

IRISH GENIUS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Dr. Dr. Hickey, of Maynooth College and Vice-president of the University College Library and Historical Society, of Dublin, delivered an address on the occasion of the inaugural meeting of the association. It is not often that we meet with anything so new, so spirited, so logical, and so true as what we find expressed in that speech. While we skip much of the introduction and the generalities contained therein, we must give in full the body of that masterly effort. By habit we have come to speak of the works of Irishmen, published in English, as Irish literature, the mistake thus made is forcibly pointed out by Dr. Hickey. Mr. Arthur B. Clery, Auditor of the Society had spoken of the works of Irishmen in English. In moving a vote of thanks to the lecturer, amongst other things Dr. Hickey said:

"With his view as to the merits of our old-time poetic literature when compared with Anglo-Irish poetic literature, I am in thorough sympathy and agreement. His remarks on the subject have, I believe, been true, just and judicious. Nor do I think that he has over-rated the prose of Burke, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Swift, Steele, and Berkeley. In English literature—nay, in world-literature—his place is undoubtedly high. But how can it, in any sense, be called Irish literature, or its creators Irish writers, passes my comprehension. Irishmen they undoubtedly were, and Irish, too, was their genius, as far as blood, race, and heredity can influence or determine genius. Few will be found to condemn the auditor's perfectly natural indignation and resentment at the cool, impudent, and cold-blooded appropriation of so many of our men of genius by the predominant partner. To say, however, that they were Irishmen, that their genius was too largely of the outcome of Irish influences, racial or otherwise, is one thing; to say that they are Irish writers, to assert that their works are Irish literature, to contend, as the auditor has done, that they are the lineal descendants of our ancient lyricists and epics, the products of their genius, a natural development of their olden poetic literature, is quite another matter. I fail to see how we can in any sense regard them as Irish writers, or their works as Irish literature. I wish it were otherwise; but I have to face the facts as I find them, not as I could wish them to be. By no means do I admit that the works of the so-called Celtic Revivalists are Irish literature, but for them it seems to me quite clear, a very much stronger case could be made out than for Burke and the other great literary luminaries to whom the auditor has directed our attention. Whether literature produced by Irishmen in the English language is in any sense or under any circumstances Irish literature has recently formed the subject of fierce and protracted controversy. That controversy I have no intention of reversing on this occasion. I fully agree with those who held that such literature never is, never can be, Irish literature.

But just now that is not my point. My contention is that, even though it were admitted that such literature could in certain circumstances and with certain limitations be fairly described as Irish literature, the works of Burke and his great contemporaries cannot be held to satisfy in any sense the required conditions. It is idle to say that the authors were Irishmen, that their writings are the products of Irish genius. How far will this carry us? Let us see. In the last century a countryman of ours, Dr. Thomas O'Hearn, lived in Belgium, and made valuable contributions to Flemish poetic literature; so at least the Belgians themselves think. The author of those poems was an Irishman, the poems themselves were the offspring of Irish genius. Literature they undeniably are, for otherwise they would not be rated so highly. But are they Irish literature? Just as much as "The Vicar of Wakefield," "The School for Scandal," and "Reflections on the French Revolution"—no less and no more. What better case can be made out for the great writers whom Ireland gave to English literature in the last century than for the Hiberno-Flemish poet? Their subjects were hardly ever Irish—in case of most of them never. Their education and training were not Irish. Their formative influences and environment, at least during by far the greater part of their inspiration were not Irish. They lived in the main out of Ireland. Their interests were in the

main not Irish. Their works were produced in almost every case out of Ireland. The audiences whom they addressed, the public for whom they wrote, were hardly ever Irish. In their works there is no Irish coloring and scarcely ever an Irish note or undertone. The utmost that can be said is that a few of them retained strong Irish sympathies, or were regarded as Irish writers, or their works be acclaimed as Irish literature? Whatever claim may be set up for writers of the Neo-Gothic school, none, it seems to me, can be set up for them. They are simply great names donated by Ireland to English literature. Their works, high as we may rate them, and much as we may pride in them as the products of Irish genius, are English literature pure and simple, unless where now and again they attain to the position and dignity of world-literature.

