

HISTORIC IRELAND.



HERE is not a land on earth to day that possessess a chequered a history as Ireland. 'Tis but a small place, smaller than many States in the American Union, nevertheless it has made considerable noise in the world, even from the dim and dark old days further back than history itself—days whose story is told in olden legend and hoary tradition handed down from sire to son, through the dusky generations that have intervened.

The children of Ireland hold a unique place in the universal history of mankind. No people I verily believe with the exception of the Jews have suffered so much without being swept off the earth altogether; no people have waged the combat against the oppressor so persistently, so vehemently and so long. The beacon-star of hope has ever shone on the horizon, but has never yet reached the mid-day meridian. The "promised land" has ever been in sight, but has never been quite reached.

Why is this? Are the Irish people anathematized? Are they God-destined to be slaves unto their brethren for all time? Verily it would seem so. They are scattered throughout all lands, toiling beneath tropical suns and arctic skies for the living denied them in their own poor country, hunted, persecuted, banned, outlawed, a people in every respect fit to compare with those of any other land. The world must and has acknowledged that the Irish are in no way second to the inhabitants of any other nation on earth. Universal history proves their abilities and worth. Have we not in every department Irishmen leading the van in the progress of all other nations? Some authorities will have it that an Irishman (St. Brendan) landed on the shores of America four hundred years before Christopher Columbus was born. Of the Twelve who signed the Declaration of America's Independence nine were Irishmen. To the indomitable valour

of Ireland's sons and their descendants this great land owes much. Meagher Sheridan, Sherman, Jackson, Grant are names that can never die while America possesses a history to record their gallant deeds. Continental Europe too with her boasted civilization owes not a little to Ireland's children. Irishmen fought and won Fontenoy for France; in the history of the wars in the Low Countries the name of Sarsfield is emblazoned in golden letters. Dillon's name also tells the tale of Cremona where the Irish Brigade though arrayed only in their shirts, rushed out in the darkness of night at the sound of bugle call, and repulsed with a daring, grand and irresistible, the fierce troops of King Louis.

Even from a pacific point of view, the continent of "light and leading" owes much to the little western isle. The students of Europe flocked to the schools of Ireland, ere the Saxons, whose descendants are her taskmasters to-day, had reached the blessings of christianity. Men of science went out from Ireland's halls of learning to found Universities and Colleges throughout the length and breadth of the land, and they can yet be traced in tracks of living light from the coasts of France to the shores of distant Sicily.

I have said no land can show such a chequered history as Ireland. I can also fearlessly assert that no nation can boast a greater or a prouder one. Ireland is indeed a land with a history older than her lakes and her hills; a land of saints and scholars, of kings and bards and heroes of high renown; a land of grey legends and olden romances, of traditions holy and hoary, richer in the blood of her martyrs, stronger in the virtues of her people than all other nations, with their armies and revenues and ships upon the sea.

The valour and wisdom of her children have gone to make up the greatness of almost every land on earth save herself. It has been said by an eminent authority with the slightest suspicion of a taunt that "the talent and bravery of Irishmen have