



THE COLLECTED
WRITINGS OF
WILLIAM
ROONEY

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Published by An Chartlann



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

These are the collected writings and lectures of the Irish-Ireland nationalist William Rooney, published in the *Shan Van Vocht* and *United Irishman* newspapers from 1898 to 1901.

Rooney was a key figure of the fledging nationalist movement at that time, often working in conjunction with his close friend Arthur Griffith, forming together the Celtic Literary Society, the Cumann na nGaedheal (Society of Gaels), as well as the United Irishman newspaper.

A cultural nationalist, Rooney was one of the first of that era to assert the necessity for the cultural independence of Ireland, the reversal of the anglicization of the country and the restoration of the Irish language and of Gaelic customs in order to have a truly Irish nation.

His works were highly influential for years afterwards, even following his untimely death in 1901 at the young age of 27. Michael Collins, in the *Path To Freedom*, wrote of Rooney:

“Rooney spoke as a prophet. He prepared the way and foresaw the victory, and he helped his nation to rise, and, by developing its soul, to get ready for victory.”

Rooney's works however have largely been forgotten, and it is our hope in compiling some of his work that his legacy can be preserved.

AN CHARTLANN.

PREFACE.

From The United Irishman, May 11, 1901.

‘Ír gairíde an báir,
Ír bairéann ré cioríde le n-a éiríde.’

Ír toubionac an rgeul é cailleadmuinte Uilliam Ua Maol Ruadh. Ír cuir mór bróin iní an tír a báir antracmúil i laeíde a óige. Uilliam an cioríde móir—cia tiorca leir a áit a tógáil in a tóidí iní an tiorc éiríde agus nuair beirdear a corb boct rínte ríor iní an bfair-éiríde cia rídear iní an mbeirde ríor-éiríde ríor-óiríde ‘a nbeiríde rírean gan clonad do’n leiríde ná do’n tairíde eile? Cia leir an tóir náir coidil ariam áit as fairídeáil i h-asáid cleiríde an náir? Nuair beirdear an ríiríde ari ríiríde agus nuair do’ eiríde an tSairíde ariíde i n-aí meiríde cia ‘mbeir leir an tóir mairídeáit do’ éiríde ‘ra tioríde an ríiríde ríiríde, agus cia leir an éiríde ríirídeáit a éirídeáit éiríde-ríiríde an t-áiríde gáiríde agus cia leir an gáiríde a b’uiríde dá ríiríde, agus cia ‘mbeir leir ríiríde an éiríde ariíde leir an ríiríde béríde do buiríde ríiríde agus do éirídeáit. Com ríiríde ír bí ríiríde n-aí meiríde ír ríiríde buiríde leir tóiríde a éirídeáit ariíde ná tíre gur anoir mairíde beiríde tairíde éiríde mairídeáit ó éirídeáit ríiríde an cáir dá ríiríde do mairídeáit ríiríde éiríde-éirídeáit guríde-cailleadmuinte a báir éirídeáit. Duiríde é an béríde cioríde ná nbeiríde ariíde agus ír íomíde íde a mairíde i n-oiríde.

WILLIAM ROONEY

“FEAR NA MUINTIRE,”

“HI FLACHRA,”

“CRIADHAIRE,”

“SLIABH RUADH,”

“GLEANN AN SMOIL,”

“SHEL MARTIN,”

“KNOCKSEDAN,”

“KILLESTER,”

“FELTRIM,”
“BALLINASCORNEY,”
Of “The United Irishman.”

Born October, 1873; Died May 6, 1905.

GOD SAVE IRELAND!

The Davis of the National revival is dead – dead in the spring of life – a martyr to his passionate love of our unhappy country. Ireland has lost the son she could least have spared, and we have lost our leader, our comrade, and our life-long friend. Like the name of Thomas Davis, the name of William Rooney was no household word in Ireland; but the movements which have revived a nation sinking into death sprang from his patriotism, were nursed by his genius, and carried to success by his energy, industry, and fiery enthusiasm. The Irish language is today a living force, and to William Rooney let the greater praise belong; the nation rescued from the demoralisation of fetid Cockneyism owes its rescue to the ceaseless toil of William Rooney. He saved his country’s soul from damnation at the price of his life. Ten years of brain-wearying work for Ireland – of writing, and preaching, and teaching, and performance, brought him to the bed of death, and on Monday morning the great soul which the worn body could not imprison went forth to find its place with those who have suffered and died for man since the beginning. His dying thought was of Ireland; his last words sweet with love for the land he died to save.

It seemed impossible to us that he could die – he the embodiment of Irish Nationality. Though the doctors declared he could not live, that the strain of his superhuman labours would have killed a giant, his friends could not and would not believe that William Rooney was doomed. A few days ago, as we sat by his bedside, with a wistful smile he told us, quoting from a poem of Denis Florence McCarthy’s, that he was weary waiting for the May. And the May brought him death, as he knew it would, although we had hoped and prayed it might bring him health. It is difficult for his comrades to realise even now that he

is dead – that the sun, as one said when Davis died, has gone out. And it is impossible for them to think or write coldly in the presence of the re-enactment of the calamity that befell Ireland in the September of fifty-seven years ago.

He is dead at twenty-seven. Let Young Ireland work that the great movement of which he was the inspiration may not crumble and pass as the movement born of Davis crumbled and passed – Irish history has a sad tendency to repeat itself. To make Ireland free, a sovereign, self-reliant nation was the ambition of his life. He stored his mind with her language, her literature, her history – he studied her economic resources, her military resources, her natural features to that end. He wrote and worked to that end; he tramped her valleys and climbed her mountains to that end; he stayed with the peasant in his sheiling and learned from him the old folk-stories and folk-songs which are now becoming known to us, so long Uitlanders amongst our own people. And though he loved Ireland's language and music and literature and song and legends, and Ireland's rivers and valleys and hills for their own sake, yet he laboured to utilise all that appeals to the Irish heart and imagination to fire the sluggish and indifferent with the same burning desire that filled him to hasten the day when the last vestige of foreign rule would be swept from our island.

It is our grief that he did not see before death came the rending of the chain. But to young Irishmen – aye, and to old Irishmen – we say, Him you must model yourselves on if you would be as Irishmen perfect. An Ireland trodden by men as unselfish and enthusiastic could not remain the footstool of a foreigner. Few may possess his genius – few his wonderful power of assimilation and his marvellous energy, but all can strive to emulate his work. We have written of his qualities as an Irishman, but as a man he was worthy of the imitation of all. Young, gifted, and witty, he was absolutely untainted by any of the vices or failings common to young men. No more generous, no nobler, no truer comrade man could find. In him there was no affectation, no assumption of superiority, no cant, no vanity – others often claimed the credit for the work he had performed; he cared nothing, and when

betimes a friend waxed indignant, he would laughingly say, "What matters it who gains the credit if the good work be done?" A poet, a musician, an historian, a litterateur, a linguist, an archaeologist, he used all his talents for Ireland, and never received or would accept a penny for his services. No sordid motive ever inspired or could have appealed to his peerless soul. And to those who excuse their indifference or apathy to their country's cause on the plea that fate compels them to toil hard by day, let us say that William Rooney, the man whose untiring work brought back our country's soul, worked in uncongenial surroundings ten hours each day to earn the bread he ate while resuscitating the nation.

And surely the cause that inspired a soul so noble and so great as William Rooney's is a cause that in itself must be of the greatest and noblest.

OUR PEASANT POETRY.

From The Shan Van Vocht, 5th September, 1898.

In these days of “decadence” and “art for art’s sake,” it may not be fashionable to hint that anything really worth study has come from the peasantry of any country. Paris, the first to lead the fashion in millinery, has latterly subdued literature and controls the study and the editorial chair as completely as she does the boudoir. Style and elegance in art or literature are to be admired, but they are not things to which everything is to be subordinated. The polish and glitter of the schools may perfect the artist, but equally in our days as in those of Horace, Nature makes the poet. A little examination will go far to show that the men who hold to-day as poets were influenced by no school, but in most instances depended on their own genius and judgment. That they took the wiser course let the recognised geni of all nations attest.

This is not exactly the place to discuss very minutely the judgment of those who seek to graft French styles on the original Irish stock. This paper does not profess to go very deeply into the matter, but merely to point out a few men who owe none of their power to either school or system, who have obeyed the voice within, and written from the heart. Some few of them have come to fame, others obtain a popularity here and there, more are never heard of. It is a notorious fact that even yet, after the “National” school system has been half a century working, that almost every townland has its local rhymester, who chronicles the goings and comings of the neighbourhood, in perhaps slipshod, but not unmusical verse. We do not seek to argue that their writings are worthy of serious attention; but they do a service in so far as they centralise attention on local affairs, and are in such wise a check in some degree on the Anglomania which unhappily has crept into even the most remote parts of our country. It is little to their discredit if their work is merely assonantal, if it scorns all the rules of English syntax, and all the conventionalities of prosody. It keeps alive interest in matters Irish, and as it thus serves a purpose

deserves consideration. It is to men of this class that we owe the preservation of our old airs, for long before Bunting had collected or Moore immortalised them, and often since, these men wedded their words to melodies which win the hearts of all who hear them. To these men we owe also the preservation of the legends, traditions, and local history of almost every parish in Ireland. To them likewise is due all the knowledge of the past that exists in country places. One meets occasionally in out of the way corners men who never knew the pleasures of reading, to whose fingers a pen would, perhaps, be the clumsiest of possible implements; yet they are often the repositories of a priceless store of songs and story committed to memory line by line from the rude rhymings of these village bards. How much more preferable it is to listen to one of those simple rural songs than to any of the imported abominations of the nearest large town we shall not pause to say. Whatever their imperfections, they are in a sense true to their surroundings, and possess all the flavour of the mountains and the moors of Ireland.

Yet it is not of them so much as of those men of real ability who have imitated them that we would deal, and a few names will best convey our idea. There is a poem familiar to us all, "Caoch O'Leary," which we owe to this school, the simple earnestness and homely truth of which no one will be found to deny. It is rough and uncouth, yet it conveys a perfect picture, and one that must affect the reader, and favourably, to the class of which it is a type.

It is a more natural piece than the "decadents" all combined have accomplished, not viewed artificially, but naturally, from the heart, the only true test of real poetry. Its author, John Keegan, has left but little after him, but every piece is true to its subject. "The Blind Girl at the Holy Well," "The Holiday Dance," "The Irish Harvest Hymn," "The Holly and Joy Girl," and "The Connaughtwoman's Lament" are brimful of the feeling, whether reverent, fierce or sad, which, like that "harp" spoken of by Boucicault, "rests in the bosom of every Irishman." John Banim, whose novels of Irish life are amongst our most treasured possessions, is also a poet of this company. His "Soggarth Aroon,"

“The Reconciliation,” “Mo Bhouchailin Buidhe,” “Aileen,” “Irish Mary,” and others are veritable transcripts of Irish thought and passion. Griffin, too, in his best work, has aimed at catching the idiom, and crystalising the thought of the peasant in his verse, and his “Wake of the Absent,” “Gille Machree,” “Siubhail a Gradh,” and kindred songs are far better than his efforts in more classic styles. Davis occasionally tried the same key, but save in a few notable instances like “Oh! The Marriage,” “Maire Ban a Stoir,” “The Girl of Dunbuidhe,” and “The Welcome,” not with notable success. James MacKeown, the author of “The Ould Irish Jig,” and John Walsh, of Cappoquin, were greater masters of this particular vein, but perhaps the best peasant poet we possess is Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, whose two great poems, “Shemus O’Brien” and “Phadrig Crohoore,” are instances of how much may be made of the realities of Irish peasant life by anyone who brings to it beside the all-necessary gift, a kindly sympathy with and honest desire to faithfully depict the people. Kickham, in his “Rory of the Hills,” touches the very highest level in this class; a few pieces of Mary Kate Murphy, and almost every line of Ellen O’Leary’s, are instinct with the life that knows not yet the benefit of British civilisation.

In our times, spite of prevailing influences, a little that is very good has been accomplished. Mrs. Tynan-Hinkson, in her “Shameen Dhu,” showed a leaning in its direction. Frank Fahy’s “American Wake,” “The Donovans,” “The Ould Plaid Shawl,” and many other equally racy piece; P. J. McCall’s “Going To The Fair,” “The Little Heathy Hill,” “The House in the Corner,” “Threshing the Barley,” and countless others, are unmistakably the heart of the country. But beyond and above all in this style (always excepting Le Fanu) stands Miss Jane Barlow, whose poem, “The Ould Masther,” is a marvel of faithful word-painting, and brings home at once to the reader a sense of the world of varied characteristics that lies virgin in the everyday life of Ireland, waiting some wizard hand to wake it into life and being.

We do not mean to assert that all the possibilities of Irish Literature (in English) should be forced to run in this channel, but dare to claim that nothing true to Irish life as it exists, to Irish thought

as it is, to Irish sentiment and passion, as we meet them, can find an adequate or even general expression in the carefully turned periods of London Bohemianism, influenced by Parisian fads. Perfection can be reached and fidelity attained without seeking to imitate the style of the Boulevards. Art in its truest guise should not attempt to ornament, or disguise, it should imitate Nature, else it is not natural; it has nothing to appeal to what is common to natural man. Some there will always be found, of course, so hyper-superior as to scorn everything that is palpable. To them the Nature note may be abhorrent, but to the ordinary individual the note which takes its tone from the things around will be always acceptable, since it tells of something we have felt, something we can understand, something of that touch of Nature which makes all men brothers.

THE GENESIS OF ANGLICISATION.

From The United Irishman, July 15, 1899.

There can be no question that the movement making for the perpetuation of ideas Irish has grown and widened considerably since the fall of parliamentarianism by the death of Parnell. The Irish language movement, the Feis Ceoil, the literary revival, and a few kindred propagandas have to a great extent stopped the dryrot which, commencing with the partial subsistence of Fenianism, had all but entirely emasculated the nation by the Union of Hearts. Today we welcome most heartily the increasing signs which tell of a return, in the country districts, to the manners, ideals, and opinions which have resisted seven hundred years of the sword, famine, and corruption. But while the people to a degree have awakened, there are at work agencies and influences more insidious than any of those which in other days threatened the National existence.

Obviously, the most dangerous things are those which work under a popular guise; and of these the most general is the concert, organised for charitable or other purposes from time to time in every town in Ireland. Now, notwithstanding all effort, the lamentable fact is that our amateur singers invariably affect the namby-pamby nonsense of the pseudo-Italian school and its English imitators. Nothing is too extravagant, inane, or unmeaning so long as it has received the patronage of London and has become fashionable. We do not expect that Ireland, any more than other nations, should refuse to accept and applaud anything of worth that has been produced by other peoples; what we complain of is, that while we all but entirely neglect our own productions, we encourage foreign ones simply and solely because they are foreign. The fad to be in the fashion dominates all circles. The reverend president of a bazaar eagerly solicits the aid of "talented lady and gentlemen amateur singers," and passively submits to the latest skirt dance of the last new song from some "Geisha" or "Gay Parisienne." We have heard in this city of Dublin young girls singing sentiments which, if they were avowed by them in ordinary

conversation, would render them liable to be considered rather worse than they should be, and yet the items were applauded, solely because the audience was too absolutely heedless of what they were doing to give the matter the slightest thought. We have seen young men make fools of themselves under similar circumstances, and pride themselves on being laughed at. At these bazaars men and women go about in the most outlandish costumes, decorations hired from anywhere outside of Ireland, all the latest effects of phonograph, cinematograph, and kinoscope are gathered together under some hitherto unheard of title, and the entire olla podrida foisted on the Irish public. Then, amid a mighty clamour, his Excellency drives down to give a tone to the affair and endeavour to draw the patronage of the moneyed classes. A military band, or failing that, the R.I.C, or the Dublin Police discourses loyal music, and the fete goes merrily forward. The Press gives an enthusiastic trumpeting to the affair, everyone interested congratulates everyone else on the "great success," and never a thought is given to the effect which all the mirroring of Anglicism, all the soulless, senseless song and crash and glitter must have on the young. Possibly the promoters and controllers of these affairs consider themselves Irish. Doubtless they are, after a fashion; but only so because they are not English or Dutch or American, God help them! The fault is not theirs. Go into their homes and think to yourself what a foreigner would say, listening to the songs, looking over the books, the papers, and the music, and noting the general air of their places. Then, if you can, think out what the Ireland of the future will be if this state of things is allowed to continue.

It is not necessary here to trace this Anglicisation to its beginning. Without any doubt, from the first day that Irish ceased to be the general tongue of Ireland, the corroding influence has been at work. We have only to look around us in any direction to see how woefully prevalent it is. Take any social organisation that is started, cycling, boating, or amusement club, and see the name which its devotees confer upon it. Foreign almost invariably. Our young commercial men, the clerical staff of our towns, are too utterly respectable to join

such a “low crowd” as those who form the ranks of a Gaelic football club. Hurling is altogether beneath them; but Rugby football or hockey are quite in their line. Hockey is their especial favourite, for their young lady friends can join them in the game, and there is no fear of their practises being disturbed by tradesmen fellows and rough customers for whom Sunday is the only free day. With the relative merits of any of those games we have here no concern, for of them, as of the songs, the worth of worthlessness is a very minor factor. The chief reason of their being affected by anybody in Ireland is purely and solely because they have been introduced from the other side. Golf is the latest addition to the weapons of Anglicisation, and is being taken up by that brainless and backboneless section who would follow a superior in anything, if promotion were possible by it. We all know how golf got a foothold in Ireland, and we can guess the circle whom it first entranced. Latterly the votaries of “fashion” have taken to it, and all the snobbishness and slavishness of clerical Dublin have followed in their wake. It is hardly worth noticing, save as a straw which tells the direction of the wind, for it will die a natural death, when some billiard-playing Chief Secretary or Viceregal cricketing enthusiast comes along, but it shows how utterly demoralised the “respectable” and self-styled educated classes of our towns are.

In a recent number of the *Irish Rosary* an Irish-American admitted his disgust to see the little boys and girls of the cities wearing hats bearing the names of her Britannic Majesty’s battleships, and strutting about attired as British bluejackets. The cause of it is not far to seek; the women of Ireland have not realised the necessity there exists for their being National. Shut off, as they have been from active participation, and oftentimes interest in the struggle, they have not considered how much of its success depended upon them. How can we expect the boys and girls, who are to be the men and women of the future, to be anything but lumps of clay if their parents, and especially their mothers, know nothing, and care less, of their country? The age of miracles has passed, and the National spirit of the country must eventually wither and die if the memory and traditions of the past,

which were to it as rain and sunshine to the shooting plant, do not survive to nurture it.

Take another phase. Of the numbers who annually take a week or so's holiday, how many bother about spending them in Ireland? Few, very few, for, of course, one wants a little "life" during holidays, and Ireland is so dull and tame that it is not to be thought of, so we are perforce compelled to resort to Blackpool or Morecambe, or some other of the English rallying places congregate. There, amid the shriek of the steam whistle, and a babel of all the dialects of Britain, we pass whatever time we have, losing our National identity in the horde of foreigners, seeing little, learning less, or learning only what makes us worse men and women than we were. We masquerade in an atmosphere of manufactured attractions, in a realm of tinsel and trumpery, leaving unvisited and unknown in our own lands the natural beauties that alone can elevate and ennoble human character. We do this simply because some one else of our friends and neighbours has done it. Because it is "class" to be able to boast an acquaintance with the charms of the British seaside; because this is "an age of progress, and one must go with the times." We do it for the same reason that our fathers forsook the Irish language, because there are slaves all around us, and we have not sufficient manhood to emancipate ourselves from the thrall of custom and fashion.

What is the germ of it all? The criminal carelessness of every class in Ireland to the real interests of the nation. The National school, the intermediate school, the convent school, all our amusements, almost everything we read and the places we visit, all these constitute a series of influences daily drawing us further and further from the ideals that constitute and perpetuate a separate and distinct Nationality. It may not at first sight seem inconsistent for a professing Irish Nationalist, on being asked to sing, to immediately troll forth the latest London favourite. It might be construed rudeness not allow a young lady to oblige the company with something similar, though she professed an utter ignorance of Moore and all our other poets. It is no discredit, some may think, for the holiday seeker, who knows every stone in the

streets of some mushroom British hamlet, to admit he has never heard of Gleann an Smoil or Carlingford. That such anomalies are not only possible, but permissible, is a sad comment on the reality of our vaunted National spirit. Fancy a Frenchman boasting his knowledge of Spain or Germany, and knowing nothing of his own country; or a German parading his mastery of Italian music while turning his back on the *lied* of his own land! The fact is we have been too accommodating in our opinions and ideas, and we have allowed our sense of National self-respect to become so dulled as to be all but entirely destroyed. The revulsion which the last few years have seen is but a sign that the disorder is not absolutely incurable, but thorough recovery lies with the people, and the whole people. Unless the bulk of the people is moved, the foresight and efforts of a few enthusiasts cannot suffice. The issue is a very plain one. Do the Irish people desire an Irish Nation or a British colony, a people true to the past or one ignorant of it and indifferent to the future? Their acts belie their words. Let us be consistent; and the few who do really desire a nation can count their forces and take measures accordingly.

THE FACTORS FOR REGENERATION.

From The United Irishman, July 29, 1899.

It may be taken as granted that all who give any thought whatever to the condition of the country recognise and deplore the state to which the combined effects of so-called Catholic Emancipation, National Schools, and the policy of compromise have brought us. That it is recognised is something, for it means that so far as the few are concerned who have foresight, a change will take place. But the recognition is not enough – measures must be taken sharp and speedy to arrest the decay which threatens everything in Ireland. The success which has met the movement for the resuscitation of our native language is full of hope for other matters, for it proves that the people only need to be awakened to take steps to protect whatever through indifference they have jeopardised. There can be no question the work before those who undertake the directing of the nation on the right road is stupendous. It means that the lackadaisical spirit of two generations the influence of British opinion in school, press, platform, and everyday life, the exigencies of existence, personal comfort, in many cases, and the innate lack of energy, in almost all, have got to be met, combatted, and conquered. It may even yet be heresy to many to declare that we are today without a National Press, party, or policy; that our lives are absolutely objectless, and that we are leading a merely vegetable existence, watching the sun's rise and sink, and drifting every day nearer to seed; to seed that cannot duplicate its stock for all that gave it life and individual existence is being sapped and drained from it.

It will sound somewhat strange, possibly, to assert that the spirit which kept a perpetual fight in existence for seven centuries is likely to wither and disappear. We need not look far for an example of its truth. Anyone who has experience of our people in England and Scotland can say how absolutely disheartening it is to find the second generation of Irishmen and women without a single thought, nay,

without the slightest idea or the smallest sympathy, for the land of their fathers. Boys and girls with Irish names – names that carry even the O or Mac – join the Britisher in reviling the latest revival from Ireland – ridiculing his accents, sneering at his manner, casting contumely on everything he possesses. Let me not be taken as in any sense implying that this is the invariable fact, but it is undoubtedly and unfortunately true of many great towns and cities throughout Britain, whether the necessities of his situation drove the poor, unlettered, and simple-minded Celt after the famine. His sons, in most cases, were in the Fenian ranks; but their sons and daughters, reared in a different atmosphere, have imbibed the spirit of their surroundings, and become – not as English as the English – but more dull, plodding, mindless beings, without a thought beyond their personal needs, and without the spirit to resent, or the knowledge to know, that an insult to their nation is an insult to themselves. To this they have been brought principally by the loss of their language, but to a material degree also by the absence of those influences in the home which impress the mind of childhood and waken its budding ideas to thought and interest. Fenianism has undoubtedly preserved many thousands still to Ireland, among our countrymen abroad, but there are circles which its influence never reached, and there, alas! Are lost, possibly beyond redemption.

Towards the same state we are drifting, slower, it is true, but not a whit less certain. It is idle to repine. The present is the time potent to undo what has been done. We may not control either today or tomorrow, but we can, at least, endeavour to make them better than yesterday – or else there will most certainly dawn for Ireland a day that can have no tomorrow. How, then, must we work? Our resources, whether of men or means, are limited. We have been taught to look abroad for the power of regeneration; we have been accustomed to regard Acts of Parliament as the initial steps towards any change. We have been trained to believe that nothing of good to the nation, nothing of permanent effect, can come from the people themselves. We have, in a word, been taught to rely upon the goodwill and

conscientious scruples of the foreigner rather than upon our own right arms and our own resolve. When we have knocked the bottom out of all these absurdities, when we have begun to think out matters for ourselves, we shall have begun to check the canker which has been gnawing at the heart of the nation, ever since the eyes of our people were first turned towards the British Parliament.

How, I ask again, are we to proceed? We must begin in our homes; we must make them National, we must make them native; we must create a spirit which, ridding itself of the fashions supplied by penny British periodicals, strikes out for itself, and in its every characteristic proves to the foreigner at once that he is in a land entirely distinct and apart from others in tastes and ideas. Our songs must be Irish, our books must be Irish in subject and sympathy, our furniture, as far as it is possible, must be made in the country; everything we use, wherever obtainable, must be Irish. This would be a change radical and revolutionary, without doubt; but will anyone deny its necessity? We may be told such conduct is behind the times, narrow, bigoted, and confined. But let us ask the superior person who affects such broad conceptions of the duty of the hour, whether he thinks the Frenchman would place Frederick the Great or Bismarck over his mantel-piece, or whether Goethe or Schiller would be found on the shelves that had no place for Beranger or Victor Hugo? Does anyone imagine that the Italian or the Austrian moulds his habits or his views by those of his foreigner neighbour? Does even the Belgian, the Swiss, or the Hollander do so? And if they do not, why should we? No one accuse them of narrow-mindedness, of littleness of purpose, of poverty of ambition, because they mould all their daily lives by standards of their own. Let us do likewise, and leave to the man who has lost hope, the man who has no confidence in himself, the man who talks of "the gallant but foolish struggles of the past," the contemplation of the grandeur and the glory of the citizenship of the British Empire.

But making our homes what they ought to be will not be quite sufficient. We must work a change in the system of instruction which keeps every child in Ireland ignorant of an elementary knowledge of

his own country. This cannot be done in a day, or a year, but a little headway may always be made. The Acts of a British Parliament compel the children to attend the National schools; it remains to be seen whether the unanimous wish of the people cannot have some influence towards making the instruction reproductive to the country. The Board of Education is just as amenable to agitation as any other institution, and ought not to be less secure from it. Let the people express their desire of reform and the struggle will be comparatively easy, but till they do so we must, what few of us perceive the evident failings of the system, endeavour, as far as we may, to direct public attention on them, and never cease attacking them until they are remedied. We cannot, under British rule, ever except a National system of education; but we may, possibly, utilise what does exist much better than we do – that is to say, we can use the schools as they stand, and bring about such reforms as shall at least secure that the children will not be drilled into believing that Ireland is “sometimes called West Britain,” and that “nothing is definitely known of it for several centuries after the Christian era.” [Sullivan’s “Geography Generalised.”]

Towards this end, the reform of the primary school system, the greatest aid would be a National Press. That we do not possess, nor are we likely to possess it for some time. One cannot reasonably expect much from the British Institute of Journalists, no more than from any other British institution, and we shall therefore have to wait for a National Press and National pressmen. The commercialism and money-grubbing spirit of our times has garnered to its views most journalists in Ireland, and the men to reform the system of education must be men who will not barter their minds and principles for money. Consequently, for the present, we must rely on whatever organisations exist amongst the people. We must look to the national clubs and assemblies throughout the land to inform and direct public opinion on this matter, and when the spirit of the people has been aroused to the full dangers of the situation, the Press, or rather the journalists who always fight with the big battalions, will know

sufficiently well upon which side their bread is buttered to need no directing. Nothing makes a Press so humble and useful as the knowledge that people can afford to dispense with it. The people must make up their minds to force the Press to voice their opinions, and not to pervert them.

Recently in these columns the potency and necessity of native manufactures have been advocated. I merely mention the matter here to point out how great a factor it must be for building up the Nation. It is, possibly, one of the few matters upon which we are all of a mind, but on it, as on most of the rest, the public sadly needs to be informed. We must endeavour to bring before the people every article and fabric made inside our four shores; we must try to make the shopkeepers take an interest in stocking Irish goods. We must make what influence we can command an agency in pushing the sale and use of these manufactures. We must train ourselves to judge between them and similar articles produced elsewhere, and thus, though our knowledge may not be technical, gradually eradicate whatever inferiorities the native articles may possess.

IS THERE AN ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE?

From The United Irishman, August 26, 1899.

One of the features of the present Irish language movement is its aggressiveness, or, perhaps, it is less a feature of the movement than of some of those in it. To some extent it is a laudable and commendable thing, but, like many other things, it can lead people too far. Its latest phase is an assertion that all the literature of '48 and '67, and everything produced since, instead of being, as we all fondly and foolishly imagined, "native and national," is merely English, and not in any sense National, least of all Irish. From the superior height of an acquaintance with Father O'Growney's primers, the enlightened owners look down on the mass of their benighted countrymen, and patronisingly pity the unfortunates who see anything worthy of imitation in the prose or poetry of Young Ireland or the Fenian Days.

