

Our Curbstone Observer

ON CHEERING WORDS

FROM time to time I meet with brief passages in articles, or entire paragraphs, in various newspapers, that correspond so exactly with my own impressions and give such complete expression to the results of my personal observations, that I clip them out for future use. Some time ago one of these small articles came my way and I noted it down, and ever since I have had almost daily occasion to find application for it. The following is the passage:—

AN EXAMPLE.—This may seem all common sense, but so plain that each one will say: "We know all that." But the saying of it is exactly the merit; just as the saying of the kind and cheery word only demands the good will—no effort is required. Sometimes, however, lack of thoughtfulness causes people to neglect good opportunities of saying kind and cheerful things. This passage came home to me the other day when speaking to an old acquaintance, whom I had not met for fifteen years. Away back in the early "eighties" this young man, was full of talent, and courage, but he was also generally full of something else. He had contracted the drink habit, and for some ten years he had been getting monthly and even daily worse. He felt that his constitution and resisting powers grew weaker in the inverse ratio of the strengthening of the liquor habit. He had every desire to change, but had not the strength. It was his most cruel punishment to find all his ambitious aims falling to pieces, and shattered by this very same cause. One time, in 1885, he had been indulging to an extreme extent, and by an effort that was heroic he had succeeded in sobering up. I was travelling with him on a train from Toronto to Montreal, when another of his friends came on. This gentleman is long since dead. He was with us for a time, and when I had gone away for a few moments he gave expression to his delight at seeing his young friend so well over the trouble he had been in. Just as I returned I heard him say, in a most cheery manner, "John, my boy, I always had faith in you, and I know that you have a fine future ahead. I'd stake my life on you!"—He said no more, because I came along at that moment. Years went past, and I lost sight of both my companions of that journey. In 1899 I read of the death of the kindly old gentleman, but it was only the week before last that I again met the other. I was astonished to see what a fine, solid, prosperous-looking man he had become. He told me that he was now the leading lawyer in an American city, also a United States Senator. And, in the course of our chat he recalled that trip from Toronto, and he said:—"I have dated my success from that day. So cheering was the old gentleman's words, and so much in contrast with all the evil that others constantly predicted, that the moment he said that he would stake his life on me; I made up my mind that he would never lose his stake—and since that day till this I have never taken a glass of liquor, my success came in rapid succession, and I am so grateful to his memory for that one word of encouragement and of

cheer." The old gentleman may not have realized all that he had done that day, he may never have dreamed of the importance of his cheery words; for he was accustomed to speak encouragement, and I believe he could not have spoken otherwise had he tried. No matter, the good was done. The word was spoken at the right time and the results have outlined the one who spoke that word. This is an example that came to my mind to-night as I reflected on a subject for this week's column. And I think there is no more delightful sensation than that which comes to the one who feels that he has done a kindly deed and, by the simple means of a cheery word, has brought light where there was gloom, has strewn flowers where all was barren, has won gratitude at the smallest imaginable cost to himself. And the cheering word is never forgotten. It may not be constantly present to the memory; but it is buried away down in the heart, and the slightest circumstance will call it up and cause it to twinkle like a brilliant star upon the horizon of a person's life. It is, therefore, a good resolution to take to be always ready with the kind word, for none can tell what mighty effects it may have.

THE IRISH MELODIES.

(From New York Freeman's Journal.)

True poetry has been likened to a paintings which shows the harmonious blendings of light, shade and color, the accuracy of perspective, without any mathematical harshness, and an entire freedom from redundancy. The simile is apt. In poetry we have the blendings of light, shade and color of the poet's imagination, the same freedom from rigidity, and, above all, a truthfulness to nature. In either, a touch or word more or less may mar the picture, and the higher and finer the subject, the more easy will it be to make its reproduction imperfect.

