

CHAPTER III.

THE ENGLISH LITERATURE OF IRELAND.

A.D. 1800 to 1900.

THE AGE OF MOORE, GRIFFIN, AND D. F. MACCARTHY.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

"Ireland is a land of poetry. It is a country of tradition, of meditation, and of great idealism. Monuments of war, princedom and religion cover the surface of the land. The meanest man lingers under the shadow of piles which tell him that his fathers were not slaves. He toils in the fields with structures before him through which echoes the voice of centuries—to his heart the voice of soldiers, of scholars, and of saints."—*Henry Giles.*

1. GLIMPSES AT IRELAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.—We have already touched upon some of the chief events in the Irish history of the present age (Book II, Chap. VI.). The political misery of the nation was completed at the very dawn of the century. It was a time of struggle and confusion. Corruption and treachery ruled. The Catholics were powerless. William Pitt spent nearly \$10,000,000 in bribing members of the so-called Irish Parliament, and a majority of that corrupt body voted for its destruction. "It sold the birthright of the nation," says Walpole, "for its own selfish ends."* And

* It must not be fancied that all the members turned traitors to their country. The Parliament contained such genuine patriots as Henry Grattan, Sir John Parnell, and many others. The iniquitous measure, however, was carried by a majority of forty-three.

thus, in brief, came about the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland.

Dr. Johnson once remarked to an Irishman: "Do not make a union with us, sir. We should only unite with you to rob you. We should have robbed the Scotch if they had had anything of which we could have robbed them." The truth of this pointed remark is beyond question.

"From the first of January, 1801," writes McGee, "Ireland ceased to have even the semblance of nationality. Her laws in future were to be made in London, in a House of Commons seven-eighths of whose members had never seen Ireland, or knew anything whatever of her resources, trade, commerce, or agriculture; and in a House of Lords where the ignorant majority was even more anti-Irish and anti-Catholic."

2. CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.—The Irish Catholics—the great body of the nation—were still white slaves to whom, indeed, a few crumbs from the table of justice had been thrown. They were sunk in gloomy apathy.

"The peasant scarce had leave to live—
Above his head
A ruined shed,
No tenure but a tyrant's will."

At this critical period a great man appeared. It was Daniel O'Connell—the foremost political figure in Ireland for nearly half a century. His voice was a trumpet-blast that aroused the nation. The pens of Bishop Doyle, Bishop MacHale, Rev. Sydney Smith, and the eloquence of Shiel came to his assistance. O'Connell knocked at the doors of the English Parliament, and forced England to grant the Catholics

emancipation, in 1829. At last the atrocious penal laws were erased from the statute-book, after filling the island with misery for centuries. Six millions of Irish Catholics were told that they had the right to live, move, say their prayers, and learn to read, write, and cipher, without being hunted like wild beasts. It was a great step forward.

3. REPEAL, YOUNG IRELAND, AND THE FAMINE.—O'Connell next aimed at the repeal of the Union. He wished Ireland to have her own legislature in Dublin. After years of peaceable agitation, however, the English Government had him arrested, prosecuted, and imprisoned. O'Connell was now an old man. His prestige waned. He was opposed by the "Young Ireland Party;" and, in the midst of these political dissensions, gaunt famine came in all its terrible reality. The potato-crop withered away mysteriously. It was the only food of the poor. A shout of alarm arose, and, in 1847, a doomed people beheld the awful spectre of starvation. It was a stupendous calamity, and the English Government was never "a friend in need" to Ireland. The unhappy people perished—died in thousands by the waysides, and hastened to foreign lands in millions. During the last third of a century fully three millions of Irish have made their homes in this Republic.

The "Young Ireland Party" grew wild at the deplorable condition of the country under English misrule, and rushed heedlessly into a short-lived rebellion. But Ireland wanted food even more than freedom. The outbreak of 1848 was a mad effort at revolution. It was only the sword-flashes of a few gifted, foolish, and fearless young Irishmen.

