

AN ENGLISH ESSAYIST ON IRISH EDUCATION.

MATTHEW ARNOLD ON IRISH CATHOLIC CLAIMS.

MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD writes as follows to the editor of the 'Pall Mall Gazette':—

Sir: An assertion made in the preface to my account of German higher schools, that, "before Prussia compelled Roman Catholic students to attend university instruction she gave them Roman Catholic universities to go to," has met and still meets with so much denial, and the matter at issue is so important, that I will ask you to afford me space for an explanation. In my preface I was contrasting the position of the university student in Ireland, if he is a Roman Catholic, with the position of university students in Prussia and Great Britain. I remark that, whereas in England and Scotland Protestants had public universities where religion and philosophy and history were taught by Protestants, and in Prussia both Catholics and Protestants had public universities where these matters were taught by professors of the student's own confession, in Ireland Catholics had no such university, and we would not let them have one. Writing for the general reader, I applied the term Catholic or Protestant to universities as he himself, I thought, would be likely to apply it; meaning by a Roman Catholic university not a university where no Protestant might enter; and where even botany and mineralogy must be taught by Catholics, but a university where the Catholic students would find religion taught by Catholics, and matters where religion is interested, such as philosophy and history taught by Catholics too. In speaking of a university as Protestant I mean the same limitation to be understood. *

I had also a right, I think, to say that while we would not give the Irish a public university where religion, philosophy, and history were taught by Catholics, we English and Scotch, had for ourselves public universities where religion, philosophy, and history are taught by Protestants. This is indisputably so as to religion; the only question can be whether it is true as to philosophy and history. Can anyone think that a Catholic could be appointed to a chair of history or philosophy at Oxford or Cambridge? No one. But a distinguished Scotch Liberal—eminent alike by rank, office, talents, and character—assured me that as to all chairs of philosophy and history the Scotch universities were now perfectly un-Protestantized. In law, no doubt; but in fact? In fact, they remain exclusively Protestant. My Scotch informant himself supplied me with the best possible proof of it—for when I went on to ask him, "Would it be possible, then, for the government to appoint an eminent Catholic metaphysician—Father Dalgairns, for instance—to a chair of metaphysics in Scotland?" my informant answered instantly "Of course not; it would be a national outrage." But really the Irish Catholics could hardly desire for themselves anything more agreeable than a national Irish university where it should be a national outrage for the government to appoint Mr. Bain, or any except a Catholic, to a chair of mental philosophy. *

Irish Catholicism is a natural, existing fact, and certain to exist for a great while to come. It is not going to disappear because it is not so enlightened as the religion of the "Fortnightly Review" or so pure as the religion of Messrs. Moody and Sankey. For a very long while yet our only course will be to take Irish Catholicism as a fact and to do the best we can with it—now, the worst we can do with it is to shut it up in itself. True, Catholicism has political inconveniences in its Ultramontanist, social inconveniences in its confessional, intellectual and moral inconveniences in its denial of the necessity and duty of private judgment. All these incidents of the religion of Catholics, however, Catholics have accepted because their religion itself was so attractive to them. They will not drop these things because we dislike them; and most certainly they will not drop their religion to get rid of those things. They will get rid of them, or of what is bad in them, not by a sudden change, not by a wholesome conversion, not by ceasing to profess themselves Catholics, but only by the slow advance of culture in the body of the Catholic community itself, only by the general widening and clearing of European thought being felt through this community. This is a truth which statesmen cannot lay too much to heart; and it is the gravest possible condemnation of our policy towards Catholicism in Ireland.

For what are we doing in Ireland? Forcing Catholicism to remain shut up in itself because we will not treat it as a national religion. And why will we not? In defence to two fanaticisms: a secularist fanaticism which holds religion in general to be noxious, and, above all, a Protestant fanaticism which holds Catholicism to be idolatry. But Catholicism will not disappear, and at this rate it can never improve. Dr. Lyon Playfair made an excellent speech the other day on the defects of the Irish schools. The 'Times' had an excellent article remonstrating against these schools being treated with a slack indulgence unknown in England; against grants without examination and teachers without certificates. But Mr. O'Reilly says that what the Irish ask for is training schools as in England and Scotland, Catholic training schools there, as there are Protestant training schools here, and aided on just the same terms as the English and Scotch training schools; then we shall be quite ready, says Mr. O'Reilly, to forego grants without examination and teachers without certificates. And really there is no answering Mr. O'Reilly, supposing the facts to be as they are stated; the Irish have a right to training schools like those in England and Scotland, and it is but fanaticism which retards education in Ireland by refusing them.

