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SIDELIGHTS ON IRISH CHARACTER.

Written for the REVIEW.

The Rev. Father Drummond's very able and most interesting address on "The Irishman as a Soldier" delivered on the eve of the feast of St. Patrick must have turned everyone's thoughts to the Emerald Isle, and it thus brought back to my mind one or two curious reminiscences of the appreciation of things among the lower classes in Ireland.

While spending a little while one summer near Dublin, I had occasion to go to see some very good Catholics, in limited circumstances, who lived in the outskirts of the city.

The multitude of children visible in the less wealthy parts of the metropolis of Ireland, must, I should think, seem remarkable to every stranger, but, as I approached the term of my walk, my astonishment increased more and more.

It appeared as if no family in the neighborhood could number less than six children under ten years of age, and that every member of each household was playing in the dust of the road, or on the pathway when I arrived.

Another peculiarity which would have struck me still more forcibly, had I recently arrived from Canada, was the singular scantiness of wearing apparel provided for these little ones, what in France would have clothed two children, and in England, perhaps four, was manifestly what the Irish call "stretched" to meet the requirements of ten in Dublin.

Anything like a shoe or stocking, a cap or jacket was entirely unrepresented.

Sanitary clothing is often advertised, and certain kinds of wools are declared to prolong life, but the natural conclusion to be drawn from the rude health of this half wild population might surely encourage a belief that the less material of any kind people wear the better, while, as far as the longevity of the human race is concerned, all soap manufacturers may, without risk, be ruthlessly abandoned to panic and bankruptcy.

When, at length, I had patiently stepped over and round many boys and girls, as their varying ages rendered most convenient, I rang at the door of the house where I had come to call.

After a little while, the object of my visit having been duly explained and attained, I rose to depart, and on my way to the garden gate congratulated the mistress of the house on her considerable possessions in poultry.

"Ach shure, and we have to be after buyin' no eggs."

"Most decidedly not," I returned with surprise, "you must be rather able to sell a great many."

She flashed a mischievously contemptuous glance at this sordid expectation on my part, "faith and it's not myself that sells the eggs, we eat what we want, and the rest I throw away."

"You throw away hundreds

of good new laid eggs?" I exclaimed in amazement.

"And shure and where's the harm? There'll be plenty of hens to lay eggs in the world when the green grass is growing over your grave and mine."

A few days after my conversation with this prodigal housewife, I went to stay with a friend near Tralee, whom I will call Mrs. Wilmott. She had just arrived from England, the bride of the Squire of the place, and was very pleased with the prospect of becoming acquainted with her husband's tenantry in Ireland.

The latter were chiefly Catholic, while the Squire and the minority were Protestants.

Mr. Wilmott, however, being a just man, and very well bred, was scrupulously careful to avoid showing partiality to those who shared his own religious views, and the priest of the parish had experienced during several years that all outlay which he wished to make on his church or school had been defrayed by Mr. Wilmott without question or hesitation. Between such a landlord and his people the most perfect coadjuality existed, even though I am alluding to times when on most other properties a very bitter feeling between owners and tenants was unfortunately rife.

It had been decided that, in order to make all hearts rejoice on the happy occasion of the Squire's marriage, a substantial present, besides the usual banquet, should be made to each man and woman belonging to the estates.

The steward was to distribute the gifts to the men while Mrs. Wilmott wished to have the pleasure of making a little acquaintance with the women by giving the presents to them herself.

All arrangements were made accordingly and on certain mornings after breakfast the several recipients were directed to come up to the hall. Mrs. Wilmott and her visitors expected some quite original entertainment in witnessing the welcome these warm Irish hearts would have to bestow on the young Englishwoman, who, they had been told, meant to spend several months out of the year in their midst, and wished to know them all personally.

Few English pens can, I suppose, do justice to the enthusiasm of Irish feeling—and certainly mine would be among the most incapable—so I must content my readers with relating that the peasants came in overflowing with kind greetings and that they were all manifestly delighted with the excellence of their presents; but afterwards, unaccountable as it seemed, there was a look of evident disappointment, they came gay and they left the room—many, at least—almost sad; it was quite unmistakable, and at last Mrs. Wilmott asked us what we thought could possibly be the reason of this singular change in each case.

It was impossible to offer any explanation but at last some one suggested, "the servants will be able to find out, if I were you, Mrs. Wilmott, I should get my maid to tell me."

This is for many people a common solution in cases of doubt, and one is tempted to ask with curiosity for how many centuries has it been regarded as particularly belong-

ing to the province of those whose chief occupation is the dressing of hair to search out the secrets of their fellow-women?

Many articles have surely been written on less interesting questions; so let us hope that some competent author may one day enlarge on the subject; but in the meantime one may say with certainty that, in the generality of cases, sooner or later, some confidence becomes established with those whose hands are constantly occupied with one's head, a word now and then is generally unavoidable, and there is always the option of commencing a conversation which is unfailingly responded to as flattering.

The maid is probably very often thinking about something that is not altogether indifferent to your mind and she has just come upstairs from a social centre where a great many of your acquaintances, affairs have been very freely discussed, with far better opportunity of knowing the truth than you possess; so what wonder if now and then, influenced entirely, of course, by the laudable desire to be of use to your friends, you think it better to hear what people "do find to say about nothing."

Barrington received her mistress's instructions to discover the mysterious secret with the pleasing consciousness that her success would cost but little effort, while it would increase the estimate of her abilities in the eyes of Mrs. Wilmott and her friends.

A few mornings afterwards, as she was slowly and tenderly drawing the comb through her mistress's hair, she observed: "If you please ma'am, you said you wished to know why those strange Irishwomen behaved as they did"—(the élite of English servants have but scant respect for those who have never visited London or Paris and so they find them strange) "I have found out, if you will allow me to take the liberty of telling you."

