

All Ireland Review

To the Editor All Ireland Review

Author(s): E. D.

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All Ireland Review.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1901.

VOL II.—No. 31.]

EDITED BY STANDISH O'GRADY.

[ONE PENNY.]

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IRELAND AND THE LAW.

TO THE EDITOR ALL IRELAND REVIEW.

DEAR MR. O'GRADY,—I am very sorry to hear that you are experiencing that isolation which is too often the reward of independent public spirit, and forced, like more than one good man before you, to form a "parte per te stesso." It is especially unfair that this should be your lot, who have infused into public questions something of the old national brightness which is so little apparent in the modern Irish character. Indeed, every shade and brand of nationality is denouncing as traitor to the country those who take a different view, or addict themselves to a different department of the national problem. Ireland of to-day is sadly lacking in that inclusive spirit to which Wolfe Tone (whom you love not), Davis and Parnell, in their several ways, owed much of what they effected.

Though I can understand and partly sympathise with your attitude towards the King's Irish, I cannot see how Ireland can be finally bound by a constitution made 700 years ago, after such a series of changes in all circumstances, even if such constitution had been valid, as against the whole nation originally, and it seems to me to have been as void *ab initio* as the Act of Union itself. Since then every reign has been a virtual abdication of the *Irish Kingship*, each Sovereign ruling Ireland so far as circumstances would permit, as a territory dependent upon England, which it is not, or as a part of Great Britain, which it is even less.

However, in spite of all, the work seems now to be going forward, though along different lines, which will doubtless be brought to co-operate when the right man or movement shall arise, and then the value of your pioneer work can hardly miss recognition.

May that day come soon, and meanwhile, may the beauties of Irish nature without, and a *mens conscia recti* within, rob the period of suspense of some of its irksomeness.

B.

DEAR B.,—I don't believe in pills and "doses" at all, but were I to prescribe one, it would be a little dose of Irish History. I think I shall have to outline a History of the Constitution and hymn—if I can—the grand, the victorious supremacy of the Fundamental Law, the Law beneath as above all Laws, the genius of this Land and Race, a warrior angel, dreadless, marching down the centuries; and never so great, so refulgent and victorious as when, with a wail of anguish that shook the stars, alone he went down into the Valley of the Shadow.

It was when we all, all misled or frightened by the genius of that marvellous boy, Tone, some on the right hand, and some on the left, abandoned him, and broke away from the great road. And from the Valley of the Shadow which he treads to-day alone, he will emerge, never doubt it, for he is an immortal god and the angel of the Most High.

Pardon this roar; but a roar now and then seems to give me some relief.

Yes, dear B., I think I shall have to try what I can do in the matter of that hymn, after getting my books and things into order and properly receipting my subscribers, etc., etc.—ED.

BEAUTIFUL RIVERS.

THE NORE, THE BARROW, AND THE ANNAMOE.

I wish your correspondent S., who advocates a good dose of scepticism for Ireland could know something of —'s faith, so strong; so brave. Why, their "faith" is the one great, beautiful lasting inheritance of the Irish! Our beautiful rivers are as full of suggestion as they are of gliding water. I was greatly struck with our friend the Barrow when riding from Borris to Graigue. Near contact with it at my own place made me always rather despise it! But looking down on it there, it was beautiful, like a great deep peace flowing at the heart of things. Whenever you looked there it was flowing on. Then the Nore, which your correspondent found fault with as having "no music," has a great grandeur as seen on a bridge between Innostigue and Thomastown. It certainly does look a little self-satisfied, and seems to say I know what is expected of me and I will do it. But my dear, sweet, Annamoe. No river can touch it, with its charming surprises; so gay, one might say inconsequent, like the laughter of a child, yet here and there a sad, long pause and sob. Rivers speak as no other things in nature do. Now the Barrow says to me "peace;" the Nore, "fulfilment of duty;" the Annamoe, "life," and its lessons, as the years go on—joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain.

SCOTA.

DEAR S.,—There was a singular appropriateness in your selection of such a name for signature, which is that of the Irish goddess of flowers; for you love flowers, and stars, and light, and fire, and all manner of beautiful things. I think you are laughing at me in

some of the things that you have written about my own noble river, the Nore. Do you remember Shelly's lovely lines?

"I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight,
The fresh earth in new leaves drest,
And the blessed night."
Starry evening and the morn
When the golden mists are born."

TO THE EDITOR ALL IRELAND REVIEW.

