine truth, has never been clothed, even by its most faithful and loving followers. Why we cannot unlock the infinite treasures of Catholic literature, and show them to the world, is a puzzle to more than the present writer. To suppose, for a moment, that this modest volume is going to break the spell of silence that hangs around us is a presumption that I am not so foolish as to entertain. But I know, to vary the simile, that I am turning up the first sod over a rich and inexhaustible mine, that would yield undreamed of riches

under a better system of Catholic education. And from this retreat I think I can see indications in Ireland that these happy times are near at hand.

I think in journalistic and professional circles in Dublin and elsewhere there has arisen a taste for higher studies on Catholic lines. Perhaps the work I have sketched out for Charlie has already begun—that the idea of a new Catholic propaganda is not altogether illusory. However that may be, I launch this new volume on the very turbid seas of English literature. And whether it succeeds or fails, I think I may send it forward with these assurances culled from the greatest living dramatist, and perhaps the greatest of living poets :—

"If there be good in that I wrought,
Thy hand compelled it, Master, Thine.
Where I have failed to meet Thy Thought,
I know through Thee the blame is mine.

"One stone the more swings to her place
In the dread Temple of Thy Worth—
It is enough that through Thy grace
I saw nought common on Thy earth.

"Take not that vision from my ken!
Oh, whatsoe'er may spoil or speed
Help me to need no aid from men,
That I may help such men as need."

Doneraile, Sept. 8th, 1896.

CATHOLIC LITERARY CRITICISM

IV

It is only in very recent times that criticism has come to be regarded as a science, or to speak more correctly, as an accomplishment, the only credentials of which are the assumption of its possession. A science supposes apprenticeship, and qualifications tested by examination, or the tacit approval of experts. But no one, surely, expects that the vast majority of critics should be subjected to such trials, or should be expected to submit the only diploma of merit in a work of their own creation. Yet no man has a right to pull down who cannot build up again. For it is plain that a child may pluck to pieces a flower, which only the All-Powerful could frame and decorate. I am speaking of analytical and destructive criticism, for the science of synthetic and constructive criticism has yet to be discovered. And yet it is the great desideratum in modern times, especially for us, Catholics. Mr. Arnold, who approaches nearer to the ideal of this master-critic than any writer of our century (if we may, perhaps, except Mr. Taine), has told us that the great work to which moderns are called is a better, higher, more world-wide criticism than any we have yet known. This he defines to be " the disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate

the best that is known and thought in the world." "Real criticism," he says, "is essentially the exercise of curiosity as to ideas and all subjects, for their own sakes, apart from any practical interest they may serve; it obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind, and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other consideration whatever." I would, of course, entirely disagree with Mr. Arnold in what he considers the best thought of the world; for he would regard it from a purely literary and artistic standpoint; and we cannot regard thought, or written or spoken word, without relation to the highest and supremest issues that are at stake in the world. But I gladly welcome the definition that criticism is the pursuit and study of high thought and adequate execution; and as such takes its rank amongst the very greatest of the sciences that cast their light athwart the footsteps of humanity. For men need guidance to-day as of old. Not many readers can trust their own judgments. And it is easy to conceive readers, young and old, hopelessly bewildered and dazed in the awful flood of printed matter that is yearly flung from the printing-presses of the world; and still more hopelessly bewildered at the conflicting opinions that are thrust upon them from all directions as to what is vicious and ephemeral, or what is useful and permanent, in modern literature. A critic, therefore, serves a most useful purpose in wisely discriminating between the valuable and useful elements of literature; and I should consider a good

Catholic critic endowed almost with an apostolic vocation of being able to "try all things" with impunity, and "hold fast by what is good."

Of the intelligence and wisdom, the delicacy of perception, and the wide liberalism of thought, that should be the dowry of such a writer, it would be difficult to speak with exaggeration. Very great issues are at stake. The best thinkers in America and the British Isles are unanimous in the belief that quite a new departure in our Catholic literature is demanded by our own necessities, and still more by the duties we owe our Christian brethren who are outside the pale of the Church. It is the written word that tells best to a generation that is omnivorous in its reading. But the written word must be conveyed through an attractive channel; and that channel is what is designated by the broad title—literature. It is through literature we have to work and convey to the minds of our own people a thirst for knowledge and principle and the encouragement that comes from high ideas and noble language, the exalted truths and the thrilling ideas that are part of our heritage. And it is through literature we have to open the vast treasures of the Church, and show them to those who believe we are stricken with the curse of intellectual poverty. Let me take one department. Have we popularised our philosophy? Attempts have been made to translate it from the folios of the Fathers to the dainty octavos and duodecimos of modern libraries. Some manuals of philosophy and its history have been published. Yet they lack attractiveness. And here under my hand is a treatise on Modern Pantheism,

to which, owing to its wonderful brilliancy of style, any reader might turn with pleasure when wearied with the inanities of a modern novel. Is our fiction attractive and readable? Mr. Edmond Gosse, in the *North American Review*, declares that the great characteristic of the last decade of years has been the abnormal and disproportionate, but unquestioned development of the novel. He even startles us with the assertion that our best writers are drawn irresistibly in that direction; and he even puts forward the rather daring speculation that if men like Buckle, Newman or Ruskin had been in their prime during the last few years, they would have chosen fiction as the means of putting forward and emphasizing their pet theories. How do we Catholics stand in that particular? And in poetry, what position do we hold? And is our Ecclesiastical History, with all its beautiful episodes, familiar to the reading public? These are questions that may cause us some heart-burnings and anxious searching of consciences; and these are the questions which a Catholic critic has the power of solving to our satisfaction. For it is not either writers or material that we lack. It is the sympathetic appreciation of what is good in our literature and the kindly rejection of what is weak. As to our material, we have for philosophy, the vast treasure-houses of the Fathers; for poetry, subjects that reach from the lowliest work of Nature, seen as the handiwork of God, up to the vast and awful sublimities of the last Cantos of the Paradiso; for essays, we have all the complexities of modern civilisation as they are studied under the piercing light and unravelled by

the unerring hand of the Church's teaching and discipline ; for fiction, we have Catholic life in our cities, aur towns, our prairies, on Irish hills, in English oastles, on American lakes and mountains, in the sweet cmenities and regularities of Catholic married life, in the sublime simplicity of our convents ; in our soldiers and sailors, our schoolboys, our priests, our professional men, our merchants, our great ladies, our simple, faithful servants. We have English and German Catholicity, Polish and Irish to deal with ; and we have above all certain well-defined elements and principles that will keep our novels from running into the dreadful issues that mark all modern English novels. And the writers, where are they ? There are many in the field ; many more, who would come forward if they expected, or had any reason to expect, a fair, if not a kindly recognition of their work. Now, it is just here that a good Catholic critic is invaluable to our literature. He can understand what is written. This should be his first accomplishment. And it is a rare one. To enter into an author's feelings and designs, to know what he aims at, to separate essentials from accidentals ; and, if the work is solidly good, to recognize it as such—these are qualifications that suppose a great deal of discernment and experience. In judging, for instance, of poetry, what delicacy of feeling, what a sense of musical notation, may be required ! It is notorious that great thinkers on great subjects, may be absolutely without a sense of harmony. It is even true that writers whose prose style is absolutely perfect in tone and form, may lack not only the musical sense, but even the conception

of the essentials of poetry. I have before my mind, as I write, the name of a writer, whose works from a historical and philosophical standpoint are monumental; and who has also written some chopped lines of prose, which not all the charity of his friends can keep him from believing are Miltonic in form and conception. The highest poetry, as a fact, does not come into the domain of criticism at all. It soars above, and eludes the grasp of the critic. It is sometimes not unintelligible but inexplicable to the poet himself. He can neither analyze, nor explain it. Does not Plato say so: "All good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems, not as works of art, but because they are inspired and possessed. For the poet is a light, and winged, and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired." How then can a man who knows nothing of the divine afflatus, deal with this aerial being? Well, he clips and burns the wings of this "light, winged, and holy thing," and makes him a creeping caterpillar.

Again, some lonely student, who has been, in his seclusion, feeding on the marrow of giants, puts forth, it may be resolutely, it may be timidly, some essence of what has become to him vital and necessary truth. It is put in strange language, and is without the musty odour of mediævalism or the schools. A timid critic will sniff ominously at it, and pass it by. A too daring critic will strive to annihilate it, and fail. The matured and discriminating mind of one who is well grounded in sacred sciences and their modern applications will alone understand it and let the world know of it,

Yet, if this grave critic does not come by, how surely that work, which might be fraught with all kinds of important consequences to the Church and the world, will be flung aside to rot on bookseller's shelves or adorn the topmost level of a lending-library.

Granted, then, sufficient knowledge and liberality of mind in our critic, I should say that his first principle in selecting for commendation a Catholic book should be the reversal or rather the direct contradictory of the old scholastic maxim, *Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocunque defectu.* A perfectly healthy axiom in moral science. A vicious and pernicious maxim in criticism. Writers, like their books, are not perfect. Young writers, particularly, will slip into solecisms very easily, because in aiming at a main object they are prone to forget side issues. Again, writers who are vividly impressed with certain ideas, are naturally intense in their expressions. Is it not George Eliot who has said somewhere, " Art, of necessity, intensifies " ? It is its province—its vocation. What would Turner be without his intense idealism ? What would Watts be, without his intense, sometimes painful realism ? The bare truth never convinces. A too strict adherence to the features of man or nature generally ends in a bathos. If, therefore, a writer who feels intensely the necessity of driving home his ideas to the public mind, sins inadvertently by faults of art or even by venial extravagances of principles, it is neither prudent nor kind to condemn him absolutely and to close the book to a large class of readers.

And this thought brings me naturally to what is

the immediate subject of this paper—the ethical aspect of criticism. I am addressing Catholics, who, whatever their position may be, can never put off the sense of moral responsibility. I am not addressing that school of insolence and incompetence which is best represented by such sheets as the *Saturday Review*. Let us keep two facts in view, which will enable us to determine principles. The first is that which Jean Paul Richter states, and which is unhappily too true, namely, that the anonymous character of a reviewer gives to the judgment of an individual the weight of a college. The second is, that nowadays no Catholic writer can publish a volume except at his own expense. As to the first, however much we may regret it, it is but too true. The writer, who sits at his desk, and hastily cuts the leaves of a new volume, wields judicial power of life and death over that volume, according to the journal he represents. And many a book has passed rapidly over the counter until some foolish novice at the pen thinks he has discovered a mistake, and gloats over it and magnifies it until the public become suspicious, and the sale is suddenly stopped. What is the result? The publication of the book has cost the author from seventy to one hundred pounds. It becomes a dead loss. If then, the *critique* which has killed the book has been an unscrupulous and an unjust one, the writer is unquestionably bound to restitution.

A book is *pretio aestimabilis*, the same as a horse, or a piece of merchandise. If a flippant, unthinking critic, whose opinion, however, is regarded by the public, pronounces unjustly that an animal is unsound

and unsaleable, or a piece of dry goods damaged, he is bound to restitution if such an opinion is wrong, and he has uttered it maliciously or carelessly. It is the property of the author or the publisher; and they have a right that their property shall not be injured by statements that are untrue or unsound.

Does the neglect or contempt of this theological principle account for the very pitiful condition of our Catholic literature? Does it account for the fact that our best writers have laid down their pens; and that a great many gifted souls whose vocation is literature, dread the loss of money on the one hand, or the loss of reputation on the other? Would it account in some measure for that amusing, but pathetic and painful admission of the greatest of our Catholic living poets:[1] "I can call no man in my position badly off, for I can double my income any day—by laying down my pen"? That melancholy fact is staring us in the face, that Aubrey de Vere, the friend of Wordsworth and Tennyson, and quite their equal, has had not audience, because of the Catholicity that deeply permeates every line he wrote. I would rather have written "May Carols" than "In Memoriam." Yet, who reads the former; and who has not read the latter?

I am distinctly of opinion, therefore, that we have no Catholic reading public, because the Higher Criticism, or what I have ventured to call constructive criticism, is unknown. We have a good deal of negative criticism—of which there are two great schools—the hyperæmic and the anæmic. Of the two

[1] Aubrey de Vere,

the latter is the most formidable ; but let me take them in detail.

The hyperæmic critic is always young, inexperienced sanguine, self-reliant. He does not, to use a phrase of Cardinal Newman's, understand the solemn weight and meaning of words. He is as irresponsible with his pen as a boy with a new revolver. He feels it his duty to kill or maim something. To praise a book means weakness or want of knowledge. To find fault presupposes wisdom and superiority. And, therefore, is he always " on the pounce " to discover faults and mistakes on which he can build his final judgment, which is always that of the *Quarterly Review* on Keats : " This will never do." His mode of reviewing is peculiar. He commences with a quotation from Aristotle or Plato, generally the latter, as being much more in vogue than his great logical rival. The application of this great principle, thus quoted, he leaves to the reader ; and descends to particulars. Waiving altogether the object of the book, its construction and technique, he addresses himself to a microscopic inspection of phrases and even words. A printer's error is a crime ; a mistake in date, or a slip in some secondary phrase is magnified into a literary misdemeanour. " This author mistakes an acid for an alkali, surely this is unpardonable." " Is the author quite correct in the date of the second crusade ? We think not. Surely the public have a right to expect something better than this slip-shod writing." " The author here falls into a blunder that would be unpardonable in a school-boy. He makes Sirius blaze away in the south at midnight in the

month of June." These appear rather trifling mistakes, but they leave the book limp and tattered in the end, for a good many readers follow the principle we have already condemned, *malum ex quocunque defectu ;* and judge of the value of the book by some quite extrinsic standard, just as in some parts of England, the rustics judge of the qualifications of a new parson by his style of horsemanship. Then comes the final verdict: "On the whole we think the book may be recommended to our readers; but we hope the author will do better in his next volume." Who would invest a dollar in a book that comes before the world with such an introduction?

The anæmic school is worse, for it generally takes the high moral tone. Its eternal warning to authors is *peuris, virginibusque ;* its motto, *maxima reverentia pueris debetur.* Very true. But what of grown men and women? Are they to be always fed on whey? They demand a stronger diet. Can we give it? If not, they have the poisonous narcotics of English and French literature, that will drown all their Christian sensibilities and steep them in that spiritual torpor, which is like unto death.

There is a great temptation here to enter into a cognate question, which, however, does not come strictly within the scope of this paper, namely, the question of the Catholic novel. It may be passed by the more easily, because it has been so frequently discussed in our journals these latter years. But to show how Catholic authors may be driven from the field by criticisms of these retrogressive schools, let me quote two instances. In these islands, within the

last few years, we have had two promising writers—the one in poetry, the other in prose. It is no exaggeration to say that when the first volume of poems by Francis Thompson appeared a few years ago, they created quite a sensation in London literary circles. The life of the author, full of all kinds of strange vicissitudes, may have had something to say to his sudden popularity in a community that is always on the search for new sensations. But the novelty of these poems, constructed on new principles, and inspired with the loftiest thought, attracted the attention of the leading literati of London and forced reluctant praise from circles where the religious tenets of the author, and the subjects of his poems, were by no means recommendations. The author was ranked amongst the *Dii Majores* of song, by the great Scottish review on the one hand, and by such authors and critics as Richard le Gallienne, etc., on the other. But the author has retired. For the present he will write no more poetry. Why? I should hardly like to intrude upon the privacy of another's thoughts; but Francis Thompson, who, with all his incongruities, ranks in English poetry with Shelley, and *only* beneath Shakespeare, has hardly had any recognition in Catholic circles. If Francis Thompson had been an Anglican or a Unitarian, his praises would have been sung unto the ends of the earth. He would have been the creator of a new school of poetry. Disciples would have knelt at his feet. Had he been a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, his bust would have been placed in their halls. But being only a Catholic and an Ushaw student, he is allowed to retire,

and bury in silence one of the noblest imaginations that has ever been given to Nature's select ones—her poets. Only two Catholics—literary Catholics—have noticed this surprising genius—Coventry Patmore and Wilfred Meynell. The vast bulk of our co-religionists have not even heard his name, although it is already bruited amongst the immortals ; and *the* great Catholic poet, for whose advent we have been straining our vision, has passed beneath our eyes, sung his immortal songs, and vanished. Now, to what class of criticism has this great poet been subjected ? To the verbal and puerile criticism I have detailed above. All his crudities and irregularities were carefully noted and exaggerated ; and the great kernels of his marvellous conceptions were feebly praised. His latinisms and coined phrases were counted as solecisms that could not be tolerated ; as if a poet had not a perfect right to do what he liked with mere language. It is the poets that have given us the English language as it is ; and to refuse to a Victorian poet what was so freely conceded to an Elizabethan, is to declare that the tongue of Shakespeare and Milton had reached a point beyond which it must not be developed. There are undoubtedly in this great master, I do not say of verse, but of thought, certain incongruities that we cannot explain, such as applying to our Divine Lord the epithet " The Hound of Heaven " ; but perhaps the poet had some inner meaning which we may not discern, and if we object to the title, at least we accept the poem as the most wonderful piece of literary mechanism we possess. If this be so why have we not said so to the world,

instead of shaking our heads at points of versiculation or metre, that are really of no consequence? No; our great poet has come and gone. He is now writing little prose sketches for *Franciscan Annals* at Pantasaph. He will write no more poetry for the present.

The other example of our utter incompetency to appreciate our Catholic authors and their works may be found in our dealings with the author of *The New Antigone*. When that book appeared, some said: "At last we have entered the arena with the world's own weapons. It will go hard with us or we shall succeed. The novel is the modern vehicle of thought. We shall use it to propagate truth, as the world uses it to propagate error." Were there faults in that book? Yes. But why did we dwell on and exaggerate them, forgetful of the main object at stake, and heedless of the splendid valor of the writer, who took the enemy's weapons and turned them against himself? Had this brilliant Catholic writer been encouraged he would probably, by this time, have poured forth a library of standard Catholic novels from his pen. But he has retired from the prosecution of a task thankless and dangerous; and he has been driven into this retirement by the critics of the anæmic school. "When he appears again," says a witty American priest, "it will be as the author of a goody-goody story, which tells how little Jemmy, the shoeblack, laboured and toiled for the support of an aged mother, then sickened and died; and how little Mamie was altogether too good for this world, and so entered a convent and lived for ever and for ever."

What, then, do we contend for? Simply the criti-

cism that creates, instead of destroying. Never in the history of the Church's life was there a period more favourable for the creation of a great Catholic literature. The world is listening, if we could speak. We are in the midst of a revolt against all modern literature. In poetry there is an outcry against the artificialities that are poured from the press like Christmas cards and Christmas numbers, and are quite as inane and inartistic. There is a desire even to get back to the simplicities of Pope and Goldsmith. In philosophy we have but a rehash of ancient errors and a feeble attempt to reconstruct them into modern systems. In religious literature we have dull sermons, platitudes about Christianity without Christ, denial of dogma, and all the dreary latitudinarianism that is the chief characteristic of modern Protestantism. There is no criticism nor critical school. In essay writing, *obiter dicta*, etc., we have but the ephemeral papers of magazines. No one now dreams of reproducing his articles in the reviews. And the novel has gone down into the lowest depths of suggestiveness. When Dean Farrar and Mr. Stead are at loggerheads as to whether a certain situation in *The Christian* means adultery or not, we can understand how low the English novel has fallen. And the world is disgusted. It craves for some higher intellectual food. It is tired of frothy salaciousness. Here, then, is the grand opportunity for Catholic authors. We have solid truth to teach the world, if only we can put it into attractive form. But we must keep ourselves always distinct and separate in our literature. Whatever be said of the wisdom of our mixing freely amongst our separated brethren and familiarizing them with

our practices and teachings, our literature must be always exclusive and characteristic. It must not be imitative of modern styles, still less of modern ideas. We have abundant material for building up a great masculine literature, human and sympathetic, divine and transcendental. It must touch human infirmity without gross realism; it must deal with passions without the luridness of detail that makes passions absorbing and infectious. And, above all, it must shed around human life and all its many environments that beautiful idealism, which is our exclusive possession. All the tendencies of the world to-day point to a levelling down of age, sex, position, dignity; *we* know that there must be diversity and distinctiveness to maintain the Christian ideal. And we also know that it is only in this conservatism, that draws its ancient lines and barriers around rank and sex, that either Christian dignity or Christian morality are to be maintained. But it is only the idealism founded on Catholic dogma that can effect this. If, then, the world is so fanatical in its opposition to this Christian ideal, and if to-day the leaders of its literature are iconoclasts of every sacred image and tradition that have hitherto been the hope of our race, surely it is incumbent upon us to maintain in all their integrity those ideas that are the soul of our religious systems. And can there be a more ignoble treason than to bow to every foolish whim, that under the guise of literature, is put forth to please or pander to the irregularities of a world that is drifting steadily backward lnto yet another phase of Neo-Paganism?

