

# GREEN ALICE STOPFORD

THE OLD IRISH WORLD

**Alice Green**  
**The Old Irish World**

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*The Old Irish World:*

# Содержание

CHAPTER I

7

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

50

# Alice Stopford Green

## The Old Irish World

### PREFACE

Some Irish friends have asked me to print certain lectures concerning Ireland to which they had listened with indulgence; and to reprint also former papers in a manner more convenient for country readers. This volume is the answer to their request. It will be seen that I have not attempted to alter the lectures from their first purpose and form.

The various studies, thus accidentally united, have a connecting link in such evidences as they may contain of civilisation in the old Irish world. A hundred years ago, in 1821, Dr. Petrie noted that while the historians of ancient native origin were unable in their poverty and degradation to pursue the laborious study of antiquities, there were others of a different class and origin who had taken up the subject to bring it into contempt; and these indeed succeeded in the cause for which they, unworthily, laboured. Forty years later he recognised the same influences at work. It would appear, he said in a letter written to Lord Dunraven shortly before his death in 1865, to be considered derogatory to the feeling of superiority in the English mind to accept the belief that Celts of Ireland or Scotland could

have been equal, not to say superior in civilisation to their more potent conquerors, or that they could have known the arts of civilised life till these were taught them by the Anglo-Normans. After the lapse of half a century we can still trace the same spirit – so powerful have been the hindrances to serious and impartial enquiry – so slow has been the decline of racial prejudice and political complacency. But in these latter days a great change has silently passed over the peoples. The difficulties of historical research and instruction do indeed remain as great as ever; but in the new society which we see shaping itself in Ireland on natural and no longer on purely artificial lines, there is no reason to fear truth as dangerous or to neglect it as unnecessary. There is now a public ready to be interested not only in Danish and Norman civilisation in Ireland, but also in the Gaelic culture which embraced these and made them its own.

I cannot adequately thank Professor Eoin MacNeill for generously allowing me to embody in my first chapter some of his researches on the history of the Scot wanderings between Scotland and Ireland; it is earnestly to be hoped that he will publish before long the results of his original work.

I owe my warm thanks also to Mr. F. J. Bigger for his unstinted help in references and suggestions out of the stores of his topographical knowledge. I may mention as an instance the grave-stone in Kilclief churchyard carved with a Celtic cross, which he discovered while these pages were going through the press, so that I have been able to note it for the first time among

Lecale antiquities.

Mr. R. I. Best has rendered me more services than I can here tell, however gratefully I acknowledge them.

The account of Ardglass has been re-printed with additions, by the kind permission of the Editor of the *Nation*. I have to thank the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* for leave to add the article on Tradition in History, which is inserted at the request of readers in Ireland.

To prevent mistake I may add a word of explanation that the map, or rather diagram, which is entitled Scandinavian Trade Routes, contains not only those lines of sea-commerce, but also an indication of the ways across Europe which were used by Irish travellers from earlier times. The difference between these routes is clearly indicated in the text.

*ALICE STOPFORD GREEN.*

*April 25, 1912.*

**IN MEMORY OF**

**THE IRISH DEAD**

# CHAPTER I

## THE WAY OF

### HISTORY IN IRELAND

IN all the countries of Europe the study of history for a citizen of the State is taken for granted, as the study of tides and currents might be held necessary for a mariner, or of the winds for an airman, or that of the map for a merchant. It is only a dozen years ago, however, that its study was made compulsory in elementary schools in England, and in that country men are still discussing, by way of lectures and so forth, "What is the Use of History." The historical instinct among the English people has indeed never been very keen, so that, as learned men tell us, it would be more difficult to form a folk-museum in England than in any other country, so few are the objects of a distinctly national character that have survived. The past is rapidly overlaid among men who live intensely in the present and the immediate future. A great gulf separates them from a race like the Irish, to whom the far past and the far future are part of the eternal present, the very condition of thought, the furniture without which the mind is bare.

The Irish, nevertheless, have by long effort been brought under authority to the English mind in history, and an Anglicised Ireland now lies in the wake of England, a laggard in the trough of

the wave, rocked by the old commonplaces of the early Victorian age. The hope that our people may win out of that trough lies to a great extent in the new sails set by the National University, if they may at last catch the fresh breezes of Heaven, and be swept into the open sea of free knowledge and candid thinking. In Ireland, as in England, history has been made compulsory in a sense – a sense, we might irreverently say, of the “United Kingdom.” It has been made a department of English Grammar, and has further been portioned out to Irishmen as a fragment of English history, strictly confined within dates fixed for that history in the schools of England. The Irish story is thus shut up as it were like criminals of old in the Tower prison of Little Ease – a narrow place where no man could stand or lie at length. And Irishmen are still driven to discuss in belated fashion the question that all Europe settled long ago – Why should we make the History of our country our serious study?

The reason of Nature for this study is indeed as profound as the being of man. There is no other creature on this planet that can create a history of its kind. To man alone belongs the faculty of looking “before and after,” and considering the story of his race from the first human being that walked the earth. Our first forefather brought with him something new – the power to store up and to celebrate memories of the great dead. His elemental pieties have become part of the whole tradition of our humanity; and that history which he began, and to which we add day by day, is our witness to the separateness of man from the other creatures

of this world. When we cherish this study we are proclaiming our pre-eminence among all the living beings that we know. When we let this history fall from us we are sinking to the level of the dumb beasts. As living men, therefore, “let us enjoy, whenever we have an opportunity, the delight of admiration, and perform the duties of reverence.”

There is a practical reason, too, for the knowledge of history. The individual man left to himself is helpless to stand against the powers of the world. Alone he can do nothing. His strength lies in the generations and associations of man behind him, linked by an endless tradition, who have made for him his art, religion, science, politics, social laws. It is only in communion with that company of workers that he can take a step forward. The soul of a country is bound up with the heroes who still

“... people the steep rocks and river banks,  
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul,  
Of independence and stern liberty.”

Rulers and commanders have known this well. When they have wanted to exalt peoples or armies under them, they have opened out to them the glories of their history, and called on them to admit into their souls the spirit of their fathers.

“Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed  
From dead men to their kind.”

When they have wished to depress and subjugate a race they have slammed the doors of their history on them, and left them alone, spiritless and forlorn, passed by and forgotten by the Ages, despised of themselves and of their neighbours.

Whether therefore as men of a reasonable nature, or as members of a nation, we are bound to make History our all-important study. There is no question about this in any self-respecting nation in Europe. How does the case stand with us in Ireland?

When I first began the study of Irish History, I was dissuaded from it by a man of exceedingly acute mind and wide reading. His argument, I imagine, is a common one, and shows the kind of scruples that are set to bar our way to Irish history – as some primeval race once planted the slope of Cahir Mor on Aran with a forest of jagged standing-stones, to forbid all entrance to the fortress uplifted there above the expanse of the Ocean in its freedom. Why, said my typical objector, should we turn away from the great highways of the world's progress, with their sweeping procession of Empires and great Dominions, to lose ourselves in the maze where humble and unsuccessful nationalities walk obscurely. Stimulate the spirit of young men by giving them the examples of heroes whose fame has sounded through the earth, and societies that have been adorned by triumph. Let the men of local fame, the guardians of smaller nationalities, rest in darkness, and let us follow the sun in its strength.

