

IN THE BOOK WORLD.

WALTER LECKY'S VIEWS ON SOME TIMELY TOPICS.

SIDNEY LANIER'S INFLUENCE ON THE POET TABB—JEREMIAH CURTIN'S TALES OF IRELAND—THE SACRIFICE OF CATHOLIC MEN OF LETTERS WHO ARE TRUE TO THEIR FAITH.

It is pleasant, now and then, to have a higher authority agree with your estimate of a man. In my "Down at Caxton's" I had written: "It is easy to trace in Father Tabb's poetry the influence of Sidney Lanier." This statement was controverted. The London Bookman is on my side of the issue. Here is what it says:

"Father Tabb's 'Poems' is undoubtedly the most successful first book of poetry issued in America for many years. Published just before Christmas, the daily little volume is already in a third edition. John B. Tabb is fifty years old, and comes of an old Virginia family. For some years he has occupied the chair of English in St. Charles College, Ellicott City, Md., but he still holds the old homestead in Virginia with his sister, where he spends his vacations. Father Tabb was a great friend of Sidney Lanier, to whose memory the poems are dedicated, and whose influence is apparent in much of their lyric quality."

I copy the dedication poem from "Poems" sent by the poet's loving hand to gladden my work:

"Ave, Sidney Lanier,
The Time's horizon-line was set,
Somewhere in space our spirits met,
Then over the starry parapet
Came wandering here,
And now, how art thou gone again
Beyond the verge, I thence remain
(Last echo of a lofter strain)
To greet thee there."

In the Cosmopolitan, Andrew Lang, in his chatty review of recent books, thus writes: "In any case, I believe that no absolutely new intellect has dawned on us since I wrote last, unless it be the poet Tabb, and I vainly ask for Mr. Tabb on the sunny and dusty wastes of the midland sea."

We trust that the canny Andrew will see that the little book is in his grip on his next angling expedition. Among his native Scotch heather would be the atmosphere. Every book has, as Bagehot wrote, "its atmosphere."

How pleasant it is, in reading the life of some literary man, to drop on those passages which tell of the influence of some book given as a college present, an influence formative and life-lasting; an exquisite resemblance.

Will our Catholic colleges be persuaded to give such books? It is time that the raw, unadorned trash sold at so much a pound, would give way to books of merit and artistic neatness. What book would make a better beginning than the Poems of John B. Tabb? Among the Catholic poets represented in John Lane's Bodley Head Library, are Francis Thompson, who will in a few weeks publish his second volume entitled "Songs, Wing to Wing;" Poems by Lionel Johnson, the well-known London critic; "Cuckoo Songs," by Katherine Tynan; Poems by Mrs. Maynard; "Verse Tales," by Emily Hickey; "Whisper," by Francis Wynne; Sonnets by Wilfred Scamman Blunt; The Bodley Head, the home of Parnassus in the 19th century, is a little low-browed, second-hand book-shop, in Vigo street, off Regent street, in the very heart of fashionable London. The publications of this firm and those of its American are limited editions of the best. It is safe to assume that not a few of the Bodley Head poets will take a permanent place in English verse. That place is already in the "Hound of Heaven," assured to Francis Thompson.

Of the new works in fiction, there is a clever and readable book, "A Daughter of the Soil," by M. E. Francis, and a delightful tale of Erin, the "Dancehall," by Mrs. Rosa Mulholland. It has been a wonder to me that the sweet pictures of Irish Catholic life, so vividly portrayed by the novelist, have such a limited circulation in our land. Who will say that it is not owing to the vast amount of "translated stuff" and "indigenous stupidity?" Celts the world over should feel a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Jeremiah Curtin, the distinguished philologist, whose various collections of the legendary tales of Ireland, pagan and civilized, are the best extant. To the philologist-historian they are a veritable mine of information in the delineation of the complex Celtic character. Mr. Curtin's manner of handling these strange old tales is admirable. After reading his Heroic Tales, one can say with a recent critic, "And is there anything so perennially fascinating as the old folk-lore tales told anew, especially tales of fairies and ghosts as can be turned to weirdest music on the harp of Erin." Yet such tales are unknown to our children. In their place we have "Your Uncle Andy's" library or my "Aunt Nora's Keepsake," a collection of French salad minus the vinegar. I trust the younger Celts will show Mr. Curtin that they are not ungrateful to the wizard who has wrought to our modern eyes the simple, fascinating life of our ancestors in the heyday of their barbaric strength. It is from these collections that the younger school of poets will learn how to use a phrase of that genuine Celt, Douglas Hyde, to de-anglicize Irish literature.

