All Ireland Review

To the Leader

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All Ireland Review.

SATURDAY, MAY 18th, 1901.

VOL. II.—No 18.

EDITED BY STANDISH O'GRADY.

ONE PENNY

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ANNALS OF THE FOUR MASTERS.
CORRESPONDENCE.
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TO THE LEADER.

DEAR MR. LEADER,

According to your desire I put you before Lord Castletown, whom, by the way, last week, you treated in even a more scandalous manner than you did "John Eglinton" and his book, your review of which was a disgrace to you, and an injury to the noble cause which you represent to-day in Ireland.

I put you before Lord Castletown, the representative of the ancient kings of my county, that which is enclosed between the Barrow and the Nore, and whom, if I could I would make king of the same to-morrow, being profoundly dissatisfied with my own king—the Marquis of Ormonde—believing firmly that he, Lord Castletown of Upper Ossory, the Mac Giolla Phatraic, would, were he our Captain, set things humming here, and very soon get the Nore and the Dinan and the King's River to sing a new song to which all Ireland would listen, and listen well pleased.

And I put you in front of him, partly because you desire it—rightly enough; perhaps; for intellect, if it desires it, has a native right to precede rank and birth, and yet I think that intellect, the best kind of intellect will cheerfully and cordially give rank, and birth, and even riches, the precedence, and joyfully take the very last place in the show, with rank, and birth, and wealth, and capital, and labour, and fashion, and beauty, and everything else that is good stepping out well a-head taking the first place and recipients of the huzzas.

Mr. Leader, do you care for those huzzas?

And I have put you first, because I know Lord Castletown of Upper Ossory, who is a very good personal friend of mine now for many years, since chance threw us together, a long time ago, and, if I know him, and his purposes, I believe he would be as well pleased to occupy the last page of the *All Ireland Review* as the first page or the first column in the first page. This Irish Peer, unlike others of his order, happens to be built that way, and he is Irish through and through, and so far as I can judge singularly free from vanity and pride. Lord Castletown—I am glad and proud to stand out to-day before Ireland as his defender—thinks little of his rank and birth,

which, with the sole exception of that of the O'Briens, is the noblest in all Ireland; thinks little of his intelligence, though he is as intelligent as most of us; and thinks little of his bravery, though in my time no man in Ireland has played a braver part.

Your attack upon this gentleman arose, I feel sure, not out of bad blood, malevolence, and desire to hurt, but just out of lack of knowledge, plus the rumours ascending out of this *rameis*-laden land. Cleverer men than yourself, dear Mr. Leader, have been deceived about him by this self-acquitting, other-accusing, victim-finding, and *rameis* loving people of ours; the depths of whose duplicity and hypocrisy you were the first to sound, and to sound effectually, because by birth and religion you are allied with some three-fourths of the Irish people; unlike myself who am, as you would say, a heretic and a "Sour-face," etc., etc., and outside the Pale of Salvation; I and my kind; and I do think that between you and myself, and the printing press, we agree so far, whatever the exigencies of your position may, in your weak moments, lead you to write.

Now, dear Mr. Leader, you know a great many things, but you do not know everything, and are not at all omniscient. You charge Lord Castletown with having delivered a "Boston Speech," and "backing down" afterwards. Are you aware that before one year of that miserable agitation had expired Lord Castletown wrote to the All Ireland Committee in the Mansion House, who were the accredited and nominated representatives of the movement, and for publication, and in the way of a manifesto, a letter so strong, so fiery, advanced, and almost revolutionary addressed to the gentry and the people of Ireland, and to Catholics and Protestants, that the All Ireland Committee were afraid to publish it; also that when the movement was as dead as Julius Caesar Lord Castletown, hoping against hope, and willing to do the best he could, up to the last moment, and when the whole movement was in fact dead and damned, came into this part of Ireland and delivered here, by the Nore, the very finest and most spirited speech that I ever heard during the whole course of that agitation.