We may remember one of the snares laid by the Prince of Evil for the Son of Man, when he set Him on a high place above the kingdoms of the world, to bend His soul before their ostentatious glory. From the mountain Satan displayed the emblems of their pride, palaces and towers and treasures, “knowing that it was by those alone that he himself could have been so utterly lost to rectitude and beatitude. Our Saviour spurned the temptation, and the greatest of His miracles was accomplished.” England was just at the outset of her imperial career when Milton, in his “Paradise Regained,” pictured that tremendous scene, the passing of the empires in their state before the judgment of the Divine Reason. The prodigious procession was marshalled from the very dawn of history, powers and dominions sweeping over the earth, and disappearing with the suddenness with which they rose. Not one has survived. In the shifting scene forms of states move and stir dimly like the fallen angels from “Paradise Lost” as they lay prone, extended on the flood of ruin and combustion. One scheme of government after another is lifted up to be cast down – tyranny, oligarchy, slavery, commercialism, communism, parliaments, theocracies. The great warriors and the great statesmen are alike entombed in the ruins of their empires. “Head and crown drop together, and are overlooked.” On the other hand, when empires have fallen, the nationalities have not always perished. They die only with the utter extermination of the people. So long as the old stock lingers on the soil, there is a spirit that can outlive all empires,

form the scourge of conquerors, and set the last barrier to pride of dominion. We know how peoples enclosed within small states, fed from deep sources of heritage and tradition, have given the impress of their local passion to their art. Out of the intensity of national life have come those high inspirations that have given to us all that is best of literature, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, and however deeply the artist has felt the influence of the world outside, his ultimate power lies in the spirit which has entered into him from his native state and the race of which he sprang. The generous influences of local patriotism were recognised by the greatest political thinker that modern Ireland has sent out: "To be attached," said Burke, "to the sub-division, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections."

Perhaps, we might also suggest to our objector, the lesser nationalities are even now, in these days of triumphant Imperialism, beginning to have their revenge. The study of small societies seems to become fashionable among the new reformers. Do we not hear from all sides of the education, discipline, and public spirit of countries compassed within bounds suited to man's apprehension? With what respect do not Unionists extol the industrial success of States such as Holland and Denmark, for example. Even now do we not hear English Imperialists crying out that perhaps Switzerland has got the secret of the democratic mind, or Norway, or New South Wales, or Arizona; might not England take a lesson from some little self-contained and thrifty

community on the use of the referendum? It would seem that the influence of small commonwealths is not yet extinct among us.

It is very certain that Ireland of all countries, if left to itself, would never of its own will allow history to lie in a backwater among the flotsam of the current. History was the early study of the Irish, the inspiration of their poets and writers. Every tribesman of old knew, not only the great deeds and the famous places of his own clan, but of the whole of Ireland. In the lowliest cabin the songs of Irish poets lived on for hundreds of years, and dying fathers left to sons as their chief inheritance the story of their race. When war, poverty, the oppression of the stranger, hindered the printing of Irish records, there was not a territory in all Ireland that did not give men to make copies of them, hundreds of thousands of pages, over and over again, finely written after the manner of their fathers. Through centuries of suffering down to within living memory the long procession of scribes was never broken, men tilling small farms, labouring in the fields, working at a blacksmith's forge. And this among a people of whom Burke records that in two hundred thousand houses for their exceeding poverty a candle, on which a tax lay, was never lighted. As we follow the lines and count the pages of such manuscripts, we see the miracle of the passion in these men's hearts. No relics in Ireland are more touching than these volumes, and none should be more reverently collected and preserved. They form a singular treasure such as no country in all Europe possesses.

But now, in spite of this tradition, history is more backward in Ireland than in any other country. Here alone there is a public opinion which resents its being freely written, and there is an opinion, public or official, I scarcely know which to call it, which prevents its being freely taught. And between the two, history has a hard fight for life.

Take the question of writing. History may conceivably be treated as a science. Or it may be interpreted as a majestic natural drama or poem. Either way has much to be said for it. Both ways have been nobly attempted in other countries. But neither of these courses is thought of in Ireland. Here history has a peculiar doom. It is enslaved in the chains of the Moral Tale – the good man (English) who prospered, and the bad man (Irish) who came to a shocking end – the kind of ethical formula which, for all our tutors and teachers could do, never deceived the generosity of childhood. The good man in the moral tale of Ireland is not even a fiction of Philosophy or of History. He is, oddly enough, the offspring of Grammar alone, and carries the traces of his dry and uninspired pedigree. He owes his being, in fact, to the English dislike for a foreign language. The Gael, as we know, ever faithful to the tradition of his race, while he sang and recited and wrote and copied his story with an undying passion, did these things in his own speech. The Norman or “Frank” settlers, true “citizens of the world,” adopted his tongue, his poetry, and his patriotic enthusiasm. When the English arrived, however, they according to their constant insular

tradition refused to learn a strange language, so that the only history of Ireland they could discern was that part of it which was written in English – that is, the history of the English colonists told by themselves. On this contracted record they have worked with industry and self-congratulation. They have laid down the lines of a story in which the historian's view is constantly fixed on England. All that the Irish had to tell of themselves remained obscured in an unknown tongue. The story of the whole Irish population thus came to be looked on as merely a murky prelude to the civilizing work of England – a preface savage, transitory, and of no permanent interest, to be rapidly passed over till we come to the English pages of the book. Thus two separate stories went on side by side. The Irish did not know the language which held the legend of English virtue and consequent wealth. The English could not translate the subterranean legend of Irish poetry, passion, and fidelity. Religion added new distinctions. Virtues were Protestant, the sins of the prodigal were Catholic. Finally, class feeling had its word. The upper class went to their university, and their manners and caste instincts entitled them as of course to the entire credence of their own social world; the lower class were alleged to be men whose manners were common and their prejudices vulgar.

In this way there grew up an orthodox history based on sources in the English tongue alone. The Colonists laid down by authority its dogmas and axioms. All that agreed with this conventional history was reputed serious and scholarly: whatever diverged

from it was partial, partizan, or prejudiced. “Impartiality” and “loyalty” became technical terms, with a special meaning for Ireland. The two words were held also to be interchangeable. A strictly “impartial” writer must not let his “loyal” eye swerve from the fixed point, England. As a judicious Englishman said of his compatriots, they only think a man impartial when he has gone over to the opposite side.

The results of this system are conspicuous. A Frenchman may unrepented write with affection and ardour of France, and an Englishman of England. An Irishman, however, is in another case. He must have no patriotic fire for his own people. He must not acclaim their victories nor mourn their defeats. Take an illustration of this temper. A clergyman has lately written to the *Church of Ireland Gazette* to condemn history readers “written from an anti-English and anti-Church point of view”; he complains that the writer describes the battle of the Blackwater in 1598, where the English were routed, as “a glorious victory for the O’Neill.” Such a phrase as this cannot be allowed to Irishmen. Or as a writer to the *Irish Times* puts a similar argument: “If the Nationalists want for ever to live in the glories of the past and to harp upon them, why do they not go far enough back ... to the time when they ate their grandmothers ... and indulged in all sorts of hellish rites.”

