

[FROM THE CRITIC.]

THE IRISH QUESTION.

(Continued).

There is nothing inviolable in recapitulating race-truths which the long course of history has shown to be broad truths. It is only in the light of broad truths that I present them. As in all generalizations, there are large exceptions, and, taking the Irish as the representatives of the Celtic race, Macaulay's "ivory school-boy" knows how fair a type of humanity is the higher Irishman. But extremes meet. The race which can produce the highest is very capable of also producing the lowest, and it is vain to affect ignorance or disbelief that Ireland is prolific of both. Speaking for myself, I have too high a regard for many Celtic qualities, too intimate and too friendly a knowledge of hundreds who are representatives of the Celtic idea, to have an inviolable thought in discussing the question of race idiosyncracies. But I am a student of history, and I study it because I believe the study of it is the surest guide to truth at present permitted to our limited conceptions. All efforts of the human mind are futile unless we can, by means of them, attain a rational balance—unless, by practice, we can attain to something like an intuition as to what is intrinsically true.

If I am asked what kind of thing is intrinsically true, I will answer that the type of Sarsfield, Grattan, Burke, and D'Arcy McGee, is not the type of Tyrconnell and O'Donovan Rossa, and that if Sarsfield or Burke were to appear in Ottawa to-morrow, they would be assassinated, like D'Arcy McGee, by bad Irishmen of the Tyrconnell and Rossa type. "Tis true 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true!"

Now let us see what the Celtic, and what the Teutonic ideas, in the broad are. Speaking of the recent ebullition of French race-feeling in Quebec, the writer from whom I quote, so far as his thoughts are my thoughts, says: "Apart from the Jews, who constitute one of the few existing races which can lay claim to purity of descent, there are only two races which enter largely into the composition of the people which now occupy the greater part of the continent of Europe, and the British Colonies in the East and West. The one is the Scandinavian—Teutonic or Indo-German, and the other is the Celtic." That these "are remotely connected is no doubt true, but Latham points out that the Celts must have diverged previous to the evolution of the declension of nouns, and this throws us back to such a remote period that practically we may look upon the races as distinct." True enough: yet one touch of human nature makes us all akin; we find those touches everywhere; we all profess Christianity; why cannot we agree to differ and remain friends in spite of differing opinions? Hardly so long as there is aggressiveness; never, perhaps, so long as the aggressiveness is on the side of ignorance and superstition, and—the pessimist may say—that will be till the day when the power of the sun fails, and the human race is gradually contracted to the tropics, and ultimately frozen out of existence.

The Scandinavian-Teutonic race still exists on the shores of the Baltic, the Celtic on the west coast of Ireland, where "they preserve not only their race but its traditions in such purity that they probably differ but slightly from their ancestors of a thousand years ago. But the rest of Europe has been the battle ground of the races for centuries, and they have now become so mixed up that it is almost impossible to unravel the tangled skein. That the early settlers in France were Celtic is, of course, beyond doubt, but the very name of France is German, and the population had already received a strong infusion of the German element from their Frankish conquerors, when Rollo and his Normans took peaceable possession of the city of Rouen."

The writer from whom I quote proceeds to show that the early French settlers in Canada were principally Norman, that the Gaspé district derives its population largely from the Channel Islands, and that there has been a Scotch infusion along the shores of the St. Lawrence. "How then," he says, "can the French-Canadian claim to belong to a distinct race?" This, however, is but a side issue, but there is truth in a sentence which follows: "The Englishman, like himself, is a mixture of Scandinavian, Teuton, and Celt, and although considerably less Celtic than the Frenchman, it is merely a question of degree." The degree, however, is masked. The Frenchman unquestionably retains very much more of the Celtic, and less of the Teutonic, tone of mind than the Scotchman or the Englishman, and the reasons are, I think, to be found in the circumstances of the Roman Empire during the first four or five centuries of our era, and the different nature of barbaric conquest on the continent and on the British Isles.

"No race," says Mr. Green, speaking of the Celts, "has shown a greater power of absorbing all the nobler characteristics of the people with whom they come in contact." "But," as the writer I have referred to before, adds, "they have done more than this. They have absorbed the Goth as a sponge absorbs water, and all the 'nobler characteristics' of the Goth have gone to strengthen a race which always has been, and always must be, his most bitter enemy." To this proposition I do not assent. There is, unhappily, much bitterness existing, but the Celt has too many noble qualities to permit the belief that it is unappeasable by the ultimate redress of wrongs; especially as it may safely be said there is no corresponding bitterness in the Teuton.

A glance at the map of Europe during the sixth century shows us, it is truly observed, the Gothic conquest so complete that the Celt might be supposed to have been altogether suppressed. But the outcome has been very different, the Goth has vanished, and the mixed races which have resulted from the graft of the conquerors on the conquered have remained Celtic in thought, feeling, and method, and have only taken on from the Teutonic admixture enough of the Teutonic steadfastness to render them more formidable than the unmixed blood. It is this mixed race, the descendants of the Norman and Saxon-Irish, who are to-day the backbone of the Irish contention.

