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PUBLISHERS:
HODGES, FIGGIS & CO., Ltd., Grafton Street, Dublin
DAVID NATT, 57-59 Long Acre, London, W.C.

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SIX MONTHS  -  -  3s. 6d.
ONE YEAR    -   -   7s. 0d.

Prepaid subscriptions should be sent to the Editorial Offices, 26, Dawson Chambers, Dawson Street, Dublin.

Contributions to be addressed to The Editors, DANA, 26, Dawson Chambers, Dawson Street, Dublin.
If anyone peruses, even cursorily, the comments in the Irish Catholic press on the present political situation in France, he will obtain an interesting and instructive light on the consistency and spirit of justice which the clerical temper connotes. It is not more than a generation since Irish Catholics were loudly calling out for the disestablishment of the Irish Protestant Church. The arguments then used, quite legitimately, were that that Church ministered only to a section of the people, and that in any case it was wrong to take public monies for the endowment of particular creeds. The Irish Catholics were taxed to support a Church in which they did not believe, whilst supporting their own Church voluntarily, and they naturally and properly protested. And the doctrine then in favour in Ireland was that the State, as such, had no right to meddle with religion, which was a private affair that should derive its funds from the free offerings of its own children.

Now observe the case in France. The Catholic Church there is in much the same position as was the Protestant Church in Ireland. There are naturally some slight differences, with which I shall presently deal. But the broad fact remains that under the Concordat, the Church obtains public monies from the public purse; though, of course, she resents public control. For a long time, however, it has been obvious that great numbers of the French people have ceased to believe in this Church or to desire its ministrations. In addition to the large bodies of avowed Freethinkers, there are in France vast numbers of indifferentists who resort to their parish church at times of marriage, at burials, and on other occasions of social ceremonial, but otherwise have no living belief in its mission. Between the condition of the Protestant

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Church in Ireland and the Catholic Church in France there are indeed striking resemblances. Mr. Justin McCarthy graphically draws this picture of the State Church in this country before 1869, a picture which is, of course, equally true to-day: "In many places the Protestant clergyman preached to a dozen listeners; in some places he thought himself lucky if he could get half-a-dozen. There were places with a Protestant clergyman and Protestant church and absolutely no Protestant worshippers."¹ Compare this with the description given by Mr. H. W. Massingham of the present condition of the Catholic Church in France: "A popular and active priest, in church-going Paris, rejoices if he can call one parishioner in thirteen a 'practising' Catholic, in the widest sense of that most freely interpreted expression. In great tracts of the country in the South, the East, and the Centre, the regular maintenance of religion tends to die away. In many parishes no services are held."² The same testimony is borne by numbers of other witnesses. Here is M. Jules Delafosse, a Catholic deputy writing in Le Gaulois of a country district visited by him:—

"Another characteristic of these people is their remarkable detachment from religious observances. There is still a church and a priest in each commune, but he is almost the only man who enters it. In the commune in which I was staying, there was hardly anyone at Sunday Mass but I and my people. I saw neither women, nor girls, nor boys. Even the children who are getting ready for their first Communion do not go to Mass."

M. Delafosse adds that there is no trace of hostility to religion; it is rather apparently a case of quiet and peaceful dissolution. The whole picture, however, is singularly like Mr. Justin McCarthy's picture of Irish Protestantism. Over and above any descriptions such as these, there is the outstanding fact that the French Chamber of Deputies, under a system of free election, is very largely free-thinking. On the head of M. Combes every kind of calumny was heaped by his clerico-militarist opponents, and even our Irish religious press adopted a fantastically abusive tone towards him, painting him as mean, crafty, deceitful, and filled with the spirit of evil. His domestic opponents, from the pious M. Syveton, who struck General André in the face, to the eccentric M. Baudry d'Asson, who flourished a

¹ A History of our Own Times, Vol. IV., p 235.
² Independent Review, January, 1905, pp 509-510. Compare the figures of the recent Daily News religious census of London, which gave 1 to 5 of the population as attending Church on Sunday,
copper saucepan in the Chamber, do not impress one either by their seriousness, their sincerity, or their good taste. As usual, it is the aristocratic and Church party who err most in the latter respect. But when all is said against him, M. Combes was, and remains, as representative a statesman as, say, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in England or Mr. Michael Davitt in our own country. Yet when such a politician proposes to do in France what, under very similar circumstances was done by Gladstone in Ireland, and put an end to a State-supported Church, the Irish Catholics who cheered on Gladstone abuse him as vile and corrupt. Such, it is to be feared, is the measure of Catholic and, for that matter, Protestant consistency. One may fairly describe clerical ethics in the main by altering the common tag: What is sauce for the goose is never sauce for the gander. Anyone, in fact, who desires a really sane and really just outlook on any question of politics, especially if it be one involving ecclesiastical affairs, must seek it outside the official exponents of clericalism. Certainly, from those exponents one never obtains anything more than the enunciation of the common-place policy of self-interest. In Ireland at the present moment we see the purely sectarian and impossible attitude which the ecclesiastical body as a whole takes up on the University question, it being left to lay common-sense to suggest any possible or practical scheme. If the Church in France were anything like the moral exemplar it is alleged to be, one might have imagined that it would voluntarily refuse to accept funds collected by the secular arm from taxpayers who stand outside its pale and only give on the compulsion of the law. After all, when the Church relies upon force, it cannot at the same time claim to be ruling solely through the spirit. Yet, just as the Irish Church fought for its tithes, knowing they were an imposition on the people, so the Catholic Church in France fights for its establishment, and will fight to the end. It would be a mistake to suppose that end is reached in the resignation of M. Combes. His policy remains, and in the present condition of things in France may be expected to be substantially the policy of any successor; indeed, it is declared that the newly-formed Cabinet of M. Rouvier is explicitly committed to that policy in all its details.

II.

When one turns to the political science of the matter there are, for the State, obviously two equitable methods
of dealing with religion. The first is to subsidise all religious, and even non-religious, bodies alike, in proportion to their numbers in the community. If, in a population of 1,000, there were 500 Catholics, 300 Protestants, 100 Jews and 100 Agnostics, then the Catholics should get half the amount set apart under this head, the Protestants three-tenths, and so on. That would plainly be equitable. But in practice such a system, which is partially applied in France and Belgium, tends to handicap the smaller sects and societies to the advantage of the larger bodies. Dissent and heresy are really the very salt of the intellectual life, Christianity itself originally arising as a dissent from the prevailing paganism. Yet such variation is penalised under the best system of State endowment, since there must be some administrative limit to the recognition of bodies entitled to participate. The second equitable method is to abolish all State subsidies and leave religious organisations to their own resources, like any other voluntary society. And this latter system secures all that the very best State system could possibly achieve. Any religionist who objects to such freedom is merely saying that he distrusts the loyalty of his co-religionists to voluntarily provide for their Church as much as the State would provide out of the public revenues. At the same time the State must, of course, retain the right to control Churches and religious bodies, even as it retains the right to control any of its members, if their proceedings seem to imperil the public welfare.

