

tic proportions. Over 60,000 quarto pages of ancient Irish manuscripts can be found in the libraries of the Royal Irish Academy and Trinity College, Dublin.

23. The Irish language is the most ancient in Europe.

24. *Ossian*, *St. Columbkille*, *St. Donatus*, *MacLaig*, *O'Duggan*, *MacWard*, *O'Kane*, and *O'Carolan* are a few of the names of Irish bards some of whose works have come down to us.

25. *Tighernach O'Brien*, abbot of Clonmacnoise, and *Brother Michael O'Clery*, *O.S.F.*, were the greatest of the Irish annalists.

26. *Duald MacFirbis* was the last regularly educated Irish antiquary and historian; and *Tirlogh O'Carolan* was the last of the Irish bards.

27. The *Annals of the Four Masters* is the greatest and most comprehensive of the Irish annals.

28. *St. Fiacc*, author of the *Metrical Life of St. Patrick*, was the father of Irish biography.

29. The most ancient work existing in the Irish language is the *Book of the Dun Cow*.

30. The *Táin Bo Chualgné* is the epic of ancient Ireland.

31. See *Short Dictionary* for the other Irish writers of this period most worthy of mention; namely, *John Scotus Erigena*, *James Ussher*, *Sir James Ware*, and *Roderick O'Flaherty*.*

* For a fuller account of ancient Irish literature and the Irish language, see Prof. O'Curry's *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, Canon Bourke's *Argan Origin of the Gaelic Race and Language*, and Matthew Arnold's *Study of Celtic Literature*.

CHAPTER II.

all THE ENGLISH LITERATURE OF IRELAND.

A.D. 1700 to 1800.

THE AGE OF SWIFT, GOLDSMITH, AND BURKE.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

1. GLIMPSES AT IRELAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.—The eighteenth century carries us through the reigns of Anne and the first three Georges, and during this mournful period Ireland was the most wretched and misgoverned nation on the round earth. It was in the reign of Queen Anne (1702–1714) that the penal laws against Catholics were brought to what Edmund Burke calls a “vicious perfection.”

2. THE PENAL LAWS.—Let us glance at some of these horrid enactments. Every Catholic in Ireland was disarmed, and forbidden the use of a gun. Every officeholder, from a clerk to an archbishop, and all professional men, were obliged to swear against the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. A Catholic could not sit in Parliament, could not hold any office under the crown, could not enter the army or navy, could not vote at an election, could not be a lawyer, a physician, a sheriff, or even a gamekeeper. A Catholic was not permitted to own a horse of greater value than \$25; and if he owned a fine horse he was bound to sell it for that sum to any Protestant who was disposed to buy. Catholics were fined \$300

a month for absence from the Protestant form of worship, and they were forbidden to travel five miles from their houses. No Catholic could go near a walled city—especially Galway and Limerick. "In order," writes John Mitchel, "that they might be sure not to get near a walled town, they were to remain several miles away, as if they were lepers whose presence would contaminate their select and pampered Protestant fellow-citizens." If a younger brother turned Protestant, he supplanted the elder in his birthright. A Protestant lawyer who married a Catholic lady was disqualified to continue the practice of his profession. Marriages of Protestants and Catholics, if performed by a priest, were annulled, and the priest was liable to be hanged. A Catholic could educate his children neither at home nor abroad. Catholic schools were closed, and all Catholics were forbidden to teach. The doors of the only university in Ireland* were closed to Catholics. A reward of \$50 was offered for the discovery of each Catholic schoolmaster. Catholics who went abroad to be educated were disinherited of all their property. If a Catholic entertained a priest or a bishop, he was fined \$100; for a second offence of the kind he was fined \$200; and for a third offence he forfeited his whole estate. The exercise of the Catholic religion was forbidden; its churches were closed or stolen; its priests were banished, and hanged if they returned home.† Rewards, varying according to the rank of the victim, were

* Trinity College, Dublin.

