

tralia—of acquiring that experience of men and things which is so indispensable to one who is to help in moulding the destinies of peoples. During his years in America he was brought into close contact with the Irish race and learned to estimate their worth. The experience derived across the Atlantic cannot but have ripened under the Southern Cross. From this point of view one could wish for no more promising asset in this crucial period of our country's history. And personally I have reason to look back with pleasure and satisfaction to the attitude he adopted nearly three years ago, when, on his way through England to Rome from America, three eminent Englishmen, one of whom is now no more, tried to use him as a vehicle for the spread of their newest pet theory that Irish freedom would be disastrous to the interests of the Church, and even injurious to the temporal interests of the Irish people."

Chickens Come Home to Roost

Every day we now hear new protests against the growth of immorality in this Dominion. And from beyond the seas the cry is re-echoed. The evidences of the want of self-restraint resulting in scandalous breaches of the laws of God are appalling. There is no need to dwell on the proofs we have of the havoc wrought by vice among our unfortunate soldiers who have been plunged by the war into the midst of temptations which they were no way prepared to withstand. It is enough to say that a more terrible foe than their enemies in the field is striking them down, and that for many of them death in the trenches was preferable to the consequences of their sins. Still less is there need to call attention to the plague rife in our midst here at home at a time when we ought to be doing penance in sack-cloth and ashes if we were not blind to all the lessons of the war. Over and over again it has been preached from the house-tops that no legislation will strike at the root of the evil. From America and England and Germany warnings are uttered regularly that nothing is of any avail but the fear and love of God. Even men who have advocated the secular schools are forced to admit their dire failure, and to recognise that without religious training the morals of the young people can never be saved from shipwreck. Grave men of every Church have condemned the system which, in spite of the testimony of our senses and of the evidences of awful results, is still perversely supported even by ministers of religion. The sentence of the secular schools of New Zealand is written in the daily records of the police courts; it is written in letters of fire in the annals of our expeditionary forces. And if common sense and common decency have not lost their force, the time will come when the men who are responsible for maintaining that system will be branded as criminals. In a sermon preached at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Christchurch, on August 5, the Rev. J. Paterson told his hearers in unmistakable words where the cause of the rottenness lay. "The war," he said, "was teaching that there was no real uplifting of character in secular culture. There was a great warning in it for New Zealanders. They talked with pride of their secular education, but they were trying to build upon a foundation of shifting sands. Unless in the hearts of men and rulers there was placed the fear of God there was not sufficient force making for truth and justice." We endorse these remarks of Mr. Paterson, and recommend them to the consideration of our legislators. As we are going on at present New Zealand bids fair to rival France in its unenviable record amongst the nations.

Here a word as to the material cost of the unpardonable and exploded system by the maintenance of which the Minister always draws the plaudits of a clique of men too blind to see a danger which is overwhelming people who care for purity and decency with fear. The present cost of education if any sane man will dare call it so in this country is accord-

ing to the latest report £1,704,000. It is costing the country three times as much to-day as it cost seventeen years ago, and twice as much in proportion to the population. And if the number of children was to-day in the same proportion to the population as then, there should be 1800 more attending schools now than there are. That the children are not there is one of the effects of the system itself. It costs £120 to educate a child who remains to take advantage of the High Schools. As a matter of fact only one in every thirty children go on to the High Schools at all, and parents who cannot take advantage of these schools have to pay for this minority. The Otago High Schools—to take only one example—cost the State £9379 for the year, and this was paid by parents who in most cases derived absolutely no advantages from the schools in question. And what are they paying for? They are paying for a system which is not education at all. The money levied from them is going to support schools condemned by statesmen who are willing to look facts in the face, and by ministers of religion whose Gospel does not altogether consist in bigotry, as being utter failures in so far as the preparation of children for becoming worthy members of society goes, and as positive stumbling blocks where the welfare of their souls is concerned. Only those who have no regard for the welfare of the Dominion can consistently support such schools: to all who believe in God and in a future life they are nothing short of an abomination.

Francis Ledwidge

Lord Dunsany tells us that he had long looked for a star in the same part of the sky, and that he found it where he looked for it when Francis Ledwidge raised his voice in song among the Irish peasants, among whom alone, he says, "was a diction worthy of poetry, as well as an imagination capable of dealing with the great and simple things that are a poet's wares." This new poet is kin to John Keats in his Greek sense of light and beauty, limpid beauty of words, exquisite beauty of ideas, delicate beauty of art. His muse does not build unsubstantial, airy fabrics in fairyland; to quote Lord Dunsany again, it is a "mirror reflecting beautiful fields . . . a very still lake on a very cloudless evening." We limit ourselves to a few extracts from much that clamors for quotation:

A LITTLE BOY IN THE MORNING.

He will not come, and still I wait.
He whistles at another gate.
Where angels listen. Ah, I know
He will not come: yet if I go,
How shall I know he did not pass
Barefooted in the flowery grass?

The moon leans on one silver horn,
Above the silhouettes of morn,
And from their nest-sills finches whistle,
Or stooping, pluck the downy thistle.
How is the morn so gay and fair
Without his whistling in the air?

The world is calling, I must go.
How shall I know he did not pass
Barefooted through the shining grass?

GROWING OLD.

We'll fill a Provence bowl and pledge us deep
The memory of the far ones, and between
The soothing pipes, in heavy lidded sleep,
Perhaps we'll dream the things that once have been.
'Tis only noon and still too soon to die,
Yet we are growing old, my heart and I.

Across a bed of bells the river flows,
And roses dawn, but not for us: we want
The new thing ever as the old thing grows
Spectral and weary on the hills we haunt.
And that is why we feast, and that is why
We're growing old, my heart and I.

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