DEAR MR. O'GRADY,—I have just seen the first number of the A.I.R., in its new coat—or, rather, without its old coat—and hasten to wish it welcome and wish you good speed. Indeed, I don't know why I have not written to you long ere this. I started to do so more than once, but found I had so much to say that it was impossible for me to find time to write it all, and so I abandoned the idea of becoming one of your little group of correspondents. You see I am kept so busy scribbling for one or other of the daily papers you despise so heartily, that it is hard to find leisure for that sincere expression of opinion of which you speak. Loyalty to my craft, however, forbids my endorsing your dangerous views on the subject of newspapers, for, as you know, there is honour even amongst thieves—and we journalists are all that more or less. Seriously, there is hardly a single point upon which I do agree with you, dear Editor, except in your love for "this lost land" (I don't like that phrase, it's too hopeless) and its people. Perhaps that is why I enjoy reading your tirades (excuse the expression) about "the King's Irish," the "Order," and so forth, and so on. Why the *King's Irish*, anyway? You will tell me the King of England is the only King all Ireland has ever known. Even if I admit that—I must, as it's historically true—what does it prove? That we must accept this King as one of the facts in nature, and cultivate a deep well-spring of gratitude to him in our hearts? I cannot see it, for my part. In fact I cannot see the necessity for a King at all. A King typifies centralisation with all its necessary attendant evils (and good), and it is just possible that this is exactly what Ireland does not want. Of course, to have a King of one's own, who is the embodiment of the nation's personality, and the expression of its faith and its hope, is very fine and romantic, even if a little antiquated. When Kings have borne that relation to their people—as they often did in the past—they were, not unnaturally, beloved—even worshipped. But who can say that this is true, or can ever be true, of any English Sovereign and his Irish subjects? I don't want to be treasonable, but really, dear Editor, you expect too much from your fellow-countrymen when you expect them to feel the devotion of a medieval knight for the Head of this Realm. Why not admit that the strength of the present arrangement lies in its inevitableness, its utility, its convenience, anything you like, so long as you don't place its foundation

in the imagination or emotion of the people. I myself am quite prepared to dispute the inevitableness—or, at least, set a limit to it; though I can see that there is something to be said for the idea. But imagination and emotion—they are quite outside the question, are they not? I must not, however, allow myself to stray into controversy or my letter will not get finished, and the loose sheets will remain in my desk to remind me of yet another unfulfilled intention. One word more of protest and I have done. Why are you so hard upon Dublin? Is it not the very stronghold of the King's Irish—those pleasant mandarins with whose manners and customs you are so familiar? As a Dubliner born and bred I must take leave to dissent in the most determined manner from the oft iterated opinion that Dublin is dead, and that no good thing can come out of Nazareth. Dublin isn't a bit dead—as far as thought is concerned. Where do nine-tenths of the philosophers and poets, and artists, and dreamers, and enthusiasts, that help to keep this little isle of ours sweet and habitable, come from if not from the capital? A moment's reflection will bring to your mind a score of names whose owners have breathed Dublin air, moved amongst Dublin scenes, worked under Dublin influences, during the greater part of their natural lives. As for the selfishness, it exists, of course, as it exists everywhere, but surely not to any great extent amongst those who work and hope. We are only human; but give us a chance and we will prove to you that we are not cold-hearted.

Again—good luck. E. D.

DEAR E.D.—For many years I was myself on the staff of one of your eastward-looking Dublin roarers. I know all about you and that singular craft of yours. A docile and modest-minded lad, I wrote as I was bid like yourself, and in the manner that commended itself to my Editor, and such a manner!

"It is with the very gravest misgivings that we publish to-day the startling intelligence that Lord Salisbury," &c., &c.

It was troublesome at first like walking upon stilts, but, after a while, became quite easy—like lying. As I wrote small, I could often reel of my column in three quarters of an hour, and it was just like a good rest, for the heart, the understanding, and the imagination were quiescent the whole time; only the fingers busy.

No more at present. Just follow what I have got to say about the King. You and your fellow-craftsmen of the Fourth Estate will be the first to understand; and perhaps,—who knows?—A.I.R., and its friends may yet free you from the thralldom in which you are now held by the furious demon of politics and the cold one of capital.—ED.

THE FINEST SINGER IN GALWAY.

"I am the finest singer in Galway; I can sing against any man." So said William Leonard as we rested ourselves in a little inn facing the village green of Monivea, on the road to Athenry. We turned to look at the new-comer—he had a straight eye, a form wearied with labour, a grizzled beard, continually combed by a nervous hand, with deep wrinkles in his face; past the middle age, but sturdy and still boastful of his

prime. "I can sing louder than any man in Ireland; I have raised a lilt in Monivea that has been heard in Menlough. I have forty songs. One time I sang here, and Shawn there heard me as he was leaving Dublin after drivin' cattle from the County Mayth. Is not that so, Shawn?" "It is," said John. "You could not sing so loud as Barrett of Tyrawley, as he led the high Burkes against the Spaniards at Kinsale," we ventured to remark; "he had the loudest voice in Ireland." "Barrett is it; he was nowhere with me; Barrett, indeed! When did he live?" "Three hundred years ago," we answered. "That was before I was born, so I never heard of him. I have cracked pots before now with my singing. I have broken windows—hundreds of them. I have shaken trees and brought down the rain," and we verily believe that Leonard had faith in his own abilities.