4. WHAT IS AN EVICTION?—Poverty and starva-

tion were not the only woes that haunted the path of the Irish peasant. He could be evicted at any moment by the merciless landlord. Such a heart-rending scene is thus described by an eye-witness: "Seven hundred human beings," says Dr. Nulty, the venerable Catholic Bishop of Meath, "were driven from their homes on this one day. There was not a shilling of rent due on the estate at the time, except by one man. The sheriff's assistants employed on the occasion to extinguish the hearths and demolish the homes of those honest, industrious men worked away with a will at their awful calling until evening. At length an incident occurred that varied the monotony of the grim and ghastly ruin which they were spreading all around. They stopped suddenly and recoiled, panic-stricken with terror, from two dwellings which they were directed to destroy with the vest. They had just learned that typhus fever held these houses in its grasp and had already brought death to some of their inmates. They therefore supplicated the agent to spare these houses a little longer; but he was inexorable, and insisted that they should come down. He ordered a large winnowing-sheet to be secured over the beds in which the fever-victims lay,—fortunately they happened to be delirious at the time,—and then directed the houses to be unroofed cautiously and slowly. I administered the last Sacrament of the Church to four of these fever-victims next day, and, save the above-mentioned winnowing-sheet, there was not then a roof nearer to me than the canopy of heaven. The scene of that eviction-day I must remember all my life long. The wailing of women, the screams, the terror, the consternation of children, the speechless agony of men, wrung tears of

grief from all who saw them. I saw the officers and men of a large police force that were obliged to attend on the occasion cry like children. The heavy rains that usually attend the autumnal equinoxes descended in cold, copious torrents throughout the night, and at once revealed to the houseless sufferers the awful realities of their condition. I visited them next morning, and rode from place to place administering to them all the comfort I could. The landed proprietors in a circle all round, and for many miles in every direction, warned their tenantry against admitting them to even a single night's shelter. Many of these poor people were unable to emigrate. After battling in vain with privation and pestilence, they at last graduated from the workhouse to the tomb, and in little more than three years nearly a fourth of them lay quietly in their graves."*

5. DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENGLISH PROTESTANT CHURCH.—From the reign of Elizabeth well into that of Victoria—a period of over 300 years—the Protestant Church as by law established added to the woes of Ireland. It brought not the peace of the Gospel. It filled the land with tears and blood. "The ground was dug as for a grave," says Father Burke, O.P. "The seedling of Protestantism was cast into the soil, and the blood of the Irish nation was poured in to warm it and bring it forth. It

*During the last thirty years eviction has been in full swing. Thousands were evicted immediately after the famine of '47. Here are some eviction figures:

1876.....	1200 evictions.
1877.....	over 1300 "
1878.....	over 1700 "
1879.....	nearly 4000 "

Is it any wonder that, as a class, the Irish landlords are regarded as merciless tyrants?

never grew; it never bloomed; it never came forth." As early as the year 1700 the Protestant bishops of Ireland—men who had nothing to do—held nearly one million of acres of the best land, or one-nineteenth of the island.* This so-called Church was the fruitful cause of strife, hatred, and heart-burnings. It was the emblem of bitter oppression. The Catholics were obliged to support the odious institution. The poor man often paid out his last shilling, or saw his last cow marched away to pay the tithes of an idle, intruding minister from whom he received nothing in return—except, perhaps, cold contempt.† When Sunday came, the bell of a neat parish church—which had been stolen from the Catholics—often summoned only the parson and his clerk. There was no one else to come; while, not far away, one thousand Catholics were huddled together in a miserable hovel "to render thanks to God for even these blessings, and to tell their woes to Heaven!" "There is no abuse like it," said Sydney Smith, "in all Europe, in all Asia, in all the discovered parts of Africa, and in all we have heard of Timbuctoo." This barren institution, with the curse of innocent blood upon it, was dises-

*In 1845 it was ascertained before a parliamentary committee that seven Protestant bishops in Ireland had died, leaving behind them in ready money the enormous sum of *over seven millions of dollars*. And "this," as an historian remarks, "among an ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-educated people—the most miserable in Europe."

