

# An Hour with the Editor

## ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS

James II. had two objects in view when he came to the throne. One was to make himself an absolute sovereign; the other to establish Roman Catholicism as the religion of the nation. Probably to do him justice, he looked upon the former more as a means to bringing about the latter than as something desirable in itself; and it is very probable that if he had been content with the former he might have attained it. That absolutism could ever be permanent in England was impossible; but there is no doubt that Charles II. left the kingdom in such a mood that it would have welcomed almost any form of government that promised stability. Shaftesbury had fled from the country, and with him had gone the hopes of the Country Party. Oxford was proclaiming the doctrine that passive resistance even to the worst rulers was an obligation of the Christian religion. The High Church party throughout the kingdom upheld the same doctrine, and the influence of the court of France was making itself felt upon the social leaders of England. When Charles died, his successor was greeted with a display of loyalty such as none of his predecessors had enjoyed. He had the nation at his feet. Yet in three years he was a fugitive; Protestantism was declared by Act of Parliament to be the religion of the state; Roman Catholics were deprived of almost every privilege of citizenship, and absolutism had given place to constitutional monarchy.

James first weakened his popularity by permitting the merciless cruelty of Jeffries after the suppression of the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion. Even his staunchest supporters counselled him against these outrages upon justice. His cruelty seemed implacable, and there was a spirit abroad in the land that would not tolerate it. "Do you not know that it is in my power to show mercy?" he asked one of the victims of his wrath. "It may be in your Majesty's power," was the brave reply, "but it is not in your heart." He alarmed even his adherents by increasing his forces. Charles had called 10,000 men together as his personal guard, thereby laying the foundation of the standing army of England, and James increased it to 20,000, drawing many zealous Roman Catholics from Ireland to fill the ranks. He also in defiance of plain statutory enactments issued commissions to Roman Catholics. He hesitated about calling a Parliament, and when he found he could no longer delay, he laid his plans to secure a body that would serve his purposes. For this purpose he cancelled the charters of all the boroughs and re-organized them with Roman Catholics in important offices. He dismissed the Lord Lieutenants of the counties and the sheriffs, and placed men favorable to his designs in their place. Yet the Parliament chosen would not do his bidding. All wise observers saw that he was pursuing a course that led to ruin. The Pope endeavored to dissuade him from what he realized meant inevitable defeat; but James preferred to listen to the King of France, whose ambition was to become dominant in Europe, and who counted upon the assistance of England to enable him to carry out his designs. He paid money freely to James, who was foolish enough to fancy that he could wear down the determination of the English people. Parliament refused to repeal the Test and Corporations Act, and James sought to override it by his Decree of Indulgence. By this freedom of worship was extended alike to Roman Catholics and Nonconformists, the latter having been deprived of it during the previous reign. He hoped in this way to win to his side. The decree was absolutely illegal, and the judges so held, but James dismissed the judges and appointed others, who held it to be legal. He ordered the decree to be read in all the churches, but most of the bishops refused to obey. He caused them to be prosecuted, but though the sheriffs packed the juries, so intense was the feeling of the people that the bishops were acquitted. A wiser man than James would have seen from this that the people were determined not to submit to his absolute rule, but he only became more determined than ever to enforce his will upon the kingdom.

For relief the popular leaders turned to William of Orange. William was grandson of Charles I.; his wife was daughter of James II. She was therefore heir to the throne, if James died childless. But, to the surprise of the nation, it was announced that Anne of Modena, the wife of James, was about to be delivered of a child, and later it was proclaimed that a son had been born to her. Doubt was at once thrown upon the truth of the claim, and when the fact of the birth was shown to be indisputable, a question was raised as to the child's legitimacy. William saw that the chance of his wife's succession was growing doubtful, and the people of England became aroused over the prospect of a successor to the King, who would be brought up a Roman Catholic. But more influential than these considerations in the mind of William was the idea that by securing the crown of England he could strengthen his position on the Continent and form a Protestant alliance that would be able to counteract the plans of the French King. As soon as James heard that William intended to land in England, he begged of Louis to prevent it, but that monarch, while at first he showed a disposition to comply with the request, was deterred from invading the Low Countries by the fear of leaving his eastern borders undefended. William was thus left free to act, and he acted with promptness and decision. He landed on the west of England, and although at first he was received without enthusiasm, the people soon flocked to his standard. James advanced against him with his troops, but the latter proved faithless, and he thus found himself practically deserted by