When we come to the concrete case in France we shall see that these principles were sought to be applied in the measure drafted by M. Briand, though with modifications. At the beginning I said that there were some differences between the situation in Ireland in 1869 and in France to-day. In Ireland there was only one established Church. In France the Protestants and the Jews are also subsidised. But even here there is some slight parallel between the two countries. For Mr. Gladstone, when he disestablished the Episcopal Church, also commuted the Maynooth Grant and the Regium Donum. In France the Bill of M. Combes, or rather that adopted by him, provided, of course, for the extinction of all religious subsidies. And it is to this latter fact, no doubt, that some of the moderate non-Catholic opposition to disestablishment is due.

At the same time, there were in M. Combes' measure a number of checks and counter-checks—relics of the long warfare which the Catholic Church in France has carried
on against the Republic—which raise some misgivings in
the minds of critical on-lookers. The Church buildings,
which are national property, were to be let by the local
authorities at a nominal rent for ten years to the societies
to be immediately formed to carry on Church affairs.
These societies were to furnish accounts to the civil
authorities, and were not to retain in hands at any time
more than a third of their annual income. Moreover,
any priest who used his church, or allowed it to be used, for
political gatherings, or made political harangues, was to be
liable to penalties, and if the offence were persisted in, the
church might be closed altogether.

The object of these restrictions is plain. They spring
from the knowledge of the part the Church has played in
politics in the past, and the desire to prevent her further
activity in that direction. No religious organization was
to extend beyond the limits of one Department. Thus the
Church was to be prevented amassing a campaign fund out
of its voluntary revenues, whilst priests were to be pre-
vented from permitting their churches to become the
centres of political intrigue.

These provisions the clericals declared to be intolerable
hardships; though obviously they are only hardships to
those who desire to travel outside their religious functions.
Why should the Church wish to amass a large reserve
fund, like a limited liability company, in defiance of the
teaching: "Take no thought for the morrow"? Or why
should individual clergymen complain of not being allowed
to turn their pulpits into political platforms?

These criticisms of the complaints naturally suggest
themselves. And yet we may be sure that anything which
even savours of harshness will recoil on the heads of the
Republicans. The storm caused by the revelations as to
espionage in the army is evidence of how carefully reformers
must walk. It is easy to prove that M. Combes' Govern-
ment merely inherited this system from previous French
Governments, or to argue that any Government might well
take means to rid its army of disloyal officers.³ Republicans
complain with justice that they have had to face persistent
clerical intrigue at every stage of the Republic's history. For

³ It may be noted that the Leader, a clericalist weekly, which pub-
lished several articles full of pious horror at the Masonic espionage in France
—without question a scandalous practice—itself a short time previously
published details of the religious beliefs of the employés of various banks and
railways, details which could only be obtained by the private reports of
fellow-employés. I say nothing here as to the use made by the Leader of
this information, or as to the general question of the alleged boycott of Irish
Catholics by large corporations.
it cannot be made too clear that the clerical party and the militarist-jingo party, who openly sigh for the restoration of the Empire, are inextricably bound together in modern French politics, whilst the tone and temper and breadth of view of their newspapers are about on a level with those of the London *Daily Mail*. The Boulanger episode and the long-drawn Dreyfus drama are recent striking instances which justify the Republican fears. Nevertheless, men of justice should guard against answering plots and intrigues with counter-plots and counter-intrigues, or meeting bad faith with elaborate counter-balancing machinery. For the vanity of it all is that, just as the diplomatic *finesse* of the Church has not availed her to reconquer the mind and the manhood of France, so the nicely-balanced checks against her will fail too. Thus it is not difficult to see that some of the provisions of the Combes Bill might easily have been evaded. If the Church is rich enough to voluntarily raise much more than is sufficient for her current needs, she will easily find means of capitalising the surplus if she so desires, all precautions notwithstanding, whilst priests need not personally do the political fighting that may be done on their behalf. In Ireland, for instance, priests do not enter Parliament yet they have not less but rather more political power than if they did. The Republic, in fact, if it means progress, must commend itself by a magnanimity which is, in truth, the highest wisdom, and by rising superior to the temptation to retaliate in kind. Only thus, it would seem, will France ever get clear of the imbroglio which has complicated her politics for a generation, if not for the past century. What the immediate effect of M. Combes' resignation may be it is not at the time of writing possible to say; he himself is reported to have expressed the belief that it would facilitate the realisation of his policy. Be that as it may, however, the disestablishment of the Church in France can only be a matter of time. The Concordat, that delicate patchwork devised by Napoleon, can never be made perfect again. The Republican statesmen, on the other hand, may well be expected to accord to the Church the fullest liberty, compatible with the right of the nation as a whole to develop itself along its own lines. As citizens, French Catholics are entitled to the same consideration as all other citizens. Catholicism in its day of power burned heretics at the stake. It would surely be a poor hope for humanity if the Republic in its day of power exhibited the faintest likeness to that evil example.

*Frederick Ryan.*
AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS.

Oh, to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all,
The heaped-up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf again' the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains,
And pendulum swinging up and down;
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white, and blue and brown.

I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on the shelf again
My white, and blue, and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night,
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delph!

Och, but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house, a house of my own,
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

PADRAIC COLUM.
THE BEST IRISH POEM.

—"As certain also of your own poets have said,

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a name rose into prominence in England which was a baleful star to poetry, a name at which Eros paused in his ranging and grew pale, recognising a threatened end to that great period of his apotheosis during which he had become the inseparable companion of the nine muses and been held equally in honour with them—the name of Malthus. The modern study of literature has taught us to see every literary movement in relation to the philosophical theories and social changes of the time, and we might almost say that the first formulation of the Malthusian theory—or the theory that population tends to increase at a rate in excess of the means of subsistence—was the signal for poetry to betake itself to the interpretation of nature and of the individual life, and no longer to be the mouthpiece of those warlike and reproductive instincts which make for mighty nations. For the poet is of all men most susceptible to any changes in the intellectual climate of his age, and the slightest cloud in the metaphysical or speculative sky often causes a fatal rift in his lute. The poets were at once up in arms against Malthus: Shelley, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, all protested against this cruel demonstration by a Church of England clergyman of the blindness of Cupid. "I had rather be damned with Plato," said Shelley, "than go to Heaven with Malthus!" "This abominable tenet," exclaimed Coleridge, "disgraceful to man as a Christian, a philosopher, a statesman or a citizen!" But that the arguments of Malthus had struck home, at least so far as the poets were concerned, is clear from their subsequent fortunes. Already had come the epoch-marking defection of Wordsworth and the almost complete change in the venue of poetry brought about by his withdrawal from civic life to his native mountains; and in the next generations we find the poets either faithful to the magnificent prospectus of the new poetry which he prefixed to "The Excursion," or else battling pathetically with theological and sociological spectres, and endeavouring to lay the hateful ghost of doubt. It is only historic visionaries like William Morris
or belated *jongleurs* like Swinburne, who adhere obstinately to the old themes, as though the sun of a new era were not already well up in the sky. Generally speaking, in spite of the reassurances of such writers as Henry George, the poets have never quite got over the depression caused by the "theory" of Malthus, and it would seem as though the reproduction of one generation by another were a process which must now go forward unattended by the gratulatory chorus of the poets: indeed it is hardly among those naturally selected for the continuation of the species that they find now-a-days either their chief audience or inspiration. One and all, the poets turn with an increasing aversion from the noisy and unlovely centres of population to the calm and solitude of nature; obeying an instinct perhaps not essentially different from that which drove the Christian ancestors of the modern world into the wilderness.

