

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

Among the volumes not already referred to are Keble's "Christian Year," "The Ingoldsby Legends," "Irish Melodies," by Thomas Moore; "Irish Ballads and Songs," selected by Martin MacDermott, and a selection of legends and ballads, beginning with the "Nut-Brown Maide," and ending with "Jim Bludso, of the Prairie Belle." Here, of course, we have "Chevy Chase," and many other old favourites, and by way of showing the catholicity of the collection we have side by side "The Boyne Water," and "God Save Ireland." We have no need here to discuss the extremes of "Orangeism" or "Fenianism," but from the standpoint of literature we are sorry that the Protestant song makes such a poor showing:

Come let us all, with heart and voice,
Applaud our lives' defender,
Who at the Boyne his valour showed
And make his foes surrender.
To God above the praise we'll give,
Both now and ever after,
And bless the glorious memory
Of King William that crossed the Boyne water.

Contrast this doggerel with the high-pitched excitement and poetic fire of the last verse of "God Save Ireland:"

Never till the latest day
Shall the memory pass away
Of the gallant lives thus given for our land:
But on the cause must go
Amidst joy, or weal, or woe,
Till we've made our isle a nation free and grand.
"God save Ireland!" say we proudly:
"God save Ireland," say we all,
Whether on the scaffold high
Or the battle-field we die,
Oh, what matter, when for Erin dear we fall.

There may be very much that is mere froth about this passionate patriotism, but at any rate it gives a tremendous swing to the political songs. In taking leave, then, of the "Penny Poets," we may say that this article has not been written for the purpose of criticism, or we might express our doubts as to the appropriateness of appending a short essay on "Re-incarnation," to Wordsworth's delightful ode on "Intimations of Immortality," and deal with other points which, in a popular edition of this kind, are of comparatively small importance. We are glad that at present we are simply called upon to express satisfaction that so much good literature has been brought within the reach of those who cannot live by bread alone, but who by their circumstances are forced to spend so much of their strength in the daily search for bread. A man who makes himself acquainted with the body of poetic literature, which is here given for less than one dollar, may not be an educated man in any technical sense, but he must by this communion with so many great minds attain a measure of real culture.

Strathroy.

W. G. JORDAN.

The Marriage Tie and Social Evolution.

WHETHER or not it be due to the publicity which the untiring enterprise of the public press gives to all events, whether political or social, in the present time, it must be a matter of consideration for all that to-day not a day passes even in the Canadian news items, when the public are not brought face to face with abundant proof that there is largely, perhaps, as a reflex from the social customs of the neighbouring republic, appearing in Canadian society both high and low, a—let us hope temporary—lack of regard for the ethical meaning of marriage, as it has been illustrated during the past eighteen hundred years, wherever the Christian religion has exerted its most positive influences upon society, and wherever nations have in history been noted for the pre-eminence of heroic virtues. No better illustration of this truth, perhaps, can be found than a comparison of the penalties which the society of a hundred or so years ago attached to the sins of the Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne, as related in the Hawthorne pathetic tale of "The

Scarlet Letter," as compared with the calm statistical records of the New England States of the present day, when the total divorces for the six States of New England in 1892 were 7.1 per cent. of the marriages celebrated during the same year. In some counties, indeed, in old Massachusetts the rate has reached of one divorce in every twelve marriages, and the rate for the whole State of New Hampshire has in same years risen still higher. We do not pretend to suppose that the legislators of any of these States, or of others equally notorious in the matter of divorces, would attempt to defend on any moral ground this growing tendency to the loosening, we might almost say to the destruction, of the marriage ties. That the steps which have been taken to break down the barriers to divorce must have been sanctioned by public opinion and society leads us at once to the conclusion that the symbolic and sacramental character of marriage, first made clear and unequivocal by the Council of Trent, and which is still maintained especially by the Roman Catholic Church, must largely have been lost in these districts, and that marriage as a civil contract between two persons has largely taken the place of it in public opinion in those States where such divorce laws exist. In examining into the statements upon which applications for divorces are made, it is found that from year to year one fifth are on the ground of adultery, some 50 per cent. on the ground of desertion. Curiously enough, however, there are in these States at least 50 per cent. of as many marriages of divorced persons as of divorces granted in any year. It is, therefore, manifest that on the part of one or both of the sexes, the moral qualities supposed so long to be inherent in, and a strong power towards the maintenance of sexual purity, are either temporarily being lost sight of, or that this somewhat old-fashioned doctrine of the sanctity of the marriage relation is being replaced by some other as the result of social evolution.

It seems to us, however, that modern society, even our own, requires to go through the unpleasant process of self-examination, and determine whether in view of certain very well-determined facts, historical and physical, it is not travelling in a direction which, in practice, has ever resulted in moral decadence and physical degeneration. Perhaps, too, it is most important that woman should enquire most particularly into the effects which the making of marriage a matter of mere convenience, or of a temporary state during which she is to be merely petted and caressed, will have upon the position which only after thousands of years she has succeeded in attaining to, and that she makes sure that in insisting on "woman's rights," she is not most surely producing "woman's wrongs."

The history of savage races, whether of ancient or modern times, has always presented woman as "woman a movable thing, a ware, an object of bargain and sale, a thing to satisfy lust and to work." Such she is to-day amongst the Polynesian native races, such she was amongst many of the native American tribes. Later she became a person, lower much than the male socially, and yet having the idea developed of the right of disposal of herself and her affections. Then she became the object of man's wooing, and so ethical qualities and distinctions became developed, and gradually the woman became conscious not only of her personal charms but that she had a right to bestow them on him whom she loved, and on him alone. Thus came to be evolved those two qualities which good society has ever looked upon as constituting the glory of woman—*chastity* and *faithfulness*; these implying all of that patience, suffering and personal self-sacrifice which are necessarily involved in true marriage.

Reverting to the purely physical aspect of the personal purity which is involved in what we may call the *old-fashioned* ideas of the marriage contract, it has often been asked: why should society demand of woman under all and every condition and circumstance a purity which is not so absolutely insisted upon in man? Or should man be punished as severely and as sternly for his unchastity as woman? The answer is that they cannot, in the very nature of things, be bound up in the same degree and under the same law. By loosening the strict social limitations by which woman is bound up, thereby giving her the same license as man, will not lift him up; but it will drag her down. The moral offence in the man may be by far the greater, as where inexperience and misplaced confidence have led a woman astray; but the essential and permanent distinction is that physically the