

An Hour with the Editor

IRISH HISTORY

It is interesting to note that the Crusades were never preached in Ireland. Speaking of the widespread character of this movement, William of Malmesbury writes: "The Welshman left his hunting, the Scotchman his association with vermin, the Dane his drinking bouts and the Norseman his raw fish" to take part in these great adventures. It is estimated by some writers, though in all probability they have exaggerated the facts, that in 1096 fully six millions of people were on the way to Palestine to take part in the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Infidels, and so far as is known not one of this vast army was drawn from Ireland. It is by no means unlikely that some Irish adventurers united themselves with the forces raised by the barons of other countries, and notably those of England, Scotland and France, but there does not seem to be any record of this, and the supposition rests solely upon the fact that the Irish were ever a warlike race and some of them would be likely to volunteer to fight in Palestine, as we know they did in the wars of France. Why Ireland was exempted in all the appeals addressed by the several popes to the children of the Church can only be surmised. No part of Europe was more loyal to Rome; no people were more strictly observant of the doctrines of the Church. One explanation can be suggested, namely, that the hidden purpose of the Crusades was to overthrow feudalism, that they were really political and not religious movements, the fanaticism of the people being appealed to for political purposes. The feudal barons were growing too powerful for either the spiritual or temporal rulers of Europe to contemplate their further aggrandizement with equanimity, and as we know the effect of the Crusades was, among other things, to break up the feudal system, and that the alleged object of them, the rescue of Jerusalem from the Saracens, was not accomplished, we perhaps do no violence to the probabilities if we suppose the result reached was the result aimed at. In Ireland the feudal system had at this time obtained no foothold, and hence there was nothing to be accomplished by preaching the Crusades there. It is true that afterwards, and before these remarkable expeditions were concluded, feudalism was set up to some extent in Ireland, but it never obtained anything like a general foothold in the country. The non-participation of the Irish in these wars prevented the island from being subject to the influences which those returning from them exercised over the rest of Europe.

The efforts of the English kings to Anglicize Ireland met with a failure that was almost complete. Henry II. divided the island between ten of his barons, but they never had more than a nominal title to any land that they did not occupy by force of arms, and in most cases this was confined to a small area around their castles. The clan system continued to flourish, and as we saw in the last article, the Brehon Law was administered side by side with the laws of England. Inter-marriages between Englishmen and Irish women became numerous, and by degrees the families resulting from these unions adopted the ideas of their mothers' race in preference to those of their fathers'. To such an extent did this "degeneration," as it was called, of the English go, that a parliament was summoned to meet at Kilkenny for the purpose of passing laws to prevent such Englishmen from enjoying any of the rights of their fellow-countrymen and forbidding trade or other intercourse between the English and Irish. War was constant on the borders of the Pale, the boundaries of which were hardly the same for more than a few years at a time. After the Battle of Bannockburn, Edward Bruce went to Ireland, taking with him 6,000 men. It is thought that he was invited to do so by a number of the chiefs, although some authorities claim that he went there as a spirit of pure adventure. For a time he was very successful, but he achieved nothing permanent. The strife between the English and Irish and between the Irish themselves continued without intermission generation after generation, until the wars of the Roses, when from very necessity there was respite, so far as the English were concerned, for the English barons were too busy contending with each other to be able to spare time or attention to the affairs of the Western Isle.

Left thus to themselves, the attention of the Irish chiefs was turned to some degree to the restoration of the former civilization of the country, and we read that one of the kings, at the suggestion of his wife, called together a great gathering of all the learned men. The proceedings began with a great feast provided in one of the abbey. The Queen sat on a dais and sumptuously and received her guests, while the King on horseback sat before the door and welcomed the learned men as they approached. But, unfortunately for Ireland, and unfortunately also for England, the enmity between the clans seemed incapable of being removed, and when the Tudors came to the throne of England they found Ireland distracted by internal disorders, and there was abundant excuse, if not justification, for a resumption of the policy of oppression. In fairness to both parties to the quarrel, which has not yet reached a satisfactory conclusion, it may be well to state the causes of the original disagreement, which did not result from the attempted conquest of the country alone, for history furnishes many proofs that the ill-feeling resulting from conquest may readily be ascribed.