The "population question" meant a different thing to that poet of County Clare who in 1780 wrote what has been called "the most tasteful composition in modern Irish," *The Midnight Court* (*Cúirt an Mheadhóin Oidhche*). The Munster poets of the eighteenth century, in whose idealism there is none of the pessimist alienation from the joy of life of the later English poets, produced a literature which has not yet found its critical interpreter; an office which, we may wonder, is not taken over by someone like Mr. Stephen Gwynn or Mr. T. W. Rolleston, whose knowledge of Gaelic enables them to enjoy in the original poetry for which such high claims are made as that of Owen Roe O'Sullivan, Egan O'Rahilly, etc. We need not wonder that the penal times produced poets whose main themes were wine, women and joviality, any more than we need wonder that Calvinistic Scotland produced Burns. Perhaps, indeed, the dear Irishman is never so unconvincing as when he talks, as he is so fond of doing, of the horrible events of the penal times, as if they were entirely undeserved, or as if, from his own point of view, they did not prove a blessing in disguise. But for the penal regulations, Ireland would doubtless have been, at the time of O'Connell, as much an English-speaking country as Scotland. The modern Gaelic movement is in direct descent from the battle of the Boyne, which threw the Celtic world back on itself, and arrested that disintegration of the old language which was already far advanced. The penal regulations were a very mild form of that
discipline to which every race which has ever done any-
things in the world has been at some time subjected, and
the lack of which till then in Ireland is probably the
cause of its having missed hitherto both that political and
literary destiny for which the Irishman, both physically
and mentally, is so well fitted. As it was, that period
proved, so far as matters could at so late a date be mended,
his salvation. With nothing to do but to keep quiet,
Gaelic Ireland at length achieved in its own despite some-
thing like unity. The population steadily increased,
and whereas at the beginning of the seventeenth century
there were only about half a million Gaelic speakers in
Ireland, by the end of the eighteenth a big nation had
come into existence, which has been the main problem
of the British Empire ever since. As regards literature,
this period was, by all accounts, the golden age of Irish
poetry. Not only did many of the mediæval tales and
poems then receive their final shape, but a sudden
expansion of form and metre brought into the poems of
the Celts the passion and genius of their melodies.
During the "Augustan age" of English literature poems
were written in Ireland which have far more in common with
later developments of English poetry—with poems, for ex-
ample, like Shelley's "When the Lamp is Shattered," or
George Meredith's "Love in a Valley"—than anything
produced by the "wits" of the London coffee houses. For
proof, read only Dr. Douglas Hyde's running translation
of the "Love Songs of Connaught," with side-glances at
his Irish text. These poets, however, were only strong in
the expression of the primordial instincts. When he "be-
gins to think," the Celtic poet is not so much, as Heine
said of Byron, "a child," as a nasty bigot. The stock-in-
trade images of unregenerate Irish nationalism are all of
his creation: Kathleen Ni Houlihan, the Soggarth
Aroon, the Saxon tyrant, the jolly good fellow. Ironical,
sensual, gregarious, and too clever by half, the Irish poet
enables one to understand how tough a problem was pre-
sented in the Irish temperament to evangelists like
Ignatius Loyola and Wesley, who both entertained the vain
ambition of repeating in Ireland the legendary success of
Patrick.

Yet that there is no natural limitation in the Irish mind
which disqualifies it for "dealing boldly with substantial
things," or for free speculation, is sufficiently proved in the
poem already mentioned, "The Midnight Court," of Brian
Merriman, which is now being published and translated in
the Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie, by L. C. Stern.* The steady increase in the population had already begun to overflow in that stream of emigration to America and to the large towns in Ireland and Great Britain, which, with another cause mentioned in the poem, deprived the country of its best and most enterprising young men. What remedy for this evil? is the question discussed by Merriman. Whether Irish is ever to become the universal language of this country, it is certain that the "obscurity of a learned tongue" is most fitting for certain passages of this poem, of which, even in a learned review, only 1,000 of the original 2,000 lines have the temerity to appear in print. The form is the mediæval Aisling, or vision. The poem opens with a fine description of daybreak on a summer morning in this County Clare.

"My heart rejoiced as I looked on Loch Greine,
The fields, the soil, and the width of the skies,
The mountains lying serene and lovely,
One over the other uplifting their tops.
Dried up though it be, the heart rejoices,
Spent and nerveless and filled with pains;
The embittered hungerer, owning nothing,
Looks forth for a little while over the woods!"

Wandering on until exhausted the poet lies down and falls asleep. A woman of giant form appears to him in a dream and upbraids him with his sloth. Does he not see how the people are hurrying to the Court, no court of robbers who have "sworn on the Bible the destruction of the poor," but a court of the queen and high dignitaries of the fairies who befriend Munster, and who are met to hear the complaints of "the poor, the good, and of women." There is a want of men in Erin. The high spirit of the old race has gone over the seas, and the young men are doing nothing to replace it. Without further parley the poet, as helpless as Chaucer in the claws of the eagle in the House of Fame, is seized and borne over the valleys to the court at Feakle.

He there finds a company assembled in a stately room lighted with torches (it is midnight in his dream), and standing at a table, with tear-stained face and excited gesture, a maiden is laying before Iwil, the Queen, the sad case of the women of Erin, who through neither choice nor fault of their own have to live "like black nuns." It is only the old, not young and proper men, who will marry.

* Through the kindness of Dr. Kuno Meyer we have been able to see proofs of the Irish text with German translation.
She enumerates her own charms, and describes without reserve her frustrated efforts to secure a mate, urging that some compulsion be brought to bear on the young men. In answer to this an old man rises and pours forth vindictive abuse of the women of Erin, which he illustrates by an account of his own mésalliance. The young men of Erin, he contends, only show their prudence in refusing to marry; and he makes a grumbling allusion to the high fee (three guineas and a crown, as the German editor reminds us) which the poor man had then to pay the Church for the privilege. But if it be true, as he admits, that the “race of men is degenerating on the soil of green and delightful Erin,” there is an “easy way of peopling it once again with heroes,” without the “useless and meaningless” help of the priest. Abolish marriage. Let noble blood combine with peasant vigour to produce a worthier race. Proclaim through the land freedom to young and old. Such a law will breed again wit and sinew in the Gael, and the men of the land will have “chest, back, and fists like Goll.”

The reply of the first speaker to this proposal is serious and crushing.

“God willed that the mother should not be forsaken.
In women’s behalf have the prophets ruled!”

She defends the delinquent in the old man’s case in language which drops out of the decorous pages of the German review, but is led on by his proposal to contrast such dotards as he with the fine young men who are lost to the country in the church. “My heart is filled with grief, and in perplexity I wonder at one thing, what has exempted the clergy from the bond of marriage? For languishing maidens it is a sad sight, their muscular build and comeliness, jovial countenance, and sparkling smile. They live in luxury at table, with comfort and money for drink and pleasure; they have beds of down and nourishing meats, with cakes and comfits and wine and jesting; they are trusty and able and young and sociable, and as we all know, made of flesh and blood like ourselves!”