† For instance, 424 priests were banished from Ireland in the year 1698. "Some few," says an Irish historian, "disabled by age and infirmities sought shelter in caves, or implored and received concealment and protection of Protestants whose humane feelings were superior to their prejudices."

offered for the discovery of Catholic clergymen. At one period, the same price was offered for the head of a priest and that of a wolf. Even Jews came from Portugal to hunt down Catholic priests in the Emerald Isle of the sea, and found it a profitable business. The fierce Mohawk, ranging the ancient forests of New York, was not more eager and skilful on the trail of an enemy than was the ferocious and barbarous government of England in its rage after Catholic ecclesiastics. Bribes were offered to all who would betray Catholics. Truly has Davis written:

"They bribed the flock, they bribed the son,
To sell the priest and rob the sire;
Their dogs were taught alike to run
Upon the scent of wolf and friar.
Among the poor,
Or on the moor,
Were hid the pious and the true;
While traitor knave,
And recreant slave,
Had riches, rank, and retinue."

A Catholic could neither purchase land nor dispose of it by will. Pilgrimages to Lough Derg, to shrines of the saints, or to holy wells were forbidden under severe penalties; and magistrates were ordered to destroy all crosses and religious pictures and inscriptions.*

* The language of those brutal enactments is painfully offensive. A Catholic is never termed a Catholic, but a "Papist," and his religion is nicknamed "Popery." The vulgar words "Popish," "Romish," "Romanist," and "Romanism" can also be met. I have already remarked in one of my books that "the same malignant and uncultured spirit which produced the penal laws gave the world this mongrel brood of ragged, boorish words. It is said that 'Papist' was first used as a nickname for Catholics by Martin Luther; the others had their disgraceful origin in England. But no educated speaker or writer of our day can use such outcasts; they are literary eyesores, forbidden alike by politeness, good sense, and elegance of diction. Things and persons should be called by their right names."

Is it any wonder that Montesquieu exclaimed with indignation: "This horrid code was conceived by devils, written in human gore, and registered in hell"?

"The Irish," says Edmund Burke, "have been more harassed for religion than any people under the sun."

"I have read," declares the famous Dr. Doyle, "of the persecutions of Nero, Domitian, Genseric, and Attila, with all the barbarities of the sixteenth century. I have compared them with those inflicted on my own country, and protest to God that the latter, in my opinion, have exceeded in duration, extent, and intensity all that has ever been endured by mankind for justice's sake."

The spirit of the Catholics was crushed and broken under the weight of such enormous oppression. The wealthy were ruined, and the poor became poorer. "The poor people of Ireland," said Lord Chesterfield, "are worse used than negroes." Ireland was not for the Irish, but for the Protestant English colony, or the Protestant garrison, as they called themselves.

The members of this insolent minority filled all the public offices, ruled the island, and formed the corrupt body falsely known as the "Irish Parliament." But this so-called Irish parliament was Irish only in name. It did not represent the Irish Catholics who composed the great body of the nation, but who were not recognized by the law, and who were still spoken of as "the common enemy."* It merely represented a faction of intolerant upstarts—the persecuting English Protestant colony in Ireland. It was this sham "Irish" par-

* Chief-Justice Robinson, interpreting the law, declared: "It appears plain that the law does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Catholic."

liament that passed and sanctioned most of the shameful enactments of which I have given a summary.

The Catholics formed nine-tenths of the nation, but for them the door was closed to every ennobling impulse. They were doomed to ignorance and social degradation. There was no way out of obscurity; no promise of worldly success; no scope for energy and enterprise, except at the awful price of surrendering their hopes of Heaven and turning their backs on the dear old faith of St. Patrick. But this noble people sacrificed everything earthly for the sake of their religion, "accounting all things as dross that they might gain Christ;" and in the words of the Holy Book, "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake, theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

3. HEARING MASS.—What dangers were braved to hear and celebrate Mass! The Holy Sacrifice was secretly offered up in caves, secluded valleys, and mountain-gorges.* The fear, however, created in

