

All Ireland Review

The Great Enchantment

Author(s): Y.

Source: *All Ireland Review*, Vol. 1, No. 38 (Sep. 22, 1900), pp. 4-5

Published by: [All Ireland Review](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20544946>

Accessed: 22/06/2014 03:39

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



All Ireland Review is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *All Ireland Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

THE GREAT ENCHANTMENT.

I hope you will give us more and more of your opinions. What we want from you is a kind of Irish "Fors Clavigera." You are about the best fighter we have against that Death whose most manifest expression in this country is Trinity College (should we not add Alexandra College?) and which has already turned our once intelligent gentry into readers of the "Irish Times."

I fear that you cannot awake the dying mind of a dying class; but people like you can keep it from dying right out till another class is ready to take its place.

Y.

Dear Y., the initial will not hide you; the distinctive personal savour and flavour are so strong.

Thanks for desiring to get more of my opinions. I know you do, for you had always the courage to be sincere; but I am by nature properly more a story-teller than a propounder of views and opinions.

What I work against, for my "fighting" days, if I ever had any, are, I think, over, is "the Great Enchantment" whose modes of operation are past counting and whose subtlety transcends the human faculties to discern.

I have watched its presence and power in our politics and public life generally! You are more aware of it as it manifests itself in education and things literary.

By the way, there is a new weekly paper just out called the "Leader," of which I have formed a high opinion. Here at least is one of the things you want from me, viz., an "opinion". The Editor, who seems to write the whole paper himself, has a perfect perception of the presence and power of the mysterious spell which has reduced us as a nation and in all our orders and classes to a state worse than Reuben's—the intellect paralysed, the will gone all to water. His manner is blunt and plain, but he has knowledge and understanding, clear purposes, fearlessness and sincerity, and he stands, as in my own poor way I try to stand, with his face to the country, not with his back to the country and eyes fixed devoutly on the great Idol, the source of the Enchantment, though it is we ourselves who give it its power.

You remember how our ancestors slew their little children in honour of their demon-god Crom.

Now Crom was not to blame. Crom was only a poor unoffending stone, unluckily, as I suppose, of a peculiar formation. The men themselves were to blame who, out of the evil imaginations of their hearts, their own wickedness, meanness, selfishness, and cruelty, created from the stone a very real devil whom they adored and feared and in whose honour sacrificed their cattle and even their poor little children.

We, too, have made for ourselves a god out of a thing which fifty years ago and long before it arrived at its present advanced stage of decomposition the ablest English writer of this century described as "a Mother of Dead Dogs." For idolatry and superstition are not old-world sins which it is impossible to commit now. They are here to-day, here in the Land of Saints, called also "This LOST Land," and now, as of old, the divine punishments which track them are terrible.

And I think the Editor of the "Leader," with his face to Ireland and his back to the Mother of Dead Dogs, is a brave and sensible man who, if he can keep his pulpit erect, is likely to preach us many wholesome sermons about many things that concern

our welfare. He at least sees and knows that the enemy is not across the water but here in our own hearts and souls and the accumulated power of bad habits and traditions and cant and shams past counting. And he is something of a warrior, and I wish him success in his wars.

And I would ask you too to use your influence with Mr. Edward Martyn to write some such satire upon Ireland as he wrote upon England in that excellent book, *Morgante the Lesser*. The English people did not read his satire upon them, but we will read him when he satirizes us and the exercise will do us good.

The Enchantment must be assailed from many points, and writing is only good as a preparation for action, for it is only by action that the power of the Spell can be effectually broken. The true deliverers will be the doers not the sayers.

Our ancestors, from the date of the Battle of the Boyne down to '82, were under the dominion of an enchantment emanating from something that called itself the King but which was in fact the genius of mercantile greed en-Throned and wearing Sceptre and Crown, under whose control they destroyed a great Irish industry and exterminated three hundred thousand Irish Protestant weavers. Still, as of yore, the punishments that track such sins are terrible. For now observe the fate which has overtaken the descendants of the men who then led the nation to victory and gave Ireland independence, prosperity, and power.

To-day we are surrounded by the wrecks and fragments of this great Irish order, which did such mighty things, and then sank into slavery to phantoms of their own creation, so that even adversity could not teach them.

And I see, too, as you do, that from them, as a class and order, nothing is to be hoped. Have we not seen them offered the leadership and flinging it aside for something called the Fry Commission—an ominous name?

But this I know, and I believe you do too, that in this class there are many individuals of the highest spirit and honour, and ready to serve their country in everything that is right and good; and some of these men—and women—have already come, as it were, into action, and others are coming; and I sometimes think that one such in each county would be enough when the fogs and vapours lift a little and permit them to see the road. One such I know who went out into the wilderness and upon the waste moors made homes for hundreds and an abode of cheerful industry. And of that order I have several such in mind whom I shall do all I can directly and indirectly to bring into action; the modes of action are countless, but everything good that is done, or even honestly attempted to be done, must tell. In my own county the only attempt to do anything since I came into it will be done this winter, and by a man of that order.

I don't think you ought to revile any Irish class or order. You write of "the dying mind of a dying class." You might write, and perhaps more appropriately, of "the dying mind of a dying nation." For indeed we have been all worshipping the phantoms, and the demons of our own creation are—these current years—devouring far more than that erring and unfortunate class.