It follows, then, that the world has again to be taught Christianity, and has to be taught it in its own

idioms and dialects, that is, not in scholastic phrases or syllogisms, not in the language of mediæval schools, but in its own tongue—that is, through the medium of literature. It has been said that if St. Paul were living to-day he would be a journalist, that is, he would use the speediest and easiest medium of conveying to the world the ideas that were to him as the breath of life. Here, then, is the vocation of the young and ardent Catholic who wishes to do something for Christ before the shadows fall and the night comes on. And there cannot be a loftier vocation than to preach and teach to the wide world, that is drifting so rapidly from the side of Christ, something of that divine sweetness and light that have been, and must ever be, the hope and solace of humanity. But such neophytes need encouragement, and as such they become the wards of the Catholic Press. If inefficient or weak, it is not beyond the courtesies of the language or the delicacy of Christian refinement to ask them, without giving pain, to retire from an arena where their presence would but embarrass better qualified champions. But if there be a hope or promise of success it is surely the duty of the press to raise those hopes and confirm such promise, and this on independent grounds, heedless of what a godless journalism, to which the name of Catholicism is *maranatha*, may put forth. Nay, the very highest testimony to the excellence of a Catholic work should be the revilings of a press that is not only material in all its concepts, but which seems to be always hesitating between the mock humility of agnosticism and the unblushing indecorum of blasphemy

It is a question, whether up to this time we have not been too deferential to the criticism of a hostile press, as well as too liberal in our estimates not only of anti-Catholic, but even anti-theistic literature. There is a kind of Catholic liberalism that sees too much good in the poisonous and noxious products of the Protestant and infidel press, and there is a tendency to bow down before the fetishes which a corrupt generation finds to worship in its sciences, in its arts and in its letters. Our writers forget that in the words of Tertullian " every arrow that is shot against us has been dragged from the quiver of truth." If we have strength to use the world's weapons against itself it is what the world has already done to ourselves. And we have some idea that the equipments of our armouries are not only adequate, but superabundant for the warfare in which we are engaged. Let us, therefore, have a Catholic literature, and let us acknowledge it. Let us reserve our scorn for our antagonists, and keep our encouragement for ourselves. It is unwise in the forefront of the battle to depreciate our forces. Not that we need admit the puerile and weakly elements that may undermine our strength. But our solicitude should be to strengthen the ranks of our literary workers, to be eager for their success, so that when the world bows down before Catholic genius, it may be tempted to consider Catholic truth, and to forget the traditional scorn, which, unfortunately, we ourselves too frequently adopt; and whose watchword is: " Can anything good come out of Nazareth ? "

THE AMERICAN REPORT ON IRISH EDUCATION

V

This important document, compiled by W. Cloudesley Brereton, formerly Inspector under the Intermediate Board, is to appear next year; and the *Times* in its *Literary Supplement* has deemed it of such importance that it has already published a Summary, which gives, we presume, a fair idea of what the Report will contain. If we are to judge the Report by this Summary, it will be valuable so far as the history of educational movements and changes in Ireland is concerned. But we have a suspicion that, as is quite usual in all such cases, it is only officials or professional experts that have been consulted; and that the Inspector has not gone down to face the problem and examine it in those places where alone it can be studied and solved; that is, in the schools themselves, and in the lives of the children after they have left school, and passed into the work-a-day world. If an inspector had taken that trouble, it would have probably saved him the gigantic and useless labour of poring over worthless statistics in the pigeon-holes of Education Offices; and probably, he could have compressed what we presume will be an elaborate account of the progress and prospects of education in Ireland in the simple

words : *There is none !* At least, that is the verdict of every thoughtful man in Ireland to-day.

The census returns of the number of " illiterate " persons in Ireland are very misleading. We do not believe there is wilful deception of the Officers ; but the standard of education is so very low that thousands are returned as capable of reading and writing, who are barely able to spell laboriously through the columns of a newspaper, or scrawl their names in a half illegible manner on a bank-bill. Most of these semi-illiterate persons have passed through the usual classes or standards in the Primary Schools ; but owing to causes, which we shall afterwards specifically mention, they abandon the habit of reading and writing after leaving school, and sink back into a condition of almost absolute illiteracy. Any one who has ever witnessed a few peasants drawing a bill on a village bank, or signing a paper for the purchase of land, and seen their mental agony whilst they try to decipher the meaning of the document, and then append their signatures, will testify to this. And what is true of our agricultural districts, is equally true of manufacturing centres, where the young lads and lasses, after two years, have almost entirely lost the faculty of reading and writing. As for a taste for reading anything beyond some light novel—or the weekly political newspaper—it is absolutely unknown.

We do not know whether Mr. Brereton has studied this aspect of his subject ; but as it embraces the whole subject, being simply the net result of all this elaborate mechanism, with its ever-growing staffs of

officials; and as it means, in very plain English, comparative, if not absolute failure, it may be a useful, although an ungracious task, to cast a little light on the subject. And first with regard to primary education.

Perhaps the best manner of elucidating this subject is by comparison of the old and new methods, so far as the attitude of the teachers and the nature of educational work and methods are concerned.

There is a marked difference between the old untrained school-master and the young teachers who now come out, year after year, from our Training Colleges, and pass at once into our schools as assistants or principals. With the old generation, teaching was something like what Carlyle was always dreaming of and talking about—a kind of lofty vocation, a priestly function, which he would not rank lower than that of a Kirk-Minister or voluntary preacher under the Free Church. The principal teachers then were all old men, who had been trained under fiery discipline, and were rather too anxious that the characters of the young should be annealed, mentally and morally, in the same way. The discipline of the school was severe. Corporal punishment was administered in a manner which would send a teacher of to-day into penal servitude. The hours were long, generally from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In many places there were morning sessions from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.; and night-schools were the rule, not the exception. There were no stated times for vacations. The old teachers strenuously objected to such a waste of time; and in many towns in Ireland to-day,

weird traditions have come down of desperate attempts made by the boys to " bar out " the masters, until the latter yielded to the demand of at least a short cessation from school-work.

It is rather an interesting speculation why these old men were so much averse from granting periodical holidays, or lessening the hours of daily school-work. There really is no explanation of such an attitude so totally different from everything we are accustomed to in modern life, except that those men had conceived a perfect passion for work; that solitude was unbearable; that they were never happy without the book and the ferule, and the daily worship of a crowd of awe-stricken and reverent pupils. It must be remembered that at that time travelling was almost unknown except amongst the wealthier classes. No teacher would think of wasting weeks by the seaside, much less of going abroad. And a very important factor in their monotonous but singularly useful lives was that they were all deeply conscientious men, and that in addition to their obligations to the State, they had, owing to the then prevailing system of school-fees, a sense of personal duty to the pupils, and a corresponding interest in their educational advancement. There never was a bolder or wiser plan, from their own standpoint, than the attempt of British Ministers, from time to time, to subsidise the Irish Catholic Clergy; and never a wiser policy than that adopted by these latter in thwarting and rejecting such attempts. And for the same reason there never was a greater, and alas! more irremediable mistake than

that made by the National Board of Education in abolishing school-fees. It converted the teachers into State-officials, and destroyed all personal interest in their pupils. And it broke up that sympathy, arising out of mutual assistance, that existed between the teacher and the parents of the children. It turned the schools into Government *Lycées*, controlled by penal laws; and whilst it removed from the consciences of the teachers that sense of commutative justice that arose from the personal obligations of giving value for the stipends received, it took away at the same time from the minds of the parents that keen interest in the educational progress of their children that naturally is felt where it is well paid for. Hence, to-day we find, in the few voluntary schools of the country, which are not under the management of the National Board, and where fees of one penny or twopence a week, up to ten shillings a quarter, are paid by the pupils, the attendance is cent. per cent.; whereas, in the National Schools, where no fees are paid, and where very often, as in the case of Convent Schools, books, papers, slates, pens, etc., are supplied gratis to the children, the attendance seldom reaches beyond 65 per cent. of the pupils on rolls.

Under the old system again, a great deal of initiative or voluntary work was permitted to the teachers; and with their extraordinary zeal, they eagerly availed themselves of the permission. The subjects marked on the Time-tables were very limited in number; and the educational capacities of the teachers did not reach beyond them. But what they

knew, they knew well ; and they had the talent to impart it thoroughly. The inspection was loose and unmethodical. The managers rarely visited the schools ; the inspectors came once a year for the annual examination. There was a certain freedom permissible in the arrangement of lessons, so that if boys or girls had a fancy or an aptitude for a particular subject or science, they were allowed to exercise it without molestation. And if a class interested in geography or mathematics seemed to covet a few minutes more in that class, no objection was made. We remember one clear instance, where two young lads, aged 12 to 14 respectively, were permitted by the master to spend the seven hours of a day for the last two years of their course in working out problems in algebra, or exercises (or as they were called " cuts ") in Euclid to the exclusion of every other subject. This gave them an extraordinary power of mental concentration, that made all succeeding subjects comparatively easy.

The results of this old system were at least twofold :

(1) Thoroughness in Teaching ;
(2) A passion for self-improvement on the pupil's part.

As we have already said, the subjects were limited. They embraced :

Reading,	Euclid,
Writing,	Algebra,
Arithmetic,	Mensuration,

Geography.

And all of these, with the exception, perhaps, of reading (the comparative unimportance of which we shall discuss hereafter) were taught in a manner which is now impossible.

And the teachers had the singular and unique success of implanting in the minds of their pupils a sense that, on leaving school, they were *but commencing their life's education, which would end only with life.* Hence they turned out generation after generation of reading men, eager to supplement the elementary education of their childhood by the larger reading of after life. The very fact that so much liberty of initiative was allowed, that studies were not altogether taskwork, that there was a kind of sympathy between teachers and pupils arising out of a mutual love for kindred subjects, would go far to account for this. The eye of the pupil was upon his master ; the eye of the master on his pupil. The inspector was not much considered. If he chose to give an unfavourable report, the master's pocket did not suffer too severely, if the parents thought their boys were treated well.

All this is now changed. The *personnel* of the teaching staff has undergone surprising modifications, and the methods of teaching have been revolutionised. The principals and assistants in all National Schools to-day are comparatively young men, most of whom have been recently trained at some recognised colleges here and there in the country ; but with no further experience. They have learned to teach scientifically. Many of them have no idea of making teaching a profession. Conscious of much ability,

they determine that that school shall be a stepping-stone to something higher—a little pause in the race of life before striding on to the final goal. The little children are no longer the sons and daughters of friends, who are to be watched over with more than paternal vigilance, and whose futures are an object of as much solicitude to the teacher as his own. Unlike the old teachers, he does not look forward to the time when that brilliant young barrister will call to his school and thank him publicly for all the wise counsel, all the sage admonitions, that he received; or the young priest or minister, flushed with the glory of ordination, will steal in and greet his old master, and give him his blessing; or that young girl, who has made a prosperous match, will roll up in her carriage and place a bunch of violets on the master's desk without a word. All that has gone; the pupils are now so many units, who have to be worked up into decimals to prove to Treasury officials that there has been a certain number of wild Irish in attendance at that school, and that there is no loophole, alas! for escape. His salary, even to the decimals, must be paid.

It would be the gravest injustice here if we let it for a moment be supposed that the modern teacher is indifferent or careless about his pupils, except in so far as they help him to his salary and increments. But, in view of the fact that there is scarcely a teacher in the country who has settled down permanently in his locality without hope of a better school in a more comfortable place; and in view of the fact that so many Irish teachers are flying away to England,

or seeking situations in the Civil Service, and in view of the fact that there are no longer those mutual relations between teachers and pupils that arose from the payment of school fees, it is no exaggeration to say that the calling of a National Teacher in Ireland has sunk down from the Carlylean idea to one of mere officialdom—the paid hireling of the State.

The modern methods of education tend to accentuate this. The teacher is now bound, hand and foot, without the slightest power of initiative. The manager, generally a clergyman, visits the schools once a week or oftener. The manager's eye is on the time-table, lest, perchance, the inspector may come in and find a class out of order, and a prompt, and perhaps peremptory message will reach him from Dublin. The inspectors (senior, district, and assistants) visit the schools at all times, and a few days after the annual examination a visit of surprise may be invariably expected. That visit is promptly begun by a prompt examination of " Rolls," a comparison between the rolls marked and the number present ; a sharp survey of the names that might be stricken off the rolls ; an elaborate examination of decimals along frightful columns of figures ; the abstracts of each day's work, of monthly summaries, of yearly reports, etc., etc. The efficiency of the school is nowhere in comparison with the neatness and accuracy of roll-books. And so, too, the least divergence from the time-table which, to the uninitiated at least, is as puzzling as a Bradshaw, is instantly reported to head-quarters. Let a class be ever so interested in a subject, let a boy or girl be

ever so engrossed in some problem of physics or mathematics—the clock strikes, and the book is shut—and the interest of that young mind in that subject vanishes, never to return.

This abuse arises in great part from the multiplicity of subjects that now form the curriculum of *primary* education. Let it be remembered that it is of *primary* education alone we are speaking now. For one of the worst abuses that prevail in Ireland is the unhappy tendency to foster the foolish ambition and pride of the people by allowing primary education to overlap Intermediate studies; and these latter to encroach upon the University Curriculum. We have heard "Analysis" taught to little girls in the fourth standard in a manner that might suit young graduates in a Scotch University; and the higher grades of Tonic Sol-Fa taught to girls who would much prefer the latest music-hall chorus from London or Liverpool. There are two truths that seem never to have been grasped by Irish educationists. The first is that they rate the average intelligence of Irish children altogether too highly; the second is, that education should also be adaptation; that is, in the great majority of cases, the preparation and training of children for their positions in after life.

The present idea appears to be that children's minds should be made not only repositaries of universal information, but should also be trained to a degree of mental efficiency that is only attained in the grand climacteric of life. The question really is, whether the child's mind is to be made the storehouse, like a doll's shop, full of all small but pretty things;

or whether the tastes and talents of the child shall be cultivated towards something higher to be acquired in after life. This latter is our opinion; and that is the reason we insist so strongly on the right of allowing some originality or initiative in the selection of subjects by teachers or pupils.

A simple example will suffice to show how in one department alone immense trouble is taken in one manner of handling a very common subject which practically is of no utility whatever in after life, except to a chosen few; and no trouble whatever is taken in teaching the same subject in that manner, and under that aspect, when it might be universally profitable.

How many children in any National School in Ireland will be called upon in their after lives to read aloud either to an individual or some select gathering? How many will become professional elocutionists? One boy out of five hundred will be a clergyman, and must read distinctly and with a certain grace. One girl out of ten thousand may be a companion to a lady, who may require her to read for her at night, or during illness. The remaining legions will never, as a rule, be called upon to read distinctly, pronounce correctly, or understand the proper emphasis of words or phrases. Yet, what time, what labour, what pains are expended on an accomplishment which will seldom or never be requisitioned in after life. Let it be remembered that we are not making light of the accomplishment. It is a very beautiful one; but we are speaking now of educational methods in their application to the utilities of after

life; and there, in the vast multitude of cases, the accomplishment is practically useless. On the other hand, *reading in the sense of creating a passion for reading and a knowledge of what ought to be read, is never taught.* The minds of young lads and young maidens of sixteen and seventeen are fed with the crumbs and pills of scrappy literature—elegant extracts, bits of poetry, dissertations on political economy, etc., in which, because they are task-work, the children can take no interest whatsoever. The beauties of English literature, the vast treasures that have been accumulated for centuries by the rich and prolific authorship of great and enlightened men; the hoard of precious thoughts that lie hidden there beneath the covers of books which modern competition has made available for the slenderest purse—all are unknown and concealed from the eager and inquiring spirits, who then go out into the world to feed their minds on the only *pabulum* of which they have ever heard—the garbage of London flimsies, or the poison of party political organs, where there is neither "truth, justice, or judgment." A taste for reading—I mean reading anything wholesome or elevating—is almost unknown in this country. A young Englishman or a young Scotchman will be found to have a pretty fair idea of the English Classics—a pretty fair idea of what books are worth reading, and what books are worthless. And, considering the fact that really half the joy and pleasure of most lives is to be found in books, is it not pitiable that our children's minds should be so starved that, in after life, they cannot distinguish food from poison

—the great thoughts that elevate and refine from the pitiable trivialities that weaken the intellect, lower the standards of ethical and moral worth, and create an effeminate and thoughtless people, swayed by passion, and regardless, because ignorant of, the higher principles of reason and public morality.

This is only one instance of the irrational manner in which the minds of our children are formed. How this may be remedied I shall point out when treating of Intermediate Education. A few brief suggestions on the general question must suffice here.

And first, with regard to the *personnel* and the training of teachers. I doubt if the educationists of Ireland have ever realised the dignity and importance of the office of teacher. They are so accustomed to consider teaching as a mere means of livelihood, and teachers as mere Civil Servants, that it must be difficult, if not impossible, for these latter to rise to a higher conception of their profession. In fact, it is only once or twice in a generation that some profound and reverent thinker seizes on the idea that next in dignity and honour after the sacred professions comes the very exalted and honourable vocation of training the young minds of the country. It is difficult to see why the profession of teaching should be regarded as less honourable than the legal or medical professions. If we judge by its importance, and not by its emoluments, it should rank far beyond them. If we are to judge by its services to the State, there is no comparison. If we are to judge by its influence on humanity, it stands out the premier secular profession. Probably it will take many

generations to understand this. But it should be said at once that in our Training Colleges, especially those under the management of religious guides, this view of the sacredness and solemnity of the teaching office should be kept before the minds of the pupils, in season and out of season. They have got to deal, not with human decomposition and disease, not with human crime and folly and dishonesty, not with mechanical contrivances and dull, inert matter; but with human souls, which are placed in their hands for formation; and which receive at their hands that bias towards good or evil that must influence all their after lives, and make them a burden or a curse, or a blessing and a help, towards the entire community.

Hence I am of opinion that, at once, the material interests of the teachers, their salaries and pensions, should be placed in such a position of adequacy and proportion that would liberate the minds of teachers from all anxiety about their futures, and leave them absolutely free to devote themselves to the more spiritual side of their exalted calling. I do not think, therefore, that the salary of a teacher should be made dependent on the size of his school, or the number of his pupils. For thence arises the deadly temptation of regarding himself as a mere bird-of-passage, who has not, and never can, have an interest in his pupils; but is ever looking out in the daily paper for an advertisement for principal in some more populous place, whence again he is to emigrate when the opportunity offers. On the other hand, reason, justice, public opinion, and common sense demand

that when a teacher has honestly and conscientiously devoted his life to the services of the State, he should be protected by the State by adequate pensions from any hardship of poverty or sickness, when incapacitated from work by old age or infirmity.

With regard to the time devoted to education in Ireland, we find that 200 days is the minimum exacted by the National Board. That is to say, the working days in our schools are little more than half the days of the year. Setting aside Sundays and holidays, there should be 306 working days at least; and allowing the 40 days, which is the maximum of vacation allowed by the Board, there should be 266 working days in the year. Yet a minimum of 200 days is all that is required from teachers or pupils. And each working day means but four hours. Now considering the multiplicity of subjects required by the Board, and the very limited time that is imperative and obligatory on the teachers, it follows that only the most superficial education can be imparted to the children of the country. Add to this the number of days that are lost by individual pupils, who are absent through sickness, epidemic or otherwise; by agricultural requirements, and through the thousand and one excuses that are made by negligent and ignorant parents, and it will be seen how impossible it is to create in Ireland a body of youths of both sexes, who may be said to leave school even fairly equipped for the responsibilities of life. There seems to be no reason why (except in the case of infants) the school hours should not be extended to five; there is no reason why, as in former times, Saturdays should not be half-holidays; there is no

reason why a uniform standard of vacation—allowing a fortnight at Christmas, ten days at Easter, and four weeks in summer—should not be rigidly maintained.[1]

The night-extension schools was an admirable idea. It failed; and it failed because the youth of the country were not already prepared by the day-schools to recommence their education. They were never taught that education meant anything but task-work, without design or object but to help the teacher to live; and they had no notion of commencing such task-work again, when tired and weary after the manual labour of the day.