Forthwith "to plaze your honours," he started a "Come all ye" of twelve or fifteen verses, about Irishmen looking for work in England, and the way they were treated by the Saxon. The air was an old Irish one, weird and strange, commencing with a loud, startling note, and ending with a wail! In spite of the surroundings it affected us deeply, and set us thinking of long bye-gone days.

We waited until William had drunk our healths, then we finished our refreshments, and wended our way to Athenry.

F.J.B. & H.H.

The following is a copy of the ballad, and the air was similar to Moore's "*Thy Fair Bosom*," as given in Graves' "*Irish Song Book*," No. 50:—

THE TRUE-BRED IRISHMAN.

Come all ye true-bred Irishmen
Who are inclined to roam,
To reap the English harvest,
So far away from home;
Be sure you're well provided
With your comrades, just and true;
You'll have to fight both day and night
With Johnny and his crew.

When we left home for Dublin
The weather it was fine.
When we got on board of ship
We gave three long, loud cheers.
Hurrah, my boys, for Paddy's land;
The place where we adore.
May heaven shine on every child
That loves the shamrock shore.

Away we sailed from the quay
And never received a shock,
Till we landed safe on side of shore,
Alongside of Clarence dock.
Where numbers of our countrymen
Did meet us in the town.
Hurrah, my boys, for Paddy's land,
Was the word that went around.

Away we tramped for three long days
High wages for to find,
And on the following evening
We chanced a railway line.
The navvies they came up to us
And loudly they did roar;
They cursed and damned those Paddies
The sons of Granuaile.

They cursed and damned those Paddies
And told us to begone,
They made us think of '98,
Ballinamuck and Slievenamon.
Up steps Barney Walsh
And he knocks the ganger down,
The bricks and stones in hail and showers
They fell all around.

They fought from half-past four
Till the sun was going to set;
When O'Reilly says, "My Irish boys,
I fear we will be bet."

Early next morning, as you will quickly hear,

One hundred strong we marched along
Without either dread or fear.

Each man he had a blackthorn
He brought from Paddy's land,
And a hook that launched with steel
And silver in their hands.

When the fight commenced the second time

Its there you'd see some fun,
With scythes and hooks flourishing
Says the navvies, "We're undone."
The cowardly clan away they ran
With their head and arms sore,
They'll think upon O'Reilly
And the boys of Ballinamore.

Here's long life to Reilly,
McCormick and McCabe;
And also Bryan McGovern,
He never was afraid.
And every man from Paddy's land
That fought upon that day,
To enforce the English navvies,
In gangs to run away.

They sailed back with Barney
And passed them all around,
Like Samson with his Philistines
They laid them on the ground.
Away they went with one consent
To drink strong ale and wine,
And each man drank a favourite toast
For the girl he left behind.

They drank and sung,
The tavern rung,
Despising Erin's foes,
For many a man
That hates the land

Where St. Patrick's shamrock grows.

TO READERS.

Last week we had an absurd sort of doggerel, which certainly looked comical enough, as a sequel to our late discourse upon poetry. "This, then," said the captious critic, "is the kind of poetry that Mr. O'Grady admires—very low and unidea'd doggerel."

The fact is that this little scrap of contemporaneous Irish ballad poetry broke loose from its context, all through the fault of the Editor. This number will explain.—ED.

LETTER TO G. C.

PLAIN, BUOYANT.

DEAR G. C.—I hear that what you used to enjoy most in A. I. R. during its moral career was the rare excellence of the misprints, and the steadiness with which I kept up the supply—"matted tears" and so forth. I am sure, therefore, that you were pleased to observe that even the great city of the Mandarins, and the eminent firm which now prints me, were unable to send me forth deprived altogether of those little customary ornaments and decorations which, in your opinion, add such a charm to my usually sober attire. Last week, for example, I declared that my publishers, in quest of a "plain buoyant title," changed "Red Hugh's Captivity" to "The Flight of the Eagle," which is "buoyant," surely, but, as surely, not "plain." You saw at once that there was something of an ornamental nature here, if you could only detect it. I feel sure that even your acute and enquiring mind failed in the attempt, so shall explain. What I really wrote was "flamboyant!"

It occurs to me that the title ALL IRELAND REVIEW does really correspond with the double epithet, plain and buoyant.

P.S.—Observe in the third line, my "moral career." Supply still steadily kept up!