And I have heard this brave and high-spirited Irish gentleman traduced in private, and traduced in public, by men who never stirred foot or hand in help of that agitation, who in fact pooched and laughed at it, but who when all was over affected to think that they

would have done mighty things only for Lord Castletown's desertion of them.

You know what *rameis* means; and I consider that the treatment which this Irishman has received from his country is just a concrete example of what I call "the Great Enchantment"; the great power which broods over the whole land, which darkens our understandings and reduces our wills to water, so that our committees nominated with tremendous cheers won't sit, and that we, who nominated them cannot even ask them why they did not sit.

We are a singular people, Mr. Leader; you yourself know quite as well as I do, how singular.

John Eglinton, as you perceive, is defending himself, and there is no one more competent than he is to do that.

I shall only supplement his letter by one or two observations. You, through your courage and good sense have reached a position of great power. Is it your clear and fixed intention to murder thought in this land? If it is, you will decline from your present position with all its noble opportunities; you will decline into a mere trade organ, and the intellect of the country will bid you farewell; surely.

I think I know as well as if I had been by your side and in your confidence what happened. You never read John Eglinton's book; and I think you have not read it yet. "I-Maal" sent you a review of it which seemed to you to be of the nature of a scorch, and to supply good copy; and without reflection or consideration you printed it, and allowed that man, "I-Maal," to brand John Eglinton as an atheist on the strength of a sentiment expressed by him with which near a million of Irish people are in agreement, and with which at one time all Christendom was in agreement. You made a mistake, and a bad one, which, I fear, you will be too proud to admit; but if I were in your place I most assuredly would.

You are young and brave; you have sense and understanding; don't give yourself over to those who hate light and love darkness, and all too in the very morning of your career.

32, Dawson, Chambers,
Dublin,

13/v./1901.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "LEADER."

SIR—The "Leader" claims, no doubt justly, that it "offers a liberal and fairly wide battling ground," and perhaps you will allow the writer of this booklet condemned by you in severe language as containing an offensive phrase, to ad-

dress a few words to you. In the first place, since you have thought proper to notice his words, he must protest that he said "crucifix" and not "cross." And by representing the poet as refusing to see in Ireland a "palsied beldam with whiskey on her breath and a crucifix in her hand," he meant to contrast (somewhat, in fact, in a style to which the "Leader" has accustomed its readers), the actual Ireland, with what it has in it the capacity to become, a vision upon which the poet is supposed to have his eye. Of course this does imply that, in the writer's opinion, the Irish peasant is superstitious in his use of the crucifix, but there is nothing necessarily offensive to Catholics in that assertion. Does the "Leader," for instance, deny it? Why should enlightened Catholics resent reference to the degenerate form of their religion any more than enlightened Protestants to the degenerate form of theirs? Superstition in Ireland has no doubt something to be said for it, and our folklorists and most of our poets would be sorry to see our peasantry turned rationalist; yet the poet in the essay has in his mind's eye something nobler even than a peasantry with curious and picturesque ways. Certainly, there is no necessary connection between the crucifix and whiskey; yet in Ireland, where free thought and honest speculation are still called, in a large way, "atheism," the barrenness of intellectual and spiritual life has probably a good deal to do with a recourse to the bottle, as well as with that triviality of interests and accessibility to Cockney vulgarity against which the "Leader" is waging so righteous a warfare.

And cannot one say these things in Ireland? The "Leader" has a well-deserved reputation for cleverness, but really it should know that religious, social, and philosophical questions are not to be settled by the tomahawk of a truculent obscurantism.

Lest you should suppose that the writer is anxious to convert your notice of his book into an advertisement, permit me to subscribe myself, sir,

Yours faithfully,

— "CACKLETON" [JOHN EGLINTON.]

LETTER TO LORD CASTLETOWN OF UPPER OSSORY.

(CONCLUDED).

DEAR LORD CASTLETOWN,

Though I have a great deal more that I would like to say to you I must bring this lengthy epistle to an end here and now.