With regard to the programmes of primary education, let it be again insisted upon that the systems should not be allowed to overlap each other, but that each, primary, intermediate, and university, should be kept rigidly within its own limits. Hence, what are called "accomplishments," the frills and decorations of education, should be absolutely excluded from primary education, *for the object of primary education is not to discover talent, not to help on a favoured few, not to create reputations for clever teachers or pupils; but to extend the blessings of an elementary training amongst the vast masses of the population.* To raise these masses up from their frightful ignorance in which they now spend their lives; to introduce into their homes something of the "sweetness and light" of modern civilisation; to show them, the poorest of the poor, and the humblest of the humble, that human life has higher issues than are involved in mere drudgery for daily

[1] In Germany, by Act of Parliament, the Schools throughout the Empire open and close simultaneously.

bread ; and, in a practical sense, to show them how to avail of the vast utilities that lie beneath their hands, and which only a fairly educated people can adequately develop—this is the sole object of primary education in Ireland. It may be fairly said that 90 per cent. of the children frequenting our schools will have to earn their bread by manual labour. It would seem reasonable then, that whilst technical education should hold a primary place, everything that savours of mere "accomplishments," or that belongs to a higher and secondary course, should be rigidly explained. Let us now see how the programme for National Schools meets these demands.

The entire programme in an ordinary girl's school embraces the following subjects :—

Reading,
Writing,
Composition,
Dictation,
Arithmetic :—
  Mental,
  Written,
Cookery,
Irish,
History,
Sewing,
Crochet,
Drawing :—
  Geometrical,
  Freehand,
  Scale,
Geography :—
  Local,
  Physical,
  Mathematical,
Laundry,
Knitting,
Grammar,
Parsing,
Analysis,
Tonic Sol-Fa,
Staff Notation,
Kindergarten,
Object Lesson,
Hand and Eye Training,
Drill,
Fancy-work,

Religious Instruction.

This is an extensive programme for two hundred days at four hours a day, and one wonders whether it is possible for the pupils to obtain more than the merest superficial and elementary knowledge of these many subjects.

As mere "accomplishments," such subjects as Freehand, Geometrical and Scale Drawing, Analysis (which is only fit for University students), Tonic Sol-Fa, Staff-Notation, Fancy-work, Mathematical and Physical Geography, might be struck out at once. Imagine a class of grown girls, staring at a blackboard crowded with geometrical figures, and knowing all the time that in a few weeks they will be milking cows and washing clothes! Or a class struggling through the intricacies of Tonic Sol-Fa, when we know that every girl there will discard all that in a few weeks, and pick up the latest music-hall song from London! And imagine little children in a fourth standard puzzling their poor brains over subject, predicate, qualifying predicates and objects, when we have known young philosophers in the higher colleges torturing their intellects about such things.

Surely, so far as mere literary training is concerned, it should be quite enough for working boys and girls to know *how* to read and *what* to read; to write a decent legible hand; to compose an interesting and grammatical letter; to speak distinctly and clearly without mouthing, mumbling, or slang; to know how to tot up figures and keep accounts, and understand the intricacies of buying and selling; for boys, some technical training should be made indispensable,

and for girls, cooking and laundry; and for both, some elementary knowledge of hygeine.

It seems incredible, but it is a fact, that the ordinary people who form the bulk of our population do not know, have not even the faintest idea, of how their bodies are constructed, what are the organs of the body, and how placed; what are the natures of specific diseases, how they are contracted, how they may be prevented, or cured. Many children have the most fantastic notions of the organs of the body and their location; whilst the processes of circulation, respiration, and digestion are sealed mysteries to them. Most of the diseases of middle life are the results of the indiscretions of youth, and many of these indiscretions are the results of ignorance as well as misdirected passion. I once heard a young man who, in the very springtime and promise of a useful and even distinguished life, was suddenly stricken by an hereditary malady, curse bitterly the parents who had brought him into the world. How many young men and women have reason to resent bitterly, the culpable neglect of parents and teachers who, through false shame, or more often through indifference, allowed these young and unprotected creatures to enter upon the solemn duties of life without a word that could guard them from bodily disease, or spiritual corruption! Surely, one of the very first things that should be taught the young of both sexes is to protect the temples of their bodies, and save themselves from the years of agony and the premature deaths that are the result of the neglect or the indifference of their inexperienced years. A

good deal of attention is now given in some schools to the care of the teeth and the eyes, and the hair; and some progress has been made. But there are deeper and more radical problems which ought to be faced. I have heard that in some high-class Protestant institutions the matrons pay enormous attention to the physiological development of their pupils; and when leaving school, young ladies are carefully instructed as to how they are to maintain their physical health, as well as to protect themselves against dangers that may arise from social corruption. Would that this system were extended to our primary schools; and that our young boys and girls, who are flung into the very teeth of temptation, might be taught how to safeguard health and virtue together.

I regard, then, instruction in elementary physiology and elementary pathology as absolutely necessary in our primary schools. And for girls, a knowledge of the science of nursing should be made equally indispensable. Nursing of infants and of the sick is the natural duty and calling of young girls. Apart from argument, the eagerness and zeal with which the profession of nursing has been taken up of late years by hundreds of young ladies throughout the land, is a proof of this. If there were not some natural instinct, some divinely-planted calling in this direction, these ladies, many of whom have been delicately reared, could never face the hardships and the painful surroundings which are inseparable from the sick-room. This instinct should be fostered and encouraged in our young girls, so that in their own homes and families they may be able at any time to

render their parents or their brothers and sisters such help as can only come from a trained and experienced hand. Practical education of this kind would make our young people more studious about themselves, more intelligent helpers to others, than if they could draw circles with the genius of a Giotto, or could analyse the longest sentence in Ruskin. And I have but faintly understood the teaching of this artist and philosopher, if these are not also his ideas. Just now, too, an opportunity is afforded by the establishment in many districts in the country of the Victoria Jubilee Nurses. The local committees where these nurses are placed find it extremely difficult to collect the requisite funds for the maintenance of the nurse and the appliances she requires for the homes of the sick. A small fee given by the National Board to these ladies for special lectures on Hygiene in the schools of their districts would materially help the local committees, and advance the cause of education.

Finally, there just now arises a temptation that must be promptly met. The Irish people are particularly prone to be caught by catch-words, which are passed on from mouth to mouth, carrying no sense, but like a *Tale of little meaning, though the words be strong.* One of these catch-words is just now flying from lip to lip in connection with university scholarships. We hear a great deal about "the poor man's son," and the necessity of giving clever boys a chance of developing undoubted talents in the halls of some university. It is a specious cry because it holds an elemental truth—that it is a de-

ordination in Nature to have splendid talents allowed to run to waste; and to see brave young geniuses, who might be Newtons or Lavaters, condemned for life to the spade and mattock. But the temptation lies in this—that ambitious parents, confident of their children's ability, or ambitious teachers, anxious for the honour of their schools, might be induced to demand and give special time and attention to some favoured few, to the detriment of the many. If a teacher thinks he has discovered a particularly clever lad, who will probably take a scholarship, and if he is willing to devote special time to his development, by all means let him do so; but it must be outside school-hours. It would be a crime to take away from ninety pupils the teacher's care and attention for the purpose of developing one case of talent. For, again let us repeat, and it cannot be repeated too often, the crying evil of our country and our time is the lack of ordinary decent education amongst the masses of the people; and that the object of the National and other systems of primary education is not to discover or develop the genius of one pupil, but to diffuse throughout the entire community a sound elementary education that will qualify them to act the part of intelligent and responsible citizens. How necessary this is in the rapid developments through which the country is now passing should be evident to the most superficial thinker. For good or ill, the processes of successive Reform Bills have eventuated in manhood suffrage. Every individual, therefore, is part and parcel of the administration of the country. To

commit that administration into the hands of an unthinking, unlettered, and, therefore, irresponsible population would be to pledge the country to disaster. Yet this is what we have to face, unless some revolutionary methods be adopted which will bring the means of education within the power of every citizen, and the blessings of a liberal education into the homes of the humblest cotter or labourer.

THE IRISH PRIESTHOOD AND POLITICS

VI.

The present condition of politics in Ireland raises anew the question, what exactly are the views entertained by the vast majority of Irish priests on the present crisis, and what are the habitual relations between the Irish priesthood and the Government of the country. It cannot be denied that the Government, faithful to cherished traditions, regard the vast body of Irish priests with dislike, suspicion, and fear; and the English journals, which interpret English Tory opinion, indulge in hysterical alternatives of contemptuous hatred and pitiful appeals, grounded, of course, on exalted principles of justice and morality.

It has passed into a truism in Irish politics, modified a little in recent years, that Englishmen cannot understand our countrymen—their wishes, their hopes, their ambitions. If this be true of the Irish as a whole, it is not too much to say that the opinions and practices of the Irish Roman Catholic clergy must be doubly mysterious to them. That they still remain the principal factor in Irish politics is certain. That the opinions of certain dignitaries and certain priests are also defined and declared is also certain. But what are the opinions of the hundreds of Irish priests

who never speak in Press or on platform? And what is the meaning of the attitude of silent watchfulness which they assume?

It has been remarked that the Irish character is so sensitive, unsettled, and impulsive that it changes periodically, vibrating to new ideas, new emotions, so long as their influence continues. Whether this be philosophically correct we know not; but it is certain that the present century has beheld three generations of Irish priests, specifically distinct in feeling, character, modes of thought; and that these changes have been effected by circumstances, and by the education which men in public life insensibly receive from the events which are passing around them. In the closing years of the last Century the young Irish Levite was compelled by penal laws to steal to France or Spain for the education denied him at home. He returned with all the polish and suavity of Continental life, engrafted on the pure and noble, yet turbulent elements of character he had inherited from his race. He reverenced his countrymen for their marvellous fidelity to the principles of faith; but, somehow, his spirit was weakened and broken. Still patriotic, he had neither the taste nor ability to initiate, or push to any issue, a great political movement. He was friendly with the gentry and the Protestant clergy; would not recognise any natural antagonism between the racial characteristics of Celt and Saxon; and was scarcely a believer in the possibility that Ireland might yet be a Nation. Maynooth was built; the Emancipation Act was passed, and forth from the halls of the

Government Seminary, built specially for the promotion of loyalty, came another class, no more like the priest from Louvain or Salamanca than an English parson is like a mediæval friar. Less refined, but more solid, knowing no language but their own native Gaelic and the tongue of the stranger; but firmly grounded in the theology of Aquinas, and widely acquainted with the religion and political history of their Country and Church; heartily loving their own people, and heartily hating the Government and the "landlord garrison"; they might have changed the whole history of Ireland were there one spirit amongst them bold and original enough to shape a policy, and show them how to pursue it. But years were wasted, and spirit and energy thrown away in the agitation for repeal. Then the great mind that held all the nation in hand passed away, and the stormy excitement of 1848-49, from famine and rebellion, was succeeded by a long period of apathy and repose.

The second period is rich in eloquence and poetry; and possibly the names of MacHale, Cahill, and Doyle are amongst the immortals; but it is singularly barren of any political fruit. No great measure was suggested to Parliament by the Irish priesthood. No Bill, ameliorative of the condition of the Irish people, was passed by the British Parliament during the long term of years that elapsed between 1829 and 1870.

Meanwhile a gradual change was creeping over the Alma Mater of the Irish priesthood. Eager and inquiring intellects were growing impatient of a

curriculum of studies that was limited to Theology and Ecclesiastical History. The class business which satisfied their conscience and the professor was easily mastered, the hours of study were long—six hours in class-halls or in their private rooms. The young clerical student is no dreamer. He could not spend all this time decorating the naked whitewash of his cell with fancy portraits, or admiring the stately elms which stretched in parallel lines before him to the horizon. He must have some mental pabulum different from the scholastic disquisitions of his leather-bound, musty folios. During his Logic Course, he had got a glimpse of a strange new world, peopled with poets and philosophers, and the music of the former haunted him, and the splendid conjectures of the latter fascinated him. He knew of course it was all visionary. Here was the solid earth beneath his feet. Prayer and not problems would keep him from sin.

I think it was on the 25th August, 1869, I passed through the Sphinx-guarded gates of Maynooth College, and stood near what was then the Senior Chapel, and saw, with a certain melancholy feeling, the old keep of the Geraldine Castle lighted up by the yellow rays of the sinking sun. I remember well that the impression made upon me by Maynooth College then, and afterwards, when I saw its long, stone corridors, its immense bare stony halls, the huge massive tables, etc., was one of rude, Cyclopean strength, without one single aspect or feature of refinement. So too with its studies. Relentless logic, with its formidable *chevaux-de-frise* of syllogisms,

propositions, scholia; metaphysics, sublime, but hardened into slabs of theories, congealed in mediæval Latin; Physics, embracing a course that would have appalled a young Newton or Kepler; and then the vast shadow of four years' Divinity towering above and over-shadowing all!

The Graces were nowhere! Even in the English Literature or Belles-Lettres class, as it was called, the course seemed to be limited to hard grinding Grammar, and nothing more. During the first *semestre*, a few lectures were given on literature. All that I can ever remember of that period were the words "Lake Poets," which the good professor was for ever repeating.

After Christmas, however, there was a change; rather a momentous one for some, at least. Father O'Rourke, a very gentle, polished man, had to leave College, and go abroad in delicate health; and his chair was taken by a young priest, just then finishing his third and last year in the Dunboyne House. This was one of the most remarkable, if not one of the most distinguished, students that ever passed through Maynooth. It shows the passing nature of all things, that one, who was such a celebrity in his own time, should be now almost forgotten. The students of the present day have never heard of his name; and yet his classmates, many of whom are still living, and some of whom are occupying the highest positions in the Irish Church, speak of him, of his intellectual power, his imperious ways and address, his talent for unwearied work, as something phenomenal in a student. The only parallel I have ever seen to the brilliant career and subsequent tragic

failure of this young priest was in the case of William Sutherland, the acknowledged leader and *princeps* in that brilliant group at Oxford, which numbered A. Henry Hallam, the Tennysons, Manning, Ward, Froude, Monckton, Milnes, etc., amongst its members, In Maynooth he speedily established a reputation. which had just reached its zenith when I sat beneath his pulpit, close to the wall at the left hand side in the Logic Hall, near the Junior Chapel.

He was a tall, splendidly-formed man, with a cast of features distinctively Roman. One or two photographs remain of him in the albums of friends. The face with the stern brow, the lock of hair falling over it in studied affectation, the curved lips, the firm, broad nose, is the face of a lost archangel. His career was tragical; one other instance of genius misplaced, and, therefore, hurled to prompt and inevitable ruin.

To us, young hero-worshippers, sick and tired of logic-chopping, and the awful dulness of the morning classes, he came as a herald of light and leading. Swiftly he opened up to our wondering eyes the vast treasures of European and, particularly, of English literature. He was a trained elocutionist; and it was a pleasure to hear him read either one of his own compositions or some masterpiece of prose or poetry from the great classic authors. From him I first heard the names of Carlyle, Tennyson, and Browning; and I never rested until their books were in my hands.

Before Christmas I remember having, in the usual course of things, recited publicly *The Downfall of Poland*. Then one night in the Lent of the year 1870, I was marked for another recitation. I had been filled

and saturated with the poetry of 1848, and I had committed to memory many of its stirring pieces. In the innocence and inexperience of youth, I selected this evening the most revolutionary ode of that stirring epoch; and quite ignorant or forgetful of its inappropriateness within the walls of Maynooth, I thundered out (it is worth repeating here):

THE YEAR OF REVOLUTIONS

I

"Lift up your pale faces, ye children of sorrow!
The night passes on to a glorious to-morrow;
Hark! Heard you not sounding glad Liberty's pæan
From the Alps to the Isles of the tideless Ægean?
And the rhythmical march of the gathering nations,
And the crashing of thrones 'neath their fierce exultations,
And the cries of humanity cleaving the ether,
And the songs of the conquering arising together.
God, Liberty, Truth! How they burn heart and brain!
Those words shall they burn, shall they waken in vain?

II

"No! Soul answers Soul, steel clashes on steel;
And land wakens land with a grand thunder-peal.
Shall we, O my brothers, but weep, pray and groan,
When France reads her rights by the flames of a Throne?
Shall we fail and falter to join the grand chorus,
When Europe has trod the dark pathway before us?

No ! Courage, and we, too, will trample them down,
Those minions of power, those serfs of a crown ;
Ay, courage, but courage, if once to the winds
You fling freedom's banners, no tyranny binds.

III

" At the voice of the people the weak symbols fall,
And humanity marches o'er purple and pall ;
O'er sceptre and crown with a noble disdain,
For the symbol must fall, and Humanity reign.
On, on, in your masses, dense, resolute, strong,
To war against treason, oppression, and wrong.
On, on, with your leaders, and Him we adore most,
Who strikes with the bravest, and leads with the foremost,
Who brings the proud light of a name great in story
To light us to danger ; unconquered, to glory.

IV

" With faith, like the Hebrews, we'll stem the Red Sea,
God, smite down the Pharaohs, our hope is in Thee.
Be it blood of the tyrant, or blood of the slave,
We'll cross it to freedom, or find there a grave.
Lo, a throne for each worker, a crown for each brow,
The palm for each martyr who dies for us now !
Spite the flash of their muskets, the roar of their cannon,
The assassins of freedom shall lower their pennon ;
For the will of a nation, what foe dare withstand ?
Then, patriots, heroes, strike ! God for our Land ! "

Maynooth had just been disendowed; and the place was no longer a Government institution. The mutton which the students ate was no longer the Queen's mutton. But you cannot exorcise the traditional spirit of a place in a day. The government of the House at that time was distinctively conservative, if not anti-national; and it was certainly rash for a young student to select such a fierce, revolutionary ode for recitation in a college where there was a traditional dread of such things.

Many readers will recognise in these lines the famous ode for which, and for a correspondingly inflammatory article, the editors of the *Nation* were arrested. And they will recall the dramatic scene, when the Crown Prosecutor, at the time, scornfully declared that the writer was hiding under the anonym, "Speranza," and afraid to reveal his name; and how a lady stood up in the gallery over his head, and declared that she was the authoress. This was Lady Wilde, wife of Sir William Wilde, famous oculist and antiquarian, and mother of another unhappy Irish genius—Oscar. In my youth, her poems were on all our lips; and glorious and spirited poems they were, sending the blood bounding under the trumpet-call, to do something for Ireland.

Although I acted rashly enough, however, on that occasion in selecting these burning words in such a staid and solemn place, I was pretty safe, because at that very time our lecturer was writing some similar verses for the Dublin *Nation*, under the *nom-de-plume*, "Fion-Barra." There was one poem which I have never seen since, which seemed to express

the intense pride and defiance of the writer. I can only remember the words :—

" Black does it look, my future,
Masters, that see so far ?
But I'll make each span of its blackness
The throne of a stately star."

And :—

" Fear was made for the hearts of hares ;
It was never made for mine."

I wonder did he foresee the stormy scenes that were to be crammed into his little life ; and the fearful cataclysm which was to close it ?

One of his poems, however, I well remember, for I committed it to memory at the time, and I have never lost hold of it. It is called :

VINEGAR HILL

I

" Ah, dear Father Tom, how you're panting ! I'm sorry I hurried you so ;
But the heart was red-hot in my bosom, to see the old hill ere I go ;
To stand on its top, as I'm standing, the town huddled there at my feet,
Some eyes, I dare say, in its bosom that looked on the rebel's retreat,

II

" Very dark is the green of the grass here, and sullen
it shows to the brutes ;
But we know what 'tis drinking for ever beneath
from the sod where it shoots ;
We know, but we're not going to mention the flesh,
and the blood, and the bones,
Hidden here since our Wicklow was widowed, and
Wexford was glutted with groans.