With the idea that the truest and best Irish literature must seek expression in the Irish language there will be found but few to differ; on the sentiment that anything else is unnecessary and un-national there will not be quite the same unanimity. Whether Finland, or Poland, or Bohemia, or anywhere else, have or have not National literatures, except in their own language, is not the question, when the relative difference of Ireland these countries is considered. No person seeks to claim that our English-writing dramatists and poets of the last century were Irish in their work, for they did not go to Irish sources for their inspiration; but the same thing does not apply to any man who voiced the life and the sentiments of our people, even though he did use the foreign tongue. A characteristic vehicle of expression is an essential of a National literature; but there are such things as sentiment and thought to be considered, and the man who asserts that they have nothing to do in determining the nationality of a literature either wilfully misstates or wholly misunderstands the case. I have no desire to become the apologist for Young Ireland; but since the

founders of the *Nation* have been blamed for creating a new literature instead of continuing the old, it is just as well to point out that when the *Nation* was started the short-sighted policy of certain of the Catholic Bishops had brought the Gaelic-reading population to an almost-irreducible minimum. The creation of the National Schools had all but wiped out the hedge schoolmaster, and the policy of O'Connell had reduced the National spirit down to the most harmless and old-womanish of spirits. There was some hope of getting at the people through the medium of the men who could read English; there was none by any other, for neither books nor teachers were available, and a cure for the growing canker was imperative. That the remedy was effective the present Gaelic language movement testifies, for if the soul of the land had been depending merely on academic programmes or antiquated idealists Irish Nationality as a positive force would long since have disappeared.

Is the motto of Young Ireland true? Did "a new soul come into Erin" at the call of Davis, and if there did is that an un-national or an un-Irish process by which the work was wrought? Was it a new soul that drove the slavish toasting of her Britannic Majesty from our public dinners and substituted a spirit of honest belief in the powers of the people? Was it a new soul that shivered the hoary fraud of "the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland," and raised instead the Ideal of an Irish Nation, self-dependent and self-defending? Was it a new soul that brought life back to Ireland when famine and the fever-ship had taken from her two millions of people and the weak-kneed had left her "like a corpse on a dissecting-table"? If it be the mission of a National literature to preserve and perpetuate high and lofty ideals, then assuredly the writings of '48, by whatever name they may be called, have fulfilled their mission, and deserve all of the people for whom they were designed. The men who have preserved a political ideal for the people, who have kept before their eyes the separate and individual entity of an Irish Nation, have guarded the plain and prepared the way for those who in our day are setting the seeds, or, rather, resetting the seeds, that O'Connell tried to scatter to the winds of Heaven.

But there are other reasons why this work of our writers in English should not be condemned on the summing up of people manifestly full of the proselyte's fresh-born zeal. It must be remembered that most of the literature at all claiming to be representative of Ireland is the creation of this present century, and consequently depicting an existence wholly foreign to any Gaelic writer, but yet part of the life of Ireland. Now, a literature to be representative must have found its types amongst the people. Will anyone who knows anything about the subject deny that the "Croppy Boy" is not a perfectly faithful picture of an incident of Wexford life in '98? Will anyone say that "Coach O'Leary" is not a true, a homely, and a touching sketch of Leinster life in the early forties? Will anyone have the hardihood to attribute falseness to any single character in "Knocknagow"? And if these are not false, how are we to reconcile the fact with the assertion which would have them considered un-native and un-Irish? Let us consider a moment what they represent. They depict an abnormal state of existence – a people using a tongue not their own and still retaining all the other characteristics which go to make up individuality. If they were drawn speaking Irish they would be false, for in two of the cases, in any event, they never knew it; consequently it would be as untrue of them as it is to make Aodh O'Donnell or Shane O'Neill talk English. It is a regrettable fact, but the fault lies neither with the painter nor the people depicted. He draws them as he found them, and if they are not Irish, then we fall to place them, for they certainly are not English in tastes, sentiments, or surroundings.

It will sound like heresy, possibly, but it is a fact, nevertheless, that the literature which is now discovered to have been a huge mistake is really the most National, in the sense that it is the most Ante-English, that we possess. The minstrelsy of Munster is sonorous and musical, eminently singable and limpid as a stream in a mountain glen; but it has not in it the swinging tramp of a people marching to freedom. The present writer has the advantage of being able to judge at first hand. He is not indebted to translations, and except MacCurtain's "A Chlanna Gaedhil Fáisgidhidh bhúr láimhe le céile," there is nothing in

the writings of any of the poets, from Seaghan O'Neachtain to Seaghan O'Coiléain, that can be dignified with the name of a National poem. Ephemeral verses reviling "Seaghan Buidhe," are only on a part with T. D. Sullivan's "Lays of the Land War," for "Seaghan Buidhe" was not England, but the Hanoverian. I am not to be taken as believing that the ideal of an Irish Nation was not abroad both before and after Limerick, but there is very little evidence of it in the minstrelsy of Munster. It is, on the contrary, the very essence of this literature so abhorrent to the Gaelic movement. It is, apparently, a foreign spirit, an English, more than likely a West British spirit, which has inspired the "Memory of the Dead," "The Rising of the Moon," and every other song and ballad that has kept alive the ideals that all but upset English authority here in '98, and today, despite all its power, are a menace and a danger to the British Empire in every quarter of the globe.

It is difficult to understand the position of these guardians of the National taste. We have, in spite of ourselves, an English-reading public in Ireland, supplied with an illimitable periodical literature wholly British in tone. The National School has kept us wholly ignorant of ourselves and our history in childhood; this vendetta of the hyper-Gaelic element would deprive us of all the writings likely to preserve in our souls the ghost of a National tradition, hope, or sentiment. Surely no one is lunatic enough to imagine that we can de-Anglicise Ireland by teaching the people to regard as non-Irish the writings of Davis, Mitchel, Mangan, and their confrères and followers? Father Hickey, one of the leaders of the present Gaelic movement, has admitted that an essay of Davis's first directed his attention to Irish. Are we to shut off all possibility of stirring others in the same fashion? Are we to ask the young men and women who have had the misfortune to have never heard Irish spoken to give up reading until they are able to satisfy themselves with the literature of Gaelic Ireland? Are we further to force those of our kith and kin who can write to go over to the service of the enemy because they are unable to give their thoughts to us in a tongue which, through no fault

of theirs, they do not know? I am not by any means to be taken as making an *ad misericordium* appeal for the creators of an Irish literature in English. They have a *raison d'être*, and the popularity that their works have won, and still find amongst the most Irish of Irishmen, is a proof of their truth to Ireland and their service to her cause.

It strikes me that the Gaelic cause will be far better advanced by encouraging the reading of this literature than by reviling it. It is primarily and principally intended to keep Ireland Irish; being so it is the most potent weapon for these parts of Ireland where Gaelic has been lost. Whatever may be said to the contrary, it is a fact that the history of Ireland, a whole host of her traditions, legends, performances, hopes, and sacrifices are enshrined in it. It has never sought, and none of those who write in it ever wish it should, supplant the older and the more truly Irish literature. Gaelic cannot be brought back into general use in Ireland by a miracle. Nothing less than a miracle could give us at once Gaelic writers and Gaelic readers, and we must read something if we are to remain reasonable beings. This Anglo-Irish literature, which certainly mirrors the life of this present Ireland that is ours, provides us with the necessary material. It is not the perfection of Irish thought, it is not claimed for it that it is, but it is a saving salt that will secure the heart of the country from complete decay. A generation, full of its ideals and working out its views, is not the one that will let any characteristic willingly depart; least of all the language. It is, as I have already said, outside the question to point to Finland or Bohemia to establish a contrast. Neither of these places had any literature until within recent times. Even then they were primitive peoples, free from all the conflicting elements which lie across the path of regeneration in Ireland. If any of those who so loudly protest against the idea of further taking to our hearts the "Spirit of the Nation," or "Knocknagow," feel that these works are too anti-English in tone, let them, by all means, raise their voices, and the Irish public will know how to value the criticism.

“THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IN EARNEST.”

From The United Irishman, September 30, 1899.

Amongst the other regrettable qualities which our Celtic ancestors have bequeathed us is a certain lack of tenacity of purpose. We work up a great deal of enthusiasm from time to time, but a few months suffices to play it out, and we drop back to the humdrum of letting things take their course, till some fresh incident occurs to stir our interest again and awaken our energy for a brief space. This statement may not seem at all justifiable in the face of the fact that seven hundred years have not sufficed to reduce the country to submission. The truth of it will seem more apparent when one reflects that our struggles have only been sufficient to irritate the enemy, and have never been prolonged enough to free ourselves.

There are some things in which we are left behind by other peoples. Military dash we are admitted to possess, talent and courage, and a great disregard of consequences may also be ours, but in dogged persistence and plodding endeavour most of us are not equal to the foreigner. How many organisations have we not seen started for every conceivable purpose, initiated with a great blare of triumphs, carried on with enthusiasm for some time, and then withering not slowly, but all at once, into nothingness, to be succeeded, within a year or two, by an exactly similar organisation fated to the same doom. There must be some reason for this phenomenon. Progress is at all times commendable, but consistency and tenacity are equally good. The creative and destructive faculties appear to be abnormally developed in most of us. The qualities which go towards the pursuit of a fixed object, the maintenance of an existing entity, somehow are sadly lacking. Judged from any standpoint, this eternal hankering after re-arrangement and amendment is disastrous. It fritters away the time, the energies, and the ambition of all the young people, whose concentrated attention to one particular means of action might make

the nation better, and whose abilities, instead of being given to some great national work, are occupied by the advancing of some, doubtless very good and well-intentioned, but none the less petty society, whose influence scarcely extends beyond the personal acquaintances of its founders. This I say, not in criticism of any attempt made to organise and direct the sentiment of a particular district, but with reference to the whole of our people, here and everywhere else, who seldom work in the same harness for six consecutive years. As I have said, there must be some reason for this peculiarity, and I think it is to be attributed, more or less, to the fact that the bulk of our people, entirely ignorant as most of them have been kept of the needs of the country, not knowing exactly what is wanted, are ready to follow any fresh cry which promises the ends they have been seeking for centuries.

We are ignorant of our past, hence we are at the mercy of every mountebank who chooses to claim for his programme the natural succession to the policies and doctrines of other days. We are ignorant of our present, consequently we are at a loss to answer the coward and the cad who justify their treason or their indifferentism by an alleged lack in the country of the means of self-support and self-protection. We are ignorant of the future, naturally, but we are also careless of it, because we take no care of the influences and resources around us to enable us to avail of its opportunities. We may possess enthusiasm and patriotism, but we are not enough in earnest for people who may have soon, and certainly some time, will have to face the ordeal which lies before all who desire independence. We have not realised that the perpetuity of Irish sentiment, the preservation of Ireland herself, depends on every man and woman of our race becoming in themselves the apostles and teachers of the Faith of Nationality.

No success can come except through organisation, but organisation means something more than numbers and mass meetings. The man or woman who sits down resolutely to do something towards enlightening the rest of the people on some point of national interest, who tries to fan into active being some decaying faculty or characteristic of the nation, who endeavours to stimulate

their neighbours to a sense of reverence and respect for the crumbling ruin in their midst, or the traditional lore of the elders of the neighbourhood, is preparing ground for true organisation. It is good to have behind one an united people; but a few who know exactly why they hold their opinions are even better. History has never been made by the millions; the few have sacrificed and did all that the world is proud of. The single seed can eventually fill the corn field, the silent, earnest thinker moves the mass.

But Ireland has need of all her thinkers, and it is, therefore, the more necessary that they be in earnest. It is necessary that they be men whom no danger shall deter and whom no cold-shouldering shall discourage; that they be men whose interest in what is right alone shall be sufficient to make them continue their labours and rise superior to all the disillusionings which unselfish effort so often has to face. They can only be so by being thoroughly in earnest, and they can be most in earnest by having the whole case of Ireland at their fingers' ends. "Paul not John," says Dr. Doyle of Leighlin, "was the Apostle of the Gentiles," and the men who desire to serve Ireland, in the sense of inducing her people to take a serious interest in her, must be no mere sentimentalists. Ireland has claims on nationhood that rest on more than a sentimental basis. Sentiment of the salt of human thought – it keeps a people fresh and pure, it preserves them for their destiny, and destroys the enervating spirit of Esauism that is born with us all, but it is not damaged in any way by having material reasons to support it. Though most people with any ambition regard themselves more or less as Solons, it would be well if, before rushing enthusiastically into national matters, we endeavoured to exactly understand the requirements of the positions we undertake to fill, and having weighed all, give our whole soul to the advancement of the cause we advocate. This does not in any sense necessitate us foregoing very much of our leisure time, but certainly does mean giving a certain, definite amount of time, and with unbroken regularity, to whatever we engage in. Every man or woman joining a national organisation should not fancy their work done with the paying of a subscription, but should do what

little they may to spread abroad its doctrines. Quite as much good may be done in a room containing half-a-dozen as in a field of a thousand, if the half-dozen are in earnest. The resources of nationality are not wholly comprised in a series of resolutions, but in *one*. If we had recognised this, we might not have so many monuments and memories around us of broken hopes and shattered promises. But it is even yet not too late. Today is ours, and tomorrow likewise, if knowing ourselves, we may.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL IDEA.

From The United Irishman, January 13, 1900.

The weekly meeting of the Celtic Literary Society was held on Friday evening last, at the rooms, 32 Lower Abbey-street. Mr. M. J. Quinn presided, and Mr. Wm. Rooney delivered the following lecture on “The Development of the National Ideal.”
He said: –

The subject upon which I have chosen to say something tonight is one of which you will say you have already heard quite enough – a subject which is so well thrashed out that nothing worth hearing remains to be said upon it. I do not claim that I shall be able to say tonight very much that is fresh upon it. I have no doubt I shall in the course of this paper bring you back to matters which you have given time and study to, but I do trust to be able to show that there is a National Ideal – and that there always has been one. Of course there are ideals of all possible forms. There is the ideal of the land reformer which masquerades as a national ideal, “Ireland for the Irish – the Land for People,” blazoned on all its banners and bellowed from all its platforms. There is the Home Rulers’ ideal – a body of men meeting under the shadow of Grattan’s statue, under the shade of the Union jack, and passing a series of harmless and equally useless bills for the better government of Ireland – a body of green-livered henchmen of the British connection, with the spoils of office for their faithful stewardship. There is the ideal of the Irish Agricultural Reformer, whose soul yearneth for a millennium of practical poets and poetical dairyboys – and there are again the academic language enthusiasts who look to the resurgence of Gaelic to dissipate all our ills. Now each one possesses elements of a National Ideal – but none of them can reasonably be allowed to be so. We can best realise the extent and limits of a national ideal by endeavouring to understand what the

citizen of any free nation would understand by the term. There are, possibly, no greater Nationalists in the world than those of Germany. They would not consider that a national policy which, though giving to them land proprietary, a subsidised agriculture, liberty to make their own laws and use their own languages still allowed a foreign State to claim their allegiance and exact their services. Frenchmen would scarcely tolerate the man who could suggest that they should be satisfied with a Legislature in Paris, subject to the veto of the Hohenzollerns. Belgium did not seek to identify the Flemish language and Flemish freedom as similar things, nor did the Greeks imagine that they enjoyed liberty while the accents of Hellas were uttered under the shadow of the Crescent. I have said that all the movements before the public are in a sense national – but as they all admit the supremacy and acknowledge the right of British law in Ireland they cannot claim to be the national ideal, which rightly interpreted ought to mean an Irish State governed by Irishmen for the benefit of the Irish people.

This subject is at once a retrospective and a prospective one, and the study of it from both sides cannot fail to be of advantage to the general good of the nation. Various reasons have been advanced from time to time to account for the Irish allowing a faith, let us not give it the hard word. English supremacy to grow from the insignificant following of Strongbow. The innate inability to unite for any purpose has been discovered by the keen observers of our history, and has become the excuse of the timid and the weak-minded.

There is a little truth in the allegation – but it is not the all-influencing factor which it has been attempted to be made by those who have based their ideas on English views of the matter. When the Normans came to this country, as we know, they found Roderick O'Connor the nominal monarch, but all the chiefs doing pretty much as they liked in their own respective districts, and as much in their own neighbour's country as his watchfulness or worthlessness permitted them. That state of chaos was due to social reasons extending back centuries – but unite immediately to the usurpation of

Brian Boroimhe. That Brian was in many respects the greatest monarch who ever sat on the throne of Ireland should not blind us to the fact that he was a usurper, pure and simple; and that his action inspired less able men to emulate him, and by dividing the forces of the nation in a great degree prepared the way for the Norman. Roderick O'Connor's only recommendation for the crown was that he was the son of *Toirdhealbhach Mór*. He might have been a good enough king for a country not called upon to face the difficulties which the rebellion of Diarmuid and the subsequent advent of the Normans entailed. He was rash without being resolute, brave without being earnest, and altogether lacking in those characteristics which win the confidence of a people. He had not the dash of Muirceartach of the Leather Cloaks, nor his own father's persistence and fixity of purpose. He appears to have been ambitious, but utterly incapable of making it a spur to secure him the reality of the title which he claimed. It is scarcely to be wondered therefore that he did not win the entire support of the nation in his effort to stifle the treason of Diarmuid. He undoubtedly assaulted the auxiliaries of Strongbow as King of Ireland, and, in the name of the Irish nation, summoned to his assistance the chiefs of the country. Had he possessed other characteristics than those he did he undoubtedly would not have gone to his grave without having by the complete route of the enemy fixed himself firmly in the hearts of his people and figured in history as scarcely less of a saviour than great Brian himself. His retirement practically left the country without any visible, not to speak of virtual head. The murder of his son, Conor Moinmoy, removed the most likely successor, for Cathal Crobh Dearg, though a man of wonderful powers, never appears to have realised, even to the limited extent of Roderick, the necessity for a movement uniting all the forces of the country against the foreigner. Cathal was decidedly the greatest enemy the English encountered in the West, and while he lived he kept his people free from the attentions of the foreigner; but his operations were local, and like all such labours, were not of that all-influencing nature which makes nations.

Several chieftains advanced their claims to the Crown during the century succeeding the advent of the Normans, but only one is of noticeable importance – and, in fact, of such importance as marks him out above all his contemporaries, that was Domhnaill O'Neill who sent the famous letter to Pope John III indicating the reasons for Irish resistance to the foreigner:

MOST HOLY FATHER – We transmit to you some exact and candid particulars concerning the state of our nation, and the wrongs we suffer, and which our ancestors suffered from the kings of England and their agents, and from the English barons born in Ireland.

After driving us by violence from our habitations, our fields, and our paternal inheritances, and compelling us, in order to save our lives, to make our abode in the mountains, marshes, woods, and caverns of the rocks, they incessantly harass us in these miserable retreats, to expel us from them and appropriate to themselves the whole extent of our country. Hence there has resulted an implacable enmity betwixt them and us, and it was a former Pope who originally placed us in this miserable condition.

We cherish in our breasts an inveterate hatred, produced by lengthened recollections of injustice, by the murder of our fathers, brothers, and kindred, and which will not be extinguished in our time, nor in that of our sons. So that as long as we have life we will fight against them, without regret or remorse, in defence of our rights.

We will not cease to fight against, and annoy them until the day when they themselves, for want of power, shall have ceased to do us harm, and the supreme Judge shall have taken just vengeance on their crimes, which we firmly hope will sooner or later come to pass.

Until then we will make war upon them unto death, to recover the independence which is our natural right, being compelled thereto by very necessity, and willing rather to face danger like brave men, than to languish under insults.

This decidedly national prince, who appears to have had a broad and just conception of the needs and rights of the nation, was followed by his son, Brian O'Neill, who at the ford of Caol Uisge on the Erne in the year 1258 was elected King of Ireland by the men of Connacht, under Feidhlim O'Connor, and the men of Thomond under Tadhg

O'Brien. This was the prince who, fighting the national cause, was killed at the battle of Down by the Normans under de Courcy. This union of Caol Uisge was a wholly spontaneous idea on the part of the Princes of Thomond and Connacht, and proves that there were, even in such far-off days, men with a thorough conception of the national ideal. Similarly with the landing of Edward Bruce we find the chiefs of Ulster banding themselves together against the enemy, and we find Feidhlim O'Connor heading all Connacht to his assistance, and risking the whole strength and future of his cause at Athenree. It is not unreasonable to assert that this movement circling round Bruce was essentially a national one, and that it was wrecked wholly through the impatience and impetuosity of its central figure.

Art MacMorrough looms up the greatest figure of the immediately succeeding years, but he, like Cathal Crobh Dearg, does not appear to have grasped the necessity for a great national struggle. Of course, during his lifetime he bore the full brunt of the English attack, and kept its forces so busy that they were unable to attend to anything else; but he does not seem to have ever ambitioned a higher title than that of Prince of Leinster, and to have been satisfied when the Saxons were driven out of his own territories or those of his allies. The battle of Kilmainham should have encouraged him to end forever the English occupation by the razing of Dublin to the ground. But that, like many other opportunities, was lost, for what exact reason is inconceivable, for one cannot accuse Art either of faint-heartedness nor of very decided leanings towards the Saxon. We all know how easily English power might have been extinguished from the reign of Henry IV to Henry VII, but no man of commanding influence and convincing mind seems to have arisen to perform it. The Irish nobles, like those of Poland, seem in most instances to have been conservative only of their own privileges and careless of the condition of the country. The people at all times, as far as we have any evidence, had a truer appreciation of their duty. When the chiefs of the O'Neills, O'Donnells, and Burkes accepted English titles and repaired to Dublin to have them confirmed, they found themselves deposed on their return to their

territories, and native chiefs installed in their places. Thus was Seaghan O'Neill – Shane, the great chieftain of the North – exalted in the place of his father, Con Bacagh. Shane, though a veritable thorn in the side of the English, cannot be said to have treasured a national ambition either. We cannot, of course, judge him too severely, for he was at all times sore beset, and that he succeeded in making native rule recognised from the Boyne to the furthest stretches of the North is in itself evidence of his striking superiority to his contemporaries. But he stood alone, and his arrogant assumption of superiority of birth prevented the chieftains of the South from making any overtures. The Desmond Confederacy of 1578 was not in any sense national, nor indeed was Clancarthy's agitation for the principedom of Munster anything but a purely personal ruse. The two greatest national chieftains of Gaelic Ireland – the men who of all the assailants of English rule were actuated by the truest and most perfect nationality – were the two Hughs, Aodh O'Neill and his gallant contemporary, Aodh Ruadh O'Domhnaill. O'Neill may be regarded as the most astute, the most politic, the most resourceful, the most influential, and the most skilful enemy England had faced up to his time. He most certainly aimed at the sovereignty of Ireland, and he recognised that the aid of all his countrymen was essential to secure it. He was the first soldier of Irish freedom who recognised that the crafty English politician was scarcely less dangerous than the soldier or the hired assassin. The soldier, he knew, could be met with the native courage of his people; the assassin might be checkmated by the exercise of a little care and watchfulness. The statesman, vindictive and cunning, could not be effectually opposed by anything but his own weapons. These Hugh's English training placed at his command, and he utilised them till the preparations of years fitted him to take the field and maintain an Irish army. While his foresight and patriotism places him at the head of Irish chieftains, the national spirit of such men as O'Donnell, Maguire, MacMahon, O'Ruarc, O'Sullivan, and all the others who loyally served under his banner is beyond all praise.

The advent of James I, notwithstanding many things to the contrary, was regarded by the Irish chiefs as a favourable omen. A spirit somewhat of a fashion with that to which we are treated nowadays – the kinship of the Scots – induced the people to believe that the sons of the Stuarts would be true to his origin and remember the ties of blood. Some of the chiefs were so far led away as to sit in the Dublin Parliament with the old English and the new English, and found themselves after a short time swamped by the intrusion of nearly eighty persons selected by the Lord Deputy to represent a number of imaginary boroughs which even up to today have no existence. “When a Catholic proprietor died leaving children under age, the King, like a true father of his people, undertook the charge of the children,” had them educated in London as Protestants, and thus in time were evolved from the Gaels, the Thomonds, Donaghmores, Dunravens, Lismores, Clancartys, &c., who have been ever since the bitterest enemies of Ireland. I need not detail here the history of the years which witnessed the plantation of Ulster and the confiscation of Connacht. I pass to the movement of which Rurie O’More was the head and front and Phelim O’Neill the military chief. Few nowadays hear of Rurie O’More, but as an organiser and a conceiver of broad National views he is eclipsed, among civil leaders, by Tone alone. “Roger More of Ballynagh,” as he is called by the contemporary British scribes, was a man of no ordinary calibre, and his ideal of an Irish nation was vastly different from that erected by the Confederation of Kilkenny. That he aimed at the creation of an Irish monarchy there can be no question, for all his negotiations were conducted among the old Irish or such of the *Seanghall* as had become through intermarriage and family ties as Irish as themselves. That these were wholly Catholic cannot affect the case, for Protestantism and the English interest were as interwoven and as identical as they are today, only a great deal more open and more pronounced. In fact the National character of the movement needs little further recommendation than the fact that the Catholic peers and gentlemen of English descent offered to take up arms against it, and being

contemptuously refused by Parsons and Borlase, joined the Confederation and eventually proved its ruin. His enemies' estimate of him is a gauge to O'More's ability and ideas.

Owen Roe arrived from Spain. Phelim O'Neill patriotically gave up the command of the North to him, Benburb was fought, the British statesman once again plied his calling, Owen died, and under the iron heel of Cromwell the country fell smothered in her own blood, the dark story relieved alone by Aodh Dhubh's heroic stand at Clonmel, O'Ferrall's successful fight at Waterford, and the gallant defence of Limerick. If Owen had lived he might have beaten Cromwell, but he was a soldier, not a statesman, and it is just as likely that he might have been vanquished by the lawyers and the Parliament men. Ruric O'More, the one man fit to cope with them, mysteriously disappeared while the movement was still in its infancy.

The conduct of the two Charleses might, without any strain of opinion, be held to justify at least the suspicion of the Irish race. Yet, no sooner did the English Protestants run James off the throne for an exhibition of impartiality than all that was left representative of the country rallied to his support. Not that they liked him – for he was a plantator of 170,000 acres in Tipperary – but because they recognised in him the descendant of all their kings of historic and heroic times – and possibly also because they felt by supporting him they could smite the Saxon. We are all familiar with the main facts of the events which culminated in the Treaty of Limerick, but of the National composition of the Parliament which met to support James in 1689 much more ought to be known. By its acts we can judge it, and save that it linked its future to a wretched cause, one is forced to concede to its foresight, prudence, and tolerance. It was decidedly the most representative assembly which had met in Ireland from the first day the Norman entered Ireland. One of its first acts declares the independence of the Parliament and kingdom of Ireland, and prohibits the bringing of lawsuits to the British House of Lords for settlement. It repealed Charles II's Act of Settlement confirming to the Cromwellians the land of the old families. It prohibited the importation of English,

Scotch, or Welsh coals, designing thus to aid and extend the Kilkenny coal pits, and it endeavoured to assist and advance “trade, shipping, and navigation,” authorising the establishment in the leading towns of schools of mathematics and navigation. These were some of its enactments, and one can but marvel that the minds which so readily grasped the necessities of the country did not also see how much more easily their ideal could be attained by severing at once all connection with England than by supporting the claims of the aspirant to its throne. Davis, in his history of this Parliament, laments that there was no effort made to join the forces of Catholic and Protestant for such a National purpose – but the Catholics can scarcely be blamed for only being up to the standard of their times.

Men smarting under a sense of robbery could not be expected to take a very dispassionate view of the situation. Many of them had been personally dispossessed, and regarded rightly the occupiers as robbers. Anything less than the restitution of their property could not be accepted by them as the basis of a settlement, and such a thing, of course, would not be entertained by the Protestants. A very slight percentage of them were Irish-born and scarcely one at all Irish in sympathy. They condemned the people as savages, their religion as idolatry, their customs, language, and habits as barbarous. They had attained position, wealth, influence, and importance at the price of the blood and spoliation of the rest of the people – and they were not prepared to fall in with anything likely to jeopardise their possession. Hence the heroics of Enniskillen, and Butler’s-bridge and Derry. I am not disposed to minimise the courage of these men. I impeach only their motives; they were fighting for the ascendancy of their class, the main tenance of their tens over the Catholic thousands, the perpetuation of robbery, jobbery and confiscation. That they would have had nothing to fear from sharing the Government with the Catholics, history can attest. That such men as Tyrconnell had no other object than the mere resurgence of Catholic rule ought in no sense blind us to the fact that all the Gaelic soldiers and chiefs, and those of semi-Gaelic blood like Sarsfield, favoured a more complete

independence. Aughrim was fought not for James' pretensions, but for the preservation of all the characteristics and privileges of the Gael. In the rout there, there was settled the fate not only of James, but of Irish Nationhood for that generation. It is more than doubtful if even the relieving of the siege of Limerick could have preserved the cause. Sarsfield was simply a soldier; he was not even an elementary statesman, and the diplomats scored again. "*Briseadh Eacdroma*" is even to today the Gaelic peasants' synonym for disaster. The purposelessness and apparent powerlessness of the Gael which the succeeding years witnessed had their germ there. But those years were not by any means so effete and so uninfluencing as most people imagine. The Penal Days were not wholly clouds and sorrow. Education was banned by British law; Catholicity was proscribed; every position was shut except to the alien, the knave, and the coward – but yet the race lived on, and the ideal of an Irish nation blazed brighter and stronger than ever. It poured into the armies of England's enemies recruits by the thousand; it manned the fleets of a hundred little bays in the South and West, and traded with the Continent in spite of English laws and English administration. It produced poets, scholars, and divines, whose reputation abroad reflected honour on their native land, and, scarcely less than the soldiers of Cremona and Almanza, indicated unmistakeably the individuality of Ireland.

