

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

HAS ENGLAND WRONGED IRELAND?

(Golden Smith in the Nineteenth Century.)

It appears unhappily to be the fact that Irish hatred of England is not the offspring of the Home Rule quarrel alone or likely to die with that question, but has been rooted in the Irish breast and is carried into every land in which the Irish dwell. This opens a most doleful prospect, and one which would have been most deeply deplored by the writer's Irish friends and political associates of former years. Combined with the conflict of English parties, it seems to make a happy settlement almost hopeless.

I am glad (says the Rev. Father Caragher, addressing a great Irish meeting in California) to see the Irish people arming and practising the use of rifles of instruments of war. For centuries they have been borne down under the tyrannic weight of English rule. In every city of the world where a patriotic Irishman lives, on Tuesday the green flag of Ireland will be waved. We must make a success of our celebration, for great things depend upon it. It will reflect the spirit of Ireland throughout the world, and some day it will bring about the raising of the green flag where it belongs. The Union Jack of England will be hauled down and torn in pieces, and 200,000 armed men will march into the county of Cork and drive the English into the sea.

The harangue, it seems, brought the whole of a great audience to its feet in a spontaneous burst of applause which lasted many minutes. This was in the United States and the Far West; but the Canadian Parliament has deemed it expedient more than once to pass resolutions in favor of Home Rule, in spite of reproof from the Home Government, to satisfy Irish feeling in Canada.

Irish history, in all that relates to the conduct of England to Ireland, is perverted to the service of hatred. Nor is this done by Irish patriots only; it is apt to be done by English supporters of Home Rule. "England" is charged with things which belong to the account of the Normans, the Papacy, or the general convulsions of Europe, political or religious.

It was about 1866 that Guizot, walking with an English visitor in the garden at Val Richer, when the conversation touched on Ireland, stopped and with an emphatic wave of the hand said, "The conduct of England to Ireland for the last thirty years has been admirable." Reminded of the State Church, which had not been then disestablished, he recognized the exception, but repeated with renewed emphasis his first words. Guizot was not an Anglo-maniac; as a French Minister he had more than once come into collision with England. His friend did not ask him what the thought of the continuance of the abuse and hostility, when in the eyes of an impartial observer like himself the treatment had been admirable.

In 1846 the English people had not themselves been in the enjoyment of a really representative Parliament for much more than one generation. Ireland had received her share of parliamentary reform. Catholic emancipation had been carried four years earlier. Ireland had shared other liberal measures with England and Scotland, notably those for the establishment and improvement of public education. She has since obtained disestablishment while England has not.

Coercion there has been, no doubt, but it was inevitable. At a time when the writer was in Dublin an agrarian murder was committed. The Council met, and the Attorney General was asked whether he had obtained information about the case. He replied that he was perfectly informed, that he knew by whom the murder had been committed, and who had been the accomplices watching the roads to guard the murderer against surprise. But he added that he should not think of at once going to trial; every witness would perjure himself; the only chance of a verdict was delay. The law has had to deal with people whose moral ideas had been by an unhappy destiny perverted and who had murder in their hearts.

The attitude of Irish politicians towards England, and their habit of appealing to the enemies of England in the United States, have not made it easier for the English promoters of reform in Ireland to gain the support of their own people.

The Irish land question is one of extreme difficulty. But it cannot be said that it has been neglected by English legislators, or that they have not done their best to solve it aright. There may be people no doubt ready to solve the difficulty by a sweeping measure of confiscation, the effects of which apparently would be the loss by rural Ireland of its heads, reckless multiplication of the peasantry, and the turning of more land from pasture into potato ground, the reverse of what agriculturists declare the best policy. The Celtic Irish do not appear to be specially successful as farmers in the United States. They certainly were not said to be so in the district of the United States where the writer spent some time. The Norman peasant does pretty well on a small holding. But the Norman peasant is very industrious, very thrifty, and not so philoprogenitive as the Celt. The culture which is the most profitable must surely in the end prevail.