* William Carleton, in one of his novels, gives a vivid pen-picture of Mass in a mountain-cave. It is full of interest and sublimity. "The day was stormy in the extreme," he writes. "It was a hard frost, and the snow, besides, falling heavily—the wind strong and raging in hollow gusts about the place. The position of the altar-table, however, saved the bishop and the chalice and the other things necessary for the performance of worship from the direct fury of the blast, but not altogether: for occasionally a whirlwind would come up, and toss over the leaves of the *Missal* in such a way, and with such violence, that the bishop, who was now trembling from cold, was obliged to lose some time in finding out the proper passages. It was a solemn sight to see two or three hundred persons kneeling, and bent in prostrate and heartfelt adoration in the pious worship of that God who sends and withholds the storm—bareheaded, too, under the piercing drift of the thick-falling snow, and thinking of nothing but their own sins, and that glad-some opportunity of approaching the forbidden altar of God, now doubly dear to them that it was forbidden. The bishop was getting on to that portion of the sacred rite where the consecration and elevation of the Host are necessary, and it was observed by all that an extraordinary and sudden lull took place, and that the

England by the Scottish Rebellion of 1745 served slightly to relax some of the penal laws against Catholic worship. In a *Tour through Ireland* by two English travellers, written in 1748, we read: "The poorer sort of Irish natives are mostly Catholics, who make no scruple to assemble in the open fields. As we passed yesterday, in a by-road, we saw a priest under a tree, with a large assembly about him, celebrating Mass in his proper habit; and though at a great distance from us, we heard him distinctly. This sort of people seem to be very solemn and sincere in their devotions." Later on Catholics were permitted to build a little chapel here and there, but with the humiliating condition that it should have neither bell nor steeple.

4. THE CHANGES MADE BY A QUARTER OF A CENTURY.—As the trouble with the American colonies became more serious, the galled and goaded followers of the ancient faith were to experience another taste of English generosity. But what was it? In 1771 the magnificent concession was made to them of permission to hold long leases of fifty acres of *bog for reclamation*, provided it was not within a mile of any city or town! In 1782, after England had been beaten to her knees in America, the Irish Catholics were allowed to purchase, inherit, and dispose of land; and ten years later, when the French Revolution was shaking Europe, the professions were opened to them, and they were permitted to keep schools. St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, an institution for the

rage of the storm had altogether ceased. He proceeded and had consecrated the Host—*Hoc est Corpus Meum*—when a cry of terror arose from the affrighted congregation.

"My lord, fly and save yourself! Captain Smellpriest and his gang are upon us!"—*Willy Reilly*, chap. xiii.

education of the Catholic clergy, was opened in 1795. But no people can be satisfied while wickedly cheated out of their rights. Discontent filled the air. The unhappy people were driven into premature rebellion in 1798. A swarm of Scotch, English, and German ruffians, misnamed soldiers, were let loose on the country, and crimes the most horrible were committed. The pitch-cap, whipping, half-hanging, burning off the hair, and other unspeakable barbarities were sanctioned by the English authorities.*

5. REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH LITERATURE OF IRELAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.—The English penal laws explain why not one Catholic author of distinction appeared in Ireland during the eighteenth century. The nation was inhumanly gagged. It was reduced to a sad silence. Ignorance was compulsory. To master the multiplication-table was a crime; to learn to read was a crime; to learn to write was, perhaps, a greater one.† It was dangerous to own a Catholic book, and many a family was ruined by the possession of an Irish manuscript. The faithful priest and the worthy hedge-schoolmaster kept, however, the lamp of knowledge dimly burning among a people who love and honor true knowledge above any race in the world. What was a hedge-school? It is aptly described by Carleton in his *Willy Reilly*. "Father Maguire," he writes, "previous to his receiv-

* Lord Cornwallis was so sickened at the condition of things that he wrote from Dublin Castle to a friend: "The conversation even at my table, where you will suppose I do all I can to prevent it, always turns on hanging, shooting, burning, etc.; and if a priest has been put to death, the greatest joy is expressed by the whole company."