In Ireland herself, of course, we know that men were not inactive. Scarcely had the first flock of the "Wild Geese" flown when William Molyneux rose to assert the independence of the Parliament meeting in Dublin, and of the entire independence of the Irish nation. The one dissatisfying part of his argument is his admission of the right of the English king to rule Ireland. His claim for Irish independence he based on the historic existence of Ireland as a separate nation – his claim for the independence of the Parliament on the resolution passed by that body as far back as the 38th year of the reign of Henry VI. Molyneux's idea had in it an element of nationality, seeing that it resented the interference of any English body to pass a law affecting the country,

but it was not the nationality which at a little earlier period wrested the Netherlands from Spain, or erected Switzerland into an independent nation. It was a narrow spirit, too, for it only recognised the civil rights of the Protestants, but it was a commendable and a patriotic spirit, for it kindled greater things in later days. Swift's campaign had in it rather more of nationality for it united all the elements of Irish society for the first time in centuries, and frightened the British Minister into the possibilities of Irish Union. But it was also narrow, for it did not look beyond the mere legislative freedom demanded by Molyneux. Lucas, Flood, Grattan, the Volunteers, their ideals were all more or less patriotic, but recognising the claim of an English king on Irish loyalty their views cannot be accepted as marking the ideal of an Irish nation. The first man to adequately voice the truest and fullest conception of an independent Irish State were Tone and the United Irishmen. We can honour all the patriots of Confederate and Williamite days, we can be proud of Molyneux, Swift, and Lucas for their courage and persistence in the face of all the opposition of their times. Flood and Grattan and the Volunteers may stir us to the opportunities which English difficulties afford to Ireland. But our whole hearts can go out unreservedly, enthusiastically to the United Irishmen who for the first time banded all classes of Irishmen, the Gael and the Gall, the Protestant, the Catholic, and the Dissenter into one great united body, and who sealed their convictions with their blood at Antrim, at Ballynahinch, in Kildare, in Wexford, in Wicklow, and in almost every country from Mayo to the streets of Dublin.

"I made what was to me a great discovery, though I might have found it in Swift and Molyneux, that the influence of England was the radical vice of our Government, and consequently Ireland would never be either free, prosperous, or happy until she was independent, and that independence was unattainable while the connection with England lasted."

Thus Tone, and his words must ever remain for the Irish nationalist the cardinal feature of his political faith. An Irish State self-supporting, self-defending, her flag respected in every port, her shores

and her sympathy for the oppressed of every race and colour. Her voice in the council of the nations; her language, her laws, and her achievements the pride of all her people. Such is a national ideal, and to Tone do we owe the fact that any of its most militant features still recommend themselves to the vast bulk of our countrymen. It outlived the horrors and the gloom of '98, it survived the sacrifice of 1803, and though it showed not its head during O'Connell's years of work, it lived and throbbed in all the cabins of the country. No one can claim the Catholic agitation as a National one, though of its necessity there is no question, and while we must regard O'Connell as a man devoid of all National ambition – we must give him credit for what he did. He probably wielded more power during his prime than any Irishman up to his time. He found the Irish Catholic on his knees, he lifted him to his feet, and taught him the power that lay within him. What he must be blamed for, eternally blamed for, is that he endeavoured to confound religious freedom with National liberty. His slavish loyalty to the British crown, his bitter enmity to the United Irishmen, and his horror of the very name of revolution, all contributed to make his influence hurtful to the ideal of his immediate predecessors, and consequently injurious to the nation generally. But though he and his satellites either wilfully or unwittingly endeavoured to humbug the people, no one can doubt the popular fidelity to the old ideal. The millions who thronged to the meetings of the early forties – to Tara, to Mullaghmast, to Westport – they had conceptions of something higher than the Parliament of '82. They had views of the Ireland of Tone, and their rally to the standard of the *Nation* on its appearance in 1842 proves how ready they were for all eventualities had the man been forthcoming to sound the tocsin. I need not delay to indicate how true to the ideal were the Young Irelanders and the men of '67.

It was reserved for our time to bring the ideal lower than it had ever fallen at any time in our history. It was reserved for us to trail the banner of the centuries in the mud, to prostrate ourselves before the foreigner, and pander to him for favours that could be of no possible use. True, the leader who concentrated behind him or united

race, refused to indicate the limits of our demand. But how painfully low, how pitifully slavish, how utterly false to the past all the talking and truckling of the last twenty years have made the people, anyone seriously interested in the question can see for himself. Today we see ourselves inert and disunited, without a policy, without any visible organisation to keep the nation alive, distrust, disgust and despair eating at the national heart. Our population dwindling, our prestige at vanishing point, all our characteristics dying, all our customs consuming, our credit almost nil. A hundred years and the Irish nation must be sought anywhere but in Ireland. Must this be? Assuredly not, if Irishmen still survive to prevent it – but how? Firstly, we must unite the people, and we must unite them on some broad platform, on some wide plan that can embrace them all. We must give them an objective, and as all Irishmen willing to consider themselves such honour and reverence Tone, let us lift up the old ideal. Let us ask the people to unite and work for an Irish nation – not a mere shadow in College Green or anywhere else, but a veritable Irish nation. Irish in everything, in language, laws and policy, in prestige and importance. Let each man as his convictions lead him work in whatever way he deems it best to reach that ideal, but let that be the goal – nothing less, nothing nearer. It may be a long way off, but it is worth working and waiting for. It may never be achieved without the loss of lives, and without such means as we cannot just now command, but let us see that such weapons as we may use are not allowed to remain idle. We are only a handful at home, but we are numerous elsewhere; and let us look to it that our numbers and our influence are given their due effect. Let us see that the millions of our race in the Americas, in the British Colonies, in Britain herself, and in all other places are consolidated towards the perpetuation of all our characteristics, language, music, traditions, and convictions, and the prosecution of our right to rank with the rest of the nations. Let us educate foreign opinion to the intensity and the utility of our beliefs, and we shall be, at least, on the road to progress. The Brigade of old was a standing earnest of our individuality; within the last twenty-five years that has been lost, but

the action of our countrymen away beneath the Southern Cross has done much to restore it. Let us look to it that no opportunity escapes of thus emphasising it. Let us link “Language to Liberty.” Let us teach the world what it is we seek, and while refusing to utilise no weapon which the necessities and the difficulties of the enemy force him to concede, let us still go on making each concession a stepping-stone to higher things. Nothing is to be gained by shuffling or shoneenism. We must be men if we mean to win. No tyranny can endure forever.

“We will not cease to fight against and annoy them until the day when they themselves, for want of power, shall have ceased to do us harm... Until then we will make war upon them unto death to recover the independence which is our right... willing rather to face danger like brave men than to languish under insults.”

Let these – the words of Domhnall O’Neill to Pope John – burn into our souls. Six hundred years have elapsed since they were written. Let us show that the spirit which inspired them is still a living, breathing power. Let us teach it to the young, so that if the opportunity is denied to us, they may know the truth and feel their duty.

CAPABILITIES FOR INDEPENDENCE.

From The United Irishman, 27 January, 1900.

The recent creation of an Agricultural Department, and the powers vested in it of examining into and controlling the physical resources of the country, may have the effect of inducing thought on the subject amongst the “cultured” of our community, and possibly of convincing some of them of the existence of more wealth in the country than they dream of. There have been for many years, of course, departments of Governmental origin, charged with the care of Irish geology, but their work was done so secretly and in such quiet that no one ever heard of it. The change may, possibly, result in a little more noise – but certainly no popular benefit may be looked for. We shall, probably have numerous reports as to the qualifications of such and such a district for such and such an industry, but beyond the report stage let us not look – for there lies disappointment.

It were silly to expect more – the idea that any Englishman or Irishman working in England’s interest, is likely to do anything calculated to make us better off than we are can only be entertained by a person who knows nothing of our history. Anything tending to elevate Ireland, to make it more prosperous, must necessarily militate against Britain; that was the reason of the Union, that will prevent anything practical from being done at any time by the free will of England. Yet, though no actual benefit can arise, the usual effect which must come of any enquiries into our resources cannot but aid the renaissance of the belief which looks for Irish prosperity from the entire subversion of British rule and from that only. It is now considerably over half a century since Robert Kane, in his epoch-marking book, proved beyond yea or nay Ireland’s capacity for self-support and self-protection. Many things have come and gone since then, the conditions of living, of commercial exchange, have all been altered. Distance has all but been annihilated, and electricity has all but supplanted steam. Yet deducting all that these things means, the

reader of Kane will be enabled to form a very good idea of how far we should be able to provide for ourselves were we cut adrift from the mighty British Empire tomorrow.

The stock argument of the Loyalists for his opinions is that Ireland is only preserved from national bankruptcy by being a portion of the Empire. It never occurs to him, even though he does favour the existence of a Financial Relations Committee, that if she has existed for over a hundred years in a fairly sound state, and yet paying an excess of over three millions, that the likelihood of her still existing solvent with the disposal of her funds in her own hands, plus these excess millions, is at least not so wild as he imagines. Ireland pays a contribution to the Imperial exchequer for the maintenance of the British navy equal to the sum which maintains the entire fleet of Norway and Sweden. She pays for the keep of thirty thousand soldiers, thirteen thousand constabularymen, and twelve hundred metropolitan policemen, the bulk of whose supplies are imported, and whose clothing is made abroad. Surely, under ordinary circumstances there is nothing to prevent Ireland from maintaining so many units of a national army, distributing their pay more evenly, and circulating it to better advantage by clothing and feeding them with home products. The British Civil Service in Ireland is very much overmanned and immoderately overpaid, add to which is the fact that all the positions of importance or emolument are invariably held by English or Scotchmen. The same thing pervades most of the civil establishments, banks, and large businesses, *all* places, as far as possible, are given to foreigners. These men not only use their influence to keep the people down, but never spend a penny in the country that they can help, even sending to London the measurements of their clothes and getting them back ready made. This system naturally militates against national growth, and deprives the people of the spirit which in free countries make all classes equally eager for the country's good. These are the people who, while sucking the life-blood of the nation, still revile it as a God-abandoned hole where some are bound to suffer for a time before they can go to – the other place. These are the people

who have circulated the foolish theories that crop up now and again in the mouths of the unthinking, anent the impossibility of Ireland's separate existence at this time of the world, her lack of coal, her scarcity of money, her dependence for flour on America, and for markets on England. These are the people who, to preserve their positions, have disseminated the falsehoods that we cannot compete with the foreigner in food stuffs, nor retain what foreign markets we possess, under opposite conditions to those existing. As to the statement that connection with England preserves us from bankruptcy, it used only to be pointed out that instead of England giving us anything to stave off such an emergency she takes much more than that to which, by terms made by herself, she deemed herself entitled. On the other counts affecting independent existence a little thought alone is necessary to prove their hollowness.

Ireland, by reason of geographical position, must, as a free nation, look to a navy as her first line of defence. That she could well afford, for she would have no colonies to defend; it could all be concentrated at home, save the few vessels necessary to look after her foreign trade. She would not need many vessels, for her coasts, in most cases are admirably adapted for all the purposes of defence, and she could readily find sailors, as her seaboard population are mariners to the manner born. It is not necessary to insist on her capability for raising land forces; an army of 100,000 men, eminently suited for all the purposes of a national government, could be got together inside of three months. For their equipment the country possesses all the necessary requirements. At present the iron ore of Arigna supplies the metal from which is manufactured the best cutlery of Sheffield, and the lead mines at any period produced evidence of their richness. Sulphur she has, too, in abundance, and re-afforestation alone is required to supply her with an illimitable stock of charcoal. These are her capabilities for a war establishment; her provisions in times of peace are not less equal to all the requirements of a free nation. The millions of sheep which are raised every year, instead of having their fleeces shipped to England to have them woven into West of England tweeds,

will have their wool kept at home to be utilised for the necessities which the growth of manufacture shall create. Similarly the skins of our cattle which are sent green to England now, shall leave the country only as leather, and shall be used to substitute the foreign article which is all but universally worn now. The foodstuffs which are now at the mercy of every fakir who wishes to turn an honest penny by selling the rankest of foreign produce at the highest price of the home article, shall be protected by more potent means than Merchandise Marks Acts. The linen trade of the North shall not depend on Belgium for its flax, but shall look to the districts of Connaught most suited for its growth, and thus at once be economical and patriotic. The milling trade can be resuscitated by prohibiting the free entry of manufactured flour, and the timber trades encouraged by the discontinuance of importing the ready-made article from anywhere abroad. A hundred other different ways by which a native Government shall encourage native effort will at once occur to the mind of anyone who thinks the matter out. A hundred ways similar to those by which countries infinitely less than us in size, population, and resource maintain themselves and exert an influence on the world. This is no Utopia; it is the practical reason for revolution; these things ought to be and they are not. There are no natural deficiencies in our nation or in our people to account for their non-existence; consequently it is our duty to possess them. We can never obtain them under the English constitution; our plain and simple duty then is to endeavour to secure them outside it.

One of the reasons that make headway difficult in this country is the fact that our manners and fashions are foreign. People who today would sneer at the idea of dressing in anything but the latest London style, tomorrow under native rule would feel ashamed to take their ideas from anywhere outside of Ireland. Duchesses may dress in green silks and Lady Lieutenants don nothing but Irish textiles – the sycophantic gang who hang around them wink the other eye and do likewise, but the trade of Ireland in no sense benefits. It cannot be spoonfed by patronage – it can only prosper when the people take it

up, and they will never take it up as they should while any of their self-appointed guides are deluded by the smiles of the Viceregal ladies and lulled into quietude by the balm which the Castle can so well dispense. Home Rule might be a slight disadvantage, just as the Local Government Bill may be of advantage, or as this more recent Agricultural Bill may be of advantage; but we must not allow ourselves to be cajoled into the belief that it can resolve the National question. That merely depends upon our facility for separate existence, our desire for it, our chances of securing it, and our means and determination for maintaining it.

PARLIAMENTARIANISM?

From The United Irishman, February 17, 1900.

According to the newspapers the election of Mr. John Redmond to the chair of the reunited Irish Party has been the signal for a shout of joy throughout the country. We all know how prone the journalistic mind is to exaggeration, and one has but to glance through the letters and telegrams given in detail to form an estimate of the depth and breadth of this trill which has shaken the land. We are a singularly forgivable people, or rather we have a decided faculty of forgetting what we ought to remember. I am not prepared to say that Mr. Redmond is not the fittest man to guide the counsels of the combined wisdom which represents Ireland at Westminster. I am not of opinion that unity was not a desirable matter, but I do most sincerely hope that no unity will blind the people to the fact that Mr. John Redmond is the man who at Cambridge in 1895 before an audience of Englishmen took upon himself to say that the Irish nation neither desired nor thought separation from England desirable. Mr. Redmond, or anyone else has a perfect right to hold that opinion – but it is to be trusted that those who do not hold it, and I am sure they are neither few nor far apart in this country – will not forget that it was uttered, and by whom.

The Irish Party may or may not have had the best and most patriotic reasons for reuniting. The reasons need not weigh, the fact is they have reunited, and the question for the country is whether or not a continuance of their services is desirable – whether or not anything possible of achievement remains to be done by Irish representatives in the British Parliament. They are eighty odd in a house of 670; in a house bound by laws and regulations which limit the time for discussion and place a weapon in the enemy's hands to stop it at any time – in a house which is utterly unsympathetic, generally speaking, with the meanest national demand, and which is unwilling to use its authority in matters which are manifestly crying evils against progress and social order. Let us dispassionately examine the question – let us not be led away by any claptrap about the

invincibility of a solid Irish phalanx at St. Stephen's; let us take the thing for what it is worth, weigh its faults, total up its merits, and having made up our minds prepare to abide by the consequences. The constant attendance of the Irish Home Rule representation would put a considerable hole annually in £20,000. Of Home Rule there is not the ghost of a possibility for years to come, of remedial land legislation which would effectually stop the flow of the life-blood of the nation there is about equal chance – of any measure calculated to improve the condition of our towns or increase the authority of their governing bodies there is a similar hope – of a reduction in Irish taxation there is the same outlook, and in fact of anything likely to prove of the slightest benefit to Ireland there does not appear to be even the faintest indication. This, some one will say, is the result of the chaos of the last ten years. We will be told that an united Irish Party would have forced the Liberals to resign after the throwing out of the Home Rule Bill by the Lords in 1893. What would have been the result? The return of the Tories to power with the same majority which they possess at present. The fact is the Home Rule Bill was allowed to drop by the Liberals, and has never been taken up by the Tories because the British Government recognised that Ireland had broken up all her effective organisation, and concentrated her entire strength in the ranks of Parliamentaryism. The indifference which exhibits itself all throughout the country respecting the representation is wholly due to the fact that the people have lost faith in it. They have seen its impotency to even pass a Bill for the draining of a barony; they have seen it scouted by the Liberals and sneered at by the Tories; they have seen its ranks recruited from men whose sole national work has been a timely contribution to the party exchequer. They have seen, and more vividly within the last three months, the hollowness and humbug of that "Union of Hearts," for which they cheered themselves hoarse before hotel windows, while the county member spouted eloquently of the utility of forgetting the past and letting bygones be bygones. A generation has grown up which has been trained by cartoon and spicy paragraph to regard each of the leading members of

the reunited party as either a West Briton, a toady, a time-server, or a tool. How can the young men who have been educated on such lines have any respect or admiration for these men, or any confidence in their judgement? Either these men are what the party organs painted them, or else the organs have lied, criminally and persistently lied. Yet these are the men for whom the country has flung up its hat in joy, and these are the organs which for the future are to be our Mentors. Let us burn it into our souls, we are to be led by knaves and fools, and spoonfed by journals that blow hot or cold as the occasion warrants.

It will cost, as I have said, nearly £20,000 to maintain this united party in the British House of Commons, and the return will be a harvest of rhetoric – polished if Mr. Redmond, profound if Mr. Dillon, acrid and biting if Mr. Healy – but windy and ineffective withal, and for this we shall be asked to pay £20,000 per year. A glorious prospect with a diminishing population, and markets every year become more and more crowded by foreign competitors. It may be granted for parliamentarianism that it provides an excellent theatre for the display of Irish disaffection, that it affords an opportunity for catching the ear of the world, and making our position known to foreign peoples. It does not occur to the advocates of this theory, however, that the same agency which shuts out foreign opinion from us also has the means of colouring any information it supplies to the Press of other peoples. It does not occur to the advocates of this theory that half the sum spent on parliamentarianism if spent in subsidising Irish Agents in the principal Courts of Europe might be a more effectual means of bringing Britain to her senses. I have dealt previously with the power which lies in our hands abroad if our people would only act unitedly; the same power acting in the hands of a firm, patriotic representative at Paris, St. Petersburg, or Berlin, might not be wholly ineffective. The possibility of Continental aid for Ireland is at least as likely as the coming of Home Rule or any similar concession.

We shall most likely see a recrudescence of the National League within a few months. No one should object to its reinstitution – organisation of any sort is better than chaos or inaction – but since

the scales have to a considerable extent fallen from our eyes, let us see that we are not used any longer merely as marionettes. Let us look before us, and do nothing that does not recommend itself to our own judgement as sound and patriotic. Let us cease thinking that our leading men are miracles of resource or intellect. Let us cease believing that we are a nation of persecuted saints – a nation of martyrs doomed to eternal misery. Let us remember we are men – merely men – and being men let us endeavour to do the part that fits us for citizenship. That does not consist entirely in registration, nor in carrying a torch in a midnight procession. Both of these are necessary duties that occasionally may fall to the lot of every man, but one ought not to stop at them. Let us endeavour to educate ourselves and each other, to understand the fallacy of compromise and the uselessness of cant – for cant is not wholly a British vice. If we do these things, or strive to do them, the unity of the parliamentarians may be the blessing which its organs claim it is. If we maintain a public opinion outside the columns of the Home Rule Press – if that opinion be kept healthy and vigorous, ready to grasp every difficulty of Britain for its own advantage, ready to emphasise everywhere and at all times the irreconcilable differences which exist between the two nations – we shall keep that representation in our power, make it the servant of the National will instead of its master, make it an instrument to be utilised whenever occasion requires. Let us be independent of it; but let us by all means tolerate it as a weapon in our armoury, but let us not make it our sole and only resource, for that way danger lies. It is a battered suit of mail at best, full of chinks and inequalities, and in no sense as suitable for our nation as the claymore or the battle-axe.

THE SITUATION.

From The United Irishman, March 24, 1900.

The unity of the Parliamentary party has so far given no indication of what the future public policy of the country is to be, outside of a general opposition to all the traditional reactionary methods of England. Home Rule as a policy is as dead as it can well be, and nothing in the nature of an aggressive propaganda or a national programme seems even dimly possible. There are rumours of a convention, but of its nature or the work that might come before it there is no data to go upon. The one organisation outside of the language movement which shows itself is the United Irish League, and its recent action in Mayo, or rather the action of those at the head of it, shows it to be guided by the same intolerant and self-sufficient spirit which smothered and gagged free opinion from the days of the Land League to the fall of the "Union of Hearts." We are sadly in want of discipline in Ireland, and nothing of course can be gained without organisation, but there must be no burking of opinion. The cause of the nation is too scared and too high a trust to be left wholly to platform patriots and village demagogues. I am not disposed to reflect on the utility of both of these factors. I would only suggest such limitation of their influence as would secure a hearing for an independent minded man, and prevent him being howled at and derided as a traitor and an enemy. We must see that the childish and insensate, the blind and unthinking obedience of the late eighties is not repeated. As I have before insisted we must know what we want, and the value of the means by which it is proposed to get it. We must learn to analyse our public movements and our public men, not for the purpose of finding frivolous faults in them, for they cannot be perfect, but for the remedying of any serious defects, and the maintenance of their power of doing good. It is, possibly, not quite an original idea, but it is none the less one deserving of insistence – no man will give all his energies for a thing he does not understand. A man may become

wildly and gloriously enthusiastic in a crowd, but cheers are of no practical use. If we want to secure anything like a national government in Ireland we must begin by teaching every one from the labourer up what is he loses by being a bondsman in his own land. Few men will give their lives for an ideal, many may for the practical things that make a home and a people happy. Consequently any fresh movement aiming at consolidating our nation must first of all have an educational value, or it will eventually follow all its predecessors to oblivion.

Now it may be granted that as agriculture is the staple industry of Ireland the land question must monopolise attention, especially in the provinces. It cannot be denied that the vast grazing tracts of the west, of Meath, and Tipperary would be better employed maintaining a populous peasantry than as they are. No Irish Nationalist will or can quarrel with any man or any movement which seeks to reduce the emigration statistics, and provide a field for Irish effort at home, but the line must be drawn and drawn tightly when it is sought to raise an agrarian question into the importance of a national one, when the interests of one class are set against all the other needs of the nation. I am not one of those disposed to consider what the artisans have suffered by the last land war. In the great upheavals of any country some interest must be sacrificed. If it were possible to settle the matter by the sacrifice of all the existing mechanical industries in the country there should be no hesitation in accepting the settlement, for they would phoenix-like arise again through the influencing suns of better times. But the interests that I think of are not those of any section but of Ireland herself. No man looking around our country can deny that the struggles of the last agitation have cost her more than any class advantage was worth. They have lowered the *morale*, physical and intellectual, of her people, turned them from themselves and their fathers to imitate the Britisher, taught them that the Englishman of the past acted through ignorance, and that the Englishman of today is a sturdy honest fellow who only needs to be taken properly in hands to see his wrong-doing. Taught them in fact that the whole past of our country was a mistake, that Providence evidently intended these two

islands to work in harness, and that it were as easy to avoid Fate as to change our destiny. That of late years we have heard that theory from few platforms in no way alters the fact that it has been taught to the people. It only ceased as a doctrine when the “sturdy honest fellows” of the Liberal and Radical clubs got tired of, or had no further use for their “Irish” auxiliaries.

Those who hold by the primary importance of the land question as underlying all others, if they be honest men, cannot but admit the demoralising effect which the chicanery and low cunning of the last land war has had upon the people – how far it accustomed them to habits of deceit and petty trickery. The writer is not one who imagines that any great national movement can be immaculately free from blotches; but when one encourages a certain line of action he ought to be certain that it may not some time or another be utilised in an exactly different direction, with possibly equally effective results. He knows that the agencies against the people in Ireland are not particularly of a heroic or even of a manly character, but nothing should be done that may endanger the national character, nothing employed that can lessen the influences of the past. Much in recent years has been done in the name of expediency; memories have been allowed to lapse and men have been forgotten; principles have been trifled with – and the harvest has been of Dead Sea fruit and ashes.

All these thoughts, or rather the one continued thought, have been suggested by things as they stand today. The people are apparently making up their minds to go into some movement; they are casting around for some principle to stand by, some policy to work for, some goal to reach. It is well that they should do so; it is well that they should even embark on a movement that would lead them back to where they started, for anything that engrosses their minds and provides them with food for thought and energy is better than that enervation and listlessness which consumes and obliterates a people. No one, except a person wilfully blind, believes that the United Irish League is a national power. I do not stand upon its merits as an organisation, but merely draw my conclusions from facts furnished by

its official organ. Every other week one reads reports of branches being reorganised, and oftenest in the very cradle of the League. The Parliamentarians are not, apparently, too much in love with it, and will only touch it failing everything else. That time will most assuredly come, and the duty of all true Nationalists – those Nationalists who do not believe in any humdrum British creation in College-Green or anywhere else – is to see that the land question, while getting all due and reasonable consideration, is not allowed to become the all-dominating factor which it was in the past. There will most certainly be a shriek that such conduct is playing the landlords' and the grabbers' game, but the exercise of a little patience and the insistence of a hearing for every view, may prove it not quite so unpatriotic as it could be represented. There must be consideration for more than the farmers and their labourers. With all the lamentation which the politicians make of the ruin which has overtaken the national question during their quarrelling, it is a fact beyond gainsaying that the country has made more real progress towards true nationality within that time than it ever did while they were together. No unity among the Parliamentarians, no combination among the people, must be allowed to endanger the onward march of the movements which have succeeded in awakening the people to a sense of the worth of their own belongings. It was a matter deserving of lamentation that the loudest-lunged around a platform, the most profuse in their display of green silk and gold lace, were also the disseminators of the latest London comic, the most up-to-date in fashion, whether in ties or tanned boots. There have been healthy changes made in matters of the kind, but the respect for Irish customs and characteristics has not yet reached its natural and proper proportions; and any movement that seeks to catch the popular mind must be able to recognise the necessity for respecting and maintaining and advancing everything that makes us less English. Such a movement must also embrace our industries. The farmer who ambitions a populated countryside, must not be allowed to forget the influences that have emptied our towns, and filled our shops with the

output of every place but Ireland's. The man who talks of bullocks fattening where men should be must beware of foreign artificers supplying the needs that Irish hands could meet. The people who ostracise a grabber must also be made to understand that he who allows the industries of his own land to wither, or who fails to aid their resuscitation, is equally deserving of the scorn and contempt of honest men, is also a wretch to be avoided. These are a few things which other men in other movements forgot. The torpor was upon us then, and we drifted towards annihilation unknowingly. We have wakened and can see somewhat before us. Every class of the community has crying needs for remedying. There is danger in attempting the cure of too many at the one time, but let us, at least by endeavouring to understand what is wanted, learn how far each may be met without compromising the others.

“ADVANCED” NATIONALISM.

From The United Irishman, May 5, 1900.

Since Catholic Emancipation allowed Irish Catholics to become members of the British Parliament there has been talk of a spirit which the said members and their satellites of the Leagues and Registration Associations have been pleased to call “Advanced” Nationalism. Now there is no earthly reason why the adjective should be applied, for the objective towards which this spirit is directed is nothing more than that for which all the labours of the last seven centuries have been given. “Advanced” Nationalism, so-called aims at nothing more advanced than a Irish nation – that is to say, an Irish state, governed, controlled, and defended by Irishmen for Irishmen. “Advanced” Nationalism is in truth no petty, compromising propaganda, which talks of healing the wounds of centuries, or guarantees the aid of Irish arms for Imperial buccaneering, “if our rights are conceded.” It is indeed no convenient creed which would toast a foreign queen or flaunt the Union Jack in College-green for the privilege of being allowed to concoct a drainage scheme, or pass an authority for a railway cutting through Cork or Connemara. It is no temporising, time-serving, half-hearted sentiment which fears the future, but likes to take advantage of the present, trusting to the forgetfulness of the popular memory to overlook any vacillation from the right road: It is a spirit which takes something more than an antiquary’s interest in the struggles and belief of the past, which does not talk of the superior advantages of our fathers to excuse inaction or indifference today. It is, in fine, the spirit of Irish Nationality which recognises nothing short of supreme and entire independence as the limit of Irish hopes and aspirations.

