

Bethlehem on the first Christmas night was to the three Eastern Magi; what the vision of the Holy Grail was to the Knights of the Round Table; what the Holy Sepulchre was to the dying eyes of the Crusaders fainting in the parched Syrian desert, that to the children of the Irish race was and is the tradition that there has been, and the faith that there will be a golden-hearted Irish nation, the land of song and wit and mirth and learning and holiness, and all the fair flowering of the human mind and soul. By the light of that message, glinting out in ineffaceable rainbow colours, no matter what angriest storm clouds crossed the Irish sky, generation after generation have marched gaily to their doom upon the battlefield or scaffold; and the statesman who hopes to settle accounts with Ireland by mending our clothes, and giving us an additional meal a day without satisfying that imperious spiritual craving of the high strung Celtic nature, may as well legislate for a time when the green hills of holy Ireland will wear the red livery of England, and when the birds on the Irish bushes will chirp "Rule Britannia" (cheers). Conquering nations of the coarse material textures of the ancient Romans and the modern English have never been able to understand why little nations like Ireland should cling to their own hopes and ideals, instead of embracing the new gods and scrambling for their share of the world-wide empire which they have had the same share in building up that the hundreds of thousands of slaves who perished under King Rameses' lash had in building the great Pyramid. I have no doubt that King Xerxes' courtiers were just as much disgusted at Leonidas' folly in standing to be killed in the Pass of Thermopylæ, with his absurd little mob of three hundred men, instead of sensibly coming over to dinner with the glittering hosts of the Persians and sharing the good things that were going, as the ordinary Englishman is with our obstinacy in dreaming of a National Parliament instead of learning sense and taking our pull out of the Hindoos, and carrying all before

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