† The woful "laws" were so rigorously enforced that, according to a writer in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, there were probably not 200 persons in Ireland who could *read and write* their native Irish at the close of the eighteenth century.

ing orders, had been a schoolmaster, and exercised his functions in that capacity in holes and corners; sometimes on the sheltered or sunny side of a hedge, as the case might be, and on other occasions when and where he could. In his magisterial capacity 'the accomplishment' of whistling was absolutely necessary to him, because it often happened that, in stealing in the morning from his retreat during the preceding night, he knew no more where to meet his little flock of scholars than they did where to meet him; the truth being that he seldom found it safe to teach two days successively in the same place. Having selected the locality for instruction during the day, he put his forefinger and thumb into his mouth and emitted a whistle that went over half the country. Having thus given the signal three times, his scholars began gradually and cautiously to make their appearance, coming towards him from all directions; reminding one of a hen in a farm-yard, which having fallen upon some wholesome crumbs, she utters that peculiar sound which immediately collects her eager little flock about her, in order to dispense among them the good things she has to give."

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, in his *Young Ireland*, has a very suggestive passage on this mournful period. "Among the Catholics," he says, "there was no national literature; no books of any kind indeed except a few pamphlets written by Irish priests or exiles on the Continent and smuggled into the country. But an injured people have a long memory. By the fireside on a wintry night, at fairs and markets, the old legends and traditions were a favorite recreation. The wandering harpers and pipers kept them alive; the hedge-schoolmaster taught them with more un-

tion than the rudiments. Nurses and seamstresses, the tailor who carried his lapboard and shears from house to house and from district to district, the peddler who came from the capital with shawls and ribbons, the tinker who paid for his supper and shelter with a song or a story, were always ready with tales of the wars and the persecution. A recent historian* cannot repress his disdain that in those times—for this was 'the Augustan age of Queen Anne'—no great drama or epic poem or masterpiece of art was produced in Ireland; but it is not on the jailers in this penal settlement, but on their prisoners, that the critic's reproaches fall."

The chief names in the English literature of Ireland in the eighteenth century are *Sir Richard Steele*, *Jonathan Swift*, *Oliver Goldsmith*, *Edmund Burke*, *Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, *John Philpot Curran*, *Henry Grattan*, and *William Drennan*—all non-Catholics. Let us glance at the attitude of each towards Ireland and his shamefully oppressed Catholic countrymen. It will throw much light on nobility of character and the love of fair play and civil and religious liberty. Steele lived most of his life in England, and I am not aware that he ever uttered a word in favor of Ireland. Swift was a Protestant clergyman. He spent most of his life in Ireland. He has been falsely called an Irish patriot; but his narrow patriotism never extended beyond the English colony in Ireland. He was at heart an English snob, and was ashamed to be taken for an Irishman. "I no more consider myself an Irishman," he writes, "because I happened to be born in Ireland, than an Englishman chancing to be born in Calcutta would con-

* Lord Macaulay.

sider himself a Hindoo." He scoffs at the Catholics as "the savage old Irish." He has no word of sympathy for their worse than wolfish treatment by the English, but speaks with disdain and aversion of the very people who gave him his bread and butter. It is worthy of notice that Goldsmith has no reference to Ireland in any of his writings. Burke was a great man and a true Irishman. He loved his native isle, and, though he spent most of his life in England, he never ceased by tongue and pen to demand justice for his oppressed Catholic countrymen. Sheridan had many failings, but he never lost his affection for his native land. Among the last words he uttered in the English House of Commons were the following: "Be just to Ireland. I will never give my vote to any administration that opposes the question of Catholic emancipation." Grattan was the soul of Irish chivalry, and an intense lover of justice. "So long," he exclaimed, "as we exclude Catholics from natural liberty and the common rights of man we are not a people." Curran was a genuine Irishman and an earnest advocate of religious freedom. Drennan was the patriotic poet of the Irish Rebellion. He was the first to give the title of the Emerald Isle to Ireland in his poem *Erin*:

"When Erin first rose from the dark swelling flood,
God blessed the green island, and saw it was good;
The emerald of Europe, it sparkled and shone,
In the ring of the world the most precious stone."

LESSON I.

SIR RICHARD STEELE. DIED 1729.