†It took an army to collect these unholy tithes. On one occasion a regiment of hussars might be seen driving a flock of geese. Deplorable scenes occurred. In 1831, a dozen men were killed and about twenty wounded by the police at Newton Barry. At Rathcormac, in Cork, a Protestant archdeacon brought a party of military to collect tithes of a family named Ryan. The Ryans were Catholics, and resisted payment. The military fired. Eight persons were killed and thirteen wounded. "Will you pay me now?" roared the brutal archdeacon to Mrs. Ryan, whose son had just been shot before her eyes. Sydney Smith estimated that perhaps a million of lives had been sacrificed to this outrageous collection of tithes in Ireland.

tablished in 1869, and Ireland was thus relieved of another colossal incubus.

6. THE LAND QUESTION AND SOME OTHER QUESTIONS.—The total area of Ireland is a little over twenty millions of acres. At present 744 persons, called landlords, hold nearly ten millions of acres, or one-half of the island; and two-thirds of all Ireland is held by 1942 persons. Thus a few intruding monopolists claim all—or nearly all—the soil, while the nation at large, five millions of people, remain disinherited—ever reminded of their degradation, ever standing on the ragged edge of misery and pauperism. Is it any wonder that the Irish are not satisfied with being cheated? What people would be? The voice of this plundered and suffering nation still appeals to earth and heaven.

England, as we have seen, robbed the Irish people of all that is dear to man in this world—homes, lands, liberty, family greatness, education, churches, schools, colleges, religious institutions, and an independent legislature. What restitution has she made? What adequate compensation has been rendered for this robbery of a nation—this stripping of a people to the bone? Is it such cheap, windy, pen-and-ink favors on parchment—manufactured in the British Parliament—as “Catholic Emancipation,” “Church Disestablishment,” and badly tinkered “Land Bills”?

No! a thousand times no! “The Irish people,” says the illustrious Pontiff, Leo XIII., “have their rights, and they are allowed strictly to maintain them, and to claim them back.”

7. INFLUENCING AGENTS ON THE ENGLISH LITERATURE OF IRELAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.—The stern and successful struggle of the long-suffering

Catholics for emancipation produced a fiery, eloquent literature which is to be found chiefly in the speeches of O'Connell and Shiel, in the poems of Moore, and in the public letters of Dr. Doyle and Dr. MacHale. Moore was the *first* Irish Catholic who became a master of the English language, and proved it in his writings. Dr. Doyle was the *first* Irish Catholic bishop who, in the same tongue, wielded a pen of immense power.

At the date of emancipation, Ireland—which before the coming of the fierce Dane or the grasping Norman had been the school of Western Europe—was the most ignorant and impoverished Christian country on the face of the earth. The penal code left nearly *four millions* of Irish unable to read or write, and nearly a *million and a half* who could read but could not write.* The present state-school system, anti-Catholic and anti-Irish in its tendency, was established in 1831. A new generation of readers soon grew up. The Jesuit Fathers, the Christian Brothers, the Franciscan Brothers, the Ursuline Nuns, the Ladies of Loretto, and many other religious congregations of men and women have toiled in the great field of education with an energy and success beyond all praise.

What is known as “Young Ireland” was an offshoot of O'Connell's Repeal party. It originated a new and brilliant school of literature. Its chief organ was the *Dublin Nation*, founded in 1842 by three young men—*Charles Gavan Duffy*, *Thomas Osborne Davis*, and *John Blake Dillon*. “The five volumes of the *Nation*,” says a recent writer, “would

* Sir Charles G. Duffy.

of themselves, if nothing else of the writings of its contributors remained, form a small library of prose and poetry, more valuable than scores of ordinary books. The massive prose of Duffy, the electric poetry of Davis, the sharp, intense leaders of Mitchel, the solid, practical reports of McGee, the erudite reviews of Reilly, the lighter but exceedingly pleasant sketches of Meagher, and the songs and ballads of most of those and of scores of volunteer contributors, form a cyclopædia of politics, literature, and verse unmatched in the history of journalism.*

The nineteenth century has witnessed a sort of literary resurrection in Ireland. In the dread days of the penal laws, the people either hid their books or destroyed them. Persecuted monks and nuns, when obliged to fly from their quiet, holy abodes, often deposited valuable manuscripts in strong boxes, which were carefully put away in some secluded chamber. They hoped for happier days which, alas! did not come in their time. Many of these precious treasures came to light in our own age. The *Book of Lismore* was discovered in 1814, while repairs were going on in the ancient castle of Lismore. "In the progress of the work, the men having occasion to reopen a doorway that had been closed up with masonry in the interior of the castle, they found a wooden box

* Among the occasional contributors to *The Nation* were James Clarence Mangan, Richard Dalton Williams, Denis Florence MacCarthy, and William Carleton.