The differences between the Irish and the English were racial in their origin; they were augmented by the antagonism between the systems under which the two peoples were organized, and they were, in the time of Henry VIII, embittered by religious discord. Prejudices of race, prejudices arising from customs and prejudices arising from religion made a trinity of evils out of which the most difficult problems were certain to arise.

The Irish were, and for the matter of that are today, one of the proudest peoples in all the world. No matter how poor might be their condition or how barbarous their habits, they have always been inspired by a pride of race which made them tenacious of their freedom, difficult to deal with, and unwilling to recognize any foreign rulers. Their chiefs were regarded as superior in rank, it is true, but there was no hard and fast line of demarcation between the nobility and the common people, and they all alike found a common interest in the common ownership of the land. They looked upon the English, or rather, to speak more accurately, upon the Anglo-Normans, as their natural enemies. For centuries they had fought with the Danes and Norsemen, and they saw no difference between an invasion from England and one from Scandinavia.

England in the reign of Henry II. was strongly feudal, and between that system and the clan system there was nothing in common. The Irish did not so much resent the claim of Henry to be king of the island as they did his effort to interfere with land tenure. Of course the personal character and ambitions of chiefs on the one side and the barons on the other played an exceedingly important part in the promotion of strife. Customs have changed so greatly in the past eight centuries that we can hardly judge of the events of the Middle Ages in Ireland from the standpoint of modern ideas. Naturally Irish historians seek to excuse the wild excesses practiced by Irishmen, and English historians seek to justify the rapacity of their own countrymen. Undoubtedly both races were greatly at fault; but the fact remains, after allowance has been made for everything, that the differences between the Irish and English people were fundamental in the beginning. It is apparent that, if wise counsels had prevailed, the two countries might have been bound together in ties that would never have been strained, and that Ireland might have developed in peace under English rule to resume the place in the work of education and civilization, which she occupied about the beginning of the Christian Era, but errors on both sides rendered this impossible, and the policy of Henry VIII. completed the breach between the two countries, which has not yet been fully bridged over. This policy will be considered in the next article.

LEADERS OF HUMANITY

In the Fourth and Fifth Centuries before Christ, Greece produced a group of philosophers, whose thoughts have influenced those of succeeding generations even to the present day. Of these, in order of antiquity, may be mentioned Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Their lives overlapped each other. Socrates was a student, though perhaps not a pupil, of Pythagoras, who was born about 510 B. C.; Plato was a pupil of Socrates, and Aristotle, who died in 322 B. C., was a pupil of Plato. Other conspicuous names belong to this period, but those mentioned are the most illustrious. Speaking in general terms, it may be said that these men relied upon pure reason for the demonstration of their philosophical tenets. It is claimed of Pythagoras that he was the first person to claim the title of philosopher, his predecessors in the domain of thought calling themselves sophists, or wise men, Pythagoras preferring to be known simply as a lover of wisdom. While of necessity we have to surmise much as to the intellectual and moral condition of Greece twenty-five centuries ago, we may conclude with some degree of certainty that the Sophists were teachers, who kept alive old traditions and discouraged independent investigation. We use the word "sophistry" now to signify false reasoning, and in this we unconsciously accept the stigma which Socrates played upon the Sophists; for recent investigators suggest that Socrates was not uninfluenced by personal prejudice. Be this as it may, there seems to be good ground for the belief that Pythagoras gave the thought of Greece a new direction. The countries around the Mediterranean seem to have been emerging from a period of intellectual and moral darkness about the time of his birth. During the past few years extensive explorations have been made in Crete and other places in that part of the world, and they show beyond all doubt that some centuries previous to the dawn of what we commonly call Grecian civilization, very great progress had been accomplished, only to be overthrown by some catastrophe or series of catastrophes. What seem to be the real facts, upon which Grecian mythology was based, are being brought to light, and the conclusion seems warranted that the grotesque stories of gods and demi-gods are only distorted recollections of actual people. In previous articles on this page reference has been made to other evidence of the existence of a civilization in Levantine countries about seven thousand years ago. On this point it is yet too soon to draw definite conclusions, but there are sufficient historical facts to warrant the statement that in Pythagoras we have one of the first, if not the first, of the Greeks, who sought to shake the fellow-countrymen free from the shackles of superstition and tradition, and to teach them to think independently. The ethical system which he taught was very lofty. He laid stress upon self-restraint, sincerity, purity of heart, conscientiousness and upright living, and one of his purely philosophical conceptions was that virtue, meaning thereby the combination of all the good qualities of our nature, was nothing more nor less than harmony with the Divine Spirit, which he taught pervaded the Universe.