But what of the theory of development which the auditor has propounded? "It is a well-observed phenomenon," he has told us, "of all literature that a period of great poetry is succeeded by a period of prose-writers." Be it so, I need not contest or pause to examine that statement; it is not necessary to my argument. But assuming that Plato and the Greek orators are a natural development of Aristotle and the tragedians; that Voltaire and Rousseau are a natural development of Corneille and Racine; that Addison, Richardson, and their contemporaries are a natural development of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists and poets, how does it appear that Burke, Swift, and the others are a development, natural or otherwise, of our ancient lyricists and epics? In my opinion there is absolutely no analogy. Where you have no continuity there can be no development. In Greece and France and England there was continuity and perfect continuity—continuity of language, and therefore continuity of literature and literary tradition. The later writers were acquainted with the works of those who preceded them. Their education was largely based upon them. Their thought was largely shaped by them. They formed their mind from them. They were to a large extent the agents of their intellectual culture and training, and the fountains of their inspiration. Furthermore, the later as well as the earlier writers dwelt in the same lands, worked in much the same environment, addressed the same people. Under such circumstances I can quite understand natural development and lineal descent.

But how does all that has been said fit in with the Irish case? Burke and his great contemporaries owed nothing to the ancient Irish poets. They knew nothing of our olden literature, for they were ignorant of the language in which it was written. Their education was carried on without the slightest reference to it. In the main they lived and wrote in an alien land. Their environment and substantial interests were not Irish. Their formative literary influences were not Irish. How then, I ask, can their works be held to be in any sense a development of our ancient poetic literature, or they themselves be regarded as the lineal descendants of our ancient lyricists and epics? The real fact is that, like Addison and Richardson, they were rather a development of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Although I have been obliged to point issue with the auditor on these points, my admiration for his paper is not on that account a whit the less. I sincerely congratulate him upon it, and I thank him for having selected such a subject. Such subjects are the most suitable and useful for societies composed of young Irishmen of ability and education. They appeal to them as no other subjects can. They arouse their sympathies, speak to their hearts, fire their imaginations, and after all, let doctors say what they will, such subjects as naturally awaken interest, fire the imagination and enlist its aid in the work of education, are the truest, best, and most effective agencies of culture and intellectual development. For this reason it is gravely to be deplored—is nothing less than a national calamity—that native subjects and national features find so little place in Irish education. To the members of the society, and, indeed, to all young Irishmen, would I therefore, appeal to interest themselves in the past of this old nation of ours, in its language, literature and history."

WAR'S AGONY AND SORROW.

Private letters from a resident of Turban, depict the horrors of the Transvaal war in vivid colors. The writer quotes a fellow-German refugee, Heinrich Auar, forced to leave Johannesburg because, as husband of an English woman, he was suspected of British sympathies, had visited the battlefields of Glencoe:

"I judge there were about 1,000 dead and wounded on the battlefields of Glencoe, when we passed it on October 21, in the afternoon. I shall never forget the sight, for I haven't slept a second since then.

"Picture to yourself heaps of bodies, some stretched out beyond their own length, it seemed, as if they had grown longer with the infinity of torture; others curled as if, in dying, they had been searching for a friendly hand, and in their anxiety had, perhaps, caught hold of their own limbs.

"There were rows of Boers who died kneeling in the trenches in a natural position.

"Several bodies I found standing boldly upright, leaning against trees or other impediments that had prevented them from falling. They were

all shot in the head, and their faces were black from powder, dust or the beginning of putrefaction.

"And all over this living grave rose the gurgling wailing of wounded and expiring men, who groaned and sighed for help, or for death to come, while their hands and nails clutched at the earth and grass.

