

THE IRISH RACE

An Interesting Outline of Their Record on American Soil.

An Open Letter Addressed to the President of Harvard University,

Pointing to an Omission of a Serious Character in a Recent Paper of That Educationalist, and Entitled "Five American Contributions to Civilization."

In a recent issue of the New York Sun the following open letter was addressed to the President of the Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., by Mr. J. D. O'Connell, of the Treasury Bureau of Statistics, Washington. It is an excellent document replete with statistical information and many features of the record of the Irish race in America with which our readers may not be familiar. We give the letter in full as follows:—

I have read with great interest your article on "Five American Contributions to Civilization," published in the Atlantic Monthly for October, 1896, as I have many other of your published papers. If my commendation is of any value I offer it to you without reserve, and have only one criticism to make. You do not credit Irish immigration with any share or part in those contributions.

In almost every work on the make-up of the American people that I have read I have found Ireland credited with furnishing a large number of emigrants to this country, as well before the Revolution as since; yet you do not mention the Irish among the other "peoples" who were already in the colonies at that time. If you had not mentioned the Scotch I would have supposed that the Irish were included under the word "English."

I think it is very well known that the Irish furnished a larger proportion of soldiers to the American cause in the Revolution than all the English, Scotch, Dutch, Germans, French, Portuguese, and Swedes, then in the colonies, combined. I am correct in this statement. I think your omission to mention the Irish as an element of the mixture of peoples in the colonies at that time is somewhat strange when you have mentioned so many other nationalities. You speak of the Germans as being well diffused and having established themselves in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Georgia; and that the Scotch were scattered through all the colonies. A like statement could have been made of the Irish as well.

Mr. Froude, in his "History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," tells us of one year of immigration when 20,000 Irish emigrants settled in the New England colonies; a number probably largely exceeding all the emigrants from England up to that time. You would probably call these people "Scotch-Irish," as they came from the north of Ireland mainly; but that term is a misnomer peculiar to this country and of comparatively recent invention. It originated from a misapplication of the word "race" to any of the English, Scotch, and Irish inhabitants of the British Isles. I recognize no distinction that would classify those inhabitants as of different races. It would be just as inappropriate and erroneous to use the phrase "American race" to designate the people of this continent, who are descended from the various European nationalities that make up the American people.

An "Englishman" is a person born in England, whose grandfather may have been a Dutchman, an Irishman, or a Scotchman; an "Irishman" is a person born in Ireland, whose father, grandfather or great-grandfather may have been a Frenchman, an Englishman, a Scotchman, or a Yankee; and an "American" is a person born in America, whose father, grandfather or great-grandfather may have been an Englishman, a Scotchman, an Irishman, a German, or a Frenchman, or a Portuguese, a Swede, or even a Congo negro.

Now, as we know that a commingling of people of various European nationalities has been going on for centuries in England, Ireland, and Scotland, similar to that which has occurred on this continent, I submit that when you undertake to designate the "English race" as "predominating now as in the eighteenth century" in this country, it is, to say the least, a misleading statement; because at the present time, and for centuries back, the English people were not a distinct race, but a conglomerate mixture of various peoples and tribes of the Teutonic and Celtic races. An Englishman is, therefore, either of the Teutonic or the Celtic race, or both; but he would be a bold man who would undertake to demonstrate that the Englishman distinctively belonged to either of these races. It is a fair inference that he is a man of mixed Teutonic and Celtic blood; and the same holds true of the Scotchman and Irishman, the Welshman alone approaching nearest to a distinct type of race, namely, Celtic.

I therefore take the position that the descendants of English and Scotch settlers in Ireland are neither "English-Irish," nor "Scotch-Irish," but simply Irish, as there is no such race as an English race, or a Scotch race, or an Irish race. Therefore, if you undertake to designate people by their nationality, instead of by race, I claim that a person born in Ireland and of British allegiance is an "Irishman" in every respect, and

should be so called without regard to the nationality of his grandfather, or great-grandfather, or great-great-grandmother. When you assume that the "English race" predominated here in the eighteenth century and predominates here at the present time, of course you mean that the predominant element of our population was and is of English extraction. Are you not mistaken in this? Is it not far more likely that the predominant element of the population then and now was and is of Irish extraction? And when I say Irish I, of course, mean neither Celtic nor Teutonic, but a mixture of both. It would be as absurd to say that in the eighteenth century or any part of the nineteenth century the Irish were Celts as it is to say that the English people are or ever were "Anglo-Saxons," or that there ever was an "Anglo-Saxon race."