The first newspaper in Ireland was printed at Dublin in 1685. It was called *The Dublin News Letter*. The *Freeman's Journal* of Dublin, now the most influential daily in Ireland, was founded in 1763. The *Dublin Penny Journal*, a weekly, began its career in 1832; and though it did not live long, a set of the *Journal* is very valuable. The *Dublin Nation* is still an important weekly. Among the best known of the Irish magazines are the *Dublin University Magazine* and the *Irish Monthly Magazine*. The latter is under the able editorship of Rev. Matthew Russell, S.J.

enclosed in the centre of it, which, on being taken out, was found to contain the *Book of Lismore*, as well as a superb old crozier. The manuscript had suffered from damp, and the back, front, and top margin had been gnawed in several places by rats and mice."*

In 1820, on opening the vault where stood the cloister of the old Abbey of Connor, in the county of Antrim, the workmen discovered an oaken chest, the contents of which proved to be a translation of the Bible into Irish, and a collection of the original poems of Ossian, transcribed at Connor, in 1463, by an Irish priest named Terence O'Neill.

About the year 1821, while certain repairs were being made in an apartment of the old ruined Abbey of Bun-na-Margy, on the coast of Antrim, an oaken chest was discovered containing four manuscripts in a state of good preservation. One consisted of a large portion of a theological treatise by St. Thomas Aquinas, written on vellum, and extending to about 600 quarto pages. "It is the finest specimen of penmanship we have ever seen," says Dr. Stuart in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1822, "and the ink is superior in brilliancy and intenseness of color to any at present manufactured in Europe."

"Many Irish manuscripts," writes Canon Bourke, "were stowed away in the cottages of the peasantry behind what are called the rafters of the house. The present writer has in his possession at this moment two such manuscripts that had lain for years hid behind rafters in the cottages of respectable peasants named Bodkin and Bourke."†

* O'Curry.

† *The Aryan Origin of the Gaelic Race and Language*.

The government survey of Ireland led to a careful study of her rich antiquities by such distinguished men as *O'Curry*, *O'Donovan*, *Petrie*, *Wilde*, and *Todd*. The work of examining and cataloguing the vast collections of Irish manuscripts in the libraries of Trinity College and the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, together with the establishment of chairs of Irish history and literature in Trinity College, the Catholic University, and the Queen's Colleges,* gave, at least, a temporary impulse to the study of the Irish language, Irish history, and Irish antiquities. The best results of this rich, rare, and scholarly labor are to be found chiefly in Dr. O'Donovan's splendid translation of the *Annals of the Four Masters*, and in O'Curry's two excellent works—*Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* and *The Manners, Customs, and Government of the Ancient Irish*.

8. INFLUENCE OF THE IRISH MIND ON ENGLISH LITERATURE.—The French critic Taine professed to find in the writings of *Goldsmith*, *Burke*, *Moore*, and *Sheridan* "a tone of their own—the Irish tone." This was no great discovery, but it was the first time such a difference was ever pointed out in a work on English literature between the product of the Irish mind and that of the Saxon or English mind. The difference is very marked. An old Irish poem says:

"For acuteness and valor, the Greeks;
For excessive pride, the Romans;
For dulness, the creeping Saxons;
For beauty and amorousness, the Gaels."