From a broad National standpoint there is nothing “advanced” in this spirit. It could not look for less and remain National; it only deserves its name by the assertion that the active operation of all essentially Irish energies and influences is alone Nationality. Anything short of that may possess some traces of Nationalism but is

not Nationality. One cannot lop off any member of the human frame and pretend that it is still a complete and healthy body, and though a wooden leg may have its uses it is by no means as effectual or as wholly in sympathy with its wearer as his own proper adornment. In every phase of human thought, political, scientific, or otherwise, there will, of course, always be wide divergences of opinion, there will always be thinkers in advance of their fellows, always men more daring than others, and always cautious, careful individuals, who whisper that it is better to suffer some few inconveniences than to risk the loss of life in an endeavour to attain the right of Nationhood. There is room, even in Ireland, for all classes of opinion, but there ought to be no toleration for anything which seeks to masquerade as a thing which it is not, which is unnecessary, and, in the strict meaning of the term which it qualifies, superfluous. One never hears of “advanced Nationalism” in connection with any free country. A Belgian, a Dane, or a Swiss peasant would scarcely be considered a patriot, if he advocated less freedom for his countrymen than they at present enjoy. The Greek or the Dutchman who would seek to confound the administration of Turkish or French laws from his capital with Nationalism would be laughed at by his countrymen. The things are as distinct as the stars, and have hardly as much bearing on each other as the planets.

“Advanced” Nationalism became a bugbear to the “comfortable, well-to-do” Catholics from the first day they were allowed to enjoy the benefits of the British Constitution. There was no mention of it during the days when Ireland was sending her young men to fill the armies of the Continent, and when the tongue of the Gael rang in every court in Europe. There was no confounding of principles then; a man was either attached to the English interest in Ireland, or else all his sympathies were with the boys abroad, and the adventurous spirits who made every creek and inlet around the Irish coast busy centres of intercourse with France and Holland and Spain. No man, however great his reverence for the memory of the Volunteers, can consider Grattan or his fellows Irish Nationalists; they were purely and simply

what the colonists of Canada and Australia are today. They armed to protect Ireland for England – not for Ireland. The Irish Nationalists were the men who in 1792 founded the Society of United Irishmen, and who fought and fell in every province six years later. They fought against English law and English influence in Ireland just as the “Wild Geese” had, and just as every previous generation of Irishmen had from the first hour either gained a foothold inside our borders. They were discountenanced by the Grattan party equally as much as by the Court party, and had few opponents bitterer than those who had officered the Volunteers, and who two years subsequently stood proof against all the inducements of the Minister over the Union. They stood for class privileges, not for National rights. Fiercely as they denounced the idea of merging the individuality of the Parliament in that of England, they were equally persistent in the assertion of their loyalty to the “Constitution.” Out of their continued existence would have sprung a recrudescence of the spirit of Tone, but it would have been in spite of them rather than as a consequence of any of their actions. O’Connell’s work, too, was in no sense National; he restored the privileges of his own class; he enfranchised the English Catholics, but practical freedom to the Irish masses he conferred none. They are today just as much the victims of English influence as they ever were – with possibly a less keen appreciation of their disabilities than before he commenced. He did more to confuse the ideal of an Irish nation – to debase the spirit and distort the views of our people – than any leader they have ever known. His view was evidently merely Grattan’s, “the golden link of the Crown” uniting the two nations, Ireland concerning herself with her own affairs, but accepting England’s treatment of all Continental complications – bearing the brunt of all her quarrels, risking her existence on their result, but gaining nothing by any of them. Such a state of things may have been to him the only possible, and a by no means undesirable, settlement of the Irish question. No one would refuse to accept it, but no one ought to make it the final settlement, for apart from the uncertain finality of all human arrangements, it would be an abrogation of all right to

separate national existence. On this point it was that O'Connell's methods and Young Ireland's differed. He would have been content to fight under the Union Jack, with the Parliament of Grattan restored; they were content to accept that Parliament, but without giving any guarantees to bind the future. They would not make it the limit of Irish aspiration, and hence the commencement of the caballing and secret whispering which eventually broke into open charges of "infidelity," anarchism," &c., and finally disgusted Young Ireland with Conciliation Hall. The Confederates, of course, were "advanced" Nationalists in the eyes of John O'Connell and his coterie; but who would dream of including him in a list of Nationalists of any description? The movement of '48 and Fenianism were decidedly Nationalist movements, but not one whit more "advanced" than any legitimate Nationalist movement has ever been. It is a mistake to call the Nationalism of any period a policy; it is a tradition, a belief, an ideal, an end, but in no sense the means which a policy is most certainly. It has always existed; it shall always exist as long as Ireland rises above the waves of the Atlantic; its means are merely determined by the circumstances of each generation – but it is, beyond everything else, a denial of the right of any foreign State to rule this country – except by force – and continued assertion of the popular belief in the continuity of this country's individuality.

Those parties whose claims to the title of Nationalist rest upon their acceptance of the Home Rule idea are exceptionally fond of talking of the impracticability of what, as we have said earlier, they are pleasant to call "advanced Nationalism." They speak of the odds against the possibility of its accomplishment, altogether overlooking the fact that right is right, no matter what the opposition. They forget that, so far from being impracticable, this "advanced" patriotism, in its purest acceptation, takes all the advantages that come and utilises them for the securing of others. It is in no sense inimical to the growth of any influences that may be of use in the future, but it is jealously careful that none of those which have come down to us from the past are allowed to become obsolete through any false shame of their origin

or foolish belief in the superiority of manners, methods, or ideas imported from beyond the water. It is decidedly a conservative spirit, but far from an ignorant or intolerant one; it recognises that the past has been full of mistakes, and that much of our misery has been occasioned by ourselves. It accepts the view that physically and morally our people have remained equal to most other nations, but it sees all too plainly that in mental equipment, in national self-respect, in independence of opinion, we are woefully behind the age. These things have grown upon us principally because within this century we have surrendered more of our characteristics than ever previously within our history. We have forgotten the past, and consequently have been at the mercy of every mountebank who chose to screen his real purpose behind an assumption of Nationality. Nationalism is not a variable quantity; it is, or ought to be, today what it ever was – nothing more, nothing less. Its work now is the care of what characteristics we have left, and the preparations for whatever opportunities the future may afford us.

INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL FREEDOM.

From The United Irishman, May 26, 1900.

To say men will not lose their lives for an ideal may sound materialistic and false in view of the host of historical evidences to the contrary – yet it is a simple fact. That no man can work well for a cause without exactly understanding it is equally true. We hear and have heard for years protestations of undying fidelity to the cause of liberty – but the speakers have never had the remotest idea of risking their lives – for the object of their undying devotion was not liberty but a mere extension of local governing powers, an exaggerated scheme of corporate control. The crowds have shouted themselves hoarse, primarily because the crowd is invariably true to the ideal of liberty, and secondly, because being befogged and bewildered by the sophistries of the Parliamentarians the crowd has been cajoled into the belief that Irish freedom can be attained by the will of the British Parliament. All the grandiloquence of the “Irish phalanx” at Westminster will fail to secure what the people imagine they are in quest of – Irish liberty; for liberty is not to be won by any power by logic or reasoning. Necessity aided by the arms and resolve of a determined people is the only thing that brings a giant bully to his knees, and nothing less shall ever wring the rights of freedom from the Government and people of England.

We have been asserting all through our history our belief in our right to liberty. While any semblance of a separate individuality, laws, language, and arms, remained with us we met the power of Britain like men, and not infrequently overcame it. Since we allowed ourselves to be deprived of the first and last, and almost of the other of these distinctive tokens of nationality, we have in the main pinned our faith to monster meetings and resolutions. I am not now disposed to go into the relative utility of force and logic, both have their uses and their abuses. What I conceive to be essential just now is the proper

understanding of our position, what it is we want, what benefit it may be to us, and what we suffer through lack of it. We may be all said to wish for a free Ireland, but it is essential that we think out how far it could better the individual life of each one of us. At any time in the future the exigencies of the hour may call for the declaration of an Irish constitution, a revolution does not consist entirely in the facing of the enemy in the open field; if chaos and anarchy are to be avoided we must encourage thought on the possibilities following the actual outbreak; the necessity of maintaining the common rights of individuals, order and law. Excesses are inseparable from all upheavals, but anarchy cannot possibly promote either permanent content or public confidence. We must, therefore, educate ourselves and each other to the responsibilities and duties that as citizens rest on all of us. We must prepare to recognise that on each one of us lies the protection of the community from the attentions of the vultures who hover in the wake of all popular uprisings. We must prepare to take a citizen's interest in the general good, accept a citizen's risks, that we may deserve a citizen's honours and rewards. These duties do not consist entirely of marching in procession or polling according to the prevailing opinion of our neighbourhood. In the examination of the defects of our system, in the promotion of objects calculated to provide an opening for the talents of our population, in the fostering of everything likely to keep the people in the country, lie some of the labours which a conscientious citizen of an Irish state will take upon himself. His lifetime may never afford him an opportunity of testing the worth of the schemes which his thought has induced him to believe may be of use to his fellow-countrymen; but the very fact of his having thought out his position and convictions will make him a better man mentally, and by confirming him in his traditional opinions, by providing him with reasons for them, make him a better Irishman. Our first duty to our country manifestly, therefore, is to educate ourselves that we may be of service to her, understand exactly what she is capable of, and how far it is possible to utilise her resources, for no confidence can exist without knowledge, and knowledge, unlike

patriotism, unfortunately is not an inheritance; it needs study, demands time and energy, but yields results equal to all its costs. I speak not merely of that knowledge to be gleaned from books, but that wider teaching which embraces everything, which sees a lesson in every hill and valley, hears a voice in every rath and dun, recognises the utility of bay and inlet, of loch and ford. That knowledge which knowing how far we may rely upon ourselves to sustain ourselves teaches the duty of doing so, and endeavours to impart that confidence in widening circles till the ring embraces the whole island, and by the creation of a self-reliant, self-conscious people takes away at once the strongest weapon of the enemy – the distrust of ourselves which has kept us as we are. It is this individual thinking out of the duty we owe each other and our country that makes men fit to understand and ready to fight for freedom.

“The freedom of individual men is the highest of liberty,” sings Boyle O’Reilly; but we must enfranchise ourselves mentally before we can understand the necessity for political liberty. One hears repeatedly that we enjoy under the British constitution the highest form of individual liberty in the world. A superficial view of the subject seems to strengthen the idea. We are allowed to hold pretty well what opinions we choose, shout ourselves occasionally hoarse and discuss anything we like in debating rooms. The press is allowed latitude enough to blackguard landlord, grabber, or land agent, to shout defiance to resident magistrates, and invite the people to organise against rack rents. Orators can say much what they like from platforms, and one section of the population denounce the other to their heart’s content and the authorities never mind. The loyal and constitutional point triumphantly to such instances, and ask what further freedom any man can wish than to go where and when he pleases, and say whatever he thinks fit. One has no passports to be vised, no officials to pull him up at every turn, no prying eyes to pierce the inmost recesses of one’s trunk and pull forth his most sacred and secret correspondence. No, no these things are unknown under the British flag, every position of influence and importance is open to any

man who ambitions them, and has sufficient brains to perform the duties of them. Honours, emoluments, riches, await the consistent and the faithful servant of the British Empire. It is a mere coincidence, of course, that in order to climb to these places one has to become false to all the traditions of his people, to scorn and condemn the opinions of his fathers, to join the aggressors of right and liberty in every land, and even to aid the foreigner to cripple, crush, and exterminate everything that keeps the people of this land antagonistic to annihilation. That is not liberty which keeps the bulk of the nation in yearly dread of starvation, and reserves all the positions, state and commercial, for a dominant party, who, for the sake of a mere living, sink their opinions, sell their principles, and sacrifice their souls. I am not to be taken as believing that there are not men in Ireland who boldly and bravely think for themselves, but they suffer for their independence. I do not speak of mere monetary sacrifice. We do not sufficiently value the merit and the duty of single, strong thought; we think in groups, and the silent, lonely student is more often laughed at than otherwise. Where such a thing exists there is no individual freedom; indirectly by discouraging independent thought we aid the very forces whose ruin we fondly imagine is the object of our lives.

National liberty, to my mind, is but an extended individual liberty. It means, or ought to mean, much more than a flag, an army, and a recognition among nations; it ought to mean the absolute independence in mind and person of every unit of the population. This is an ideal that, of course, no collection of people can ever attain, but in the abstract the constitution of a free people ought to offer no barrier to the growth of such an ideal. A tolerant, educated, self-thinking people may always be relied upon to guard their privileges and characteristics as well, at least, as a collection of individuals whose lives are wrapped up in themselves without any concern for their neighbours. We in Ireland have bothered ourselves very little about what may be called the realities of liberty; some vague idea has always been abroad that it needed but the abolition of English rule to make this country a land of milk and honey. It needs no recognition of the

general truth of that dogma here, to add that there lies a long road before us after that has been accomplished, before prosperity can be reached. National liberty, as I have said, is not merely a flag, an army, and a recognition among nations. It is likewise, and to an enormous extent, a nation's power of self-existence, a nation's absolute independence of outside influence; its self-sustaining, self-maintaining qualities, which enable its population to build up their strength from within, and defy all intimidation from without. "To depend on the will of another nation," says Grattan, "is the definition of slavery,"; but to depend on any outside nation for sustenance is mere idiocy. No nation can rely upon itself that cannot support its people from its own resources. These are questions, of course, primarily for free peoples; but they are equally momentous for us; for they alone are fit for freedom who have laboured to achieve and learned to utilise it. Freedom must not come and find us unfit for its reception; for that were but to make us little better than we are. We cannot afford to mismanage it; we have been asserting for ages the inability of the foreigner to govern this land for its people's benefit. Let us study and learn the responsibilities of national existence, prepare to utilize its powers and make it the source of prosperity to us which it is to all peoples who have wit enough to understand, and earnestness sufficient to make it fulfil its mission.

EMIGRATION – HOW TO STAY IT.

From The United Irishman, September 15, 1900.

The yearly return of the Registrar-General has filled all hearts that beat for Ireland with dismay and awakened anew the cry of sorrow throughout the land. Westward still hies the youth, the strength, and the vigour of the land leaving to us who remain behind, only the empty seats and the vacant places that once knew laughing eyes and merry vices. Why this should be, and apparently must continue to be need not be dilated upon here. Sufficeth it that it is, that daily we are losing those to whom all Nations look for perpetuation. Language, music, art, customs, manners, traditions are vital characteristics of Nationhood – but men and women are the Nation itself. If Ireland continues to lose them as she is losing them, a bare half century will see her as effectually wiped off the map as if the Sea of Moyle had risen above her mountains, and Clodhna's wave rolled over her plains and valleys.

It has been pointed out repeatedly in these columns that no agrarian agitation can effectually solve the emigration question. Though every acre of Ireland were rent-free to the occupiers, emigration would still go on, for the day has passed when a farm can support in perpetuity an average Irish family. We shall need to establish in, at least, our county towns local manufacturies to turn out the articles needed for the personal and household necessities of the people. We shall need to make it as dishonourable to use or wear foreign goods as it is to grab a farm. We shall need to turn our towns into something more than a collection of huxters' shops, designed for the exploiting of British wares, and as a natural consequence, wells of Anglicisation, poisoning every section of our people. We are not heartily in love with the co-operative policy of Horace Plunkett, but if it in anywise tends to throw the people back on the road which preserved their individuality for centuries then most decidedly let it be welcomed with open arms.

But though we have a mill or a factory of some kind or another in every village our work would be but half done. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," in Ireland, as everywhere else. A few years' work would wear the novelty off of the most interesting daily labour to which we could call our people. It is not for their hands alone we must find employment, not alone must we occupy their days, we must give them the means of developing their minds and provide them with amusement for their evenings. The Ireland of old was a self-supporting Ireland, she looked for little of her physical or mental sustenance from outside, she produced all she needed herself. Her cornfields and her sheep-tracks, her flax and cattle, fed and clothed her men and women, and left them surplus enough to compete in the markets of Holland, France, Spain and Italy. She sought no mental recreation from the literary offal of Britain, for her poets and scholars were known to the people and round the winter hearths one heard the songs and romances which had delighted generations or heard from the lips of the travelling pedlar the last new song of Eoghan Ruadh Ó Suileabhain or An Mangaire Sugach. In the summer evenings there were friendly contests in the hurling field, agility competed in the high jump, the long jump, or the foot race, muscles were exercised in the casting of the stone, and the full breath of the mountain was inhaled following the fleet hound over moss and heather. Nor were the girls without their pleasant evenings either. While the turf fire glowed and the shanachus went round, the hum of the round brown wheel rang in the kitchen accompanying soft and sweet voices that so well know how to make the accents of the Gael full of glamour and music. Of summer evenings when the bees were gone, and the birds piping their last notes to the world, one heard the piper's music at the cross-roads mingled with the rippling melody of cailins' laughter and the shouts of encouragement to some pair more nimble-footed than their fellows. There were merry-makings too within doors that filled our peoples' lives for many a day with pleasant memories; and at fair and market one never missed the signs that told at once of a people distinct from all the world – a people working along their own lines and living

within their own environment, conscious of their wrongs, and nursing a steady hate of foreign laws and foreign institutions that would blaze to action at the least sign of a possibility of success. This is the Ireland we have lost, and the loss of it as much as anything else conduces to the stream of emigration which has hurried our youthful millions beyond the waves within this present century.

Let us not be mistaken. No one recognises more than we the truth that the presence of English laws and organisations here more than anything else deprived us of the manhood which would have made O'Connell invincible had he been in earnest. We know that the average landowner had no sympathy with anything native and no interest in Ireland save as a rent producer. We have seen the evidences of his work, and indeed one needs not go very far in any direction to find grass-grown hearths and roofless houses to attest the spirit of Irish landlordism. We know the people fled from famine and pestilence, but much of that has been changed now, as much as can be hoped for while the British connection lasts. We rush away today, not from famine in all cases or from pestilence in any, but from idle days and monotonous evenings. We rush away from a land which has lost its storied charms drawn from the lives, deeds, and sacrifices of heroic men and women since the dawn of history. The ties of kindred and tradition keep the old people at home, but the young ones lured by the rosy-coloured pictures of places afar off gleaned from odd sentences in emigrants' letters, and inspired by the occasional arrival of remittances from the children abroad, grow disgusted with the unceasing round of work with little to brighten it, and the longing grows to be away in the whirl of the world where one's life, if it were not exactly bright, would be busy enough to prevent thought from darkening the future. We know how illusive a few months of exile prove these ideas, and how the memory wanders back to hill and valley in the old land, till in the silent night, when the great cities of America have hushed their noises for a few brief hours, the lonely Irish exile in his lodgings, feels his eyes grow dim as he thinks of the days when he went gathering nuts in the woods and knew the hiding-place of every

fish in all the rivers. No amount of success can conquer memory, and those emigrants of ours, who like birds of passage flit as often as they can to Ireland when the blossoms fill the trees and the fields are sweet with clover know in their hearts that they would rather live their lives in Ireland than elsewhere. But why do they not? You will say. Why not resume their olden lives and quiet memory by coming back to the glens and hills that haunt them in their dreams. The prime reason is, of course, the country can give them nothing to do save the huxtering of a country-town, but the lack of any amusement or entertainment for the vacant hours has its influence likewise. We should be sorry to see many of the things which are supposed to make life endurable in great cities, imported into rural Ireland, but we must endeavour, if we wish to stop the emigration, to make the lifetime of our young people brighter than it has been since the Gaelic civilisation and entertainment which knitted our people to their native places was allowed to be submerged by the culture of the National school and the “literature” of the foreigner.

Davis recognised the necessity of brightening rural life when he insisted on the establishment of Repeal reading rooms in the villages. He probably foresaw what the absence of all entertainment, save that of the public-house, would mean to Ireland, when the rest of the world was using every effort to provide itself with something to fill the vacant hours. The “practical” politicians naturally looked coldly on the effort, and eventually succeeded in killing it. The National Schools crushed the language, mainly because the Catholic representatives on the Board had not the grit to demand reasonable and rational treatment for it. The Famine came to deaden the people’s hearts, and the false standards set up by those who presumed to lead the people abolished the seanachus, the cross-roads’ dance, and the hurling field. The pathron was denounced, the piper was despised, the seanachuidhe was unappreciated, but we received the waltz and the London penny periodical in their stead. Fenianism came and crushed for a time the growing slavishness; but the “practical” politician arrived once more, and after twenty-five years of oratory and “orderly” agitation we have

the population reduced to nearly four millions, and with no amusement save the reading of some “great National organ” run by the British Institute of Journalists and built up of clippings from the offal of British journalism.

This is as things are; but the real question is whether or not we can remedy them, and how. The complaint everywhere is that the people have nothing to employ their evenings. Let us then give them something, and if we are earnest in our desire to keep the people in the country we can do so. In the Irish-speaking districts, as well as insisting on Irish being taught in the schools from the first stage, and taught up to the fourth or fifth as if English had no existence, we must restore reverence to the seanachuidhe, for he is still with us in the Gaelic places. We must reorganise the fireside college, and make the songs and poems of the district once again popular. Nay more, we must have an evening Irish class in every village and town, Irish-speaking or otherwise, where, as well as calling into service the seanachuidhe, the scribe shall again become an institution to set down and prepare for the permanency of print the stories, histories, songs and ballads that are even yet being produced in every part of Gaelic Ireland.

The work incidental to such exercises will go far to invest anew with interest all the old places sacred to myriad saints and heroes, and, developing, become a network linking each end of the island so indissolubly together that united action on economic, industrial, and international questions shall become more easy of accomplishment than it is now. The Feiseanna have done much towards this end, but every possible pathron must be revived, restored as far as is feasible to its original purpose, the cross-road dance should be re-initiated, hurling and football clubs should be called into existence everywhere, and anything that will make a dull hour pleasant, or a place interesting, should be done if it can at all be accomplished. On the clergy and the schoolmasters of Ireland a great deal depends towards making this prospect possible. They have not done anything like their duty in the past; they must prepare to do so now – and at once – else

the people taking the matter in their own hands may see their way towards a system of education where clerical managers and board teachers shall have no existence, and where English ideas of everything shall not predominate. There is no valid reason why the teacher should be prevented from taking his place in making Ireland interesting to Irishmen; that bugbear of “no politics” must be disposed of. Every other public servant can work in the National ranks in whatsoever way he wills – subject to certain risks, of course – but the teacher is supposed, or imagines he is supposed, not to have any political convictions. The time has come to do away with that absurdity. The rural parts of Ireland and the cities of Ireland need to be made Irish in order that they may become interesting to the growing youth of Ireland. If the teacher wishes to take his part in that noble work he must not be obstructed; and if he does not, then he must be prepared to go the way of all the other agencies against which Irish Nationalists have – heaven be thanked! – begun to set themselves determinedly and relentlessly.

THE WORK AND THE WAY.

From The United Irishman, October 13, 1900.

It needs no deep discrimination, no great experience, no mighty thought to convince one that this nation of ours is today Anglicised and debauched to an extent that at first sight seems utterly hopeless. Despite the enthusiasm of the multitude at a popular gathering, green sashes and gold rosettes, the majority of our people, through sheer downright indifference, through criminal thoughtlessness, and through an ignorance which, for a people claiming to be intelligent, is perfectly appalling, have sunk to the level of the lowest of London crowds, to a besotted callousness to the future, and an indifference to the present that almost passes belief. It must fill the heart of any exiled Irish Nationalist with grief to find on his return to the land which has filled his waking thoughts and dominated all his dreams to find the people for whom he had hoped so much drifted so far from what the citizen of any country would consider National self-respect; to find them all, men and women alike, actually tumbling over each other in their desire to show the foreigner how perfectly they can imitate him, how ardently in love they are with his arts, ideas, and institutions. Let that exile we have spoken of walk down O'Connell-street, Dublin, on any evening in the week and behold the young and strong women of our country almost hanging on the necks of British soldiers. Let him go to the places of amusement and find the young and middle-aged of both sexes filling the various places to listen to the latest "new thing" from the "Criterion" or the "Prince of Wales," London. Let him stand a moment and listen to every second boy he meets whistling the last new comic from the London music-halls; let him gaze into the newsagents' shops and feast his eyes on all the splendid productions of Mr. Pearson or the Brothers Harmsworth; let him see the stalwart youth of our towns engaged in athletics with the British garrison football or cricket club; let him see our men and maidens thronging to band promenades to kill an evening listening, or rather alleging they

listen, to the music by the butchers of Omdurman or the conquerors of King Theebaw, and he will naturally be inclined to ask if this is the Ireland he knew, or whether the land which produced '48 and '67 has not been submerged by some sudden action of the Atlantic and this abortion evolved in its place.

He may have a fancy to bring back with him to what has become his home some specimens of Irish manufacture, and he visits a leading house in the belief that it must naturally be able to supply him. He is shown something "up-to-date." Is it Irish? Oh, no; but it is the exact pattern worn by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, or her Majesty has graciously accepted a present of it, and it is worn by all the Royal princes. This sort of thing haunts him wherever he goes, till eventually he concludes that the country has become a mere dumping ground for all that is worst and worthless produced by the Anglo-Saxon. Perhaps the claims of kindred necessitate a visit to the provinces. He drops into some house of entertainment he knew of old. English temperance drinks, English chandlery and matches, American bacon and flour, Scotch oatenmeal, and advertisements of foreign goods stare him on every side; he knew the place when it knew none of these. He looks up the street; up there at the bridge a roofless mill is standing; he knew it when fifty or sixty men found daily employment through it. Higher up one could once hear the hum of the shuttle and the clink of the shoemaker's hammer. There was a tailor once beyond where four empty walls are standing now; close beside it lived Jerry Sweeney the smith. He remembers often standing at the door on his way from school and marvelled whether all the stars in the sky were of the same nature as those which Jerry drew from a piece of iron at a white heat. Jerry, God rest him, sleeps below in Cnocrois, his forge is shut up, and the gate has lost its hinges. The "tuckmill," where the flannel used to be made when he was a boy is gone to wreck and ruin, too, and half the town is bare walls and thistle pastures, but what of that? Hasn't Andy McKeon got a "fine plate glass winda" all the way from London in his shop, an' can't ye get the latest fashions now from him just the same as you would in Dublin or anywhere else?

Who'd think of dressing in the rough things they used in your father's time when you can get the latest patterns, and they readymade, just fresh from England?

Will any honest, sane-minded individual undertake to deny the cruel, bitter truth of this? Can any man, not absolutely blind, with a heart at all for Ireland not feel this perfection of wretchedness, of slavery, and self-abandonment, and is there a man or woman alive to the needs of the hour and the honour of this generation who does not feel personally called upon *at once* to do something to lift the country out of the mire and misery to which the fatuousness, the vanity, and the criminal neglect of her supposed guises have condemned her. We need not to look far. At our very doors, in almost all our homes lies work for the hands and brains of all who desire to make Ireland Irish, and by making her Irish to make her prosperous, and by our united purpose at length to make her free. Let us set about the work by nationalising our own homes; let the progress towards redemption be as gradual as you will, but let it be constant, let it be consistent, let there be no going back, no turning, no temptation. Let us cut ourselves adrift from these ideas of fashion, "tone," &c., which have dominated our thoughts and made our daily lives muddy and discoloured imitations of London and Manchester. Let us lift ourselves out of the ruck and channel of Britishism, and begin the march again along our own lines and towards our natural and National destiny.

Have we the means and what is the way? The Gaelic League has provided one means at least. Let us all honestly and earnestly make the first step by resolving to learn as much as we can of our native language. Some of us may be too old to master it thoroughly to our own satisfaction. Let that not deter us – our example will inspire those younger ones who are springing up around us, and whom a few years will make the men and women of Ireland. Let our family hearths be as native as we can make them; the school trains the mind, but the home moulds it. Let the parents be Irish in heart and mind, and no school, National or otherwise, will sufficiently influence the child to make it unworthy of its parents. Let our songs be Irish – in Irish wherever

possible – but Irish in sentiment under all circumstances, and our young boys and girls will grow up with a spirit that will justify John Mitchel’s prophecy. For that work towards the restoration of Irish hearths and homes we must have an Irish womanhood – an intelligent, enthusiastic, earnest womanhood, who will make Irish wives for the men and Irish mothers for the children of tomorrow. They must be women who know the duty and the pride of sacrifice; for tomorrow may call for sacrifices, and we shall need something besides dishevelled hair and tear-stained faces. We shall need women like the Mary Dwyers, the Maggie Munros, and the Betsy Grays; women with the lofty patriotism of “Mary,” “Eva,” and “Speranza;” women with the quiet firmness and iron resolution of Ellen O’Leary; women with the fortitude of Mary O’Donovan. They need not be as talented as these latter; let them be as womanly and as resolute, and we need not fear whatever trials the future may bring. Women with their hearts in Ireland, their memories filled with the past, their fancies painting the future, will not be likely to rear a race of recruits for the armies of Britain, or curse the country with vain creatures who can be dazzled by the red coat of England. Let us place the blame on whom we will, the infatuation of many of our girls for the British soldier is a disgrace to us. If it is right for us to discountenance and denounce enlisting, how much more necessary is it for us to sue the strongest measures against this other growing evil which strikes at the very existence of our people. Unless we are different to the wives of the future being merely the same as the women of English towns we will see that every girl who seeks the company of the British soldier is made to feel the degradation she brings upon herself. This is drawing the line pretty tight, but the evil is a grievous and a growing one, and when we take measures against physical plagues we ought not to neglect the more insidious ones which, by sapping the morals, eventually emasculate the whole nation.