Observe that rural Ireland has not much changed of late, and that these old names, some historical, and associated as they were with the earth itself, still

exercise a great influence and power over the imagination of our people, and what else is so potent to stir, excite, and move men in any direction as the imagination?—Ed.

COROMAC SINGS.

Coromac sings;
There broods a calm upon the brows of kings
And they are glad to-night
To feast at Tara far from sound of fight,
For memories of more than war he brings.
He harps; they hear,
In harp note sighing through the banquet's cheer
Soft voices that are sad,
Of loves that in their youthful days they had,
Of noble women who no more are near.

He sings again;
And now hot tears are rolling like the rain
Down aged unused cheeks.
He pauses, in the silence no man speaks;
For all are sobbing betwixt joy and pain.

Flann rises up,
Awards the skilful bard a royal cup
But adds to that award
This prohibition hard
That he may sing no more where warriors sup.

ALICE L. MILLIGAN.

A CRITICISM.

Why does Miss Nora Hopper, in "A Love Song"
"A.I.R.," September 1, write:

"O woman that's most dear to me
and then in the next line:

"My grief thoul't be?"

and

"Woman that's most fair to me."

It hurts the ear, and also is bad grammar.

She means:

"O woman who art most dear to me,"
which, no doubt, would spoil her metre; but, as it
stands, the line, or rather the word, "that's," is
ugly. Now isn't it? Do you know that from
smiling at the first issue I have grown to like the
paper a whole lot.

You constantly publish people's letters; don't
please print my name.—B.

DEAR B.—Is it not a little temerarious (I don't
often use such great adjectives) to criticise one of
the most celebrated Irish poets of the day. I con-
fess I rather agree with you, but distrusting my own
judgment as to this very singular kind of writing
I hereby invite my friend, Mr. W. B. Yeats, to let
us know what he thinks of the "Love Song."

Mr. Yeats can be always trusted for honest criti-
cism. He would not leave the right road for an
Emperor.—Ed.

ALL IRELAND REVIEW.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

POST FREE, PREPAID.

	s.	d.
One quarter	1	7½
Half a year	3	3
A year	6	6

If sent in stamps let them be halfpenny stamps.

Subscribers will kindly remember that both the
finances and the book-keeping of this paper have
been necessarily based upon the assumption of pre-
payment.

THE LAST CONQUEST—PERHAPS. GRASS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ALL IRELAND REVIEW.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I am delighted to see your article on "The
Labourers and their Allotments," and hope many of
your readers will avail themselves of your invitation
to correspond on this important question. I remem-
ber some years ago a lady, Miss Sharman Crawford,
was very earnest over Ireland's possibilities in small
agricultural holdings. She had spent some time in
Belgium and the Netherlands studying the question,
and came back full persuaded that Ireland's salva-
tion lay in the pursuit of small industries—long-
haired rabbit and poultry growing, bees, fruit, and
a variety of vegetables and flowers. She said that
the success of the Netherlands was in their using
every corner of ground for something, not leaving
odd scraps of waste, weedy ground, as is too often
the case, with us. It is easy to grow a patch of pars-
ley or mustard and cress, or to erect a rabbit hutch
in a spare corner, and keep a few of these useful
little animals, who will cost practically nothing to
feed, and bring in a few shillings to their owners.
Fruit, vegetables, and flowers can be made extremely
profitable, and there is an increasing demand for
them. Now we have the light railways and the
parcel post, the difficulty of sending them fresh to
the market is largely removed. If any incline to
get reliable information on this subject from an ex-
perienced gardener let them consult Miss Currey,
of Lismore, or Miss C. G. O'Brien, whose article in
the last "A.I.R." has introduced us all so charmingly
to her.

Miss S. Crawford memorialised the then Lord
Lieutenant praying him that there might be an acre
of land belonging to each country National School,
and that there the children should be taught to weed,
as she considered one great cause of want of success
in Irish farming was that ill weeds were permitted
to grow apace and selfishly impoverish and occupy
land that should be turned to good account. But
like many other wise suggestions it received a polite
reception and was then shelved and forgotten.

As long as the farmers continue to employ nearly
all their land in grazing, there must be emigration
of the labouring population. Our strong young men
and women must go to find work elsewhere and leave
broad acres to be tenanted by cattle, and the few
who are required to attend them. I am told that
two men with dogs can mind one hundred acres of
stocked grazing land, whereas it takes from twenty
to thirty men and women per acre for fruit growing.
Unfortunately the Irish peasant has strong prejudices
against striking out a fresh line for himself, and he
traditionally follows what his father has done be-
fore him; therefore it will be necessary to get some
co-operation and encouragement to induce fruit and
vegetable growing to be taken up by the small far-
mers. An English gentleman, Mr. Bullock Hall,
did much some years ago to start fruit growing in
the South of Ireland, and met with a considerable
amount of success. It would be interesting to know
if the industry continues to prosper there.

Is there not also another aspect of the question
which, though not so practically evident, will appeal
to the readers of the "A.I.R."

Will not the Irish people who love their land
with that deep sentiment peculiar to their race, be
happier and more in harmony with their surround-
ings when engaged in the loving labour of calling
upon Nature to yield her own good fruits to the
children of the soil, rather than in the many de-