Some of the well-defined literary traits that distinguish the Celtic Irishman from the Saxon Englishman, and which characterize the former's best mental

*The Queen's Colleges no longer have chairs of Celtic.

productions, are lively wit, a spiritual temperament, delicacy of sentiment, brilliancy of imagination, uncommon power of satire, great aptitude for describing the magic of natural scenery, an emotional nature and a quick perception, a reverence and enthusiasm for the good, the pure, and the beautiful, and the gift of style in a wonderful measure.*

"The Celt's quick feeling," says Matthew Arnold, "for what is noble and distinguished gave his poetry style; his indomitable personality gave it pride and passion; his sensibility and nervous exaltation gave it a better gift still—the gift of rendering with wonderful felicity the magical charm of nature. The forest solitude, the bubbling spring, the wild flowers are everywhere in romance. They have a mysterious life and grace there; they are Nature's own children, and utter her secret in a way which make them something quite different from the woods, waters, and plants of Greek and Roman poetry. Now of this delicate magic, Celtic romance is so pre-eminent a mistress that it seems impossible to believe the power did not come into romance from the Celts." †

For over a hundred years Irish genius—the genius of Goldsmith, Burke, Grattan, Moore, Griffin, Davis, Mangan, Williams, MacCarthy, and others—has done a world of exquisite work peculiarly its own in giving

* Canon Bourke claims that the hymns of the Church owe much to ancient Irish writers. "There are," he says, "for the past 1400 years, about 150 Latin hymns in the books of devotion in use among the children of the Catholic Church. Nine out of ten of these hymns are written in the same style as that in which the Irish people of the early period wrote their native *dans* or poems."—*Aryan Origin of the Gaelic Race and Language*, p. 458.

† *Rhyme*—the most striking characteristic of our modern poetry as distinguished from that of the ancients, and a main source, to our poetry, of its magic and charm, of what we call its romantic element—rhyme itself, all the weight of evidence tends to show, comes into our poetry from the Celts.—*Matthew Arnold*.

the impulse of a new Celtic life, polish, grace, and dignity to the English language and English literature.

9. ANTI-IRISH WRITERS.—But from English writers—who until recently had the ear of the world—the Irish get small credit for their gifts, virtues, or achievements. Such writers, however, deserve to be exposed that the sensible reader may know how to guard himself against their prejudice, contempt, or malignity. The first on the list is *Gerald Barry*, or *Geraldus Cambrensis*, the lying historian, who wrote shortly after the English invasion. He is a shameful falsifier. Father Burke hit the truth neatly when he stated that if every word of Barry was not a lie, at least every sentence was. *Edmund Spenser*, the polished scoundrel, the famous author of the *Fairy Queen*, points out what, in his opinion, was the best way to make an end of the Irish people. It was kindly to forbid them to till the soil or pasture the cattle for one whole season. The poet felt that that would bring about the following much-to-be-desired result: “The Irish would quickly consume themselves and devour one another.” *Samuel Butler* could not finish his *Hudibras* without writing:

“A deep occult philosopher.
As learned as the wild Irish are.”

Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, bitterly blames Cromwell for not driving the whole Irish race out of Ireland. *Hume*, in his *History*, shows an intense hatred of Ireland. *Macpherson* tried to make out that Ossian was a Scotchman, and wrote endless falsehoods to prove it. The wretched *De Quincey* cannot pen a note of nine lines without libelling what he terms “the barbarous Celtic blood.” Southey

states that the opium-eater was a calumniator, and perhaps Carlyle is not too harsh on De Quincey when he describes him as one that “carries a laudanum-bottle in his pocket and the venom of a wasp in his heart.” *Macaulay* gloats over the oppression of the Irish Catholics during the dark days of the penal laws; probably this is why the famous Dr. Cahill styled him a “rhetorical fop.” *Thackeray*, in some of his stories, seems to take pleasure in ridiculing everything Irish. His drunken “Captain Costigan” is not only a leading character in *Pendennis*, but he is also dragged into *The Newcomes*. His *Irish Sketch-Book* is an elaborate sneer at everything Irish. Carlyle’s *Journey to Ireland* is a disgrace to human nature. His brutal hatred breaks forth in a manner that would bring blushes to the cheek of a Malay or a Mohawk. But of all modern English writers on Ireland and the Irish, Froude is the most false and malignant. He is color-blind to the truth of history.