In fact, as we trudge along the dull beaten road of the orthodox history we never escape, not for a moment, from the monotonous running commentary which sounds continually

at our side. “Nomadic,” “primitive,” “wigwam,” “aboriginal,” “savage,” “barbarous,” “lawless” – the words are always at hand. In the moral tale the accustomed stream of precept and delation never runs dry. It follows us through all the strictly “impartial” writers. The Irishman was a “kerne.” The Irish word *cethern* (*kerne*) meaning a troop or company of soldiers, probably foot soldiers, is as old as the Latin *caterva* with which it is cognate, or the Umbrian *kateramu*, and so is of quite respectable lineage; but being a foreign word to the Englishman, he used it as a natural term of contempt, as though a Chinese should cry “sailor” or “merchant” when he meant to say “English devil.” More than that, the Irishman was a “nomad,” apparently because he sent his cattle to graze on the hills in summer – a custom which in modern Switzerland is held to be quite respectable by admirers of Federalism. This “nomad” idea is familiarly handed about from one writer to another. One of the most esteemed historians in Dublin was Mr. Litton Falkiner, who has added some notable pages to later Anglo-Irish history. Yet he was satisfied to dismiss the Irish population of mediæval times in one terse phrase: “the pastoral, and in great measure nomadic Celts, who stood for the Irish people before the 12th century” – in other words, before the Norman invasion. This absurd sentence seems to pass current; no objection has been made to it. What would educated Englishmen think of a leading historian who dismissed the pre-Norman population of that island as “boorish Low-Dutch, hut-dwellers round a common field cut into strips

after their barbarous manner, *who stood for the English people before the Norman Conquest?*” Trivialities and ignorances of this sort are not in fashion in English history, and it is time that they were out of fashion in Ireland.

Irishmen of the north still preserved, Mr. Falkiner told us, even to the end of the 17th century, “all the primitive characteristics of the scarcely more than nomadic civilisation of Ulster.” With summary contempt he pretended to dispose of what he fancifully termed “the lawless banditti who commonly formed the body-guard of an Irish chief”; and in the orthodox manner confronts “Irish law” and “Irish lawlessness” under what he called “the English ownership of Ireland.” The great Hugh of Tyrone is described as looking “on the onward march of English institutions with feelings not very different from those with which the aborigines of the American continent beheld the advance of the stranger from the east.” In the same spirit he informed Englishmen that Ireland was sadly deficient in the wealth of historical and literary associations which form the romantic charm of England. “Cathedral cities, in the sense in which the term is understood in England, Ireland may be almost said to be without. A few of the towns,” he generously admitted, “contain, indeed, the remains of ecclesiastical and monastic buildings. But even where these exist they are, with one or two exceptions, sadly deficient in human interest.” It is a cheap method, even if it is one out of date elsewhere, to deny human interest to a subject which one has learned to ignore, and may desire to see

forgotten. Can no human interest touch the heart in Dromahair or Donegal or Glendalough? There is a remote and little-known road in the plains of Mayo where a singular sight may be seen. Near it stand the ruins of a majestic abbey founded over seven hundred years ago (1189-1190), by Cathal O'Connor (whose foster-father's tomb has lately been found at Knockmoy with its Irish inscription). Nave and transepts were laid bare and open from their immense gable ends, and the tower flung from the four splendid arches that supported it, but the old vaulted roof of the choir still remains; and here, it is said, in this remoteness, is the only ancient church of the Irish where, amid the universal destruction and confiscation, they have been able to carry on their old worship from the old days till now. In this land of the banished – "to hell or Connacht" – mass was without ceasing celebrated in the choir; and from the hearts of the worshippers kneeling in the nave and transepts under the open sky a prophecy arose that when the church was roofed once more Ireland would be freed. Songs still sung among Connacht peasants tell of such services amid ruins of their holy places, the priests wet with the rain, the women's clothes bedraggled, the men carrying small stone flags so as to have a dry spot for their knees. Not in any way was such a place like an English cathedral, but if brave men's vows and prayers and tears for seven centuries can confer human interest the stones of Ballintober are precious.

The problem remains, however (for insoluble problems beset every false position) that according to Mr. Falkiner's theory the

history of towns and cathedrals only began with “the English ownership.” How was it that these Englishmen left none of their “romantic charm” there? What strange history lies hidden behind this saying?

Another historian takes up the same taunt – a true scholar and worker who has added to our knowledge of the close of Stuart rule in Ireland. “The Irish,” says Dr. Murray, “are indeed a strange race... No monument marks the site where the Irish hero and the Irish thinker repose... The graves of a patriot like Owen Roe O’Neill, and of a statesman like Archbishop King ... are unknown. The thrill that an Englishman feels in Westminster Abbey when he enters the presence of the mighty dead is denied an Irishman, for he has not taken care of the dust of his immortals.” A memorial by the defeated Irish to Archbishop King of Dublin, ardent supporter of the Dutch conqueror, passionate worker for the Protestant succession, four times Lord Justice for the government of Ireland under William in those days of agony and despair – this is a lofty counsel of perfection, such as we give to others. The Irish raised no monument to Owen Roe O’Neill – no monument, with Cromwell’s soldiers abroad in the land, to the general proclaimed by the English Government “traitor, rebel, disturber of the common peace” – is that the charge? Alas! I wonder from that day to this what welcome would have been given in a Protestant churchyard, guarded by the conquerors, to an Irish memorial over the grave of Owen Roe O’Neill. The dust of the Irish immortals lies indeed far scattered.

Has Dr. Murray ever stood in the solitary burial places of Rath Croghan, of Iniscaltra, of Clonmacnois? Has he counted the stones in Athenry or those heaped up in Burris? Has he seen the bones of the martyrs strewn from sea to sea? Surely he himself has told us that “the Irish custom of burying their dead in an old ruined church or monastery was forbidden,” and that not by the Irish, but by the Church of the English. From the Reformation until eighty-two years ago every Irish Catholic was needs carried at death to a Protestant cemetery, and it is only within the lifetime of men now living that, when Catholic prayers at the grave were denied, the Irish people at last secured in 1829 a burying place of their own.

This fiction of a “strange race” has become a kind of special philosophy which is dragged in to interpret the most ordinary actions of the Irish. For example, “the march of the soldiery upset the balance of the excitable Irish farmer, and he neglected his land” – a fact which in any other country would need no “race” explanation. Through the story of that war, whose end was to transfer the soil of Ireland, five-sixths of it, to lords of another race and religion, the old inhabitants of two thousand years’ possession are made to appear as “the Irish factions”; their vice is patent, while English crimes are accidental, inadvertent, or high-spirited. If we want to know why the Irish people lost faith in the Stuarts who had betrayed and outraged them at every turn, we are referred to the simple habits of a strange and childish race. “The Celt wants to see a sovereign regularly in order to adore

him”: “A principle must be set forth by a person, and the more attractive the person the stronger the hold of the principle.” As we watch the strong ceaseless current of Irish life such theories are swept beyond our sight. The Irish poet told his people another tale:

“It is the coming of King James that took Ireland from us,  
With his one shoe English and his one shoe Irish  
He would neither strike a blow nor would he come to terms,  
And that has left, so long as they shall exist, misfortune upon  
the Gaels.”

