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## TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

**When Catholics Were Elected for the First Time Directors of the Toronto Mechanics Institute—A Recommendation that has Been Preserved and is Copied Here—The Men Who Were Members of the Institute Directorate in 1867—The "Soirees"**

I have been handed by Mr. Thomas C. Irving, General Manager for Western Canada of the Bradstreet Mercantile Agency, the following, which is a copy of a recommendation of the officers and directors of the Toronto Mechanics' Institute in favor of Mr. Irving, for a position with that company, then lately established here. Mr. Irving held the position of Assistant Librarian of the Mechanics' Institute, an old established institution, and which filled the position that the Public Library now fills:

"The Mechanics' Institute, Toronto, 11th Oct., 1867.

"We have much pleasure in stating that Thomas Irving, who has been employed in the capacity of Assistant Librarian at the Toronto Mechanics' Institute during a period of fifteen months, has been careful, obliging and attentive. We believe him to be strictly moral and conscientious, of good disposition, and believe he will discharge his duties faithfully in any position he may be entrusted with.

(Signed) Jno. J. Withrow, president; Wm. P. Marston, vice-president; Henry C. Clarke, vice-president; William Edwards, treasurer; John Moss, secretary; William Halley, director; W. H. Sheppard, Daniel Spry, Robert Wilkes, J. Carty, Thomas McCrosson, Christopher Bunting, Fred Cumberland, F. W. Coate, Henry Langley, Walter S. Lee, John Downey, directors."

I was surprised as well as pleased when Mr. Irving handed me this document, for I had forgotten all about the circumstance, which recalled a pleasant incident in connection with my former Toronto career. The Mechanics' Institute in those good old days was quite an institution in our midst. It was literary, scientific and social in its character. It lent out books the same as the public library does now; it maintained classes for teaching lessons in the arts and sciences, and night schools for the instruction of those who wanted to improve their education. It also possessed classes for debating purposes. And in addition to those advantages gave weekly entertainments in the winter evenings, the admission to which was ten cents.

The meetings and library of the Mechanics' Institute when I came to Toronto, were held in the old building in Court street, just north of King. That building was city property and was used for many purposes—fire-hall, Mechanics' Institute and police court. The Toronto Typographical Society met there too; and there was a saloon in the basement. When the Mechanics' Institute grew stronger it built a fine home of its own at the northeast corner of Church and Adelaide streets, with two halls for public uses, a larger and a smaller one, both greatly used, as they were well provided for the accommodation of the public. The larger hall on the third floor was known as the music hall, and in it took place all the leading functions belonging to the social life of the city. The lower or smaller hall was capable of seating about six hundred people and answered a very desirable purpose. The functions that formerly took place in St. Lawrence Hall took place in the Music Hall after it was erected in 185—

I was elected a member of the Board of Directors in 1866, and my friend, Thomas McCrosson, whose name is signed to this recommendation as well as mine, was elected a director at the same time, and we considered it an honor, and so it was. I remember the election well, and it was a problem whether two Catholics or one Catholic would be elected, because previous to that I know of no Catholic who was a member of that board. Our old friends, who were members of the Board, sat around watching the result, and there was a sigh of satisfaction when it was announced that we were both chosen.

When the new Board met I presented a pet project of mine that I had in view and which I had talked about before I was elected; and that was to appoint a standing committee to arrange for and present during the winter evenings a series of entertainments of a musical and literary character that would be accessible to all, at the low price of ten cents. This could be easily done, as the hall was our own. George Longman was then secretary and librarian and he warmly favored the project, which encouraged me in the undertaking. Christopher Bunting, who was an influential member, also warmly espoused it, and also Daniel Spry, both warm personal friends.

The idea met the favorable consideration of the Board of Directors and the committee was appointed, consisting of five members, with myself as chairman. I was very active in my work and "Soiree Evenings" at the Mechanics' Institute were always looked forward to with interest and pleasure. Usually I was the chairman at those entertainments, which gave me a rank among foremost citizens. The "Soirees" were first held in the lower or smaller hall, but after a while the audiences grew so large that the upper or larger hall had to be used. The talent employed was nearly all volunteer or amateur talent, but sometimes professional talent was employed and paid for.