Pythagoras was for his day a very extensive traveler. If we may credit what is said of him, that he visited and studied with not only the learned men of Egypt, Arabia, Palestine and nearby countries, but went as far afield in search of knowledge as Gaul, where he examined the teachings of the Druids, and India, where he was initiated into the mysteries of Brahmanism. He seems to have been a connecting link between the philosophy of the more ancient world and that of Greece, from which we derive many of our dominant ideas. It is this that seems to entitle him to a place among the leaders of humanity, for though he cannot be said to have founded the school of philosophy, which was revived in Europe after the Crusades and very materially modified Christianity, he undoubtedly paved the way for the great thinkers who came after him. Of specific work attributed to him, the most conspicuous were his achievements in arithmetic and geometry. Indeed it is claimed that he taught that number is the essence of everything. Carried out to its logical conclusion, the science of numbers, so Pythagoras held, meant the establishment of a limited and orderly universe instead of illimitable chaos. His geometrical discoveries are in use today. While his purely philosophical teachings have been to a great extent forgotten or superseded by those of later leaders, his geometric formulae are employed in our schools. Much of what is ordinarily attributed to Euclid belongs of right to Pythagoras. To him also is to be attributed the honor of having been the first person, as far as is known, to suggest the existence of the planetary system and the motion of the Earth around the Sun, and it may be mentioned that one of the objections taken to the Copernican system of astronomy by the Church was that it was Pythagorean in its origin.

With the name of Pythagoras are associated certain "mysteries." Nothing is really known about them. They were confined to men prominent in social and governmental circles. Their chief value seems to have consisted in the fact that they formed circles for the study of philosophy. Because of these "mysteries," which was the term applied to the secret proceedings of his followers, his name became later a synonym for almost anything opposed to the established order of things. One of the tenets of the members of these "mysteries" was the transmigration of souls, and in this we see some evidence in support of the claim that Pythagoras visited India.

MIRACLES

To what extent the Christian religion rests upon miracles may be a matter of argument. There are those who hold that today what are called miracles are the best outward expression of the power which is the essence of Christianity. What do we understand by a miracle? In the New Testament the term used for such incidents is generally "mighty works." The dictionary says a miracle is literally a wonderful thing but in theology means a departure from the established order of things, or a supernatural event. In this, as in a good many other things, theology has invented a difficulty for itself to grapple with. If you read the story of the miracles as told in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, that is, read it just as you would the morning paper, taking what is told as substantially correct and not importing into the narrative anything supernatural, you will realize that to Jesus, his followers and the Apostles and their followers, what are called miracles were not departures from the established order of things, but only the result of the exercise of a power which all might possess, who would qualify themselves for its possession. This is not a Twentieth Century effort to explain any difficulties in the way of the acceptance of miracles. Jesus, himself, said: "Greater things than these will ye do, because I go unto my Father." The idea that "the age of miracles is past" has no sanction in anything that Jesus ever taught. It is simply an excuse given by persons who seek to explain their own lack of faith.

The theological conception of miracles is mediaeval. It is one that was formed at a time when enchantments and witchcraft were looked upon as very real. There was a time, as we all know, when it was easier to explain unusual things by attributing them to magic rather than to the operation of natural laws. An ecclesiastic, who claimed to be in the line of apostolic succession and yet could accomplish nothing in the way of miracles, might very naturally desire the people to believe that it was not that he was deficient in faith, but that the time for the exercise of that power had gone by. Most of our theological ideas were evolved in an age of dense ignorance and superstition and when the laws of nature were for the most part a sealed book to even the most learned of men.