In his laborious work on the Norman settlement, Mr. Orpen deals with the Irish in the usual conventional manner: – “The members of this family were always killing one another.” “The chieftain ... had no higher conception of duty than to increase the power of his clan; with this object in view, he was stayed by no scruples”; as for the clansman, “the sentiment for ‘country’ in any sense more extended than that of his own tribal territory, was alike to him and to his chief unknown.” This description, like the terms “tribal” and “nomad,” has long been habitual, and accepted with as little enquiry as those words. Mr. Orpen’s clients, the “Normans,” we may assume to have been nobly free from any such barbarous notions of individual aggrandisement, regardless of “their country’s” claims.

Mr. Bagwell, the leading historian of the English occupation under Tudors and Stuarts, throws his searchlight on the Irish: –

“They were barbarous, but they could appreciate virtue.” “The Irish were subtle, fond of license, and ready for anything as long as it was not for their good.” May we remember the saying of the Irish themselves in those days: – “Ask for nothing that you would not deem a benefit to you, and before all praise God.” Again, according to Mr. Bagwell, “the people had no other idea of trade than to extort exorbitant prices.” This quality scarcely seems to need a racial explanation; it has been found elsewhere in time of war. But under all circumstances the “primeval” theory of Irishmen must be maintained. The character of the “natives” – using this word with its “savage” implication – plays a great part in our history. Thus, when a boat load of treasure from the Armada was washed on shore Mr. Bagwell notes that “such unaccustomed wares as velvet and cloth of gold, fell into the hands of the natives.” Cloth of gold and velvet had for centuries been known to the wealthy Irish; even in England they were not the clothing of the “natives,” if such a term could be applied to Englishmen. Again we are told that “the Irish, by being held always at arm’s length, had become more Irish and less civilised than ever”; *held at arm’s length* is an ingenious phrase for evicting a people from their homes, and throwing them out on bogs and mountains. The hardships of hunted famine-stricken outlaws hanging round their old homes, is represented in this kind of history as the life which would be naturally chosen by wild Irish “nomads.” “True children of the mist, they [the O’Tooles] either bivouacked in the open or crept into wretched huts to which

Englishmen hesitated to give the name of houses. They cultivated no land.” “Thus one by one did the chiefs of tribal Ireland devour each other.” As for “the men of free blood, whose business had always been fighting, and who would never work ... when the chiefs were gone they had nothing to do but to plunder, or to live at the expense of their more industrious, but less noble, neighbours.” “The island was poor and the people barbarous, and no revenue could be expected.” It is true, indeed, that the wealth did not go the way of the Crown; officials had other uses for it.

In the same way Mr. Chart, in his study of Irish life during the dark years after the Union – years of acute suffering, hunger, disillusionment and despair – discovers “a sullen discontent which, as usually happens in Ireland, broke out occasionally into acts of lawlessness and barbarity,” as if some special form of iniquity had its home in Ireland. At a time when the whole people in England were in a turmoil of revolt, on the verge of revolution, he mourns “the fatal Irish tendency to rush into extremes,” and that magistrates and police had to accustom “a hot-headed and violent-tempered race to curb itself within legal limits” – as if this was an unusual fact, peculiar to this one race of the world, predestinate to evil. It would seem that in Ireland alone it is not safe to give any man “full and unconstrained control over his personal and political enemies,” and therefore “Ireland is no country for a volunteer police.”

I suppose there is not another history in the world in which this free slinging of blame and advice is continuously kept up

at so fine a pitch. If a problem in Irish life lifts its head, some puzzling fact or tendency that demands explanation, a stone is ready in the orthodox historian's sling: the dilemma is ended by one of the useful words – “primitive,” “tribal,” “kerne,” “nomad,” “barbarous,” “Celtic.” By constant reiteration I fancy writer and reader now scarcely notice them, so much have they become the symbols of Irish history, and so deeply have they sunk into the public mind.

Thus the stream of calumny still flows on. The latest voice from Trinity College, that of Professor Mahaffy, in his Introduction to the third volume of the “Georgian Society,” is of the old familiar type. It should be, he explains, “the interest and duty” of historians to maintain certain desirable opinions – this, according to Dr. Mahaffy, adds to their credibility. Once more, therefore, we have from him “the elements of primeval savagery which still existed in the Irish people, and which they had in common with almost all primitive races and societies” (and this by the way, in the 18th century, after six hundred years of English compulsion). How well we know the old battered and time-exhausted phrase! Of course we have again our old friend, the story of O’Cahan sitting with the naked women, served up as the ever-repeated type of all the generations of Irish in their habitual squalor. For, we are told, “since the earliest times the greater part of the Irish ... have not found any discomfort in squalor.” But for English law this singular people would apparently never put on clothes at all, winter or summer, good or bad weather, in

any northern gale from the Arctic ice. Ulstermen now-a-days are certainly a degenerate race in physical endurance.

It is interesting to follow this story of O’Cahan.

The story begins with a Bohemian baron, name unknown, whom Foynes Moryson, an Englishman, saw on one occasion. Here is the exact tale: – “The foresaid Bohemian baron, coming out of Scotland to us by the north parts of the wild Irish, told me in great earnestness (when I attended him at the Lord Deputy’s command), that he coming to the house of the O’Cane, a great lord among them, was met at the door with sixteen women, all naked, excepting their loose mantles; whereof eight or ten were very fair, and two seemed very nymphs; with which strange sight his eyes being dazzled, they led him into the house, and there sitting down by the fire with crossed legs like tailors, and so low as could not but offend chaste eyes, desired him to sit down with them. Soon after O’Kane, the lord of the country, came in all naked excepting a loose mantle and shoes, which he put off as soon as he came in, and entertaining the baron after his best manner in the Latin tongue, desired him to put off his apparel, which he thought to be a burden to him, and to sit naked by the fire with his naked company.”

Now on this tale let me make two or three remarks.

We may ask, in the first place, why this one story is repeated on every occasion by historians of what I might call the “savage” type; why, omitting all other accounts, it is singled out as the typical instance of daily life in Ireland. Is this one of the views

which, according to Dr. Mahaffy, it should be “the interest and duty” of impartial and loyal historians to maintain?

The story originated with a “Bohemian baron,” of whom we know nothing; it was reported by the English secretary of Mountjoy, whom he praises for the number of “rebels” he had “brought to their last home”; to both of them the Irish were nothing more than savages of a low type. We may remember that this is the only story of the kind cited from Ulster. A Spanish captain, escaped from the Armada, travelled through Connacht and Ulster and the O’Cahan country for several months of hiding from English soldiers; he too talked Latin in the many Irish houses which gave him shelter, but in the book of his wanderings there is no such incident as this.

