

to assert in one sentence that the Irish in America, in spite of their relative poverty, are remarkably free from the evil of bribery and in the next to protest, without attempt of proof, that the influence of the Irish on American politics has been uniformly bad. Evil, no doubt, has followed from the pernicious system of hiving a penniless, broken-spirited people in the slums of the half-dozen great cities of the United States, when by a meagre outlay they might have been put in occupation of the vast farm lands of the then unoccupied West. Figs do not grow on thistles ; and the boy who is born in a Bowery tenement, who has to live by his wits as soon as he can walk, who cannot receive an extensive education because he has to help support the house, who cannot get business training because the sons of the wealthy can afford to work for nothing ; who cannot compete against trained specialists having the advantage of education and wealth, can scarcely be expected to look upon things in the same easy contented manner that another assumes, who is the product of twenty generations of comfort, who has been to the college, made the grand tour, acquired or inherited a fortune and considers himself the orthodox mouthpiece of Providence and Omniscience. The writer runs through the list of occupations and finds the Irish badly represented. He finds few Irish doctors, and concludes that the Irish are too lazy to make the necessary study. But if we think of the bright Irish boy of our immediate circle of acquaintance, one who might carry off the honors in a class, the discovery is made at once that he cannot get the start. He must earn bread while his heavy-witted comrade goes on to success and riches and the respect of the world. In many States one can qualify for the law by study in spare hours, and the Irishman gets into the profession and makes his mark. The Atlantic writer says it is because talk comes easy to him, and talk is easily mistaken for law. He does not find the Irishman in the chair of the President, in the Administration, in posts of honor. No ; where there are any perquisites it is easy to overlook the Irish Catholic. No need to examine the practice in the United States. A Catholic soon learns that he is an important factor in determining a selection, but that he is easily set aside should he have any aspirations in his own behalf. If he can by hook or by crook, honestly or otherwise, accumulate a million of money, he can secure an office commensurate with his financial value to his associates. But not otherwise. If there are sacrifices to be made he is welcomed. The Atlantic writer admits with bewildered magnanimity that Irishmen merited more honor in the battles of the union than any other race. Then they had all the chance for distinction they could desire. Afterward there was still hewing of wood and drawing of water to be attended to. There can be no manner of doubt that the unlovely development of the tenement system has retarded the progress of the Irish in America and has prevented the adequate expansion of their talents ; but in little more than a generation they have drawn up all but even with their more favored fellows, and the triumphs of the future may not unlikely be their triumphs, for a people who are loyal, who are courageous, who are patient in long suffering, who are humble in Christian humility, who are hopeful in adversity, who are ambitious of good repute, and who have the abounding natural talent which this people possess, cannot long abide a place below the level of practical equality.