

there was in the Church, and then proceeded to tell the public that Catholicism—or, as the illustrious Professor Dickie, who is infallible in Dunedin about the Twelfth of July, would say, Romanism—had nothing to commend it, and stood for obscurantism and for ignorance. The tactics of Protestants in this regard were decidedly Protestant: no other word can be found to fit them. And what they have done with reference to the Church they have also done in a political sphere with reference to Ireland. Some day it may be worth while collecting a number of the contradictory things they have said about Irishmen, who, according to the mood of the anti-Irish writer, are "ferocious," or "cowardly," or "humble," or "proud," or "lazy," or "vain," or goodness only knows what not. For too long Irishmen were content to accept in a certain measure as true what their enemies said about them, just as they were satisfied to regard English papers and English books as worth reading. The false tradition deceived the people, and it needed a miracle to arouse them from their dreams.

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They have been aroused. They have been taught to look into themselves and to examine in how far the traditions apply to them. For the past 20 years writers like D. P. Morgan have been scouring the Anglo-Saxon ideals out of them and teaching them to see West Britonism for the shoddy, contemptible thing it is in truth. The Gaelic League has come along and led them to turn back and regard everything from the standpoint of Celtic, and no longer from that of British, culture. It has dawned on them at last that they have a heritage and a record which puts them immeasurably above the conglomeration of races called Englishmen, and that spiritually, intellectually, and physically they are the superiors and the English the inferiors. And from this turning-point, when Irishmen began to see things for themselves and to take a right pride in themselves, dates the renaissance of the Irish nation. Twenty years is a short period in the life of a people, but what has been achieved in that span in Ireland is absolutely marvellous. One sign of it is the positive wonderment and astonishment of old people in this Dominion who were saturated with the old ideals and found it hard to realise the change and all it stands for. The vague notions about the Gaelic League, the dense ignorance about the activities of Sinn Fein with which we personally had to contend when we came to edit the *Tablet* over two years ago now, prove clearly how far Ireland has leaped forward ahead of old conditions. And as yet, far as she has gone, she is only on the threshold of her future greatness. So far she has in fact but gone back: back to the ancient ideals which were thrust aside by centuries of false English civilisation, which were vital enough to remake Ireland, which are the foundations of Ireland's prosperity and development in the years to come. Sinn Fein has now taken the lead, and more than fulfilled the highest expectations of its pioneers. Its maxim is *The Irish for Ireland*; its first commandment is *Thou shalt be Irish, not English*. The Rising of Easter Week, the incredible cruelty of Maxwell, the official protection of the murderer Colthurst, and the immoral attempt to impose the horrors of military slavery on a nation that never did and never will acknowledge English rule, strengthened Sinn Fein and made it the irresistible force it is to-day in Irish life. Under Sinn Fein the country is united as it never was at any time in its history. Owing to the dishonest chicanery of Lloyd George, the one danger that Irishmen might be caught in the trap of British promises is for ever removed. On the broad lines marked out by the Gaelic League, Ireland has begun her march towards freedom and prosperity.

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Two movements will help to show what promise the future holds. The co-operative movement that began so quietly, now widespread, embracing in its activities "nearly every phase of national life from herring-fishing off Kileel to painting from life in Dublin," with branches from Carnsore Point to Lough

Swilly, has come to stay. It aims at the economic rebirth of Ireland, it transfers the idea of Sinn Fein from politics to political economy. It applies the commandment *Thou shalt not be English* to every department of trade and industry, and teaches Irishmen to wear Irish-made tweeds, to burn Irish coal, to light Irish matches, and to read books printed in Ireland on Irish paper. In literature Irish writers have discarded the hybrid Anglo-Saxon ideals and gone back to Celtic culture and to Celtic standards. All the old unreality, all the sunbursty, all the empty sweetness and sentimentality have been ruthlessly swept aside, and literature made to look straight at life as it is, and to become a real thing instead of a sham. The new Irish drama is intensely national—more national than anything of the sort in the world to-day. The new poetry is as Irish in its sincerity and directness as the hearts of the men who make it. The tide of life is flowing high; the literature to-day is the voice of a strong, healthy, regenerated people, conscious of power and proud of it. All this has been achieved under the misrule of a foreign power which has not a shadow of right to govern Ireland. But one thing is wanting now for the full flowering of the promise that has burgeoned so richly. When oppression and tyranny are gone, as they are going fast, the future will see a free Ireland developing to its full stature and taking a place in the sun beside the first nations of the world. We conclude with a quotation which Zygmunt Krasinski puts on the lips of his own oppressed country in circumstances not unlike Ireland's: "Not for hope—as a flower it is strewn; not for the destruction of our foes—their destruction dawns on to-morrow's clouds; not for the weapons of rule—from the tempests they will fall to us; not for any help—Thou hast opened already the field of events before us; but amidst the terrible convulsions of these events we beseech Thee only for a pure will within ourselves, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

NOTES

"Pages from the Past"

One of these days we shall have a fine new book by John Ayscough of which possibly a few stray copies may find their way to this benighted land of retrograde schools and low ideals. We make no prophecy about the forthcoming book: it has been already begun and, in part, appeared serially in the *Month*, that fine old English Catholic paper which by its breadth of views and modernness reflects a damning discredit on the anti-Irish and Jingo London *Tablet*. The new Ayscough book will not be a popular book, so do not say that we did not warn you in time; but it will be a book such as every lover of literature will welcome, not only for its own intrinsic worth, but also for the sake of the interesting literary reminiscences of the author. We will be glad when we can place it on our shelves in a permanent shape, although we shall by that time have read it eagerly in its serial form. We know half-a-dozen others who will be glad to lay hands on it lovingly; and we wish we could say we knew hundreds of others—but we know nothing of the kind.

Hardy and Meredith

A sample of John Ayscough's critical acumen may be gathered from his causerie on the literary merits and contrasts of Hardy and Meredith—two names which will appeal like a trumpet call to the *cognoscenti*: "Hardy and Meredith are philosophers, at least as truly as they are novelists: but they are peculiarly unlike." [*En passant*, how many of our readers have noticed Ayscough's use of the colon?] They are equally intimate, but Meredith is as subtle as Hardy is direct. Their atmosphere is absolutely different. Meredith is all lambent fire of meteoric vagary; his lightning is

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