
The Irishman

be writing a book about Mr. Bernard Shaw at all. It is indefensibly foolish to attempt to explain a man whose whole object through life has been to explain himself. But even in nonsense there is a need for logic and consistency; therefore let us proceed on the assumption that when I say that all Mr. Shaw's blood and origin may be found in *John Bull's other Island*, some reader may answer that he does not know the play. Besides, it is more important to put the reader right about England and Ireland even than to put him right about Shaw. If he reminds me that this is a book about Shaw, I can only assure him that I will reasonably, and at proper intervals, remember the fact.

Mr. Shaw himself said once, "I am a typical Irishman; my family came from Yorkshire." Scarcely anyone but a typical Irishman could have made the remark. It is in fact a bull, a conscious bull. A bull is only a paradox which people are too stupid to understand. It is the rapid summary of something which is at once so true and so complex that the speaker who has the swift intelligence to perceive it, has not the slow patience to explain it. Mystical dogmas are much of this kind. Dogmas are