

OLD PUBLICATIONS.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

THE BRITISH ESSAYISTS.—Last week's contribution closed with Dr. Johnson's appreciation of the field selected by the British Essayists. It had been left for Steele and Addison to rescue the valuable accomplishments of the age from obscurity and abuse, and to unite wit, learning and elegant sentiments, in the service of cheerful piety and decorous manners. Their province was to treat of love, jealousy, marriage, friendship, domestic duties, revenge, taste for expense, gaming and such like. In this Steele acted wisely, in his character of "Censor Morum," and performed a duty which we are told, was not always unattended with personal danger. Characters like these are at all times the legitimate object of satire, and the shafts of satire were not spared against these reformers, nor were they sparing in making use of like weapons. Of the works written upon this plan, the first in point of time, and that which prescribed a form to all the others, is the "Tatler." The design of this work belongs exclusively to Sir Richard Steele, concerning whom it may be interesting to dot down a few notes. It is to be regretted that the material is scanty. So much envy existed in his regard that much of the interesting facts connected with his life have been purposely consigned to oblivion by his less able contemporaries. The fullest account given is that in the "Biographia Britannica," and it is often inaccurate. Until Mr. Nicholas published Steele's letters, in 1786, nothing was attempted in justice to the memory of a man to whom the world is so greatly indebted. In one article we could not attempt to tell all about Steele and his contemporaries—they came in as part of his biography—but we will try and give a fair idea of this first of the Essayists, even if it requires a couple of contributions.

RICHARD STEELE.—Steele was born in Dublin, in 1671. His father who had been for some time secretary to James the first, Duke of Ormond, was of English extraction, and sent his son, when very young, to London, where he was placed in the Charter-house by the Duke, who was one of the governors of that seminary. Thence he was sent to Merton College, Oxford, and admitted a Postmaster in 1691. While in college they say he amused himself writing a comedy, which a fellow student advised him to suppress, as unworthy of his genius. He left the University without a degree, and went into military life, by entering the Horse Guards. This course offended his friends, and he fell into the company of gay and unthinking young men. To counteract the force of temptation he had recourse to a singular expedient. He wrote his book called "The Christian Hero," with a design to fix on his own mind a strong impression of virtue and religion. He soon discovered at least one mistake in this experiment; he found that the support of this little book—published in chapters—was too weak, while his engagement to be virtuous was voluntary and unknown. To render it more binding he reprinted the book with his name, and tried to live as well as he wrote. This had only the effect of making

those who had considered him a pleasant companion look upon him as a disagreeable fellow.

It was only after writing several plays, from 1701 to 1707, some of which were ridiculed and others condemned, that he conceived the idea of the "Tatler." He had been a lifelong companion of Addison, and they were close friends, and it is believed that Addison had greatly encouraged him in this enterprise.

He commenced the "Tatler" on the 12th April, 1709. During its publication, in 1710, he was appointed a Commissioner of the Stamp Duties, which he retained after the defeat of the ministry that had appointed him. The "Tatler" was almost immediately followed by the "Spectator," and the "Guardian." In the last-named journal he declared war on the Ministers and lost his position. He published "The Spectator" and "The Reader," and, on the death of the Queen, he was appointed Surveyor of the Royal Stables at Hampton Court. He was elected member of Parliament for Boroughbridge, in the first Parliament of George I. On the 8th April, 1715, he was made a Knight. The next August Sir Robert Walpole gave him 500 pounds for special services. He opposed the famous Peage Bill, not only in Parliament, but outside in his publication "The Plebeian."

With all his advantages he never practised economy, and in 1718 he tried to relieve his necessities by the publication of the "Fishpool." In 1719 he published "The Theatre," and in 1720 he fought most honorably against the famous South Sea Bubble. It was in this connection that he wrote his celebrated comedy, "The Conscious Lovers," which was acted with great success and advantage to the author. The King, to whom the play was dedicated, presented him with £500. But he was soon again in poverty and obliged to sell his share in the theatre, and was defeated in an action which he commenced against the managers, in 1726. He is now said to have been attacked by a paralytic disorder greatly impairing his understanding; and in this melancholy state he was removed to Carmarthen (in Wales), where he died on the 1st September, 1729, and was, according to his own desire, privately interred in the town church of that place. In a note on No. 176 of the "Tatler," (Oct. edit. of 1806) we find this remark: "Steele retired into Wales before he had the paralytic stroke that deprived him of his intellectual faculties, and solely on the principle of doing justice to his creditors, at a time, too, when he had the fairest prospects of satisfying all their claims to the uttermost farthing. His first wife, a lady of Barbadoes, died a few months after their marriage. His second wife was Mary, daughter of Jonathan Scurlock, of Languanor, in Carmarthenshire. They had three children, two boys, who died young, and a girl who married, in 1732, Lord Trevor of Bromham, and whose daughter, Diana, was a remarkable beauty, but unfortunately an idiot. He was not happy in his marriage, for his wife was a miser and a scold, and she led him a life far different from that which is congenial to a man of refinement and letters. Such the outlines of the life of Sir Richard Steele. We will now turn to his work and its influence upon English literature.

errand and made his way to the grand salon. His shabby costume, his tangled beard and white hair provoked the smiles of the perfumed belles and dandies of the court; but, passing on, he addressed himself to the Queen. "Madame," he said, "you are going to give a festival. I, too am anxious to procure a feast for some poor little birds dying of hunger in their nests—my abandoned children. My hands are empty, but the misery of these foundlings proves a blessing for you, as you have never refused to help them."