“I say nothing;” she goes on, “of the awkward chatter-box, the gouty grumbler, the disconsolate booby, no, my business is with the simple and stout fellows who snore and do no work. I think certainly that many might still take orders, and I allow them! We must not, in justice, hang the whole company, condemning all to the rope, nor would I sink the ship for the sake of one man. Many of them, indeed, are no good, and many are unregulated and not to be trusted, niggardly, unsympathetic, without virtue, rough
THE BEST IRISH POEM.

and cold, hateful to women! But the most of them are better, filled with love and of a noble nature. By their help we often attain a thing of value, a jewel, a cask, or grain. Their virtues are extolled, I know it, and many a clever and proper deed of theirs. Often, too, in the country have I heard a whisper running round that the gentlemen have their love-affairs . . .

“A sorrow on the land it is, and a wrong to women, this senseless obligation on the clergy. A bitter grief it is for Ireland, what we have lost by this aimless law. Wise Queen! I lay before you my complaint—the law which binds the priests! My little confidence is shaken, I am as one who sees not—enlighten me, and tell me, for you know it, the speech of the prophet, the royal apostle's living word! Where is the rule ordained by the Creator, of the killing of the flesh in the priestly tonsure? Saint Paul said not, as I think, to shun marriage, but rather lust; to leave your kindred, however high you be, and life-long to cleave to the wife. But it were a vain thing for one such as I to expound to you the sense of the law.”

Finally, the queen pronounces judgment. She finds a true bill against the men of Erin, and henceforth whoever of them is twenty-one and unmarried is to be handed over to be whipped. As regards the remedy proposed by the plaintiff, she says: “Speak it softly and tell it not above a whisper, your hand over your mouth, for talk is risky: just at present you need not disturb those charming gentlemen—it is coming to marriage with them, you will see it yet! The day will arrive of the great dispensation, the Pope himself will put his hand to it. He will find that this community is hurtful to the land, and soon you will have free for the marriage-bond those fine fellows who take your fancy!” The poet now finds himself to his discomfiture the object of general attention. He is hailed forward to the table by his conductor, and convicted of being thirty and unmarried. In a clever and amusing passage he gets in an account of himself, his personal appearance and habits, his popularity with the gentry (Merriman had acted as tutor in several houses), his musical gifts—it is plain that he deserves no mercy. They decide to make a terrible example of him, and sentence him to be flayed alive! The date of this important decision is being called out in the court when the poet—awakes.

It would be unbecoming in us to add anything to the judicious words of Iwil in summing up this delicate case. The vexed question of a celibate clergy, is it not discussed
exhaustively in the pages of Lea and of Lecky? We will only say that if ever the event prophesied by this Irish freethinker of the 18th century should come to pass, it will not be owing to any decisive battle in religious controversy, but to the awakening in Ireland by means of general culture of the historic sense. Every institution has its justification in some mood or phase of human development of which it survives as the monument. Monasticism has played as great a part in the history of human culture as the Renaissance. For our own part, we regard the existence in Ireland of a celibate priesthood, which undoubtedly withdraws from the population the "fittest," both mentally and physically, of the "men of Erin"—as Huxley pointed out, the two qualifications go together oftener than we suppose—as the outward sign of that mediævalism which has only in our own day begun to break up in Ireland.

JOHN EGLINTON.

BESIDE THE POPLARS.

For solace of all lonely things
That have no heed of day or night,
Beside the poplars grey and still,
Beside the poplars, still and high;
Where bats fly whistling in dim light
And draw the night on with their wings;
And dark unmoving shadows lie
On paths that know strange visitings;
I go, with will like the wind's will
For solace of earth-exiled things.

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN.
And now, having written so far mostly praise of these beloved little stories, does misgiving seize us, as often misgiving will! and do all authority, and all the habit of admiration of years seem a small thing, unless we can find and show some essential reason for our praise? Herethen, before considering *Pride and Prejudice*, and the three novels of her older years, let it be said that Miss Austen's "quality" is the unfailing, perennial charm of truth—she takes no temporary side in temporary controversies, she champions no cause whose interest is now dead. She is on the side of truth, and wisdom is her cause in her account of human life; and her art is not to disguise or exaggerate, but to divine the essential, and to dispose it with power, economy and effect. Is it indeed noted that she was not learned? Yet one knowledge was hers, that which is most important of all, the knowledge of human nature; and her genius gave her art, which is independent of the learning of books.

And yet, as natural in a young writer, she began with "novels with a purpose." But the purpose is modern, now as then; for to her good sense the obvious foe was Nonsense—failure in veracity; and accordingly the earlier *Northanger Abbey* was meant to combat the wild nonsense of the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe and her followers, the cult of melodramatic sensation in prose; while the earlier *Sense and Sensibility* was to be opposition to the tearful nonsense of the followers of Henry Mackenzie, who parodied rather than imitated *The Man of Feeling*. These are indeed purposes important now as then, though the external models of error are different. But the narrowness of combat with a particular form of mistake was impossible to such a genius, and the two little books treat of human nature as a whole, and really know no petty controversial limitation.

In the revised *Pride and Prejudice* of 1813, the remnant traces of didactic still further dwindle, and are only to be found in the title¹ and a few nooks and corners. Here is the most widely known of her stories. This is

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¹ The title is almost certainly borrowed from a passage in the last chapter of Miss Burney's *Cecilia*. "The whole of this unfortunate business," said Dr. Lyster, "has been the result of *Pride* and *Prejudice*."

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partly due to the exquisite heroine Elizabeth—"I must confess," writes Miss Austen fondly, "that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print," and it is partly due also to the number, variety, and supreme excellence of the fools in the book. There are at least six of the highest rank. Impulsive heedless folly finds varying examples in Lydia Bennet and Mrs. Bennet; solemn consequential folly in Mary Bennet, Sir William Lucas, and Lady Catherine; while, greatest of all, the incomparable Mr. Collins is a law unto himself.

Mr. Saintsbury has said good things of *Pride and Prejudice*:

"myriad, trivial, enforced strokes build up the picture like magic. Nothing is false; nothing is superfluous. When Mr. Collins changed his mind from Jane to Elizabeth while Mrs. Bennet was stirring the fire . . . when Mr. Darcy brought his coffee cup back himself. the touch is like that of Swift, when Gulliver describes the King of Lilliput as taller than his subjects by the breadth of my nail."

And again—

Mr. Collins is really great, far greater than anything Addison ever did, almost great enough for Fielding or for Swift himself. It has been said that no one was ever like him. But in the first place he was like him; he is there—alive, imperishable, more real than hundreds of prime ministers and archbishops, and "all the metals, semi-metals, planets, and distinguished philosophers" In the second place, it is rash to conclude that an actual Mr. Collins was impossible or non-existent at the end of the eighteenth century. . . . In fact for all the "miniature," there is something gigantic in the way in which a certain side and more than one—of humanity, and especially eighteenth century humanity, its well-meaning but hide-bound morality, its formal pettiness, its grovelling respect for rank, its materialism, its selfishness, receives exhibition. I will not admit that one action of this inestimable man is incapable of being reconciled with reality . . .

