

world. And so when in the future men may talk of a nation of the most prosperous and contented people, we will know the country of which they speak, we will know, "My country, tis of thee, sweet land of liberty."

The next toast on the list was:—
LITERARY IRELAND.

"And fancy's flash and reason's ray
Serve but to light the troubled way."

Response by J. Ryan, '97.

In proposing it, Mr. McGee gave a brief sketch of Irish literature. Mr. A. Mackie sang in good voice "Annie Laurie," and Mr. Ryan then replied.

He said: "The literature of Ireland dates so far into antiquity, that it were to labor in vain to attempt to trace it to its origin. Certain it is, however, that Irish saints and Irish scholars were exercising a beneficial influence on the European continent, ere yet the inhabitants of other countries had discarded the gaudy colors of savagery.

When Patrick landed in Hibernia he found a nation ignorant, it is true, of the tenets of our religion, yet not a race of illiterates; no, he beheld a people whose preeminent characteristic was then, and as it is to-day, love of learning.

Prior to that early period, Ireland had her historians, her poets and her bards, whose writings exceed in number those of the Eastern nations. Yet, pathetic and even sublime as are many of these works, they are shrouded in a dark cloud of paganism; but with the advent of the Great Apostle this cloud is dispelled, an epoch of joy begins, a cycle opens, in which prose is illumined with a ray of hope, and poetry chants a song of gratitude well-befitting a nation newly converted to christianity. As the new Faith advances, its path is marked with rising educational institutions which were soon filled with saints and scholars whose productions to-day adorn the shelves of our magnificent national libraries. Erin became the nursery of education, the great Instructress of nations. Founders of

universities sought out Irish scholars to place at the head of their institutions: and foreign countries admiring the brilliancy of her authors and the sanctity of her children united in conferring upon Ireland, the title, "Isle of Saints and Scholars."

Oh! Glorious Island, University of Europe, Teacher of Christianity, would that the peace and harmony that then betrayed the lofty aims of your happy and contented sons, were to last forever! But no, your "golden age" was envied. A few centuries pass, the scene is changed and your bright star is on the wane. Persecution and oppression have already usurped the throne of justice and equity. The Reformation, so repugnant to the "Faith of Our Fathers; the merciless rule of Queen Elizabeth, and the Cromwellian reign of blood wrought sad havoc in the field of Irish letters. Then came the Penal laws making education a crime. Need we wonder then, that Irish authors failed to make an impression on the sixteenth century. Truly Irish genius had declined; but it was not dead. No, hidden beneath thatched roofs and in humble cottages it gasped for existence, awaiting a brighter era to burst once more upon the world in all its glory. Its new day came and with its second rise, Ireland's decayed literary fame was, in a measure, restored. But the new genius was not confined within the bounds of the "Old Sod," for in lands far away her exiled sons found other fields in which to display their intellectual powers.

A long line of poets adorns the History of Irish Literature. We have Rev. Francis Mahony better known to all lovers of genuine humor, pathos and versatile genius, under the name of Father Prout; Moore, one of the most accomplished, ornate and musical lyric bards of our language, whose soul-stirring melodies—approaching so near the soft, sweet tones of an angelic chorus,—resound throughout the world to-day animating Erin's children with the deeds of her heroes; and making