"Ah, that one night, by a ministering angel, dispatch some of those unhappy ones by a beneficial dose of poison! I caught myself running away howling and blubbering from the side of a Boer, who was vainly trying to stop the flow of his blood. There a brave rifleman, who had bitten off his tongue while seized by spasms, I saw three or four men die within arm's length of me. One suddenly rose, jumped high in the air and fell back dead.

"Outside the hospital tents I found Boers lying on cots flitting with their arms and murmuring: 'What's the use—let's retreat and back at them.'

"Here was a whole row of sharpshooters disposed in excellent order, with their officer in the centre, evidently struck by a volley as they were obeying a command to shoot themselves.

"An overturned battery there, the piece of ordnance buried in the sand, parts of human and horses' bodies mingled indissolubly, swimming in a pool of blood. Many of the dead had their faces turned in the direction of the sinking sun. Their spirits were sinking at the same time, I reckon.

"Over the lying hospitals hung the awful smell of chloroform. Saws were buzzing over bones, knives sharpened and draughts concocted in the open air. The sentinels and outposts shot vultures by the dozen without driving all away. Thank God, the human hyenas of the battlefield were missing, though, there are not enough people in this neighborhood to yield these outcasts that in civilized Europe abound.

"One of the English sanitary officers showed me a basket full of letters which his men had gathered on the battlefield. Wounded to the death, despairing of timely rescue, many English officers and men had scribbled a word of farewell to their loved ones, or, else, pressing to their lips some lines received from mother or father, wife, sister, bride or intended. I myself ran across some of these messages. One or two seemed stained with tears, all had blood spots on them. Several were beyond deciphering.

"A hospital nurse told me that he found many dead Englishmen stretched on their backs, knapsacks under their head and photographs in their uninjured hands. Maybe they had been dying for hours, having had just strength enough to make themselves comfortable and take the picture from their pocket."

ZOLA ON HIS OWN WORKS.

Recently an Austrian gentleman found his son reading Zola's infantile novel "Nana," and he was so anxious about the effects that such a work might have upon the youth, that he wrote to Zola and asked him plainly if he—the author, thought that his works could be read without danger, by young people. The following is Zola's answer:

"Sir,—I do not write for young girls and I do not think the reading of all of my works can be good for minds that are yet in a state of development. You are perfectly right to direct, as you see fit, the education and instruction of your children and they owe you obedience in such matters. Later on, when life will free them from control, they may read what they like. Accept, sir, the expression of my deep regard.

EMILE ZOLA."

Nothing could be more significant, and at the same time sophisticated than this answer from the pen of the man who has written some of the most admirable works of the century. According to him it is only fully developed, or fully educated brains that can attempt to digest with safety the works of Zola. This is, we say, a significant admission on the part of an author, and suffices of itself to justify the placing of his writings on the index. The first line, however, of the letter is a sophistical statement quite characteristic of Zola. He was not asked specially about the young girls, but about young people—the case being that of a boy. Yet he takes the trouble to say that he does not write for young girls. This is false. Possibly while Zola is composing a book he has not the young

girls before his mind as readers; but he writes for publication, and publication is for all readers—including girls and boys. He does not write for girls, but he takes every means necessary and within his power to have his writings circulated—which means amongst girls as well as amongst full matured people. If his works are of such a character that he is obliged to excuse them by stating that they are not for young girls, he should either take effective measures to prevent them from coming under the eyes of these young girls, or else not publish them at all. A man sets fire to a house and the conflagration extends to such an extent that half a city is reduced to ashes, it is no excuse for him to say that, in setting the fire, he had no intention that it should burn any other houses than the one which he wished to destroy. A man calumniates his neighbor to half a dozen friends, the calumny gets abroad and is taken up and repeated by hundreds; it is no justification for him to say that he did not tell the story for the hundreds he had only mentioned it for the benefit of a few. The house-burner should not have lit the fire at all, since it was certain to go beyond his control, the calumniator had no business to state, even for a few, the calumny, since he could not prevent them repeating it. Zola is unjustified in writing for mature minds that which is unfit for undeveloped minds, because once his words are printed he can no more recall them, nor prevent them from reaching those whom they must injure, than he is capable of gathering together last summer's leaves, or preventing this winter's snow from falling.