It is the same thing as to universities for Irish Catholics. Mr. Gladstone's Irish University Bill is spoken of as the extreme of concession ever to be offered by England to Irish Catholicism. Yet that famous bill was in truth—if one may say so without disrespect to Mr. Gladstone, who had to propound his University Bill under the eyes of his Secularist and Nonconformist supporters—simply

ridiculous. Religion, moral philosophy, and modern history are probably the three matters of instruction in which the bulk of mankind take most interest, and this precious university was to give no instruction in any one of them! The Irish have a right to a university with a Catholic faculty of theology, and with Catholic professors of philosophy and history. By refusing them to Ireland our fanaticism does not tend to make one Catholic the less—it only tends to make Irish Catholicism unprogressive. So long as we refuse them, sir, I persist, instead of congratulating myself with the 'Times' on our admirably fair and wise treatment of Catholicism—I persist in thinking that, where we are put to the test, our treatment of Catholicism is dictated solely by that old friend of ours—strong, steady, honest, well-disposed but withal somewhat narrow-minded and hard-natured—the British Philistine.

THE REPRESENTATIVE MEN OF IRELAND.

THE 'London Daily Telegraph' said only a short time ago: "When a young Irishman is called to the bar, it is an even bet whether he will end by sentencing or being sentenced to penal servitude." It used to be so; but the odds are now a thousand to one on the prudent and selfish side. Ireland's poverty of reliable public men is one of the saddest facts of the day. "Men of means, for the greater part, ape English ways and crawl after English distinctions. The shining lights and even the farthing candles of the professions in literature, law, and whatnot, let out their wits to hire, and only England, who holds the purse, can buy. Only Isaac Butt's abilities save him from ostracism in his own class. Such as he are exceptions which but prove the rule.

There are free lances enough that would enroll themselves under Home Rule colors if they could see their way to deserting upon profitable terms; it speaks well for public opinion in Ireland when they keep aloof. But the fact stands, that the country cannot supply representatives in quantity or quality at all equal to the demand. At the last general election fully ten seats were lost or want of men to fill them. Mr. A. M. Sullivan was, we understand, solicited to stand for at least twenty places. The O'Gorman Mahon was torn asunder between Kerry, Ennis and Tipperary. Urgent telegrams assured Captain King Harman he had only to say the word to be elected for Leitrim, for Kildare, for Kerry; for Waterford, for Dublin; and he ended by leaving the country to escape the honors. It is a fact that for a few days a full dozen telegrams used to reach the Home Rule office in Dublin, praying "For God's sake send us a candidate!" Two seats for the County Waterford might be had for the taking, and nobody turned up but an Englishman named Longbottom, whom the Home Rule League had to disown.

Take the Irish representation as it stands; better, on the whole, and honestest than ever it was. Nearly half the fifty are well-meaning country gentlemen who give a vote and a prosy speech once or twice a year on the Home Rule side, and go home to their constituents with what The O'Donoghue called "the Home Rule annual" in their buttonholes. They were accepted for want of better; and, indeed, have done much better than was expected of them. We think we do not pry too much into private affairs when we say that, as to the balance of hard workers, their attention to public business involves personal and pecuniary sacrifices that ought not to be the penalty of public life. The joke of the English that a certain Irish member had an objection to attending the London Parliament, being hard up for his railway fare, is only an ungenerous exaggeration of the hardships more than one popular representative has to face in order to be constantly at his post.

It is well known that Mr. Butt has sacrificed the most lucrative position at the Irish Bar. Mr. O'Shaughnessy can well afford it; but he has also resigned practice at the bar. Mr. A. M. Sullivan with amazing industry edits two newspapers, and is able to engage Disraeli himself without gloves upon the deepest and the most different topics. His colleague in the representation of Louth, Mr. Harley Kirk, is a tenant farmer with a not over indulgent landlord. Mr. William H. O'Sullivan, the member for the county Limerick, is a business man, who is the life of his business. Mr. Fay, the member for Cavan, and Mr. McCarthy, of Mallow, are practising attorneys, whose clients grumble when they are away. Dr. O'Leary (who enjoys the distinction of being the smallest man in the House, as Mr. O'Sullivan is the tallest and Major O'Gorman the weightiest) has a wide circle of patients in Dublin who might take a fever or colic while their medical confessor obeys the ring of the division bell. Mr. O'Connor Power, the young member for Mayo, must give readings and attend his law lectures in the intervals of the sessions. The Chevalier O'Clery writes for a small weekly newspaper.

The hardship is that these are the men who always mount guard and do the work. Their more showy but less sincere associates only put in an appearance on parade. There were already too few men like John Martin, with leisure enough and will to be always at their post, and keep the waverers in countenance. In this way, and in the loss of his private influence, the death of John Martin will be sorely felt. But the loss is not altogether irreparable. The Home Rule Movement was not checked by the death of two of its most notable champions—George Henry Moore and John Francis Maguire: it will survive even this third blow. There are youth and promise enough in the country. If there is a scarcity of public men of leisure and ability, there is at least an absence of profligate public men, such as held the helm for many a day in Irish politics. It would be hard to despair of the country that had three such men as John Mitchel, John Martin, and John Gray to honor, and knew how to honor them.—'Pilot.'

No less than 24,255 immigrants arrived in California overland since April 1, 1874.