Miss Austen's own words concerning *Pride and Prejudice* are "The work is too light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade." The humour, wit, and above all, the courage of Elizabeth have endeared her specially to many readers, no less than to her author. We find Miss Austen in May, 1813, looking, with sweet nonsense, for the portrait of Elizabeth in the Royal Academy. She found Elizabeth's sister Jane in a "white gown with green ornaments." "I

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2 See in *Mansfield Park*, chapter II., the account by Julia and Maria Bertram of their lessons. T. W. L.
dare say Mrs. Darcy will be in yellow.” But she found no Mrs. Darcy. “I can only imagine that Mr. D. prizes any picture of her too much, to like it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine he would have that sort of feeling—that mixture of love, pride, and delicacy!”

The later group of novels begins with *Mansfield Park*, written 1812-14, published 1814. If from the earlier three a careful reader comes direct to this book, he will feel the advance in style, the emergence from apprenticeship to mastership. The mere story is singularly interesting, and were the six novels re-written by someone without genius and humour, *Mansfield Park*, by the mere entertaining power of its plot, would suffer least. One of its characters is particularly without analogy elsewhere in Miss Austen—the dignified, honourable, loveable Sir Thomas Bertram, worthy head of a household steadfast protector of the weak, patient, kind, and wise. We love him as we love Dr. Johnson, with and for his imperfections.

Like all Miss Austen’s other books [writes Mr. Austin Dobson], it has its party of preference, and Professor Goldwin Smith tells a story which should make that party even stronger. It is of a group of literary men at a country house, who, being required to write down the name of the novel [by any writer] which had given them the greatest pleasure, were found to have given seven votes to *Mansfield Park*.

*Mansfield Park* was followed by *Emma*, with title dated 1816, but published probably in the very latest days of 1815. *Emma* is Miss Austen’s most finished and elaborate piece of comedy, with remarkable variety in its humour, and the special characteristic of delineating freely not only the foolishness of the foolish, but the particularly egregious foolishness of clever people. Another and a pleasant note of *Emma* is that several of its most delightfully amusing foolish people are very loveable—Miss Bates, for instance, and Mr. Woodhouse and Isabella. Nevertheless, as in other novels, Miss Austen shows up with keen, almost cruel power, the unamiable, mean, and vulgar folly of such people as the Eltons, the continuators, as it were, of Mrs. Norris. *Emma* is also singular in its extraordinary external domesticity and tameness. Certainly, were its story told by a writer without genius and humour, it would seem by far the least attractive of Miss Austen’s works. In none does

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3 In February, 1904, the first edition of *Mansfield Park*, (3 vols. 1814), sold for £18 10 0.
she so nearly resemble a little prose Molière of the southern counties as in this. For the interestingness of *Emma* is the supreme triumph of exquisite, inobtruding, perfect art.4

Nevertheless all who love Miss Austen's books deeply, regretting that she died so early as her forty-second year, with so much left to do, must still be glad that her last word is not *Emma*, but the beautiful, wise, tender love-story, *Persuasion*. The prominence of very foolish people as *dramatis personæ* is much diminished in *Persuasion*, though in Sir Walter Elliot there is a liberal portrayal of a consummate donkey. Again, *Persuasion* has a wider background; the British Navy, Trafalgar, and later the Peace of 1814, are necessary incidents of its setting. Its main action takes place in the close of 1814, and the beginning of 1815. We have the pleasure of re-introduction to Bath, and of a visit to beautiful Lyme Regis, while we are imaginatively conducted to the Indies, East and West; to Gibraltar, and the Bermudas, and the Bahamas; to the North Atlantic, and the Cape; and to wider lands and seas outside England, by the reminiscence of the gallant sea-captains who are so pleasantly numerous in the story; and who bring a feeling of enlargement and release, and of noble possibility of action and passion in a noble world.5

The moral and mental enlargement of *Persuasion* is correspondent to this character in its setting in time and space. Deeper soundings of heart and conscience, wider field for intellect, feeling, and imagination, find expression in a prose style finer and more delicate than even the usually admirable level in *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*. In *Persuasion* more than in any other of her books, there is revelation of the inner nature of Miss Austen. She was half shy about this! Anne: "is almost

4 When Tennyson and Arthur Hallam compared notes as to Miss Austen's novels, it was found that Tennyson preferred *Emma* and *Persuasion*, and Hallam wrote, "*Emma* is my first love, and I intend to be constant." Years after, in January, 1870, Tennyson wrote, "Miss Austen understood the smallness of life to perfection. She was a great artist, equal in her small sphere to Shakespeare. I think *Persuasion* and *Mansfield Park* are my favourites." Again in 1890 Tennyson said, "Scott is the most chivalrous literary figure of the century, and the author with the widest range since Shakespeare. I think *Old Mortality* is his greatest novel. The realism and life-likeness of Miss Austen's *dramatis personæ* come nearest to those of Shakespeare. Shakespeare however is a sun, to which Jane Austen, though a bright and true little world, is but an asteroid."

5 Sir Walter Elliot, however, thought ill of the Navy! "First, as being the means of bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction, and raising men to honours which their fathers and grandfathers never dreamt of; and secondly, as it cuts up a man's youth and vigour most horribly; a sailor grows old sooner than any other man; I have observed it all my life. A man is in greater danger in the Navy of being insulted by the rise of one whose father his father might have disdained to speak to, and of becoming prematurely an object of disgust himself, than in any other line."
tooth good for me," she writes. In Anne for the first time her heroine is not a girl—implying the great superiority of interest and charm possessed by twenty-eight years in refined womanhood, when contrasted with inexperienced twenty-one.

All Miss Austen's novels display the following general characteristic of construction. The consciousness of the heroine is the central interest of the story. We know the heroine's mind, we live with her and share her hopes and fears, and we share also her ignorance of the inner minds of the other characters except as observed by her, and as they reveal themselves to her. 6 To this fact is due one striking charm of the little books,—the charm of exquisite companionship. To this also is due in part that remarkable unity of impression which they make, and their enthralling interest of plot. The six little novels are the little histories of six sweet girls, and at that time of superlative interest and charm, the love-making age. They treat the subject love, and marriage for love, with great enthusiasm, insight, and wisdom. Miss Austen over and over enforces her belief that marriage for love is the best of human good things, but that marriage without love is a lame and wretched betrayal of human nature. Of the former thesis perhaps the most remarkable enforcement is the whole plot of Persuasion, with the sad musings of Anne, who in past years, in her timidity and want of self-confidence, had broken with her lover to please her elders. As to the second—recall Elizabeth's dismay, in Pride and Prejudice, on finding that her friend Charlotte Lucas will marry the unamiable fool Mr. Collins, merely to gain a comfortable establishment; and more striking—the secondary plot of Mansfield Park, where the high-spirited beauty, Maria Bertram, marries dull Mr. Rushworth for Sotherton, and ten thousand a year, and the best house in Wimpole Street—

"In all the important preparations of the mind she was complete, being prepared for matrimony by a hatred of home-restraint and tranquillity, by the misery of disappointed affection, and contempt of the man she was about to marry. The rest might wait!"

(To be concluded.)

6 The only important exceptions to this rule that I can remember are the various conversations (especially those of Henry and Mary Crawford) in Mansfield Park about Fanny, not in her presence; and also the explanations to us of the reflections of Sir Thomas Bertram about Fanny's goodness after the shock of Maria's elopement with Henry Crawford. Even all this is only a small part of the novel.
MOLLY.