(1) *Essays.* (2) *Comedies.* (3) *Letters.*

JONATHAN SWIFT. DIED 1745.

(1) *Tale of a Tub.* (3) *Gulliver's Travels.*
(2) *Drapier Letters.* (4) *Poems.*

1. Who was Sir Richard Steele?

Sir Richard Steele, the founder of *English periodical literature*, was one of the most original and brilliant writers of the eighteenth century.

2. Tell us something of his career.

Steele was born at Dublin. His father was an Englishman, but his mother was Irish, and from her he seems to have inherited his bright fancy, tenderness, and impulsive ardor. He studied at Oxford, became a captain in the Horse Guards, then a member of the English Parliament, and died in poverty.

3. Where did his *Essays* first appear?

In his papers—the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*.*

4. Which was the first English periodical?

The Tatler.

5. When did Steele begin *The Tatler*?

In 1709.

6. Of the three periodicals, which was the most celebrated?

The Spectator, a daily paper, which to this day ranks as one of the most famous publications in the history of British periodical literature. It is an Eng-

* "The *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian* were all of them Steele's journals, begun and ended by him at his sole discretion. In these three he wrote 510 papers; Addison, 369."—Henry Morley

lish classic. The best essays written by Steele and Addison appeared in its pages.*

7. By what other works is Steele chiefly known?
By his *Comedies*, and *Letters* to his wife.

8. Which is his best comedy, and what should be remembered to his honor?

The *Conscious Lovers* is his best comedy. Steele was the first dramatist after the Restoration to introduce virtue on the English stage.

9. Who was one of the most original writers of the eighteenth century?

Jonathan Swift, "the greatest wit of all time," and one of the greatest masters of the English language.

10. Give a short account of his life.

Swift was born at Dublin, was left an orphan, studied at Trinity College, and, after many ups and downs, became Dean of St. Patrick's Church † in his native city. He was insane during the last three years of his life, and died at the age of 78.

11. In what line of thought did the ambitious Swift first make his mark as a writer?

He plunged into politics, and used his pen as the lever by which he meant to raise himself to the pinnacle of clerical and political greatness. ‡

* It must be remembered that Steele published his famous papers in England, not in Ireland. "It was through the *Tattlers*," writes Henry Morley, "and the daily *Spectators* which succeeded them, that the people of England really learned to read."—*English Writers*.

The first number of *The Spectator* is dated March 1, 1711; the last, December 20, 1714—in all, 635 numbers.

† It was stolen from the Catholics. Swift, as has been already stated, was a Protestant clergyman.

‡ "Against all comers he stood the Goliath of pamphleteers in the reign of Queen Anne, and there arose no David who could slay him."—*Coppée*.

12. Which was his first work of marked power and originality?

The *Tale of a Tub*, which was published in 1704. It is the coarsest, wildest, and wittiest of all his polemical works.

13. What caused Swift to write the *Drapier Letters*?

In 1724 an Englishman named Wood obtained a patent from the government empowering him to coin over half a million dollars' worth of copper money for circulation in Ireland. Swift opposed the measure in a series of public letters, marked by a bold, simple, and hardy eloquence, and signed "M. B. Drapier." The blow crushed Wood and his odious patent.

14. Which was Swift's most popular and original work?

Gulliver's Travels, which he made the vehicle of his contempt and hatred of mankind. The gross indecency of certain portions of the work merit severe condemnation.

"Immodest words admit of no defence,
For want of decency is want of sense."

15. What is your opinion of his poems?

Swift was a poet, but the less said in praise of his poetry the better.

"I am far from wishing to depreciate Addison's talents, but I am anxious to do justice to Steele, who was, I think, upon the whole, a less artificial and more original writer."—*William Hazlitt*.

"Swift knew, almost beyond any man, the purity, the extent, and the precision of the English language."—*Blair*.

LESSON II.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH. DIED 1774.

Chief works: (1) *Poems*.
 (2) *Plays*.
 (3) *Essays*.
 (4) *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

16. Who was Oliver Goldsmith?

He was a gifted, kind-hearted Irishman, "who left scarcely any style of writing untouched, and touched nothing which he did not adorn."

