
The Irishman

really attempted to set out all the sensible stages of his joke, the sentence would have run something like this: "That I am an Irishman is a fact of psychology which I can trace in many of the things that come out of me, my fastidiousness, my frigid fierceness and my distrust of mere pleasure. But the thing must be tested by what comes from me; do not try on me the dodge of asking where I came from, how many batches of three hundred and sixty-five days my family was in Ireland. Do not play any games on me about whether I am a Celt, a word that is dim to the anthropologist and utterly unmeaning to anybody else. Do not start any drivelling discussions about whether the word Shaw is German or Scandinavian or Iberian or Basque. You know you are human; I know I am Irish. I know I belong to a certain type and temper of society; and I know that all sorts of people of all sorts of blood live in that society and by that society; and are therefore Irish. You can take your books of anthropology to hell or to Oxford." Thus gently, elaborately and at length, Mr. Shaw would have explained his meaning, if he had thought it worth his while. As he did not he merely