There would seem to be need of some strictness of enquiry – some caution in discussing the tale. At the best the outlines of the baron’s story are vague. What decorations he himself may have introduced into it, and what further ornaments Fynes Moryson may have added, we do not know. We may, perhaps, judge by the embellishments which later writers have introduced. It is possible that the baron and the secretary, not inferior to their successors in contempt of the Irish, may have equalled them also in literary skill and the gift of embroidering a narrative. Let us see, therefore, some of these decorations.

Froude takes up the tale: – “If Fynes Moryson may be believed, the daughters of distinguished Ulster chiefs squatted on the pavement round the hall fires of their father’s castles, in

the presence of strangers, as bare of clothing as if Adam had never sinned.” Here we see the “women,” who, for all the original story has to tell us, might be servants, dependants, or refugees gathered in from the war and pillage by which O’Cahan’s country was then ravaged, are transformed into “daughters of chiefs,” the “house” turns into “pavements” by the “hall-fires of castles,” and the incident has become a universal custom.

Then Professor Mahaffy arrives with a series of versions. “O’Cahan, though living in a hovel, could speak Latin.” More particularly, it was a shantie of mud and wattles, without rafters, and the cattle and swine occupied the same room as the masters; so he explains in a lecture on “Elizabethan Ireland.” A more circumstantial account appears in “An Epoch in Irish History.” In this the traveller is received by the “ladies of the chieftain’s household.” “They brought him into the thatched cabin which was their residence,” and throwing off their mantles invited him to do likewise before the chief came in – an invitation which the unknown “women” of the baron’s tale did not give. The baron’s “house” has already changed into castles with pavements, then into a hovel, and a thatched cabin, but the picture of savagery is not yet lurid enough, and there is a further transformation which, possibly from its supposed importance, is dragged into a description of society in the Dublin Georgian houses of the 18th century. “The O’Cahan in his wigwam, surrounded by his stark naked wives (why not squaws?) and daughters, addressed the astonished foreign visitor in fluent Latin.” The “wigwam” and

the “wives” show the unimpaired fertility of Professor Mahaffy’s imagination. His pronouncements, the *Irish Times* assures us of this essay, “carry historical value of the highest degree.” It will be interesting to watch his further adornments of his favourite tale. It will also be interesting to see how long professors of Trinity College will still invite Irish students to enter there by offering this curious bait of conventional insults to their race and country, and new varieties of old slanders.

We might remember the scene in Galway a few years later, where high-born ladies, plundered of all their property by the rapacious soldiers, sinking with shame before the gaze of the public in their ragged clothes, covered themselves with embroidered table-covers, or a strip of tapestry taken from the walls, or lappets cut from the bed-curtains, or with blankets, sheets, or table-cloths. “You would have taken your oath,” says the contemporary writer, “that all Galway was a masquerade, the unrivalled home of scenic buffoons, so irresistibly ludicrous were the varied dresses of the poor women.” Why do not the Colonial historians give this scene as showing the habitual taste and pleasure of the Galway ladies?

Dr. Mahaffy has some other lights to throw on Irish history. “The contempt for traders as such ... is,” he says, “like all such prejudice in Ireland, the survival of the contempt which the meanest members of any Irish clan felt for any profession save that of arms, and the preying on the churl.” The despisers of trade whom he is describing in this passage are the English landowners

of the Williamite settlement, who had finally ousted the Irish from their lands, and taken them over as Protestant Englishmen, men of “a better race.” This conquering class naturally felt a contempt for their victims, the evicted Catholic Irish, who were allowed for the benefit of their lords and rulers to plough and to trade, while deprived of civil and social rights. But I do not know how those lordly squires would like to have heard that they represented the prejudices of “the meanest member of an Irish clan,” accustomed to prey on “the churl,” whoever he was. As for the Irish clansman who is supposed to look on traders as outcasts, he appears to be a fiction of the essayist’s fancy. Where in Irish records will proofs be found of contempt for a trader? Their story seems to be quite the other way. It may be convenient, however, for the defaming of the Irish to despise and ignore those records. Moreover, since Irish abbeys and cathedrals have been pronounced by Mr. Litton Falkiner not to be like the English ones, why need an Irish writer stoop into their ruins to seek out the story written there? No, it is easier to keep the slander running, to swell its volume, and to increase its violence. Yet in those ruins any man who will may look upon the countless tombs of Irishmen who (so long as the conqueror’s law allowed their desolate companies to enter the ancient shrines) were borne by their friends to rest in the roofless nave or before the high altar under great slabs with the signs of their trade, the tailor’s instruments, the carpenter’s tools, and the mason’s, the labourer’s plough, and the trader’s ship, deeply graven beside their names –

no emblems of shame in those last sanctuaries of the Irish people.

Social life in Ireland, through all the ages, Dr. Mahaffy describes as especially immoral. The young girls, he says, were generally accessible to the squire and his sons all through Irish history, and suffered no disgrace, but married all the better for such an adventure. "All through Irish history" is a liberal and characteristic phrase to use of English squires and their sons. The tradition of absolute landlord power still lives in the Irish country-side, when girls were told the price at which they might save their family from being driven out of the home held by their ancestors for hundreds of years, and left to die on the roadside of hunger, or in the coffin-ship of plague. With security of tenure for the Irish poor such ordeals have passed into history. As for reports of English tourists, they resemble the travellers' tales which everywhere and at all times various countries have heard on the manners of their neighbours. It is well to remember Gibbon's reflection on general charges of this sort. Manuel, Emperor of the East, visited England in 1400, and coming from Constantinople was shocked at English conduct: – "The most singular circumstance of their manners," he reported, "is their disregard of conjugal honour and of female chastity. In their mutual visits, as the first act of hospitality, the guest is welcomed in the embraces of their wives and daughters; among friends they are lent and borrowed without shame; nor are the islanders offended at this strange commerce." "We may smile at the credulity, or resent the injustice of the Greek," Gibbon

reflects, “but his credulity and injustice may teach an important lesson; to distrust the accounts of foreign and remote nations, and to suspend our belief of every tale that deviates from the laws of nature and the character of man.”