17. Give a brief outline of his career.

Goldsmith was born at Pallas, in the county of Longford; graduated at Trinity College, Dublin; studied medicine; made a tour of Europe with "a guinea in his pocket, a shirt on his back, and a flute in his hand;" and at length, settling in London, he devoted his life to literature.

18. Which are his chief poems?

The Traveller and *The Deserted Village*; but he wrote a number of short poems of great merit.

19. What is *The Traveller*?

It is a didactic poem in which Goldsmith gives his impressions of the scenes and society that he met on his travels through the various countries of Europe. He comes to the conclusion that—

"Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
 Our own felicity we make or find."

20. Which is Goldsmith's masterpiece?

The Deserted Village, the most polished, precious, and soul-touching of all his poems. It speaks to the heart. It is full of exquisite pictures of rural life and manners. The diction is simple and beautiful. In

short, it is a poem unsurpassed in the whole range of English literature.*

21. What do you know of his comedies?

Goldsmith's comedies are *The Good-Natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*. The former is an agreeable satire on the follies of benevolence, and the latter a laughable burlesque on a very improbable mistake. They still keep the stage.

22. How does Goldsmith rank as an essayist?

As an essayist he ranks with the highest in our language.

23. What merit belongs to him as a writer of fiction?

The great merit of purifying the novel and of raising it above the sensual and obscene. *The Vicar of Wakefield* stands alone in English letters, the matchless story of his own matchless pen.

"Goldsmith, both in prose and verse, was one of the most delightful writers in the language. His verse flows like a limpid stream."—*William Hazlitt*.

"From the excitement of our present literature, whether genuine or spurious, it is a pleasant change to take up the tranquil pages of Goldsmith—to feel the sunny glow of his thoughts upon our hearts, and on our fancies the gentle music of his words."—*Henry Giles*.

*The following suggestive lines are often quoted:

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
 Where wealth accumulates and men decay.
 Princes and lords may flourish or may fade—
 A breath can make them as a breath has made;
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
 When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

LESSON III.

EDMUND BURKE. DIED 1797.

Chief works: (1) *Speeches*.
(2) *Public Letters*.
(3) *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

24. Which is the greatest name among the Irish writers of the eighteenth century?

Edmund Burke, who was to England and all Europe a new light of political wisdom and moral experience.

25. Tell us something of his career.

Burke was born at Dublin, received his education at Trinity College, entered the English Parliament, and spent a long and spotless life in laboring for the advancement of justice and civil and religious liberty.

26. Which was his earliest original work of marked power?

His *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, a work written in a style of great elegance.

27. What is said of his eloquence?

The eloquence of Burke, though it often flew over the thick heads of those to whom it was addressed, is destined to be the admiration and delight of unborn generations. Lord Macaulay styles him "the greatest master of eloquence," and pronounces him "superior to every orator, ancient or modern."

28. Upon what subjects did he speak and write with most force and fervor?

On the claims of the oppressed Irish Catholics,* on justice to the American colonists, on the impeach-

*But a few months before his death, he wrote his last *Letter on the Affairs of Ireland*.

ment of Warren Hastings, and on the French Revolution.

29. Mention his three splendid pieces on the American struggle.

- (1) *Speech on American Taxation*;
- (2) *Speech on Conciliation with America*;
- (3) *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*.

He was ever the friend of America, and his protests against the war will last as long as our literature.

30. What does John Morley remark of those three productions?

It is no exaggeration to say that they compose the most perfect manual in our literature, or in any literature, for one who approaches the study of public affairs, whether for knowledge or for practice.

31. Which, perhaps, was the grandest oratorical achievement of his life?

The famous impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1788.*

32. What has a famous critic said of his *Letter to a Noble Lord*?

That it is the most splendid repartee in the English language.

33. Which, however, is Burke's masterpiece?

The *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, an incomparable work, that gives the fullest and clearest statement of his political philosophy. It is a treasury of eloquence and political wisdom. It is a Christian book. It shows that without religion true civilization must cease to exist. "We know," says Burke, "and what is better we feel inwardly, that re-

*Hastings had been Governor-General of India, and had sadly abused his position.

ligion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort."