The work has already begun in the poems of Yeats. What the Grimm Bros. have done for the Fatherland, Mr. Curtin, in a way, is doing for the land of his forefathers. These collections are the best answer to that supercilious sneer that Anglo-Saxon vulgarity assumes to the Celt. A significant defection from the tottering school of Zolaism is Karl Huxman, one of the five distinguished disciples, and a contributor to the Soirees de Mendon. Mendon is the home of M. Zola.

M. Huxman's recantation is hardly noticed in the pages of our literary magazines, and the reason is not hard to find. The reviewers are as a general rule, if not openly, covertly hostile to dogmatic Christianity. The only dogmatic Church is that of Rome, and any writer whose tendencies lie in that direction, is either slurred or beneath their notice. If some Catholic writer, like the poet Thompson, receives notice, it will on full investigation be found that the starters of his fame-tall were co-religionists like Coventry Patmore or Katherine Tynan Hinkson. There are exceptions where the brilliancy of genius demand and receive adequate position, but they are few. American criticism at the present time is a mutual admiration society—luscious—by growing in an atmosphere of cant. Howells, Boyesen, Mabie, Garland, Brander Matthews, in one way or another, control the most of the leading monthlies, and their criticisms mostly of each other, with now and then a pat for Tolstoi or Ibsen, are laudatory and unconsciously subtle. They have to their own satisfaction strangled the school of romanticism and rid the public of the glamor of Scott, etc. Their school Realism is triumphant. A sneering public answers them by buying the works of Haggard, Weyman, Doyle, etc.

What we want to prick this sad and diabolic the critical Jackdaws is a review like the English Saturday Review, and a free lance like Henley. There are signs in the air that the time is ripe for rebellion. It can benefit no one more than the Catholic writer. At the present time his work (if he is true to his faith, and does write something that will give suspicion of that faith), stands a tolerably sure chance of rejection. A distinguished writer was lately informed by a magazine editor, that pictures of Catholic life were not to the taste of his miscellaneous and omnivorous readers. How could it be expected that those who brutalize themselves in the stories of George Moore, and revel in the lost atmosphere of Grant Allen's "Woman Who Did," would relish things spiritual. However, if Catholic writers are true to the noble ideals of Manzoni and the great Catholic writers of fiction, they will help to strangle materialism and help in the new birth of the Spirit.

In France the struggle is intense. The Decadents are the wreck of Zolaism, but the true conquerors will be those who are guided by the Master's teachings. In England, Lilly, Barry, Patmore, Thompson, Johnson, Dowson, Hinkson, Ward, Blunt, Anstey, Burnand and a host patiently battle. The worth of their work is in the eyes of every cultured Catholic. In our own land we are but beginners, yet earnest. If not to us falls the crown it will to our offspring, and they will in their days of strength remember those who bore the brunt of the battle, and fell in the sight of victory.

Let it be truthfully written of the American Catholic men of letters, that they knew and knew how to sacrifice. Brownson cared only for the fair fame of his Church. Gilmary Shea, to tell her glories, was content with poverty. Boyle O'Reilly would have given her joyfully his life-blood. It is better to be poor with Truth, than rich with Falsehood, was their motto. It is that of the younger school—WALTER LECKY, in N. Y. Catholic News.

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IRISH NEWS ITEMS.

Dr. Griffin has been appointed to the Post office and Ireland Revenue, Kilkenny.

Miss Nellie O'Sullivan, of Cork, niece of E. Crean, M.P., died on June 21 at the age of twenty-one years.

Captain O'Driscoll, of Glenville, Monks-town, has been appointed to the Commission of Peace for County Cork.

Acting-Sergeant Wilson, of Limerick, and Acting-Sergeant Martin, of Annacotty, have been promoted to be Sergeants.

Simon Mangan has been appointed Lieutenant for County Meath, in the room of the Marquis of Headfort, deceased.

The scholarship open to boys of Galway County, by the Incorporated Society, was won by Thomas Frazer, of the Andrah School.

Constable McNaughton, of Camlough, died suddenly on June 27 while doing street duty. He was stationed in Camlough for the past two years.

Michael Fitzgerald, J.P., of Loughbill House, Limerick, died on June 26, the result of a driving accident. Deceased, who was a justice for the county and a governor of the Limerick Lunatic Asylum, was a sincere Nationalist.