Molly through the Garden
   Laughed and played with me,
And the gate unbarred in
   To the rosery,

Just she said to show me
   How the roses grew,
And when she would show me,
   Ask me if I knew

Which of all was fairest,
   Crescent bud or rose,
Till I guessed the rarest
   She would not disclose.

Laughing little lady,
   All her features shone
Like a star whose body
   And whose soul are one.

So I went intending
   To please her if I could,
Pondered then, and bending
   Pointed to the bud.

But the moment after
   Saw her face illume
With a peal of laughter
   Reaching for the bloom.

Oliver Gogarty.
Is DOGMA passing away for ever, and will future times look back upon the theological beliefs of our day with the same mingling of curiosity and wonder with which we regard certain primitive survivals? Or is it a perennial product of the human mind destined to spring up in the ages that are coming under new forms, just as the particular form which is now passing away (if it be passing away) itself displaced earlier ones? The question rises in one's mind when reading Irial's article in the December number of DANA. It is a big one, and cannot be answered lightly, involving as it does another—What is Dogma, and how do dogmas arise? Perhaps a few words on the subject may be allowed from one who, though having renounced allegiance to Dogma (at least in the ordinary acceptation of the term), yet regards it from another, perhaps from a more sympathetic standpoint than that of Irial.

The attitude of the article referred to is to be found summed up in a sentence of the concluding paragraph:—“At the base of all the old religions was fear.” This is a statement to which, I think, exception may be taken as an assumption, and one, moreover, not borne out by facts, at any rate, in the case of the leading religions which have influenced mankind. The oldest Aryan religion of India was, as Max Müller has shown, a worship of the powers of Nature, and such was also the form assumed by the primitive religions of the Hellenic, Italic, Celtic and Teutonic races, to go no further. The powers of Nature are not uniformly beneficent. Zeus had his thunderbolt, and the Irish storm-god, Balar, struck down his foes with the lightning-flash of his eye; but on the whole the element of fear was proportionately small in these pagan mythologies. And when we turn to those religions belonging to a later stage of development which arose on a more definitely ethical basis, and found their sanction in the message of some great teacher, Buddha or Christ, we find the same thing: In their primitive form they are positive teachings which seek not so much to deter man from doing wrong as to lead him to do right. The religion (to come to the one which most nearly concerns us) preached by Jesus, John, and Paul was one of which joy and love, not fear, formed the basis; and an unprejudiced mind will find, I believe, very little
foundation in the New Testament Scriptures for that doctrinal terrorism which subsequently claimed support from their authority. The introduction of that terrorism must be looked for at a later period, when the civilization of the Empire was crumbling into anarchy before the onrush of barbarian hordes from north and east, and when Christianity, if she was to hold her ground, had to win the savage conquerors to her sway. A glance at the incessant strife and change, the political anarchy, the social misery which governed Europe during the early Middle Ages, help us to understand the evolution of the Christian Hell. To impress the untutored minds and untamed passions of men in those ages, it was necessary to emphasize the doctrine of future rewards and punishments—particularly the latter. Races pass through much the same stages of development as individuals (a fact overlooked by many scientific people who do not seem to apply to the human mind and its beliefs that law of evolution which they recognize in the external world); and any one who has experience of the juvenile mind in its early phases knows that the alternative of dry bread or jam for tea works far more potently with it than any purely ethical consideration. Trial speaks of "the brutalising effect of the belief in eternal punishment, which helped in turn to make people cruel." I believe, on the other hand, that it was rather the cruelty of men which led to the belief in eternal punishment. An age in which people put out their enemies' eyes with red-hot irons was driven to invent a still worse torture to punish such a deed in the future state. Moreover, no one acquainted with the passion for symbolism of the Middle Ages will suppose that the crude horrors of the mediaeval Hell were accepted literally by all minds. By the mass, no doubt, they were; to more developed intellects they represented the attempt to shadow forth spiritual things under the likeness of corporal. To give a literal interpretation, for instance, to the Inferno of Dante would be to do the poet a grave injustice, and to miss much of the ethical import of his work.

What, then, is the basis of the older faiths if it is not fear? I believe they were due to the profound conviction of the human soul, in all ages and in almost every stage of civilization, that there is something beyond the tangible physical universe which surrounds us, a "metetherial environment," if you will, and that within itself there lie latent powers, a deeper stratum corresponding perhaps to that superphysical element in Nature; a conviction resulting, according as the one or the other of these
conceptions prevailed, either in some form of Nature-worship or in a more subjective and spiritual faith. Religion is, in fact, the recognition by mankind at large of the truth, which the nobler systems of Metaphysics have acknowledged and which Science is perhaps on her way to discover, that the ultimate reality is not matter, but Spirit. But Religion differs from Metaphysics in that she not only announces the reality of that spiritual essence to men but claims to bring them into contact with it and enable them to draw on its infinite resources; and that she has made good her claim in countless cases, and in all epochs, no student of religious history and phenomena will, I think, deny. Unlike Metaphysics, too, she does not address herself to an intellectual elite, but to men of every class and capacity and temperament; her aims are practical, seeking ultimately to influence conduct; and she appeals in the first place rather to the emotional than the reasoning faculties. And in support of her assertions she turns to Revelation—that is, to give the term a rationalistic interpretation, to the words of some inspired teacher, who, gifted in a supereminent degree on the ethical and spiritual plane with that kind of sublime intuition, to which in the intellectual or aesthetic domain we give the name of genius, communicated to his followers the truths which he saw, rather than apprehended, in the form of vision, parable, or aphorism. They in their turn—the divine light flowing in more dimly upon them—passed on his teachings to the crowd in more definite shape, but with impaired vitality, until, in the constant passage from mind to mind, the living truth became a dogma.

The history of human language furnishes a parallel. Every word, says Emerson, is a fossil poem. The first Teuton who found a name for the sun conceived of it as a beneficent power, feminine rather than masculine, a mother of life; and the sound he uttered conveyed his conception to his hearers. To us the word "sun" is a mere symbol; and if we could arrive at a universal agreement to interchange the names of sun and moon, it would only require a lapse of time for us all to grow accustomed to and acquiesce in the arrangement. Even so a dogma may be said to be a fossil truth.

The process is inevitable, however regrettable it may be. It is not easy to see how any religion could be propagated or made an instrument of general utility to mankind without the aid of dogma. Every religion must ultimately adapt itself to the needs of the average individual, who has
neither leisure nor inclination for metaphysical thought, but who, at the same time, looks to it to furnish him, not only with a rule for conduct, but with some explanation of his own existence and destiny. To the cursory observer, looking back on the history of Christianity from the days of the homoousian and homoi-ousian controversy onwards, it may seem as if dogma had generated nothing but confusion and strife. But the student of human nature, as it reveals itself in life, literature and history, will be inclined to ask, not so much—Why was the world so bad in spite of the Church? as—Might not the world have been far more worse but for the Church? He will recognize that if, on the one hand, the worst passions of men often found an excuse and an ally in the dogmas of religion, on the other hand those same beliefs became to other men as it were the channels of divine grace, which through their lives flowed out upon their fellow-creatures. “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” Perhaps there is no dogma which has ever gained a deep hold on men’s convictions which did not originally enshrine some great truth: which did not in its day serve its purpose and justify itself. The dogma of the Incarnation has appealed to the heart of mankind as no other doctrine ever did, not because it recalls an alleged historic fact, but because it embodies an ever-recurring spiritual one. The Trinity, repellent to human reason in the form in which it is popularly stated, or even when set forth in Newman’s nine propositions in the “Grammar of Assent,” was to Thomas Aquinas and others of the early Christian philosophers before him the profound and subtle expression of a truth which, though transcendental, yet underlies all human experience. The Mariolatry so distressing to the Rationalistic temperament, which found an issue in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, was in the middle ages connected with the purest emotions and most chivalric ideas of men; it helped to uplift and sanctify womanhood; it inspired the noblest forms of mediæval art. To understand fully all that it implied to the best minds of that period, one must turn to St. Bernard’s Hymn to the Virgin in the closing canto of the Divine Comedy.