every person to whom he could look for support. As in the case of the Armada, the Roman Catholics of England refused to assist a co-religionist, in the person of Philip of Spain, because his success meant the domination of a foreign potentate in England; so now they refused to support James, because by so doing they would virtually place the kingdom in the hands of the King of France. Once more the indomitable love of freedom triumphed over every other sentiment. James fled. He was arrested and brought to London on his first attempt, but the way was made easy for him when next he attempted to seek refuge in France, and he made his escape.

The character of James can be estimated from a remark made by Charles. James told the latter that there was a plot on foot to kill him. To this Charles replied: "They'll never kill me, James, to make you king." James had all his brother's vices without any of his amiable qualities, or his natural shrewdness. He was superstitious, and a religious bigot without being a religious man. Reference has already been made to his cruelty, and to this quality he added cowardice. With all his faults, Charles knew how to attract men to him; James repelled them. He was headstrong and impatient of counsel. The evil he did lived after him, for he provoked retaliation upon his co-religionists, which was exceedingly unjust and absolutely unnecessary for the safety of the state.

## NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

During comparatively recent years, much has been brought to light concerning the early history of Ireland, and there seem to be grounds for believing that it was the seat of civilization antedating all others now in existence, except perhaps, that of the Chinese. Many years before the Christian Era, a population inhabited Ireland, acquainted with the working of metals, the making of fine tissues and possessed of a copious literature, and animated by a love of music. Relics of an age, apparently contemporary with the Stone Age in Europe, have been found in Ireland showing great perfection of workmanship, and suggesting that they were old when Greece and Rome emerged from barbarism.

It is commonly said that the Irish are of Celtic origin. As we have already shown, this does not mean very much that can be stated definitely. Whether the people called Celts originally formed one great nation, extending from the Caucasus Mountains to the western shores of Ireland, or were simply a race that moved across Europe by slow stages, finding rest at last on the soil of Ireland, is something about which no one can do more than form an opinion. Rev. A. J. Thebaud, in his history of Ireland, seems to incline to the belief that they did the latter, but his deductions from his stated facts do not seem quite in harmony with them. The civilization of Ireland seems more ancient than the Celtic eruption, which inflicted so many grievous blows upon Greece and Rome. Mr. Thebaud himself admits that there are many theories as to the origin of the early Irish, and they as well as the facts upon which he relies are inconsistent with a Celtic migration within historic times.

It may be objected that the people call themselves Celts; but that proves nothing. The name was a general one applied by the Greeks to the race that occupied the region now included in Austria and Germany, just as the term Scythian was applied to the various races inhabiting what is now Russia. Mr. Thebaud is careful to mention that these people, whom we call Celts, had no common name among themselves. We have a parallel case in America, where Europe united in mis-calling all the people of the continent Indians, and the name has been preserved to this day, although we know that the various tribes are in many cases quite distinct from each other.

But, from whatever source the original population may have come, there is no doubt that it remains almost pure in blood in many parts of Ireland, as well as almost everywhere throughout the world. The Phœnicians and Carthaginians traded with Ireland long before the Christian Era. Whether or not they founded colonies there is uncertain, but if they did, the descendants of the colonists were speedily assimilated by the old population. The Romans never reached Ireland. Hence the people remained free from any admixture of Roman blood. The invasions of the Norsemen were repulsed; hence none of that blood, which had more or less influence upon the determination of the characteristics of the peoples of the western sea-coast of Europe, mingled with that of the Irish. The Saxons and Angles did not attempt an entrance into Ireland. The English invasion scarcely affected the ancient inhabitants racially. Doubtless there were many cases where Englishmen married Irish girls, but there was little admixture of the Irish peasantry with English blood. Therefore, we seem to reach the conclusion that of all the races of Europe, the Irish have preserved their individuality the most free from foreign elements, with the exception of the Basques, and the latter are numerically small. There is many a man, in the west of Ireland especially, who, if his lineage could be traced, would be found to be descended in absolute purity of blood, from ancestors who lived in Ireland long before the Phœnicians found their way to the island. The Irish seem to be at once the oldest and purest of European races. The consequence is that the racial type is strong and remarkably uniform and persistent. The pure-blooded Irishman at home is a strict survival of the aboriginal people of the land. He is as a

descendant of the Aztecs would be twenty centuries from now, if ancestors from the days before Cortez had kept themselves from intermarriage with any other than Aztec people. It is little cause for wonder, therefore, that the influence of Irish blood is so potent wherever it is found.