We face the possibility, nay the certainty, of an indifferent, if not a hostile Press, by advocating any change in things as they stand. Most of our so-called National organs are tied to the things existent by

advertisements or by subsidies of one kind or another. Let not that deter us. The Press has been brought to its senses before on other questions. The Nationalisation of Ireland needs but the resolve of a few earnest people here and there to speed it on its way, and the Press will speedily follow the tide. If the shopkeepers of our towns cannot be induced to sell any home articles that can be got, and to encourage any others that may be produced, the shopkeeper cannot be allowed to stand in the way of progress either. He must go to make room for the producer, and to find some other job than middleman to the foreigner. But he will not refuse, unless he wishes to stand against the interests of the country, and so court ruin. The newsagent who insists on filling his windows with the output of London lanes and garrets, to the exclusion of native literature, must be treated as the disseminators of all contagion are. He must be put into rigid quarantine, and as this can best be done by the people who patronise him, a few weeks of quarantine ought effectually to dispose of his freight. One type of person should be held at the extremest length, the loud talker who does nothing but preach sermons that he never practises himself and who believes that the condition of Ireland will be remedied some time or other by a miracle. For the empty talker, the listless, the limpid, the dilettanti, and the cold water operator there should be no mercy. Let the earnestness of our convictions be judged by our own homes, and our own actions. If they are right, we will have recognised the work, and found the way which fits us to aid the regeneration of our fellows.

ATHLETICS AND OTHER THINGS.

From The United Irishman, October 20, 1900.

One of the features of the times in Ireland is the prominence, which every year is growing more marked, of Athletics in our daily life. A few years since there was none of the colossal tournaments and few, if any, of the sporting journals which today stare one in the face at every turn. Athleticism, as old as civilisation, has latterly in most parts of the world become almost a necessity to people, and its gatherings recur with the regularity of the tides and seasons. That outdoor sports of a bracing, healthy nature are essential to the existence of nation, that they make men better physically and intellectually, are in a manner tonics for the strain which the rush of modern life entails, is such a palpable fact that it need not be laboured here. Of athleticism itself in the abstract there can be no great adverse criticism. Of the manner in which it is carried out in this island of ours there is, unfortunately, much to be said, and little of a complimentary character.

Like almost everything else, Irish Athletics have suffered by the temporary submerging of the Irish language. Time was when every parish had its hurling team, its stalwart stone-throwers, its long jumpers, its high jumpers, and its swift-footed runners. Then also that parish had its poet and its seanachuidhe, its old men and women learned in the virtues of plants and herbs, and its fireside historians learned in the history of every rath and ruin in the neighbourhood. They have all but disappeared; here and there a hurling team survives, or a stone-caster worthy of his fathers arise and maintains the old reputation of the country for dexterity and muscle, but in the main the old order has changed, and the dry rot of Anglicisation has invaded our sports and pastimes, just as it has our literature, our language and our public life. The rise of the Gaelic Athletic Association for a time stayed the evil, and all but vanquished the foreigner and his amusements; but the unstable shifting and squabbling of the last

decade has strengthened the stranger, and today his organisations and his pastimes have invaded every quarter of our island.

It were foolish to adopt a policy of insular hostility to everything external for there must be international reciprocity between nations, and most countries have contributed something to the general knowledge or comfort of mankind. But there is no such international arrangement between us and Great Britain. Anything that is forced upon a people is not likely to be of much benefit to them; nor is anything adopted by them through ignorance or slavishness likely to be to their advantage either. Ireland has always been fond of the horse, but the mania for betting has its votaries now in every class, from the boy who sells you your evening paper to the teller in the bank and the lawyer in the Four Courts. One sees London betting papers on all sides, and hears the weights and handicaps discussed with quite an *au fait* air by people who do not look as if they had very much to risk on the “off chance.” Apart from the morality of betting, these papers are powerful towards Anglicisation. They are purely British; cricket, coursing, football, swimming, footracing, everything of sporting character, are looked at purely from their interest for Britishers, and as if there were no other horses or sports in the world except those controlled by the Jockey Club or the Rugby Union. One hears of the British cricketer and his scoring as if he were some illustrious general who had fought his way to fame through the blood of thousands. One sees as much interest in a cricket match between two English counties as if the salvation of Ireland trembled in the balance. This might not be so noticeable if the people who pant to learn the last exploit of Ranjitsinjhi took even a tame interest in sport in France, Germany, or elsewhere. But no; they are content to lower themselves and their country to the level of a British shire, to talk learnedly of the bowling of this one and the batting of that, and to volunteer colossal wagers on the superiority of this or that eleven. They imagine they are sportsmen and liberal-minded people because they have risen above the common sports of Ireland, and have the names of British favourites on their fingers’ -ends. This cringing and crawling is not, as might be

expected, confined to those enlightened persons the bank clerk or his mercantile brother. Those gentlemen – they are always gentlemen – are quite above the people, and take care to impress the fact on all occasions; but they have recently had accessions from the ranks of those trained in the National and Christian Brothers' Schools – talented young men whose Intermediate training and South Kensington course have convinced them of the utter narrowness and smallness of Nationality – talented – tolerated – young men, who tell you over their glass of bitter beer and in the intervals snatched from the enjoyment of one of Ogden's cigarettes, that they cannot see the use of keeping up this "bally bickering with England" – talented young men who talk of their governors and get the measurements of their clothes sent to London to have the latest cut and fashion. These talented young men have their imitators, too, in various thoughtless young men in lower ranks who take their views on all matters from the journals produced by the members of the British Institute of Journalists – who being intensely National, *wide* their leading columns – fill their pages with notes anent British actors, artistes and athletes, and lament the bad weather at Epsom, or the muddy condition of affairs at Lord's. That cricket has never had anything but a hothouse existence in Ireland is certainly not the fault of either our newspapers or our talented young men.

But though cricket has never taken a hold here, other things have been more fortunate. Thanks to the unfailing and constant patronage of our colleges, Rugby football occupies the leisure moments of our young men whose destiny is one of the learned professions or the Indian Civil Service. That low common game once so popular among the ancestors of these young men is tabooed for the pastime affected by the Britisher. Of course the sport that Fionn and Oscar and their company followed is altogether unfitted for and beneath the scions of country grocers and police pensioners. It would give them no chance of masquerading as the representatives of Ireland before a howling British mob; it would deprive them of the possibility of hobnobbing with the blue bloods of Oxford, Cambridge, or where else. It would

smash up the fellowship and kindly feeling which a series “of international matches” have sown. It would reduce them to mere Irishmen, an intolerable thing that no fellow could possibly submit to. So also the “Association” game of football has elevated our mechanics, artisans, and others, to the level of the gallant British soldier. There is now no obstacle to the young men of our towns and cities standing on the same footing, and sharing the refined conversation of the denizens of the barrack room. What a satisfaction it is to know that a British sergeant of foot condescends to act as umpire between his own company and a body of mere Irishmen. How pleasant to think that “spot” has done more than all the Acts of Parliament to make Irishmen and Englishmen foregather, and forget their racial hatred over the social cup. How pleasant it is to contemplate the march of English civilisation through our island; the choice chaste language of the barrack square and the canteen on the lips of our rising generations; the delicate airy humour of the Cockney tickling our fancy on every side; his comic papers delighting our young minds; his glorious lyrical creations ringing in our ears. Yes, it is a grand thing to think that while many of the young men who affect the companionship of the British soldier would tell you they are prepared to sacrifice their lives against the laws of the British Parliament, they are not resolute enough to forego the regulations of a British association which has no force behind it except snobbery and servility. Of the relative merits of the Irish and foreign games there is no need to speak here. During its existence the Gaelic Athletic Association has trained as great a proportion of first-class men in every line as any other combination in the world, but were its games the lowest in the list of athletic sports, simply and merely from the fact that they are our own we should patronise them and no others. There may be faults in its rules; there may have been disorganisation and want of discipline in its gatherings, but the faults can be mended. It is a fact that many of those who are devotees of the foreign game affect to protest against playing on Sundays, but such strict Sabbatarians ought not to be seen on a race course on such days, for gambling is at least a great a breach of the

Commandments as indulging in exercise. We know, of course, that this plea is merely hypocritical. The game of the British association was originally introduced here by West-British snobs and their military friends, and naturally when our young men affect the game they must needs imitate the snobbery of their originals. It is slavish for any nation to fawn and fondle on another people, especially when that other happens to be master by force of arms. It is the spirit of the mongrel and the sycophant that sneers at what belongs to home and imitates servilely and soullessly the fashions and the fads of the foreigner. No nation ever yet rose to strength or influence by any other way than by the development of its own genius, characteristics, and resources. Those who think it “class” to comingle with the Britisher of any sort must be rigidly ostracised. Ireland can only be lifted by firmness and determination.

IRISH TOPOGRAPHY.

From The United Irishman, November 24, 1900.

Among the many other subjects which the National Schools and in fact most other educational institutions in Ireland have tabooed is Irish topography. "Of the geography of the British Isles," says the Intermediate programme, "a minute knowledge will be required." "A general knowledge of the geography of the British Empire, with special knowledge of the railway systems of the United Kingdom," say the Civil Service programmes, and the unfortunate scholar is primed with the height of Mount Everest, the length of the Ganges, the density of the Dead Sea, and the junctions of the London North-Western, but of Ireland he is told next to nothing, for a knowledge of anything Irish is not a factor in competitive examinations. Hence, we grow up with the haziest ideas about Irish places, and except for such towns as Belfast or Cork or Derry, have only the dimmest acquaintance with the lakes, mountains, plains, and rivers that go to make Ireland, know somewhat more about Timbuctoo than Tullamore, and are more certain of the source of the Nile than the Shannon. It is to be hoped that one of the earliest school texts which the Gaelic League will produce will be an Irish geography in Irish, which will do something towards dissipating the ignorance and apathy which surround the subject in our day schools, and indeed in every department of our daily life.

It does not need the present writer to point out how inseparably intertwined with each other are geography and topography. Both are fascinating studies, but the latter is possibly the more fascinating, because it is the local and the homely, it tells us of things about us, it brings us from the generalities of geography to the particularities of the places we have grown up in. It is the blending of tradition, history, and locality that makes the past live and keeps the memory of great things an abiding influence to inspire the present. We, by turning our backs on our language, have lost the power that these memories would give us. For us the rivers and the lakes have no message in their music,

the voices of the glens and groves, the mountains and the lonely places speak unintelligibly, for we have lost the medium that would make them plain to us. We may appreciate their beauty, their rugged grandeur, or their soft splendour, but they are merely earth and verdure to us. We feel not the sympathy with their associations which the knowledge of the story of their names would give us. In some cases we have allowed the old names to be substituted by English ones, in many we have permitted such atrocious attempts at pronunciation to become current that the real name may be said to be obliterated, in most we have regarded the subject with such indifference that the survival of any remnant of the old nomenclature may be regarded as little short of a miracle.

There have not been wanting at all times men to draw attention to the valuable materials which we were thus allowing to slip from us. Davis, ever watchful for anything tending to distinctiveness, saw the necessity of a book on the subject. Writing to O'Brien in 1844 he says: "Either you or I, or someone should compile a short account of the geography, history, and statistics of Ireland, accompanied by a map. We must do more to educate the people. This is the only moral force in which I have any faith." It did not come then, except in such detached fashion as in O'Donovan's notes to the Four Masters and the publications of the Archaeological Society, or in O'Curry's notes under similar circumstances. The first real attempt was made by Dr. T. W. Joyce in his "Irish Names of Places," and in fact it may be said to be the only volume on the subject yet obtainable. Still it is not a book for the general reader, and is far from complete. Besides it takes account only of the places with Irish or barbarised Irish titles, passes over quite a host even of these, and has practically nothing to say of these districts which have been unfortunate enough to have foreign names substituted for their native titles. Yet it is an excellent book, and we know of few more interesting volumes for an Irish language class to add to its studies. It will make many things plain that seem inexplicable, and fill the country with quite a host of legends and

recollections that will make the most uninviting places full of interest and make the beauty spots more beautiful.

The Irish-speaking peasant alone has a true idea of Irish topography. For him still there are “the five ends of Eireann,” there are still Leath-Chuinn and Leath-Mohgha, there are no counties; the sounding waves of Moyle still fret around the shores of Uladh. Cliodhna’s wave still breaks upon the rocks of Carberry; the Boyne still marks the border of Uladh even as it did in the days of Maedhbh and Cuchullain, the whole face of the land in fact is different. The thirty-two counties disappear, and instead there exists a world that seems strange and foreign. One learns of Tir Connaihl and Tir Eoghain, of Ikerrin and Iveragh, of Idrone and Offally, of Bregia, Magh na n-Ealtaidh, and Ossory. Tir-Amhlaidh, Magh Luirg, Ui Maine, and the two Breffnies. Of Triucha, Oirghiallia Na Fuaithé, and many other cantred and tribe land. Similarly the lakes, the rivers, and the mountains become native. One never hears of such things as the Sugar Loaf, the Devil’s Bit, or the Devil’s Punch Bowl, of Lake Belvidere, of Newtown this or that or Mount so and so. Instead one finds the country dotted with full sounding titles, duns and liossa, ratha, and sliabhs take the place of all the Saxon names, and the land looks in reality a separate and distinct entity. There is no similarity with any other nation on God’s earth except where a kindred people have left their traces, or where branches of the same race have spread and multiplied. Obliterated at once are all the towns and villages that make the country look like an English shire, gone are the connecting links with British kings and queens, with Cromwellian freebooter and Williamite adventurer, and on the spots that once knew them spring to life again the memories that carry us back to the old race which has seen Norman knight, Elizabethian gallant, the Roundhead, the Huguenot, the Williamite, and the Palatine, come, intermarry with the children of the soil, and develop into the most anti-English of us all. Nay, these old names carry us back even beyond historic days, recall names and deeds that loom on the border line of history, in those dim days where the mists of tradition bide and all the figures have a mighty

majesty. They tell us of the origin of loughs and rivers, why this hollow is so called, and where is the cairn that has lived down time upon yon mountain top. They teach us of the work of the centuries, hold within them the secrets of the far off years, tell us of the changes that have come since first a name was given to them by the tall blue-eyed flaxen-haired heroes who chased the wolves through the pine forests, and formed a phalanx round the island whose fame deterred even Imperial Rome. The rule of the foreigner may have imposed new names upon some of them, but nothing can change the associations of a nation except the indifference of its own people – and today even still those old memories linger in the valley depths and on the mountain tops. On old men's lips and in old women's hearts the old names are cherished – the old traditions still survive. They are potent still to link us with what has gone if we but will it.

Some of our public bodies have taken the praiseworthy step of casting their foreign titles and restoring the olden Gaelic names. In very many cases change would not need to be radical, the original title has survived, in a very barbarous fashion generally but not wholly indecipherable. In other instances, generally of towns, only the English title appears to be known. Either of two things has happened here, the town is an English foundation entirely like Charleville, or the name is of some centuries standing, like Newport, Louisburg, or Newtownbarry. The Gaelic names of such places generally is unknown in the district, but the old books restore them to us. The Irish, as we know, never affected town life, but there were towns notwithstanding, for Ptolemy's map gives the names and situations of several such settlements even then of European fame. It should be the duty of our National organisations to agitate for a return by all our councils, rural and district, to their legitimate titles. The County Councils ruling over districts created by English Acts of Parliament ought to be left alone. Our minor councils correspond far better with our ancient divisions – for all our baronies are mainly the olden subdivisions of the provinces and retain fairly correctly their original names. An effort should be made to influence our boards to set up on

all their public notices the Gaelic names of the villages and parishes, to insist on their electoral divisions being known by their Gaelic titles and in every other way possible to disseminate knowledge of the local history of our people. This history lies locked up in our topography, the natural features of our land, its hills and hollows, its woods and morasses, its riverheads and estuaries, all these are plain to the man who can read our topography. He may never have been within miles of them, and yet their names tell him at once as well as if he were a native what manner of places they are that have been mentioned. The value of such knowledge cannot be overestimated. It is a priceless heirloom, for the loss of which no amount of commercial success can compensate. It is a book that is always to our hand, a well-spring of inspiration that can never run dry; a treasure for the humblest as for the highest; a spell that charms equally the poet and toiler; that whispers of yesterday, and fits us for tomorrow.

THE WORK OF THE CENTURY.

From The United Irishman, December 29, 1900.

A century is a fairly long stretch of a nation's history, and affords time for the making or marring of much of its individuality. It can have lifted itself within that period to a position which assure its existence for practically an unlimited time, and it can by indifference and neglect have contracted habits which make its separate existence only a question of years. Within the last hundred years the United States has grown from a comparatively small commonwealth on the eastern fringe of America to a vast organisation dominating the whole north of the Continent from ocean to ocean, and from the Great Lakes to the Bay of Florida, while Spain has degenerated to a third or fourth-rate power. The history of either does not concern us much just now, further than to serve to prove our opening statement. We are at the close of a century, and a glance back at things as they have fallen out in our own country within those years may be of service. We desire to contrast the present state of things here with those which held before the Act of Union, and to see how far we have advanced or how far we have declined since the Union Jack first flew over Dublin Castle.

The year 1800, as we know, found Ireland still suffering keenly from the gloom and disappointments of '98. It may be granted that there was scarcely a home in Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow, Kildare, Dublin, Meath, Louth, Down, and Antrim but had something of the terrors of trials of that time and tasted, many of them, the bitterest of its sorrows. The West, after her glorious response to the summons of Humbert, had fallen into silence, stunned by the failure of her hopes; and the rest of the country, in part of which the spirit of the time had been unknown, had taken the course of things in sullen indifference. The election of the last Anglo-Irish Parliament was not an event that aroused much enthusiasm. Nobody of the masses took much interest in the existence or eclipse of the body which had promoted the half-hangings, house-burnings, and other outrages perpetrated by the

various yeomanry corps, for the men whose hopes had been fixed on the utter extinction of English law in Ireland were not likely to be concerned for its perpetuation in Dublin; so they left the election to the blatant loyalist element and to such of the Catholic freeholders as the promises of Emancipation induced to support the designs of Pitt and Castlereagh.

The Union passed, and Emancipation did not come. A few years convinced even, some of those who had voted for a Union of the ruinous consequences of their action. They saw the manufactures which had given employment growing fewer and fewer; they saw the artisans growing poorer and poorer, sinking to absolute poverty in many cases, and they found themselves, instead of the equals of British lords and commoners, looked down upon as an inferior class, and, in spite of themselves, always regarded as mere Irishmen. The Act of the Parliament of 1794 which had given the franchise to Catholics and led to the establishment of the forty-shilling freeholders had filled the land with a host of small farmers, none of whom could be said to have been wealthy, but all were above the reach of want. Napoleon's wars gave them a great foreign market for their produce, and though the trade of the towns had declined woefully, yet their market was secure, their cornfields needed workers, and the population of the land went up every year by tens of thousands. A few creatures of the new state of public affairs had prospered by the extinction of the College Green Parliament, but the bulk of those whose fathers or themselves had been the leaders of the society and political life of their time began to long for a return of the old regime, some shrewdly enough seeing extinction for themselves and their class in the continuance of the provincial life that had come; others honestly enough concerned for the country. Out of this spirit of dissatisfaction a movement might have grown, aided by the complications on the Continent, sufficiently strong to have secured the re-constitution of the old Parliament from the British Minister; but O'Connell came, and seizing the disabilities of the Catholics as a cause, drew off to the relieving of them that great bulk of popular opinion and influence which, behind a movement

making for more, would have as easily achieved what it sought, and far sooner, as O'Connell secured Emancipation. The opportunity afforded by the lengthened strife in Europe passed with the fall of Napoleon; the markets went, and a famine in 1817 pressed the people almost as severely as that of '47. Rents were all but unobtainable, and the full fruits of the Union stared all classes of Irishmen in the face. Many of the forty-shilling freeholders, unable to meet their landlords, became paupers, and were thus dependent on the charity of people not much better off than themselves. The landlords had maintained a host of these small farmers purely for the influence which their votes gave them, and O'Connell, by accepting Emancipation at the price of the disfranchisement of those men, at once sealed the fate of all those of them who by one means or another had tided over famine and misfortune and still retained their holdings. Emancipation sounded the knell of the small tillage farmer, and the repeal of the Corn Laws completed whatever the other had left undone. The consolidation of small farms became the object of the landlords, and the beginning of that terrible tide of emigration commenced which still goes on. Emigration had never been quite unknown, but it had been more from the plantation parts of Ulster than from the other provinces. It had brought to America the sturdy men who gave the Knoxes, Greenes, Hancocks, Waynes, and Montgomerys to the war of the Revolution. The breaking-up of the small farms drove a host of a different set across the ocean, men and women whom generations of penal law had deprived of the simplest forms of education, and whom the combination of Orange corporations had shut out from the acquirement of most of the technical handicrafts. They were not likely to secure any desirable positions in their new surroundings, and they were compelled to become the mere drudges of their fellows. They were mainly Gaelic speakers, but that did not interfere with their prospects, for Gaelic was then as prevalently spoken in the States as any European tongue save English, and had been used on the field of battle in giving the words of command as often as English during the war of the Revolution. The earlier immigrants to America had as little

idea of abandoning their tongue as the German, French or Italian immigrant has today. The bad habit was begun at home, and grew out of as short-sighted a policy as ever influenced men. A hundred years ago Irish was spoken in every part of Ireland by all classes of its inhabitants, save the Ulster Scotch, who never seem to have taken kindly to it. During the famine of 1817, which has been referred to above, the proselytising societies of the metropolis decided on making a great effort to give their patrons value for their money, and accordingly despatched through the country a swarm of agents laden with the Bedell Gaelic Bible, and charged to succour such of the starving people as would promise to read the Bible to their neighbours and conform to the "Church as by law established." Flesh, alas! Is weak, and many a man's faith yielded to the blandishments of the Bible-mongers. The Catholic clergy took fright at the state of things, and peremptorily ordered the discontinuance of the reading of Irish. The result is obvious; the command put a stop to the copying and compiling of the MSS in the Irish tongue which had done so much to perpetuate the memory of olden times and preserve the continuity of the National traditions. There ought to have been no fear of the Bible-mongers, for, except in very few cases, their labours proved fruitless once the stress was over, and the clergy, by preventing the reading of Irish, did not see that they were throwing the people back on English, where they would, and have, found literature far worse and more dangerous even than the work of William Bedell. O'Connell's insane campaigning in English to a people who did not understand one-sixth of what he said helped on the displacing of Gaelic, and the advent of the National Schools brought the main factor, which has all but succeeded in obliterating everything with the slightest tendency towards National individuality.

Even up to the middle of the century a vast proportion of the needs of the people were supplied by themselves. In all the country districts the flax-wheel and the woollen-wheel were well known, and the woman who could not supply her own household with all its necessities held no very high place in her neighbours' esteem. That

has all but disappeared, and one meets the flimsy fabrics of Manchester and Yorkshire nowadays in the deepest recesses of the West and South, sees the latest imitations of Parisian fashions at the chapel on Sundays, and hears little or nothing of the old, innocent, enjoyable, and perfectly natural fun which once beamed around the firesides when the nights were long and the neighbours came a' ceilidh. A hundred years ago the Catholic peasant had no civil rights, or next to none; his churches had no steeples; his children could not read the latest London story, and his leaders reposed not on the soft benches of Westminster. He was, undoubtedly, the slave of the landlords, the most soulless and tyrannical class that have ever encumbered the earth. Yet, withal, he fed and clothed himself out of his own materials; he sang songs made by some famous poet of his district; he related or listened to stories of the places and the people round about him; he believed in the existence of a land of spirits and ghosts; yet he had a stout heart and a strong arm. His food was simple; his dress was comely and comfortable; his wife was as native as himself; his sons were stalwart young men who had visions betimes, and listening to the glowing fancies of the occasional poor scholar or itinerant schoolmaster, longed with throbbing pulses to take part in one great glorious charge upon the enemy. His daughters were diligent, industrious girls, whose songs as the spinning wheel went round were gladdening to the heart; girls whose ambition looked not for husbands in the ranks of yeomen or armymen; girls whose tears fell as they listened with shaded eyes to the story of some brave fellow's sacrifice. These times and people, simple and sincere, fit for any purpose, and true as steel, we have sacrificed for the dubious benefits accorded by a foreign Parliament. May we hope that the opening century and the re-awakened spirit that is abroad may restore to us some little of our olden life and customs.

GAELICISM IN PRACTICE.

I.

From The United Irishman, January 12, 1901.

I propose to be retrospective and in a manner prophetic, and if in the course of these articles I may go over ground already well-trodden, my excuse must be that the temper of the time and the evident prospects which a knowledge of the truth may make realities, compel one even at the risk of being accused of re-iteration to call attention to a number of matters that demand the attention of all who seriously regard the present and future state of Ireland. I propose to prove that the temporary loss of the Irish language has been responsible for much more of our present condition than is generally imagined, and to show that till we have impregnated every section of our people with the ideal of a Gaelic-speaking nationality that genuine progress in the sense understood by the present day, in the sense of a comfortable and contented people, is at least a very dubious possibility.

We have, I believe, reached that height of intelligence when the greater section of our people believes that the created legislature of a foreign parliament cannot by any chance, give us an Irish Nation. In spite of all the ecstasies of the newspapers anyone can see that the last ten years of turmoil and temporising have wrought such harm to the cause of what is called “moderate” Nationalism as to cripple its effectiveness for years to come, if not forever. The country, however, is not now more than in any other period without an innate belief in the righteousness of the path she has generally trodden or in the prospects of the future, but then she has recognised that the age of miracles is gone, and that the only road to success now is a knowledge of what one wants, of one’s means of securing it, and more than either a determination to obtain it at all hazards. The country in short wants a policy, that is to say Freedom, individual and national Freedom of the fullest and broadest character. Freedom to think and act as to each best beseems; National Freedom to stand equal with the rest of the

world, to support the claims of every people to work along their own lines, to develop their own ideas, and thus advance the common intellectual interests of mankind. People who sneer, like certain new writers, at “Ireland a Nation” forget that there are others who hold by the ideal of a self-governing, self-supporting Ireland, besides the class who are stirred to enthusiasm by the oratory of a British Parliamentarian or the glare of a torchlight. There are students and thinkers who having satisfied themselves of Ireland’s capabilities for separate existence, see nothing inconsistent or quixotic in the beliefs which every Irish Irishman has held to a greater or less extent since it first became necessary to take cognisance of the existence of England, or rather of Englishmen. These beliefs I have chosen to denominate Gaelicism, and I have set out with the intention of showing that while they were held and practised generally by the people the influence of the foreigner in Ireland was practically nil, and in such wise I propose to show that so far from being a merely sentimental or academical movement, this Gaelicism which is again beginning to exercise the minds of our people is of all movements the most practical, and the best calculated to restore us to that state of mind which best becomes a people eager to occupy a definite and distinct place in the world’s life. I propose to show that while Ireland retained her Gaelicism she not only supported herself, but maintained a vast commercial intercourse with the European continent – and that in spite of all the agencies that the Crown and Government of England could employ against her – and further that not only did her own people practise their customs and fashions and direct commerce, but that also those of the strangers who came amongst them primarily to work against them were assimilated and influenced to such an extent they became more active against the London Government than those whom they came to quell.

Today and for many years back we have been regarding the land as the sole source of wealth in Ireland, and we have heard of the land as if Ireland has always depended on it as her only means of subsistence. How far that is true, we shall see later on, but a passage

from an essay of Lord Dufferin's, published as far back as 1867, may be useful *en passant*: —

“From the reign of Queen Elizabeth until within a few years of the Union, the various commercial confraternities of Great Britain never for a moment relaxed their relentless grip on the trades of Ireland. One by one each of our nascent industries was either strangled in its birth or handed over gagged and bound to the jealous custody of the rival interest in England, until at last every fountain of wealth was hermetically sealed, and even the traditions of commercial enterprise have perished through desuetude. What has been the consequences of such a system pursued with relentless pertinacity for over 250 years? This: that debarred from every other trade and industry the entire nation flung itself back on *the land* with as fatal an impulse as when a river whose current is suddenly impeded rolls back and drowns the valley it once fertilised.”

This to a great extent is the reason of the state of the land question today, the real germ of the trouble, however, being the change of ownership and title, caused by the substitution of the foreign for the native code of land laws, a matter which it did not, of course, suit Lord Dufferin to dwell upon.