10. THE IRISH AS A RELIGIOUS AND FAITHFUL PEOPLE.—“The Irish,” wrote Bishop Doyle in 1824, “are, morally speaking, not only religious, like other nations, but entirely devoted to religion. The geographical position of the country, its soil and climate, as well as the state of society, have a strong influence in forming the natural temperament of the people. The Irish people are more sanguine than the English, less mercurial than the French; they seem to be compounded of both these nations, and more suited than either to seek after and indulge in spiritual affections.”

Justin MacCarthy, a keen, impartial observer, wrote in 1880: “The Irish peasant remained through centuries of persecution devotedly faithful to

the Catholic Church. Nothing could win or wean him from it. The Irish population of Ireland—there is meaning in the words—were made apparently by nature for the Catholic faith. Hardly any influence on earth could make the genuine Celtic Irishman a Materialist, or what is called in France a *Voltairean*. For him, as for Schiller's immortal heroine, the kingdom of the spirits is easily opened. Half his thoughts, half his life, belong to a world other than the material world around him. The supernatural becomes almost the natural for him. The streams, the valleys, the hills of his native country are peopled by mystic forms and melancholy legends, which are all but living things for him. Even the railway has not banished from the land his familiar fancies and dreams. The "good people" still linger around the raths and glens. The banshee even yet laments, in dirge-like wailings, the death of the representative of each ancient house. The very superstitions of the Irish peasant take a devotional form. They are never degrading. His piety is not merely sincere: it is even practical. It sustains him against many hard trials and enables him to bear, in cheerful patience, a lifelong trouble. He praises God for everything; not as an act of mere devotional formality, but as by instinct; the praise naturally rising to his lips. Old men and women in Ireland who seem, to the observer, to have lived lives of nothing but privation and suffering, are heard to murmur with their latest breath the fervent declaration that the Lord was good to them always. Assuredly this genuine piety does not always prevent the wild Celtic nature from breaking forth into fierce excesses. Stormy outbursts of passion, gusts of savage revenge, too often sweep

away the soul of the Irish peasant from the quiet moorings in which his natural piety and the teachings of his Church would hold it. But deep down in his nature is that faith in the other world and its visible connection and intercourse with this; his reverence for the teaching which shows him a clear title to immortality. For this very reason, when the Irish peasant throws off altogether the guidance of religion, he is apt to rush into worse extravagances and excesses than most other men. He is not made to be a rationalist; he is made to be a believer." *

11. THE DECAY OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE.—In 1851 there were over one million and a half Irish-speaking inhabitants in Ireland. To-day there is, perhaps, scarcely half that number. English is the official language of the country. It is the language of the schools. It is the language of commerce. Ignorant agents and landlords will not listen to Irish. The people have been forced to learn English, which has gradually displaced the venerable language of Columbkille, Brian Boru, and Hugh O'Neill. The following pathetic lines give voice to a sad truth:

" 'Tis fading, oh, 'tis fading, like leaves upon the trees!
In murmuring tone 'tis dying, like the wail upon the breeze!
'Tis swiftly disappearing, as footprints on the shore
Where the Barrow, and the Erne, and Loch Swilly's waters roar—
Where the parting sunbeam kisses Loch Corrib in the west,
And Ocean, like a mother, clasps the Shannon to her breast!
The language of old Erin, of her history and name—
Of her monarchs and her heroes—her glory and her fame—
The sacred shrine where rested, through sunshine and through
gloom,
The spirit of her martyrs, as their bodies in the tomb,
The time-wrought shell where murmured, 'mid centuries of wrong,
The secret voice of Freedom, in annal and in song—
Is slowly, surely sinking into silent death at last,
To live but in the memories of those who love the past."