There is much in the racial history of the Irish people that is difficult to explain. It is hard to account for the difference between the extreme representatives of the race. Between the ancient people, who were skilled in arts, and who delighted in music and literature, to the most semi-savage, perhaps in some cases wholly savage tribes that were found in the country at the time of the English invasion, the gulf is so wide as to seem unbridgeable; but, as we have seen, this is also true of the early inhabitants of Britain. Some allowance must of course be made for the prejudiced accounts given by enemies. The Romans called all outside people barbarians, a term which, indeed, meant then little more than "other people," but they also drew sharp contrasts between these barbarians and themselves. What they did not know about them, and that was almost everything worth knowing, they filled in from their imagination. So, too, the English invaders of Ireland. We may be quite sure that the story of the Irish peasantry lost nothing in the telling from the standpoint of the weird and gruesome. Later religious hatred added its flavor to all accounts, and the terrible stress brought about by religious persecution, the enmity engendered by ruthless conquest, both tended to force the Irish peasants into a deplorable condition, and colored all accounts of their condition and character. Antiquarians are helping us to a better understanding of the Irish people, but there is very much to learn, and unfortunately, much of it can never be learned.

We know, in addition to what has been said above, that they were a race that always loved liberty and enjoyed a form of government that was based originally upon the family relation. The clan appears, indeed, to have been a distinctly Celtic institution, and to have been a survival of the old patriarchal system. These clans were independent of each other. Caesar called them "civitates," which means republics. The loyalty of the members of the various clans to each other and to their chief was, and for that matter now is remarkable. They were of undaunted courage, a trait preserved in a large degree to the present day. The clans were accustomed to unite against a common enemy, but between themselves bitter enmity often prevailed. Even this has survived for unnumbered centuries. The clan spirit successfully resisted the introduction of feudalism, and many of the English families who came to the island in the reign of the Norman and Angevin kings fell in with the natives system, and adopted new names. Thus, the Burkes became McWilliams; the Dixons, McJordans; the Geraldines, McMorises; the McGibbons, the McHubbards, McDavids, McVories and others that might be named are of English origin. Their ancestors came with feudal grants from English kings, but being unable to hold them, adopted the Irish system, intermarried with Irish women and became to all intents and purposes Irish. The love of freedom above mentioned made the Irish so restless under English rule, that as late as the reign of James I. it was proposed to exterminate the whole race; but the difficulties in the way were too great. Henry VIII. asked for a report on the possibility of such an enterprise; but he was told that it would be impossible, for said the state paper prepared on the subject: "To enterprise the whole extirpation and destruction of all the Irishman of the land, it would be a marvellous and sumptuous charge and great difficulty, considering both the lack of inhabitants (by this new colonists is meant), and the great hardness and misery these Irishmen can endure, both of hunger, cold and thirst, and evil lodging, more than the inhabitants of any other land."

To take leave of this interesting subject for the present it may be added that only those who know the history of the Irish people can hope to understand the nature of the Irish problem, which confronts and confounds the wisdom of British statesmanship.

## STUDYING HISTORY

What is the use of studying history? a correspondent once asked The Colonist. He added that he did not suggest it was of no use, but he said he would like to know what The Colonist had to say on that point. To speak frankly, there is not very much use in studying history as it is usually taught. It can make no material difference in the success or happiness of a man living in the Twentieth Century whether or not he knows who was who in the Tenth, or any of the details of the life in the French court in the days of le Grand Monarque, that is, if his knowledge stops at a mere acquaintance with the facts. Possibly he would be better off if he knew nothing about such things. The value of such details is, to use the language of "The Mikado," that they give "verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." In other words, to learn the lessons of history you must be come to a certain extent familiar with the details of history, for the two are inseparably connected. It will hardly be denied that the lessons of history are worth learning, seeing that we of today live in a social and political fabric built up out of the experiences of the past. No prudent navigator would undertake to sail along any coast without a chart, if he

could get one. A chart is history shown upon a map. There are innumerable things about the sea and the shore that a chart does not tell. It only shows what some one has done. Some one sailed in such and such a place and found plenty of water; he sailed in some other place and found rocks and shoals. He marked this down upon a map, and the result is a chart, by studying which mariners are able to guide their ships in safety. History, properly regarded, is a chart. That is one of the reasons why its study is useful.