It is a long hark back to pre-Christmas days, but it is necessary to show that commerce and industry was practised by the Gael long before the advent of any foreigner. The reader of W. A. Sullivan's introductory volume to O'Curry's "Manners and Customs" will find sufficient data to convince him of the commercial relations existing between Ireland and the great trading communities of the then-known world. We have positive proof in the collections of the Royal Irish Academy of the skill and artistic genius of the early Irish artificers. We see in the remains of cell and cross the advanced state of the handicrafts of those days. In the *Book of Rights*, and throughout O'Curry's "Lectures" we find references going to show that artificers in textiles were equally as talented and perfect as their contemporaries in stone and the metals. The woollen trade especially is of the remotest antiquity in Ireland. In the Brehon Laws the various processes by which wool was prepared into cloth, teasing, cording, combing, spinning, weaving, napping and dyeing, are dealt with. The women of

the tribes carried on this work, and the laws are very explicit in laying down the divisions of the raw material and of the cloth in different stages of its manufacture, which a woman should be entitled to take with her in case of separation from her husband, the proportions being adjusted by an estimate of the amount of labour expended by the wife on the wool or on the fabric. All the dyes necessary in the preparation of the various cloths were home grown. Some are still known and used by the peasantry, others have been forgotten or lost. All the great mantles of our heroes, of which we read so much in Irish romance, were made by the hands of these tribeswomen, and, in fact, as an article of revenue, manufactured cloth came very close to live stock. The cloak especially was esteemed a great treasure, and indeed only in our own day has it been discarded for the fripperies of Paris and the fashion plates of the London journals. While the higher ranks had of course the best that the age could provide, the humbler people were dressed in clothes composed almost entirely of woollen material. A thin stuff answered for shirting or vest, a thicker composed the tunic and the *truis*, or trousers, and the cloak was fashioned of frieze. The women had longer mantles than men, and wore them over a kirtle or gown which reached to the ankle. The Norman adventurers found an active industrial life in Ireland, for the Danish occupation, though it had interfered seriously with the higher artistic achievements of the people, and interrupted the continuance of artistic development, had scarcely, if at all, affected the production of textiles. They had not been long here till, as even the veriest tyro in Irish history knows, they began to follow the fashions and styles of dress of the natives. This, in the main, was due to their adoption of the Irish tongue, their marriage with Irish women, and the influence wrought upon them by the habits and mode of living around about them. This fancy to appear in the garb and style of the natives did not recommend itself to the Britishers in authority, and hence the Statute of Kilkenny passed in the reign of Edward III, and prohibiting the use of the Irish fashions in dress or language. Yet, though the English objected to the styles of the Irish tailors of the 14th century, they had no objection to the manufactures

of the Irish looms, for we find Irish frieze allowed into England free of duty by an Act passed in the 28th year of this monarch's reign. During the same time we have proofs that Irish serge was imported and held in high esteem by the merchants of Florence, and a celebrated Italian poet of the 14th century, Fazio degli Uberti, refers to Ireland as "a country worthy of renown for the beautiful serges she sends us." In the reign of Henry VII an act was passed ordering the Irish lords who attended the Parliament to appear in the same Parliament robes as those of England or suffer a penalty, but the Act had little to no effect. In the next reign, Henry VIII, the citizens of Galway were ordered to "wear no mantles in the streets but cloaks or gowns, coats, doublets, and hose shapen after the English fashion, but made of the county cloth or any other it may please them to buy," and every loyal woman was forbidden to wear "any kirtle or coat tucked up or embroidered with silk, or laid with uske after the fashion, or any mantle, coat, or hood of the said pattern." Spenser some years later reviles the fashion in dress, more especially of the men. "The cloak," he writes,

"...is a fit house for an outlaw, a meet bed for a rebel, and an apt cloak for a thief. Firstly, the outlaw, being for his many crimes and villainies banished from the towns and houses of honest men, and wandering in waste places, far from danger of law, maketh his mantle his house, and under it covereth himself from the wrath of heaven, from the offence of the earth, and from the sight of men. When it raineth it is his penthouse; when it bloweth it is his tent; when it freezeth it is his tabernacle. In summer he can wear it loose, in winter he can wrap it close; at all times he can use it, never heavy, never cumbersome. Likewise, for a rebel, it is serviceable; for in this war that he maketh – if at least it deserve the name of war, when he still flieth from his foe, and lurketh in the thick woods and strait passages, waiting for advantages – it is his bed, yea, and almost his household staff. For the wood is his house against all weathers, and his mantle is his couch to sleep in, therein lie wrappeth himself round, and croucheth himself strongly against the gnats, which to more in that country to more annoy the naked rebels whilst they keep the woods, and do more sharply wound them than their enemies' swords or spears, which can seldom come nigh them. Yea, and oftentimes their mantle serveth them when they are near driven, being wrapped above their left arm, instead of a target; for it is hard to cut through with a sword. Besides it is light to bear, light to throw away, and being,

as they commonly are, naked, it is to them all in all. Lastly for a thief it is so handsome as it may seem it was first invented for him, for under it he may clearly convey any fit pillage, that cometh handsomely in his way. And when he goeth abroad in the night on free-booting it is his best and surest friend.”

These strictures of Spenser were not the only efforts made to wean the people, both the nobles and commonality, from the use of their native garments. Sir John Perrott, Deputy, made presents of cloaks cut in the English fashion to the various Irish and Anglo-Irish lords – but, though they accepted them, they still continued the use of their own long-flowing mantles, while the country people clung to their warm friezes. In the reign of James I, a set was made upon the glibbe, which Spenser had also anathematised as a mask for all kings of villainy. Sir John Davies, writing in 1613, rejoices that the enactments of James have “reclaimed the Irish from their wildness, caused them to cut off their glibbes and long haire, to convert their mantles into cloaks, to conform themselves to the manner of England in all their behaviour and outward forms,” so that he hopes “the next generation will in tongue, and heart, and everyway else become English; so as there will be no difference or distinction but the Irish sea betwixt us.” All the while, however, despite innovations, the women went on spinning, dyeing and weaving the wool, and cutting the clothes of the nation after the fashion of their ancestors. We know that practically all the towns were then and for many centuries previously occupied by the English, and that trade corporations, composed almost exclusively of Englishmen, or men of English descent, existed in them. But the fairs, at which the greater portion of the commerce of the country was then transacted, were controlled by the Irish, and there the clothing commodities sold consisted exclusively of fabrics made by the people of the materials grown by themselves, and of clothes fashioned after the styles of their ancestors. We find the merchants of France, Brabant and Flanders with agencies in Youghal, Waterford, Cork and elsewhere, for the exportation of Irish wool and woollen goods, and Campion, the Jesuit, describes Waterford and Dungarvan as full of traffic with England, France and

Spain. Galway everyone knows to have been a famous trading port with the south of Europe, and Irish fabrics were held in such esteem that in Catalonia, in Northern Spain, the inhabitants took advantage of the prevailing taste, and supplied France with serges which they passed off as Irish.

All this industrial activity finding an outlet for its production as far away as Florence had been in existence for ages before the Earls sailed from Lough Swilly, and the planters came to the North to grip the fields and uplands of the gallant children of the Hi Niall. Yet people quote Froude to justify them in attributing the commencement of manufacture of any kind in Ireland to the advent of the gentry sent over here by the companies of Skinners, Fishmongers, Haberdashers, Vintners, &c. Mr. Froude says they came "Over to earn a living by labour in the land which had produced little but banditti," and that

"...for the first time, the natural wealth of Ireland began to reveal itself, commerce sprung up, busy fingers were set to work on loom and spinning well, fields fenced and drained grew yellow, with rolling corn, and the vast herds and flocks which had wandered at will on hill and valley were turned to profitable account."

Yet as Mrs. Sarah Atkinson points out, in this very reign, in the year 1622 to be exact, it was proposed to put a restraint on Irish wools and woollens, the exportation of which was calculated to interfere prejudicially with England's foreign trade. In the succeeding reign we find Ireland engaged in a great trade with Spain and Portugal in "bides, wool, yarn, rugs, blankets, and sheep-skins with the wool." To meet this Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, Charles's Deputy, proposed to levy a tax on bees, to secure for the Castle Government a monopoly of salt and of tobacco, and by imposing exorbitant rates on raw wool and manufactured woollens to compel the people to purchase their clothes from England. The Irish were to be prevented from weaving or spinning their own wool, but this same wool was first to be taken to England where it was to pay a heavy import duty, and when turned into cloth, carried back to Ireland where an import duty was again to

be levied. However, the turn of politics in England put an effective end to Stafford's plotting. "The tour of the French traveller M. de la Boullaye le Gouz in Ireland A.D. 1644," edited by Crofton Croker for the Antiquarian Society, gives us an idea of the Irish dress of the middle 17th century:

"Their breeches are a pantaloon of white frieze, which they call trousers and for mantles they have five or six yards of frieze drawn round the neck, the body and over the head. The women wear a very large mantle, the cape being made of coarse woollen frieze, in the manner of the women of Lower Normandy. They (the Irish) import wine and salt from France and sell their frieze cloths at good prices."

Father Meehan in his "Irish Hierarchy in the 17th Century," quotes the Secretary to Rinuccini's reference to the sheep of the country "from which fine wool is made." Sir Wm. Petty, ancestor of the Marquis of Lansdowne, writing in 1672, of the dress of the Irish peasantry says:

"Their clothing is far better than that of the French peasants, or the poor of most countries; which advantage they have from their wool whereof twelve sheep furnish a competency to one of these families, which wool and the cloth made of it doth cost these poor people no less than £50,000 per annum for the dyeing of it, a trade exercised by the women of the country."

And again:

"The diet, housing, and clothing of the 16,000 families who are computed to have more than one chimney in their houses is much the same as in England; nor is French elegance unknown in many of them, nor the French and Latin tongues, the latter thereof is very frequent among the poorest Irish, and chiefly in Kerry, most remote from Dublin."

For a long time previous to this an extensive cattle and live-stock trade had been carried on with England, but in 1663 an Act of the British Parliament was passed prohibiting the importation from Ireland of cattle (dead or alive), sheep or swine, beef, pork, or bacon. Three years later the importation of horses was prohibited, along with

cheese and butter, so that consternation seized the English element in Ireland who had been mainly depending on their foreign markets for existence. The crisis decided the great Duke of Ormonde to fall back on the woollen trade till then absolutely monopolised by the Catholic Celts, and having succeeded in getting the restraints upon the exportation of commodities of Irish growth and manufacture to foreign countries removed, he brought over several colonies of woollen weavers started woollen factories in Clonmel, Kilkenny and Carrick; other colonies gathered round Limerick, Waterford, Kinsale and Cork, and business flourished remarkably well till the outbreak of the revolution of 1688, when the war in Ireland smashed up the plantations and practically wiped out the manufacture. With the fall of James the colonists got the upper hand again, and the woollen trade revived. Gradually the Catholic artisans and wool-growers grew in strength in the trade, France, the old friend, provided them with a ready market for any surplus that remained over the supplying of the home demand, and so strong did they become that it was feared that the estates of the Protestants would ultimately fall into their hands by purchase.

“The peasantry,” says Matthew O’Connor in his “History of Irish Catholics,”:

“...thus acquired valuable interests, and became a rich, a sturdy and an independent yeomanry, even that miserable race known by the name of cottiers, the working slaves of the Irish gentry, were in a more thriving and prosperous condition in those days than at any subsequent period. Most of them were in possession of a cow, two goats, and six or seven sheep.”

But the nation which had broken the articles of Limerick was not likely to allow much latitude, even to men of their own kindred settled elsewhere, and accordingly the British Parliament and the British King William III bowed to the wishes of the British people, and by the 10th and 11th Act of William III suppressed the manufacture of Irish woollens in toto. The extent to which the trade had grown may be gauged from the articles enumerated in the statute, wool, woolfells,

worsted, wool flocks, woollen yarn, cloth serges, shalloons, cloth, serge, bays, kerseys and days, friezes, druggets, &c. A fine of £40 was threatened on the master and every sailor of a vessel carrying such goods abroad, and the vessel itself was to be forfeited, and in order to further effectually stop the exportation, two ships of the fifth-rate, two of the sixth-rate, and eight armed sloops were appointed to constantly cruise between Ireland and Scotland with power to enter and search any vessel supposed to contain the prohibited goods. The result was the immediate destitution of numerous families of artisans and the commencement of emigration to America. Several families of Catholic artisans removed to the north of Spain and to France, and there started manufactures which eventually smashed the English trade in woollen textiles on the Continent. It was against this outrageous legislation that William Molyneux rose, and against which Swift wrote his inimitable pamphlets. But it has to be pointed out that the only people who suffered by the enactments of the British king and Parliament were the very men who themselves or their fathers had been imported into Ireland to make it a British colony. The Catholic population bothered little about British kings or their enactments. “The Wild Geese” flying to join the armies of France, Spain, and Austria opened up markets for the wool which their kindred at home continue to grow, and with the trade of the natives with the Continent increased in spite of armed cruisers and revenue men. All along the West and South, and indeed from every little port and inlet around the island barques sped across to France bearing the fleeces and the shorn wool to the manufactories of Rouen, Abbeville, Ameins, Beauvais, &c. I may mention here a relic of those days which still survives in Fingal – that portion of Dublin extending from the Tolka north to the Delvin river and from the sea west to the borders of Meath. The people there have got the reputation of niggardliness and inhospitality from the fact that the doors are always shut during mealtimes. The origin was nothing to do with such an un-Irish spirit, but is a relic of these wool-smuggling days, when the household gathering around the table at meal-times discussed the various

ramifications of the trade in which they were engaged, and naturally bolted the door to protect themselves against interlopers. Eventually, the men engaged in the traffic became so fearless that they ventured boldly into such ports as Cork, Waterford, and Wexford, and shipped their goods under the noses of the soldiers sent to prevent them. Other means, too, were adopted, the wool being combed, put into butter firkins or provision barrels, and sent through the custom house as salt provisions. Well known merchants of Wexford, Waterford and Youghal brought their ships into Rochelle, Nantes, St. Malo and Bordeaux, and disposed of their cargoes there in full view of any Englishmen who might be about. Froude throws rather a luminous light on this period: –

“The entire nation, high and low, was enlisted in an organised confederacy against the law. Distinctions of creed were obliterated, and resistance to law became a bond of union between Catholic and Protestant, Irish Celt and English colonist, from the great landlord, whose sheep roamed in thousands over the Cork mountains, to the gauger who, with conveniently blinded eyes, passed the wool packs through the custom house as butter barrels; from the magistrate, whose cellars were filled with claret on the return voyage of the smuggling craft, to the judge on the bench, who dismissed as frivolous and vexatious the various cases which came before the court to be tried. All persons of all ranks in Ireland were principals or accomplices in a pursuit which made it a school of anarchy; and good servants of the State, who believed that laws were made to be obeyed, lay under the ban of opinion as public enemies. Government tried stricter methods, substituted English for Irish officers at chief ports like Waterford and Cork, and stationed cruisers along the coast to seal the mouths of the smaller harbours. But the trade only took refuge in bays and creeks where cruisers dare not run in. if encountered at sea, the contraband vessels were sometimes armed so heavily that the Government cutters and schooners hesitated to meddle with them. If unarmed and overhauled they were found apparently laden with some innocent cargo of salt provisions... Driven from Cork warehouses the packs were stored in caves about the islands, cliffs and crags where small vessels took them off at leisure; or French traders, on signal from shore, sent in their boats for them. Chests of bullion were kept by the merchants at Rochelle and Brest to pay for them as they were landed. When the French Government forbade the

export of so much specie, claret, brandy and silks were shipped to Ireland in exchange on board the vessels which had brought the wool.”

Add to this the fact that a trade was also carried on with Spain and Portugal, that Irish serges were smuggled into Scotland, and that the whole peasant population were clothed in garments made by themselves, and we get an idea of the extent of Ireland’s interest in the woollen industry. Swift’s agitation in favour of homemade goods was not made for them, but for the English colonists and their wives and daughters, who had been accepting anything the Englishman sent over when the Acts of William and Anne had succeeded in extirpating the woollen factories in the towns. The scathing irony of the great Dean of St Patrick’s shamed them into something like manhood, but their narrow bigotry and intolerance drifted them back after a shorter time into wretchedness and degradation, the artisans in many cases slaving and the shopkeepers ever on the verge of bankruptcy. The Irish, on the other hand, though their condition cannot be said to have been ideal, were far from as badly off as we are oftentimes led to believe.

II.

From The United Irishman, January 19, 1901.

“Those Penal Days,” of which Davis sung, though the acme of all that fiendish cruelty and bigoted injustice could devise, as far as Acts of Parliament are concerned, were in actual fact not worse than any of the other days which our people have enjoyed since English law gained anything like a hold here. True, the Irish Catholic was a serf by law, denied education, position, and influence, but he exercised a far greater influence abroad than he does today. Though there was a price on the head of every priest, still the people managed to hear Mass; though education was denied, still they produced scholars whose fame still survives, and poets whose songs live yet on the lips of the people, and are daily winning a wider audience. The population of the country increased, Arthur Young in his “Tour in Ireland, 1776-1778,” notes the visible encroachment of the Catholic tillage population on the grazing tracts, and Gervase Parker Bushe, writing in 1789, gives the population then as 4,000,000 Catholics and 1,500,000 Protestants, and this was after almost a hundred years of Penal Law. In spite of enactments, Catholic merchants had grown to power in the towns and cities, and in some cases, notably that of the Sweetman family, stood at the head of their trades and callings. Nor were these townsmen less National in their dress than the peasantry. Factories had grown in the towns, where a superior kind of cloth was made, mainly from Spanish wool, and for all that could be produced of this article a ready market was found among the professional men and merchants of the town. Not till the advent of the Volunteers were the restrictions on those one trade removed, and then only through fear. Then, for a brief spell, something like a National spirit dominated all Ireland. “The Press, the pulpit, and the ballroom,” says MacNevin,

“...were enlisted in the cause of Irish industry. The scientific institutions circulated gratuitously tracts on the improvement of manufacture, on the modes adopted in the Continental manufacturing districts, and on the economy of

production. Trade revived; the manufacturers who had thronged the city of Dublin, the ghastly apparitions of decayed industry, found employment provided for them by the patriotism and spirit of the country: the proscribed goods of England remained unsold, or only sold under false colours by knavish and profligate retailers; the country enjoyed some of the fruits of freedom before she obtained freedom itself."

I have traced the Irish woollen trade at some length, because for centuries it was the one staple trade round which centred much of the life of Ireland. It was not the only Irish industrial occupation, nor the sole one which earned the jealousy of British traders and the British Parliament. Froude, as has been pointed out earlier, is under the impression that the linen trade was the direct result of the plantation of Ulster, but this is a mistake so easily disposed of that one wonders why even Froude should have made it. One reads of the great plaited linen garments of the Gael in all the old books, and in the poem on the battle of Down, fought in the 14th century, and in which Brian O'Neill, King of all Ireland, was killed, the combatants are described as attired —

Fine linen shirts on the race of Conn,
And the foreigners one mass of iron.

Linen was sold at the markets and fairs in the preceding century; Irish linen was imported into and sold at Chester in the 15th century, and sold likewise at Brabant and other Continental marts. In 1539 an Act of the Anglo-Irish Parliament limited the quantity of linen to be used for the making of a shirt to seven yards, and Spenser, in his "View of Ireland," already quoted, refers to the thick-folded linen shirts of the Irish. This trade does not make anything like the figure in our history which the woollen does, but that it was practised, and widely, throughout the century is beyond all doubt. Strafford gets credit for having introduced it, but what he did was to induced French and Flemish linen weavers to settle in Ireland and devote their abilities to the production of superior linen, but English jealousy manifested itself

here, too, for in 1698 an import duty was put on all Irish linens going into England, though those of Holland were admitted almost duty free. The fishing industry was attacked; the towns of Folkstone and Aldborough in Suffolk representing that the Irish herring fishery at Waterford was ruining their trade with the Mediterranean. The Irish glass manufacture was interfered with, duties were imposed on the hemp manufacture, Irish fishermen were not permitted to appear off Newfoundland, and petitions were even presented to the British Parliament praying that the Irish might be interdicted from fishing off Wexford and Waterford. The provision trade alone was the only one not interfered with, and in that for a time Ireland maintained a great business with the British colonies and with France. But in 1776 an embargo was laid on this trade, which resulted in dire poverty to many, Dublin alone having to meet the necessity of feeding daily 20,000 poor citizens who had been ruined by these exactions of the British Government.

The Union found the country, in spite of all the enactments of the King and Parliament of Britain and their generally willing tools in Dublin, possessed of a population of almost 7,000,000. She had direct commercial relations with France, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Spain, Portugal, the Baltics, with Britain and with all the British colonies. She was equipped with manufactures of all kinds, and not alone supplied herself, but ran the British manufacturer close in his foreign markets. She was then Irish-speaking practically, except in the larger towns and cities, and even there a great proportion understood and utilised her tongue. I make the assertion from a careful study of the hundred years preceding the Union that the one thing that preserved her, the one thing that consolidated her people and caused them to outlive all that the ingenuity of their enemies could devise for their destruction, was the Irish language. It was a barrier that no amount of English legislation could break down. Behind it, as behind a rampart, again and again they rallied, building up afresh whatever breaches the onset of the enemy had made in their institutions, maintaining, clothing, and developing

themselves on their own lines and out of their own resources. The fall of Limerick, and the constant rush of the young men to the Continent to join the Brigade, deprived them in a great measure of leaders, but yet they held on their way, and not only retained their own views, but impregnated the children and grandchildren of the Williamites and Cromwellians with them. Settlements, established for the direct purpose of Anglicising the Irish districts, collapsed after a generation, their populations intermarrying and merging with the Gaelic population, to become, in a later generation, more implacable and irreconcilable “rebels” than the clansmen whom their fathers had come to subjugate. Froude’s statement before quoted shows us how far the settlement of utter disregard of English law had grown in all circles during the century succeeding the Jacobite struggle. Nor was it merely in circumventing the enactments of the Castle that the Gaelic genius showed its power. Although English was nominally the official language, every landowner, merchant, and professional man found himself compelled to know Irish in order to transact his business. It was merely for convenience sake, of course, with most of them; but that self-same power which had enabled it to change the descendants of Strongbow’s knights and men-at-arms into bard-reverencing and glibbe-wearing Irishmen would also have made real Irishmen of the seed of Cromwell’s Puritans and William’s troopers. During all that century of transition, the century which witnessed the first evidence of the general breakdown of the old Irish codes of land tenure, &c., the only portions of Ireland which suffered distress were the English-speaking portions – that is to say, the towns and cities the majority of whose inhabitants were, at the best, but natives of the third or fourth generation. In the Gaelic districts, from which were recruited the men who have given to Irish military annals Cremona and Fontenoy, distress of various kinds there was often, but never so keen as in the other parts. Partial failures of harvest there were often, but never actual famine. The people were not dependent merely on one crop for their sustenance: if wheat failed, they fell back on oats, and one never

hears of a failure of the potato causing the widespread misery which characterised 1847.

The fact is that Ireland then – thought without any of the outward semblances of a nation: laws, legislature, flag, or armaments – was, in sober and real earnest, more certainly one than she has ever been since. In half the University towns of Europe Irish presses turned out books in Gaelic; Irish scholars thronged the schools of Louvain, Paris, Rome, and Salamanca; Irish soldiers and Irish officers were high in the esteem of Governments as widely divergent otherwise in their views as France and Russia; Irish merchants, as we have seen, utilised and supplied the marts of the Continent, and Irish ships sailed the seas in spite of the cruisers of His Britannic Majesty. At home here, though the Penal Laws prevented a Catholic from owning property above five pounds in value, made the seeking of education a capital crime, outlawed the schoolmaster and penalised the priest, there were schools and scholars in defiance of all that could be devised to tempt the cupidity of the people, and, to their credit be it spoken, not of the Catholic Celts alone, but of many sterling broad-minded Protestants, whom birth or residence amongst the Gaelic-speaking population had made sympathetic with the ideas and practises of the great bulk of the nation. The Gaelic population is generally set down as illiterate, but we know from actual fact now that there was scarcely a farmer's house without its manuscripts copied by the hands of some one of the family, and that even the humblest peasant was the repository of quite a literature of songs, sagas, stories, and traditions, bearing on the history, manners, customs and characteristics of the nation, and embracing no mean knowledge either of men and places very far away from Ireland, and very widely removed in point of time from those days. We know that poets and musicians abounded, and that classical learning was quite common, that in fact many of the poets wrote equally well in Latin and Gaelic, and had Greek on their finger ends. They imported no foodstuffs, all the grain necessary for their consumption was either ground in the houses by the quern or in the little mills which rose upon the bank of almost every stream and river.

The linen wheel, worked by the deft hands of the women, supplied them with the materials for all their household wants, and left them such surplus that in 1783 they exported more linen to England than the entire of all the imports from that country. Practically the only things imported, to use the words of the Anti-Union pamphleteers, were “salt and hops, which she could not grow; coals, which she could not raise; tin, which she had not; bark, which she could not get elsewhere,” all which, says he, “she got in exchange for her manufactured goods.”

The partial relaxation of the Penal Laws in the middle of the century, the Act of 1794, and the establishment of Maynooth College, by severing to an extent the Irish connection with the Continent, more especially with France, had a great effect on the tenor of the times. The French Revolution, too, by wholly breaking the connection, had its effect; but still, as I have said already, the Union found Ireland as Gaelic and as self-supporting as the day when the wail of the women followed Sarsfield’s soldiers from the quays of Cork. From the days when those who undertook to lead her turned her eyes across the waters of the Irish Sea, and taught her to look for redemption to the foreigner, whose policy for six hundred years had been to rob and pauperise her, to exterminate her very name, she began to fail. I do not believe that the assembly which met in College Green was a National Parliament. I do not believe that it was an Irish Parliament, but I do believe that that self-same spirit, or power, or influence, or whatever it was, that aided the Irish Catholic Celt to preserve himself, ever growing stronger in numbers, and ever increasing in hope through years of the most malignant tyranny that man has ever conceived would have eventually resulted in the assimilation of that Parliament, and the development from it of such an assembly as would have satisfied our highest ideals. The success of the policy of the United Irishmen most certainly would have given us an Irish nation; for, though few of the leaders were Gaelic speakers, most of them were students of the tongue, and recognised its potency. But even after the failure of their hopes, after the Union, and on down to Catholic Emancipation, it would have been comparatively easy for a leader of

the people to have maintained the old system in the country. I am not now arguing that the Union was not mainly responsible for the downfall of the remarkable prosperity which characterised the last twenty years of the 18th century, but I do assert that much of it was due to the wholesale desertion by our leaders of the Gaelic ideal. The idea of O'Connell using English in his campaign at a time when five-sixths of the people had only the faintest glimmering of that tongue, and his slavish adulation of English sovereigns, did more to degrade, demoralise, and impoverish our people, than all the enactments of the British monarchs or their henchmen in the Anglo-Irish Parliament. By discarding the Irish tongue as a weapon to rouse them to action, he made them think it was a thing to be despised, and by perpetually beslaving whatever sovereign happened to be on the throne he weaned them to a respect for that power which their ancestors had contemned. By teaching them to look for the remedying of their grievances to England, he made them distrustful of their own strength. Catholic Emancipation, by opening up offices to Irishmen in the English service, carried off a host of that brain and talent which had previously worked against Britain.

I do not say that it was not a thing for which the Irish Catholics should have not risked their lives, but I do say that by throwing over their Gaeldom, and accepting the service of Britain under the terms of the Emancipation Act, they enslaved still further, instead of enfranchising, their co-religionists. No one pretends to believe there is today religious freedom in Ireland. We may be told that a Catholic can gain, if his abilities entitle him to it, almost the highest offices in the Government of Ireland, but does he do so without sacrificing his political convictions? Is not every position of importance in the hands of the ascendancy party, with an occasional one held by some renegade from the popular side? Is there a fair proportion of the important posts in commercial life in the hands of the Catholics, or even of Irishmen of any creed? Are our corporate bodies, nominally under popular control, owners of their own soul? And yet "Catholic Emancipation" is a matter of some seventy years' existence. I do not believe that if we had

preserved the life of the Ireland of even a hundred years ago we should not only have maintained our numbers, but we should have forced by the sheer strength of an organised Irish-speaking nation a real Catholic Emancipation, and have solved longer since the question of higher education by the assimilation of Trinity College. This looks Utopian, but let any one who doubts it study the matter in the light of the history of the 18th century, and the fact that the only portions of Ireland which were self-supporting during the century just closed were the Irish-speaking districts. It is a matter of common knowledge that only when English began to be spoken in the West, North, West, and South, did the people cease to clothe themselves out of the materials grown by themselves. The whirr of the spinning-wheel ceased, and the music of the shuttle stopped when our people forsook the language of their fathers, for the fashionable accents of the stranger. Wherever the old tongue still has sway, there still the people dress after their own fashions and in their own materials; there still the stories and songs, some of them centuries old, still circle from generation to generation. There still is the old reverence for the past, the old respect for age and valour and piety, and purity of thought and living. There is a civilisation, though the garb of the people may be rough and their manners unpolished after the style of the 20th century. They are merely men and women, mere flesh and blood, no cold idealistic beings, but men and women full of life and all the passions of life. Many of them have a little English, few of them can read it, fewer still write even the English of their names in it; but they have memories stored with such wealth of song and legend, such lore of many kinds, as the graduate of any university might be proud to possess, and this they have at their disposal without any preparation at all times. We will be told that the progress of the times, and the unsuitability of our old systems to the requirements of life, have caused the breakdown of what once was common from end to end of Ireland; but surely what the Dane, the Hollander, the Belgian, not to speak of other peoples, have been able to overcome, surrounded as they are by "Progress," ought not to prove insurmountable obstacles

to the Irishman. The truth is we are where we are through incompetent guidance and through sheer neglect of our resources – through loss of self-respect and national self-reverence, and a certain undefined belief in the eternity of existing circumstances. We have all but lost our identity, and only since Catholic Emancipation came to bribe our talent, the national schools to stupefy our youth, and the policy of looking to our enemy for the remedying of our grievances to sap our trust in ourselves.

Since the Irish nation, in a word, ceased to depend upon herself for mental and physical sustenance she has drooped and dwindled in strength, in influence, and numbers. Only by going back to what she was, only by looking within her own borders for the life-giving power that makes a nation, can she recover. There are signs that she is seriously considering that step now – there are signs of mental and material activity. Naturally they are both apparent in the same circles, for nationality means the developing of more than one phase of national existence. “Not by bread alone can man exist,” but only by the development of all the resources, only by the continuance and re-adoption of that life and civilisation which was stopped by the prophets of expediency a century since, shall Ireland go down – as Ireland – to the future. We are circumstanced auspiciously today. A new era opens with us. We have had a hundred years of West Britain, with an odd space here and there of the spirit of earlier days. The fruits of the century are visible. West Britain has failed dismally. The old soul still stirs in the country, the old ideals are once more abroad. Let us therefore this year, with determination, earnestness, and sincerity resume – the History of Ireland.