WAY OF THE DRUNKARD BEREFT WITH TRIALS

YOUNG MEN.—The time is coming very fast—indeed, it has already arrived in our commercial life—when a young man who has habits of intemperance is narrowing very rapidly the possible range of openings in which he may make a living. Fifteen years ago, says a writer in an exchange, as the train-master on a division of one of our large railroads in America told me, he sat in his office one day and saw a freight train stand for two hours waiting for a member of the train crew to recover from intoxication. When the men were able to handle the train, it started out of the yard. Now, the train-master said, if the breakman or any of the train crew were found to be under the slightest influence of liquor, or if they were seen even to enter a saloon, they were instantly discharged. The idea of keeping a whole train waiting for a man to recover from drunkenness would seem perfectly absurd to the railroad corporation now. The time will come when such an idea will seem equally absurd in other spheres. A young man who lost his position in an office of this same company came to me last year and begged that I would use my influence to have him taken back by the superintendent of the division. He frankly confessed that he had been drunk and was unable to report for duty one day, but the next morning he was at his desk. When he appeared, he received his dismissal. He acknowledged his fault and promised the superintendent it would never occur again, offering to let the road take his wages and pay them to his aged father and mother. He pleaded that it was his first offence. I went with an influential citizen to the head of the department where the young man had been employed for a second trial; but the superintendent simply said: "The railroad is not in the business of reforming drunkards or reclaiming young men. Past experience has taught us that it is useless for us to take young men back in this way."

THE OCEAN CUPBOARD.—On one of her recent trips to Edinburgh, a certain steamer carried a deck passenger who retired at nightfall, having imbibed more strong beverage than suited his constitution. His mental confusion on rising next morning was sadly intensified when he made the unpleasant discovery that all his personal clothing was missing. The steward and his staff were promptly summoned to his cabin, and were followed in due course by the captain himself. The mystery seemed to defy all conjecture until the captain asked the sufferer if he had any remembrance of how he had disposed of his clothes over night. A sudden gleam of intelligence lighted the passenger's eye, and the mischievous was made apparent to all the onlookers, when he answered: "Why, of course! I remember now. Before turning in I put them all into that little cupboard yonder."

"Why, man!" roared the captain, "that little cupboard, as you call it, is the port-hole!" Only one person on board failed to thoroughly appreciate the humor of the situation, and he it was who borrowed an outfit from the steward, and abstained from drinking whiskey and like beverages during the remainder of the voyage.—Temperance Cause.

THE IRISH MELODIES.

(From New York Freeman's Journal.)

And to the latter sentiment he gives expression in those well known lines: "As slow our ship her foamy track Against the wind was cleaving. Her trembling pennant still looked back To that dear Isle 'twas leaving. So loth we part from all we love, From all the links that bind us, So turn our hearts, wherever we rove, To those we leave behind us!"

And so, to all those wild and melancholy strains which were "at once the offspring and solace of grief," the poet has wedded words which intensify their expression and harmonize with their weird beauty. The patriotic melodies, or those referring to Ireland, while not so intense, perhaps, as those of Davis, are none the less fervent, tender and sincere. Moore has been accused of lukewarmness in his love for his country, but who can doubt the sincerity of the man who wrote of Ireland thus: "Remember thee! yes, while there's life in this heart, It shall never forget thee, all lorn as thou art; More dear in thy sorrow, thy gloom, and thy showers, Than the rest of the world in its sunniest hours, Wert thou all that I wished thee, great, glorious and free— First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea— I might hail thee with prouder, with happier brow, But oh! could I love thee more deeply than now?"

Many of the "Melodies" treat of Bardic tradition, or legends of Ancient Erin, and by bringing us back to the twilight of Fable give an insight of the poetic beauty of Irish mythology. Among these we have the "Song of Feonuala," which tells of the enchantment of the daughter of an ancient Irish king, and her condemnation to wander, in the form of a swan, for many hundred years, over certain lakes and rivers in Ireland, till the dawning of Christianity, when the sound of the first Mass bell should break the charm and be the signal of her release. What exquisite fancies are interwoven in this legend! and how elegantly the poet depicts the dawning of the Faith in Ireland—that Faith that has been hers ever since, through weal and woe, through sorrow and anguish, through famine and pestilence, aye, through rivers of blood, it has lived, and will still be alive when its oppression shall have dwindled down to the lowest depths of Atheism and degradation! Those "Melodies" which reproduce in lovely, vivid tints episodes in Irish history, contain a mixture of strong, virile sentiments, deep pathos, and occasionally stirring satire. Nearly all of them dwell on the courage, sanctity and pride of Ireland's sons— "E'er Saxon foot had dared pollute Her independent shore."

In the "Song of O'Ruarc" the poet graphically describes the cause of the Norman invasion. The following lines, expressive of deep sorrow and, alas! of truth, till prophetically the pathetic portion of Ireland's story: "While now—Oh degenerate daughter Of Erin, how fallen is thy fame! And through eyes of bondage and slaughter, Thy country shall bleed for thy shame." And yet, with what hope and courage he concludes the song, attaching the blame, justly to the stranger, in his inimitably satirical style, in the following words: "But onward!—the green banner fear- ing, Go, flesh every sword to the hilt; On our side is Virtue and Erin, On theirs is the Saxon and Guilt."