"Prior to the year 1820," says Dr. Edward Young, formerly Chief of the United States Bureau of Statistics, in his Special Report on Immigration to the Secretary of the Treasury, under date of March 7, 1871, "no official records were kept of the influx of foreign population to this country." It is therefore, impossible to give an accurate statement of the Irish immigration into this country prior to that date. But if we take subsequent reports as a standard of measurement, it will be found: that Irish immigration prior to 1820, was by far the largest from the British Isles. Dr. Young says that "the population of the colonies at the commencement of the Revolutionary war has generally been estimated at 3,000,000; and it is probable that as many as one-third of these were born on the other side of the Atlantic, while the parents of a large portion of the remainder were among the early immigrants. During the Revolutionary war the tide of immigration was somewhat suspended." Dr. Young's estimate of the aggregate immigration between 1776 and 1820 was 250,000. Since that date we have the official figures of the number and nationality of the immigrants. These figures show that from 1820 to 1870, inclusive, the number of "alien passengers" arriving in the United States was 7,803,365, of whom only 3,857,850 were from the British Isles, classified as follows:

	Number.	Per Cent.
England	516,192	13.70
Ireland	2,700,493	70.00
Scotland	84,623	2.00
Wales	12,435	0.30
Not specified	544,107	14.90
Total	3,857,850	100.00

As far back as the decade ending with 1830, the number of immigrants from Ireland was 57,278, in an aggregate of 81,827 from the British Isles, or about 70 per cent.; in the decade ending with 1840 the number from Ireland was 108,233, in an aggregate of 283,191 from the British Isles, or about 70 per cent., and of the 283,191 there were 74,495 not classified; but, according to Dr. Young, these were mainly Irish. In the decade ending with 1850, the number from Ireland was 733,484, in an aggregate of 1,047,763, or about 70 per cent., of which 277,264 were not classified. In the decade ending with 1860, the number of arrivals from Ireland was 936,665, in total of 1,338,093, or about 70 per cent., of which total 109,653 were not classified. In the decade ending with 1870 the number of arrivals from Ireland was 774,883, or about 70 per cent., in a total of 1,106,976, of which 77,333 were not classified.

Dr. Young states that of these "alien passengers" about one and two thirds per cent. should be deducted for aliens not intending to remain in the United States.

We thus see that for a period of fifty years the Irish immigration to this country was almost uniformly 70 per cent. of the total increment of population from the British Islands, while that from England was only a fraction over 13 per cent., Scotland only a fraction over 2 per cent., and the "not specified" a little over 14 per cent., which latter, Dr. Young states, were mainly Irish.

It is a reasonable inference that between the close of the Revolutionary war and the year 1820 at least 70 per cent. of the immigration to the United States was Irish, because it is well known that during that war Ireland strongly sympathized with the colonies against England; and it is also reasonable to suppose that the English emigration during that period fell off very largely on account of the hostility of the English people towards the Americans. And it is a fair inference, also, that prior to the Revolutionary war there was a large emigration from Ireland to this country, from the fact, as has already been stated, that in one year alone about 20,000 persons emigrated from Ireland to the New England colonies. And as we have seen that the emigration from Ireland to the United States during the half century ending with 1870 was steadily about 70 per cent. of the whole immigration from the British Isles in all probability the percentage of Irish immigration was about the same during the half century ending with 1820, which included the period of the Revolutionary war and the development of our constitutional form of government.

The large number of Irish soldiers in the Revolutionary army adds strength

to this estimate. The above quoted official statistics make it conclusive that during the time the "Five American Contributions" which you mention were being made to civilization, the Americans of Irish origin formed by far the largest element in the population. And that the Irish element should be credited with a full share of those contributions, at least in the proportion of 80 per cent. as compared with England's 14 per cent., is apparent from the fact that there are no immigrants from Europe who assimilate as speedily or as thoroughly with the American people as the Irish, while, on the other hand, the Englishman, and, in a lesser degree, the Scotchman in America, always deires to retain his alien nationality, and does not easily assimilate himself with the American people. Neither the Englishman nor Scotchman is often wholly an American, whereas every Irish immigrant is American in all his aspirations from the moment he sets foot on our soil. It cannot be denied successfully that Ireland has furnished at least fivefold more of the brain, bone, blood, muscle, and mental and physical force of the American people than England, to which it is now the fashion to ascribe the "origin of our people" and "our Anglo-Saxon" institutions.