IS IT A MIRACLE?

"It shows that God is very near to us." Such was the comment made by one of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart yesterday after she had been speaking of what is said to be a miracle at the Convent of the Sacred Heart Order in Maryville, Missouri, and hidden from the public gaze as are the nuns of all communities, and especially, retiring as are those of the Sacred Heart, the Sisters of the Maryville Convent made every effort to keep secret this remarkable event, which took place a month ago. Gradually, however, it has become known. It was learned by the children of the convent school; it reached the ears of parish priests at an ecclesiastical gathering and has been told to the Archbishop. The lack of boasting and the pious quietness which kept the event unknown for many days after it happened have tended to increase credence in the miraculous character of the cure which has been accomplished, recalling the while the words Jesus, who, after healing the leper said unto him: "See that thou tell no man."

The subject of the miracle for such it is believed to be by those who witnessed it—was Mme. Burke, a Sister of the Sacred Heart, who lay sick, almost to death, at Omaha early this fall. Her trouble commenced with a pain in her side and gradually a lump developed, which a physician in Omaha pronounced a tumor. About this time the Rev. Mother Burke, of the Maryville convent, visited the House of the Sacred Heart in Omaha. She was greatly distressed over Mme. Burke's condition, and after consultation with the authorities in the Omaha Convent it was decided that the reverend Mother should bring Mme. Burke to St. Louis for treatment by a physician of this city. This was done, Dr. Adolphe L. Boyce was requested to attend Mme. Burke and it is said that when he saw the case he pronounced it cancer and advised an operation. Dr. Boyce was ready for the operation, but the Sisters asked him to wait nine days till the patient might be fortified by a novena which they would offer in her behalf.

During the novena the intercession of Blessed Mother Barat, who was the foundress of the Sacred Heart Order in 1800, in France, it being first given the French name, Sacre Coeur, was prayed for. Since her death there have been several evidences of what appeared to be special graces granted through her intercession in answer to prayer. In consequence of this, she has reached the second step necessary toward canonization. The first step gives the title of "venerable"; the second, that of "blessed"; the full canonization. Next to this Sister of the Sacred Heart, another early times, Mme. Barat of the Sacred Heart Order of the Visitation, has been canonized and to the attention of the Holy See. A veneration at which the and spiritual blessing, attributes

the intercession of Mme. du Chesne were presented was recently held at St. Charles, Mo.

The intercession of Blessed Mother Barat was constantly prayed for by the Sisters at the Maryville Convent; a garment which had been worn by Mother Barat was worn by Mother Burke; but even with all this devotion and tender care she continued to grow worse. A malignant cancer develops rapidly, and when the nine days were ended it was too late for an operation. All hope for assistance through human agency seemed to have vanished. The patient lay on the verge of death. She expressed no fear of death, but said that for the honor of the Blessed Mother Barat she had hoped that she might live. Such a miracle as this would have greatly benefited the cause of canonization of the revered Mother. There was nothing more to be done for the suffering nun but to administer the last sacraments.

One Friday morning she received Holy Communion. Propped up by pillows on the bed; this small exertion seemed almost beyond her strength. All in the convent were now prepared to hear of her death. But in the sick room suddenly there was a change. The emaciated look was gone from the face. The eyes became bright. In a few moments Mme. Burke arose—the lump was gone. She dressed herself and, unaided, walked out of the room and down stairs. When the doctor came it was his patient who opened the door for him. She was entirely cured, and from that time, one month ago, until the present, she has been well and strong.