English writers have forgotten a grave disadvantage to themselves in the moral tale of the good and bad man (besides its incredibility and its dullness). In this version of Irish history the Englishman’s triumph remains a poor thing, destitute of interest or value, where the fame of the victor is abased and confounded by the worthlessness of his foe. The Irish warriors are mostly described as drunkards, cowards, and barbarians. Dr. Mahaffy likens Shane O’Neill to a Moor or a Zulu. Hugh of Tyrone “was a polished courtier on the surface, with a barbarous core.” Here is Mr. Bagwell’s portrait of Shane, whose organisation and defence of Ulster cost Elizabeth over £147,000 of English money (in modern money probably over £1,500,000) without counting the enormous cesses laid on the country, and three thousand five hundred of her soldiers slain. “He is said to have been a glutton, and was certainly a drunkard.” The story of drunkenness seems to have originated in his mud-baths, such as are now commonly ordered for rheumatism. Once started, the fable was persistent. “That drunken brain was, nevertheless, clear enough to baffle Elizabeth for a long time.” His conduct of a war which cost Elizabeth so much is described: – “Shane, who had been indulging as usual in wine or whisky, came up at the moment.” “Shane, who was never remarkable for dashing courage, retired

into the wood.” “Shane, whose reputation for courage is not high, slipped out at the back of his tent.” So, I believe, did de Wet, instead of waiting to be killed. At the last, “the love of liquor probably caused his death”; here indeed Mr. Bagwell contradicts the Lord Deputy Sidney himself, who boasts that Shane was tricked and murdered by a Scotsman in Sidney’s pay, the last of a series of attempts at assassination. From the point of view that “barbarians” are usually childish, Mr. Bagwell tells how the important chiefs, MacWilliam Burke and MacGillpatrick, were given titles and robes of Earl and Baron, “in the belief that titles and little acts of civility would weigh more with these rude men than a display of force.” He complains that the best-laid English military plans of occupation of this country, instead of proceeding without interruption from the natives, might be “frustrated by one of those unexpected acts of treachery in which Irish history abounds.” However, even in treachery the Irish were incompetent. “Irish plots are commonly woven in sand.” “In this, as in so many other Irish insurrections, there was no want of double traitors; of men who had neither the constancy to remain loyal, nor the courage to persevere in rebellion.”

With such a rabble we can only wonder that there was any need of an English army at all; or how the conflict could last a year (not to say a few hundreds of them); or why England should have sent over her very best generals, her stoutest governors, and a prodigious deal of her gold. It was the bogs, apparently, that swallowed up those inconceivable hosts and coins.

Under the “savage” theory military matters lose all interest; but they are given to us with pitiless detail. Expeditions of soldiers against famine-stricken peasants without arms, raids of mere slaughter, the chasing of outlaws from a lake island, are described with the minuteness of a genuine campaign. These things, no doubt, are in the books. There are plenty of reports from officials, very humanly anxious to justify themselves or to magnify their feats. But history after all claims some revising power, and we need another standard of proportion than the vanity of a lieutenant. It is impossible to give vitality to a story in which highly armed and civilised Englishmen are represented as wiping out with cannon and gunpowder a savage and unarmed crowd of peasants – in which honour, courage, and progress are supposed to be eternally confronted with chicanery, barbarity, and treachery. No one wants to hear that tale. Such a history turns to inconceivable tediousness, of no use to any living soul.

Meanwhile vast tracts of history have been set aside as apparently not worth exploring. Where, for example, shall we find a serious account, with the guidance of modern scholarship, of the hundred and fifty years between the battle of Clontarf and the landing of the Norman barons. The people were no longer in the tribal state. The change to a kind of feudalism had come. What was the form of that feudalism? How did it differ from the system that had grown out of other conditions elsewhere? There is not so much as a chapter in any book, or a pamphlet, occupied with the land system of the earlier

middle ages, what changes the Norman settlement brought, or what forms of social life did actually exist. The campaign of Edward Bruce is usually said to be a central turning point in Irish history, but who will guide us to any adequate study of it? There are no monographs on Desmonds, O'Neills, O'Donnells, Fitzgeralds, Butlers, Clanrickards, and so on. No annals of the provinces or kingdoms have been compiled, nor chronologies. The work of the two great Earls of Kildare is one of the most critical periods of Irish history: it still awaits a historian. Who has examined the history of the schools and education? Who has worked out the industrial development? How can we learn what were the negotiations by which Henry viii. carried the claim to be King of Ireland? Here are fields too long deserted waiting for workers. Here are a few of the immense voids, into which our writers fling, like bundles of dried straw, their vain words – “savage,” “primeval,” “lawless,” “brutish,” and the rest. In the history of Ireland nothing has been completed. That which is unknown disturbs, and may overturn the vulgar conclusions from the fragments known. We are for ever walking through a country unmapped. To be sure it is full of sign-posts put up at hazard – “To English Civilisation.” Where every road is marked to lead to the same inn, why should travellers discuss, debate, and ask questions? What reason can there be to loiter by the way? The English fingerpost is always there.

Some day perhaps the Irish race in this island will no longer seem to lie beyond the need, and below the honour, of the

historical method. Ireland will have a history like other nations. It is possible to conceive that out of its peoples, English or Irish, there may arise some great thinker or poet who will set before us the two civilizations that have met here; in other words, the efforts by which two highly endowed races endeavoured to solve the problem that has perplexed every people that has ever yet appeared in this world – how to shape a community where men may live in safety, freedom, and happiness. The Celts had waged the fight for their civilization to the walls of Rome itself. They had left the valleys of the Danube and the Rhine and the plains of Gaul red with their blood. Now, on the outermost border of the world their last conflict awaited them. Within the mountain rim of Ireland, with silent Nature to keep the lists, two peoples met to fight out the last issues on that fatal soil. Here, imprisoned by the Ocean, the antagonists stood for centuries to their battle: every passion exalted, the splendours of courage, the majesty of despair, all skill of surprises, all glory of chivalry, triumph and sorrow, Christian pieties, and the surging up amid the upheaval of human nature of the mysterious superstitions of elemental man, and of his ferocities. What affections of race lay behind such a struggle? What was its meaning? What of beauty, of happiness, or of virtue did each civilization in fact offer to man? What was gained, what was lost? Here would have been a history of fire and flame, a new outlook on the fate of commonwealths, a theme worthy of an English or an Irish patriot.

In the long task of giving its true balance to the history of

Ireland, by the discovery of all the facts, and the adjudging of their place, controversy will be lively. Every Irishman for certain will be ready for a battle of wits. But let us keep our intelligence perfectly clear on one point. We shall hear a great deal of “impartiality” and a “judicial mind.” Here we must make no mistake. Impartiality of intellect need not mean insensibility of heart. Let us suppose that the intellect should have no prepossession at all, not even in favour of English civilization, nor of the idol of the market-place, “the Wealth of Nations” – its delicate balance should drop now on this side, now on that, without a shadow of prejudice or a hint of obstinacy, abhorrent of convention, with never a predilection. But impartiality of the heart – that is another matter. Who will pretend to comprehend human life who has no great affection of the soul? The generous heart knows no balancing hesitation between the man who deserts his country and the man who defends it; he alone can interpret the hero in whose soul some answering passion flames; and I suppose that the understanding of a commonwealth will best come to him who is most responsive to a variety of human emotions. I think we could do with a change of partialities in Ireland – fewer orthodox predilections of the head, if it might be so, and some illumination from the heart.