When Mr. Joshua Beard, a prominent citizen in those days, whose father had been Mayor and himself an alderman, brought his bride from Utica, N.Y., the soirees received quite an accession, as the little blonde lady, his wife, had a pretty voice and was an educated vocalist, who freely gave us her services without charge; but she endeared herself to the people of Toronto. Methinks I hear the notes of sweet Scotch songs still ringing in my ears, especially her "Down the Burne, Davy Love." And there was a Mr. Darby, a young Irishman, studying law here, from London, Ont., who received raptures of applause for his singing of an Irish song, "Sure I'm Not Myself at All, It's Only My Shadow on the Wall, Mclly Dear."

Well, well; the good old times, and the dear, good people of other days, how rapturously they used to applaud what pleased them.

WILLIAM HALLEY.

### Mission in Barrie

The mission given in Barrie by the Redemptorist Fathers, Zillis and Cullen, which concluded on Tuesday evening, January 30th, was a great success. It drew large crowds both of Catholics and non-Catholics, to all the services. The attention of the latter was drawn to the mission by the clattering of feet on the sidewalks every morning of those who came in large numbers to the five o'clock Mass and sermon. Nearly 700 approached the sacraments. The priests and people of Barrie are to be congratulated on the success of the mission. The missionaries, the priests of the parish and the members of the congregation, are highly pleased with the results. Com.

### Celebrated Golden Jubilee

At the Mother House of the Grey Nuns, Congregation de Notre Dame du Sacre Coeur, Ottawa, on the Feast of the Purification, two members, namely, Sister Angele Gauthier and Sister Mary Patrick (Margaret Phalen), celebrated the golden jubilee of their life in the order. At the High Mass commemorating the event His Grace Archbishop Duhamel officiated, and a private entertainment was given in the evening.

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## GOLDWIN SMITH AND IRISH HISTORY

An Article of Much Thought and Research by an Able and Scholarly Writer.

(By Rev. Morgan M. Sheehy, in The Catholic World.)

The New Year opens with brighter prospects for Ireland. The question of Home Rule again occupies a foremost place in English politics by the accession of the Liberals to power in the United Kingdom. The head of the Government, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, is a firm believer in the doctrine that the "Irish people should have the management of their own domestic affairs." A few days before he accepted office, and since he declared that: "The only way of healing the evils of Ireland—removing the difficulties of her administration, of giving contentment and prosperity to her people, and of making her a strength instead of a weakness to the empire—is that the Irish people should have the management of their own domestic affairs. Good government by foreigners can never be a substitute for the government by the people themselves."

No one questions the honesty and sincerity as Home Rulers of such members of the government as Mr. John Morley, Mr. James Bryce, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. John Burns, and the Earl of Aberdeen; they are all earnestly in favor of doing justice to Ireland. We may fairly expect then that the Irish question will be dealt with in the new Parliament. Neither the pressing subject of university education for Catholics be ignored; it as well as amendments of the Wyndham Land Purchase Act, which shall free that measure from many very objectionable features, is certain to find a prominent place in the parliamentary programme of the new ministry. Whatever may or may not be done, one thing is certain, nothing short of entrusting Ireland with the management of her own affairs will satisfy the aspirations and demands of the Irish people.

At the great National Convention, held recently in Dublin, the following resolution was adopted by acclamation: "We solemnly assert that no new system of government in Ireland will be accepted as satisfactory except a legislative assembly freely elected and representative of the people, with power to make laws for Ireland, and an executive government responsible to that assembly, and this convention declares that the Irish National Party cannot enter into an alliance with or give permanent support to any English party or government which does not make the question of granting such an assembly and executive to Ireland the cardinal point of its programme." Mr. Redmond declares that the reliance of Ireland is not upon any British declarations, however plausible or encouraging they may be, but upon her own strength in Parliament and the absolute justice of her demands. The Irish question is, therefore, certain to be kept in the foreground of English politics until a satisfactory answer is given to it. Not since the days of Gladstone has it occupied so prominent a position as it does at the present moment.

And not alone the political position, but the economic question, the Gaelic or language movement, the industrial revival have awakened the deepest interests in the minds of the people. The bishops and priests have united with the leaders of the nation in a desperate attempt to stem the tide of Irish emigration. Dr. Douglas Hyde, a distinguished scholar and the present head of the Gaelic revival, is at present in this country in the interest of the language movement and the revival of Irish industries.