III

" You mind, Father Tom, how around us, the land
stretches flatly for miles ?
You can see every road winding whitely, no rocks,
and no sheltered defiles.
Oh God ! how six brave rifled cannon, crammed
home with the vengeance of years,
Had shattered the skulls of the Saxon, till Ireland
rang loud with her cheers !

IV

" But you see the poor fellows had pitch-forks, and
pikes, and a pistol or two ;
And friends from afar had not risen to teach their
rude hands what to do ;
So they came here to die, dimly dreaming that the
will was as good as the deed ;
And that Ireland would honour her children, who
knew not to fight, but to bleed.

V

"And the poor fellows, too, were half-starving; they tell of a thousand or more
Whose food for a week was raw turnips, raw turnips and soft at the core—
Bad stuff for a stomach that's stationed to stand against bayonet and ball;
Bad stuff when the heart must be steady, and the feet rooted fast like a wall.

VI

"And yet on this hill-top bare-breasted, and starving and hungry and weak,
They taught the brave truth that our babies are learning to think and to speak—
That the race is not all to the swift; nor the victory all for the strong;
But the great law of God and of Nature is war to the knife against wrong.

VII

"Never mind! Let's go down from the hill-top; we've seen what we wanted to see;
The rank grass that feeds on our fathers; the fields where their feet used to be;
Poor fellows! We don't call them heroes; the land of their love wasn't Greece,
But we, you and I, give them pardon; and we pray that their souls may have peace."

THE DAWN OF THE CENTURY[1]

VII

I propose this evening to put before you a limited, but let me hope, a clear, well-defined view of that outer intellectual world, in which you will soon be called to take your place, and an important one; and with that view to stimulate you to more zealous and earnest preparation for the part you will have to perform. For it is sometimes wise for us all to pause and think and look around us; to wait till the smoke clears away from the field of battle, that we may the better see the alignments of the enemy, arrange our own forces, and make such dispositions that we may gain at least an advantage; for the ultimate victory, I presume, is not for us, nor for any soldiers of Christ, until the day when the great Captain Himself shall come. And measuring as I do the vast energies that lie hidden, and as yet bounded and locked, in the assemblage which I have the honour to address to-night, I feel a certain sense of responsibility—so great, that were it not for the deference I owed to the courteous invitation of your late President, repeated

[1] An Address delivered to the Maynooth Students in the *Aula Maxima* of the College, December 1st, 1903.

by your present Superior; and at the same time an ambition, I hope a lawful one, of addressing at least once in my life the young minds and hearts that are to control the future destinies of the Church in Ireland, I should have hesitated about assuming a duty, which might be left in more capable and zealous hands. Nevertheless, I may be able to give you a glance into the outer world, its forces, its movements, its processes of thought, which may awaken new ideas, and perhaps larger conceptions of your vocation; and with these, fresh determinations that in the serious and solemn duties that lie before the Catholic priesthood in our time, you will at least acquit yourselves like men.

All life is a process. Things do not hurry, neither do they pause. But, from time to time, there is just a rush as of forces breaking their bounds; and then again a lull in human affairs—a little breathing time for poor humanity, wherein it stops suddenly, and as if, through sheer exhaustion, refuses to be swept along on the eternal currents of thought. Just such a breathing time we have in the intellectual world of to-day. There is no great "movement," as it is called, going on in the world outside. The chief revolutions of the nineteenth century ran through their little cycles and ceased. And we, who have seen them, and been blinded by their dust, and stunned by their noise, now look back with a certain kind of wondering humiliation, that we could ever have allowed ourselves to be even temporarily disturbed by such feeble and transitory things. And if we needed a proof of that Divine arrangement in the

economy of life, by which truth is safeguarded in the custody of an unerring Church, surely we may find it in the swift judgment that Time has passed upon the insolent assumptions of the century that has just expired. Not that these systems and movements are forgotten. Nay, it is only now that they are being studied in detail. There is a curious leisure and repose in the thought of the world of to-day. It is not fretted by any particular system of philosophy. Over there, on the sands of Brighton, Herbert Spencer is rolled up and down in a bath-chair, speaking to no one, looking out with dimmed eyes on the unfathomable sea. He has left a fair amount of printed formulas which no one reads. In that highest domain of philosophic thought, I know no other name that men would care to remember. Science has passed from great principles into mere experiment. Instead of being mistress of great minds, she has become an artificer of toys for men's hands and human convenience. The discovery of the new metals, "uranium" and "radium," is heralded as a revolution in Science. But we are too much accustomed to these revolutions to heed them. Darwin and Owen, Huxley and Tyndall have vanished, and Edison and Marconi remain. Great principles, for right or wrong, are no longer laid down, fought for, assailed, accepted, or rejected. The dog listening for his dead master's voice in the phonograph, and the group around the Marconi wires in the saloon of a Transatlantic steamer, eager to catch the gossip of two continents, are types of the present. The great voice of poetry has died down into a few artificial

notes, that have neither the vigour nor the secret of inspiration. All the chief singers of the Victorian era, except one, are hushed in death. Swinburne lives, but is silent. The Poet-Laureate seems to have already passed out of public consideration. There are but two names before the world to-day, and they are called by the damning term of "minor poets,"—Stephen Phillips and William Watson. There is one great poet—a Catholic—Francis Thompson; but he, having given to men of all he was worth, and they were unworthy, has flung his two volumes, with a kind of disdain, at the world's feet, and passed, like a wise man, into the peace and seclusion of a Franciscan monastery. Mr. Lecky, representing history, has just passed away; and amongst the vast crowd of writers, who come under the general designation of "Men of Letters," and the great majority of whom are mere magazine writers with but ephemeral reputations, there seems but one who will conquer the neglect of time, and the indifference and coquetry of fame—and that, too, is a Catholic—Dr. William Barry. Ireland alone appears to be alive amidst the general torpor. The breath of life that seems to have abandoned a dead world is passing through her veins.

What, then, has the "Dawn of the Century" to show? What are the manifestations that we have to study; and how are we to forecast the future from the symptoms of the present?

Travellers who have ventured to climb the steep ascent and dread escarpments of Vesuvius, tell us of the feeling of utter solitude and desolation they experience when they have reached half-way up the

mountain. They walk ankle-deep in hot ashes ; the half-cooled streams of lava, ridged and smooth, are here and there on every side ; the air is dark and sulphurous, and difficult to breathe ; the guides are timid and uncertain about proceeding further. All around is horror upon horror ; and their hearts are chilled with a sense of loneliness and fear. Yet, looking upward and onward, there is something more terrible. The cloud that ever hangs above the crater is lurid from the sulphurous fires beneath, and now and again the mountain is shaken by the deep reverberations of the terrible forces that are trying to free themselves there beneath the surface, and high into the air is flung a burning shower of ashes and scoriæ and red-hot stones, and new streams of molten lava are poured down the mountain side. Here is desolation ; but there is death. The frightened travellers dare not look upwards ; they look around them and behind them, and ask many questions of their guides as to how best they may retrace their steps. Such is the attitude of the intellectual world of to-day. All around it is desolation—the desolation of abandoned spirits on the lonely heights. It dares not look forward. There is but death. Its guides—the prophets of agnosticism—are dumb. All it can do is to stop and look back, and try to see if haply the past can be any guide to the future. Its attitude then to-day is essentially retrospective. It is wearied and tired and frightened. Nothing remains but to study the past, and see is there a gleam of hope, a guidance of life for the enigmatic future that lies before it. Let us, for our own wise ends, follow the

example, looking through its eyes, and see what were the forces that guided the world into its present perilous condition, and leave it there with the ashes of dead faiths about its feet.

The great intellectual forces of the nineteenth century resolved themselves into two movements, known to historians as the transcendental and empirical. The former sprang from the writings of Rousseau ; affected, even created, the French Revolution, broadened out and developed into the great German systems of philosophy, passed into England and coloured the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge, generated in France a whole tribe of soliloquists and dreamers, and finally was caught up and crystallised in the half-prophetic, half-delirious preachings and rantings of Carlyle. Thence it crossed the Atlantic, inspired and originated New England Transcendentalism through the Concord School of philosophy, of which Emerson, a pupil of Carlyle's, was chief prophet. The essential characteristics of this school were vagueness and abstraction. It took its very name from the fancy that this new knowledge *transcended* all experience, and was quite independent of reason, authority, the testimony of the senses, or the testimony of mankind. Its knowledge was intuitive and abstract. It despised definition. It taught the swift and immediate grasping of a something unrevealed and indefinite, which had hitherto eluded all human effort to compass, embrace, or define. Hence its terminology was vague. It spoke freely of the Infinite, the Infinite Nothing, the Infinite Essence of Things. Then the Germans invented a more prosaic name—

the thing that is NOT-I. Coleridge made sub-divisions and introduced the now well-worn words, subjective and objective knowledge. Carlyle spoke of Eternal Verities, the Immensities, the Infinite, the Eternal Silences, etc. Emerson wrote of it as the Over-Soul, the Spirit of the Universe. How far all this differed from pure Pantheism it were difficult to say; but it permeated all literature—history was studied by its light, poetry was inspired by it, it ran through all fiction, became a religious creed, until men everywhere sought the Secret of Being in the question put by Coleridge :—

"And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all?"

Then, somewhere about the middle of the century, men began to ask whether there was any rule of conduct, any code of ethics, under all this cloudy verbiage. Men are known by their works. Systems are judged by their results. What have you to show for all this transcendentalism? How does it affect human life, human relations, human progress? How do such doctrines influence the political commonwealth by educating statesmen into higher ideas of political advancement and social amelioration? What do your prophets say? And lo! it began to be whispered that the sentimental Rousseau did actually send his children away to be shut up in an orphan

asylum; and that Carlyle, interpreting the Infinite Verities as merely brute, blind force, did defend the man who broke his word of honour hundreds of times, and carried fire and sword into every valley and hamlet and town in Ireland; and honoured the Governor who scourged with whips of wire the naked slaves of Jamaica; and wrote his "Iliad in a nutshell" to condemn the Northern States of America for the emancipation of the Negro. And yet, it would be unjust not to say that Transcendentalism did raise men's minds above a sordid level. If its dogmas were vague, at least it appealed to the higher instincts and emotions. It certainly rated spiritual and mental life above the adjuncts of mere material existence. It took men away from mammon-worship and self-seeking; and by insisting on the paramount importance of Duty, and the vast responsibilities of our short but sublime existence on this planet, it gave the young particularly higher conceptions of their calling, and put many on the high road towards nobler and sweeter lives. In Fichte's *Nature of the Scholar;* in Carlyle's *Past and Present;* and in Emerson's *Address to the American Scholar*, you will find all this exemplified. Yet, men were not satisfied. All these nebulous hypotheses about Over-Souls and Immensities could not satisfy the imperious demand of the ever-impatient mind of man for something more structural and solid. The eternal question arose as to the First Principles; and reason and logic alike declared the fundamental truth: No Dogma; No Ethics! A rule of life for men and nations must be founded on something more solid than mere verbal

abstractions. Yet, all this time, de Maistre in France, Newman in England, were thundering this very truth into the ears of the multitude; but the multitude looked everywhere for illumination, except from the central sun.

Suddenly, a momentous change swept over human thought. With one bound it leaped to the opposite extreme. "We are tired of abstractions," it cried. "We want facts! No more intuition, but demonstration! Reason shall be omnipotent. There is Nature under our eyes and hands. We will question her; and she will answer. She will give up her secrets to us, and we will build our systems upon them. We will tear open the bowels of the mountains, and read their signs, as the haruspices of old read the entrails of the sacred, sacrificial fowl, and augured well or ill from the revelation. We will pull down the stars from the skies, weigh them, and test their constituents. We will seek the elemental forces of Nature, and there we shall find the elemental truths. We will pry into all things and everywhere, dredge the seas, sweep the rivers, drag fossils out of mammoth caves, construct the forms of dead leviathans from one bone, examine the dust of stars in shattered ærolites, and the structure of the animal creation in the spawn of frogs by the wayside pool, or the tadpoles in the month of May. And we shall find that all things are made for man; and that man alone is the Omnipotent and Divine." Poets took up the pæan of the New Era, and sang it in verse that is more immortal than the cause. Tennyson laid aside his Higher Pantheism, and all the idealizations of youth to chaunt the praises

of the new pioneers of humanity. And the world took up the cry. Through the steamship, the telegraph, distance was annihilated. Mankind was shaken by new emotions. The world was moved from its solid basis, and began to shift its centres of population. Old countries were dispeopled, and new states formed, out of a curious congeries of mixed and very dissimilar nationalities. The agricultural masses began to sweep into the towns, which rapidly grew into cities under the increase of population. Vast buildings were flung into the sky, filled with all modern appliances and conveniences; and in the exultation of the moment, men looked back upon the past with a kind of pitying ridicule. "We are done with cloud-building and abstractions for ever," they said. "We have facts instead of faith. This is our earth, our world; and we want no other, The ultimate triumph of humanity is at hand!"

And then?—well, then, at the very height of all this pride, men suddenly discovered that under all this huge mechanism and masonry they had actually driven out the soul of man; and they began to ask themselves: Is this the result? And is it a result that we can boast of? Empiricism has triumphed. But is the building of sky-scrapers, the slaughter of so many million of hogs, the stretching of wires across our cities, our underground railways, our sea-tunnels—is all this a substitute or compensation for all the ideals we have sacrificed and lost? And when men began to see that beneath all this material splendour every noble quality that distinguishes man was utterly extinguished; when they saw the

horrors of their midnight streets, the masses festering in city slums, the great gulf broadening between the rich and poor, selfishness, greed, Mammon-worship, the extinction of the weak, the sovereignty of the strong, the cruelty, the brutality, that are ever latent in the human heart, developed by the new civilization, they began to shrink back appalled from their own creation, and to think that after all, " man liveth not by bread alone." And if for a moment they hesitated about this new belief in the terrible destructiveness of a Godless science, there came, ever and anon, the deep mutterings of a new terror, the very offspring of the science they had worshipped—the spectre of Socialism and Anarchy. " Yes," cried the latter, " we, too, are the children of science. Nay more, we are its servants and ministers ; we feed its furnaces with shades over our eyes to protect them from the blinding glare ; we work ten hours a day, stripped to the waist, and buckets of water have to be flung over us from time to time to cool our burning flesh ; and you, dressed in your silks, with your Turkish baths and servants to fan you from the slightest breath of a summer wind ! Who hath decreed this inequality ? It is our labour and sweat that have built up your eighty millions of dollars, and our guerdon is barely a dollar a day. You roll by in your Pullman, whilst we keep the road clear for you under a tropical sun. Your children are absolutely weakened with excessive luxury ; ours are starving, body and soul, in the slums. And after all, where is the difference between you and us ? You doubt it. We'll prove it. You are the same clay as we. Mark you,

this dagger will pierce your flesh, this tiny bullet will extinguish your life. You have whipped us with scorpions. But we hereby order that you shall sleep beneath the crossed bayonets of your soldiers; that your mightiest Emperor and Czar shall never enter Rome; and you must draw a cordon of soldiers around the quays of New York to save your President's life from the pious vengeance of our emissaries." So says, in unmistakable language, the latest creation of Empiricism, and the poets take up the cry; and the prophetic voice that chaunted the glories of science in "Locksley Hall" grows hoarse in its wailings over a lost world in the "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After." Yes! Science hath wrested all its secrets from Nature but one, the great secret, which she never reveals but to the children of faith.

The attitude of the intellectual world to-day, then, is an attitude of waiting; and in waiting, an attitude of indifferentism. Not indifference, because it is acutely aware of its critical condition, and looks forward with anxious eyes. Nay, from time to time, it turns around and gazes towards the Eternal City and the Supreme Pontiff; and in view of the powerlessness of states and governments to conquer the anarchy that seethes in every Empire, it is watching the Church with a "perhaps" upon its lips. Great Kings have already gone thither, and their royal pilgrimages were universally interpreted as an admission that Rome alone could battle with the new forces which irreligion had let loose on the world; and the peoples, following their royal masters, and in view not only of shattered faith, but of shattered

beliefs in human systems, that promised so much and performed so little, are beginning to ask if, after all that has been said and suggested, Rome alone held the secret of the stability of Empires, and the safety and happiness of the individual in those doctrines and precepts which she preaches so uncompromisingly to an unbelieving and scoffing world. Across the Atlantic, where she has more freedom than in older and more conservative states, she is making rapid progress. There, too, the distinction of classes is more sharply drawn, because there wealth and poverty reach greater extremes than in older countries. And there is wanting in America that strong conservatism, born of traditional feudalism, that is saving, in some measure, the thrones of Europe. And the non-Catholic world of America is beginning to perceive that should the forces of Anarchy and Socialism ever break bounds and attempt revolution, there is no moral force to stop the outbreak but the Catholic Church. Hence, statesmen and Presidents court friendship, if not alliance, with the American hierarchy; and the advance of education, wherein our Catholic schools take a leading place, is gradually acting as a solvent on ancient prejudices brought from the mother country, and fostered by designing and militant controversialists.

But you will reasonably ask, what has all this to do with us who are destined to work within the four seas of Ireland? Tell us something about our own country, its wants, its aspirations, its capabilities, its dangers. We pity the world, stranded there on the mountain heights, unable to go backward, afraid to go forward,

its guides dumb and impotent under the spell of modern agnosticism. But we are more deeply concerned about our own people with whom all our best interests are identified. Well, you have a right to ask the question, although, as I shall show you, you have need, too, to be much interested in the attitude of the intellectual world beyond the seas.

I have said, that the breath of a new life has been breathed on our old land. The eternal vitality of our race, not to be extinguished by rack or gibbet, Penal Law or Grecian gift, has broken out these last few years in a vast intellectual revival, the consequences of which it would be difficult to measure to-day. It would seem as if whilst the population waned, the intellectual forces of the country became concentred in a great effort towards national regeneration. All the best elements of the country seem to unite in a forward movement that promises well for the future of our country and our race. Our poets have given up the ballads and battle-songs which were so familiar a half-century ago, and gone back to Pre-Christian times for inspiration. A National Theatre has been established for the stage reproduction of dramas, founded on the epics, or history, or legends of the past; and the race is more interested with the wars of the Firbolgs and Danaans than with the struggles of the Gael and the Pale. And the attempt to save from extinction that greatest heirloom of the race—our National language—has eventuated in an all-round revival of national sports and pastimes, music and literature, which, to one who witnessed the apathy of a dozen years ago, must seem phenomenal. Yet,

there is a discordant and dangerous note even here. If some Hellenists in England and France have raised the cry: Back to Greece from Christianity! Back to the beautiful physical life, the arts, the drama, the music, the freedom of ancient Hellas, from the restraints and asceticism of Christianity, there are not wanting amongst ourselves, a certain class of art-worshippers and nature-worshippers who seem to prefer the free unlicensed Pagan freedom of our forefathers to the sweeter influences which Christianity introduced. I do not regard this, however, as a dangerous symptom. I do not think the work of St. Patrick and fourteen centuries of Saints and Scholars is likely to be frustrated by a few Neo-Pagans and Æsthetes in our time.

Then, of course, with the advance of education, and the creation of the class of the "educated-unemployed," there must be a certain amount of restlessness, and chafing under control, and a spirit of criticism and censoriousness, which can only be dissipated by larger educational training, or the judicious employment of those who have won distinction in our colleges and intermediate schools. A few weeks ago, on the occasion of the apostasy of a certain realistic novel-writer, one of our Irish papers had the following paragraph :—

The personality of Mr. Moore would not be worth even a contemptuous reference, were it not that there are thousands of young Irishmen in some of our big cities, whose minds are being slowly and gradually, and very surely, poisoned by influences which lead directly towards the abysmal gulf of

George Mooreism. Speeches have been delivered and paragraphs have been printed quite recently, which indicate that the speakers and writers are drifting, perhaps imperceptibly, but none the less steadily, towards a frame of mind, doubting, carping, hypercritical, which will not in the end be distinguishable from Continental Atheism.

And as if to emphasize and corroborate these words, we had, a few days after they appeared, an expression of opinion from the highest quarters to the same effect —that there were probably here amongst ourselves certain thinkers, too small of stature and too limited in numbers to form a school, but whose antipathies and desires seem to run parallel with those of the unhappy men who are bringing ruin upon Catholic France. These things are not alarming, but significant. They are symptoms which we cannot disregard.