There are miracles of various kinds. Before the window blooms a bed of hyacinths radiant in white, pink and blue. Their perfume makes the air around them heavy. The

blending of elements from earth, air and water into their perfection of beauty and fragrance is one of Nature's miracles. Yonder stands a tall mast with a few wires at its top. An operator at its foot touches an instrument and straightway a score of other instruments respond. Perhaps on some ship a thousand miles below the western sky-line the message that is ticked off is read, and those who read it realize to some extent how the world of men is being welded together in bonds that are invisible. This is one of the miracles of science. A singer stands before a vast assembly and as the tones come from her lips, freighted with the message of her heart, other hearts beat in unison. This is one of the miracles of the mind or whatever else it may be that enables heart to speak to heart. Why, then, may there not be miracles of faith? As the laws of Nature are not disturbed that earth, air and water may combine to make the hyacinth; as they are not altered that wireless messages may fly with the speed of light across the ocean or that the singer may stir the passions of her audience, why should they be suspended so that one in whom there dwelt the essence of the Divine might say to the leper, "I will, be thou clean?" And what right have we to assume that this power cannot be exercised today by those who through faith lay hold upon the power, from which Nature in every aspect derives her efficiency?

And so no man need find the story of the miracles an obstacle to his acceptance of the truth of Christianity. If one should ask, "Why cannot I work miracles?" the answer seems to be found in the fact that there are ten thousand things that all men cannot do because they have never fitted themselves to do them. It is not the rule in these articles to ask of any one the literal acceptance of Bible narratives. It is sufficient for the purpose aimed at to say that they should be given equal credence to that given to other ancient writings. We are told that, after his baptism by John, Jesus went up into the wilderness where he fasted 40 days, and that afterwards he began that wonderful series of "mighty works," which led the people to follow him in great multitudes. There is nothing exceptional in this course. The teaching of all the great Orientalists was and has always been that fasting and prayer are essential to the exercise of spiritual gifts. "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting," said Jesus, when speaking of the faith that can "move mountains." So until one has endeavored to qualify himself for the exercise of spiritual gifts he has no reason to doubt that others are able to exercise them simply because he cannot. Therefore, and this is as far as it is proposed to go this morning, there is nothing necessarily inconsistent with the natural course of things in what are called miracles, which properly understood are only results reached by those who exercise powers, which in the great majority of mankind are only rudimentary.

Stories of the Classics

(N. O. Barnard Logan)

Ulysses and Calypso

Homer has drawn a most beautiful picture in Ulysses and Penelope of conjugal faithfulness. In all the tales of all the Greek heroes there was never man so deeply and sorely tried and tempted as the King of Ithaca. And though while during his journeyings for many years he was forced to abide with women of indescribable loveliness and charm, who wielded all of their magic arts and sorceries to enslave him body and soul, he could not forget her whom as a tender young girl he had carried away in his chariot from her father's house, and who when Icarus sought to follow and entreat her to remain, bound to her parents by all of her daughter's devotion, loving Ulysses with all of her heart, covered her sweet face with her veil that she might not witness the grief she must perforce leave behind her unassuaged. Through all of those twenty years during which Ulysses was doomed to wander a weary traveler ever out of sight of home, it was Penelope's image that was enshrined in the holiest place in his heart.

"I know," says the hero to Calypso "that Penelope is not so far as thou in the eyes of men" but she possessed for her lord a deeper and a surer charm than mere beauty of face or limb. Thus most beautifully has Homer idealized that which should be nothing less than ideal to be perfect, that love which between man and wife makes those two a trinity with God himself.

For seven years Ulysses abode with Calypso in that wondrous isle of Ogygia, where in a magic bower the nymph's cavern was hid. "Round about the cave there was a wood blossoming, alder and poplar and sweet-smelling cypress. And therein roosted birds long of wing, owls and falcons, and chattering sea-crows, which have their business in the water. And lo, there about the hollow cave trailed a gadding garden vine, all rich with clusters. And fountains four, set orderly, ever running with clear water, hard by one another, turned each to his own course. And all around soft meadows bloomed of violets and parsley."

