

THE WEEK.

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THE CELT IN SCOTLAND.

MOMMSEN concludes his account of the Celtic race by pronouncing that "it is, and remains at all times and places the same indolent and poetical, irresolute and fervid, inquisitive, credulous, amiable, clever, but, in a political point of view, thoroughly useless nation; and, therefore, its fate has been always and everywhere the same." These are rather stern words; but the same is the moral of Mr. Duncan Keith's "Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland," from the earliest times to the death of David I., 1153 (Macmillan and Company). Mr. Keith shows, by a close examination of the primitive history of Scotland, that the Celts in that country neither founded, nor showed themselves capable of founding, anything worthy of the name of a polity till they were taken in hand by Teutons. In Scotland, as in Ireland, down to the period of Scandinavian and Norman conquest, they totally failed to emerge from the tribal state, and their only political institution beyond the tribal chieftaincy was a loose kind of supremacy, which is dignified by the name of kingship, but was military, not political. Tara was a mere meeting-place of tribes, not a centre of government. Neither in Scotland nor in Ireland do the Celts appear to have had any law in the proper sense of the term. They had no notion of State legislation, or of crimes against the State. The Brehon law, however elaborate, was not State legislation, nor was it enforced by State authority; it was a set of rules devised by primitive jurists and enforced only by arbitration. It treated crimes as private wrongs, to be compounded for by fines, not as public offences to be punished by the Government. The King's Peace of the Teutonic communities had no counterpart among the Celts, nor does there seem to have been any check on private war, the unrestrained prevalence of which is totally fatal to civilisation. In his political character the Celt may be truly said to have had a double portion of original sin, whatever the demagogue and the "hustings liar" may assert to the contrary. Left to himself, he has nowhere produced free institutions. What he did produce was a Church, at once intensely monastic and intensely missionary, which, having its origin in Ireland, evangelised Scotland, reclaimed from its relapse into heathenism the North of England, tried to reform the Merovingian Court, and extended its enterprise to Germany and Switzerland. The poetic memories of that Church linger round Clonmacnoise, Glendalough, Iona, and Lindisfarne. Let St. Patrick have come from what quarter he may, there can be no doubt that his Church was a branch of that which existed in Celtic Britain before the mission of Augustine, and not a daughter of Rome. It came into direct collision with Rome at Whitby, where the two contended for the possession of the North of England, as it did afterwards at the Synod of Cashel, where the Irish Church was forced by the glaive of the Romanising Norman to bow to the rule of Rome. The question of whether it was Protestant has been laid aside by all rational inquirers: Protestant it was not, but neither was it Roman or Papal. Its tradition as to Easter perhaps came from a Greek source, through Marseilles and Lyons. The Church of the Irish tribes did not turn Papal till the Pale

turned Protestant, and, in Mr. Keith's opinion, the character of the people is such that it would be no surprise, were Ireland to attain independence, if the Church there should throw off its allegiance to Rome and become national as of yore with a Pope of its own. The missionary character of the Celtic Church is closely connected with the restless and adventurous character of the race. The Irish Saints, Columba, Columbanus, and the rest, come before us rather as robust and intrepid rovers in the service of Christianity than as ascetics like the Saints of Rome. The monastic organisation again seems connected with the work of the missionary carried on in the wild days of tribalism and Vikings. It was natural that in a Church monastically organised the principal personages should be the Abbots, and that the episcopate should hold, as it did, a secondary place. Bishops, however, there evidently were, and plenty of them, though, to the Roman mind, wanting in hierarchical dignity and somewhat irregularly consecrated. The importance of Bishops depended a good deal on that of the cities which were their sees, as notably appears in the case of Rome; and there being no cities in Celtic Scotland or Ireland, it was natural that the episcopate should fail, as it did, to develop into a hierarchy, and remain merely a clerical grade above that of priest. The Culdees, about whom such reams of controversial stuff have been written, were, Mr. Keith is persuaded, nothing but monks who had degenerated from the rigour of their rule. In the lectures of Professor Stokes on Ireland and the Irish Church we have most interesting accounts of the monastic buildings, with their cashels, their bee-hive hermitages, and their Round Towers, with strong proofs that the architectural forms were derived from Eastern Christendom. The Round Towers, one use of which evidently was to afford the priests and their belongings a shelter from the plundering raids, are typical of the situation of the Celtic Church, which was as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers amidst the surrounding barbarism of the tribes, and seems never to have succeeded to any great extent in propagating civilisation. All around the sanctuaries the faction fighting went on; bishops took part in it; women took part in it; and we have a scene in which one Celtic woman drags another off the battlefield by a reaping-hook thrust through her breast. Ecclesiastical art, however, took a marvellous spring, both in architecture and in the illumination of manuscripts, and other decorative work. Of the learning of the Celtic clergy we are less able to form a trustworthy estimate; its renown was immense at the time, but we rather suspect exaggeration. Art of a minor kind, indeed, shed its ray even over tribal anarchy and barbarism, for the golden collars in the Celtic Museum are surpassingly elegant, as well as marvellously rich. With Malcolm Canmore and his English queen came Teutonic ascendancy, with a regular monarchy, and the final installation of the Roman in the place of the Celtic Church. But the Highlands remained tribal, anarchic, and barbarous till they were subdued and civilised by the House of Hanover. Mr. Duncan Keith is sufficiently unprejudiced to hint a regret that the Teutonic power in Great Britain should have been divided into two monarchies, which waged for seven centuries a mutually destructive war, while Nature and the exigencies of their position, in face of Celtic resistance, destined them for the Union which came at last. We may presume that he does not agree with Mr. Gladstone in desiring the dismemberment of the United Kingdom.

SAUNTERINGS.

COME, I pray you, and let us go a pilgrimage. Not with devotional intent, for the age has outworn its sandals, and outgrown its sackcloth; not by the highway that leads to any shrine, for the walking is very bad, and we are indifferent pedestrians in Canada at the best of times. We will go, inspired by the motive that sends Protestants to St. Anne de Beaupré, and we will be transported as the modern pilgrim is, but by swifter service than the ingenuity of the time has yet placed at the modern pilgrim's disposal. I have no doubt that the state of the pavement and the customs of polite society will compel us to take a sedan-chair when we arrive, but for the journey we may depend upon a more comfortable mode of transit. You may carry unlimited baggage, and my advice is that you include in yours, *ma belle demoiselle*, a ruffle or two and a farthingale, a long-waisted bodice, and some patches, if you would not horrify the Mrs. Grundy of the millinery shops; and in yours, gallant sir, knee breeches, buckled