

RECENT IRISH NOVELISTS.

ANOTHER year has come and gone without bringing us the novelist we are hoping for, whom we are in need of, to show us ourselves as we are, neither flattered nor yet too much overshadowed, by lack of discernment and sympathy. Every nation has its novelists, and the art has not yet reached its highest development, the art which reflects men and women in their dealings with and attitudes towards each other, revealing their faults, failings, powers and weaknesses, with something added from the artist, of suggestion, criticism, idealism of the reverse, which shall help the student to recognize himself or his neighbor, and hit a useful lesson home. The roll-call of Irish novelists is far too short and unsatisfactory, and if it be true that the growth of the novel increases with the prosperity and consequent intellectual culture of a country, we have not far to seek for the reason of our poverty in art. A few treasures have been handed down to us from the past, works which have made record of the people and ways and scenes of a day gone by. We have the novels of Gerald Griffin, the *Bumms*, Carleton, Miss Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, Lever, all of which give us lively and characteristic pictures of an Ireland which we see not now. In later years, either because imagination has grown dull among us, or the ways of life supply less attractive material, or the ready English market for fiction draws off our talent and employs it at remunerative wages on the themes its daily supply requires—for some one, or all of these reasons, certain it is that our Irish literature does not become enriched as time goes on, and we shall have little to show for the work of our period at the close of the nineteenth century. It is a noticeable fact that writers who produce one good Irish novel, giving promise of store to come, almost invariably cease to be Irish at that point, and afterwards cast the tributary stream of their powers into the universal river of English fiction. Thus, Mr. Lewis Hingfield, having given us that fine picture of Ireland in the day of the Volunteers, "*My Lords of Strogue*," turned his back upon us, and became in consequence less distinguished and less interesting in his work. Mr. Richard Ashe King, in like manner having delighted Irish readers with the "*Wearmg of the Green*," now supplies an English novel to an English periodical, hiding his shavrock in a field of common clover. Mr. Justin McCarthy also writes perfect English for the English, and the clever books of Mrs. Cashel Hoey show no trace of the fact that she is Irish of the Irish, not only by birth but in faithful affection. Mr. Richard Dowling, who in his early days of delicate promise migrated to London and pitched his tent beside the publishers, would doubtless have given us much more beautiful and delicate work if he had stayed within hearing of Shandon Bells. Yet how can we quarrel with any of these bright spirits if they prefer to live their lives pleasantly and in affluent circumstances in the busy working, paying world of London, rather than content themselves with the ideally uncomfortable conditions of him who elects to chow the cud of sweet and bitter Irish fancies with his feet in an Irish bog and his head in a rainbow? To choose the latter way much self-denial is needed, much faith, much singleness of purpose, and also the sacrifice, sometimes, of things even more sacred than ideal service of country. We must only hope that with the advent of Home Rule to Ireland will come the dawn of a new era, when increased prosperity and civilization will bring increase of artistic culture, and a taste for letters at present deplorably wanting in the Irish public. Until such a taste be engendered we have little chance of possessing a rich literature of our own. Of the few Irish writers who continue to write for Ireland are Miss Laffan and the clever author of "*Hurish*." While paying large tribute to the brilliant author of "*Flitters, Fatters, and the Counsellor*" we must regret that her pen is not more often dipped in the milk of human kindness when describing the faults and shortcomings of her worse fellow country men. A little of Thackeray's sly humor and sweetening tenderness would enhance the value of her often just criticism, and a bright picture placed beside a dark one would relieve the sombreness of her presentations and more completely reflect the truth. The author of "*Hurish*" has also chosen the role of censor, though perhaps in a less marked degree. All honor to those who dare to expose the naked truth with honest purpose.

Would we had a George Eliot to give us of Irish life scenes and characters corresponding to those in "*Silas Marner*" and "*The Mill on the Floss*." There is no doubt that "*The Collegians*," by Gerald Griffin, is the very best Irish novel as yet written—strikingly dramatic, wrought to a fine point of tragedy through varying scenes of the most touching pathos, the most playful humor. Every touch is Irish to the life. Laughter and tears follow one another as one turns the pages of the book.

The best Irish story written in later years is Miss Keary's "*Castle Daly*." Unhappily, the author did not live long enough after its publication to give us another of the same character—*Rosa Mulholland in Weekly Register*.

ADDRESS TO ARCHBISHOP WALSH.

ARCHBISHOP WALSH was on Thursday, the 27th ult., the recipient of an artistically illuminated address, presented by the members of the Separate School Board, the presentation taking place in the reception room of the palace. The address was read by Mr. Anglin.

His Grace, in replying to the address, said he wished to speak in a conversational manner, and requested those present to be seated. He thanked them sincerely for the beautiful address and the flattering terms in which it was couched. He left London with all its pleasant associations and with the conviction that he was assuming duties of greater responsibility in this diocese, to which he had been called in the Providence of God. He felt assured, however, that he had many friends in Toronto able and willing to assist him, and if he wanted any proof of this it was to be found in the magnificent reception accorded him on the occasion of his arrival in this city. He then referred to his early connection with the city of Toronto, and to the fact that he had served on the Separate School Board. He was glad to hear that the Separate Schools of this city were progressing so favorably. The education of the Catholic youth of this great country was a subject of great importance, and one well worthy of their best attention and labors. The Church had always taken a lively interest in the education of her children, and here in Canada they enjoyed privileges which, though not so great as they ought to be, were still greater than those enjoyed in other countries. In France the schools were being secularized and infidelized, and the nuns and spiritual teachers turned out. In Italy things were also looking very bad for religious education, and even in England undesirable changes were being made. It would be a bad day for England when the teachings of the Church were not admissible in the public schools. The battle between the Church and infidelity is now to be fought in the schools. The Roman Catholic Church in every country is moving against the influences of infidelity and unbelief. Heretofore the Catholics of Ontario could live in peace with their Protestant fellow-citizens, but now some politicians seem to think that they (the Roman Catholics) were getting more than their rights. They did enjoy certain rights here but not to the same extent as the Protestant minority of Quebec enjoyed at the hands of the Catholic majority. They were told here that they wanted more than their rights, but this was false; it was the old fable of the wolf and the lamb. They wanted to live at peace, to manage their own institutions and not to interfere with the rights or liberties of others—to live in peace as free citizens of a free country. They pay their taxes as do other citizens; stand side by side with others in the city's interests; they trade with their Protestant brethren and their Protestant brethren with them. He hoped the time would soon come when the people of Canada would learn to hate injustice and to love fair play, and when the public men would respect patriotism, instead of party and politics. He quoted extracts from the report of a Protestant minister (Rev. Wm. Rexford, Secretary Quebec Council of Public Instruction) to show that there were in Quebec nearly 1,000 Protestant separate schools with an attendance of 34,440 pupils, while in Ontario there were but 245 Catholic schools. In the Catholic Province of Quebec the Government grant to Protestant schools was \$20,545.