The Mother Superior of the Maryville Convent, when asked concerning the authenticity of the story yesterday, said that it was true, but she earnestly requested that it be unannounced through the public press, as the nuns had no desire to be known save through their silent influence. Dr. Boyce also admitted the remarkable occurrence, but desired to discuss the matter without the permission of the Mother Superior.

His Grace Archbishop Kain was seen last night and gave a short resume of the reported healing as he had learned it while on a visit to the convent. He seemed much pleased over the occurrence, but said that he could not say whether it was a "real" miracle or not. "It happened to be down to the Convent a day or so ago," His Grace said, "and I was told the circumstances concerning the cure. Of course, of my own knowledge I know nothing about it, and am not prepared to say whether it was a miracle or not. One thing I do know—that Mme. Burke talked with me and told me all about it. She seemed perfectly well at the time. You must understand that I have no right to say whether it was a miracle. That is for Rome to say. If the Sisters want this occurrence made an authenticated miracle, it will have to be gone about in a systematic way. First they will have to gather every iota of proof;

sworn statements will be taken from the physicians, the Sisters who knew of the case and from the patient herself.

"When this is done I will sit in judgment, as it were. With me will be several advisers. After weighing those proofs, if we think they are sufficient they will be forwarded to Rome. There they will be scrutinized closely. So closely is this done that the man who has charge of 'testing' the validity of these miracles is called 'The Devil's Advocate.' He is a sort of Prosecutor, and if there is the slightest flaw in the proofs, the occurrence will not count for a miracle.

"I was told at the convent that they would make no effort to have this purported miracle authenticated. They told me that it would in no way help toward the canonization of the Blessed Mother Barat, the head of the order. There have been a number of miracles performed in her name and to her glory which have been well authenticated by Rome. The addition of another would have no possible effect. It will be only a matter of time when the head of the order will be canonized. This takes a long time. Before it can be done proofs of extraordinary virtue must be adduced. Miracles performed in her name and with her aid are supposed to be a proof of her virtue. There must be at least three of these to constitute undeniable proof.

"What do I think about this purported miracle? I told you that was not for me to decide. If it can get past the 'Devil's Advocate' at Rome, provided it is ever sent there, it will be plenty of time for me to give an opinion of its genuineness. No authenticated proofs have been given to me, and all that I know about it is what the members of the order told me. They think that it is a miracle without doubt, and I know the Sister looked well when I was speaking with her." St. Louis Globe-Despatch.

A Woman's Opinion of a New Invention.

The following story told by an American exchange is at once amusing and instructive:

Have you read about that new arrangement called the phototypewriter?" asked the business man of Miss Blank, his private secretary. "It's something to do away with you women in the business world," he went on. "It's very simple. Strange nobody ever thought of it before. You just sit and talk into a receiver like the phonograph, and the type writer writes your letter. Simple—simplest thing ever offered for patent. I shall order one just as soon as it is on the market.

"I'm sorry for you girls who are here in the great world all alone, fighting along, but you must get married—you must get married. I believe the phototypewriter will do more than revolutionize the present conditions of the business world. It will restore women to their proper sphere.

"What's this?" the business man exclaimed, later in the day, as he picked up a letter on his desk.

"Oh!" said the private secretary, "I thought that as you intended to do away with my services as soon as the phototypewriter was patented you would like me to begin to do some work like that which it will probably turn out so you could be used to its arrangement."

