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AN INVITATION.

The Editor would thank the author of "The National Calendar" for a little more of his most interesting and valuable work.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Though very willing to do so I regret to say I cannot manage all correspondence. My correspondents will also be good enough to remember that in writing to me they incur the danger of seeing their remarks and observations lifted up into publicity, under initials, which can't hurt any one.

All readers will, please, remember that I am glad to get letters, whether laudatory or the reverse.—Ed.

FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY.

(Extract from a private letter written at Wepener).

"We have been seventeen days in the trenches unable to rise and move about for fear of showing ourselves and being shot. One chap near me rose to get out of a cramped position and stretched his arms out saying, 'I think we have endured about enough for our Queen and Country.' Almost at that instant he was struck down, but before he turned over dead, he had just strength left to say 'I'm sorry I said that.'"

A LITTLE SUPERSTITION.

DEAR MR. O'GRADY,

When my turn comes to have my poem put in print in the valued pages of "A. I. R." will you kindly erase the signature "Mary Seaton," and put in "E. W."? My sister assures me that "Mary Seaton" is a most unlucky name, and who of Irishwomen can disregard "Luck"? I have been rejoicing in Grogan's poetry. I am very glad it will come out in book form. When it does I should like to have a copy. Please enter me for one. I would like to know who wrote "Golden Coombe"; it is very pretty.

E. W.

So would I.

Yes, "Golden Coombe":—

"Down by the Coombe where the marigolds are golden,"

is very pretty—very—and I am ashamed to say I have forgotten the name of the author—entranced as I was by the poem. Perhaps he or she will write and acknowledge.—Ed.

"BABES AND SUCKLINGS."

Little boy (saying his prayers at his mother's knee), "And please Dod make me dood boy, and (very hurriedly and triumphantly) if at fust you don't succeed, try, try, try again."

A DEFINITION OF TEMPTATION.

Mother—"Tommy, why did you take the cream from the pantry without permission?"

Tommy (shamefully)—"I was tempted."

Mother—"Now, Tommy, that's absurd."

Tommy—"Yes, I was tempted, if I had been left to myself I would have taken the strawberry jam."

Small boy—I want a penn'orth of soldiers.

Shopkeeper—What kind of soldiers, my little dear?

Small boy—Christian soldiers, please.

Small Dublin boy, very drowsy—And give us this day—our daily, our daily, our "Daily Express"!

I confess I insert the foregoing very much against the grain—but the queer ways and humours of children are amusing and pathetic for ever.—Ed.

THE FAIRIES OF SLIEVE AN AURA.

The author of this remarkable and unique poem, with all its amazing wealth of vocabulary, is an Irish lad, from Antrim, I think, and only sixteen years of age.

For sixteen it seems to me to be a marvellous performance.—Ed.

COMMUNICATED.

"A. I. R." is sure to come to grief. It is not up to date, and its proprietor, being a mere literary man, cannot possess the business capacity necessary for keeping it alive.

W.

Dear W., I have kept it alive for some 35 issues; you, just start a similar venture, and consider how you feel after the fifth issue.—Ed.

14 Strand, Derry, 6th August, 1900.

DEAR SIR,

After many resolutions to do so, I write to express my fullest sympathy and best wishes for the work you are doing in the Review, as well as for what you have already done elsewhere.

I am one of those who believe that a true and lasting Irish literature can be possible only in our Irish tongue. But having regard to actual and patent facts, I do not on that account decry or seek to belittle the efforts of those who would provide a literature in the English speech, but concerned with Irish themes and animated with an Irish spirit. I would do so if Ireland were, as I hope it will one day be, bi-lingual. But it is not yet so. There are millions of our race to whom Irish is a sealed book, to whom, indeed, English is the only open book. Whence are these people to draw their intellectual and imaginative nourishment? Is it not possible for them to learn Irish? some one will ask. Yes, it is. It is possible for a man to enter the British army as a private, and, like MacDonald, become a Major-General, or, perhaps, a Marshal. But it would be idle to form a theory or engage in an enterprise, based on the assumption that privates can become Generals or Field-M Marshals. It can be done, but we know that in the vast majority of cases it will not. The case of the people to whom I allude is similar.

It has been remarked that one of the chapters of Gil Blas has a very suggestive heading, which is being interpreted, "What Gil Blas did when he could not do better." That is our problem. What are these people to do when they cannot do better? They have three courses open. One is to turn away from literature altogether; to condemn themselves to mental starvation. That is the course, but hardly a satisfactory one. Well they can go to English literature, pure and simple. They can and they do. Some of them go to the "penny dreadful" or the American "devil novel." That is to say, they feed on garbage. Hardly satisfactory either. But they can go to higher, to the highest English literature. Let us suppose that they have the inclination to do so, together with the leisure and the culture needful to duly appreciate the works of the great English writers. They will find there most excellent literature. But excellent for them? Aye, there's the rub. For the English people, amongst whom, and of whom and for whom it was produced—the very flower of whose culture it is—that literature is excellent. Excellent, too, for the foreigner—the French man, the German, who reads, admires, criticises, but all the time feels keenly and knows perfectly that it is foreign, that it is not his, and cannot be—that his is a different literature altogether—for him it is excellent.

But for us—who have not the Englishman's aptitude for it, not the foreigner's safeguards—what is it for our race? Not starvation, certainly, no, nor garbage. But lotus-eating; making us forget who we are and what we are; opium eating, filling us with delusions, sometimes delightful, sometimes horrible, but always delusions, and always sapping at the Irish nature that is in us, leaving us wretched mongrels, not Irish, not English either—pro-English maybe—but that is very different.

There is a third course open for those who cannot do better. It is to have recourse to a literature, English in language, but Irish in theme and spirit. It may be such as Moore wrote timidly, such as Mangan, Davis, and Mitchell wrote boldly. Far better this than starvation, garbage, or opium. Still it will hardly be the part to produce Irishmen or Irishwomen of the ancient, racial type. That kindly nourishment will they find in Ferguson's poetry and your own prose, in a literature dealing with our old heroic past and bearing the flower of our native culture. A flower transplanted, no doubt, and not as seen in its native soil, but a beautiful flower and followed by a wholesome fruit for all that share the Gaelic blood. The attempt to reproduce the old Irish literature in modern English must, of course, be inadequate; it must be "imperfect, in an alien speech."

Nevertheless, it has the "tramp of heroes" in it. It is the "Fight at the Ford," holding the foe at bay till the Red Branch shakes off its slumber.

Such is my idea of the work you are doing, and such being my idea, I have only to add

I remain, dear sir, truly yours,

JAMES L. MacLOCHLAINN.

P.S.—If you are not wearied with this I shall write again in a week or two, and—criticise little.