

These are not mere words, nor mere opinions ; they are truths. They are not based on other authority than that of the philosophy of history as interpreted by the great men who know the Irish question. It is true some may have never heard such statements before ; none of my readers perhaps, have ever realized them. Yet, since they are true, as I hope I shall presently prove, we ought to know them, feel them, act upon them. To urge and help others to do something of this nature, is the perhaps too ambitious aim of this paper. Were it not that I have a reasoning audience, willing to believe evidence, a sympathetic audience, descendants of Gaels, and a charitable audience who will pardon any shortcomings, I would not attempt such an important subject.*

The question is for us not only important but difficult. We cannot, such is the fog that Anglo-Saxon civilization puts between us and Gaelic Ireland, we cannot see that there *is* a question. Accordingly when we hear of the Gaelic Revival, we are accustomed either to listen indifferently or to make it the subject of satire. But I ask serious attention.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand this ideal now placed before Ireland, is to study the history of the Gaelic civilization of the past. It is a fact more certain than the existence of the Aztecs, that about 325 B. C. the Kelt ruled all Europe, except Greece and Southern Italy. from the British Isles to the Black Sea, from the Elbe to the Pillars of Hercules. In other words, contemporary with Alexander the Great, a mighty Keltic empire extended over what is now Ireland, Scotland. England, Wales, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Bosnia, Bulgaria, two-thirds of Germany and half of Italy. At the present day large portions of our globe are peopled by Keltic or semi-Keltic races, but Keltic civilization, all that remains to remind the world of the ancient empire, is now confined chiefly to peasants in a corner of France and parts of the British Isles. There is a movement at present to revive these dwindling and decaying fag-ends, as they are called, of the old civilization. Confining ourselves to Ireland, the struggle between the old Keltic civilization and the new Anglo-Saxon one is called the Irish Question.

*The Debating Club, March 8th.