

IRELAND'S SHAME.

The So-called System of "National" Education Which Deprives the Youth of the Country of All Knowledge of its History.

[Tuam, Ireland, Herald.]

The archbishop of Dublin has very properly drawn public attention to the amorphous class of books in use at all the national schools of this country. It is no exaggeration to say that no other intelligent people but one like ours, accustomed to neglect on the part of those who assume the privilege of ruling them, would put up with such literary pretenses and sawdusty shams. The books which are supposed to contribute to the education and enlightenment of the Irish youth are the product of a dishonest compromise of some thirty years ago, and as such utterly devoid of interest. Compared with the highly intellectual works in use in American and in the English schools, they are pitiable productions of partiality and prejudice and are feeble failures. If a stranger, as instruments of learning, takes them up, particularly the reading books of the several standards, he will find them chokeful of meaningless extracts and pointless excerpts, culled from discredited or unknown writers.

The subject of history is generally and properly considered by educated peoples as one of the chief subjects of popular instruction and literary entertainment. It forms the backbone of almost all the education imparted by means of reading books to the American youth, and in Germany and France the children have always put before them, as elsewhere but in Ireland, examples of patriotism and public spirit, which thus at an early age they learn to admire and strive to emulate. Even in Scotland the glorious pages of its blurred history are not forgotten in her primary schools, but the children from their earliest ages are familiarized with the victories of Bannockburn and other fields of battle where Scotch valor prevailed over English pluck. The almost marvellous careers of Bruce and Wallace are not, as are the doings of Owen Roe and other chieftains, with us closed books. On the contrary, the Scotch children learn to revere these cherished names and memories, and find the true story of their country's heroes, as told by their own historians, enshrined in their school books and thus part and parcel of their daily knowledge.

Knowing what we do of Scotch pluck and determination we are convinced that they would never put up with the emasculating process adopted in Ireland toward Irish books. Since its institution it would seem that the National Board of Education here has been an inquisition of the worst type, holding watch and ward over the works of popular instruction and expurgating therefrom every allusion to patriotism or love of country, cutting out ruthlessly every incident that reflects creditably upon Irish bravery or manliness. Judged by all the books now in the hands of the youth of this country one would think that the page of Ireland's story in the past, when she held the highest place in Europe as an educator of the people, was a complete blank. The thing is insupportable in its intolerance. But for the unwritten traditions of the Irish people, their lively interest in their own past, their innate love for old times and old memories, so far as lies with our popular instructors the up-rising generation would grow up a spiritless people, innocent of anything but the mere human wants of vulgar appetite. Their Celtic imagination, that at the fire-side of even the remotest cabin in the bleakest bog, dwells with such fervor even to-day upon the deathless doings of some pre-Christian hero, like Cucullin or some more recent but not more vividly pictured warrior, serves to keep alive and fresh a past, alas! alone to be found recorded in their own memories. These oral traditions occasionally find their way into books, but these books are not at the command of the people, or in their schools, and with the poor, unenterprising creatures that strive to do what they call publishing in Ireland they rarely ever circulate in the rural parts, and so, practically, may be considered useless for the purposes of instruction. But the medium through which these lessons of patriotism and love of country should be taught never by accident contain any allusion to these subjects.

The early ages of the Catholic church

in Ireland were comparatively with those other lands really brilliant with the brightest flame of learning and piety, and yet because the chroniclers of those times are Catholics, and because the men who drew up the programme of the National board were Protestants, and therefore thought every reference to the old faith a heresy and an abomination, the followers and professors of that virile and vigorous belief are to be denied the pleasure and consolation of hearing read by their children in their task books the glorious story of such a period of patriotic pride. Was ever anything comparable to such insolence of intolerance as this one incident of English rule affords? The Irish people are to be treated as no other intelligent people are dealt with, and this is to be carried out without protest or change. Because Irish history, if faithfully recorded and truthfully written, contains in its every page the story of English misrule and English misgovernment, because every line of that record is stained with treachery and deceit; because, in short, the truth must be told, and that truth is a disgrace to England, therefore, Irish history must not be taught in Irish schools, but from the books of her children, on the contrary, every passage excised that reflects creditably on our ancestors or discreditably on our rulers. The day for such suppression and oppression is fast nearing its end, and even if the present Home Rule movement, owing to its mismanagement and misdirection fail its end and purpose, as did all previous efforts, still an advance has been made that never can be gone back on, and sooner or later these traces and toils of servile subserviency to Saxondom will be swept away.

Soon these relics and remnants of intolerance will disappear, and our school books, like everything else in the country, will bear the impress and marks of being intended for an intelligent and self-respecting people, whose record of past patriotism, dimmed at times by meanness and treachery, is still in the main a bright page of heroic self-sacrifice and devotion, such as no other land in the like circumstances of affliction can furnish a parallel for. We, at least, are not ashamed of our history, and we hope the day is not far distant when at every school in the land it will be openly and honorably taught, and the true lessons of instruction to be gleaned from its pages imparted to its ardent students. Until then Irish popular education is incomplete, and wants its most essential feature and recommendation, and until that time there should be no compromise with truth or with the records of truth, such as at present disgraces and degrades the lesson books in all of our schools.—Reproduced in Chicago Citizen.

A STORY OF FRANKLIN.

When Franklin was in Paris, among the infidels and scoffers of the day, he was ridiculed for loving the Bible. He determined to find out how many had read the book at which they scoffed. He informed one of the learned societies, of which he was a member, that he had come across a story in pastoral life in ancient times that appeared to him very beautiful, but he would like the judgment of the society upon it. On the evening appointed Franklin had a reader of finely modulated voice read to them the book of Ruth. They were in ecstasies over it, and one after another rose to express gratification and admiration and the desire that the manuscript should be printed. "It is printed," said Franklin, "and is part of the Bible."

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