That the mental characteristics of the two races have strong points of difference is unquestionable, but we would fain hope that they are not as "absolutely antagonistic" as the writer I have before me affirms. He indeed lays such stress upon the opinion as to put the words in italics. "But if," as he goes on to say, it might "appear that Providence had deliberately sent two races on the continent of Europe (the one with a constructive, the other with a destructive intellect) for the express purpose of keeping up a sort of perpetual political motion, and preventing Europe from settling down into a torpor like that of China"; it would be bold to affirm that there is not some good in that. Terrible as was the French Revolution, Europe is indebted to it for the shock, rude though it was, which arrested the crystallization of despotic tendencies. It may be said that the results of American independence would have done the same thing in the long run in a steadier, if milder, manner. But the run *would* have been much longer as affected Europe, while the French Revolution demonstrated at once the danger of treading down a people as the French nation was down-trodden by her royalty, her nobles, and her priesthood. In the middle ages neither thought nor force (except the force of the mail-clad barons) were ripe, or the *Jacquerie* might have taught the lesson five hundred years earlier. So today the resolute attitude of Irish national feeling, albeit disfigured by lamentable features, will really do England service by startling her out of the stolid selfishness which is her characteristic shortcoming, and which, in these latter days, seems to be sapping the foundations of patriotism itself.

So dead, indeed, does that nobility of passions seem, so rare now a patriotic utterance instinct with the true ring, that a passage taken from the "Cruise of the Beecham," a diary—and something more—kept by the young Princes of Wales during their voyage in that vessel, comes upon us as a surprise as well as a pleasure. In the West Indies it was perhaps natural that the shades of Rodney, Boscawen, Drake, Preston, and a score of other naval heroes, should have risen before the mind's eye of the young Princes, who seem to have kept their perceptions alive to every association as well as to every duty, but one is scarcely prepared for such a passage as this.—

"Truly here

'The spirits of our fathers
'Might start from every wave;
'For the deck it was their field of fame,
'And ocean was their grave—'

start and ask us, their sons—"What have you done with those islands which we won for you with precious blood?" And what could we answer? We have misused them, neglected them, till, at the present moment, ashamed of the slavery of the past, and too ignorant and helpless to govern them as a dependency of an over-burdened colonial bureau in London, now slavery is gone, we are half-minded to throw them away again and "give them up" no matter much to whom. But was it for this that those islands were taken and retaken, till every gully and every foot of the ocean bed holds the skeleton of an Englishman? Was it for this that those seas were reddened with the blood of our own forefathers year after year? Did all those gallant souls go down to Hades in vain, and leave nothing for the Englishman but the sad and proud memory of their useless valour?

This is the Princes' own, not Mr. Dalton's, their governor and editor.

FRANC-TREUER.

P. S.—Permit me to make two corrections in my first article on this question. I alluded to a *sedulous*, not a *sedition* cultivation of revenge, and to *noble*, not *notable* traits of Celtic character.

F. T.

(To be Continued.)

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S COURTSHIP.

Near the end of May, 1758, Washington was ordered by the Quarter-master-General of the British forces to leave Winchester and make all haste to Williamsburg, there to explain to the Governor and Council in what a desperate condition the Virginia troops were as regarded clothing and equipments. Accordingly he set out on horseback, accompanied by his servant Billy Bishop.

The two men had reached Williams Ferry, on the Pamunkey river, and had crossed on the boat, when they met Mr. Chamberlayne, a Virginia gentleman, living in the neighborhood. The hospitable planter insisted that Washington should at once go to his house. It was forenoon, and dinner would be served as usual, early, and after that Colonel Washington could go forward to Williamsburg, if go he must. Besides all that, there was a charming young widow at his house—Colonel Washington must have known her, the daughter of John Dandridge, and the wife of John Parke Custis. Virginia hospitality was hard to resist. Washington would stay to dinner if his host would let him hurry off immediately after.

Bishop was bidden to bring his master's horse around after dinner in good season, and Washington surrendered himself to his host. Dinner followed, and the afternoon went by, and Mr. Chamberlayne was in excellent humor, as he kept one eye on the restless horses at the door, and the other on his guests, the tall, Indian-like officer, and the graceful, hazel-eyed, animated young widow. Sunset came, and still Washington lingered. Then Mr. Chamberlayne stoutly declared that no guest was ever permitted to leave his house after sunset. Mrs. Martha Custis was not the one to drive the soldier away, and so Bishop was bidden to take the horses back to the stable. Not till the next morning did the young Colonel take his leave. Then he dispatched his business promptly at Williamsburg, and whenever he could get an hour dashed over to White House, where Mr. Custis lived. So prompt was he about this business, also, that when he returned to Winchester he had the promise of the young widow that she would marry him as soon as the campaign was over.—From "George Washington" by Horace E. Scudder, in *St. Nicholas* for April.