"From the very first settlement of the country," says the editor of the Chicago Tribune, Mr. Medill, "in field and street, at the plough, in the Senate, and on the battlefield, Irish energy was represented. Maryland and South Carolina were largely populated by Hibernians. Maine, New Hampshire and Kentucky received many Irish emigrants. During the first half of the last century, the emigration to this country was not less than a quarter of a million. When our fathers threw off the British yoke, the Irish formed a sixth or seventh of the whole population, and one fourth of all the commissioned officers in the army and navy were of Irish descent. The first general officer killed in battle, the first officer of artillery appointed, the first commodore commissioned, the first victor to whom the British flag was struck at sea, and the first officer who surprised a fort by land, were Irishmen; and with such enthusiasm did the emigrants from the Green Isle espouse the cause of liberty, that Lord Mountjoy declared in Parliament, 'You lost America by the Irish.' [The 'Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution' might well make a note of this and take pride in their Irish ancestry.] Who were the Carrolls, the Rutledges, the Fitzsimmons, and the McKenays of the Revolution? Whence came Andrew Jackson, J. C. Calhoun, and McDuffie? Whence the projector of the Erie canal, the inventor of the first steamboat, and the builder of the first American railroad?"

"The fortunes of the Irish in America," says T. D. McGee, Minister of Agriculture, in his History of Ireland, pages 785, 786, "though less brilliant for the few, were more advantageous to the many. They were, during the war of the Revolution and the war of 1812, a very considerable element in the American Republic. It is very certain that Washington placed great weight on the active aid of the gallant Pennsylvania, Maryland and Southern Irish troops, and the sturdy Scotch-Irish of New Hampshire. Franklin, in his visit to Ireland before the rupture, and Jefferson in his correspondence, always enumerate the Irish as one element of reliance in the contest between the colonies and the empire."

"That the achievements of the Irish in America produced a favorable influence on the situation of the Irish at home, we know from many collateral sources." In 1789 Washington, responding to an address of Bishop Carroll and other Maryland Catholics, used these words: "I hope to see America free and ranked among the foremost nations of the earth in examples of justice and liberality, and I presume that you, fellow citizens, will not forget the patriotic part which you Irish took in the accomplishment of our rebellion, and to the valuable assistance which we received from a nation professing the Catholic religion."

And when the patriot army lay at Valley Forge twenty-seven members of the "Sons of St. Patrick" in Philadelphia subscribed between them £103,500 of Pennsylvania currency for the American troops.

"I accept," said Washington, when elected a member of the Sons of St. Patrick, "with a singular pleasure the ensign of so friendly a society as that of the Sons of St. Patrick, a society distinguished for the firmest adherence to our cause."

And here is the testimony of Washington's adopted son, George Washington Parke Custis: "To-day the grass has grown over the grave of many a poor Irishman who died for America before any one here assembled was born. In the Revolutionary war in this country Ireland furnished one hundred men to any single man furnished by any foreign nation."

I now come to another honored name and find the testimony of Verplank. When the Catholic Emancipation was passed there was a banquet in New York city to celebrate the event, and this distinguished citizen said: "Both in that glorious struggle for independence and in our more recent contest for American rights those laws [England's Penal laws] gave to America the support of hundreds of thousands of brave hearts and strong arms."

In the year 1778 the English Parliament appointed a committee to inquire into the conduct of the American war. In answer to a question put by a member of that committee, Gen. Robertson, who had served many years as Quarter-master-General to the British forces, replied: "Gen. Lee informed me that half the Continental army were Irishmen." The report of the committee is now in the British Museum.

These evidences make it conclusive that there was a large immigration to the colonies from Ireland in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and why not before that time? Religious persecution and trade restrictions drove thousands of the inhabitants from Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. What was the character of those inhabitants? Let Sir Edward Coke answer. He says, in the Fourth Part of his Institutes, chapter 76, "Of the Kingdom of Ireland," which was written toward the close of his life: "I have been informed by many of them that have had judicial places there,

and partly of mine own knowledge, that there is no nation in the Christian world that are greater lovers of justice (whereof we shall principally treat) than they are, which virtue must of necessity be accompanied with many others; and besides they are descended of the ancient Britains, and therefore the more endeared with us. * * *

"To conclude with somewhat which tends to the honor of that noble nation. Certain it is that, while the liberal sciences in Europe lay in a manner buried in darkness, then did their lustre shine forth most clearly here in Ireland; thither did our English Saxons repair, as to a fairs or market of good letters; whence of the holy men of times we often read in ancient writers. *Amundus est ad disciplinam in Hiberniam*" (He was sent into Ireland to study there.)

