

IRISH JOURNALISM.

AN ESSAY ON THE DUBLIN PRESS.

The Nation—United Ireland—The Freeman's Journal—Davis, Dillon, Duffy, Sir John and Dwyer Gray, T. D. Sullivan, Justin McCarthy, &c.

(WRITTEN SPECIALLY FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.)

My travelling companion, with his long legs carelessly thrown under yonder table, is busy writing the tale of an Irish eviction. He has a dozen Irish newspapers lying around him. A kind of pitying scorn plays over his features, and if you could get close to his table, between the puffs of his Patrick Henry, you would hear a few simple New York explosives mildly condemning the slowness and mediocrity of Irish journalism. In our walks and jaunts with Micky, he has laid it down as a principle, that he can form an idea of a country's literature from its journalism. In vain I attempt to make him recant such heresy. My arguments seem sufficient to crush in any mortal skull. On his cranium they have as little effect as holy water on a Master Orangeman. One of my most forcible trots is in this manner. Could a traveller from Altruria judge from a reading of the great New York dailies that we have had a Longfellow, Lowell, Curtis, Whitman, Emerson, and that we have a charming autocrat to add a new and fragrant spice to our breakfast cup, and a Eugene Field and Whitcomb Reilly to tickle us with things that are human. One of the poets warn us from attempting to convince a man against his will; so in deference to the Trickenham bard I shall desist. My friend then may smoke his rare Havana and describe that most heart-rending scene—an Irish eviction. I doubt, with all the powers of a trained journalist, if he can convey to our countrymen more than a glimpse of the misery of such a scene. The spectator becomes a partisan of the evicted, and years afterwards can hardly write of that crimson stain on civilization in a thoroughly impartial manner. Journalism cannot be judged by any such rules as my friend so glibly lays down, otherwise Ireland would have a sorry press to represent her cause at the bar of humanity. Public opinion of Americans as a class would condemn the Dublin dailies and weeklies as dull. What constitutes a good newspaper is a question that every country must decide for itself. The country that delights in the quaint humor of Gilbert, Burnand and the sketches of Leech and Du Maurier would find little to enjoy in the buffooneries of Puck. The nation that reads the Times, Freeman Journal, and finds their morning leaders more captivating than a jiney beefsteak, would be prone to condemn the flash sensationalism of the New York World and the Jejune editorials of the Herald. I have heard repeatedly Englishmen of culture, say that their was only one leader writer on this side "Dana of the Sun." I was glad to find that the people's Charlie had such an appreciative audience in Old England. American Journalism might be compared to a huge slop-bucket where the good and bad are to be seen curiously mixed while British journalism might be compared to a winnowing machine that separates the grain from the chaff. The difference may best be seen from the leaders or editorials. In Britain they mould public-opinion, in the States they carry little influence. In the news-department there can be no comparison between American and English newspaper. The Yankee spans the universe, the Englishman finds sufficient browsing in the United Kingdom. Both nations will follow their way, and it is for the traveller easier to note their merits than to chronicle their defects. Dublin journalism cannot become stagnant, while there are so many interests to maintain. The loyalists are represented by that combative sheet the Irish Times, the rabid fire-eaters, the Mayor Saunderson type, by the Mail, the McCarthyites by the Freeman's Journal, and the Parnellites by the Independent.

Of these the best written and most influential are the Times' and Freeman's Journal. The latter was once a royalist organ, and owned by the notorious sham-squire, who died in the odor of sanctity, that is as an Irish patriot. The patient research of Mr. Fitzpatrick convinced his countrymen that he was a most

blood-thirsty scoundrel. They scratched his name from their martyrology, and in their wrath smashed a granite boulder that was supposed to cover the dead patriot's heart. It would have been better to have left him alone in his glory, such glory as Mr. Fitzpatrick conferred on him. The boulder might have warned Irishmen from calling every quack and demagogue that prates of freedom and seals his utterances with "So help me God" phrases, a disinterested patriot. The Freeman under the reign of Sir John Gray, whose statue honors the city, supported liberal measures. It was a prominent Whig journal.