34. What is your opinion of Edmund Burke's rank as a writer?

He is one of the greatest masters of English prose. He united wise solidity of thought to brilliancy of imagination in a degree perhaps never possessed by any other writer of our language.

"Burke is among the greatest of those who have wrought marvels in the prose of our English tongue."—*John Morley*.
"Shakspeare and Burke are, if I may venture the expression, above talent. Burke's works contain an ampler store of political and moral wisdom than can be found in any other writer whatever."—*Sir James Mackintosh*.

"He was a prodigy of nature and of acquisition. He read everything—he saw everything. His knowledge of history amounted to a power of foretelling; and when he perceived the wild work that was doing in France, that great political physician, cognizant of symptoms, distinguished between the access of fever and the force of health, and what others conceived to be the vigor of her constitution he knew to be the paroxysm of her madness; and thus prophet-like, he pronounced the destinies of France, and, in his prophetic fury, admonished nations."—*Henry Grattan*.

LESSON IV.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN. DIED 1816.

Chief works: (1) *Plays*. (2) *Speeches*.

35. Who was Richard Brinsley Sheridan?

He was the greatest dramatist and one of the most brilliant orators of the eighteenth century. As a dramatist he is second to Shakspeare only.

36. Give a short outline of his life.

Sheridan, the son of very gifted parents, was born at Dublin, in 1751. After an imperfect education, he began life as a literary adventurer, and grasped at position, fame, and fortune as if they were his birth-right. He seemed to fail in nothing except virtue

and temperance. His career in the English Parliament was brilliant, but he died in poverty and neglect.

37. Name his principal plays.

The School for Scandal, *The Rivals*, and *The Critic*.

38. What is *The School for Scandal*?

It is a regular comedy, the object of which is to satirize the society of London. The dialogue is one incessant sparkle of the finest and most polished repartee. In spite of some faults, it may safely be pronounced the best comedy in the English language.

39. What is *The Rivals*?

It is an exquisite comedy over which the reader never ceases to laugh. The sketches of character are light and admirable. The blustering Sir Anthony and Mrs. Malaprop with her "parts of speech" can never be forgotten.

40. What is *The Critic*?

It is a witty farce, and has a capital character in Sir Fretful Plagiary.

41. What have you to remark of Sheridan's speeches and parliamentary career?

He never failed to amuse the House, and, when stirred by the trumpet-call of a great occasion, he was capable of rising to heights of noble eloquence. Burke declared that Sheridan's famous speech against Warren Hastings was "the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument, and wit united of which there is any record or tradition."

"As mere acting plays, those of Sheridan are considered the best in the language."—*Hart*.

"As a dramatic author, Sheridan produced three works which will ever be considered masterpieces in their different styles—the two comedies entitled *The School for Scandal* and *The Rivals*, and the inimitable dramatic caricature *The Critic*."—*Shaw*.

LESSON V.

HENRY GRATTAN. DIED 1820.

Chief works: *Speeches*.

JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN. DIED 1817.

Chief works: *Speeches*.

42. Who was Henry Grattan?

He was one of the purest and greatest of Irish orators, patriots, and statesmen.

43. Give some of the chief points in h's life.

Grattan was born at Dublin, educated at Trinity College, called to the Irish bar, became member of the Irish Parliament, and by the efforts of his genius he procured the legislative independence of Ireland in 1782. After the Union, he entered the British Parliament.

44. Mention a few of his most famous speeches.

The Rights of Ireland, Philippic against Flood, Reply to Corry, and Speeches on the Catholic Question.

45. Can you give an often-quoted passage from the peroration of his great speech on the Rights of Ireland?

Grattan said: "I never will be satisfied so long as the meanest cottager in Ireland has a link of the British chain clanking to his rags. He may be naked—he shall *not* be in irons."

46. What has an eminent critic remarked of Grattan's speeches?

That they are the finest specimens of imaginative eloquence in the English or in any language.