A great deal of thinking is going on nowadays. We do not know that it is any more profound than the thoughts indulged in by leaders of men in the past, but it seems to be more general. In every civilized country there is a seething mass of discontent, or perhaps it would be better to say restlessness. Everywhere men, and to some extent women, are endeavoring to discover a solution of difficult problems. There are problems of government, problems of society, problems of the relations of individuals to each other. Education has become well nigh universal and the masses are asking questions which not very long ago were only thought of by a few people. When these problems were considered only by a few scholars, it did not matter much whether or not the great majority of the community knew anything about the history of their country. It was sufficient to keep alive a few stories or deeds of valor or acts of shame, whereupon the popular imagination could be aroused from time to time, but men who had no voice in determining the affairs of the state, or if they had it, only exercised it as they were told by some superior they ought to, did not need to be informed as to how the constantly recurring problems of the state and society had been dealt with in the past, what courses had led to failure and what had led to success. But we have witnessed a great change. The laborer with his pick and shovel has a right to lay down his views on the state of the world, as to how the state should be ruled. You may find him, sometimes, sitting in his home endeavoring to get some light upon problems which vexed the minds of the great leaders of thought centuries upon centuries ago. We saw in a recent article on this page how in the reign of Charles II. one or two leading thinkers advanced ideas that were then regarded as new concerning the relations of the king to the people. Locke, the leader of the new school, claimed that his teaching in relation to the implied contract between the king and the people was founded upon the history of the English people. The freedom which we enjoy today is due to the fact that this theory found acceptance with the majority. It was vigorously combated. The theory that the people had no rights except as the sovereign chose to grant them found many staunch adherents; but in the end the lesson drawn from history triumphed, and the English Revolution was accomplished without the shedding of blood. In France the minds of the people were inflamed with raw theories, theories right enough in the abstract, but infinitely dangerous when not regarded in the light of historical precedents, and the consequence was that the French Revolution was the acme of horror. Thousands upon thousands of men are today endeavoring to solve problems of government and sociology in the light of theory alone. That way danger lies. Theory should be applied in the light cast by experience, and the only source of experience in such matters is derived from history. The student of English history will not fail to notice that all claims made on behalf of the people were based upon the ancient customs of the realm. English revolutions have been recurrences to past conditions. It may not be easy to specify when these conditions existed. Perhaps, in point of fact, they never existed since the ancient days, when the family relation was the actual basis, as it is now the theoretical basis of government; but the theory of equality within the family survived feudalism, kingship and every other influence that tended to the undue restraint of individual liberty, and it was towards this that the people turned when they demanded the Great Charter, when they put forward the Petition of Right, when they sentenced their king for treason, when they enacted the Bill of Rights. Always there has existed among Englishmen this doctrine of liberty and equality, and so British freedom has been built upon a foundation that is historical. Occasionally we hear some one say that the country needs revolution in the French sense of the term. History tells us that no such revolution is necessary. It shows clearly the path to national safety.

## Some Famous Dramatists and Their Master-Pieces

(N. de Bertrand Lugin)

### Julius Slowacki

The three great Polish poets, Mickiewicz, Krasinski and Slowacki, sang the swan-song of their ill-fated country, for there have been no great Polish writers since their time, and no incentive to create them. Poland is only a nation of glorious memory and pitiful end; yet upon the pages of her history are inscribed the names of some of the bravest men who ever lived, and are recorded besides the most stirring ever fought, and victories among the greatest ever won.