"Certainly, tell me Barrington."

"Well ma'am, if you will pardon me for repeating anything so ignorant and foolish, which I heard last night from the coachman's wife, they said, ma'am, that you were very kind and beautiful, and that the presents were much handsomer than they had expected, but what vexed them was that they had thought you were far too great a lady to be able to do anything, and so they were very much disappointed indeed to see a piece of work in your hands, and to be made aware that you use a needle and thread as they do."

So far is the simple, uncontaminated mind of the pious poor from admiring the leveling of class distinctions!

Surely there is something very touching and very noble in this honest pride in what they consider the dignity of those whom they consider their betters.

This natural sentiment, planted in the heart by Almighty God to make duty easier, had it been properly fostered, would, with the Divine help have secured in all Christian nations the happy fulfillment of the command "Render to Cesar the things which are Cesar's and to God the things which are God's."

THE REALM OF SONG.

Written for THE REVIEW by an English Banker.

Apart from the "feathered songsters of the glade," man alone, of all the animal world, is gifted with the power of song. And truly when nature has bestowed that power in high degree, it is one of her most captivating gifts, and in some respects confers richer gratification, as well to possessor as to auditor, than any one of her numerous and lavish bounties, with perhaps the one and only exception of that brilliant, fiery oratory which casts such a subtle spell of rapt attraction over its hearers.

At times nature seems to have been more free-handed in her gifts than at others. In the early sixties was this especially the case, the number of singers of that period who were gifted with really unusual powers being quite remarkable. Grisi and Mario, both fiery and powerful, Giuglini and Piccolomini, sweet and melodious, Tietjens, rich and full, Tamberlik, with his chest C, Sims Reeves and Santley, our own incomparable tenor and baritone, with several others almost equally good, were all more or less in their prime at that time. But first of all undoubtedly must be placed that matchless queen of song, Adelina Patti, who for nearly forty years has charmed the civilized world with her brilliant and unrivalled powers.

The writer happened to be present almost the first time she ever sang in Europe. A mere schoolgirl, pretty and attractive, almost immediately she had commenced her first aria, she caused the audience to realize that a great singer had appeared; and as the plaintive commencement of the air changed to a passionate outburst of emotion, the rich melody literally filled the auditorium with a flood of quavering trills, whose vibrating cadence, now low and tremulous, now rising higher until it quivered in a fortissimo of thrilling melody, as if ten thousand nightingales were joyously warbling in unison, held the entranced audience spellbound and enraptured.

But when at length the last bar was sung, and the vocal pyrotechny had ceased, the pent-up feelings of the great audience gave way, and a scene of extraordinary enthusiasm ensued. "Grave and reverend signors," forgetting their customary serenity and decorum, unable to restrain themselves shouting themselves hoarse; ladies excitedly waving handkerchiefs or clapping their begloved hands, all continued vociferously and demonstratively to testify their appreciation of the young vocalist's powers.

But a solo in an oratorio appeals far more to the finer feelings of an audience than all this florid music. For instance, the singing by vocalists like the late Clara Novello, or the "Swedish Nightingale," of the pathetic series of airs and recitatives of that first of oratorios, the Messiah, descriptive of the sufferings of the Redeemer at the hands of those whom he came to save—"He gave His back to the smiters," or "He was bruised for our iniquities"

and others—would draw tears from the eyes of many, while the thunder of the glorious Hallelujah Chorus, sung by five thousand voices, and accompanied by cornet and harp, stringed instruments and trombone, flute and trumpet, organ and drum, thrills the hearers through and through, until they positively tremble and hold their breath under a sense of the majesty and grandeur of the resounding tribute of praise to the Almighty.

But there is one vast and supernal plateau of glory in the most brilliant of all the realms in the expanse of the great universe, where music and songs of praise of far higher order are continuously sung and played—for who can say that the harps and other instruments of which we read are not real instruments, or that angels and beatified spirits have nothing material in heaven—in honour of the Supreme Ruler of all, and of Him who came to this earth to save it. And those who are willing to trust themselves to His care, and to obey His behests, will be privileged to join that glorious choir, and to sing, as they have never sung before, their glad and triumphant Hosannahs.

ST. PIE-LETELLIER.

Great changes are going on around us. Mr. Bourbonniere has bought the Letellier House for \$4,500, and intends moving in to it in June.

Mr. Bourbonniere held an auction sale at his farm at St. Pie, on Monday 19th, but owing to bad weather the attendance was poor, and the sale consequently non-successful.

Mr. Forcier has also sold his farm here, the purchaser being Mr. Saurette, who has resold it to Mr. Bois of the reserve St. Joseph. Mr. Forcier intends settling in some other part of the province.

Land is constantly rising in price in our neighborhood. Mr. Jakeway has sold his farm near Letellier to Mr. Lawrence of St. Joseph for the sum of \$10,000. The former also held a sale yesterday at which he realized about \$3,000.

Some improvements are being made in the church in preparation for the new benches.

There was a large attendance at the children of Mary's Vespers, last Sunday evening.

A Requiem Mass was sung yesterday morning for the repose of the soul of Mrs. Barnabé, it being the anniversary of her death. There was a good attendance.

Rev. Father Godts, C. SS. R., has issued, for the use of his people in Brandon, a tasty leaflet bearing on one side a photograph of the statue of St. Augustine of Canterbury in the Brandon Catholic church with a few facts about the great missionary to the Anglo-Saxons, and on the other a good translation of the collect for the Saint's feast, May 28.

If taken in time The D. & L. Emulsion will surely cure the most serious affections of the lungs. That "run down" condition, the after effect of a heavy cold quickly counteracted. Manufactured by the Davis & Lawrence Co., Ltd.