A new examination of Irish history is indeed of the utmost importance to our people. The leading reviews, text-books, and histories in England with one accord have presented Ireland to the English people under the “savage” aspect, and their

statements have been too frequently accepted. Hear the common opinion as Tennyson put it: “Kelts are all made furious fools... They live in a horrible island, and have no history of their own worth the least notice. Could not anyone blow up that horrible island with dynamite and carry it off in pieces – a long way off?” The same gloomy picture is still spread before England. Mr. Fletcher, a Fellow of All Souls, records that “it was quite common to bleed a cow for a refreshing drink of blood,” and that “there were no exports save the said cow-skins,” though with these the Irish apparently managed to buy “red seas of claret.” Shane O’Neill was killed “by his own people whom he was plundering!” Degradation was universal, as we learn from a sentence absolutely amazing in its colossal and unscrupulous ignorance – “though his name had once been FitzNigel or de Burgh, it gradually became O’Neill or O’ Bourke!” Mr. Rudyard Kipling joins Mr. Fletcher in declaring that Irish history “was all broken heads and stolen cows, as it had been for a thousand years,” and that Irishmen had no interest or care for their religion till they discovered a use for it as a warcry against England. Accounts of Ireland equally contrary to fact and common sense serve in political controversy. English politicians assert on platforms that Irishmen of themselves had never any national life or duty at all, that the first gleam of true patriotism was taught them by England since the Union, that Ireland had no conception of a Parliament till England gave it to her people, when the boon was so misused and misunderstood by

an incompetent race (the English in Ireland, be it remembered) that in the higher interests of man it had to be withdrawn. As for the desire of self-government, "some people said it was a matter of historical sentiment. The humour of it was that there never was a real Irish kingdom at all. The Parliament which it was sought to restore to Ireland was given to it by England. The historical sentiment and loyalty which Mr. John Redmond was talking was the greatest humbug that was ever preached." There are others who argue, Dr. Mahaffy among them, that practically there is not any more a Celtic race in Ireland, but one so mixed in blood that it no longer, if it ever did, contains the materials of a nation. The Celtic people, to their honour, have never denied a national brotherhood to Danes, Normans, English, or Palatines, who loyally entered into the Irish commonwealth. But as to political theories of the vanishing of the race, we have only to examine them by known facts, and turn to the Report of the Registrar-General in 1909 for proof that in the mingling of peoples the Celtic is still the predominant element over all the rest; and if this proof is conclusive, even in the register of merely Irish names, how enormous would be its increased weight if we could reckon in Celtic families the change from Irish names which has gone on ceaselessly since the thirteenth century, and is still constantly occurring at this moment – a change which, however lamentable, cannot alter the blood and the inheritance.

Irishmen are often warned to waste no time in looking back at the past. But if England draws the moral from her interpretation

of history, we must learn our lesson too – only it must be a lesson more serious, exact, and worthy of an educated people. We have had experience of how profound and vicious may be the practical effect of a history unscientific, irresponsible, prejudiced, and incomplete. Out of ignorance of the past, what sound policy can grow for the future? I suppose that in civilized Europe, among the speeches on State affairs of prominent statesmen, we could find no parallel to historical verdicts so crude and unsubstantial as those which are given to us by a certain group of political leaders and writers in England, concerning the Irish portion of the “Empire” of which they make their boast. How many are the ignorances and negligences which still do service unreproved among those who claim to be the chief upholders of a “United Kingdom,” and exponents of the “Imperial” faith.

In Ireland we have still indeed a heavy road to travel. When history has been written, what about the teaching of it, or the learning, in this country? Who will make the way free for that?

Let me put this matter before you by way of contrast. You have heard the fame of Sparta, the land of heroes who won at the Thermopylæ a far-shining glory that will ever stir the hearts of men. Montaigne reminds us that in the matchless policy of Sparta to build up a noble State, it is worthy of great consideration that the education of the children was the first and principal charge. “And, therefore, was it not strange,” he says, “if Antipater requiring fifty of their children for hostages, they answered clean contrary to what we would do, ‘that they would rather deliver

him twice so many men'; so much did they value and esteem the loss of their country's education." Now in this training up of men to be citizens of the finest quality, the only one book-study absolutely enforced in Sparta was History – to the mockery and contempt of neighbouring Doctors of letters and literature of the time. "Idiots and foolish people," scoffed the high-class Athenian professor, adept in polite languages and fine phrasing and the elegancies of culture, and not neglectful of the profits to be got by professing them; "idiots and foolish people, who only amuse themselves to know the succession of kings, and establishing and declination of estates, and such-like trash of flim-flam tales." Socrates, you may be sure, did not join in these sarcasms. Sparta had shown the honour and manhood that history can teach, and how it can make of men champions of their country, keepers of their forefathers' fame, and rivals of their own ancient heroes.

Side by side with this ancient instance we may put one of our own day. There is a country which has suddenly risen to great eminence in war and organisation, as it had long been famous in the arts, with which England hastened to make alliance. That country is Japan. In Japan, when the eldest son comes of age, it is the custom for his father to take him a tour on foot round the country, visiting every place of fame in its history, so that the youth may enter on man's estate as a worthy citizen of the State that bred him. These honourable pilgrims can be met on every road. They have known, like the men of Sparta, the power of history to fortify the mind and expand the soul. Every Japanese

man of character will tell you that in any serious enterprise he is in the presence, in the company of the great Dead of his people. That by them his purpose is ennobled, his courage uplifted, his solitude changed into a great communion. We have seen how that spirit has exalted a people.

With such instances in our minds we may ask what we are doing in Ireland. What kind of citizens are we building up for our own land?

As in England, so in Ireland, history has in the last dozen years been made compulsory in the schools. But there is a difference. For Ireland history is not a subject in itself. In our primary and intermediate education Irish history is now a department of English language and literature. At the age when impressions made on a youth's mind are certain to become the all-compelling habits of his later life, it is suggested to him that the history of his country is less important than the rules of English grammar, and that the achievements of his father may at the best rank with the model sentences in which English essayists write of Friendship and Gardens and Christmas. The student for honours under the Intermediate system may, at his own will, prefer a continental language to history. A pass-student might choose to gain all the necessary marks in English grammar and composition alone; if he has drunk in all that the amiable and unimportant Alexander Smith can tell him "Of the Importance of a Man to Himself," he may omit all that the world can tell him "Of the Importance of a Man to his Country," or of his Country to him. Such knowledge

may be left to the “idiots and foolish people, who only amuse themselves to know the succession of kings, and establishing and declination of estates, and such-like trash of flim-flam tales.”

Nor is this the worst of the matter. Suppose that an Irish boy has been stirred by what he has seen in his country home. There was, perhaps, beside it a Danes’ Fort, a Giants’ Ring, one of the two thousand mounds piled up in Ireland by human hands, a Rathcroghan, or a mighty Ailech of the kings where legendary monarchs sleep on their horses waiting for the day that shall call them to ride out. He may have lived by a solemn burial place of great chiefs, by a round tower, by a high cross deeply carved, by some island of saints rich in ruins and sculptured slabs. He may have been taken to the Irish Academy and seen the Psalter of Columcille; or to Trinity College to look on the book of Kells; or to the National Museum to be turned loose among the carved rocks, the copper cauldrons, the golden diadems and torques, the mighty horns of bronze, the heavy Danish swords, the weights for commerce, the marvels in metal and enamel work, the Tara brooch, the Ardagh chalice, the Cross of Cong, the long array of crosiers and bells and shrines and book-covers. He may learn by chance that his country is the wonder of Europe for the wealth and beauty of its relics of the past. Desire may come on him to know the story of a land so astonishing in the visible records left by his ancestors. Descended from a race who had history in their very blood and the glorious tradition of their fathers, he may feel that old hereditary passion burn in his heart. He will add history

to his study of the English language and the essays of Smith.