The letter had been dictated soon after the conversation about the wonderful invention and read:

"Mr. William Jones—no, his name isn't William, it's James. Mr. James Jones. Have you got that? You must work quicker. Well, Mr. James Jones—no, William. Did I say William or James? James? James? Oh, yes. You have his address. No? Well, you'll find it in the directory. Look under 'J'—Jones, you know. It's somewhere down town. Wouldn't wonder if he was in Wall street. Always did like Wall street. Well, can't blame him. Lively street. Where was I? Mr. Walter Jones—um—um—um—My dear Sir. No, just make it 'Sir.' I don't want to be too familiar with a man like Jones. Nice fellow, but rather—oh! you know what I mean. You've got that, 'Sir?' Yours

The amateur detective is as humorous a character as any of Shakespeare's clowns, or even old Dogberry himself. He finds the most astonishing clues, and generally follows them until he brings up about as far away from the solution of the mystery as mortal well may be. But the specialist in the detection of crime, Sherlock Holmes, is a man who reads clues, as the Indian reads a trail. Every step he takes is a step to success.

It's much the same way in the detection of disease. While the amateur is blundering along over misleading symptoms, the specialist goes right to the real cause and puts an arresting hand upon the disease. It is in such a way that Dr. R. V. Pierce, chief consulting physician to the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., succeeds in hunting out and arresting diseases where the less experienced practitioners fail. More than thirty years of special study and experience have enabled Dr. Pierce to read symptoms as easily and as truly as the Indian reads a trail which is without a hint for a less acute vision than his. Any sick person can consult Dr. Pierce by letter absolutely without charge. Each letter is read in private and answered in private. Its contents are held as sacredly confidential. It is answered with fatherly feeling as well as medical skill and the reply is sent sealed in a perfectly plain envelope, that there may be no third party to the correspondence. Thousands have taken the first step to health by writing to Dr. Pierce. No writer ever regretted writing. Ninety-eight in every hundred treated have been positively cured. If you are afflicted with any old obstinate ailment write to-day, you will be one day nearer health. Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

of the 26th proximo just received. Now be sure and begin with a capital. You must be careful of your capitals. If there is one thing I am almost cranky about it's my spelling and punctuation and diction. Diction, yes, I'm great on diction. Did I say proximo? You know I meant ultimo. You mustn't wait for me to tell you these little things. Now, new paragraph.

"In regard to that little affair—ur—ur—that business deal to which we spoke—of which we spoke—I would suggest that you visit the proper authorities—no, scratch that out. I would suggest that you call and confer with the authorities with whom we—I mean I—have had correspondence; spell correspondence with one 'r.' I had a young man once who always insisted upon spelling it with two. Another paragraph.

"I should not be at all surprised if you found everything satisfactory in such a case, for everything is pretty sure to be satisfactory when, whom—everything is pretty sure to be satisfactory when—when. What did I say? Oh! yes, when it is satisfactory. No, cross all that last paragraph out. I don't believe in writing a long letter when a short one will do. I'm like a Pascal in that. Believe it's harder to write a short one than a long one. That'll do. Yours, respectfully—no, truly, yours, that'll do."

Then the business man changed his mind about the value of the new invention.

This may be all an invention and merely told as a joke, but it is suggestive of very many peculiar considerations. Every day we read in the press reports of speeches delivered at banquets, at political meetings, at concerts, and under various circumstances. These speeches are admirable in print. But if the reporter, in any one case, were to take down the exact words of the speaker, with all the hitches, hesitations, repetitions, and peculiarities, of phraseology, and to give the same in the columns of the press, what would be the result? How many of the gentlemen, who are reported to have delivered "able," or "eloquent," or "appropriate," or "splendid" addresses would feel flattered? It would be amusing to subject every speaker—let us say during one week—to this test. We are afraid that many a learned doctor, or brilliant graduate, would feel the necessity of revising the proofs before his words would be made public.

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The Ave Maria says it may be a long time before there is a daily newspaper in the English language devoted to Catholic interests. But let us not lose sight of the need of such an organ, especially in our own country. There is nothing like agitating a thing, and sooner or later some man of brains and of means will take up the idea and carry it into execution. Possibly before the end of the next century it will be generally understood that the honor and glory of God may be promoted in many other ways besides erecting magnificent churches; and that since the printing press is a gigantic power for the spread of error and crime, it may as well be made a gigantic power for truth and justice and righteousness.

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