## PENNOLINE

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Wherever he has gone he has been most warmly received. He is telling the sad story of his country's wrongs to college and university students in their halls, and to the American people in interview and public address. He speaks of a land closely allied to the United States and blessed by Providence with great natural riches and incalculable wealth, whose half-deserted streets resound ever less and less to the roar of traffic, whose mills are silent, whose factories are fallen, whose priceless harbors are deserted, whose fields are studded with ruined gables, memories of the past. The cause of this deplorable national decay he justly ascribes to the "government—the bad government—of foreigners."

And the only remedy that he or anybody else can see is to restore to Ireland her right of self-government, so that she may become, as he puts it, "Irish all out," speaking her own language, thinking her own thoughts, living according to her own ideals, writing her own books, singing her own songs, and supplying herself with her own manufactures. Such an Ireland he and every fair-minded man knows cannot exist under "a government of foreigners." For the present English government of Ireland, known as "Dublin Castle Government," so pronounced a Tory as Lord Dunraven declares to be "an anachronism and the most extravagant government in the world imposed upon the poorest people in Europe." "Before long," he adds, "if Ireland's downward career is not checked, she will become a burden, a pauper in receipt of outdoor relief, for the amount of taxation derived from her will not cover the expenses of administration."

Now that a Liberal Government is in power, surely an end will be put to such a shameful condition of things. No Liberal Ministry can afford to tolerate at this late day the scandals and disgrace, avowed by foe and friend alike, of such glaring English misrule in Ireland. Assuming, then, that the present Liberal government of the United Kingdom will at an early date introduce an Irish Home Rule measure, it may be well to recall the features of Gladstone's bill. In 1886, Mr. Gladstone introduced his first Home Rule Bill. Its chief points may be summarized as follows:

An Irish Parliament to sit in Dublin, and Irish members to cease to sit at Westminster.

Judges to be appointed by the Irish Government, and to be removable by the Irish Parliament.

Ireland's contribution to the revenue to be reduced from one-twelfth to one-fifteenth.

The Irish Legislature to have the power of taxation, except as to customs and excise, but to be debarred from interference with the army, navy, and foreign affairs, and from the making of any religious endowment.

Measures to be taken for securing the unity of the empire and the protection of Protestants.

This bill failed of passage by reason of the gigantic propaganda which

was preached against it in England, Scotland and Wales pronounced in favor of it. So have Canada and, more recently, Australia.

The second Home Rule Bill—which Mr. Gladstone introduced in 1893, and which, after passing the House of Commons, was rejected by the House of Lords—was considerably less a "root and branch" affair than the former measure. Indeed, it was specifically stated in the preamble that the supreme authority of the British Parliament was not to be impaired. In the meantime Mr. Parnell had died and the grave scandal in which he was involved had the effect of splitting the Irish party. But to-day, and for some years past, the party has been thoroughly reunited and most ably led by Mr. John Redmond, who has shown himself to be possessed of the highest qualities of leadership. He has the fullest support and confidence of his countrymen. Such is Ireland's position at the beginning of the New Year and the opening of the first session of the new Parliament.

And now, because the question of Home Rule for Ireland is certain to occupy the foreground in the politics of the United Kingdom, we have turned with much interest to a timely volume just published by Professor Goldwin Smith. The title of the work is Irish History and the Irish Question. First a word about the author. Mr. Goldwin Smith is a self-elected Englishman, a distinguished man of letters, a graduate and professor of Oxford University. In British politics he is a Liberal-Unionist, in religion he is an avowed sceptic. He entertains, as is evident from his writings and his frequent letters to the daily press, an intense bitterness against every form of revealed religion, more especially against the dogmatic teaching and history of the Catholic Church. And as we shall see, this deep-seated anti-Catholic hostility mars what is in many other respects a fairly just and always, because of the splendid style of the writer, an intensely interesting summary of Irish history. He traces the general course of Ireland's history and considers it in its causative relations to the present situation as we have outlined it.