47. Give a short sketch of the eloquent and patriotic John Philpot Curran.

He was born in the county of Cork; received his education at Trinity College, Dublin; was called to the Irish bar; and devoted his life and his genius to the good of his country.

48. Have we complete reports of his speeches?

We have no complete report of Curran's speeches, but only hurried notes, which give us many hints of what the speeches actually spoken must have been.

49. Can you name some of his greatest speeches?

Among his greatest speeches were the following: *On Catholic Emancipation, For Archibald Hamilton Rowan, For Peter Finnerty, For Henry Sheares, and For Lady Pamela Fitzgerald and her Children.*

50. What may be said of Curran's eloquence?

Curran's eloquence was rich in feeling, courage, earnestness, exquisite humor, moral simplicity, moral elevation, and the spirit of poetry and patriotism. It glowed with brilliancy, for his soul was lighted with the fire of an impassioned imagination.

"No other orator is so uniformly animated as Grattan. No other orator has brightened the depths of political philosophy with such vivid and lasting light. No writer in the language, except Shakespeare, has so sublime and suggestive a diction."—*Thomas O. Davis*.

"No government ever dismayed Grattan. The world could not bribe him; he thought only of Ireland; lived for no other object; dedicated to her his beautiful fancy, his manly courage, and all the splendor of his astonishing eloquence."—*Sydney Smith*.

"I have met Curran at Holland House. His imagination is beyond human, and his humor is perfect. I never met his equal."—*Lord Byron*.

"No one can read even the meagre reports which we have of Curran's speeches without feeling how profoundly his life was in the cause of Ireland, and how his heart was bowed down under the burden of her calamities. This interest in his country is the central inspiration of his eloquence, and in his day his country was clad in mourning."—*Henry Giles*.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER II., BOOK III.

1. The English penal laws were a horrible code framed with one main object in view—the utter destruction of the Catholic religion in Ireland.

2. Though subjected to appalling persecution for centuries; though robbed of all human resources—liberty, homes, lands, education, churches, colleges, and religious institutions—the Irish Catholics with a never-to-be-forgotten patience and heroism triumphed, and the so-called Reformation proved a signal failure in Ireland.

3. An insolent Protestant minority misruled the island, and tyrannized over the long-suffering Catholics.

4. The laws were made, not for the protection of the Catholics, but for their inhuman punishment. The cattle that roamed the fields had more legal rights than the royal descendants of Milesius.*

5. The corrupt and persecuting legislative body known as the "Irish Parliament" was Irish in name only.

6. The difficulties of England first forced her to relax the penal code against Catholics.

7. The penal laws made it impossible for one Irish Catholic writer of distinction to exist in the eighteenth century. To learn to read, to write, and to pray were equally acts of treason.

8. Persecuted priests and hedge-schoolmasters kept

* "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."—*The Declaration of Independence.*

the lamp of knowledge dimly burning at the risk of their lives.

9. The Irish writers of the eighteenth century were all non-Catholics.

10. Steele was the founder of English periodical literature, and his *Spectator* is a classic.

11. Swift is one of the most original writers of this period.

12. Goldsmith was the first to purify the novel and make it a teacher of virtue.

13. Burke may be fairly called the prince of English prose-writers. His *Reflections on the Revolution in France* has been styled "the greatest work of the greatest writer of English prose."

14. Sheridan wrote the best and wittiest comedies in our language.

15. The *Speeches* of Burke, Grattan, Curran, and Sheridan are the earliest specimens of true Irish eloquence in the English language.

16. *Bird's-eye view of the chief Irish writers and works of the eighteenth century:*

Sir Richard Steele, *Essays in The Spectator*.
Rev. Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*.
Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village*.
Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.
Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals*.
Henry Grattan, *Speeches*.
John Philpot Curran, *Speeches*.

See *Short Dictionary* for the other Irish writers of the eighteenth century most worthy of mention; namely, *Thomas Parnell, Bishop Berkeley, Laurence Sterne, William Drennan, and Rev. Arthur O'Leary.**

* For a fuller account of the writers of this period, see *The Prose and Poetry of Ireland.*