But even in that case, once entered on the course of education provided for him by the Intermediate Board, he will find through the whole of his pass work or of his honour work not one word to tell him who made the marvels he has seen. For in Anglicised Ireland it is ordered that history shall begin in 1066. The Irish annals record a comet in that year. But it is not for the comet the year is chosen, but because the date of the Norman Conquest of England is to mark the beginning of history for Ireland. From the first the student is caught by the pleasant fiction which is now proclaimed on every Unionist platform that Ireland “under the English ownership,” has no life save that which England gives. Irish history is not to be the story of Ireland, but of the “United Kingdom.” It is to travel with the fortunes of England step by step. An exact care conducts the student through the centuries. All dates are ruled by English text-books, never by periods of change in Ireland. According to the step by step theory, if the Irish student must begin his story of Ireland with William’s Conquest of England, he must pause at the end of the English Wars of the Roses. What matter if that close of a period in England happens in Ireland to be in full midway of a very extraordinary racial and constitutional movement full of vital energy? The teacher must by order cut his story in half, and start again to pull up his next course sharply at the death of Elizabeth, a merely nominal date in Ireland, which ended or began nothing. There the next period opens by order, and ended

this present year at a date (1784) when it would be absolutely impossible for an Irish teacher to call a halt except by stopping in the middle of a sentence; and for the coming year is to close at 1760, before the first movement for the emancipation of the Irish Parliament. Not a word will the Irish youth hear of the Irish kingdoms and schools and craftsmen and merchants, nor of the Danes and their fleets, nor of the Irish culture spread over Europe. He would know nothing of Columcille and the work of Iona, nor of Columbanus and the work of St. Gall and of Bobio. Nothing will be told of St. Brendan and his sailing to the west; nor of learned Fergil the Geometer, who in spite of the orthodox theories of an impassable equator, alone maintained that there were living men at the antipodes; nor of the Irish goldsmiths and builders. Cormac's chapel must go. The very name of Brian Boru is expunged. There can be no mention of the five hundred years of Irishmen's fame in Europe as classical scholars, philosophers, saints, merchants, or travellers. The centuries of Ireland's history as a free and independent country are blotted out, and he may catch no glimpse of his people save in the various phases of their material subjugation. During his entire course he can turn no wandering eye on an Ireland that had any art, literature, or industry of its own – a place where anything may have happened on its own account, or where any interest may lie detached from an English book of chronology.

This disastrous conception of the "Union" as a kind of amalgamation of countries in which all national limits are

submerged and lost follows the Irishman at home and abroad. He can scarcely set foot in Europe save in the track of Irish wanderers of every age whose fame should be his glory. But the shadow of this distorted notion hangs round him – the shadow of the predominant sharer of all the effort and fortune of his people. In the published Catalogue of the MSS. in the Royal Library at Brussels, he must look for the Irish Annals and historical documents under the one heading *Angleterre*, without even a sub-heading *Irlande*. In Switzerland, surrounded by relics of the six hundred and thirteen dependent houses of St. Gall, whence Irish monks restored civilization to that land, he will be told at S. Beatenberg by the guide-books that S. Beatus was *British*, and by local tradition that he was Scotch. At the shrine of San Pellegrino in the Apennines, he will hear praises of a *Scotch* king's son. In Rome he will learn that *England* was “the Isle of Saints.” Against these ignorances his training in Ireland gives him no protection. Similar fallacies pursue him across the Atlantic. Let him go to America, and Washington Irving will tell him of the mariner whose story was one of the moving causes that led Columbus to enquire of the land beyond the Ocean, and will inform him that this famous St. Brendan was a *Scotch* monk. Many others he will find ignorant of history, and above all anxious not to identify Ireland with any of her children that have done great things. Mr. Whitelaw Reid will explain to him that the emigrants from Ulster to America, the Ulster-born leaders who fought for American independence in counsel, in convention, and in the field; the

“Sons of St. Patrick” who poured out their money and their blood for Washington – that all these were *Scotchmen*, of no Irish kin or race, whose followers and descendants have manfully rejected the term “Scotch-Irish” because it “confused the race with the accident of birth,” and called themselves “Ulster Scots” to show they had no part or lot with the Irish by blood (*Celtic Review*, Jan., 1912). He apparently sees in the Presbyterian religion of the “Ulster Scot” some subtle evidence of a nobler and more distinguished origin than the “Scotch Irish,” some guarantee of Low-German or English stock.

The new school of American Irish, who under the influence of the “Anglo-Saxon” enthusiasm, or with a desire to be on the winning side, lay claim to a “Scotch” descent, ignore the historical meaning of the word “Scot,” or the origin of the name “Scotland.” In vain for them authentic history may tell of the ceaseless wanderings of the Gaelic people across the narrow seas. From Ireland the Scots in early times spread over the Hebrides and western Highlands, and carried their settlements and speech over the Lowlands of the Picts and Britons to the very borders of the little English colony of the Lothians, leaving the western and middle Lowlands the most Celtic region in Scotland. Irish folk settled freely in Scotland until the confiscation of Ulster; as for example when the Monroes and Currys crossed the sea, about 1300, with a number of other noble families who obtained grants of land. Inter-marriage was very frequent at all times. Back to Ireland again came streams of immigrants from the “Scot” or

Irish settlements across the water. The mingled race of Celts and Norse from the Hebrides and the Highlands, all alike talking Irish and claiming Irish descent, poured colonies into Ireland without ceasing from 1250 to 1600, forefathers of hundreds of thousands to-day of Irish family. The western and middle Lowlands (along with the Highlands) sent from 1600 the main body of settlers of the Ulster Plantation, chiefly of Picto-Celtic stock; most of the first settlers must have been bi-lingual, speaking not only “Broad Scots” but their native Gaelic, which in 1589 was still the chief language of Galloway. Scots and Irish were the same to Henry VIII., whose servant Alen protested in 1549 against any “liberty” for the Irish, which, he said, was “the only thing that Scots and wild Irish constantly contended for.” The Scots of the Isles were known to Elizabeth as “those Yrishe people,” “the Yrishes”; the “English Scots” whom she employed in her Irish wars were so called from their political faction and Protestant religion, not from any difference of blood from their brethren. In 1630 the scholar Bedell included Irish and Scots in one single group; “and surely it was a work agreeable to the mind of God that the poor Irish, being a very numerous nation, besides the greater half of Scotland, and all those islands called Hebrides, that lie in the Irish Sea, and many of the Orcades also that speak Irish, should be enabled to search the Scriptures.” The old Irish of Ulster in 1641 excepted the Scots from their hostile measures as being of their own race, and this only a generation after the Plantation, when most of the evicted Irish must have been still

alive. Jeremy Taylor in 1667 describes the Scots and Irish of north-east Ulster as “*populus unius labii*

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