The singular resurgence of vitality and activity, also of good sense and understanding which I perceive going forward around me on every side appear to me to be connected intimately and essentially with the revival, or the movement towards the revival, of the Gaelic

tongue. I can hardly tell how this is so, and, if I could, it would take a long time to explain; but this I know as a fact that a desire to promote Irish industries and the welfare of Ireland in general accompanies or succeeds an inquisitiveness concerning the language, and that a love for the country and a desire to bear an active part in the promotion of its welfare sooner or later eventuate in the study of Gaelic.

An Irishman living in England lately entrusted me with a large sum of money to spend as I thought best in the promotion of Irish industry, and the great work of keeping the people at home.

He signed his name in Irish characters, and added the Gaelic phrase,

Dáil o' Dia air an obair.

A blessing from God upon the work.

Again, all my correspondents who are most interested in our industrial progress are also interested in Gaelic.

I went into the movement myself as a kind of intellectual relaxation; but perceive now, very clearly, that the future of Ireland, nay the very existence of our people, is vitally connected with this movement towards a revival of ancient tongue.

How this is so will perhaps be best understood through a historical retrospect of the causes of our national decline, a decline which is now, to judge by appearances, about to eventuate in national destruction. In the 18th century I don't find that the Irish gentry, though nearly all of English origin, despised the national tongue; indeed a good many of them spoke it. O'Reilly's Irish Dictionary was published early in this century, and amongst the subscribers to that great work I find the names of many Irish Peers and gentlemen, many too who supported Lord Clare in his Union policy.

After the Union your order began more and more to transfer themselves and their sympathies to England, and more and more to look down upon the native Irish and upon their most distinctive and characteristic feature, their Gaelic tongue. I think you will agree with me that that Anglicization has not tended to the increase of the power and popularity which they enjoyed so conspicuously in the 18th century.

Owing to their wealth and power, their education and social refinement, they, without intending it, set the fashion of a general contempt for the Gaelic. They were followed presently by the well-to-do shopkeepers and merchants, who on their side set the fashion for the towns; and so Gaelic was driven into the country. Then, by degrees, the country people, who naturally looked to the towns for light and leading, began to be ashamed of their language. I have myself seen the murderous business at work, and respectable Irish parents chastising or rebuking their

children for speaking Gaelic. Misled by examples emanating in the first instance from your order they believed that it was "vulgar and low"—the poor ignorant, misguided people, sheep without their shepherds.

Presently, from despising the Irish tongue they began to despise everything Irish, and our home manufactures decayed.

My lord, I think you know what I am aiming at, and the reasons which underlie my purpose in this direction.

I am also profoundly interested in the Land Question. I wish to see that deepest and greatest of all Irish interests settled permanently upon rational lines, and in such a manner that our Labour, our Capital, and our Intellect shall have free access to the Land, which is the ultimate source of all wealth; and I think that you who, as I know, have studied the Continental land systems might be of great service to us in our attempt to bring about some such solution of that great and most distressing national problem.

TO F. G.

Thanks for your beautiful hymn. I purpose ending my life with pious literature and meditations, as a man should, but the day's work is not over yet, and I can't succeed in getting religion and secular things such as stockings, the Land Question, etc., etc., run together harmoniously like well paired horses. Do you remember that fine line; I think it is Hesiod's; which the poverty of my menage compels me to print in ugly Roman characters, instead of the beautiful Greek.

*Erga neon, boulai te meson,
euchai te geronton.*

I hope my next Christmas box will be a fount of Greek type.

THE FEATHERED DARLINGS.

To-day, as well as this time last year, in the early morning, amid the blended chorus of our singing birds, we distinguished one clear song which we could not refer to any bird of our acquaintance. It might be thus translated.

Chic-a-chic-a-chic-a-chic-z-r-r-r-zek-a-deca.

The same repeated over and over again with an exact reiteration.

Can any one give us the name of this sweet singer?

IT is not a genuine and sincere affection which leaves a helpless woman and a young family to the risks of poverty when immediate provision can be made by paying a small premium to the English and Scottish Law Office.—David Drimmie and Sons, Secretaries 41, Lower Sackville-street, Dublin, and 5, Lombard-street, Belfast.