The deaths are announced of these Meath people: June 26, at Whitehouse, Waterstown, Michael Langan, aged seventy years. At Gardenvilla, Kells, Ellen Newman, third eldest daughter of the late Henry Newman. June 27, at Rathkenny, John, youngest son of John Weldon, aged twenty-two years.

David Vaughan, ex-Head Constable of Cork, died at Wellington Bridge on the 16th ult. He was taking a walk when he became ill, and expired in a few moments from heart disease. He retired a few years ago on a pension and was fifty-seven years of age. He served in Limerick and Cork cities and counties, and retired in Middleton.

At the petty session in Drogheda, on June 24, the hearing of the charges of intimidation against the evicted tenants of the Massereene estate was concluded. The charges against Mr. Downey and Matthews were dismissed without prejudice, and the charges against Lawless and Tiernan were dismissed on their merits.

The Dominicans of the Black Abbey, Kilkenny, have issued a circular to the clergy of the diocese, in which they say:—The heavy debt of £2,500 under which we labor, forces us to appeal to the benevolence of the charitable public to help us in relieving ourselves

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of our pecuniary responsibilities. This debt was incurred in building a new convent for the Dominican Fathers in Kilkenny. Bishop Browning, of Ossory, has given £35 for the good work.

At the Cathedral, Killarney, on June 23, the Rev. J. Cronin was raised to the dignity of the priesthood. Father Cronin is a son of John Cronin, who holds a large farm at Lackabane, from Lord Kenmare. He completed his ecclesiastical studies at Maynooth, having successfully passed through his preliminary course at St. Brendan's Seminary, Cork.

Hal McDermott, son of the Attorney-General, The McDermott, of Clough House, Coolavin, was awarded first place at a recent examination for LL.B. in Trinity College, Dublin, beating all competitors by many marks. His essay on "Welsh Disestablishment" was recommended for this year's medal in the University Philosophical Society, and he took first place in metaphysics. We understand Mr. McDermott, who is a splendid athlete and sportsman, will enter the solicitor's profession.

OLDEST MAN IN IRELAND.

Near the shores of the beautiful lake of Gougane Barra, near the entrance to Kilmacneigh Pass, lives Michael Callahan, the oldest man in Ireland. His photograph was recently taken, and the photographer thus tells of the incident in the current number of Black and White:

"Will you take a photograph of Mike Callahan, sir; he is the oldest man in the country, and too weak entirely for a journey to Cork. His grandchildren in America want his picture and he has a great wish to send it to them." Such was the request made of me one evening in June by James Cronin.

"And where does Mike Callahan live?" I inquired. "Only four miles away," was the reply. "We will send a boy over for him in the morning."

On the following day, however, the old man was on the mountains looking after the cows, and consequently he could not come till late in the evening, when his day's work was over. When he did come, arrayed in his Sunday suit, it was but to learn that the picture could not be made before morning. Mike could not speak English, and an interpreter had to translate our talk. With this assistance I ascertained from the old man that he had walked through the Boreen and over the mountain, and that he would go home to return by 9 of the clock. I turned out at 6 to secure a few fish for breakfast. To my surprise I found Mike before the kitchen fire smoking an old black clay pipe. "I had no means of knowing the time," he said, "and got up early." Though he had left not many hours before, he tramped the mountain path a third time, and now he hoped his honor would share with him a glass of mountain dew (2-year-old whiskey) before starting work. On my declining the offer, Mike emptied the dose intended for me into his own tumbler and drained his glass without tempering the spirit with water. Then he walked with a firm step into the open air, where I photographed him. He told me he was born in the year before the great trouble—in other words, the year preceding the rebellion of 1798. And he spoke of the Rapparees and Whiteboys, of the hard times during the famine. For my services the veteran assured me that for the remainder of his life he would pray for me twice a day, and call down upon me every blessing he could imagine, increasing in fervor when one of the spectators told him (without my knowing it) that by looking through the eye of the camera I could see that he would live to over a hundred, strong and active to the end.

MARRIED.

GUERIN—EVANS—On Wednesday, the 24th inst., at the Archbishop's Palace, Montreal, by the Rev. Canon Bruchesi, D.D., Edmund Guerin, Advocate, son of the late Thomas Guerin, C.E., to Marie only daughter of the late John Evans.

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Testimony of Dr. D. Marsolais, Lavaltrie.

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D. MARSOLOIS, M. D.
Lavaltrie, December 2nd 1885.

Testimony of Dr. G. Desrosiers, St. Felix de Valois.

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