* *History of Our Own Times.*

"Every remarkable man," wrote Lacordaire, "has been fond of letters." The same can be said of every remarkable nation. The Irish have always been a literary people. To song and legend and history, they have clung through sunshine and shadow with the same lofty tenacity as to faith and fatherland. No misfortune has been able to dull the Irish mind, however it may check its expression. The memory of the past is kept alive by a national literature more truly popular than any literature of the kind in Europe. To-day there is less ignorance in Ireland than in any other country in the world. This is one of the wonders of history. "Irishmen who return to their country after a few years' absence," says Sir John Pope Hennessy, "cannot fail to see, as one of the most noticeable changes, an extension of popular literature; a great increase in the number of readers, not, however, in the upper or middle classes, but in the lower classes—that is, lower as far as the possession of pounds, shillings, and pence is concerned. In a recent article in the *London Reader*, some statements were quoted from the reports of the United States Bureau of Education, showing the comparative statistics of education in some of the principal countries in the world, wherein *Ireland heads the list*, the United States comes second, Germany third, then Switzerland, then England, then France, etc."*

The future is full of bright promise. "I look," says Cardinal Newman, with prophetic glance, "towards a land both old and young—old in its Christianity, young in its promise of the future; a nation which received grace before the Saxon came to Britain, and which has never quenched it; a Church which com-

* *The Nineteenth Century* for June, 1884.

prehends in its history the rise and fall of Canterbury and of York, which Augustine and Paulinus founded, and Pole and Fisher left. I contemplate a people which has had a long night, and will have an inevitable day. I am turning my eyes toward a hundred years to come, and I dimly see the island I am gazing on become the road of passage and union between two hemispheres, and the centre of the world. I see its inhabitants rival Belgium in populousness, France in vigor, and Spain in enthusiasm."

LESSON I.

JOHN LANIGAN. DIED 1828.

JAMES DOYLE. DIED 1834.

1. Who were the first Irish Catholic ecclesiastics of the Nineteenth Century that exhibited marked power as writers?

The Rev. Dr. Lanigan, and the Most Rev. Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.

2. Do you know anything of Dr. Lanigan's career?

He was born at Cashel, in the county of Tipperary, and received his education at Rome and Pavia. He was for many years an honored professor in the University of Pavia. When the French invaded Italy he returned to Ireland, and spent the remainder of his life chiefly at Dublin, devoting himself to literature. Dr. Lanigan was a man of great learning, a fine linguist, a master of theology, and an accomplished general scholar.

3. Which is his chief work?

The Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, which appeared in four volumes in 1822. It was the first great work on the Irish Church, and it is still unrivalled.

4. Give some of the chief points in the life of Bishop Doyle.

Dr. Doyle was born at New Ross, county of Wexford, and received his education at the University of Coimbra, Portugal.* On returning to his native land he became a professor at Carlow College. He was appointed Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin in 1819, and for fourteen years he shone as a great light in Ireland.

5. Mention one of his public acts by which he performed marked services for his native country, and proved his incomparable ability.

His famous examination before the House of Lords on the state of Ireland. "That Doyle," said the Duke of Wellington, "has a prodigious mind, his head is as clear as rock-water."

6. Which is his chief literary work?

The celebrated *Letters on the State of Ireland*, twelve in number, and signed "J. K. L."†

7. Name his other most noted productions.

Vindication of Catholic Principles, *Letters in Reply to Dr. Magee*, and *Letters to his Friends*. A fine collection of his correspondence is to be found in Fitzpatrick's *Life and Times of Dr. Doyle*.

8. What may be said of Dr. Doyle as a writer?

He is always practical and to the point. His diction, like his intellect, was rich, simple, luminous, and powerful. With greater dignity and more massive strength he possessed all the wit and satire of Junius. Lord Bacon scarcely surpassed J. K. L. in pointed brevity, nor was Edmund Burke more solid and sublime.‡

* It will be noticed that Doyle and Lanigan were educated in foreign countries because those watch-dogs of ignorance, the penal laws, were still in force.

† J. K. L. were the initials of his official title—James, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.

‡ Of education the great Bishop wrote: "Next to the blessing of

"The most illustrious name on the roll of ecclesiastical historians of Ireland is that of Rev. Dr. John Lanigan. His critical remarks have contributed more than those of any other writer to illustrate the early life of our Apostle."—*Archbishop Moran*.

"Until Dr. Doyle came to show them how to wield a pen, the prelates and priests of Ireland, from the reign of George II., were, with one or two exceptions, singularly feeble writers."—*Fitzpatrick*.