Such then is the vision of the world as it is shown to us here in the dawn of our century. But I should not have travelled one hundred and eighty miles to reveal to you what might be unfolded from every page of modern literature, if I had not the larger object of applying to your own needs the lessons that may be derived from such a review of modern fact and thought, and of forecasting your own part in their future developments. In making such a practical application, I should feel less scrupulous if I were speaking to older heads than yours. Mind I do not say "wiser heads," for I am one of those who think

that sometimes the splendid disdain of youth is more than the cautious and careful feeling forward of age. But I should feel then that my words were merely tentative and experimental. But here I feel I am casting seminal ideas into souls whose principles have not yet hardened in the mould of experience; and which, therefore, owing to this very plasticity, need to be formed on lines that shall be drawn altogether right and fair and well-proportioned. I feel, too, that, as time goes by, each of you will be perforce compelled to try my words at the bar of experience; and there are many counsellors there, and in the multitude thereof there is not much wisdom. Nay, you will be tossed hither and thither by every wind of opinion in your latter lives. You will have to see principles which you deemed irrefragable, ruthlessly challenged and set aside; and you will have to face the worst of all mental trials—the adjustment of your conduct to lofty ideals, which, however, will be altogether inconsistent with your interests and immediate happiness. Amidst this eternal fluctuation of human opinion, and rushing together of thoughts, feelings, and principles, chaotic and confusing enough —one star shines, ever fixed, immovable, shedding its soft, lambent light across your life-way, fixed as the Polar Star, and bright as Phosphor—the Star of Duty. There is no drawing the curtains across its light, no seeking to shut out its piercing rays. It will shine through darkness as of Erebus; and pierce even through recesses where the soul seeks to hide itself from itself. And what is that Duty?

I doubt if there be a more dramatic scene in all

human history than that which took place on a certain mountain in Judæa some twenty centuries ago. A young man, apparently a mere carpenter's son, had just dismissed a wondering, admiring crowd, who had began to speak of Him as the " Prophet of Nazareth; " and had gathered around Him a few of His disciples to whom He had to say more solemn and sacred things. They, that handful of men, were raw, illiterate, unkempt, half-naked ; their hands rough from toll, their scanty clothes glistening with the scales of the fish they had pulled from the lake beneath them. And what was His message ? After quietly setting aside all hitherto-recognised principles of human wisdom, He suddenly addressed them :—

You are the light of the world ! You are the salt of the earth !

What ! A lot of half-clad, semi-savage Israelites—the light of the world ? Hear it, O ye sophists over there in Athens, listening to the calm, cultured wisdom of one of your rhetoricians, as he expounds and develops the ever-new beauties of the master-minds of Greece ! And hear it, O ye Romans, listening in your white togas in the Forum to the greatest of your orators, and the most profound of your philosophers ! Hear and wonder at this sublime audacity—a young tradesman in one of your conquered provinces is telling a handful of fishermen that they are " the light of the world." Not you Plato, nor you Socrates ; not you Cicero or Seneca ; but Peter, the fisherman, and Matthew, the publican ; and this boy whom they call John—these are the light of the world !

Who could believe it? Well, we, taught by Revelation, by history, by the subversion of an intellectualism that was Pagan, and the substitution of a folly that is Divine—we believe it, and we know it.

And if our Lord were justified in pronouncing and prophesying such a sublime vocation for His disciples, am I not right in saying to you, the future priests of Ireland: You are the Light of the World! You are the Salt of the Earth? Yes! the pure white light that strikes here from Rome is broken up into a hundred, a thousand rays that penetrate even to the ends of the earth. Maynooth is the Propaganda of the West, and you are its Apostles! Now what does that connote?

Although primarily intended for the training of priests of the Irish mission, this great College has become of late years as much a Foreign College as All Hallows—it is, let me repeat it, for I glory in the title and all its vast significances—the Western Propaganda! Yes! we cannot suppress our instincts—we cannot deny our vocation—we cannot refuse our mission. We are the Apostles of the world to-day. Even in my own remote village, within the last few months, we had three or four deputations of nuns from Cape Colony, from Dakota, from Los Angeles, seeking amongst our Irish children what apparently cannot to be found elsewhere on this planet—those pure minds, that keen intelligence, and that personal love of God, that are the constituents of a religious vocation. The same is true all over Ireland. And you, gentlemen, many of you, may—must go abroad, to other countries, and amidst a people different from

your own. Instead of the happy, religious, sunny children of Faith, you will have to speak to the people on the gloomy hill-side, their feet in the hot ashes, the desolation of unfaith around them, and their guides as dumb and panic-stricken as themselves. You will meet them everywhere. They will come to hear your sermons in some English church, and to challenge you about your faith on Monday morning. They will cry to you through the Press; and half insolently, half pleadingly, they will ask for light. You will meet them at dinner tables in country houses, and they will ask you, amid the dinner courses, strange questions about modern beliefs or disbeliefs. And if you are the light of the world remember the solemn injunction: Let your light shine before men! Now, these strange, sad people, to whom you, a Catholic priest, are a mysterious, solemn, unintelligible anachronism, will speak to you, not in your language—the language of faith, but in their own tongue; and that you must set yourselves to understand and interpret. If you care to influence them you must go over to their side, stand on their platrfom, look through their eyes. They know nothing of you —your philosophy, your theology; but if you let them see that you know all about them, it gains their confidence, lessens their pride, shows them that you have seen all, understand all, and that your light is not a shaded lamp, but a sun that penetrates every corner and recess of the human heart. Hence, in pursuing your philosophical or theological studies, you need to have an objective before your mind. Rid yourselves of the idea that yours is routine work.

Study that you may know, know that you may understand, understand that you may communicate your knowledge to others. "Let your light shine before men!"

In one of Rudyard Kipling's earliest books he tells of how a raw regiment of British troops was brought up from the lowlands to the Afghan hills to break up and destroy an Afghan horde that were hidden in a gut or ghaut of the mountains. They marched gaily, to the sound of fife and drum, into the valley, deployed, advanced in close formation, saw the enemy grouped ahead, were ordered to fire. They shut their eyes and fired—a half ton of lead into—the bodies of the Afghans? No! Into the ground! In an instant the Afghans were upon them, slashing them, right and left, with their terrible triangular knives, and in a moment the British regiment was in full flight, whilst the Colonel tore his hair and cursed freely from an adjacent height.

Well, you must not waste your forces thus; but always have a clear and well-defined objective before you in all your studies. And to-day, as in the century just dead, you will find that those whom you have to contend with, and those you have to enlighten, divide themselves into the easily recognised classes of Transcendentalists and Empiricists—the mystic and the scientist, the vague dreamer of dreams, and the hard, unimaginative reasoner. And if it pleases God that abroad you shall be called upon to defend your faith in public or in private, by sermon, lecture, or newspaper, see that you quit yourselves like men; and give honour to God, your country, and your

faith. But here in these sacred halls your preparation must be made. This is your gymnasium, your training-ground. And if you prove worthy of yourselves you will have your reward even here below.

That was a sublime moment when Ingersoll, the Atheistic lecturer, was suddenly called to account by a young Irish Catholic in his audience. He was going on gaily demolishing Churches and Revelations and Christianity when the young man shouted: "What does Father Lambert say to that?" And the hardened atheist stopped suddenly and after a long pause replied: "Yes, friend, I admit that if there be any Revelation it is that which Father Lambert has defended; and if there be any Christianity, it is that of the Church he represents!" And that was another sublime moment when another young Irish priest in another American city took up the cause of Holy Church against six or seven ministers, and defended hinmself, week after week, against their combined assault. It was a brave, nay, almost, a perilous act. For every day the city was moved as at a Presidential election. The labourers, at their dinner hour, cut short the time and rushed the cafés, hotels, and newspaper offices with the cry: "Is Father ——on to-day?" And when they found he was "on," one mounted a barrel and read the priest's defence to the admiring multitude. And when at last, in spite of every effort to compromise and condemn the Catholic Church with the old stock objections about Galileo, Inquisitions, St. Bartholomew's massacres, etc., attack after attack was resisted and beaten back by this young priest, and his adversaries, one by one,

slunk from the field, and one, an Episcopalian minister, was actually compelled to close his church; then, in the moment of victory, his countrymen gathered around their young champion, collected a sum of £6,000 to help him to decorate his church; the tram-conductors of the city, Irish to a man, presented him with a service of silver plate; and even the Protestant community honoured his valour, and the President of the State appointed him regent of the State University, an unprecedented honour for a Catholic priest.

But, with all that, I must not forget that the great majority of you, gentlemen, are destined to spend your lives in the service of your own people, and in your native land. Happy are you beyond the apostles of your race abroad, for you will have the most faithful and deeply-religious people on earth to minister to —a people who will look up to you with a kind of idolatry, as the representative of all they revere in time and eternity. I am speaking now of the great masses of the people, especially the poor. There is nothing like them on the earth. Your chief work will be to lead them on to the higher life; and I am rather sorry that this part of our ministry is not so well understood. What I mean is, that the people need only direction, I mean ascetic direction, to spring at once into the highest and most heroic sanctity. And I earnestly hope that some at least of you, gentlemen, will find time from other studies to examine the principles and practices of ascetic theology, the direction of souls into the higher life, and such holy mysticism as you will find in the works

of St. Teresa or St. John of the Cross. This is the transcendentalism which the Church acknowledges, and which has been the practice of all the saints.

But, as I warned you before, you will have another class to deal with—the semi-educated, the critical, the censorious. Some of these will dislike you, because their lives are not modelled on Christian principles, and your life is a perpetual protest against theirs. Your sermons, your life, your insistence on the great Christian Verities fret them beyond endurance, and they hate you. *Odit vos mundus!* There is another class, which is not irreligious, but which seems to blot out of their mental horizon any one under the rank of an Archdeacon. These may be good Catholics, but they do not concern us here. They are not an appreciable quantity, so far as we are concerned. There is a third class, and to these I direct your special attention, as they touch closely on that intellectual, godless world of which I have already spoken. There is no use in our trying to close our eyes to the fact that many of our young Catholics have imbibed the Continental spirit, and set themselves up as judges, not only of individuals, even those in the highest offices in the Church, but even of the dogmas of Catholic Faith. These are the people who will tell you that the Dreyfus case was urged on by the Catholic Bishops of France, that persecution of the Religious Orders to-day is not the work of Combes, but has arisen from the jealousies between the regular and the secular clergy in France, that the Bishops were even compelled to call in the aid of the Government to save them from the en-

croachments of monks and nuns. The same class will coolly tell you that all the evils of Ireland can be traced to the action of the Catholic Church; and if you question them about their authorities, they will quote the infidel papers of Paris; or such a historian as Froude. Then they pass to dogma. Indulgences, Prayers for the Dead, the sacramentals of the Church, the little devotions of the faithful, are *anathema maranatha* to these highly cultivated folk, who condescend to go to Mass, and, under a certain tacit coercion of public opinion, to attend to the Easter Duty.

With that class, and, indeed, with all others, one safe principle may be laid down—that the Irish priest must be in advance of his people, educationally, by at least fifty years. The priests have the lead, and they must keep it. But the right of leadership, now so often questioned, must be supported by tangible and repeated proofs; and these proofs must concern not only your spiritual authority, but your intellectual superiority. The young priest who has lectured on "Hamlet" in the Town Hall on Thursday night is listened to with deeper respect on Sunday morning. The priest who conducts a long and laborious experiment before a literary and scientific society in any of our cities is, henceforward, an acknowledged and unquestioned guide in his village. And the priest who, quietly and without temper, overthrows one of those carping critics at a dinner-party, may confirm, without the possibility of its being disturbed again, the faith of many who are present, and whose beliefs, perhaps, were rudely shaken by the impertinence of

the shallow criticism to which they had just been listening. No, in Ireland at least, gentlemen, we must not hide our light under a bushel. Our national Church must be the "city built on the high mountains." And we must not grovel, nor make excuses, nor apologise for our existence. We have the lead, and we must keep it! What all that connotes and signifies I must leave to yourselves to imagine and develop.

But there is one thing in which, above all others, we must keep ahead of our people—the supreme matter of priestly holiness. And this takes me away from your outer duties to address yourselves. I have kept the good wine to the last; and, alas! I have left you but little time to drink it. But, probably, these, my first, will also be my last words to you; and I desire to throw into them all the emphasis of which I am capable. In after life you will increase your intellectual stores; you will enlarge your intellectual horizon. By large reading and much reflection you will find yourselves, in ten or twenty years, in quite a different sphere of thought from that in which you are placed to-day. Your education will only commence the day you leave college and enter the larger life. But in one department you shall never advance or improve—I mean the department of spiritual science. The principles taught now by your professors and spiritual guides are fixed and unchangeable; if ever you change or abandon them, it will be to your temporal detriment and eternal ruin. What do I mean?

You are taught now that on the day when the

Pontiff places his hands on your heads, and your fingers clasp the chalice, you are raised to the highest dignity on earth. That is true. You are taught that you are more than kings on their thrones, or ministers in their cabinets. That is true. You are taught that you are more than the angels or archangel. That is true. Furthermore, you are instructed that it is by no choice of yours, or your parents, that you are raised to the sacerdotal dignity. That is true. For you are instructed that the Divine Master applies to you the words He applied to His Apostles: "You have not chosen Me; but I have chosen you." You are also warned that no sanctity, however great, can be deemed commensurate with so high an office; and that your lives, and all that is connected with them, your talents, abilities, mental and spiritual faculties, are also placed in pledge with Christ for the fulfilment of your sublime vocation. Why do I insist on such patent and palpable truths? Because you will be tempted to deny them. Experience, so much lauded as a successful master, is also a most dangerous master. It teaches, we know; but often it teaches perilous and subversive doctrines. And the worst and most deadly temptation of your lives will come from experience the day that, looking around you and watching the ways and lives of men, you will utter that word of the Psalmist: *Omnis homo mendax!* or the more melancholy verdict of St. Paul: "All seek their own interests; not the interests of Jesus Christ!" Beware of that moment; for it is in that moment you will be tempted to forget, or deny, the sacred principles you have learned in these halls. You will be tempted to

believe that your sacred office is not a mission and vocation, but a mere profession; and that you are at liberty to introduce the language, and the customs, and the principles of the world into that sanctuary, where the maxims of the Gospel alone should be recognised and accepted. You will stand for a moment half-paralysed with the spectacle of men rushing wildly into forbidden paths, and then, panic-stricken, you will be tempted to follow the herd with its treasonable cry: *Ego et rex Meus!* If you harbour that temptation for a moment, in that moment you have bartered and forfeited your birthright; you have cancelled the charter of your nobility; you have revoked your oath of ordination; and from being a *miles et amicus Christi* you have descended to be the slave and sycophant of self.

Hence the necessity of acquiring here, and developing hereafter, a certain phase of character, which I can only designate as "individualism." You must study to be self-centred, self-poised on the strong summits of conscience, not moving to left or right at every breath of opinion. This is quite compatible with that modesty, that humility, that gentleness that always characterize thoughtful minds—minds that move on a high plane, and that will not descend to the vulgarities or common-places of ordinary men. Priests of this class or calibre never forget their college lessons. But whilst striving in remote hamlets, as workhouse chaplains, or even in the slums of large cities, to develop themselves intellectually by wholesome and judicious studies, they are ever sensible of the gentle whispers of their Master, first heard here,

never to be stifled in after life—"You are the light of the world! You are the salt of the earth." "You have not chosen Me; but I have chosen you!" "I do not any longer call you servant but friend." "Filioli mei." Ah, these are the "burning and shining lights" of the Church of Christ, within whose rays men shelter themselves for warmth and illumination; who cannot be extinguished in life by envy or hatred or criticism; who even in death leave behind them in memory a certain twilight or aurora, for their words and works survive them; and many a soul, recalling them from the peace of eternity, justifies the presumption in the words of the Psalmist:—

> "Thy Word was a lamp to my feet;
> And a light along my ways!"

Here is what you have to strive after; here is what you have to attain, if you desire to maintain the traditions of the Irish Church; and to be, in very deed, the leaders of your people, the shepherds of your flock!

And so I, passing rapidly into the evening of life, say this farewell word to you in the morning of your days, and in the dawn of the century, where your life-work shall be placed. The intellectual and spiritual energies, gathered into this hall to-night, must exercise a tremendous influence in that future, when emancipated, they will have free play, and a boundless sphere of action. It is a pathetic, yet consoling thought that, when, far out in the century, our faces shall be upturned to the stars, you will be

striving for the same eternal cause as that for which we shall have spent ourselves. Nor have I a moment's doubt, that when the torch falls from our feeble hands, you will take it up and carry it forward through all those years that are sweeping towards us from Infinity, and that come fraught with such solemn issues for the country we love, the Faith to whch we cling, the Church, which is our Mistress and our Queen, and Him, who is our Captain and our *King*.

NON-DOGMATIC RELIGION

VIII.

It has been well said that a new heresy is to-day an impossibility. It cannot even be imagined. The world has so completely passed beyond that stage of antagonism, that it can never recur to it. It regards the great controversies of the past, which we consider were Divinely-appointed or Divinely-permitted trials, which were destined to make compact the whole body of Christian tradition, as childish, because metaphysical. It stands forth in all the bareness of its agnosticism, naked and unashamed.

It is an evil symptom and a good symptom. Evil, because it argues, nay, as we shall show, professes a certain indifference to all Christian traditions and beliefs. Good, because it clears the ground and simplifies the issues between the great protagonist of Revelation—the Church, and its traditional and hereditary antagonist, the world.

Henceforth, and for ever, we are done with local and partial controversies about the Invocation of Saints, the veneration of relics, the devotion of Catholics to our Blessed Lady, the utility and necessity of Confession, the supreme homage of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Much more may we regard as antiquated, and out of date, the historical questions that agitated past generations. It is quite possible

that even yet in far places on the outskirts of civilization there may be found preachers or readers, brought up in all the narrowness of Sunday-school traditions, who try to save their slippery footholds by catching at the ancient phantoms of Galileo, and Inquisitions, and all the other horrors of the three-volume novels of the eighteenth century. These little skirmishes must go on for a while, just as freebooting and guerilla warfare continue long after the defeated general of a great army has handed up his sword to the Conqueror. But in the great centres of intellectual thought in the world—London, Paris, Rome—these minor issues are now completely set aside ; and the mighty forces on both sides are being sifted and rearranged along the two great lines of Faith and Unfaith, Dogma and No-Dogma, Life as it presents itself to our bare senses, and Life as it is revealed to us with all its vast issues and tremendous responsibilities by Him, Who sitteth above the stars.

And before we pass away to witness the attitude the Church is likely to assume when confronted with the new, yet already well-organized systems of unbelief, it is hardly unworthy of us, her children, to feel a strange thrill of pride for her marvellous and superhuman triumphs over all the heresies that have assailed her for nineteen hundred years. To all human reasoning, and according to all human experience, she should have gone down before the repeated assaults of heresies that were based on human passion, that sprang from human pride, and appealed to the instinctive desire of men to live untrammelled, both in intellect and desire, by any external and

arbitrary authority. We know from history and personal experience how passion sways the heart of man, and carries it into excesses where it is unbridled by reason. Given those passions, supported by human power—by arms, politics, governments, and the people's wills, and we can conjecture what a conquest of humanity the Church has made, although unbending in her eternal teaching, that the flesh must yield to the spirit, and that all the interests of time and human things pale into insignificance before the grand and paramount interests of eternity.

The newest development of Protestantism (for Protestantism being negation, finds its logical outcome here) is the denial, not of one particular dogma or article of belief, but the denial of all dogma, and the substitution of a system of ethics, whose foundations rest upon Chaos. All this was to be foreseen, because the principle of Dogma having been denied, when the principle of authority was set aside, it naturally followed that all certitude would sooner or later be called in question, and that that questioning should end first in universal scepticism, then in blank denial.

