

Book Notices.

"Irish History and the Irish Question."
By Goldwin Smith. Toronto: Morang
& Co. Pp. viii-270. Price, \$1.50.

The history of Ireland, like the prophet's scroll, is written within and without with lamentation and woe. It is a perfect Iliad of disaster, a dark tragedy of misfortune, misrule, and battling against arduous conditions. Professor Goldwin Smith's book is written with sympathy, with discrimination, and with a high sense of justice. He metes out praise and blame as they are deserved.

Few names are more hated in Ireland than that of the great Protector. "The curse of Cromwell" is one of the direst that can be invoked. Yet Cromwell endeavored to administer Rhadamanthine justice. "His proclamation on landing," says Professor Smith, "was the first utterance of law and order heard in ten years, and was strictly carried into effect. A soldier was hanged for robbing a native of a fowl." Yet the slaughter of the garrison of Drogheda is an indelible stain upon his name, though Alva, Parma, and Tilly committed many worse.

The Irish were their own worst enemies. Their turbulence and violence made it almost impossible to rule except by force. The strife between races under the Penal Code has scarce a parallel save that between the Catholics and Moriscos in Spain. The forcing on the Irish of an alien Church was the worst of policies. Swift bitterly said that the government doubtless appointed good Irish bishops, but they were always murdered on Hounslow Heath by highwaymen, who took their credentials and were installed in their place. What must have been the feelings of the Irish peasant when his scanty crop of potatoes was tithed for the support of a Protestant priest!

The bad economic conditions forced upon the country by the English government are responsible for much of its evils. But we do not think Professor Smith has emphasized enough an evil imposed by themselves. At the very time that famine was doing its worst in Ireland the great distilleries were converting the people's food into that which blasted their lives.

The chapter of chief interest is the last on "The Present State of the Irish Question." "Ireland has more than her share of representation in Parliament; she has no established Church; if her priesthood would let her she would have a complete system of national education [and she had this before England had]; her land law is far more favorable to the tenant than that of the other kingdoms, and she has been, and still is, receiving government subventions in aid of the tillers of her soil which English and Scotch tenants do not receive. Nothing is closed against her people. They have the markets of the whole empire, all its offices, patronages and services are perfectly open to them."

Professor Smith discusses the possible plans of solving the Irish question. A larger measure of local self-government would probably placate many antipathies. A session or two of the Imperial Parliament held at Dublin for the settlement of Irish questions would have had a good effect, but would entail too much inconvenience. "Would there be any objection," asks Dr. Smith, "to empowering the Irish members of both houses to sit annually at Dublin as a preparatory house of Irish legislation framing bills to be commended in Parliament?"

The book becomes almost indispensable in discussing the Irish question in view of the prominence which it is likely to receive in the new Parliament of Britain. Like everything which Dr. Smith writes, it has the spell of his own inimitable style—the "*curiosa felicitas*" of expression, the strength of thought, the breadth of view, the high statesmanship of a great scholar.

"London Films." By W. D. Howells.
Illustrated. New York: Harper &
Bros. Toronto: William Briggs.
Pp. 241. Price \$2.25 net.

The genial author of "Silas Lapham" and many another sterling story exhibits in this book the keenness of his observation and his deftness of expression. To use the figure of his title, his mind is a sensitive plate on which are kodaked sharp impressions of the strange kinemetograph of London's streets and Lon-