“At the base of the new religion there must be understanding.” Let us hope that the present state of disintegration and unrest means that human society is preparing to move another step on the upward way, and that the new religion, whatever it may be, whether a survival of existing
forms or a new departure, will attain and keep a higher average level. But this much may be safely predicted, that the new religion, like the old, will in its turn develop its dogmas, and that its adherents will fall into the same main classes as heretofore: those whose response to its teachings is the spontaneous outcome of an inner life; those who accept its doctrines believing them to be consonant with reason and conducive to morality—a larger number perhaps; and those who follow from habit, or the force of authority, or more or less vague prudential reasons—the great majority.

Maud Joynt.

THE PIGEONS.

I heard in the night the pigeons
Stirring within their nest;
The wild pigeons' stir was tender
Like a child's hand at the breast.

I cried, "O stir not so!"
And my breast was wet with tears:
"O pigeons, stir no more,
"A barren woman hears!

"I lie by a sleeping man,
"And ah, but my life is lone;
"I hear you stir in the night,
"And your moan is like love's moan!"

Padraic Colum.
A LITERARY CAUSERIE.

There was certainly room for this volume by Miss C. L. Adams on the Ancient Castles of Ireland: few people have any idea how numerous they were or how interesting is the history of very many of them. Miss Adams has chosen between seventy and eighty, and has given some descriptive, historical, and legendary particulars of each. The brightly written page or two of introduction make one regret that the book itself is, no doubt of necessity, so meagre and annalistic in style; it is an attempt to deal with the subject in a popular manner. As a book of reference it will have value, and at the end of each several account is given a list of the authorities drawn upon; this is useful as a guide to sources of useful information. I am afraid the serious antiquarian will not be satisfied with the accuracy of some statements: but the book is not meant for the antiquarian; it is for the public who, knowing little or nothing about these castles dotted all over their country, would like to have some definite knowledge, and we are in Miss Adams' debt for a praiseworthy effort to supply information which is sealed from most people. The book is illustrated with thirty-nine drawings by Rev. Canon Lucius O'Brien, which are very good indeed, and greatly enhance the value of the work. The price is half-a-guinea.

Fiona Macleod in The Winged Destiny has a great deal to say of the Celtic Spirit now so much discussed as a living factor in present-day literature. It does not seem to me well said, or that anything notable has been added to the already existent expositions of the new convention. Yet as Fiona Macleod is one of the chief among the Celtic School of English writers, The Winged Destiny must be looked on as a book of importance. In reality it is a trivial thing, full of the usual bandying of vague phrases about Celtic glamour and mystery, and all the rest of it. One of the more interesting essays in the volume is concerned with Mr. W. B. Yeats. Now, Mr. Yeats is certainly the most conspicuous figure of the Celtic School, and is in great part responsible for its tradition, especially as regards that section which is most concerned with Ireland, and his verse is undoubtedly a shaping influence in the verse of today. A certain mood has gained emphasis and prominence, a mood that we are told is the distinctive outcome of
the Celtic cast of mind. It seems to me that the method of the so-called Celtic writer is synthetic; he selects various elements that he declares are essentially and peculiarly Celtic, then he builds up his own work with these, and the result is, we are told, genuine Celtic literature. As well might a painter think by mixing the primary colours of the solar spectrum to produce white; he will only succeed in obtaining a dirty grey. So the Celtic school has merely produced a new conventional way of writing, and not content with seeking inspiration from the old Irish literature and interpreting it to the modern world, they would have us return to the ancient ways of thought and being, moulding our living selves after the fashion of those who lived many centuries ago in a different civilization and an environment wholly unlike ours: nay, rather, they would have us accept as models the imaginative ideals of certain men of a semi-barbarous age, for who can doubt that the heroic tales of Ireland owed more to the bard than to history. That would be to set back the clock with a vengeance! It is like a hermit crab—unable to grow a shell of his own and finding himself uncomfortable in one dwelling, he hunts for a shell whose previous owner is dead and vanished, and takes possession of it.

Fiona Macleod says that—"The imagination of the world is as ready now, as it was at the coming of the tales of Arthur and of the Grail, for a new intoxication." This is profoundly true, and accounts in part for the vogue of things avowedly Celtic. The people of these countries are as eager to-day, as ever were the Athenians, to hear or to see some new thing. But the spurious novelty soon ceases to attract and is presently abandoned for something fresh; yet if there is something in it true and sound, it does not wholly drop into oblivion, but keeps a certain due place and proportioned honour. And that place and honour are what the new Celtic literature has yet to find. As for Mr. Yeats' work it is certain to live, even if it be only among a little clan. As surely as there is the hour of twilight in every terrestrial day, so surely is there a place for the twilight verse in the spiritual life. But Mr. Yeats' muse only is happy in the twilight, and for most men Life holds something more than a handful of dreams and a star or two in a brooding sky. For the twilight mood his verse is perfectly in harmony, but where vigorous deedful life is required he can give nothing. Modernity disgusts him, he is all for the old high way of things, forgetting the more necessary new high way in which our feet must walk; he
dreams of dead queens whose beauty was folded in dismay,
and lands that seem too dim to be burdens on the heart;
at the thought of

"New commonness
   Upon the throne and crying about the streets,
   And hanging its paper flowers from post to post
   Because it is alone of all things happy
his heart revolts and turns to the old things with a passion-
ate reaction. This reactionary tendency is the true ex-
planation of his attitude towards religion; he has been
charged with every kind of sacrilegious irreverence and
blasphemy; he is only flying from another aspect of sordid
and ugly modern life and thought. Creed seems not to be
a matter of personal belief to him, he looks on dogmas
and estimates from a wholly external point of view, they
are material for his art; not necessities of his spiritual liv-
ing. That is easily to be seen in Countess Cathleen and
the Land of Heart’s Desire, while in Where there is Nothing
he shows himself wholly a mutinous reactionary. This is
certainly a weakness. It betrays a petulant impatience that
makes any man who suffers from it less able to deal
effectively and strongly with the facts of life as they are.
But in lyric verse he is an undoubted master, in many
ways unapproached by any other poet “in our time.” The
‘Song of the Old Mother,’ and ‘Wandering Aengus,’ ‘The
Heart of Woman ’ and many another haunt the memory
like mists rising from water at evening. Occasionally he
displays an anthropomorphism which would be censured
even in the poetical works of Mr. Ira D. Sankey—for
example,

   “God stands winding his lonely horn.”
But in spite of blemishes and impoverishing mannerisms
he is still an exquisite poet, even if his art is not always
concealed.