Theologically this radical change from the Christian ideal of revealed doctrines, entailing by their belief a long train of ethical or moral consequences, was inevitable. The numberless sects, generated in the great Rebellion of Reformation, self-contradictory and mutually repellent, acted as a solvent of all belief in the minds of thinking men. It needed only time to make the world, divorced as it was from the centre of dogmatic truth, disgusted with the pretensions of sectaries, who ranged along the whole line of hys-

terical fantasies, from the " conversions " and " gift of tongues " of some London Bethel to the Apocalyptic visions of Swedenborg. But it is not sufficiently recognised that the pretensions of Science aided this growing unbelief. It was not the discoveries of Science, but the refutations of these discoveries, that have really plunged the world in infidelity. Science, with all its insolence, could not deny the existence of God. Nay, by its very insistence on the truth of facts, and its deductions, as well as by the tremendous insight it gave into the stupendous workings of Nature, it certainly enlarged men's vision. And when that vision fell short of the supernatural, the minds of men, annoyed by this discovery of their limitations, and, as it were, dashing themselves against the blank wall of the Infinite, gave utterance to the wailings of Agnosticism—" We cannot know." " We can see no further." But, when, in our own days, Science itself has the ground cut from under its feet by fresher and more recent revelations, when every new discovery disproves some preceding theory that was regarded as beyond disproof; when the views of the greatest thinkers of past generations are now regarded as childish and absurd; and the most common and reasonable ideas about space and time, colour, sound, light, are now proved to be absolutely puerile; when the philosophy of atoms has been revised, disproved, reconstructed, and still remains enigmatic; and when no scientist can yet say whether matter is a condition of force, or force a condition of matter, the world, that leaned its faith on the dogmatism of Science, has ceased to be even sceptical;

and in rejecting or disbelieving its dogmas, has come to reject all doctrines of every kind.

Hence, the formulas of disbelievers in our days—"A religious life compatible with disbelief in dogma"; "Religion, but not Churches"; "Ethics without doctrine"; "Christianity without Christ"; "the decay of sectarian doctrines is the revival of religious life"; "the very decline in church-attendance, a sign of greater religious vitality"; "Christianity, not belief in Christ's Divinity, but living according to the maxims of Christ."

It is specious. Most of the Protean forms of disbelief have been so. It appeals to a large and ever growing class, because it flatters that human pride that seeks unbounded license of thought. It is an impossible theory of morals. It is illogical and absurd.

It is specious. It appeals to a moral sense, the existence of which, even in the worst of times, men have not controverted, although they might have been uneasy under its restrictions. The Schools and Universities might contend about propositions; but, however evil men might violate the moral sense and secretly rebel beneath its precepts, it is only a Rousseau here and there, or a Whitman once in a century, can be found to argue a return to Nature. Social safety, political well-being, the preservation of the Commonwealth, the sanctity of the home, the safeguarding of individual rights, demand the acknowledgment, if not the careful cultivation, of the moral sense. The world could not get on without the commandments fulminated on Sinai. If the eternal and imperative precepts: "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not

steal," " Thou shalt not bear false witness," could be defied with impunity, civilization would end in a cataclysm, and all social life would perish without the possibility of being reconstructed on any other basis. But (so it seems to modern non-dogmatics) propositions, doctrines, decrees, emanating from Churches, can be repudiated without any such result. Nay, would it not be all the better that the wars of sects should cease, and that the ears of the world should be no longer tormented with disputations about dogmas, or controversies about abstruse and metaphysical questions, which the human mind will never solve ; and that we should be left at peace to pursue the avocation of life within the limits of the moral law, about which there can be no question ?

Again, although it restricts human freedom, this theory gives the widest latitude to that libertinism of thought, which is claimed as the dearest privilege of human liberty. We admit, it is said, the necessity of curbing human passion, of restricting desires within bounds compatible with the safety and comfort of others. But our thoughts must be free. We must be at liberty to believe, or not believe. Society may tie our hands and lock our lips ; but no human authority shall, or can restrict, the God-given privilege of intellectual liberty. What is it to any man whether in the secrecy of my own soul I believe there is a God, or no God ; a Trinity, or no Trinity ; a God-man, or a mere sage or philanthropist ; a soul within me with eternal destinies before it, or I, a mere animal, with just the instincts, desires, and end of the brute creation ? I shall allow no man to

put shackles on my intellect. The law will punish me if I do wrong. Quite sufficient for me then is the moral law, the laws of society, my own conscience. What are the disputations of sects, or Churches, or schools to me? For three hundred years in the beginning of the Christian era the whole Eastern Empire was torn asunder by wars, treachery, revolutions; Emperor fighting against Emperor, Pope with Patriarch, Councils torn asunder, Churches warring with Churches, and nations with nations; for what? One single vowel in the Creed. And since that time has not all European civilization been threatened with extinction through religious wars? Nay, Protestants though we are, we cannot help condemning Luther for that he revived an interest in dogmatic religion by defying its central authority, just at the time when Europe was slowly, but surely, drifting back from the misery and squalor of the Dark Ages to the sweetness and light, and natural lives and happiness of the ancient Paganisms. Yes, let us alone! We want to hear no more about dogma or disputation—Arian and Anglican, Calvinist and Socinian, High Church and Low Church, Irvingite and Swedenborgian. We bend our neck to no man, no church, no creed. We claim the privilege of unshackled freedom. We pin our faith to no formulas. We subscribe to no articles. Within us is the light of reason. Without us the laws of society that we shall follow; these, we obey. But Churches, Creeds, Confessions of Faith, we shall have none of them. If we want to worship, the expanses of Nature will be our sanctuary, the dome of Heaven

our Temple; the interchange of courtesies with our kind will be our Ritual; the poets will be our Apostles; History our Evangelist. We shall worship in Temples not made of hands; and our Apotheosis—our final return to inorganic creation! We are content to be merged in the Universe of Matter!

So say—in speech, and book, and pamphlet, from Press and platform, in prose and verse, essay and lecture—the adherents of this, the newest, the most widely spread, and the most specious and attractive form of Atheism which has appeared in our time.

Yet, the absurdity of the thing is apparent. Its consequences would be, if pushed to logical conclusions, calamitous.

This "moral sense," innate or acquired, must rest on some principle. If the precept, "Thou shalt not kill," is accepted, the principle on which it depends must be accepted also. Surely, it is not a mere whim or caprice of humanity that keeps men's hands from being imbued in the blood of their fellow-men. It is not a sentiment of mercy, or compassion, or mere humanitarianism that saves the world from promiscuous murder. How valueless such sentiments are in a whirlwind of rage and passion, such as is let loose in war, or in a panic, we know well. There must be then some underlying principle, tacitly acknowledged by the entire race, and which is formulated in the theory or statement, in which all men acquiesce, "It is wrong and criminal to shed the blood of another." But this is *dogma*. Therefore, in accepting this common religious and social principle, you put the yoke of dogma about your neck.

The same rule applies to every moral prfnciple by which Society is cemented and solidified. The Church says: "Whosoever declares or holds that it is right to steal, or murder, or rob, or bear false witness, let him be anathema." The non-dogmatist says: "Every man possesses a moral sense; and this declares that it is criminal *in se*, and subversive of all moral order to steal, or murder, or bear false witness; and whosoever holds this criminal theory is only fit to be put outside the pale of civilization." Where is the difference in the formula? The veriest non-dogmatist has "anathema" on his lips as well as the dogmatic Church.

Yes, but we are not speaking now of moral precepts, is the reply. There we are at one. We admit that the basis of all morality is dogmatic principle. What we repudiate is, your Councils, your Decrees, your fine-drawn Definitions and Distinctions about articles of Faith, of whose inner meaning you can know nothing, much less teach us. We admit that the moral teachings of Christianity are beautiful; and we try to fashion our lives thereon. But, as to the person of Christ, His origin, His Nature, His mission, His miracles, His power, we know nothing. We accept His moral teaching. We reject all dogmas connected with His Person.

But do you not see that all the force of the supreme moral teaching of Christ comes from the fact that He was a Divine Teacher. Why do you not accept the teachings of Confucius, of Siddartha, of Seneca, of Marcus Aurelius, of Epictetus? Because they were mere men, were liable to error, and did err;

and because they spoke without authority. What has given weight to the words of Christ, such weight, that even to-day, after nineteen hundred years, they are accepted as the supreme embodiment of all ethical teaching? The answer is, His authority. The authority of a mere sage or philosopher? Certainly not. This would bring Him down to the level of a Socrates. What then? His authority, as God. There is no denying it. There is no possible suppression of the faith, latent and dormant in some minds, but existent in all minds, that Christ was the Son of the Living God. The very hatred that men bear to Him, their blasphemies against His adorable name, prove this. If He were a mere sage, the world would bow its head, and pass Him by. But the world knows He is much more; and hence it rages against Him. It cannot separate His teachings from His mission. It cannot separate His mission from His person. It cannot separate His person from His Godhead. Whether it accepts His teachings as the supreme moral code of humanity, or rejects with hatred His teaching and His person alike, it admits, unconsciously and unwillingly, the Dogma of the Incarnation.

In the same way, professing non-dogmatists announce their belief in God, His attributes, His perfections. The moment they accept the natural law, or the guidance of reason, they profess their faith in the goodness and omniscience, the mercy and justice of God. For if there be a moral code, innate to the human soul, it cannot spring from mere animal nature; nor from instinct; nor from experience; nor from advanced civilization, without

external illumination—that is, the dogma of Divine Providence. If there be a moral law, directing the will, there must be some dogmatic influence controlling the intellect. Law is universal, inexorable. In the organic and inorganic creations, it is the one thing that is most clearly in evidence. All things are controlled by Law, and bow to its behests. Shall the intellect of man alone break away from the Universe, and be uncontrolled? Is it the one exception to the Cosmos that reigns throughout the Universe? Who emancipated it from the Universal Order, and gave it the charter of unlicensed liberty? Or who flung the reins over its neck and bade it go forth, uncurbed and unbridled, whilst all things else, even the superior will of man, have to suffer themselves to be dragged into discipline and obedience by that tremendous centripetal force which we designate as Law in the inorganic and animal creation, as conscience or the moral sense in man. The suggestion can be advanced only to be repudiated. Such an irregularity would be opposed to all known laws. It would be a deordination in a world of Order.

But, if the Intellect has to be curbed like all things else, it is quite clear that from its very nature that curb must be intellectual; that is, it must submit to accept some primary truths of propositions, formulated by some authority, external to itself. And these truths, being addressed to the intellect, can take but one shape—that of Dogmatic Truth or Dogmatic Fact. What Law is therefore to the organic or inorganic creation, universal, inexorable, imperious, and even necessary, what the "moral

sense," "conscience," is to the will of man; even that is Dogma to the Intellect. You may reject Nicene or Athanasian creeds; you may spurn the Thirty-Nine Articles or other formularies. You cannot rid yourselves of dogma. Even Carlyle, who rang the changes of unlimited scorn on the early controversies of Christianity, was compelled to admit, that on the acceptance or non-acceptance of that one word in the Creed of Nicæa, the whole of Christianity depended.

But if we suppose, *per impossibili*, that dogma could be suppressed, the consequences to human society would be disastrous. Nay, we are witnesses in these latter times of such disaster coming down upon society from the denial of dogma, and the repudiation of Authority. For what is Saint-Simonism, with its ugly brood of Socialists, Nihilists, Communists, French "Solidaires," Italian "Anarchists," etc., but the denial of any dogma binding the intellect, and the denial of moral law binding the will of man? It is easy for a modern doctrinaire, seated at his writing-desk, surrounded by his books, or lolling in his reading-chair, to sweep away creeds and formularies, and ridicule rites and rituals that really belong to humanity, and must take form in some shape to satisfy man's needs. But, when the apparently harmless, speculative denunciations of existing beliefs or governments takes root in the minds of the vast army of the disappointed and discontented, and altars are overturned and thrones upset, men begin to perceive how easily theories pass into practice, and how evil a crop may develop from poisonous seed. Between Carlyle, fulminating from his sound-

proof attic in Chelsea against all existing creeds, governments, social life, and Karl Marx, accepting all this denunciation as the righteous condemnation of existing shams and chimeras, where is the difference? The appeal to "Veracities" and "Unveracities," when men are told that there is nothing true, nor genuine, nor honest, under the sun, will have the effect of sharpening the hunger and quieting the conscience of a mob, that demands an equality which it will not concede, and a common proprietorship in goods that are not its own. And when all fear, and hope, and reverence are removed from the minds of men by the deliberate denial of every dogma, and therefore of all moral law, what can be expected but atheism in theory, and anarchy in practice?

There is no getting over that logical and peremptory sequence—no Dogma—no Ethics! There is no binding the consciences of men by shadowy abstractions and vague appeals to phantom virtues, undefined by doctrinal truths, and unsupported by some supreme authority, that makes the practice of those virtues imperative. It lends but sanction to human vice and passion to say: Live noble lives, and quit yourselves like men in the fight! The question will recur: What are noble lives? and what means, "to quit ourselves like men?" Robin Hood and his merry men had their own code of morals:—

"Because the good old rule
Sufficed for them. The simple plan,
That they shall take who have the power,
And they shall keep, who can."

But Robin Hood, and every pirate and freebooter that ever lived, thought they were living noble, free lives, and certainly that they "quitted themselves like men in the fight." And who shall deny that the world, in spite of its Pharisaism, has always had a secret sympathy with them, or the footpads—on a larger scale, whom the world calls its heroes and conquerors? But will that do? Can society hang together on such theories? Or must not there be some voice, as of Sinai, to pronounce first, the everlasting Dogma:

"I am the Lord, thy God,"

and then the inexorable precepts:

"Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not."

Yes! It is perfectly futile to say that men must lead clean, just, honourable lives, unless someone defines what are purity, justice, honour. But behind that definition there must be authority; and behind that authority must be its credentials, founded on dogmatic truth.

It may be said that all this is so clear, that, whilst the multitude still clings to its pleasant formula "Religion without creed or church," the leading thinkers amongst unbelievers willingly admit that this idea is neither logical nor reasonable. Hence, the curious change that has come over the tone and temper of unbelievers in our time. Instead of the fierce, bitter scorn cast upon religious belief by the whole French school, and imitated, to their eternal shame, by English scientists, there appears now a

quiet, half-apologetic, wholly deprecatory tone, as of men who boasted incontinently of their security, and have found the ground slipping from beneath them. We have already seen how Carlyle modified his fierce, scornful invectives against the Fathers of the early Councils; and now we find in Herbert Spencer's *Autobiography*, which may be accepted as his last word, and the expression of his most mature convictions, the following significant, if half-hearted, declaration, that religious creeds or cults of some kind is a necessity. Coming from the pen of so thorough an evolutionist, who has been preaching all his life the progression of mankind by "evolution" and "natural selection," and the "survival of the fittest," to the imaginary perfection of some millennium, they bear their own lesson:—

"While the current creed was slowly losing its hold on me, the whole question seemed to be the truth or untruth of the particular doctrines I had been taught. But gradually, and especially of later years, I have become aware that this is not the sole question. Partly, the wider knowledge obtained of human societies has caused this. Many have, I believe, recognised the fact *that a cult of some sort, with its social embodiment, is a constituent in every society which has made any progress.* The masses of evidence, classified and arranged in the *Descriptive Sociology*, have forced this belief upon me independently, if not against my will; still, without any desire to entertain it, *there seems no escape from the inference, that the maintenance of social subordination has peremptorily required the aid of some such agency.*

Thus I have come to look more and more calmly on forms of religious belief to which I had, in earlier days, a profound aversion. Holding that they are in the main naturally adapted to their respective peoples and times, it now seems to me well that they should severally live and work as long as the conditions permit; and further, that sudden changes of religious institutions, as of political institutions, are certain to be followed by reactions. Largely, however, if not chiefly, this change of feeling towards religious creeds and their sustaining institutions has resulted from a *deepening conviction that the sphere occupied by them can never be an unfilled sphere;* but that there must continue to arise afresh the great questions concerning ourselves and surrounding things; and that, if not positive answers, then modes of consciousness standing in place of positive answers, must ever remain. *By those who know much, more than by those who know little, is there felt the need for explanation.* Thus religious creeds, which in one way or other occupy the sphere that rational interpretation seeks to occupy and fails, *and fails the more the more it seeks*, I have come to regard with a sympathy, based on community of need, feeling that dissent from them results from inability to accept the solutions offered, joined with the wish that solutions could be found."

Why Herbert Spencer did not move a step further and perceive that if the laws of right and wrong are eternal and unchangeable, the cultus which subordinates human passion to such laws must be formed and based on eternal and unchangeable truth,

and not allowed to change, and shift, and modify itself to suit merely human exigencies, is a problem that his *Autobiography* does not solve ; and remaining insoluble now for ever, it is another proof of the limitations that will always surround the highest philosophic conceptions when unilluminated by Divine Faith. But his testimony is at least valuable as a corroboration of our thesis—and all the more valuable as the result—the unwelcome result—of an experience of eighty years.

THE MOONLIGHT OF MEMORY

IX

"The moonlight of memory!"

The phrase is not mine. It is a favourite expression of that greatest of German humanists—Jean Paul Richter. And it is a very beautiful one; because memory undoubtedly does cast a strange, uncanny, wistful light over events which, in the broad sunlight of experience, had sometimes very little of poetry or tenderness in them. And it is very strange that, as we advance in years, old times, old faces, old scenes, that seemed to have been blurred over or entirely blotted out in our adolescence, have a new resurrection in our memory and stand out clear and distinct as the figures in a stereoscope against the dark background of the past. How beautifully, for example, do the plain, prosaic, limestone walls of the old Market-House in Mallow, which crowned and terminated the New Street in which I was born, stand out in the diorama, which memory unrolls from out the side-scenes of the little theatre of my existence! How well I remember it in the sunlight and in the moonlight—the exact flat stone which we singled out for our balls; the niches which were such a sore trouble to us; the old weighing-machine; the vast and tremendous circuses whose splendours,

as of Arabian Nights, were hidden within under locked and closed gates. How romantic now, seen in the light of memory, was the dear old glen, where we first learned the art of poetry in its wild flowers: the primroses and the cowslips, and the wild hyacinths, whose fragrance, like the perfume that hangs around old letters, comes back to us across the years; and the brook, narrowing and broadening, which we leaped in the summer time, and whose flags we wove into tiny boats, and where we fished for collies and sticklebacks; and where we wondered at the gorgeous dragon-flies that swam and sang in the air on the hot summer-days; and the little chalet on the cliff, with its fringe of firs, which looked so beautiful and poetical against the sunset; and the song of the cuckoo, echoing the lines of Wordsworth; and the ditch overhead, where many a summer evening we watched and envied the little batches of Fenians going up to drill in the dark recesses of Buckley's wood. For that sublime and sacred feeling that took these tradesmen away from work and pleasure, was also the passion of our youth. The shadow of '48, and the wild music that came out of the shadow, were upon us; and we were watching with beating hearts and kindling eyes the prelude of '67.

I have quoted elsewhere a little experience of mine on one of the dark winter nights of the year '65. I see now, as clearly as I saw then, the short well-knit figure of a ballad singer in the Main Street; I see the gas-light from the shop flickering on his coat; I see the coat shining and glistening because the rain was pouring in cataracts on his clothes; I see his

face, pale but stern-looking, his black hair falling down in ringlets on his shoulders; the short black moustache; the right hand hidden away in his breast; I hear his fine voice ringing up along the deserted street that fine ballad (I often wonder who is the Innominatus that wrote it), called in Irish Anthologies, "The Fenian Men." I remember how it thrilled us to hear the words:

"But once more returning, within our veins burning
The fires that illumined dark Aherlow's glen;
We raise the old cry anew, Slogan of Con and Hugh,
Out and make way for the bold Fenian men!"

And how we agreed to tear ourselves away from the fascination, and post ourselves as vedettes up along the street from Tuckey's corner to Fair Lane, lest the police should come on him unawares and arrest him. For we knew that he was a Fenian emissary, and that he had work on hands that night, besides singing.

There was another agent of the Brotherhood, who came and went in a secret, but to us, most fascinating manner, who used gather us boys into a corner of that old Market-House, and pour floods of hot rebellion into our eager minds. It was from his lips I first heard those noble ballads of Thomas Davis: "When on Ramillies' bloody field;" and that superb song that ought to be familiar to every Irish boy and girl: "The Battle-eve of the Brigade." It was not only that he hummed and recited and taught us these fine songs; but he dramatised them. He showed us

the French lines stretching along one side of the glen, the Irish Brigade in the centre; he showed us the men sleeping around their camp-fires, the remnants of the Wild Geese who had fought on the walls of Limerick; he showed us the mess-tent in the centre, the canvas flapping, the lamps hanging down from the poles; the swords and shakoes of the officers on pegs at the sides; the long table, loaded with glasses and decanters; the Irish officers with unbuttoned uniforms, drinking and carousing till the dawn. We saw the tall figure of Count Thomond at the head, "straight as an uplifted lance." We heard the toasts.