Language Of Worship.

(By An Occasional Contributor.)

The Catholic Church is the only one on earth that possess one, universal and unchangeable language. Other churches make use of the languages belonging to the various countries in which they are established, and they cannot use other than "living" and changeable tongues. The Latin, used by the Church is a "dead" language, and therefore it is not susceptible of any variations. It remains as it was spoken and written when it was the one, universal language of the world, in the days of the Roman Empire. Times out of mind has this been explained, and it is a rare thing to find a non-Catholic who can understand the significance of a single language for a Church. The most educated and the most illiterate of Catholics may go together to St. Peter's in Rome, and then proceed to visit churches in every quarter of the globe, and no matter where they go they will find the same Mass said in the exact same words, and they feel at once as if at home in the Church. It matters not whether it be a gorgeous basilica, or a humble chapel in the back-woods, the same service, the same prayers, the same hymns, the same ritual do they meet and hear. This is another evidence of the universality of the Church and of her adaptability to all conditions, all ages, and all nations. As we have said, it is seldom that any one outside the fold can understand this.

However, there are exceptions to every rule, and one of those exceptions is Mr. Lloyd George, M.P. in the British Parliament. Recently this gentleman was called upon to speak at the laying of the foundation stone of a new Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, or chapel, and he took occasion to say that sometimes they criticized the Catholic Church very severely, but there was no church that had made a surer and deeper search into human nature. "That Church," he said, "the greatest religious organization in the whole world, conducts its worship in a common tongue. The Catholics conduct their worship in the language of worship. Their Church utilizes every means for taking people away from everyday interests, and seeks to induce them to forget what is outside. The language of commerce and of everyday occupations is thus left outside, and the people are taught the language of worship. This shows a shrewd, deep insight into the human mind. The Welsh have preserved their language for the hearth and for worship. English will become the language of commerce, the language of professions, the language of the street, even for Welshmen, but the Welsh language, when it dies, will die at the steps of the altar."

This is certainly a new way to look at the matter, and it is decidedly a very good argument. But the principal force of the assertions of Mr. George, is that they come from one who is so very far removed from Catholicity, yet whose education and position in life combine to make his words bear a special significance. He has observed and he has drawn conclusions from his observations. None more just than this one in favor of the universal language used by the Catholic Church. It is clear to even the least reflecting that a Church which draws its people away from all worldly considerations and causes them to turn absolutely to God and to the association of the thoughts that mount up to Him, in their hours of worship, must have a Divine inspiration behind its great machinery and consequently an evidence of Divine Truth in the religion it teaches. Never do we hear the Mass or the Vespers sung that it does not come home to us, how different from the cold formality of a language that is used in barter and in profane occupations. The fact that the Catholic Church possesses and uses the "language of worship" is another evidence of her Catholicity and truth.

The measure of capacity is the measure of sphere to either man or woman. Don't judge a man by his failures in life, for many a man fails because he is too honest to succeed.

THE IRISH MELODIES.

(From New York Freeman's Journal.)

And to the latter sentiment he gives expression in those well known lines: "As slow our ship her foamy track Against the wind was cleaving. Her trembling pennant still looked back To that dear Isle 'twas leaving. So loth we part from all we love, From all the links that bind us, So turn our hearts, wherever we rove, To those we leave behind us!"

And so, to all those wild and melancholy strains which were "at once the offspring and solace of grief," the poet has wedded words which intensify their expression and harmonize with their weird beauty. The patriotic melodies, or those referring to Ireland, while not so intense, perhaps, as those of Davis, are none the less fervent, tender and sincere. Moore has been accused of lukewarmness in his love for his country, but who can doubt the sincerity of the man who wrote of Ireland thus: "Remember thee! yes, while there's life in this heart, It shall never forget thee, all lorn as thou art; More dear in thy sorrow, thy gloom, and thy showers, Than the rest of the world in its sunniest hours, Wert thou all that I wished thee, great, glorious and free— First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea— I might hail thee with prouder, with happier brow, But oh! could I love thee more deeply than now?"