But amid all these charming surroundings, and accompanied by one of the fairest of the nymphs, Ulysses was far from content. Day after day he sat on the lonely shore, his anxious face always turned to the water, his eyes yearning to the dim horizon, somewhere beyond which Ithaca lay like a jewel in the sea. "And his eyes were never dry of tears, and his sweet life was ebbing away, as he mourned for his return."

So Athens that goddess whose will it was that all the ships of the returning Greeks should be scattered, and the heroes punished for desecrating the temples of Troy, and for their vain-glories boasting, knowing of Ulysses' suffering, felt a sudden remorsefulness and implored Zeus to help the luckless king.

Zeus despatched Hermes to Ogygia, in accordance with Athens' wish, bearing a message to Calypso, a command in short which she dare not disobey. And Hermes discovered the "nymph of the braided tresses" in the great cave, where upon the hearth there was a great fire burning and from afar through the isle was smelt the fragrance of elect cedar blazing, and of sandalwood. And the nymph within was singing with a sweet voice as she passed to and fro before the loom, and wove with a shuttle of gold.

When Hermes had told his message, though Calypso grieved sorely, she accompanied the god to the shore where Ulysses sat weeping and told the Greek the good tidings. The next morning "as soon as early dawn, the rosy-fingered, shone forth," she gave him tools, and directed him how to build for himself a vessel, which should be staunch and seaworthy. She wove him a web of cloth to make him sails, and when all was in readiness she brought him fair raiment and dressed him. Moreover the goddess placed on board the ship two skins, one of dark wine, and another, a great one, of water, and corn too, in a wallet, and she set therein a store of dainties to his hearts desire and sent forth a warm and gentle wind to blow, and goodly Ulysses rejoiced as he set his sails to the breeze.

But it was not destined that the traveler should reach Ithaca yet. Penelope was to wait a few years longer, listening to her suitor's importunities, and weaving and unweaving her tapestry. The "lord, the shaker of the earth," called upon all of the tempests, winds came from the east and south and the stormy west and the north, and Ulysses' bark was wrecked, and he was cast into the sea. The gay and fragrant garments which Calypso had woven for him were weighting him down to death, when he cast them off. Weary and spent he clung to the remnant of his boat, when the daughter of Cadmus, Iria of the fair ankles, rose from the depths like a white seagull, and gave him her magic veil, telling him to wrap it round him that he might be saved from further mischance.

Athena, too, called back the tempests and calmed the sea, and Ulysses though he was two days and two nights in the water, lived to reach the shores of the Phœaciads.

TOO MUCH ENTHUSIASM

Hank Dobbs was noted as an "honest" horse-trader. He would not lie about a horse. He would merely suppress the truth. Incidentally he always beat the customer who dealt with him. The way he could slur over the defects and buzz about the virtues of an animal amounted to genius.

Once Hank was trying to sell a neighbor a horse that had an eye which was nearly sightless. The neighbor knew Hank would not lie outright to him, so he questioned the horse-trader as to the various points of the brute.

"How about his sight? Can he see out of both eyes?"

"Sure," said Hank, "he's got good eyes." Here he leaned forward, his eyes fairly scintillating with suppressed honesty. One eye is particularly good."

Hank's enthusiasm for the truth had carried him too far. The deal was off.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

He was visiting a charming young society lady, and as they sat on either side of the blazing fire there entered his heart a burning desire to say something not merely complimentary, but brilliantly suggestive.

"So, after revolving the matter in his mind during a ten-minute burst of silence, he said:

"Ah, Miss Lilian, why are those fire-tongs so like—like your Frederick?"

Of course, he meant her to give it up, and then he would say: "Because they glow in your service," or "Because they are prostrate at your feet," or perhaps something even better.

But Miss Lilian did not give it up. Looking so solemnly demure that the clock almost stopped, she inquired:

"Is it because they have two thin legs and a brass head?"

Then followed another burst of silence which lasted until the tea came up.

TAKING A CHANCE

"Father," says the rapt youth, "I am engaged to marry Miss Fashunble."

"Is she pretty?" asks the father.

"I do not know. I never saw her hat off."

—Life.