A RECENT IRISH LITERATURE.

I.

From The United Irishman, February 9, 1901.

That there is a recent Irish literature in the language of the foreigner is a matter which this paper accepts as a truism, for with all the talk of the impossibility of delineating Irish spirit and sentiment in English, we think that “Knocknagow” is a very fair portrait of Tipperary, or “Little Mary Cassidy” quite a realistic picture of a Galwayman’s love. But I do not ask you to consider any of the productions of the English-writing Irish poets or romanticists. I am about to ask your attention for quite a different style of writing – an Irish literature absolutely of our own time, produced in Ireland, written for Ireland, and exclusively in Irish. It is one of the features of the last few years that we have begun to acknowledge that all the possibilities of our people’s intellect, all the flights of their genius, all the power of their imaginations need not necessarily seek expression in English. We have all of us an idea of the past of Gaelic literature. Mangan, Walsh, Ferguson, Callanan, and others have familiarised us with the Gaelic writers of the 17th and 18th centuries. From the first day when English gained any sort of a hold in Ireland even the enemies of the Gael have admitted the rhythmic beauty of Irish poetry, and Spenser, narrow-minded as he certainly was, and good critic likewise, has paid a tribute to the originality and beauty of idea of the “rhymers” of his time. Swift, with all his indifference to the native population, was attracted to their literature, and even went so far as to translate one at least of the poems, the famous “Feast of O’Rourke,” into English. Henry Brooke, a man unjustly forgotten nowadays, went to the trouble of mastering the Irish language preparatory to writing a “History of Ireland,” which design, however, he never realised. To his daughter, Charlotte, we are indebted for the earliest attempt to give the world an idea, in a concise form, of the older literature of Ireland. Joseph Cooper Walker

had preceded her by a few years, but both of them dealt in their work almost exclusively with the very earliest of extant Irish poetry, coming down only in an instance or two to modern days. Curran, as we know, was a born speaker of Gaelic, and most of the country members of Volunteer Days were also at least able to speak it. Flood was evidently impressed by its importance, as his gift to Trinity proves, and Grattan, as know, was favourable to it. The United Irishmen, so far as the rank and file went, were mostly Irish speakers, and the leaders in many cases, notably Russell and Drennan, took pains to acquire it. Lysaght wrote equally well in Irish and English, his "Kate of Garnavilla," in Gaelic, being out of all comparison superior to the English version. Much of the inspiration of Moore's earlier melodies was due to the existence of the Gaelic Society which met in Fishamble-Street, under the guidance of Theophilus O'Flanagan and William Halliday, and to the historical labours, oftentimes apocryphal, of Sylvester O'Halloran. The reader of the generally rubbishy magazines of the Irish capital of the half-century stretching from 1770 to 1820 will be struck by the quantity of translated matter from the Irish which finds a place in their pages. Worthless as the work generally is, it goes to prove how very general Irish was all over Ireland up to Emancipation days. Sometime about 1810 a country schoolmaster named William Farmer came to Dublin from Cavan and settled in Harold's-Cross. There he came into contact with one Edward O'Reilly. A similarity of tastes led to closer friendship, and eventually they started a school for the teaching of Irish. At that time books printed in the Irish language were very scarce and very dear, more especially text books of the nature required for a primary class. Of grammars and dictionaries there was an especial dearth, and as the course of the lessons grew it became necessary to make vocabularies for the students. These accumulated until at length they became quite voluminous, and were gathered into folios by the scholars. They were the germ of a great work, and became in after years the famous Irish-English Dictionary of Edward O'Reilly, which, with a supplement by O'Donovan, is familiar to all students of

Gaelic. This was not the only service these two humble men did for Ireland. Like all countrymen, the old airs and songs of their land had a charm for them, and in the intervals of their labours they amused each other singing or playing those old tunes, and writing them down for preservation. Unlike the glossary, they never blossomed into publicity, but as the Farmer-O'Reilly collection they have been drawn upon for many a fine old air by numerous collectors since. Of Farmer the subsequent life is not known. O'Reilly became secretary of the Hiberno-Celtic Society, edited for them several tracts, and compiled his Dictionary of Irish (Gaelic) Authors, which was published in 1820, a very incomplete volume, but still, as Dr. Hyde says, a wonderful compilation for one man working singlehanded. In 1817 one of the periodical famines which have marked the English occupation of Ireland took place. The terrible famine of '47-'48 has eclipsed the memory of all others, but, as in our own time, lessons of actual starvation have never been wanting in Ireland. This famine of 1817 seems to have been of exceptional violence, whole districts were left devoid of the commonest food, and the proselytiser, ever seeing in these periods of distress the dispensing hand of Providence, charitably undertook to fill the mouth of the starving Papist, only asking in return that he should allow himself to become acquainted with the Protestant Bible. At that time no parish was short of good Gaelic readers. The hedge schoolmasters, whatever their other faults, never forgot the old tongue, and accordingly the Hibernian Bible Society looked for a fine harvest from the famine, reckoning that Faith, however firm, is not invariably proof against Hunger, particularly when a string of young children have got to be considered. Many were induced, owing to the painful state of affairs, to go amongst their neighbours and read to them the Irish Bible of Bedell, and in fact so many accepted the terms of the Bible-mongers that an order was issued by the Catholic clergy forbidding the further teaching of Irish lest the whole population might, by reason of their poverty, be thus drawn away from the faith of their forefathers. This short-sighted policy, more than anything else, save, of course, the national schools,

has brought Gaelic to the position it occupied until lately. Most of the Bible-readers returned to their allegiance when the distress passed off, but a few still hung on to the skirts of the missionaries. Of these the most notable was Tadhg O'Connellan, a hedge schoolmaster, whose knowledge of Irish was certainly profound, and, who, with all the pedantry of his class, has still left some excellent little books, more especially an English-Irish dictionary, behind him. A reader of the "Introduction" of this little dictionary can form an idea of the grip which Irish had in Ireland then. Undoubtedly the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Irish did a world of damage to Gaelic, a damage which still has its effect in Gaelic places, but the Catholic bishops, in preventing the reading and writing of the old tongue, actually played into the hands of the enemy, since they left their flocks open to the more wholesale demoralisation which has fallen on them by the flooding of their towns and villages with the gutter literature of England.

An important addition to then existing Gaelic books was the publication, in 1834, of James Hardiman's "Irish Minstrelsy." This, like Miss Brooke's "Reliques of Ancient Irish Poetry," dealt principally with old Gaelic; but a valuable addition was a number of songs by O'Carolan, Seaghan O'Neachtain, and Seaghan MacDomhnaill Clarach. The compiler was exceedingly unfortunate in his versifiers. Save Thomas Furlong, none of them – John Dalton, Henry Grattan Curran, and Edward Lawson – can be said to have been remarkably gifted with poetic genius. This will become especially evident on comparison with renderings of the same poems by Ferguson, and we may trace a good deal of the critical opinion of English writers on Gaelic poetry to their acceptance of these versions as spirited or faithful. In the *Dublin* and *Irish Penny Journals* the first beginnings of O'Donovan were made, and there, in Mangan, Irish Gaelic poetry first found a man who, feeling the spirit of the old land, gave to the English dress of his renderings something of the figure, majesty and beauty of the originals. In the *Citizen*, under the editorial care of Torrens McCullagh and W. Eliot Hudson, Gaelic was not forgotten; and

the *Nation*, under Davis, as we all know, lost no opportunity of advancing its claims. Two volumes of Edward Walsh, “The Popular Poetry of Ireland” and “The Jacobite Reliques,” were amongst the most important additions made during the Forties, are, perhaps, the most faithful of all early renderings, and in some few cases the best English versions in existence. The two volumes of John O’Daly dealing with the “Poets and Poetry of Munster,” the first versified by Mangan, the second by Dr. Sigerson, are worthy of all praise, but the translations too often look forced, and consequently are unpleasing. The labours of men like Dr. Reeves, Henthorn Todd, Petrie, O’Donovan, and, above all, O’Curry, need no remark from me. Their work was generally confined to an Irish literature as yet an unknown land to most of our scholars, an Irish literature which we shall refer to later on. Of Dr. MacHale’s renderings of Moore and Homer I need say little either, save that while some few of his melodies have become popular, the vast majority of them never can – firstly, because they are rather stiff, and, secondly, because they are too closely an imitation of the form of the original, and, lastly and principally, because they are in a style of versification almost entirely foreign to Irish literature and unusual to Gaelic ears. The vowel sounds get little or no scope in them, and an Irish ear reveres the full swing of those letters, even in English. The continuity of Gaelic is preserved by the illustrious name of John O’Mahony, whose whole-souled sympathy with the tongue of his race inspired the name which defines the movement of ’67 for ever in history. John O’Mahony, to my mind, fulfils all the essentials of an Irish National leader. To a thorough desire for entire Irish independence he united an enthusiastic reverence for the past of his nation, and added to his genius as an organiser the culture and knowledge of a scholar. Proud of his nation, his greatest pride was that he spoke her language, and was able to leave for those less fortunate the best translation ever made of Keating’s marvellous “History.” The *Nation* and the *Irishman* did their part by the language, and the *Shamrock* in its earlier days did likewise, but it was reserved for our generation to begin the completion of the work which proselytiser,

Catholic bishop and national school had each, after a different fashion, formed and fostered. From the proselytiser, with alien sympathies, from the national schools, with thinly-masked ideas of the same type, we could expect little interest in Irish; but from those to whom a whole century of ignorance, emigration, and absence of civil rights had been suffered we were entitled to look for help. We did not get it, and to its absence year by year, aided undoubtedly to an enormous extent by the horrors of '48, we may attribute *all* the waning which has marked the latter half of the century. Some little semblance of interest in the tongue of the Gael marked all the generations before ours; but we, with our backs turned to everything native, with our eyes perpetually on the Parliament of the foreigner, dazzled by the prospect of a "Union of Hearts," forgot everything but the hour, and were gradually drifting, drifting into mere automata, till the crash came, and in the rending of the veil we saw at last what was before us, and paused.

I have endeavoured to trace the continuity of interest in matters Gaelic, from the siege of Limerick to our times, amongst the English-speaking part of our population. Through all that period of two hundred years the Gaelic tongue has never ceased to produce, at least, poets; but until recently they have mostly sung unnoticed. John O'Cullane, the author of the "Lament for Timoleague," is, possibly, the latest Gaelic writer of whom one will find any account in books; but of such men as Raftery, or Barrett, or MacSweeney, one must depend for information on the traditions preserved in their native regions. They all existed within the present century, but little of their work has yet found its way into print, although Dr. Hyde considers Raftery the greatest of all modern Gaelic poets. I would point out that while we have had many translations from Irish into English during the century the amount of original or translated work in Irish has been comparatively small, and only in these immediate days of noticeable importance or voluminousness. Outside of Father O'Sullivan's translation of "The Imitation of Christ," and O'Fianachty's Irish rendering of Maria Edgeworth, the amount of modern Irish prose had been very scant until within the last few years, and the poetry, though

most abundant, was still not particularly in evidence either. Like its various predecessors, the Ossianic Society had concerned itself only with the past, the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, in its initial stages, made some attempt to get in touch with Irish-speaking Ireland, but the internal broils that ensued stayed the work. The Gaelic Union did rather better, for besides providing text books, it initiated the *Gaelic Journal*, which undoubtedly laid the foundation of the literature, to which I invite your attention.

II.

From The United Irishman, February 16, 1901.

This Recent Irish Literature of which I desire to speak is the growth of the last ten or fifteen years. Begun at a time when all attention was centred in latter-day politics, it has outlived the cold weather and contempt invariably awarded it by political leaders. It has grown mainly through the labours of a few men whom Ireland will one day delight to honour, and with the awakened spirit which is every day becoming more apparent, it will yet, with God's good help, redeem the follies of the years gone by, and give Ireland a literature that no assimilating Saxon or enlightened foreigner can make or mistake for anything but what it is.

This literature I shall divide into two classes, original and collected, for I hold myself justified in treating as recent all the stories, songs, and poems hitherto speeding to forgetfulness with the passing generations, which have been collected and printed within our time. The prose is, of course, almost wholly folk-lore, and from the folklorist's point invaluable, but of course considered as literature of quite a different value. One does not expect intricate plot or continued power in a folk-tale, but many of the plots, if we may so call them, of our Gaelic folk-tales are interesting, and occasionally most original. I would direct you to one of these tales translated, almost word by word, from the original, and I would ask your attention to as beautiful a bit of descriptive writing as I am acquainted with. It is taken from the longest story in Douglas Hyde's First Book, "Leabhar Sgeulaigheachta." The story is entitled, "Giolla na gCor nDubh," or "The Black-Footed Fellow," and retails his adventures in many lands. In this particular extract we get a picture of a peasant waiting for the approach of midnight and the consequent advent of the fairies. I think the picture a real gem of word painting: —

"Giolla went accordingly to the old rath when the night was fallen, and he stood with his elbow leaning on an old grey stone waiting until the midnight

came. The moon rose up slowly, and it was like a ball of fire behind him, and there was a white mist rising from the meadows and the bottoms through the coolness of the night after the very great heat of the day. The night was as quiet as a lake when not a gust of wind is about to stir a wave upon it, and there wasn't a sound to be heard but the humming of the chafers, as they flew by from time to time, or the sharp sudden cry of the wild geese going from lake to lake, half a mile up in the air over his head, or the shrill whistle of the *feadog* or the *fillbin* rising and descending, descending and rising, as is usual with them of a quiet night. There were thousands of bright stars shining above, and there was a little frost about that left the earth under the foot white and brittle. He stood there for an hour, for two hours, for three hours, and the frost grew in intensity, so much so that he heard the breaking of the short blades of grass under his feet as often as he stirred it. He was thinking in his own mind that the fairies would not come that night, and he had almost determined to return home when he heard a noise approaching, and he knew on the moment what it was. It grew and grew; at first it was like the breaking of the waves on a stony strand, then like the falling of a great waterfall, and at last like a heavy storm in the tops of the trees, then in one great whirling blast the fairy breeze swept into the rath towards him, and the fairy host were all around."

This will give you an idea of what description in Irish is like. Of course one cannot apply to folk-lore the same criticism as to the literature evolved from centuries of practice and polish. One needs to be a great believer to take any of those tales literally, but one point stands out pre-eminently in them, their singular purity of tone and idea. I do not claim for them an immaculate freedom from taint. There is not lacking in some few of them traces of the lower senses and sentiments, but where these lapses occur they are faults of the individual of the tale, rather than of the tale itself. One does not reckon Shakespeare outside the pale because many of his characters are, to say the least, men and women of the world. So, also, in some of these folk-tales one comes across items and individuals somewhat free. One gets away from the hum and hurry of these later times in those old tales into a world full of the free life and fresh air of far-off days, green fields, high mountains, dark caverns, deep rivers, much magic, mystery, and exaggeration, but never a breath of the insidiousness which flavours

so much of the later literature of the world. Coarseness to modern minds and plain speech one certainly does find, often just a trifle too plain for our highly-polished veneer of decency. We meet the primitive Irish peasant who sees nothing wrong in calling things by their proper names, because that fungus called civilisation has not rotted his heart or warped his imagination. To the book I have already referred to, the “Leabhar Sgeulaigheachta,” we are indebted for the tale called “Tadhg O’Cathain agus an Corpan” in Mr. Yeats’ “Fairy and Folk-Tales,” of which I have spoken above.

Folklorists we have always had with us – Croker and Lover, Carleton and Kennedy, Lady Wilde, and in these days McNally and Yeats, but they have confined their work to English. Little attempt was made to gather the great treasure of Gaelic lore until the starting of the *Gaelic Journal*, when the work was begun by Mr. R. J. O’Mulrenin in his fine tale, “The Fellow Who Shook with Fear.” This was in the first volume, and since then the field has been occupied by many diligent workers, of whom, beyond all question An Craoibhin Aoibhinn (Dr. Douglas Hyde), is by far the greatest worker. He represents Connacht in the work, and represents her ably. Poor Patrick O’Leary was just starting to do for Munster what the Craoibhin did for the West when death struck him down. His book, “Sgeulaigheacht Cuige Mumhan,” though written in a dialect peculiar to South-West Cork, is so well annotated in classic Gaelic that one has little difficulty in following the trend of each tale. The stories are, of course, all Munster tales, and “Paidin O’Dalaigh” in particular will repay any trouble one unaccustomed to the dialect may meet in its reading. It is a pity that the author’s religious observance of every little peculiarity of dialect has made him stick rigidly to the accents of his own neighbourhood, for the fact may prevent the book from becoming as popular as it might in districts where the language has, perhaps, not preserved all the copiousness claimed for Beara and Bantry. Let us not be taken as suggesting any wide variety of Irish dialects, but one can readily understand how little the language of Dorset would appeal to one accustomed to the English of any other

part of Britain. For Ulster the principal workers have been Mr. Joseph H. Lloyd, who has garnered in Armagh, Monaghan, Meath, and Donegal, and Messrs. John C. Ward and Peter Toner McGinley, whose work has lain principally in Donegal. No collected volume of any of their work has yet appeared, but to the pages of the *Gaelic Journal* many folk tales, songs, &c, have been contributed. Ulster Irish, as a rule, differs very little from that of Connacht, and consequently the student finds it no difficulty to glide through the many excellent tales which have been furnished to us from the firesides of the North. Many of them, of course, are family relatives, if not exactly the same as those one finds in the various books of the Craoibhin, but some little change in incident makes them different. In fact, the reader of Irish folk-lore, as told by the writers in English, will find most of his old acquaintances turning up in those salvages from the wreck of what must have been a great freight, before the waves of fortune shattered the barque that bore it.

The "Leabhar Sgeulaigheachta" represents but a portion of Dr. Hyde's labours to preserve the literature of the people from eternal night. His "Cois na Teineadh," or "Beside the Fire," and more recently, "An Sgeulaidhe Gaodhaolach," contains stories even worthier of attention than his previous efforts. Such tales as "Liam O'Ruanaigh," "The Tailor and the Three Beasts," "The Eagle of the Golden Feathers," "The Ghost of the Tree," or "The Priest and the Bishop," though they may not appeal to the fastidiousness founded on decadence, ought at least to win favour from those who see in the Brothers Grimm or Hans Andersen subjects for admiration. But even the Craoibhin has not exhausted this fireside literature. Away in the hills of Connemara lives, to quote his own words, "*Domhnall MacMhiohil, mhic Dhomhnaill O'Fotharta, do chlannaibh Bhaoiscne, oide scoile 'san gCaladh in Iar gConnactha,*" or "Donal O'Foharty, of the clanna Baoiscne, school teacher in Calow in West Connaught." Donal is an old man now, but all his life has been spent beneath the sky and amid the Twelve Pins which through all the ages have mirrored themselves in that land of lakes. There still the Gaelic rings melodious

in fair and harvest fields; there on the Sundays and holidays the congregations yet yield up their hearts in the fashion of their fathers; there the foreign song or the music of the Gall has not yet pierced, and the audiences round the winter hearths still shudder at the tales of the phooka, marvel at the might of the giants, revel in the splendours of the slaugh sidhe, and, possibly, hope some day to catch a leprechaun. Amongst them Domhnall O'Foharty has moved, and filled his soul with their songs and stories, noted their beliefs, and made a little book of all that delighted them. Even though his neighbourhood has preserved much of its olden characteristics, he notes a change.

"How different," he says, "the world from what it was long ago, when we would be satisfied with simple fun among the neighbours when they gathered together when the night drew night. There they amused each other, and the youngsters heard the tales of the olden days. It's many a night I've spent in such a fashion myself, and I like to go back in my own mind and think of the people who used to gather and of the talk and the tales that circled round us then. To-day the people are gone, and the old customs they followed are fast going after them, but here I will set down a little of what is left."

This little is his book, "Siamsa an Gheimridh," or "Amusements of the Winter," which was given to the Irish public in 1892. It includes folk-tales, folk-songs, riddles, charms, and proverbs. Of the songs I shall speak later, the stories are in some cases replicas of ones with which we are familiar, such as "An Bheirt Dhearbhrathar," or the "Two Brothers," which is our friend, "Little Fairly," of Samuel Lover, and "Owney and Owney na Peek," of Griffin. Others, however, like that entitled, "Deirdre" (not the famous classic), are quite distinct tales. Of course the majority of them are concerned with the *daoine maithe*, or good people, and as an example I would direct you to "Diarmuid Sugach an chaoi ar cuir se ar na Daoinibh Maithe," or "Merry Dermot, and the way He Played with the Good People." These stories will be translated and published in our columns later on. Other fine stories, but much longer, are "Leaididhe na Luaithe," or "The Lazy Fellow," and "The Leprechaun."

These tales some may say are too simple to go before the world as a nation's literature, but as I hope to show later on, they possess all the essentials of a literature – love of Nature, a high ideal of manliness, a noble ideal of women, and a thorough appreciation of the beautiful in sound and vision. If these are not underlying fundamentals of literature in its highest sense, I know not on what it should be built. One will never find brute force triumphing, or vice victorious in those tales, and though real life does not always give the goal to the right, the underlying belief in truth and justice, evident from all these tales, argues a temperament capable of the highest flights of romance or poetry.

III.

From The United Irishman, February 23, 1901.

So much for the prose. The poetry is far more satisfying to the ordinary reader. It includes every class of verse, from the rollicking drinking song to the tenderest love lyric. To Dr. Hyde we are indebted for the greater part of this branch of our literature, but others worthy of all praise are J. H. Lloyd, Tadhg O'Donoghue, Domhnal O'Foharty, J. C. Ward, Michael Martin, James Fenton, &c. Writing as far back as 1885 of these "Songs of the People," Dr Hyde in the *Dublin University Review* paid a tribute to their beauty and delicacy.

"As to the verses themselves," he says,

"... they are generally full of naivete, and as such they form the most extreme contrast to the poems of the regular bards, which are refined and polished away to a ruinous extent, making in too many instances the sense subservient to the sound... It has always been the bane of Irish song that the bards lavished upon the poem that attention which ought to have been bestowed upon the matter, and while the structure of their verse in melody and smoothness, as well as variety of rhythmic measure, exceeds anything of which an Englishman could form a conception, surpassing by far what we meet with in most modern literature, the poverty of the matter is unhappily too often such as to render pitiable any attempt at translation, which, if at all literal, must only produce a smile of contempt. In this respect they resemble a good deal the collections which we meet in any Italian *canzoniere*, delicious to sing, and haunting the brain with their melody, but if in pursuit you go deeper,

'Allured by the light that shone,'

...you generally find that as in Moore's Lagenian mines, the sparkle has been merely on the surface. But with the Arcadian verses that live amongst the peasantry, verses generated from the locality and the issue of direct emotions and natural spontaneous feeling, it is quite otherwise. They are melodious, it is true, and rhythmical enough, but still there is a directness and force about them which we miss in the more educated productions of the last century... Of all the verses in which the peasantry delight, the love songs are by far the best. Many of them are genuinely pathetic, and speak the very excess of passion in nearly all its phases, generally its most despairing ones... Here is a song in which a

lover, having opened all his mind to his mistress for the first time, and apparently meeting with a favourable answer, becomes suddenly enraptured with the beauty of everything round him and exclaims twice:

‘Ta na ba ag geimnig, agus na gamhna da ndiuil,
Agus a chuisle gheal mo chleibhe ‘s leat aleig me mo run.’

‘Oh! the kine they are lowing, and the calves are at play,
And you, white pulse of my bosom, you have had my secret to-day.’

In another poem the lover seems to have been less successful, for he cries in agony:

‘Is mar sin ata mo chroidhe sa deunadh piosaidhe ann mo lar,
Mar bheith crainn ilar sleibhe a’s e gan freamha no croidhe slan.’

‘Oh! my heart is breaking slowly, breaking in the midst of me
As the roots on some wild mountain give beneath the lonely tree.’

Another song sings the beauty of some ‘Ainnir na naoi n-orfholt,’ or ‘Girl of the Nine Gold Tresses,’ of whom her admirer cries with more than Celtic hyperbole:

‘Nac raibh a solus sgeimhe
I ngleann na Reultan,
Agus lasadh ceud i mbarr gach dlaoigh.’

‘In the valley of starlight
Such splendour of beauty,
There shines light for a hundred from each gold hair.’”

The title of the article from which I have taken these extracts is “The Unpublished Songs of Ireland.” Since then in various places, but more especially in the *Gaelic Journal*, in Dr. Hyde’s own book, “The Love Songs of Connacht,” in his articles, “Song of the Connacht Bards,” in the old *Nation*, and “Religious Songs of Connacht” in the *New Ireland Review*, in O’Foharty’s “Siamsa an Gheimhridh,” in *United Ireland*, the *Cork Weekly Examiner*, *Fainne an Lae*, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, the *Independent*, *St. Patrick’s*, quite a host of pieces have at least been preserved from extinction, so most of them are “unpublished” no longer.

The Connaught love songs are, of course, the most accessible of these collections, and even the mere English reader will be charmed with them. All the lyrical swing and rhythm peculiar to Irish song are here linked with a tenderness and pathos, or oftentimes a note of joyous triumph that one seeks for vainly in all the overwrought and sound-laden verse of English-writing poets. Listen to this little song by a Mayo peasant:

“Did I stand on the bald top of Nefin
And my hundred-times loved one with me,
We should nestle together as safe in
Its shades as the birds on a tree.
From your lips such a music is shaken,
When you speak it awakens my pain,
And my eyelids by sleep are forsaken,
And I seek for my slumber in vain.

But were I on the fields of the ocean
I should sport on its infinite room,
I should plough through the billows’ commotion
Though my friends should look dark at my doom.
For the flower of all maidens of magic
Is beside me where’er I may be,
And my heart like a coal is extinguished,
Not a woman takes pity on me.

How well for the birds in all weather,
They rise up on high in the air
And then sleep on one bough together
Without sorrow or trouble or care;
But so it is not in this world
For myself and my thousand-times fair,
For away, far apart from each other,
Each day rises barren and bare.

Say, what dost thou think of the heavens
When the heat overmasters the day,
Or what when the steam of the tide
Rises up in the face of the bay?
Even so is the man who has given
An inordinate love-gift away
Like a tree on a mountain all riven
Without blossom or leaflet or spray.”

And this song of a Connemara girl is delightful in its intensity of love and sorrow – it is wedded to a splendid air, but even in a cold reading the magical swing of its numbers cannot fail to attract:

“Ringleted youth of my love,
With thy locks bound loosely behind thee;
You passed by the road above,
But you never came in to find me.
Where were the harm for you
If you came for a little to see me?
Your kiss is a wakening jew
Were I ever so ill or so dreamy.

If I had golden store
I would make a nice little boreen
To lead straight up to his door,
The door of the house of my storeen;
Hoping to God not to miss
The sound of his footfall in it,
I have waited so long for his kiss
That for days I have slept not a minute.

I thought, O my love! You were so -
As the moon is, or sun on a fountain,
And I thought after that you were snow,
The cold snow on top of the mountain;
And I thought after that, you were more

Like God's lamp shining to find me,
Or the bright star of knowledge before,
And the star of knowledge behind me.

You promised me high-heeled shoes,
And satin and silk, my storeen,
And to follow me, never to lose,
Though the ocean were round us roaring;
Like a bush in a gap in a wall
I am now left lonely without thee,
And this house I grow dead of, is all
That I see around or about me."

So, too, is that almost equally fine piece, entitled "An Bhrigdeach." But possibly the queen of Irish love songs is that entitled "Cailin Beag an Ghleanna:"

"O youth whom I have kissed, like a star through the mist,
I have given thee this heart altogether;
And you promised me to be at the greenwood for me,
Until we took counsel together;
But know my love, though late, that no sin is so great,
For which angels hate the deceiver,
As first to steal the bliss of a maiden with a kiss,
To deceive after this and to leave her.

And do you now repent for leaving me down bent
With the trouble of the world going through me,
Preferring sheep and kine and the silver of the mine
And the black mountain heifers to me?

I would sooner win a youth to love me in his truth
Than the riches that you, love, have chosen,
Who would come to me and play by my side every day
With a young heart gay and unfrozen.

And when the sun goes round I sink upon the ground,
I feel my bitter wound at that hour;

All pallid, full of gloom, like one from out a tomb,
O Mary's Son, without power.
And all my friends not dead are casting at my head
Reproaches at my own sad undoing,
And this is what they say, 'Since yourself went astray
Go and suffer so to-day in your ruin.'"

