All Ireland Review

Milton on Light!

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Source: *All Ireland Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Jan. 20, 1900), p. 2

Published by: [All Ireland Review](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20544459>

Accessed: 22/06/2014 03:35

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ment of learning their frequent use as tests tends to encourage the hasty getting up of knowledge that should be slowly grown in each mind by its own individual labour of enquiry. Science cram is the most deadly form of cram; it poisons the very sources of intellectual thoroughness. I rejoice, therefore, to hear that the Science side of the Irish examination system, both as regards the Intermediate and the Science and Art examinations, has been so much less successful than any other. It is a wholesome sign.

[To be Continued.]

"HONOR."

BY META PATTON.

No one, not even the most consummate flatterer, could call Honor O'Brian good-looking. She was a hard-featured, weather-beaten woman of, say, about forty years. Although the owner of the chief grocery shop in our little village, Honor was quite regardless of personal appearance. Never do I remember to see her iron-gray hair otherwise than strained tightly back from her ruddy face, screwed into a tight knot, and fastened with a horn comb. Notwithstanding her plain personality, Honor was a great favourite with us children. Perhaps my mother, although belonging to the village aristocracy, understood best the wealth of love which lay dormant in Honor's large heart. I have heard her talk to Honor for hours over the little counter, while we children waited and played outside. I have heard Honor tell how she left at once her good place in Dublin when her father's second wife died. For ten long years, the best part of her youth and freshness, Honor devoted herself to him and her little step-sister, Kathleen, till finally she laid him to rest in "God's Acre."

Then Honor invested all her small savings in the shop, my mother and a few more influential people promising to continue her stanchest patrons. Kathleen was the joy and pride of Honor's life. Honor was twenty then, and Kathleen only four, a beautiful child, with a dazzling sun-kissed complexion and wondrous long-lashed gray eyes, "put in with a dirty finger." Honor devoted herself to her, and the child never missed a mother's love. Educated at the village school till seventeen, Kathleen then announced her intention of going off to a shop in Dublin. Our fishery village, although lovely, was too quiet for her, and the elder sister willingly paid the premium required to further her darling's happiness.

Few knew or understood as my mother did what a grief it was to Honor to know that Kathleen never seemed to wish to come again to see her or the little hamlet where she was reared.

In respectable lodgings, a favourite on account of her artistic taste and deft fingers, Kathleen O'Brian quickly forgot such a place existed as Termore, or that a self-denying sister daily hungered to stroke once more her dark curls or press a kiss on those sweet fresh lips.

Youth sometimes can be very cruel. It rarely remembers that those who are beginning to go down life's hill would often be cheered and strengthened by a few bright words from the ones who are still going up.

Such was Honor's humble history.

I have already said she owned the principal shop in the village. It was a wonderful shop. Everything could be got there, from a pocketknife to a hat warranted the latest Dublin fashion. In the window bloaters and note paper amiably side by side, and onions and bull's-eyes shared different compartments of the same box. Many a halfpenny I spent in Honor's shop, and came out again rejoicing over the extra handful of goodies thrown in for being my mother's child.

Honor's plain face was quite transformed by the walk on the lonely beach at sunset was her only relaxation. Often we saw her, my mother and I, gazing over the pearl and emerald-flecked waters o'er which the ruddy-sailed fishing boats were skimming to the harbour.

"Can Honor appreciate the beauty of this?" I would ask my mother, as I gazed at the expanse of dimpling water, gleaming with the sunset tints.

"Nature has many voices," my mother would answer, "one for even the humblest of her children."

We, as well as the rest of the village, were more than astonished to hear of Honor's "keeping company" with young Pat Cleary. He was a handsome fisherman, and well known in our village for his taste in pretty girls. That he should single out Honor for special attention seemed almost incredible. Yet, evening after evening, when the fishing boats came in, they would stroll off in the gloaming, now in June. Pat had already purchased a service, and Honor was envied by many of the young and flighty village beauties.

Shortly afterwards she confided the secret of her engagement to my mother.

"Tis strange that Pat should care for me," said Honor thoughtfully, "but then he wants a steady woman to look after him, and I shall be able to buy him the boat he's wishing for."

"There's a lot of give and take in matrimony, Honor," said my mother, "and he is very young, only twenty-six. Do you think you will be happy?"

"Happy," repeated Honor, "the very look of his bonnie blue eyes makes my heart glow and thrill.—Happy?"

My mother said no more.

Pat's engagement was a great source of chaff

But Pat went doggedly on, never heeding, although report said he had not lost his taste for flirting with a pretty girl at a rustic dance.

The wedding was fixed for August, and we were among his comrade fishermen.

"Pat, me buoy, ye know whar tae throw yer line. Shure, if she is ould an' ugly, she's steady, an' she has the money."

able boat with Honor's money. She was still to keep on the shop.

One day she told us joyfully that Kathleen, hearing of her sister's approaching marriage, had consented to come from Dublin for a holiday.

Honor's plain face was quite transformed by the glow of love and tenderness when she spoke of Kathleen, and she plotted and planned as to how Pat could take her for little evening excursions in the boat. Shortly afterwards Kathleen came. The first day we saw her in the shop we wondered no longer at Honor's praise of her beauty. Kathleen O'Brian, with her curling brown hair, dazzling complexion, and glorious gray-blue Irish eyes, was a true type of Irish loveliness.

[To be Continued.]

A SEVERE CRITIC!

The "All Ireland Review" can never be a success while handicapped by its present awful appearance. Nothing commoner and more unattractive to a man or woman of taste and intellect, could well be imagined. Why don't you get a decent cover, like that, for example, of the Celtic Christmas? No one would expect to find literature under such an exterior as you present us with. You ought at least to supply the Review with such an exterior that we need not be ashamed to let it lie on a drawing-room table.

R.

This is indeed hard. We must only endeavour to bear up and live down our shabby coat as well as we can.—Ed.

INISFREE.

Inisfree is delicious; it has the purr of quiet places in it, the sound that is no more than the expression of silence.

L. H.

MILTON ON LIGHT!

SIR—Your allusion to light as "the beginning of things," reminded me of Milton's grand invocation of Light. Will you make room for it? For I think Milton, owing, perhaps, to his religion, is not much read in Ireland.

Gladly.—Ed.

Hail, holy Light! offspring of Heaven first-born,
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam,
May I express thee, unblamed, since God is Light
And never but in unapproached Light
Dwelt from eternity—dwelt then in thee
Bright effluence of bright essence increate:
Or hear'st thou rather pure eternal stream
Whose fountain who can tell? Before the Heavens
Before the Earth thou wert, and at the voice
Of God as with a mantle didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and wild
Won from the void and formless Infinite.