Under the able editorship of Sir John's son, Dwyer Gray, it openly and powerfully aided the cause of Parnell. Converted by Dwyer Gray into a stock company, it gained new prestige and lead in the memorable fight that characterized the early leadership of Mr. Parnell and his friends. With the sad ending of that leader's career, and the deplorable folly of its espousing a cause that could by no possible means triumph, the Freeman lost its well won place as a national newspaper. From representing Ireland, it became the representative of a fanatical set of men, whose only patriotism was the fear of losing their fat and congenial berths as Irish agitators. Agitation had lifted them from the dreary dull life of rural schoolmasters amid the moorlands of Kerry, the wearers of gowns and wigs in the Four Courts and owners of the good Dublin real estate, they owed it much and valued it more than a trifle above Irish patriotism. At one time, in the career of Parnell, it was to be found in every hamlet. Barefooted urchins trotting to school, with a pile of books under one arm and a few bits of turf to keep them warm under the other could tell you what the Freeman said: A ragged young urchin at Blackrock with his fine glossy shock slyly peeping through his battered and forlorn hat, put Micky to sort, and sadly worsted the writer by stamping his little fleeked feet in the mud and saying or rather shouting in a shrill wise "Yer a nice puke to contradict the Freeman." I own that the word puke has a dampening effect. It is a word that gives a free exercise to the imagination, and like all such "twisting words." The praise is Micky's it troubles one's well-bred composure. A brick is an innocent looking thing, but if is hurled at you even by a woman, is it not better to "pook the thing and run," another of Micky's expressive phrases. At the present time the Freeman under the caustic management of little Tim Healy is making heroic efforts to retrieve its lost honors. A friend connected with this management writes me, that these efforts so far have been unsuccessful. In the race of life it made the fatal mistake to drop and tie its shoe strings while youngsters forged ahead. A man does not like to change his Journal. It has become to him as an old friend that drops in on him every day at a certain hour to have a chat, while he smokes or sips his coffee. If he has to break with this old friend and admit a rival the chances are that the new broom may sweep out all the memory of the old. Old loves once broken are hard to mend. Like some rare old china cup that breaks, mend it as you will, there will always remain the chinks to tell of its fall, and the black thought that these chinks—my cup holds good tea now, but it may go to smash any moment United Ireland at one time was a powerful weekly and help to the cause, inasmuch as it was read by another audience than that of the Freeman. Its editorials were brief and forcible. Few journalists in any land wield a keener or more incisive style than Wm. O'Brien. Before sitting down to write, he knows what he has to say, and in what space that must be said, hence in reading his pointed leaders you are struck with the aptitude of every word used. In perusing his paragraphs you will have grasped what the man wrote, only that, and nothing more. You will never throw yourself back in your easy chair and petulantly exclaim "what is the fellow driving at?" Charming to find a journalist that has no use for glossaries or commentaries and whose English is free from barbarisms. To this journal the younger McCarthy contributed racy sketches of illustrious Irishmen, while the poems of Cleary were sparkling and cleverly constructed. United Ireland flourished during the Parnell agitation. With his passing, its prospects decreased and finally died out. It was but the comet of a season. The first really distinct national journal was the Nation. It was

the outcome of the enthusiastic literary outbreak of '48. This outbreak far more literary than revolutionary was totally different from Emmet's ill-fated rebellion. The men of '98 were revolutionists of the most pronounced type, those of '48 says Justin McCarthy were for the most part "young journalists, young scholars, amateur literateurs, poets en herbe, orators moulded on the finest pattern of Athens and the French Revolution, and aspiring youths of the Cherubino time of life, who were ambitious of distinction as heroes in the eyes of young ladies. Among the recognized leaders of the party there was hardly one in want of money. Some of them were young men of fortune, or at least the sons of wealthy parents. Not many of the dangerous revolutionary elements here to be found among these clever, respectable and precocious youths." There is here an evident air of belittling the Nation's staff. Mr. McCarthy is a delightful story-teller but as a critic of those times hardly safe. In his interesting "History of Our Own Times" written for an English market he had to repress his Irish enthusiasm when dealing with the most brilliant and romantic period of his Nation's history. Whether you agree with the historian that Davis, Duffy, Dillon, McGee were, "amateur literateurs, poets en herbe" or with the present writer that they were an earnest body of men that wanted a free government, and were prepared to get it at any risk, you will admit that no newspaper in such a short time made such a great stir, and left such a deep impress, as the Nation. Poor Mangan wrote a poem for its first issue, bespeaking a welcome for it. That welcome it royally received. Its second issue was more than 10,000 copies. Those who could not purchase it, flocked to the houses of the wealthier to listen to those songs, and that fascinating wild prose. Those were the days of the Barmecides. No nightingale songs, no rondeaus in roses, nor poems of pessimism, marred its pages but human man-like songs for freedom, and large broad utterances of a coming better time. Utterances that passed through the spirits of genuine and vigorous men. These writers of the Nation were hearty men. They were not all artists. They had no time to polish cherry stones. Many of their writings were crude, rough, unheven, but they have in them that which thrills us or subdues us, the warm heart-running blood of their authors. The writers of '48 had no literary timidities, they put in their lyrics and prose, that something which keeps all literature from becoming stagnant—a little of the writer's self. With the snuffing out of the movement, by the banishment of the brilliant coterie to the far-off colonial possessions of Victoria, the Nation became tame and insipid until the death a few years ago in Abbey street. After many reverses of fortune it passed into the hands of the Sullivan Brothers. A. M., the well-known politician, and T. D., the peasant poet. They tried their best to make it worthy of its birth, but their efforts were unsuccessful. The fact that it was a twopenny weekly was not on its side. When people could find literary pabulum enough for a penny, they did not feel like giving twopence for the same amount, even if it was wrapped in the Nation. There is something in a name, provided the bearer has some of the qualities of the maker of the name. If he lacks them people are apt to forget