LESSON II.

THOMAS MOORE. DIED 1852.

Chief works: (1) *The Irish Melodies*.
(2) *Lalla Rookh*.
(3) *The Epicurean*.
(4) *Life of Sheridan*.

8. Who was Thomas Moore?

He was the greatest of Irish poets, and a prose-writer of eminence.

9. Give a short account of his life.

Moore was born at Dublin in 1779; was educated at Trinity College; visited America in 1804; and devoted his life to literature as a profession. His last years were unhappily clouded by mental infirmity.

10. Which is his chief work?

The immortal *Irish Melodies*, which he began in 1807, and spent over a quarter of a century in their composition. They number one hundred and twenty-four.

redemption and the graces consequent upon it, there is no gift bestowed by God equal in value to a good education. Other advantages are enjoyed by the body; this belongs entirely to the spirit. Whatever is great, or good, or glorious in the works of man is the fruit of educated minds. Wars, conquests, commerce, all the arts of peace and industry, all the refinements of life, all the social and domestic virtues, all the refinements and delicacies of mutual intercourse; in a word, whatever is estimable amongst men, owes its origin, increase, and perfection to the exercise of those faculties whose improvement is the object of education. Religion herself loses half her beauty and influence when not attended or assisted by education, and her power, splendor, and majesty are never so exalted as when cultivated genius and refined taste become her heralds or her handmaids."

11. How does the poet himself refer to this work in words as true as they are beautiful?

He says:

"Dear harp of my country, in darkness I found thee,
The cold chains of silence had hung o'er thee long,
When proudly, my own island harp, I unbound thee,
And gave all thy chords to light, freedom, and song."

12. Mention a few of the most popular and beautiful of the *Irish Melodies*?

*The Minstrel Boy, The Last Rose of Summer, The Meeting of the Waters, On Music, Remember the Glories of Brian the Brave, and The Harp that once through Tara's Halls.**

13. What is *Lalla Rookh*?

It is a charming versified Eastern romance.

14. What is *The Epicurean*?

The Epicurean is a beautiful Egyptian tale of early Christian times. It is written in pure and elegant prose.

15. How should we estimate Moore as a writer of English?

Moore is one of the greatest masters of our language. In the *Irish Melodies* he forces a music out of English words that has never been equalled by any other writer.

* "The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul were fled,
So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high for praise
Now feel that pulse no more.

"No more to chiefs and ladies bright
The harp of Tara swells;
The chord alone that breaks at night
Its tale of ruin tells.
Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes—
The only throb she gives
Is when some heart, indignant breaks,
To show that still she lives."

"In the quality of a national Irish lyrist Moore stands absolutely alone and unapproachable."—*Shaw*.

"Of all the song-writers that ever warbled or chanted or sung, the best, in our estimation, is verily no other than Thomas Moore."—*Wilson*.

"The *Irish Melodies* must be considered as the most valuable and enduring of all his works; they

"Circle his name with a charm against death,"

and as a writer of song he stands without a rival. Moore found the national music of his country, with very few exceptions, debased by a union with words that were either unseemly or unintelligible. The music of Ireland is now known and appreciated all over the world, and the songs of the Irish poet will endure as long as the country the loves and the glories of which they commemorate."—*S. C. Hall*.

LESSON III.

GERALD GRIFFIN. DIED 1840.

JOHN BANIM. DIED 1842.

16. Who was Gerald Griffin?

Gerald Griffin, the first of Irish novelists and a distinguished poet, was born at Limerick in 1803. After finishing his education he went to London to seek his fortune as a dramatic writer, and had a severe struggle for existence and recognition in the modern Babylon. He returned to his native land, and wrote some of his finest works in his quiet Irish home. He became a Christian Brother in 1838, and, as *Brother Joseph*, the famous author died the death of the just two years later.

17. Mention some of his best productions.

Poems, Tragedy of Gisippus, The Collegians, The Invasion, and Tales of the Five Senses. His works are commonly published in ten handy volumes.

18. Which is his masterpiece?

The Collegians, which he wrote at the age of twenty-five. Sydney Smith pronounced it "an ad