This is high encomium from a jurist, an author who at the end of his great career said of "justice," that it was *architectonica virtus*; and of the Irish: *Sunt in bello fortes, et in pace fideles*.

The Irish at the earliest colonial period were certainly in nothing inferior to the "English Saxons;" they loved "justice," that architect of all the virtues. Why, therefore, refuse to give credit to the Irish immigration for its share in peopling the colonies and developing the Five Contributions to American Civilization, especially when it is a necessary inference that no nation of the Christian world contributed more largely than Ireland to that of civilization? It would be no disgrace to an Eliot or to Harvard University itself to acknowledge this debt. They both owe more than they can ever repay to the ancient Harvards and Eliots, who preserved the liberal sciences and caused their lustre to shine forth in Ireland when all other countries of Europe lay buried in intellectual darkness, and when the Englishman went to Ireland for an education in the liberal sciences centuries before Oxford and Cambridge were heard of as foundations of learning.

JOINS THE CHURCH.

The Niece of Bishop Potter of the Protestant Episcopal Church Becomes a Catholic.

Quite a sensation was created in Episcopal Church circles when it became known that Miss Florence Thompson, the favorite niece of the Right Rev. Henry C. Potter, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of New York, had become a Roman Catholic.

While rumor has it that her conversion to Catholicism occurred a year ago, it was only a fortnight ago that her family learned of it.

Mrs. Launt Thompson, the mother of the convert, was Maria Potter, the sister of Bishop Potter. She married Launt Thompson, a noted sculptor, 25 years ago. The couple took up their residence in Florence, where Mr. Thompson died five years ago, leaving a large income and a magnificent home. They had three children, and "Flossie," as she is lovingly called by Bishop Potter, is the youngest, being 15 years old. The family have always been great entertainers, and they have received the most select of American and English society.

Mrs. Thompson is credited with having carefully excluded from her circles of visiting friends all members of the Roman Catholic Church. Her husband, however, had filled some very important orders in works of art for ecclesiastics of the church and for wealthy families of that faith, and it is believed that the daughter, who inherits the beauty and brains of her mother's family and the artistic skill of her father, formed some close friendships in Florence while studying in her father's atelier. Among Episcopalians it is said that a fortnight ago she confessed to her mother that she had entered the Roman Church a year ago, and that she could not be shaken from her belief.

A BLIND BARGAINER.

She Picks Out Dress Goods and Trimmings with Amazing Skill (From the Chicago Tribune.)

Shoppers in one of the big stores downtown last bargain day curiously watched the movements of a blind woman at the dress goods counter. She was about 30 years old, her face showing great intelligence and refinement. She was richly dressed for the street, and a girl about 20 years old accompanied her.

The blind woman examined the fabrics placed before her by passing them through her hands. She depended upon her own sense of touch, apparently, for she seldom spoke to her companion, and then only in answer to questions. She appeared to be quite critical, and before she made her selection the counter was piled high with patterns of all kinds.

After she had examined a large number of pieces, she took up one of the first that had been shown her and decided to buy it.

When the clerk had measured it she verified the length herself by measuring it with her outstretched arms. Satisfactorily satisfied that the piece contained as much as she had bargained for, she took a transfer ticket and went to the counter where trimmings are sold. There she selected the material with which to finish her dress, examining the laces and other delicate fabrics most critically.

After the blind woman had left the store the floor manager said her shopping was not an unusual thing. She was but one of the many blind customers who came into the store regularly. This woman, he said, was not only able to make the nicest discrimination in the matter of trimmings, but so delicate was her touch she could often distinguish colors. He added, however, that she never depended entirely upon her touch in matching shades, but verified her selections with the eyes of the clerk and her companion.

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

THE SUBJECT OF AN ABLE DEFERENCE BY FATHER KING, S. J.

THE VOLUNTARY AND BOARD SCHOOLS COMPARED—THE SUPERIOR TRAINING OF THE FORMER.

The Rev. M. King, S. J., delivered the following eloquent sermon at the Church of the Holy Name, Manchester, Eng. We reproduce it as it is an additional valuable contribution upon the subject of Catholic Education:—

Father King took for his text. "This is eternal life, that they should know the one true God and Him whom Thou hast sent" (St. John, 17c. 3v.).