That image of the star through the mist is a favourite one with our poets; and that warning which the maiden breathes in the first stanza appears also in a very favourite Ulster song, "Coillte Glas Tricuha" (The Green Woods of Truagh"), printed by Mr. Lloyd in the *Gaelic Journal* a few years ago, the only difference being that in this latter song it is the man upbraids the maiden. All the songs, however, are not in praise of women. In O'Foharty's book such pieces as "An Chiomach," or "The Slatthern," giving versions from Connacht, Beara, and Donegal, are included. This poem is a terribly sarcastic diatribe on the enormity of marrying for the sake of a few had of cattle or a "bit o' land," and in fact, to some extent, on the folly of marrying at all. Such pieces, however, are not very numerous, for evidently the poet takes greater pleasure in idealising life than in painting its grim realities. The sorrow of unrequited affection, the misery of blighted affection, or the uncertainty that is at once a pain and pleasure, these are generally his themes; but the prosaic miseries of matrimony, as a rule, seldom win his attention. The last four Oireachtasa brought out many fine pieces hitherto unknown outside their immediate districts. Michael Martin, of Dingle, was the greatest contributor, and his "Bolg Dana" contains examples of almost all kinds of verse, including love songs, dirges, and pathological pieces. It is a remarkable fact that the political strife of the last hundred and fifty years has affected Gaelic poetry very little. Very few songs in Gaelic deal with '98, songs about O'Connell are not very numerous either, and of later days there are no political songs. The only lays at all approaching that style of composition are the Ribbon songs, of which examples will be found in O'Daly and in this collection of Michael Martin. These, of course,

narrow in their views, in no way represent the general political feeling of the people. That there were songs of a strongly National character in the political sense I am convinced, but the early collectors having little or no sympathy with the strong feelings of the poets looked on them with contempt, and neglected to take them down. A song extolling the Stuarts was a safe thing; but one inculcating an Irish policy for Irishmen was quite a different matter; hence we have but few songs that can be called political, for the generations that preserved them have been gone for many years. Of this class of song the most famous is one yet remembered in Tipperary, with the refrain, "Taim-se i mo chodladh no's for mo sgenl," or, "I'm Asleep or the Truth I Declare." The air is a very fine one, not to be confounded with the great air "Taim-se I mo chodladh 's na daisigh me."

IV.

From The United Irishman, March 2, 1901.

Of other collections of verse, the pieces which have secured most popularity are those collected by Mr. Lloyd, "An Buinnean Buidhe," "Siobhan Nig Uidhir," and "Coillte Glasa Triucha," mentioned above, which two former have become especially well known through their insertion in "Ceol Sidhe." "The Buinnean Buidhe" is one of the finest additions to our store of folk-songs, and is in many respects one of the best songs we possess. It is known all over the North-West and West, but the version given by Mr. Lloyd comes from Donegal. The poet, rejected by his sweetheart for imbibing rather freely, comes on a wintry night to a frozen pool, where he finds a bittern, lying stiff and dead. He proceeds to lament the bird, and moralising on its fate, reflects on the fallacy of teetotalism, pointing out that death must come if thirst be not appeased. There is a touch of grim humour in his conclusions which is absent from most of our folk songs. We know that the ancient bards were credited with mighty powers of sarcasm and invective, and traces of this faculty are not unknown in later days, Aodhagain O'Rathallaigh and Eoghan Ruadh especially, were dowered with no small share of it. Irony and satire are not absent either, Mangan's glorious version of "Bean na tri mBo" is a good example, and Dr. Hyde in the "Roman Earl" has recovered a specimen of a grimmer kind. Of humour proper there are many examples in our poetry, but the poems otherwise are not remarkable. In the prose one often meets real humour. Dr. Hyde's story "An Piobaire agus an Puca," will repay a reading even in English, but for the general merit of the lot the little tale in "Leabhar Sgeulaigheachta" may well stand: -

"There was a man once and he had a beautiful daughter, and every man was in love with her. There used to be two youths coming to court her. One of them she liked, and the other she did not. The man she didn't like used to often come to her father's house to be in her company, but the other whom she liked used to come but seldom. Her father preferred her to marry him who came often, and he prepared a great dinner, one day, to which he invited everybody. When

all were gathered he says to the girl 'Drink now,' says he, 'to the man you prefer best in this company,' for he thought that she would toast him whom he liked himself. She raised the glass in her hand and she stood up and looked around, and then gave this quartrain: -

I drink to the health of Often Who Came,
Who Often Came Not I also must name,
Who Often Came Not I often must blame,
That he came not as often as Often Who Came.

She sat down when she had given the lines and spoke no more that evening. But 'Often Who Came' came not after that, for he knew he was not wanted, and she married the man of her choice, with her father's permission."

All this literature has been committed to print within our days. In Mr. P. O'Brien's "Blaithfhleasg de Mhílseanna na Gaedhilge" we get a specimen of the tales written by the Irish writers of the last century, and existing in great part still in MS. This book contains three stories, "The Adventures of Torlogh MacStairn," "The Adventures of his Three Sons," and a tale entitled "The Bruighean Bo." They are all remarkable for great imaginative power, and though of course highly improbable, still as romantic tales are entitled to rank with any of the adventures of knight or cavalier which have made the Romance languages famous. As a type of what lies unread, and in great measure unknown in our literature, they are extremely valuable.

So much for the traditional or MS. literature of the Gael. It has not been the only product of our times. As I observed earlier, Irish poetry has never ceased to be written, but Irish prose probably has. Of original prose work in Irish in these later days the only examples are those afforded by the various journals here and in America devoted to Gaelic. These articles, written largely for the hour, are consequently not of permanent interest. Of workers in the cause, one of the veterans is certainly Mr O'Neill Russell, whose labours here and among our kindred in the United States can never be forgotten. His book, "Teanga Tioramhail na h-Eireann," is an endeavour to give to modern Irishmen a book in classic Irish that is in the tongue which all our people, acquainted with the written language, can understand and

appreciate. The style is vigorous, and based as it is on the best models, must certainly become popular. It occupies the place of the "Essay" in Irish, and is a book that one can turn to with pleasure as a fount of encouragement when the outlook for the old cause is dim and cheerless. Dr. Hyde's Gaelic articles dealing with the "Love Songs" and "Religious Songs of Connacht" are excellent examples of what Irish is capable of in criticism. They are written in the simplest fashion, and contain no word that would elude the intelligence of any peasant.

The advent of *Fainne an Lae*, and later on of *Claidheamh Soluis*, introduced to the public writers of whom little had previously been heard. Of them, by far the best was Donnchadh Fleming, whose death last year deprived Irish literature of its most promising writer. His "Eactra na n-Argonantac" will be found to be one of the best additions which Irish literature has received in our time, and a prime service, too, would be the gathering of the various articles contributed by John Fleming to the early numbers of the *Gaelic Journal*.

The greatest glory of our recent literature is, however, its poetry. Here also Dr. Hyde is pre-eminent, but it is regretted by those best able to judge that the Craoibhin has not written less in the metres of the foreigner. The English reader can scarcely appreciate the difference that lies between Irish and English systems of rhyming. This is not the place to enter into a disquisition on them, but anyone acquainted with the street ballads of a half century since will have little difficulty in understanding in what the styles differ. Dr. Hyde's poems have been gathered to an extent in two little volumes, "Duanaire na Nuadh Ghaedhilge," and more recently in "Ubhla de'n Chraobh." Of them possibly the finest is his "Smuainte Broin," or "Sorrowful Thoughts," included in the first book, which has been translated by O'Donovan Rossa, and ought to be better favoured by our reciters than it has been. It is unfortunately too long to quote, but it may be recommended as absolutely the most National of recent Irish poems. Here, however, is one that tells its own story: -

“O’er the sounding sea many wild waves flee,
Till they burst in glee on the shell-strewn shore;
Many blithe birds sing in the shining spring,
Or, on sun-tipped wing, through the ether soar;
In the blossomed trees on the light-flecked leas,
The flower-fed bees swarm day by day;
But the sweets they miss of my honeyed bliss
In your echoed kiss, my young ‘Queen of May!’

“Many grains of sand make that sea-swept strand,
Many grass-stalks stand in yon meadow green;
Many sweet songs float from the wren’s small throat -
But the whole to note ‘twere less hard, I ween,
Than of kisses count the combined amount
Which our hearts’ love-fount yield myself and bride;
When the lilting lay of the skylark gay
Hails the blush of day o’er the green hillside.

“Ere the sun’s first ray tinged the mountain gray,
Love-tranced we lay, dear – yourself and I;
With no one near us, to see or hear us,
What spell could bear us to earth or sky?
While above and ‘round swelled a joyous sound
(God’s praise profound – from the woods and air),
We listened dreaming – but, to my seeming -
To music teeming we gave no care.

“The birds in chorus sang – ‘Night is o’er us,
And Day’s before us with radiant smile;’
But little heeding how time was speeding,
Our thoughts were reading our hearts the while.
My ‘Sunburst streaming!’ ‘My Pole-Star gleaming!’
On me you’re beaming, my mild ‘May-dawn!’

My sweetest pleasure! my joy's full measure!
Through life to treasure, mo mhuirnin ban!"¹

The constant recurrence of rhyme here is an attempt to follow the original, but English is a bad medium for such exercises. The Craobhin is very fond of the past. Here is a dramatic little poem which tells its own tale. It is entitled "A Day in Eirinn": -

"Four gleaming scythes in the sunshine swaying,
Thro' the deep hush of a summer's day,
Before their edges four stout men sweeping
In tuneful measure the fragrant hay,
Myself the fourt of them, strong and happy,
My keen blue steel moving fast and free,
Oh! little then was the broadest meadow
And light the heaviest scythe to me.

O King of Glory! what a charge is o'er me,
Since the young blood thrilled me long, long ago,
When each day found me, with the sunshine round me,
And the tall grass falling to my every blow,
O'er the dewy meadows came the *cailins'* voices,
Ringing glad and merry as they raked the hay,
Oh! the hours pass quickly as a beam of sunshine
When the years are rosy and the heart is gay.

Like fairy minstrels, the bees a-humming
Went honey-sucking from flower to flower,
Like golden berries in the distance gleaming,
I've watched and listened to them hour by hour.
And the butterflies on the sunbeams riding,
With wings surpassing e'en the blush of dawn,

¹ The translation appeared originally in *United Ireland*; I am unaware of the identity of the translator.

Or like fairy jewels, full of light and splendour,
On the golden crown of the *bouchalan*.

The blackbird's lay in the woods rang clearly,
The thrush's note echoed far and high,
While the lark's full song, like a bell's vibration,
Came floating down from the midmost sky,
From his leafy station the linnet lifted
His little voice in the hazel glen,
And oh, God of Grace! was not life a pleasure
In our green and beautiful Eirinn then!"

This also is taken from "Duanaire na Nuadh Ghaedhilge." Beside them in the book are a number of pieces signed "Padraic," the work of Patrick O'Byrne, now of Killybegs, who more than anyone else has contributed to keep alive interest in Gaelic amongst our people in America. He, too, writes in modern modes, but his pieces are exceedingly melodious, especially such of them as "Bas an Fhilidh," "An t-Am Fad O," "Smuainte ar Eirinn," "Cuireadh," "Tog suas an Chlairseach," &c. Then our friend Mr. Russell is also in the ranks of the bards, and many of his lays are very singable, which is a very quality in most songs I would especially refer to "An Fhuiseog," "An Fhuiseoigin Dearg," and "An Cuaichin Binn."

These men represent the van of the movement. Long before any of the prominent men of the day were heard of, and in fact when most of them were still at school, these three men were working in silence, day in and day out, to waken the people from the lethargy in which the last agitation steeped them. To-day, thanks to their efforts, the signs of a new literature, full of every characteristic of the past, are becoming plainer. Among poets who have been working consistently for years, Domhnall O'Loingsigh holds a high place. Most of his work is in the modern mode, but he has written songs in the old style, and his "Ta an la ag Teach," "Ar nGaedhilge Binn," and "A Dhia Saor Eire" have been long and bid fair to remain long popular. Robert MacSharry Gordon (An Gabhar Donn) has also given us some melodious pieces,

and is one of the few Gaelic poets who have attempted the sonnet. Patrick Staunton, of Cork; Captain Norris, of New York; Father O'Reilly, of Kerry, Father O'Growney, have been all more or less successful as versifiers. Among even more recent men, striking pieces have come from Tadhg O'Donnchadha, who would be much more popular if he favoured the faults of the Munster school to a less degree than he does. His verse is often archaic in its vocabulary, and a popular poet needs to be simple in his diction. Mr. J. H. Lloyd in his fine song, "Leathadh an Ghaedhilg," Michael O'Sullivan in his "Cailin Deas Cruidhte na mBo," Dermot Foley in his "Rallying Song," Seamus O'Seaghda in quite a number of songs, notably "An Cailin Donn," Osborn Bergin in a few very musical little lyrics, Tadhg MacSuibhne in some two or three swinging songs like "Slainte na nGaedheal," and Daniel O'Connor, of Mill-street, a poet of great promise, have all contributed to the growing literature of the nation. They are all young men, and may confidently be looked to, to maintain the high standard handed down by such writers as "Liam Dall," Seaghan O'Cullane, Andrias MacCraith, Seaghan O'Tuama, &c.

I have yet to refer to another branch of our literature which is the growth of the last two or three years, and which one may say to have never had a previous existence. Hero and romantic tales we have had, but the story in the modern acceptance of the term has only come to us since the Oireachtas started. A few men have distinguished themselves in this line. Father O'Leary, of Castlelyons, practically began it with his "Seadhna," which ran for some months in the *Gaelic Journal*, but the short story or sketch in Irish has been begun by such writers as P. T. MacGinley of Donegal, James Doyle, now of Derry, Father Hynes of Sligo, but above and beyond all, by Patrick O'Shea of the Belfast Gaelic League. It is not deprecating the others to say that such tales of Mr. O'Shea's as "Eachtra Risteaird" and "Laeteanna Sgola" have never been surpassed in modern Irish. I know of few figures more calculated to stir the heart than that of Nora Ni Fhailbhe in this latter story. Dickens, with all that we hear of his mastery of the heart, never created a more lovable character. She is an ideal Irish girl,

and it is to be hoped that the promised volume of Mr. O'Shea's stories will soon be given to us that our girls may be introduced to Nora and taught to know their duty to Ireland as well as she. To Father O'Leary we owe likewise the initiation of another phase of our literature – the dramatic. Years ago Father O'Carroll in the *Gaelic Journal* gave us a few historic dramatic episodes in Irish, but the play as a play has been initiated by "Tadhg Soar," and that very fine tragedy, "Bas Dallain," which has passages worthy of the drama of any country, more especially the speech of Seanchan Torpeist in the last act. Mr. MacGinley in "An Bhean Deirce" has essayed this style, too, rather successfully, and Dr. Hyde's "Casadh an t-Sugain" is said to be excellent. It needs but a few public performances to test whether or not these pieces, which read excellently, possess the cardinal quality of a drama, suitability for stage purposes.

V.

From The United Irishman, March 9, 1901.

I have thus endeavoured to give you an idea of a literature which has grown up around us, almost without the knowledge of the majority of us. About 1891 a few enthusiasts conceived the idea of again attempting the work begun and left unfinished by Young Ireland. Around them they gathered what has become a yearly increasing circle. Some few books of value have been the result, but the greater result was one not looked for by the *renaissants*. The idea of making an Irish literature in English stirred some few to the thought of an Irish literature in Irish, to continue the chain which links us with a history whose beginning is lost in the depths of time. The great gap embracing the Penal Days and all the years between them and ours was, as far as the world was aware, a vast blank in Irish literature. These collections with which I have dealt cover part of the chasm, further labours will completely bridge it, and where the traditional lays and stories end, the continuance is taken up by the men to-day endeavouring to produce still a literature for Ireland. There are many people professing an interest in the Irish language who tell you they would learn it if there were anything to be read in it at the end of their labour. To such as these I trust this little effort of mine may be some proof that their doubts are, to say the least, not on the best foundations. There are others who sneer at the poverty of Gaelic literature – to such I would quote the words of Dr. Hyde: “If anyone is still found,” he writes,

“... to repeat Macaulay’s hackneyed taunt about our race never having produced a great poem, let him ask himself if it is likely that a country where, for one hundred years after Aughrim and the Boyne, teachers, who for long before that had been in great danger, were systematically knocked on the head or sent to a jail for teaching; where children were seen learning their letters with chalk on their father’s tombstones, other means being denied them; where the possession of a manuscript might lead to the owner’s death or imprisonment, so that many valuable books were buried in the ground or hidden to rot in the

walls; whether such a country were a soil on which an epic or anything else could flourish. How in the face of all this the men of the eighteenth century preserved in manuscript so much of the Ossianic poetry as they did, and even rewrote or redacted portions of it, as Michael Comyn is said to have done to ‘Ossian in the Land of the Young,’ is to me nothing short of amazing.”

I shall not stop to discuss the suitability of Irish for all the purposes of fiction. Until a few years ago an erroneous idea existed that Irish was an impossible tongue for the teaching of science. That error has been dispelled. It would be outside our province to suggest what might be utilised by future Gaelic writers for material – their own tastes more than anything else will suggest subjects. There exists in manuscript historical tales sufficient to fill, according to O’Curry, 4,000 pages of the size of the “Annals of the Four Masters.” Of tales about Finn, Ossian, and the Fenians, material exists sufficient to fill 3,000 pages, and in addition there exists a number of imaginative stories, neither historical nor Fenian, computed at around 5,000 pages, not to speak of the romances of the last three centuries. All these certainly point to a mine of wealth that, rewritten to suit the changes of the language, would place ours on a level with the literature of any language. Something of this nature has been done by the publication by David Comyn of “MacGníomhanta Finn,” and, within the last few days, of Mr. T. O’Neill Russell’s “Boromha Laighean.” Your own minds will conjure up for you what these old tales and stories might become treated by some Gaelic Scott or Victor Hugo. The everyday life of Ireland can, at least, furnish the same material to the Irish writer as to him who endeavours to paint our people properly in English. Of the nature of these old and locked-up treasures an idea may be gleaned from the “Silva Gaedilica” of S. Hayes O’Grady, or from the various extracts in Dr. Hyde’s splendid little book, “The Story of Early Gaelic Literature,” to which I am indebted for much of the basis of these papers, and in his great work, “The Literary History of Ireland.”

It is rather labouring the question to point out how much we should gain by a general adoption of Gaelic. Firstly, we should emancipate ourselves from the servitude and soullessness which an

entire dependence on a foreign literature entails. However national one may remain, the presence of a shoal of magazine literature in our midst must have an effect. We can only counteract it by producing something ourselves; and a magazine in Gaelic, with modern themes and studies of the everyday life of Ireland, in Irish, would be the greatest barrier we could possibly raise against the tide of threepenny monthlies which threatens to turn the tastes of our youth into insipid and colourless channels, with no higher ideals than the study of criminals' skulls or the relative size of the British Empire and some particular journal's circulation. Besides, a Gaelic market at home would provide a field for our writers, who are forced away, to become the drudges of the Saxon, to write against their convictions, and sink, in the struggle for bread, the abilities that, directed in some proper channels, might produce a masterpiece. By the adoption of Gaelic we will gradually wean ourselves from fashions and habits that have grown on us unknowingly, we will become what we claim to be, and strengthen to an almost incalculable extent our claim to individual nationhood.

But this change is not to be wrought in a day or a year, nor in a lifetime possibly, and what shall we do in the meantime? As I observed in the beginning of this series, I think "Knocknagow" an exact and faithful transcript of Irish life, and I will go so far as to say that some of Frank Fahy's poems could be written by no one but an Irishman. Are we to kill off the people capable of producing work like this? Are we to discourage an attempt to give the English-speaking portion of our race something representative of themselves? Let us say what we will, no man's ideal of Irish nationhood will be lowered by reading Davis or Mitchel. No man will be the less an Irishman because the lines of Mangan and Williams and Casey and O'Donnell surge through his memory. No man can be false to Ireland if he follows their teaching. They have not, perhaps, given us distinctly national literature, but they have given us a Nationalist one, and the horizon of a free Ireland was before their eyes as they wrote. Let us look around to-day and weigh the position of affairs – two millions at least of our

population can never hope to be able to appreciate a Gaelic literature. Are we going to deprive them of a substitute, even though a bad one, in English? If we do, their children will not be even as Irish as themselves. For a generation or two yet we must have Irish writers in English, just as till we are independent we shall have to use English in our daily life. It is a narrow view, considering the circumstances, to say that all effort must be concentrated in purely Gaelic channels. It means that men who otherwise might do good, men with sympathies wholly Irish, are to be shut off from all participation in the uprise of the nation because fortune did not favour them with a Gaelic mother, and consequently cannot reach above mediocrity in the language of their own land. Mr. John MacNeill, writing in the *New Ireland Review* in 1894, altogether discounts the idea of an Anglo-Irish literature, and looks down on "third-rate efforts in English," but to my mind we provide something for those who, through no fault of theirs, are unable to grasp the beauties of Gaelic literature. I shall not here discuss the existence of such an Anglo-Irish school, but it will be manifest from the few extracts I have given that anything ambitioning the title of "Irish style" in English must be simple and direct. No mystification, no introspective or metaphysical ramblings can pass current for Celtic style or spirit. The Celt to-day is as great a believer as ever. He, no doubt, has lost much of the simplicity, most of the superstition, and a great measure of the optimism of old times, but, in the main, he is the same individual who has been contesting the supremacy of this island for centuries. This is true of the Irishman who has come within the influence of English ideas; it is a million times truer of the men beyond the Shannon and the Galtees, the clansmen of Erris and Innisowen. For them, looking westward over the tumbling waves of the Atlantic, Hy Brasil still comes up upon the sunset, for them still the raths and duns are musicfuf, the banshee wails and the phooka sweeps through the lonely, leafy valleys. For them still the Sluagh Sidhe come in eddying circles up the dusty roads in the summertime, and fairy hands still shake the reeds beside the rivers. Amongst these people and in their thoughts is the real heart of

Ireland, the Ireland untouched by time, still fresh and verdant. The key to the heart is the Irish language. It will open to the writer all the manifold charms that have won the commendation even of bitter enemies. Something of its glow and glamour can be represented in English, but only by men whose knowledge has been won by personal contact with them. Through no translation can that soul or spirit be infused. I do not seek to claim as an end an Anglo-Irish literature. I only point it out as one of the roads, and the surest road that can be travelled by those long disassociated from Gaelic thought and treasure. Its presence and popularity can in no wise injure the fair demesne to which it leads. It will induce many to know more of the real material, where the study incidental to the knowledge might at first deter them. I have endeavoured by Anglo-Irish means to give you some idea of the value of this literature. You may take it that, charming as some of those things have been even in English, the best of them conveys but a very slight idea of the melodiousness and merit of the original. It should be the glory of our time that we have seen the spring of a new Irish literature, let it be our boast also we have done all that we might to secure for it a full and abundant harvest.

WM. ROONEY.

(AN CRIOCH.)

IS AN ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE POSSIBLE?

Published posthumously in *The United Irishman*, August 10,
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*This article was written several years ago by Wm. Rooney in
the **Seanachuidhe**, the MS. Journal of the Celtic Literary Society.*

It may almost sound like a heresy to propound such a question as this in these columns, for has not this journal, to a great extent, as its aim the cultivation of a market for such productions? Like most other matters which have been boomed, a name has been created which may mean much or little, and which is so vague in its real meaning that it can cover quite a large programme. What, first of all, is Anglo-Irishism? Is it a germ of the West-British stock? What are its tendencies, whence its origin, what its strength? By Anglo-Irishism the present writer interprets that sentiment of our people which finds expression in English. The fundamental thought may be Irish, but since it grows and blossoms into actuality in a foreign language it loses half its strength and practically all its individuality. That it is to a certain extent representative of the country may or may not be true, but the contention of this present writing is that an artificial situation and expression such as this, though they may influence politics, cannot produce literature, that is literature representative of the people, their opinions, their habits or their hopes.

What is a representative literature may appear an unnecessary question. Most of us would answer "A literature mirroring certain phases of life and character." Now to appreciate the position and prospects of Anglo-Irish literature we have got to consider, first, the people and peculiarities it should represent, and secondly its possibility of understanding them. Let us briefly glance at the Irish people. Their enemies admit that their character is one of the most complex amongst nations. Even tainted, as many of them have been, or perhaps some would prefer saying, influenced, by modern

developments of thought and civilisation, they preserve practically untouched all the characteristics of their fathers. They, no doubt, have lost much of the simplicity, most of the superstition, and a great measure of the optimism of old times, but in the main they are the same individuals who have been contesting the supremacy of this island for centuries. This is true of the Irishman who has come within the influence of British ideas; it is a million times truer of the men beyond the Shannon and the Galtees, the clansmen of Erris and Innisowen. For them, looking westward over the tumbling waves of the Atlantic, Hy Brazil still comes up upon the sunset, for them still the raths and duns are musicfuf, the banshee wails, and the phooka sweeps through the lonely leafy valleys. For them still the Sluagh-sidhe come in eddying circles up the dusty roads in the cool summer evenings, and fairy hands still shake the reeds beside the rivers. Amongst these people, and in their thoughts, is the real heart of Ireland, the Ireland untouched by time, still virgin and verdant. Therein is the soul that swayed the forms which faced the first invaders, therein is the truest form of Irish thought and idea; the metal from which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been moulded the Irish nation. It is this nature, with all its primeval belies, its strong passions, its fierce hates and fond affections that our literature must fashion into words if it is to be at all representative. Can this be done in the English language? The present writer thinks not, because the source of all is one entirely antagonistic to the genius of that tongue. One does not expect the characteristics of Italy to be capable of fit representation in German, nor the hot blood of Spain to find expression in French. How then imagine that the thought of Kerry, of Connaught, or Tirconnail, can be moulded with satisfaction into English?

This is, doubtless, altogether opposed to the fond theories we have been harbouring that Young Ireland laid the foundation of a really Irish literature. That it did wonders towards the building of a Nationalist literature representative of certain phases of opinion is indisputable. That it did as much towards the portrayal of Irish mind

or fancy is not equally certain. Take Mangan, Walsh, Ferguson, and perhaps John Keegan away, and what writer of that time is left whose work can be labelled representative; that it is Irish in tendency we have already admitted. Let us examine a few of them: Denis Florence McCarthy has left us some most musical poems, but what is there in them reminiscent of Ireland? O'Hagan's splendid idyll, "The Old Story," would be a credit to any country, but it is too arcadic to be mistaken for Irish. Williams' fire and fervour make the pulses tingle, but one never feels himself drawn back to the things they speak of, they do not impress one any more than if they limned the feats of Gaul or Teuton. Even Davis seldom strikes a note other than academic. One certainly gets a glimpse of real Ireland in such pieces as "The Girl of Dunbwy," "Oh! The Marriage," "The Boatman of Kinsale" and "Mo Mhaire Ban Astoir;" but there is little in common with peasant thought in such poems as "Oh! For a Steed," "A Ballad of Freedom," or kindred verses, apart from the general sympathy with every phase of patriotism. The writers of '67 had few amongst them thoroughly Irish in style and manner. Casey occasionally approached the heart of Ireland, and Kickham undoubtedly knew every fibre of it; but O'Donnell, or Halpine, Scanlan or Mrs. O'Donovan, while essentially Nationalist, were, in no sense, National writers. John Walsh and Ellen O'Leary were far truer in their work, but their work is infinitely less artistic, viewing it from the merely mechanical standpoint, than that of their contemporaries. Amongst the writers of our own times, saving of course Dr. Hyde's, which being of the people is essentially true to them, the work produced of an Irish character is small compared with the output nominally known as such. A few poems by Yeats, Todhunter's "Banshee," half-a-dozen of Norah Hopper's lyrics, a couple of Katherine Tynan's ballads, such as "Shameen Dhu," Iris Olkyn's "Valiant-Hearted Girl," Jane Barlow's "Ould Masther," and a few songs by Fahy and McCall. In fiction, Standish O'Grady's "Mona Reulta," "Coming of Cuchullain" and "Captivity of Red Hugh," and in general prose Mr. Taylor's "Life of Owen Roe O'Neill," constitute about all the really native literature of today. These pieces are Irish in

so far as they adequately represent the spirit of the times they depict, the sincerity of the idea they enshrine. They are a few flashes of inspiration in a grey sky of monotony and oftentimes mediocrity. This inspiration cannot be extracted from the mummified labours of translators, it must be caught from the people themselves. Its local colouring must come from experience, not from imagination. It must listen to the voices of the past speaking through the beliefs of the present, and understand the accents that they may not be misrepresented. This can only be done by making the Irish language the medium of expression; for the thought that is most truly Irish can form its idea in no other channel. If even the merest strain of real Irish feeling is to filter into an Irish literature written in English, it cannot come except through a knowledge of Gaelic, and, being Gaelic, will tend more towards the perpetuation of an old than the creation of a new literature.

It may be asked why if holding such opinions, we lend any assistance towards the promotion of Anglo-Irish literature. The answer is easy. While not essentially Irish this literature is still, as we have said, perfectly National, and consequently directs thought towards Ireland, that is to say, exactly fits our policy, for ours is missionary work. Our province is the cultivation and spread of thought, for in thought lies the salvation of Ireland. The bane of our position is that we have merely followed a certain vein of feeling without knowing or caring why. We have allowed our children to be educated, or rather stultified, in National schools for over sixty years without ever thinking that every year brought them farther away from the central force of a National individuality, that is, a language peculiar to themselves. We have submitted to have them taught the exact opposite of their beliefs, to have the whole past of their country shut off from their knowledge. The remedy for all these mistakes is not an indiscriminate rush to the study of Gaelic, but the eventual crushing of all this tendency towards de-nationalisation must come from a greater knowledge of it. Towards the creation of an appetite for that knowledge, towards the awakening of our people, to a sense

of their situation, towards the growth of a healthy thoroughly Irish tone, this Irish or pseudo-Irish literature in English can effectually aid, but it cannot, except in rare instances, claim to represent, because it cannot understand or adequately express anything but the hour and the immediate surroundings.