"Mark the words!" our strange and fugitive mentor used to say; "mark the toasts and how the captains received them:

> 'Here's a health to King James! and
> they bent as they quaffed!'

That was Shemus the coward! the fellow that ran away from the Boyne, and left behind him the men, who cried: 'Change kings, and we'll fight you again!' But there's the Irish always, making fools of themselves about kings and queens, and leaders who betray them! 'They bent as they quaffed!' They didn't cheer! Oh, no! They couldn't do that! But you see they had a soft corner in their hearts for the Stuarts who betrayed them! But look at the second toast:—

> 'Here's to George the Elector! and fiercely they
> laughed!'

Of course they did! That was George, the English king! How they wished they could meet him on the morrow! Look at the third toast:—

'Good luck to the girls we loved long ago,
Where the Shannon and Barrow and Blackwater flow.'

"What do they do now? Nothing at all. They had something else, besides girls, to be thinking about that night, those warriors and captains of the Brigade! Ah, but now look at the last toast:—

'God prosper all Ireland!'

"What did they do now? Did they rise up and throw their helmets in the air, and shout and make fools of themselves, as you see men doing to-day? NO! But they put down their glasses in silence on the table; and their faces grew as white as a girl's who has seen a ghost, and they covered their eyes with their hands. What does Davis say?

'You'd think them afraid
So pale grew the chiefs of the Irish Brigade!'

"That's just it! That's the finest dramatic touch in all poetry! Look at them, boys! Look at them! The forty captains of the Irish Brigade, their faces white, their hands trembling, their hearts throbbing! And why? Because the sorrow of Ireland and the sadness of Ireland, and her eternal hopes always and

ever defeated, have come down on them! And because they remember what a little thing was between them and victory! And because they think, if they had listened to the voice of their Bishop and the Franciscan Friar, who told them hold out to the end, all would have been different! Ah, yes! Look at them! Look at them! and believe me, boys, you needn't much mind the man who flings his caubeen in the air and yells and shouts, and says he'll shed the last drop of his blood for Ireland! But whenever you hear: God save Ireland! or God prosper old Ireland! and you see a man's fingers twitching, and his teeth clenching, and the lines drawing down on his face, and the colour flying from his cheeks; ah, yes, boys, mind him!"

Strange to say, it was an exact picture of the men in whose Brotherhood he was enrolled. For that was one characteristic of those Fenians. They were silent, strong men, into whose character some stern and terrible energy seemed to have been infused. There were no braggarts amongst them. Their passion was too deep for words; and that passion was an all-consuming, fierce, unswerving and unselfish love for Ireland. They did not love their motherland because she gave them a scrap of her bogs, or fields, or mountains, or because they could sell her interests at a brigand's valuation; but because she was Ireland, and she had wrongs to be avenged and sorrows to be redressed; and, because they hoped, every man and boy among them, to see the day when they would help to crown that dear old motherland with the royal symbols of independence.

Yes! in truth, the blood runs freely in the veins of youth, and our veins ran fire under the stimulus of that glorious passion. With what scorn we drowned some wretched music-hall song about "A dark girl dressed in blue" with the ringing notes of

"Viva la! the New Brigade!
Viva la! the old one too;
Viva la! the rose shall fade,
And the Shamrock shine for ever new!"

And how we whispered amongst ourselves awful secrets about certain places along the Railway Embankment, where coffins, filled with well-greased rifle barrels were stored. At that time in Mallow football was almost unknown. Hurling and handball in winter, cricket in summer, were the universal games. Every lane, every street had its cricket-club; and high above all, and dominating all, was the M.C.C., the magic letters that floated on the flag that hung above the little shanty in the cricket field that lies to the east of the monastery. That club was then the most formidable in the South of Ireland. It had won victories everywhere; beaten military and city clubs beyond number; and its members were heroes in our sight—Curtin, the Captain; George and Harry Foote, demon bowlers; Pat Kelly, the slow bowler, whose deadly "twists" were feared more than the cannonading of the Footes; Joss Mullane, the famous backstop; Micka Roche, the favourite batsman, and Bill O'Brien, the genial giant, whose mighty feat of sending a ball over the

Courthouse walls from the centre of the cricket-grounds is remembered to this day. What then must have been the mighty attraction that took us, schoolboys, away from such an arena on a certain hot summer afternoon, and flung us, a wild disordered mass, into the public streets? Nothing but the report that the police had surrounded the house of John Sullivan, at the corner of Carmichael's Lane, had placed him under arrest, and were searching every room for papers. We were not disappointed. The whole town was out; and there, inside his shop window, we could see the prisoner, erect as usual and unconcerned, and chatting gaily with the crowd of constables that filled the house. He had on his usual white coat (he was a baker), and was stroking his short American-cut beard. Presently, the District-Inspector came down stairs. He had found nothing to compromise the prisoner. No wonder. Every second man amongst the constables present was a sworn Fenian.

One beautiful August night the following summer, 1866, a group of four young lads walked up and down the Main Street from Tuckey's Hill to Chapel Lane and back. It was a glorious night, the moonlight flooding the whole street without throwing a shadow from the houses. They were chatting about a hundred things. Then the Town Clock struck ten; and just at Tuckey's Hill they paused, and the central figure said to the present writer, who was then home from St. Colman's for his first holidays:

"What are you going to do with yourself?"

"I suppose the Church!" I said.

"Ah!" he said, with a sigh, "that was my idea also; and I haven't had much happiness since I abandoned it."

It was James O'Brien, the Captain in the Revolutionary Forces, although he cannot have been more than eighteen years old. How well I remember him—the strong, square face, dimpled all over with curious lines, when he smiled; the tall, sinewy, athletic figure; the broad shoulders; the erect figure and military gait of the boy—*Ay de mi!* what might have been?

A few months later, when the snow was some feet thick upon the ground, he put aside his civilian jacket and, like Emmet, donned his green uniform; slung his revolvers around his neck; slipped unobserved from the house, and trudged along the six miles to Ballynockin, where he met Captain Mackey and a contingent of absolutely unarmed men from Cork. They brought out the women and children from the police barrack; and as the men refused to surrender, they instantly set fire to the place. The sergeant and four constables were only saved from a terrible death by the intervention of the curate (Canon Neville), who commanded the police to surrender at once, and he would exonerate them from all blame before their superiors. Then a detachment of military stationed at Purcell's of Dromore came up, and the unarmed Fenians dispersed. The next day James O'Brien was arrested and lodged in Mallow Bridewell for three weeks awaiting his trial.

A pitch dark night the following winter, somewhere before or after Christmas, I found myself in Cork.

It was an awful night, the rain falling in torrents. For some reason I wished to see Mrs. O'Brien—what the reason was I cannot remember now. I hired a covered-car, and bade the driver take me to Mrs. O'Brien's, Nile Street. He seemed reluctant; but he gave way. Half-way down King Street he stopped and tapped at the window. I let it down. He put his face through the aperture, and whispered:

"Do you mane the Captain's, sor?"

I said, yes! and we drove on; and James O'Brien, the chevalier *sans peur et sans reproche*, passed out of my life. Once afterwards I heard that at a certain Commercial Ball in Cork he created quite a sensation as he walked into the room, a green rosette on his breast, and a fair young girl hanging on his arm. I wonder could it have been "Brigid" of the Nation, the hidden and unappreciated writer of the best dramatic poem, "Sentenced to Death," and the best piece of Irish humour, "How Tom Bourke became a Zouave," that we possess in Anglo-Irish literature.

Like many another genius, which has needed years and a theatre for its development, his brother William, the great tribune of after years, was comparatively obscured; but even then, slow of speech, he was known to be desperately tenacious of purpose. The first man, curiously enough, to recognise his hidden talent was a Mr. Wright, a Protestant classical teacher, who foretold brilliant scholarship from the pages of Latin composition that his young pupil presented to him.

The following March, that of ever-memorable '67,

was unusually severe. At the middle of the month the snow was thick upon the ground, and the long flanks and high peaks of the Galtees were a mass of glistening crystals. It amused us, young rebels in St. Colman's, to see or pretend we saw the dark files of the Fenians silhouetted against the virgin background of the hills, and the red patches of the British regiments in the rear. But then one day came in a report that the Fenians had been surrounded in Kilclooney wood, and had been overpowered and annihilated. Gradually the news filtered down until it touched reality, that Peter O'Neill Crowley had been killed with English bullets on the banks of the mountain stream; that he had previously ordered his companions to flee and save themselves; that it was only at his earnest entreaties Captains Kelly and McClure consented to fly; and that then the brave man fought a whole British regiment and a posse of police, dodging from tree to tree, and firing steadily on the advancing enemy, until his ammunition was exhausted; and he fell pierced with bullets, God having given him time enough to receive the last Sacraments at the hands of Father Tim O'Connell, then curate at Mitchelstown.

I remember well the evening on which that remarkable funeral took place. It was computed that at least five thousand men took part in the procession and shouldered the coffin of the dead patriot over mountain and valley and river, until they placed the sacred burden down there near the sea and under the shadow of the church at Ballymacoda. I remember how a group of us, young lads, shivered in the cold

March wind there on the College Terrace at Fermoy, and watched the dark masses of men swaying over the bridge, the yellow coffin conspicuous in their midst. We caught another glimpse of the funeral cortege as it passed the Sergeant's Lodge; then we turned away with tears of sorrow and anger in our eyes.

A great strength and fierce force lay in all these men. They were in desperate and deadly earnest. They seldom smiled or jested during those momentous years. They always wore the same grim look of settled determination. It was life or death that was in the balance. They walked under the shadow of the scaffold.

Two years later, one of these men, who had been sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, James F. X. O'Brien, visited the Presentation Convent in Fermoy to see his sister, who was a nun there; and the Bishop, who was in Fermoy at the time, had asked the liberated patriot to dine at the College. Probably at that time Dr. Keane was the most popular and well-beloved Bishop in Ireland. He deserved it. He had the reputation of being a strong, almost an extreme Nationalist. I was too young to understand. I only knew that the newspapers were fond of quoting some words which he addressed to the students at the Irish College, Paris.

"Gentlemen, remember that your first duty is to your God; the second to your country!"

The Irish memory was then tenacious, and fond of treasuring up the words of its great men. A few words in another direction sent another Bishop (a

very great and a very holy man) down to his grave under a storm of obloquy and hate.

This evening Mr. O'Brien was late for dinner, which was half gone through when he arrived. The little quiet figure dressed in gray had stolen half-way up the hall when he was observed. The whole body of priests and students sprang to their feet, and gave him an ovation that a king might envy.

During these vacations from our seminary course, we had to witness sometimes strange scenes. Probably the most pathetic, if we had known it, were the borough elections. It was then, and up to 1882, when William O'Brien broke the evil spell for ever, a mere contest between two landlords, one Liberal, one Conservative, both caring equally little for the country or the people. Sir Denham Norreys, the local magnate, held the borough for thirty years. To my imagination, he was the embodiment and impersonation of the haughty aristocrat. He was an old man then; but his slight figure, his gold glasses, and, above all, his magnificent gait and carriage, as he walked up the Main Street, seemed to my youthful fancy the type of old-world *haute noblesse*, in whom it would be a condescension to speak to an ordinary mortal. I remember how everyone stepped off the sidewalk as he approached, and how he looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, and never spoke to the commonality. He came in for a good deal of rough handling at the elections; and it was remarkable that even then he never seemed to lose that splendid hauteur of manner. Once a local solicitor, and a very clever man, was speaking from the broad window

at the left-hand corner of Fair Lane, and he said, as I well remember :

" He calls himself Sir Denham Norreys ; but I call him Sir Damn Nonsense ! "

We thought the stars would fall. But there it was—Norreys *v.* Longfield for years ; and a squadron of huzzars, sabres drawn, marching two and two up along the street the whole day long ; and three hundred police massed around the Court House the day of the polling—all to keep these poor Irish fools from murdering one another ! But the secret fires were burning also in young hearts at the time.

It was quite a revelation in after life to find that the proud aristocrat, the seeming embodiment of racial and sectarian ascendancy, was the same Sir Denham who was O'Connell's chief supporter during his many conflicts in the House of Commons ; and that later on he served under the banner of Gladstone.

Just before the Fenian rising in '67, Serjeant Sullivan was made Solicitor-General for Ireland, and he had to find a seat. And where but in his native Mallow ? He came, saw, and conquered. He was made Attorney-General, and had to be re-elected. He came, saw, and conquered again. But the elections were hotly contested ; and party feeling ran very high. He was a good popular speaker ; and he had some clever tricks in catching the popular imagination. The ballad-singers sang :

" Hurrah for Sullivan ! He's the man
That will chase the fox through Duhallow.
He's now come forth to lead the Van.
He's one of the Rakes of Mallow."

Small boys wrote orders (unlimited) for porter on copy-book leaves, which orders were honoured by every publican. The successful lawyer leaped from the backs of a poor, servile people, from the bar to the bench, from the bench to the Woolsack. And then—passed into oblivion. For it is a remarkable fact, and one that I should like to impress on the minds of our youthful generations, that the Muse of Irish History has a curious knack of blotting out with her thumb every name, no matter how illustrious for a moment, that has not served the cause of the motherland, while she embalms for ever in her pages the very humblest who have given their lives to the sacred cause. I suppose not one man in a million to-day could tell the name of the judge who sentenced the Manchester martyrs to death; and every schoolboy knows the names of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien. Who can tell the names of all the distinguished Judges, Attorney-Generals, Crown Advocates, Serjeants-at-Law, who prosecuted or sentenced the patriots of '98, or '48, or '67? And who can forget Emmet, Wolfe Tone, the Shears, Mitchel, Martin, Kickham? And so, too, the little town there by the Blackwater has given men to the Woolsack and the Bench; to the Church; to medicine; to art; and to history. Yet, no one asks where these men are buried; or cares to see the places where they were born. But every schoolboy can point out where Thomas Davis first saw the light; and the high house in Ballydahin where William O'Brien spent his early days. And I often wondered whether that distinguished lawyer from Mallow, who wore the Lord

Chancellor's robes, was able to shut out altogether that terrible name " Scorpion Sullivan," that made a hissing in all men's ears after the State Trials of '67 in Cork ? For I remember well that even while the mob were shouting " Hosannas ! " after his carriage on the eve of his election in Mallow, I heard some bitter things said by white-faced young men about " castle-hacks " and " purchased slaves " ; and I knew that these young fellows turned away in disgust from the porter-sodden and degraded canaille of the streets to grease their rifles up there in Carmichael's Lane, or speculate, as they watched the dragoons passing by, how easily the axe of the croppy-pike could cut the bridles, and how easily the steel hook could bring the trooper to the earth ; and how easily the pike with its rudle-point could do the rest. They were dreamers of dreams, of course ; but they were superior to the poor slaves, whose hands had closed down on ill-gotten gold, or the poor wretches who debauched themselves with cheap drink, and thought they were serving their country !

The relations between Protestants and Catholics were all this time exceeedingly happy and cordial. The only occasion on which some little friction took place was when the Protestant Rector or church-wardens first attempted to close the burial-ground around the Protestant Church and in the interior of the ruins of the old Catholic Church dedicated to Saint Anne. The attempt made on this occasion was frustrated in a singular manner, although in after years, on sanitary grounds, it succeeded.

During the summer evenings, a little man, clad like a sailor in blue blouse and white nankeen or linen trousers, used put in an appearance just at the corner of Fair Street and right opposite the entrance gate to the Protestant church. His face was deeply marked, and he looked insignificant enough; but his feats of strength, for it was these he came to exhibit, hoping to earn a few pence thereby, were very remarkable, and showed uncommon muscular and nervous power. One of the feats was the lifting of a half-hundred weight to the level of his head, and holding it aloft in that position whilst he walked rapidly along the streets to the great bridge that spanned the Blackwater, and back again to the point from which he started, altogether a distance of three-quarters of a mile.

This evening, just before giving the usual exhibition of strength, an immense funeral was seen slowly coming up the Main Street. It halted at the church gate, which was locked and bolted. Clearly this was expected. The sexton, acting under orders, refused to allow the funeral cortege to pass. There was deep anger and indignation written on the faces of the people; and after some moments of indecision, it was clear they were about to take the law into their own hands. Amongst them were the Mallow butchers —the Gracchi of their age—the fiercest, strongest, loyalest men that ever took up a cause. Just whilst they were hesitating, the little sailor athlete pushed his way through the crowd, and struck the gate one violent blow straight from the shoulder. Whether it was that the lock was worn and rusty, or the impact

very great, the great iron gate yielded and swung back; and the tumultuous crowd, with a suppressed cheer, broke into the avenue. No legal action was taken, but probably the little sailor got sixpences for pennies that night.

And may I not embalm, and preserve from utter oblivion, in these hot and hasty times, the names of the humbler, yet picturesque celebrities, who haunted the streets of Mallow during these days, and who came prominently to the front during election times, and were well known at fair, market, and cross—Bill Shehane, the giant, who always inherited the boots and cast-off integuments of another giant, old Homan Haines; Bill Shehane, who knocked down with one blow a furious and dangerous bull in the Big meadow, and then cried chivalrously: "Get up you, you son of a gun, I never struck a man down"; Stephen the Fool, who once swallowed a live mouse for the premium of sixpence and the delectation of the Club gentleman; Jack the Manager; Davy the Lady; Biddy Black; Peg Mack; Ellen Gorman, of the Cakes; and last, not least, Kitty Moss, the terror of our childhood.

And in higher circles of society, there were that giant priest, the typical soggart of the past, Justin McCarthy, mighty in stature, and great of heart, the hero of two tithe wars, the foe of felonious landlordism, who revenged an eviction in his parish by putting a price of one shilling per head on every fox's head that was brought to his hall-door. And the gentle Abbé Moriarty, with the seraphic face and the long white hair, who, we firmly believed, saw the heavens

opened, when, on Sunday mornings, he preached, and the beautiful vestments which he had brought from Dieppe shone in the sunlight, and the magnificent chalice glittered on the altar. And Father Danger (Murphy), theologian and catechist without rival or equal, whom we looked at with such awe and veneration; and the saintly Denis O'Connell, just passed to his reward; and Father P. Horgan, young, gifted, accomplished, who trained our choir on the one hand, and was inexorable to Sunday-school truants on the other. He is still, happily, with us; but the others—alas! all gone, swallowed up in the night of oblivion or rather shall we say, basking in the eternal sunshine of an eternal day?

LENTEN TIME IN DONERAILE

X

The Stations are over; and we are in Holy Week. Like all other human things, if laborious, the memory of them is pleasant. It is no joke to get up at an unearthly hour in the morning, and to speed, in very variable weather, seven or eight miles to the house where the Station is to be held. Sometimes, after snow, the ground is so slippery we have to pick our steps. Sometimes Boreas thunders from the north, out between the mountain chasms, and across the bleak March landscape. Sometimes the south wind comes up, with its soft, sweet, heavy burden of rain. But at all times one is glad to get in sight of the farmers' cottage, known and recognised afar off by its fresh coat of white-wash, and the little group of men waiting in the haggart before the door There is a cheery welcome from the master—the husband or the eldest son; a careful picking of our footsteps across the muddy yard, carpeted with fresh straw; a bark of warning from the vigilant collie; a still more warm welcome from the vanithee, and then we settle down to work. I generally leave the "parlour" to my curate. I prefer the seat by the open hearth, where piles of timber and coal, and occasionally a heap of mountain turf, light and heat the whole

kitchen. And here is the "sugan" chair, made of twisted hay; but the vanithee rushes out with a grand, new, horse-haired, well-springed one, and snatches the humble seat swiftly away. Right opposite me, a withered, venerable woman stoops to catch a little heat for her poor congealed veins. Her beads hang down as they roll through her fingers. Here, quite close, are the three junior scions of the house, their faces shining from soap and the fire, their pinafores spotless, and with great wonder in their eyes at the awful apparition of the priest. Silently and reverently, one by one, the penitents come and kneel on the hard paving stones, bend their heads till their hair touches your face, and make their simple confession. Then the little lecture, the Holy Mass, heard so reverently and humbly. All is still as death, save the cackling of a hen in the yard, or the swift carol of a blackbird out on the ash tree beyond. The station list is called; the "pleasant word" is said; and then the breakfast. It is a pretty poor business in Lent, though since we got the dispensation for butter, it is not quite so bad. And the vanithee, with great pity for the young priests, sidles over and whispers:—

"Wisha, yer reverence, what about a couple of eggs? It is a long drive, and a cowld morning."

