

LEAVES FROM A STUDENT'S LOG.

"I have some naked thoughts that rove about
And loudly knock to have their passage out."

Milton - at the age of 19.

10—"William J. Fitzpatrick, the Irish scholar and historian, died at his home in Dublin on Christmas eve." The announcement could scarcely have been briefer, had the subject of it been a tradesman or a shop-keeper. It would certainly have been much more complete, did it deal with the passing away of a dishonest financier or a titled malster. But being simply a scholar and merely an Irishman, Mr. Fitzpatrick was vouchsafed the cable tribute of two lines. Such is the whimsical disproportion of the world's rewards. And yet Fitzpatrick was deserving of more generous treatment. He was one—almost the last—of a small group of great Irishmen, who have given their lives and talents to increasing our store of information on historical question as interesting and important as they had hitherto been obscure and neglected. O'Hart and O'Donovan, Madden and O'Curry have had their day; their places are now vacant save for the rich store of historical and antiquarian lore their researches have brought to light and left for the benefit of posterity. So long as Fitzpatrick was alive we knew that the sacred torch was still burning; now that he is gone, there is no one left to whom a prudent seeker after truth dare safely entrust himself for further investigation in the labyrinth of Irish antiquities, even—paradoxically—of modern date.

William J. Fitzpatrick was the son of a successful and highly respected Dublin merchant, and was born in that city some 66 years ago. He enjoyed all the benefits incident to a thorough course of studies at Clongowes Wood, and early in life decided to adopt literature as a profession.

A large fortune inherited from his father relieved him from the embarrassment of bargaining with publishers and allowed him to take his own time with his work. Yet he never acquired an elegant or even easy literary style; to the last he remained ever involved, sometimes turgid, often heavy. It is the matter, not the manner that gives value to his works; had nature or art blessed him with the gift of dressing facts in elegant form, there is no height to which he might not have aspired in the fields of biography and history. As it is, he has paved the way and made easy the work of a future truthful Froude or Macaulay.

Yet it would be unjust to conclude that Mr. Fitzpatrick has not won for himself a high and permanent place in the Irish corner of English literature. Who has not been charmed and instructed by his brilliant biography of Father Tom Burke? His lives of Bishop Doyle, the famous J. K. L., of Dr. Whately, Lever, Dr. Lanigan and Father James Healy are faithful and interesting. Of his memoir on O'Connell Mr. Gladstone said that it enabled Englishmen to see O'Connell as "a great and good man," and the historian Lecky, while constantly referring to Fitzpatrick as an authority of the highest rank, frequently acknowledges his own indebtedness to his painstaking countryman's researches. The two works on which Mr. Fitzpatrick's fame chiefly rests are "Ireland before the Union," and "The Secret Service Under Pitt." We all remember the sensation they created on their appearance only a few years ago. It was their perusal that lead Mr. Gladstone to denounce the "blackguardism"