Let the accuser of England cross the water and see the Ireland in America. He would be struck at once by one thing most creditable to the Irish—the warmth of family affection which has brought so many thousands of the race across the water, the first settlers of the family paying out of their earnings the passage of the rest. On the other hand, he would be told what the Irish have been as a political element; what powers have been able to command their votes; how the American statesman views their influence. He would be told that they have been the most unfeeling tramps on the negro. He would be told that, in the middle of the Civil War, the Irish having risen in New York against the draft, spreading over the city, raised a cry against "the nigger"; forced their way into hotels and restaurants where colored servants were employed; sacked an asylum for colored children (it had several hundreds of those little helpless inmates), the women in the mob carrying off beds, furniture, and such other property as could be removed—they then set the building on fire; an armory not far distant shared the same fate. In the lower part of the city an attack was made on the office of a newspaper—the Tribune—specially obnoxious to the rioters on account of its supporting the Government; the omnibuses and street cars were stopped; the railroads and telegraphs cut; factories, machine shops, shipyards, &c., were forcibly closed; business was paralyzed. In all directions the unoffending negroes were pursued in the streets; some were murdered; their old men and infirm

women were beaten without mercy; their houses were burnt; one negro was tied to a tree, a fire kindled under him, and he was roasted to death.

On this occasion the Americans, when they got up troops, quelled the rising with a vigor at least as decisive, as that which would have been displayed on a like occasion by the British Government. Next year a repetition of the outbreak was apprehended. But an American general came into the harbor with troops, called the leaders of the Irish before him, and told them that if there was any disturbance he would hold them personally responsible. There was no disturbance. A character may have very bright and winning features and yet stand in need of firm government.

The prime authoress of all the unhappiness which we admit and deplore appears to have been Nature, who formed the two islands and placed them as they are relatively to each other and to the continent. In the age of predatory and roving wars, invasion of the lesser island by the greater there was pretty sure to be.

Ireland in the dawn of her history was tribal, and tribalism means disunion and general weakness, though by union under a war-like tribal Ireland was enabled to repulse the Dane. Tribal Ireland had a brilliant missionary Church of which the touching monument is Iona. But if the Round Towers were, as is supposed, places of refuge, the tribal state would seem not to have been a commonwealth of law. Of one race all the tribes may have been, and they may have had a code of customs; but they could hardly have been called a nation. The history of Dermott and Strongbow does not seem to point to the existence of any powerful and centralized government.

After the Dane, who left some little settlements on the coast, the next invaders of Ireland are the Normans, like the Danes a roving and marauding race, who present themselves in the eleventh century as the special soldiers of Father Caragher's spiritual chief and bear the banner of Papal aggrandisement at Hastings. Hildebrand, the real creator of the Papacy, found them the useful instruments of his ambition, while he lent to their enterprise his spiritual consecration. He demanded homage of William the Conqueror, but the Conqueror was too strong to concede it, though Hildebrand was allowed to crush the national Church of England and install Ultramontaniam in its place. The conquest of Ireland, irregularly commenced by the Norman adventurer Strongbow, was presently pressed and formally achieved by his king. The marauding and Papal banner passed from Hastings to Ireland. But Henry the Second, weaker than the Conqueror, paid homage, and Ireland thus passed under the suzerainty of the Papacy, combined with and consecrating the dominion of the foreign raider.

The Norman kingdom of Ireland had been too hastily and weakly founded on the nominal submission of the tribal chiefs. The power of England was distracted by European conflicts. The consequence was the permanent division of the island between the Celtic tribe-land and the feudal province of the Norman; and the people of one differing radically in blood, language, character, and customs from that of the other. This was the original source of all the evil, and for it "England" is no more responsible than she is for the Fall of Man.

Had the Norman conquest of Ireland been complete, like the Norman conquest of England, the result would have