As to the sincerity of A.E.’s work there can be, I think,
little question, whether inspired by the Celtic muse or any
other. That is one reason why I like The Mask of Apollo so
much. The little volume contains seven stories or sketches
or what you please to call them; its inspiration is in the
main Oriental and mystic, but none the less it is the work
of a true Celt; East and West have mingled and the result
is good. The stories were written long ago, and A.E.
says he had hoped to improve them, “but I find with
sorrow I have passed too far away from the mystical mood
in which they were written, and they must remain as they
are. I have printed them less from my own desire than at
the desire of some friends who remember the spiritual adventures we had when we were boys, and who wished for some memorial of them." They have not been available for the general reader until now. I had read "The Childhood of Apollo" in the first number of The Shrine, and the "Dream of Angus Oge" in The Green Sheaf. "The Childhood of Apollo" is the one I like least of all the seven, but the "Dream of Angus" has some delightful human touches. The "Meditation of Ananda" and the "Midnight Blossom" are of purely Eastern inspiration. The "Story of a Star" relates the birth of a planet, imaginatively observed by use of some of the powers of the Magi of Old Persia: it is one of the best of all, a splendid vision of colour, light, and motion, subordinated to a philosophical idea. But to the "Cave of Lilith" I would give the wreath of pre-eminence both for beauty of idea and harmony of structure and skilful writing: in it, too, is enshrined the fine lyric—"What of all the will to do."

"From the Sad Singer I learned that thought of itself leads nowhere, but blows the perfume from every flower, and cuts the flower from every tree, and hews down every tree from the valley, and in the end goes to and fro in waste places—gnawing itself in a last hunger. I learned from Lilith that we weave our own enchantment, and bind ourselves with our own imagination. To think of the true as beyond us, or to love the symbol of being, is to darken the path to wisdom, and to debar us from eternal beauty. From the Wise One I learned that the truest wisdom is to wait, to work, and to will, in secret. Those who are voiceless to-day, to-morrow shall be eloquent, and the earth shall hear them, and their children salute them. Of these three truths, the hardest to learn is the silent will. Let us seek for the highest truth."

Small as the book is, it is yet a notable one and has been recognized, for I believe very few copies remain unsold. The manner of these stories is quite young: A.E. writes much better now, he has a finer grasp of style and a firmer touch, but there is in the Mask of Apollo a delightful freshness and eagerness that one would be sorry to miss even for the sake of a more finished style. Although appealing more to an esoteric class of readers, the book will give very great pleasure to any one who cares for literature of contemplation and beauty. It is printed and bound in Dublin (I wish this part had been better done) and published by Whaley & Co., to whose venture I wish every success, both for this and their succeeding publications.

F. M. Atkinson.
SECRET LOVE.

I make music for my Secret Love,
I croon a gentle song to her,
But because they all stand listening, her name I will not sing.
I will sing of the young blackbird,
Or the deep red rose of Summer,
Or, when our joy is fullest, of the primrose of the Spring.

I make a new name, Secret Love,
A new name every day for you,
And whiles you are a little bird, and whiles you are a tree.
But I laugh when they stand waiting
To hear your name fall from my lips,
And I sing a song of rapture to the sweet wild honey bee.

But you will know, my Secret Love,
You will know the words I sing,
And that the earth's best beauty is my hidden name for you.
And so my song will fly away,
And none will guess its meaning
But my Secret Love, who listens to the falling of the dew.

ETHEL GODDARD.

THE COMING OF APHRODITE.

Since first my heart awoke and, waking, knew
Its infinite need, lo, it has climbed its stair
Of dreams, and to the unresponsive air
Stretched forth its arms, and called, and called for you,
And, answerless, has moulded of the dew
And luminous dawns, and sunset's tumbled hair
And deep sea-music, something passing fair
Which long it sought to know, but never knew.

And now your cheek is warm against my cheek.
And Love is satisfied?—Nay, evermore
Thy hands are full of promise, and thine eyes
Glow with a Light I must forever seek
But never find, and joy hath joy in store,
And heaven another heaven in its skies.

JAMES H. COUSINS.
THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

A large and distinguished audience assembled on Tuesday evening, December 27th, last, to witness the opening performances of the Irish National Theatre Society at the new theatre in Abbey Street, provided for them through the munificence of Miss Horniman. During the course of the week in which the Society held the boards the attendance thinned a little, but towards the end it recovered itself considerably, so that the closing night was probably the best from point of numbers after the first.

To one who had watched not only the career of the Society since its beginning with sympathy and interest, but the much larger and older movement of which it forms a part—namely, that slow awakening of the latent imaginative faculties of the country which is gradually feeling its way towards self-expression in the arts—the occasion was one of great interest and importance. Indeed it was much more. One felt keenly that it was a critical moment big with opportunity, and that, for a generation at any rate, the fate of national drama was trembling in the balance. Would the Society, or would it not, realize the important issues at stake, and avail itself to the fullest extent of the opportunity that had come to it? Such were the questions that arose during the performance, whilst the mind kept flying, as before events, into the unaccomplished future, vaguely wondering, idly speculating, beating its fragile wings futilely as ever against the unbarred doors of time.

The Society had started well. There could be no question about that. It was on the high road to success; but no one was foolish enough to suppose that there were no pitfalls in the way. Even the free use of a theatre and all its appurtenances might not be altogether an unmixed blessing. One felt inclined to forget, in the enthusiasm of the opening performance, that the real work of the Society is but beginning, that it has yet to make itself felt as a compelling and gripping force in the country, and through years of stern and unremitting labour to justify by solid achievement its existence and—shall I say it—the hanging of its trophies in the vestibule. To be nicely housed, to have willing authors, pleasant plays, good actors and approving audiences is much, but it is not enough. Unless the
Society is merely trifling with drama as a dilettante, no one of its members should ever feel that it has accomplished its purpose until the theatre in Abbey Street has become a distributing house of ideas, and the centre of a great intellectual movement in the country. For I trust that Ireland will never forget that art is the companion of thought and life, and not the plaything of effeminacy and degeneration.

And what a hopeful prospect is before the Society! It has the free and ungrudging services of a body of devoted actors, and the leading writers and artists in the country. The financial difficulty has been removed by the generosity of a lady interested, as an artist, in the work of the Society. And it has in Dublin an interested and alert people with a temperamental and traditional bias towards the drama, and who, with a little training, will be capable of providing an appreciative and understanding audience.

There was no new ground broken by the Society at the opening performance. The three plays presented were quite in the manner and style of the work produced during last season at the Molesworth Hall. The all-round high level of acting was well maintained, while the costumes and scenery, particularly in *Baile's Strand*, were very effective, and in excellent taste. But these short plays are of course merely preparatory. One looks forward with interest to the real test that will come when the Society stages a play in which there will be scope for the cumulative effect of sustained acting, necessary in the development of character. And if the high ideals of thorough workmanship and tireless industry, which have already almost become traditional with the Society, are maintained, we need have little fear but that they will carry through the undertaking with credit to themselves, and benefit to the country at large.

Thomas Keohler.
CONTENTS OF PREVIOUS NUMBERS.


Contributions to forthcoming numbers have been promised by F., Miss Barlow, Professor Dowden, Stephen Gwynn, Alfred Nutt, George Moore, George Bernard Shaw, &c., &c.

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