

'Pitt: "I cannot see the Speaker, Hal, can you?"
'Dundas: "Not see the Speaker! Hang it, I see two!"'

The extreme prevalence of drinking among 'the classes' at the close of the eighteenth century in Great Britain and Ireland is testified to in a sufficiently emphatic way in 'Courts and Cabinets of George III.' (vol. iii., p. 189). In time, that deep-swilling period is close at hand to us—only a little beyond the reach of 'the oldest inhabitant'. Our drinking habits still sorely need mending. Yet, thank God, we have in one short century moved worlds away from the state of heavy toping and leaden fuddledom that characterised the days from the Restoration to the reign of the fourth George. And in few departments of life is the change more marked than in the vastly higher state of general sobriety that marks the various parliamentary institutions throughout the Empire, as compared with the conditions that prevailed in the Mother of Parliaments for nearly one hundred and twenty years of its history. Herein the progress has been indeed great and gratifying.

France: Some Compensations

The numerical losses sustained by the Church during the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century found their compensation in the spread of the ancient faith in the East, and still more in the new world that the genius of Columbus opened up to missionary enterprise in the New World beyond the Atlantic. And now the war of plunder, confiscation, and proscription that is being carried on by the Christ-hunters in France is destined to serve the cause of God; perhaps by the triumph of religion over the lodge in the Third Republic, certainly by an enormous accession of skilled and devoted workers to the foreign mission field. From time to time our news and editorial columns have borne evidence to the signal manner in which the expulsion of religious from France has aided in the spread of the faith and the cause of charity all over the American continent, in the Pacific islands, and in the near and distant East. England, too, has benefited by the persecution beyond the Straits of Dover. According to the English 'Catholic Directory' there was in 1906 an increase of seventy-nine religious in Great Britain—an unusually large addition to the ranks of workers in education and charity that is accounted for in great part by the banishment of nuns from France. The number of clergy in Great Britain was, at about the close of the past year, 4024—an increase of eighty-five on the figures of the previous year. 'Closings', says the London 'Tablet' of December 29, 'may be the order of the day in France, but here in England there has been a busy time of openings, for there are sixty-three more churches and chapels than there were at this time last year.'

The chemist knows how to make a healing balm from the root of the deadly aconite. And God is wont to bring good out of seeming evil, as Samson drew out of the eater meat, and out of the lion's mouth honey. All such trials as those through which the Church in France is passing have their compensations. Persecution passes nations, as suffering passes individuals, through the crucible; and the shortest cut to our Thabor is over our Hill of Calvary. It is an incident; if a physically unpleasant incident, of progress, as is the training and 'hardening up' of the athlete. With Catholics there never can arise the cry: 'The Church in danger!' With the illumined eye of faith we see whereon we believe. And with our bodily eye we can behold how 'what came to us as seed goes to the next generation as blossom, and what came to us as blossom goes to them as fruit'. And so with only a halt here or there for repairs, replacements, or the casting-off of useless or injurious burdens—the forward march of God's Church goes grandly on.

St Patrick's Day Concerts

We are nearing the season when the monkey-faced scarecrow known as the stage Irishman reappears with a war-whoop, and proceeds to travesty in a gross way the modes of thought, the moral conduct, and the speech of a faithful and much-tried Catholic people. Shakespeare's Captain Macmorris (the Welsh Fluellen's friend) was a fast and faithful friend and a brave and determined, if hot-headed, soldier. England's greatest dramatist knew nothing of the wild, coarse, apish, fuddled, whooping, red-headed idiot who in a later day posed as a type of the humanity that inhabits the Green Isle. The modern conception of the 'stage Irishman' seems to have grown out of the literary decadence that followed the destruction of Ireland's separate political life in 1800. He was, so to speak, swathed in vulgar, though sometimes smart, street ballads by young Trinity 'bloods'. Then, in an evil hour, came Samuel Lover—a graduate of Trinity in its Orange days—with his blundering 'Handy Andy' and more or less fixed the type.

Will Carleton was even a worse offender. He was an idle, worthless wight, without a sense of honor or of shame. He sponged on friends and acquaintances till he was a weariness of the flesh to them, and they cast him off with a collective boot-toe. We next hear of him in a debtors' prison. Then, like another Mick McQuaid, he appears as a pervert from the faith of his fathers. His 'Life' (published by Downey and Co. in 1896) tells the simple story of his 'conversion'. He came across the Rev. Caesar Otway, a leader in an organisation that was endeavoring to rescue Ireland from 'Popery' by vitriolic tracts and newspapers, and by inducing the poor of the slums and the hunger-driven peasants to

'Sell their souls
'For penny rowls,
'For soup and hairy bacon.'

In furtherance of the first part of the 'soup' propaganda, Otway had started the 'Christian Examiner'. He hired Carleton to write stories that would convey to the reader a lurid idea of the 'superstition' and savagery of Irish 'Papists'. These stories would, said Caesar, 'serve the cause if properly prepared'. 'Paddy-Go-Easy' was the grossest and most vulgar of those 'properly prepared' libels on Irish Catholics. But even Otway could not stomach Carleton very long. In the height of his financial success this joint creator of the modern 'stage Irishman' went into the Insolvent Court. He remained a sponger, a toady, and a nuisance to the last. And to the end of his days his venal pen was at the service of any party or any creed that was willing to hire him.

Dion Boucicault did not make his characters speak the impossible Jabberwocky that passes for Irish dialect in Cockney music-halls and on some of our stages on St. Patrick's nights. But in the 'Shaughraun' he at first staged a wake-scene of so disgusting a nature that he was hissed and greeted with ostentatiously ancient eggs until he modified it. We believe we have killed off the 'stage Irishman' in many parts of New Zealand. But we have reason to think that there are some people in the Colony who are content to sit still and applaud the monstrosity. The awakened sense of race pride and race dignity has already sternly rebuked this form of insult in Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and the United States. And we hope that his reappearance upon any stage in New Zealand, at least at Catholic concerts, will be greeted with such emphatic marks of disapproval as will lead to his early and permanent retirement. Strict previous supervision of programmes—and especially of the alleged 'comic' element in the programmes—is a precaution that organisers of such concerts would do well to take. It is high time that a halt should be cried on such caricatures of a highly moral and comparatively crimeless Catholic people.

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