We shake our heads; and the talk goes round, with one or two of the neighbours who have come in to help us; and it is all about the "Lague," or the Landlord, or the new taxes, or the Land Courts. And it is sad and almost desperate to see these poor people toiling from dawn to dark to make the "rint"; but "Hope springs eternal in the human breast,"

and there is a perennial fountain of hope in the hearts of these people.[1] "Well, sure God is good!" There is the ultimate syllable on the Irish tongue—faith, deep, profound, unshakable in the eternal clemency and protection of God.

And so, cheerful enough after our cup of tea, we bid "Good-bye!" to our good hosts, until——

"Give Mary your blessin', your reverence; she's goin' to America next week."

My heart sinks down into my boots. America! America! draining the life-blood of Ireland. All that is fair, and beautiful, and healthy, going; and all that is old, and decrepit, and imbecile, left behind. I cannot help saying angrily:—

"Why can't she stop at home?"

"Wisha, yer reverence, what's there for her? We have enough to do; and sure the sisters in Boston have paid her passage, and will meet her whin landin'."

There is no use replying. With a surly look and bad grace I place my hand on the thick auburn hair of the poor child; and my curate wonders all the way home why I am so silent and distracted. I cannot help it. This whole modern and universal

[1] Their trust in Providence has been vindicated. The above lines were written while the old evil system of dual ownership was still in operation. Under the beneficent influence of the Land Purchase Act of 1903, the landlord system has now quite disappeared from the parish, and the soil has become the people's own property. The results are abundantly evident already in their greater cheerfulness and comfort, the neatness of their homes and their increased enterprise in developing the resources of the soil. "The Lague" is still a power in the parish, but it is a League for completing the pacification of the country by combining Irishmen of all creeds in the cause of their common native land.

exodus from their native land is maddening. I know it is the genius of the race. We were always exiles and wanderers. We got the evil impetus from our Scythian forefathers, who struck and pitched their tents of skins from the Balkans to the Urals, and from the Danube to the Ganges. It was the same nomadic spirit that drove Dathi and his soldiers across Europe in their terrible crusade of fire, until their mighty king was smitten, from Heaven, under the snows of the Alps. It was the same spirit that bade Brendan seek the Western World; and his companions the forests of France and Germany. Down there on the Kerry coast, near Smerwick, where Grey de Wilton massacred the four hundred Spaniards who laid down their arms, depending on his word of honour, you still may see the beehive cells where the ancient Irish monks rested on their couches of rushes—cells so constructed for this race of mighty ascetics that the monk could neither stand nor lie. And there is the same eternal sea, where they found their choir-stalls, for there up to their armpits in the freezing waters they stood at midnight, and sent up their penitential chaunts to Heaven, with no organ accompaniment but that of howling winds and thundering waves. But were these ascetics of the Irish Thebaid content with this? No! After thirty or forty years of this violence to Heaven, the old Celtic spirit seized them, and "*peregrinari pro Christo!*"[1] on their lips, up they arose, and on these frail coracles, such as those you may still see in Kerry and Arran—poor, fragile, Nautilus-boats, canvas stretched on a few

[1] To go abroad for Christ's sake.

planks, they went forth to France and Germany; and the weaker races shuddered before their Libyan austerities, and clamoured for the milder rules of Benedict, in place of the awful penalism of these Irish Culdees. And that is the reason, you know, why the Benedictines have never thriven in Ireland.

Well! "*peregrinari! peregrinari!*" there is still the destiny of the race. Alas! that we should say it: It is no longer "*peregrinari pro Christo!*" but "*peregrinari pro Mammona!*" Ah! yes! the dear old Spartan simplicity of Irish peasant life is yielding to the seductions of the Zeitgeist: we want the city, and the electric light, and the saloon, and the ball-room. There's the secret of Irish emigration!

Well, we've finished the rounds of Stations. We have trodden on historic, or semi-historic ground. We have passed by the two Danish moats under the old frontier keep of Shinagh, near Waterdyke; have skirted Ballinamona, the ancient seat of the Nagles, one of whom, Elizabeth Nagle, married Spenser, the poet (see Lowell on the English poets). In this house, too, lived George Bond Lowe, who was fired at eighty years ago, whence originated the famous "Doneraile Conspiracy Trial," in the evolutions of which O'Connell won his brightest laurels. Who has not heard of his journey by coach from Cahir-civeen, his relays by the way, his appearance in Cork Courthouse, to the utter dismay of the Solicitor-General, his breakfast on the dry loaf of bread, interrupted between every bite by his exclamation: "That's not law, sir!" the saving of the poor victims from the gallows, by his marvellous eloquence; their

transportation—ah, yes! it all comes back, for here are their grand-children in my parish to-day. And down there across the Awbeg, whose silver is now gleaming in the morning sunlight, is the spot where Father O'Neill was horsewhipped by Captain St. Leger; and when the old priest shrank from prosecution, Curran forced him into it, took up the cause of the old man without fee or reward, except that it laid the first stone of an immortal reputation. Here, too, is Carker (carcer, a prison), where my predecessor, Father Tighe Daly, lived in 1688, one of the priests who had to be duly registered, and his good conduct guaranteed by two solvent securities. Here is the copy of his registration, culled from the Rolls Office, Dublin Castle:

No.	Name	Age	Where Ordained	By Whom	Place of Residence	Of what parishes is he the pretended Parish Priest
	Tighe Daly	67	Rheims	The Archbishop of Rheims	Carker	Caherduggan, Doneraile, Templersan.

Securities—Arthur O'Keeffe, Ballymohill,
and
Another
£50 each.

Back here in the defiles of the black mountains is a favourite spot of mine, Tooreen. You can see it gleaming—a little green patch against the sombre setting of the purple hills;—and it stretches deep down into the brown valleys, where the stream, turbid with flood-wrack, wine-coloured from the peat, or crystal in the mild summer time, forever break the

silence and monotony of these wilds. And here dwell a simple, hardy race, leading a kind of monastic life in their solitudes, and rarely venturing beyond the seclusion of their valleys, except to Mass on Sundays or holidays. I had heard of them long before I ever thought I should be their pastor. From far before the famine years, when the population was ten times what it is to-day, their reputation has come down unbroken, as being the very first, winter and summer alike, to enter the Church on Sunday morning. They are seven miles away—no roads from the inner fastnesses of the mountains—yet here they are at half-past seven on Sunday morning, eager for the Mass that is to cast its halo of blessing over their labours of the coming week. I tell them they ought to be holy—they are so near to God. Yet here, too, the fever of emigration has penetrated; and in New York and Indiana, up and down the cities of the States, are the children of the mist and the cloud, thinking, perhaps, sometimes of the purple heather and the bracken, and wondering will they ever see it again.

"From this spot, yer reverence," says old Dan Magrath, the woodranger, "you can see the five counties."

So you can. The sea to the south, the Shannon to the West; and in the east Knockmeldown, beneath whose conical summits nestles the Mecca of the Irish—the Monastery of Melleray. And far in front stretches a vast landscape, broken by ridges that run parallel to one another, but transverse, here from the mountains to the sea. It is dotted all over with white farm houses, from which the blue smoke, this

calm March morning, curls upwards to the sky. The smell of Spring is in the air, blended with the pungent aroma of peat and wood fires, carried to us across the wide lowlands; the cattle are browsing lazily in the far meadows; now and again you can hear the bark of a watch dog far away, or the song of some colleen or bouchal, as they pass down to the creamery; and all Heaven over your head is resonant with the raptures of the larks, who fling down the dews from their exultant wings and the pearls of music from their throats that gasp with exuberant melody. And this is Ireland? Yes! And there, down there in the lowland, and here in the mountain defiles, are Celts? Yes, every one! But was it not here, even in this very valley of Tooreen, that Spenser saw the ghosts coming out of their caverns; and was it not of this very country he wrote, that its population was exterminated? Hear his words, written just there below, where the black ruin of Kilcolman Castle makes a blot upon the landscape:—

"Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked anatomies of death; they spake like ghosts crying out of the graves; they did eat of the carrions, happy when they could find them, yea, and one another soon after, insomuch as the very carcases they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and, if they found a plot of water cresses or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time; yet not able long to continue wherewithal; that in short space there were none almost left, and a most populous and plentiful country was suddenly left void of man or beast."

Yet a few years; and through these very files swept down the stalwart Rapparees, who surrounded Kilcolman Castle, and put the brand to this keep of the robber and the stranger; and then with characteristic Irish chivalry dashed through the burning rooms to rescue a babe, whom, too late, they had heard was left behind by the Saxon servants. And here, after three hundred years confiscation and burning, exile and death, Connacht plantations and West Indian expatriation, here still are the Celts apparently as indomitable as ever. Surely, if Rome is the "Eternal City," the Irish are the "undying race."

Let us go down from the hill-top in our course of Stations, and visit the low-lands. We pass at once under the shadow of another mighty frontier fortress, also belonging to Spenser, for he held three thousand acres of land here, confiscated from the Earl of Desmond. It is a splendid old keep, still well preserved—a square, embattled tower, like that which suggested to Dante the simile of masculine fortitude —*Sta come torre ferma.* You can see it for miles around. Sometimes, when the sun shines, it is almost invisible, for the white face of it does not show against the sunlit mountains. But, generally, it stands out clear, distinct, well defined, a solid square of mediaeval masonry against the everlasting hills. It is Castlepooke—the keep of the Phooca or Witch; for you must know that once on a time, a famous witch, and a malignant one, took up her quarters here, and wrought dire distress amongst the people around. She burned the corn in the fields, until the wheat ears were filled with soot instead of

grain, sterilised the milk in dairies until no amount of churning could produce cream, brought dread diseases on the cattle, etc., and alas! there was no benevolent fairy to counteract the evil doings, or bring blessing for curse to the afflicted people. But there was a hope—a promise—a tradition, that if the habit of a Grey Friar could be flung over her in her sleep she would rise up and vanish in a flame of fire. And, one day, the emancipation came. A poor mendicant called at a farmer's house in the neighbourhood, and begged for alms and a night's lodging. It was freely given in this land of hospitality. The stranger slept, and lo! curiosity led the vanithee to open and inspect the bundle the poor man brought. It was all he had, but the staff for his hand. And she drew out the long grey habit of a friar. It was rash, perhaps sacrilegious; but the time had come. God had sent His messenger. But who would dare face the tigress in her den? Not one would volunteer! At last, a little child was requisitioned. She knew no fear, probably because she knew no sin. Carelessly she ascended the high mound of the Castle, carelessly entered, carelessly threw the garment over the sleeping woman, who instantly rose in the air, angry and threatening, and passed away for evermore in a flash of fire towards the West. So goes the legend; and of course it is true; but I do not vouch for it.

Our next Station takes us down into the plain to Kilmacneesh—church and graveyard of St. McNeese, a disciple of St. Patrick's. Thence to Inchnagree (the island of the cattle pens), where quite lately a

pathetic little incident took place. One day the very intelligent farmer who holds the land received a letter from a lady in England, asking was there any tradition of her family in that neighbourhood. She had a dim recollection that she was born somewhere there under the mountains of Mole. He at once wrote to say that he could point out the exact place where her father's house stood. She came over immediately and drove from the railway station to this remote place. The good farmer accompanied the trembling lady along the road to where the house stood near a plantation of fir trees. " There," he said, pointing to the spot from which time had now swept away even the ruins, " there is where your house stood, and there you were born." The lady sat down on the broken edge of the fence, and wept. So do human hearts turn to their homes and cradles. Across Bawntigeen (the green field of the little house) we pass ; and our next Station is Kilcolman, Ardeen, and Ballyvonare. Here was a church, built to St. Colman, one of St. Patrick's disciples ; and here in a little field is the Church of Rossdoyle or Rossdale,[1] mentioned in the same page as Doneraile in the assessment made by Pope Nicolas in 1291 for the Crusades in the Holy Land. But St. Colman's Church and Priory are gone ; yet here, dating from 1387, is the Castle of Kilcolman, famous for ever as the place where the " Faerie Queen " was written. It is now a solid stump of masonry, but must have extended far and wide across the meadow and above

[1] This little church is the oldest Christian Church in Ireland, if we except one near Bray.

the bog, there beneath, once an ornamental lake. How the imagination travels back across centuries to the old Desmond lords who built it; to the Elizabethan usurper, who never preached but one solution of the eternal Irish question, and that the Cromwellian one of wholesale massacre!

Spenser, who would exterminate the native Irish like vermin, died a beggar in London, in a lane near the great new Cathedral of Westminster; and Kilcolman Castle is now held by the Celto-Catholic Barrys; and there, right under the old keep, is the white-washed cottage of the Secretary of the Land League—an unmistakable Celt of Celts—William O'Toole.

And how the centuries glide into each other; for here a few years ago the most popular representative the great Republic of the West ever sent to Ireland, J. J. Piatt, wrote sonnets on the blackened ruin, and on the more modern structure beneath.

Across the Awbeg, our course has taken us through Cahirmee, where, for three hundred years, the greatest horse fair in the world is held, on the 11th and 12th July; by Caherduggan, whose village (depopulated by plague), church and castle, are swept away; by Cornahinch (hill of the island), Ardanaffron, which is either hill of the Mass, or Saffron Hill, its modern appellation, for here grew acres of yellow crocuses, which yielded the saffron with which the Irish invariably dyed their outer garment; by Bally-na-Dree, the town of the Druids, and Croagh-na-cree, where there still may be seen the sulphur and lithia well that wrought marvellous cures in pre-Patrician times;

and back to By-bloxe towne (the ancient name, for Doneraile is quite modern, dating only from 1291), to find the black pall of mourning hung over church and people, for this is Holy Week, and to-night the sweet Rosary, Sermon, and Benediction, always so bright and glorious and triumphant, give way to the solemn office of Tenebræ and its mournful lamentations.

Holy Thursday :—

Yes, indeed, my incredulous reader, we had the office of Tenebræ last night here, even here, in this remote village ; and we sang the solemn dirges of Jeremias, and my good little choir did harmonise the " Benedictus " and the " Miserere." It was not quite so impressive, perhaps, as what you have heard, so many times, in the Sistine Chapel ; but it was well sustained, and correct, and sure ; if our poor people only followed it in their heads and in their hearts, well, it must have left sweet and soothing, and penetential feelings there.

Good Friday :—

It falls cold, and chill, and mournful upon us all : yesterday was so bright and joyous we forgot we were in Lent. And the altar was so beautiful, with its red candles (are not candle flames always red in daylight ?) and huge masses of flowers—spring flowers, narcissi, and tulips, and hyacinths, and the lily of the valley—all throwing out the incense of their humble hearts before the feet of the hidden Creator. And, all day long, our Children of Mary,

in their blue cloaks, divided the hours among them, so that there never was a fear that our dear Lord should be left even for a moment alone. But there was no danger of that; for all day long, the people thronged and dwelt in the little church, until very late at night, when, with a kind of pang, as of a parting with a beloved one, the candles were extinguished, and the doors closed, and God left alone with His angels! But this morning, there was a flash of lights for a moment again, which was instantly darkened after the procession of the Blessed Sacrament; and the deep gloom of black drapery, hushed bells, mourning vestments, and the solemn figure on the cross, fell on our hearts and senses.

Holy Saturday :—

We had Tenebræ again last evening; and, of course, a Passion Sermon. In one sense, the Passion Sermon is the greatest oratorical event of the year in Ireland. Men go to hear the Passion Sermon who won't go to Mass. Protestants attend. The priest is chosen for the office as far back as Ash Wednesday; and if he is young, and has not yet learned that the breath of popular applause, called fame, is a very futile and fugitive thing, he is naturally nervous and apprehensive. The lines of the sermon, too, are strictly limited. It must extend to an hour at least. Anything short of that is a disappointment. And it must follow, detail after detail, the Gospel narrative. Any departure from that is viewed with great displeasure by the people, and is gravely censured by the older priests.

" 'Twas a good sermon enough ; but it was not a Passion Sermon," is the verdict.

If the young priest has physical endurance to carry him over two hours, he is immortalized. Every one feels that real justice has been done to that sacred and ineffable theme. And, dear me ! how it touches their Catholic hearts ! And how they crowd around that pulpit. Here, just behind me, two or three are leaning over the altar rails ; beneath, the children have poked in their heads to get a better view of the " strange priest." The women, with hooded heads, are rocking themselves to and fro, under the magic of the eloquence ; now and again, some young girl covertly takes out her handkerchief, and, wiping her eyes hastily, tries to look impassive and unconcerned. Ah, me ! 'tis no use. That story of infinite suffering, infinite patience, and infinite love, will continue to touch the human heart until the dread time comes when the selfishness of modern life shall dry up all the springs of human affection, and the divinest examples of self-surrender and abnegation cease to touch the films of eyes that stare blindly and unknowingly at them.

Ah, well ! the sermon is over, the Tenebræ concluded ; the little children have gone home in the dark, clinging to their mothers, and wondering, wondering in their own minds at the mighty preacher. And Holy Saturday has dawned—the brightest day in the year in my reckoning. For, after all, Easter Sunday is but a second and revised edition of Holy Saturday. Surely, all the joy and exultation of the Resurrection has spent itself, when, after the blessing

of the font and the Paschal fire (always reminiscent of St. Patrick and Tara), and the mighty candle, and the prophecies and litanies, we flung off our plain albs and purple vestments, and tore away the violet veils from the statues, and the organ pealed out at the Gloria, and the great bell rang, and the acolytes, on tiptoe of expectation, pealed out a salvo of bells at the word! And then that glorious *Regina Cœli*, by Lambilotte, is it not? I don't know, and I don't care; nor do I know or care whether it is strictly classical, or Cecilian, or what not. I leave all that to the dreadful people who laugh and cry by rule. All I know is this—that that splendid accompaniment seems to my uncultivated senses to harmonize with all the Rubrical requirements of this great morning. It would not be out of place as the orchestral rendering and resurrection-song of the great final day. Then Magnificat, short Vespers; and Holy Week is over! There is one drawback. The Lenten fast should close on Good Friday night at twelve o'clock. It is not congruous that after the mighty exultation of the Holy Saturday ceremonies we should have to sit down to a Lenten breakfast.

Easter Sunday :—

Well, I repent of and retract what I said above. Easter Sunday is not a replica or second edition of anything else on earth. It stands alone. This morning the children got up early to see the sun dancing; for in Ireland the sun dances with joy on the Resurrection-morning. And all the neighbours, thronging to Mass, are joyful; and "A

happy Aisther!" is going all round. We had an immense Communion; and at High Mass an immense congregation.

"'Twas aiqual to any two Masses I ever heard before," says a farmer from a neighbouring parish, who saw High Mass for the first time. And the *Victimae Paschali* was lovely; and again, my heart leaped at the *Regina Cœli;* and I thought I heard all Heaven tumultuously echoing that mighty pæan of triumph to their great Queen. And the boys bolted at the Alleluias of the *Ite Missa Est*, as is usual all the world over. But they made up for it. For here, under my window, all the week, they are shouting Alleluia! whenever they peg a top or hit a marble; and all Nature is singing Alleluia! for it is springtime, and the green buds are hanging on the trees, just ready to burst forth; and the incense that hangs around the garments of the virgin season is afloat in the air; and the river, there under the bridge is murmuring Alleluia! and the red-beaked blackbirds and the speckled thrushes are shouting Alleluia! And the noisy larks are filling the heavens with Alleluia! and, oh, dear me, all Ireland would ring with Alleluia! from sea to sea, and from cliff to cliff; but, alas! it is as yet only a feeble prelude, for her resurrection-day has not dawned; and no one has yet arisen to answer the mournful question:—

"Who will roll back for us the stone at the Mouth of the Sepulchre? For it is very great."