

EDMUND BURKE'S ORATORY.

NATIONS, as individuals, have their rare exquisite moments of triumph when they drink their nectar cup of joyous victory; yet the honey of the draught is too often soured by the bitter, vinegar tear-drops of sorrow and oppression. Globe-trotting journalists and grave historians unite in declaring the ever-green Emerald Isle, the Niobe of nations. Isolated, she stands, weeping, bewailing the sons that were born unto her and have emblazoned their deeds of arm and intellect not upon Ireland's national tablets but upon the immortal scrolls of foreign countries. The success of the Irish abroad has become paradoxical. England has learned this lesson from the text book of experience, both to her sorrow and to her joy. In many a hard-fought Fontenoy, Irish valor has infused new life into the French lily, faded and drooping before the hot onslaught of the English; Irish eloquence fanned into an unquenchable blaze, the fire of American Independence, as it lay smouldering in the well-nigh cold ashes of a rigorous winter at Valley Forge; Irish bravery, intellect and intrepidity, personified in the Iron Duke, sent a thrill of triumph through the despairing heart of exhausted England, when they overcame the scourge of Europe.

It is not a part of our programme to treat of the military achievements of the ubiquitous Gael:

"For exiled Celts again have raised
New Irelands round the world."

Our orator confines us to the unrivalled oratorical powers of the Irish. The eloquent sons of Erin have proved to a nicety, if proof were necessary, that the living word is mightier than the sword.

The English Parliament, the grandest,

noblest theatre of public speaking in the modern world, without its soul-inspiring O'Connell's, Sexton's, Burke's would resemble *Hamlet* without Banquo's Ghost. The reader might be tempted to conclude, that this is the wild raving of a hot-headed Irishman under the potent influence of a recent St. Patrick's celebration; to offset such a calumny we summon England's Grand Old Man, Hon. W. E. Gladstone to bear witness: "that of all orators the Irish are the best. The Irish are a nation of born orators." One of the ingredients of the Irish character is the most essential requisite of a great orator—a fiery spirit. An English priest once remarked: "the Irish people do not require to take spirits, as they are full of spirit." Another requisite of a public speaker is a well-balanced intellect; some seem to think that the Irishman's ready wit indicates a head after the fashion of a rattle. A celebrated English writer has answered such a rash charge in the following words: "The man who thinks the Irishman deficient in mental quality because of the effervescing of his natural wit, need not look abroad for a fool."

This is not the first time, that the wise, old *Owl* has contributed its modest stone to the grand mausoleum, that should be erected to the memory of the great Irishman, orator and statesman, Edmund Burke, at the centenary celebration of his death next July.

It may be said of Burke, as of Bayard, that he was a man, *sans peur et sans reproche*. It seems to be "carrying coals to Newcastle" to state that Burke's private character was pure and untainted; unless a man has lifted his heart out of Nature's common rut, he need never aspire to the priceless privilege of speaking