Slowacki, as distinct from his two compatriots, was a dramatist as well as a poet, but, like them, he sang in an impassioned strain of the land he loved. Like them, too, he was an exile for his patriotism, and composed his works in

an alien country. Through all his writings one can trace the endeavor to inspire his countrymen with a deathless allegiance, though his hopelessness that his beloved land could ever be restored to her lost place among the nations is manifest in every verse.

He was a man of the people, possessing that untamable spirit which can brook no restraint. He fought with all his moral and intellectual strength for the freedom of those whose mouth-piece he was, and he hated with an almost unreasoning hatred the rulers of his country, who stood for slavery and despotism. Hence only to be in possession of his books constituted a penal offence, and Slowacki lived a wanderer until his death.

He was born in 1809, and was educated at the University of Vilna, where his father was one of the professors. From his earliest years he evinced a decided poetical bent, and though at first upon leaving the university he entered the service of the Government, after two years he gave up the position and devoted his time entirely to writing. His first works show the influence of Byron, whom he greatly admired. They are "Hugo," "The Monk" and "The Arab." They abound in beauty of imagery, warmth of sentiment and voluptuous description of scene; but their loveliness is overshadowed by the spirit of hopelessness which is always in evidence in the poet's works, though more particularly in his early ones. Of his first dramas, "Mary Stuart" is undoubtedly the best. It is a particularly powerful play, abounding in strong situations and impassioned and beautiful poetry.

In all of his works Slowacki is the patriot first. Love of country is the dominant theme in his plays. Those of us who know a little of Poland's history can sympathize with the fervor of a man who lived to try, however hopelessly, to ameliorate that country's wrongs. His poems must appeal to all those whose loyalty is dear to them. One of his best productions is the powerful drama, "In Honor of Our Ancestors." Two others of equal merit are "Mazepa" and "Balladyna." In the latter and in "Lilla Weneda" the poet revives some of the old traditions of his country.

Slowacki surpassed all his contemporaries in the magnificent flights of his imagination, and in the glowing richness of his language and imagery. His dramas are among the chief ornaments of Polish literature, and his beautiful letters to his mother should be mentioned as gems of epistolary style. He ranks among the great poets of the Nineteenth Century. He died in 1859.

The following extract from the beautiful poem, "I Am So Sad, O God," will give an idea of the deep feeling portrayed in the writer's patriotic verse:

I am so sad, O God. Thou hast before me  
Spread a bright rainbow in the western  
skies,  
But Thou hast quenched in darkness cold and  
stormy

The brighter stars that rise.  
Clear grows the heaven 'neath Thy transform-  
ing rod;  
Still I am sad, O God.

Like empty ears of grain, with heads erected,  
Have I delighted stood amid the crowd;  
My face the while to stranger eyes reflected  
The calm of summer's cloud;  
But Thou dost know the ways that I have  
trod,  
And why I grieve, O God.

Today o'er the wide waste of ocean sweeping,  
Hundreds of miles away from shore or rock,  
I saw the cranes fly on, together keeping  
In one unbroken flock;  
Their feet with soil from Poland's hills were  
shod,  
And I was sad, O God.

Often by strangers' tombs I've lingered weary,  
Since grown a stranger to my native ways;  
I walk a pilgrim through a desert dreary,  
Lit but by lightning's blaze,  
Knowing not where shall fall the burial clod  
Upon my bier, O God.

Some time hereafter will my bones lie whit-  
ened,  
Somewhere on stranger's soil, I know not  
where.  
I envy those whose dying hours are lightened,  
Fanned by their native air;  
But flowers of some strange land will spring  
and nod  
Above my grave, O God.

When but a guileless child at home they bade  
me  
To pray each day for home restored, I found  
My bark was steering—how the thought dis-  
mayed me!

The whole wide world around.  
Those prayers unanswered, wearily I plod  
Through rugged ways, O God.

Upon the rainbow whose resplendent raster  
Thy angels rear above us in the sky,  
Others will look a hundred years hereafter,  
And pass away as I;  
Exiled and hopeless 'neath Thy chastening rod,  
And sad as I, O God.

## IT PROVED FATAL

Little Ethel came running into the house one day with a very sad face.

"Mamma," she cried, "my dolly has been dreadful sick and died and gone down to God."

"What was the matter with your dolly?" her mother asked.

"It had the doctor dreadfully," Ethel replied.—National Magazine.