Now, about this time the talk of Paris, and of foreign courts as well, was of a recent occasion when St. Vincent de Paul had presented himself before an assembly of elegant dames and matrons, bearing in his arms two infants that he had picked up on the streets, and had said: "Now, ladies, do you wish these little ones to die?" Answer. "And suddenly these women had plucked off their jewels and thrown them to the advocate of those who could plead as yet only with their tears. Aime of Austria, who was posses-

ed of true nobility of soul, had fully understood the lesson of this incident, and now it came to her with redoubled force. Glancing at herself, she blushed for her luxurious raiment as others do for their shabbiness; and detaching her jewels from her hair, neck and arms, she placed them all in the hands of the poor priest.

"But, your Majesty," cried one of her ladies in waiting, "think of what you are doing! Depriving your head-dress of those magnificent pearls and on such an evening as this! Why, your coiffure is all disarranged. How are we to repair that?"

For sole answer the Queen culled a beautiful rose from the many bouquets around her, and, fixing it in her hair, said with a smile: "Is it not worth all the gems cut by the hands of men? Don't mind, 'tis for the little birds of Monsieur Vincent."

JACK AND THE CHICKENS.—Jack was a beautiful Irish setter that was devoted to his little Mistress, Mary. He had one very bad habit; he would kill chickens. The ranchmen all around threatened to shoot Jack if they caught him, and Mary was much distressed. One rainy day in the early spring a farm-hand brought into the house a number of dear little chickens, just out of the shell, and placed them on the hearth before the fire. The tiny fluffy waifs were chilled through and through, and their little legs were icy cold. Mary, like a good little housewife, suddenly conceived the idea of filling a basket with raw cotton, so as to make the small strangers a nice warm bed, and without thought of leaving them alone, started briskly upstairs to the garret, and soon returned with a hamper padded with warm white cotton. Imagine her horror, however, when, upon entering the room, she saw Jack lying lazily in front of the fire and not a chicken in sight.

The little girl was sick with fright, for she knew they had been hatched from expensive eggs of a particular breed, and that her father would scold her for her carelessness.

"Jack," she cried severely, "what have you done with those chickens?" Jack merely wagged his tail and looked at her with one ear cocked. Mary slowly approached the culprit, with a deep frown on her face, and said: "If you have eaten those chickens your master will have to shoot you."

At this terrible threat the dog only wagged his tail the harder and cocked both ears. Just then came a faint "Peep peep!" from somewhere near the fire, and the dog looked knowing.

And where do you suppose those baby chickens were hiding? Between the setter's two great forepaws and all up under his soft, silky hair. When his mistress had left the room Jack thought they needed care and considered it his duty to play nurse during her absence, so he had stretched himself before the fire and gathered the wee fluffy balls together under his warm fur, and now and again a tiny yellow head was thrust forth for a minute, to be withdrawn and tucked out of sight. Mary concluded that the basket was not needed just then and put it aside.

HUMAN MIRRORS.—Children are wonderful mirrors. If your small brother always answers you rudely, it will be quite safe to review your dealings with him, to see if your own impatience or petulance is not responsible for this condition of things. I remember once seeing a little girl running out to meet a sister who had been uptown on an errand. As both hands of the elder girl were filled with packages, the little one had to content herself with clutching her sister's skirt, and holding it tightly as she ran by her side. But when the piazza was reached, she hastily climbed to the topmost step, from which point of vantage she could throw her arms around her sister's neck, and bestow upon her such a hugging and kissing as would fittingly commemorate a return from Europe after a year's absence. Faithful little mirror! She was reflecting a sweetly unselfish character of which this world can never have too many duplicates.

The treatment we receive from those outside our homes also helps in showing our true selves. When a girl's acquaintances are inclined to take liberties with her, it indicates something more than a lack in them; it proves that she is wanting in the sweet dignity which is an essential to a beautiful girlhood as to womanhood. If the friends of another are continually coming to her with gossip, or stories she would be the better for

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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE. Vol. LIII., No. THE TRUE WITNESS IS PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE S. CARSLY Co. LIMITED. 1765 to 1788 Notre Dame Street, 184 St. James Street Montreal. GIFTS TO THE POPE. Isabella, of Spain, left token of her great fort Pope. Her personal piety much greater than had ed. Several donations have been made by so Vicar of Christ within Why does not the Italian possession of the has as much right to t to the Papal States. to the Pope of Rome legitimate manner. Th money are lawful gift persons, princes, and r pal domain consisted from Kings, Emperors, rulers who owned the p gave it to the Pope fo If the usurpation of the is legitimate, so would sure of ex-Queen Isabel AN EXPIATORY TEM grooped expiatory tem ered Heart, the Montm sion, is now planned in unction taken up officia nounced in a collective the Belgian Bishops as the seventy-fifth annive sional independence. A mitte has been formed ecclesiastical corporati the plateau of Koelbelve ive parish has been acq new space formed arou guim was first consecra Sacred Heart in 1868, with the entire world, 1905 she will dedicate Heart of the Divine Ma ing, in the very heart try, a temple which wil the children yet unborn owes to the benignant God. OTTAWA UNIVERSITY 24th May, Tuesday nex Day," the corner-stone University of Ottawa. The old building, which last year, was large en wholly up to modern r The new building will n imposing in appearance, modern in every resp day next educationalist and rulers temporal an will be present. The G ral, the Parliamentary S Sarratti, the Papal Del bishop Dubame, Chancel University, the Archbish shops of other Canadian heads of different relig