him, while they honor his ancestors. The last editor was the gifted Eugene Davis, to whom the author of these vagrant jaunting-car sketches owes many a delightful memory of the poet's haunts of Dublin, and the remembrance of many a jest and story told, during rambles in the quaint, dirty streets of the Irish metropolis. With the death of the Nation a new organ was established in the interests of the Catholics and under the sanction of Archbishop Walsh. This journal bears the name of the Irish Catholic, and has prospered beyond the ideas of its publisher. It is ably edited, and has a far-reaching influence. The Irish Times in its list of representatives from the various metropolitan journals would wind up with "Frank McDonogh, the Irish Catholic." McDonogh was then a brilliant youth on the staff of the Irish Catholic, with an ambition to woo London fogs. Since then he crossed the channel, more's the pity. Ireland has trying need of such men. Since then the gentle Davis has crossed the Atlantic. All things change, as change they must, so goes the song.

W. LECKY.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN MISSIONS.

The welfare of the Indians in the Rocky Mountains has the devoted solicitude of both priests and Sisters who are living among them. From a communication received from the mother-house of the Ursulines, St. Peter, Cascade county, Montana, we can form an idea of what a truly apostolic work it is to evangelize our red brethren. The letter says:

"We are driven by suffering and want to appeal to your kind charity in the great work of converting and civilizing the Indian children. We were trying to secure a suitable building for ourselves and 300 children, where we will be at least comfortable and move out of those miserable log cabins, wholly uninhabitable, where we have experienced so much privation, sickness and suffering during the past severe winter, living upon alms.

"The little Indian children come to us in a state of filth, misery and degradation impossible to describe. Among God's poor we are the poorest. We have neither linen nor chairs; our cells are so small that we cannot move about by day unless by keeping the scant furniture upon our straw mattress; rain and snow drift in upon us at night; we fix our one umbrella over the stove while preparing meals. Our bitter cold has long since set in. One night last week we were gathered around our one last log of wood, not one cent in the house, neither sugar, flour, nor soap—nothing but potatoes and beans. We are straitened for warmth both night and day.

"We will be most grateful to any and all persons sending donations, large or small—blankets, quilts, sheeting, chairs, flour, groceries, etc."

The priests fare little better. Besides their want of means, on them rests the responsibility of continuing missions and schools already opened and of starting new ones. Some of these schools were begun under the impression that the Government would help them, but the Indian Commissioner refused to award them the contracts, and the missionaries are compelled to sustain the pupils as best they can.

There are no revenues for the priests, and the support of themselves and of their missions and schools must come from elsewhere. A secular priest who has an Indian mission writes that he "must keep himself and his mission on eleven dollars a month." A Benedictine Father announces that he has even less than this, and a Jesuit Father says he has "no need for book-keeping." If the priests had offerings for Masses, it would be a great source of relief to them, but even these they cannot obtain.

Priests and Sisters, too, are needed to continue a work so auspiciously begun and so promising of good to the Indians. Those who have borne the toil and hardships of pioneer life are now looking to others to take their places. The Lord of the harvest is calling for more laborers.

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HOW DO YOU DO



when you buy shoes or clothing? Don't you go to the place (if you can find it) where they tell you that you may wear the articles out, and then, if you're not satisfied, they'll refund the money? Why not do the same when you buy medicine?

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