The reverend preacher said that it was in these words that our blessed Lord spoke on the night before His death, and it was this very knowledge of the one true God and of Christ Jesus that was denied to the children who were educated in the undenominational schools of England. In these schools God might be spoken of as a force, a power, a Being Who was distinct from the world, and Jesus Christ might also be spoken of in His purely personal character as One Who lived and died, as a Biblical personage, with Whose sayings and doings it was well the children should be acquainted. God, in other words, might be an abstraction and Christ a man Who lived and worked and died, but of the God that they, his hearers, knew, of the God of love, of the God of Whom they taught their children to speak with such loving familiarity and respect, of the Christ with His loving human heart and the strength of His Divinity, on these subjects it was not allowed to base instruction in the undenominational schools of England. Those in whom the spiritual life was not as deep and real as it was in them sometimes asked why Catholics made such sacrifices to get their children educated in Catholic schools? There were schools open to them, magnificent buildings with all the modern improvements, where the children would receive an education that would fit them to take their part in the battle of life. Why was it that Catholics neglected these splendid opportunities and put themselves to great sacrifices, to great pain, in order to educate their Catholic children in Catholic schools? Yes, said the rev. preacher, it was true indeed that these schools did furnish a good education for this world, they sent the children out well equipped for this world, ready to take their part with those whom they would meet, but they did not use that precious time when the mind was opening, when impressions were so strong, to fill the child's mind with those great truths of which they so well knew the importance of their responsibility in this world as human agents of the destiny before them of their duty not only to their neighbor, but their duty to the God who made them. They wanted the child to have something which would ennoble him, something which would lift him up above the narrowness of his surroundings, they wished to show him where his sins would be forgiven if his soul was unfortunately dimmed and had lost its lustre in the face of the temptations of this world, they wished to lift his soul above this earth, and in order to do that, they who were believers in Catholic Education, they took the child at the time when his mind was tenderest and impressed it with truth, knowing that if through human frailty he fell away, at least he would have some principle in him which would get him through in his journey towards his Heavenly home. This was eternal life that they should know the one true God and Him whom He had sent. Our Lord was the lover of children. He came down to make Himself one with them, and they knew what a wonderful way He had of appealing to the child's heart. Their effort then must be to make Our Lord known to the child and this was what they did. They took the child at an early age and drew and led him to Our Blessed Lord. They surrounded him in his early years with emblems of piety and devotion. In his schoolroom they had the statue and the picture of Our Blessed Lady and the statue or the picture of the Crucifixion. They thus drew and led his mind and thoughts to God. They showed him where God was, and when he reached the age when sin might have defiled his soul, gently and quietly they taught him of the Sacrament of Confession, how he might receive forgiveness for his sins. Then when his mind was more open they led him to the altar rails, and there they spoke to him of the

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God Who would come down to live in that little heart which He had formed, and they hoped and they thought that by these means they were giving to their children an outfit which would enable them to take their places in this world and the next. If their Catholic schools were deficient in secular education, if they did not give their children an education which would enable them to stand side by side with those who were educated in the Board school, then his appeal would lose half its force; but when he appealed to them on behalf of a system of education which gave all that the other schools gave, and more besides, which gave their children the power to take their place in this world and also in the next, then, indeed, there was strength in the appeal. He appealed for the children, not merely to give them human knowledge, but also that supernatural knowledge which they knew was of such value and importance to them. They knew also that the money which they gave was not squandered. They did not have immense palatial buildings. The Catholics did not waste money which was not theirs in erecting vast buildings and decorating them and fitting them up superbly. Their schools were plain enough. Their work was the result of the self-sacrificing zeal of Catholics who devoted themselves to the work of Catholic instruction. They had not the appliances which other schools had, and they had to make up for it with extra energy and zeal, and with God's blessing the Catholic schools of England stood in the forefront of the schools of the Board and the other denominations. God had blessed their efforts, but it was only by their generosity that the schools could be kept in the position in which they found them. They were good, they were excellent schools, these schools in their midst for which he appealed that day. The Burlington Street schools were known for the excellent education which they gave. The Bishop had spoken highly of them. The inspectors had spoken highly of them. They gave an outfit for this world and they gave an outfit for the next world. It was for this education that he appealed, an education which taught their children what would fit them for this world and the world to come.

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