Among his special qualifications to undertake this work—though it may well be doubted if any Englishman, especially one of Mr. Goldwin Smith's strong prejudices and peculiar temperament, could give us an impartial survey of Irish history—he informs us in his preface that some forty years ago he spent a summer in Dublin as the guest of Edward Cardwell, then Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and the real head of the Irish Government. Under Cardwell's roof he heard the Irish question fully discussed by able men, including Robert Lowe, and derived a still greater advantage from constant and lasting intercourse with such friends as Lord Chancellor O'Hagan, Sir Alexander Macdonald, the head of the Education Department, and other leading Irish Liberals of the moderate school, who were ardent patriots and thoroughgoing reformers. Mr. Goldwin Smith says that to the teaching of these men he has always looked back for his best guidance in dealing with the Irish question. At the same time he strove to form an independent judgment by acquainting himself thoroughly with the country and its people. The fruit of his studies was a little book entitled Irish History and Irish Character, in which he preached in favor of charity and reconciliation by pointing out that the sources of Ireland's sorrows were to be found in natural circumstances and historical accidents, as much as in the crimes and follies of English misrule in recent times. The essay has been superseded by historical and political works which in the course of nearly half a century, have been evolved by the Home Rule controversy. Not only has the subject, however, lost none of its interest for the author, but his confidence in the wisdom of his Irish friends and instructors has been strengthened rather than impaired by the course of events.

Now we are quite prepared to give the author credit for an amount of honest sympathy with the distress and sufferings of the Irish people. His sense of justice revolts against the

fearful wrongs inflicted upon the nation. In the very first line of his recital the note of sympathy is struck, and in the last line he has written he asks: "What far-off object of aggrandizement can be half so important as a contented and loyal Ireland?" From his study of Irish history he finds that, "of all histories, the history of Ireland is the saddest. For nearly seven centuries it was a course of strife between races, bloodshed, massacre, misgovernment, civil war, oppression and misery."

Turning to the country's geographical position and natural resources, he reminds us that the theatre of the tragedy is a large island lying beside one nearly three times larger, which cuts it off from the continent of Europe, while on the other side it fronts the wide ocean. "The climate is, for the most part, too wet for wheat. The pasture is very rich. Ireland seems by nature to be a grazing country and a country of large farms. Tillage and small farms have been enforced by the redundancy of the rural population consequent upon the destruction of urban industries. In coal and minerals Ireland is poor, while the sister island abounds in them, and, in its swarming factories and mines, furnishes a first rate market for the produce of Irish pasturage; so that the two islands are commercial complements of each other." Interests, he holds, of every kind seem to enjoin the union of the islands. But, in the age of conquest, the weaker island was pretty sure to be marked as a prey of the stronger, while the difficulties of access in the days of primitive navigation portended that the conquest would be difficult and that the agony would be long. Such was the mold of destiny."

To the difference between the islands in respect of physical environment was added a difference of race. While it may be conceded that too much has been made of racial infuence, it cannot be denied that the Celt and the Teuton are of widely different temperaments. It is not easy, therefore, for the two nations to sympathize with or to understand each other.

Nothing worthy of the name of parliamentary governments seems ever to have prevailed in Plantagenet and Tudor times. As a rule, the Parliament of Dublin was a tool in the hands of the deputies. From the first the relation between the feudal realm established by Henry II. in a part of Ireland, and the native tribal organization was border war. The new comers and the original inhabitants were alien to each other in race, language and social habits, as well as in political institutions. The Normans could not subdue the Celt, nor the Celt wholly oust the Normans. Left to its own feeble resources, however, the Anglo-Norman colony failed to become a dominion, and presently dwindled to a Pale, as the region immediately around Dublin was termed. Between the Pale and the Celt incessant war was waged, with the usual atrocity of struggles between the two races. Fusion there could be none. There was not the bond of human brotherhood, or that of a common tongue. On neither side was the murder of a member of the other race a crime. "Never," he sums up, "was there a more inauspicious baptism of a nation."

After recounting the tribulations of Ireland under the Stuarts, under the Protectorate, the Restoration, and the Revolution of 1688, Mr. Goldwin Smith expresses the belief that had the Catholic won he would certainly have deprived the Protestant of his land, perhaps of his life. He goes on to point out that the Protestant, having won, proceeded at once to avenge and secure himself by binding down his vanquished foe with chains of iron. Henceforth the law, without actually prohibiting the Catholic religion, provided, as the framers of the penal statutes hoped, for its extirpation. "All priests were required to perform service out of their own parishes. All Catholic archbishops and bishops were banished and were punishable with death if they returned, so that in future there could be no ordination. Monks and friars also were banished. Catholic chapels

(Continued on page 5.)

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