Many of the "Melodies" treat of Bardic tradition, or legends of Ancient Erin, and by bringing us back to the twilight of Fable give an insight of the poetic beauty of Irish mythology. Among these we have the "Song of Feonuala," which tells of the enchantment of the daughter of an ancient Irish king, and her condemnation to wander, in the form of a swan, for many hundred years, over certain lakes and rivers in Ireland, till the dawning of Christianity, when the sound of the first Mass bell should break the charm and be the signal of her release. What exquisite fancies are interwoven in this legend! and how elegantly the poet depicts the dawning of the Faith in Ireland—that Faith that has been hers ever since, through weal and woe, through sorrow and anguish, through famine and pestilence, aye, through rivers of blood, it has lived, and will still be alive when its oppression shall have dwindled down to the lowest depths of Atheism and degradation! Those "Melodies" which reproduce in lovely, vivid tints episodes in Irish history, contain a mixture of strong, virile sentiments, deep pathos, and occasionally stirring satire. Nearly all of them dwell on the courage, sanctity and pride of Ireland's sons— "E'er Saxon foot had dared pollute Her independent shore."

In the "Song of O'Ruarc" the poet graphically describes the cause of the Norman invasion. The following lines, expressive of deep sorrow and, alas! of truth, till prophetically the pathetic portion of Ireland's story: "While now—Oh degenerate daughter Of Erin, how fallen is thy fame! And through eyes of bondage and slaughter, Thy country shall bleed for thy shame." And yet, with what hope and courage he concludes the song, attaching the blame, justly to the stranger, in his inimitably satirical style, in the following words: "But onward!—the green banner fear- ing, Go, flesh every sword to the hilt; On our side is Virtue and Erin, On theirs is the Saxon and Guilt."

THE IRISH MELODIES.

(From New York Freeman's Journal.)

And to the latter sentiment he gives expression in those well known lines: "As slow our ship her foamy track Against the wind was cleaving. Her trembling pennant still looked back To that dear Isle 'twas leaving. So loth we part from all we love, From all the links that bind us, So turn our hearts, wherever we rove, To those we leave behind us!"

And so, to all those wild and melancholy strains which were "at once the offspring and solace of grief," the poet has wedded words which intensify their expression and harmonize with their weird beauty. The patriotic melodies, or those referring to Ireland, while not so intense, perhaps, as those of Davis, are none the less fervent, tender and sincere. Moore has been accused of lukewarmness in his love for his country, but who can doubt the sincerity of the man who wrote of Ireland thus: "Remember thee! yes, while there's life in this heart, It shall never forget thee, all lorn as thou art; More dear in thy sorrow, thy gloom, and thy showers, Than the rest of the world in its sunniest hours, Wert thou all that I wished thee, great, glorious and free— First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea— I might hail thee with prouder, with happier brow, But oh! could I love thee more deeply than now?"

Many of the "Melodies" treat of Bardic tradition, or legends of Ancient Erin, and by bringing us back to the twilight of Fable give an insight of the poetic beauty of Irish mythology. Among these we have the "Song of Feonuala," which tells of the enchantment of the daughter of an ancient Irish king, and her condemnation to wander, in the form of a swan, for many hundred years, over certain lakes and rivers in Ireland, till the dawning of Christianity, when the sound of the first Mass bell should break the charm and be the signal of her release. What exquisite fancies are interwoven in this legend! and how elegantly the poet depicts the dawning of the Faith in Ireland—that Faith that has been hers ever since, through weal and woe, through sorrow and anguish, through famine and pestilence, aye, through rivers of blood, it has lived, and will still be alive when its oppression shall have dwindled down to the lowest depths of Atheism and degradation! Those "Melodies" which reproduce in lovely, vivid tints episodes in Irish history, contain a mixture of strong, virile sentiments, deep pathos, and occasionally stirring satire. Nearly all of them dwell on the courage, sanctity and pride of Ireland's sons— "E'er Saxon foot had dared pollute Her independent shore."

In the "Song of O'Ruarc" the poet graphically describes the cause of the Norman invasion. The following lines, expressive of deep sorrow and, alas! of truth, till prophetically the pathetic portion of Ireland's story: "While now—Oh degenerate daughter Of Erin, how fallen is thy fame! And through eyes of bondage and slaughter, Thy country shall bleed for thy shame." And yet, with what hope and courage he concludes the song, attaching the blame, justly to the stranger, in his inimitably satirical style, in the following words: "But onward!—the green banner fear- ing, Go, flesh every sword to the hilt; On our side is Virtue and Erin, On theirs is the Saxon and Guilt."