

by force or by outside aggression; financial relations must be determined in the same manner; and the Ulster question, being an Irish question, must be settled without outside interference. So far as the heads of disagreement are concerned there ought not be much difficulty, but the whole matter must be approached by England from a different angle: instead of trying to impose conditions on the Irish people she must come to treat with them as with a free nation that will not submit to coercion from an enemy whose right in Ireland is exactly the same as that of the Prussians in Belgium during the war. Hope is not dead yet. Indeed the artificial Ulster question is the only serious obstacle. It is unthinkable that de Valera, the Irish bishops, and any true Irishmen would not rather fight on to death than leave the Catholics of Ulster at the mercy of the Orange assassins; but it is not unthinkable that *all Ireland* should agree to accept a true and assured Dominion status. The future is in the hands of Providence. What concerns us is that we must be prepared for more trouble, and should that come we must be even truer and more earnest than ever in our support of the Irish people.

NOTES

Custom and Costume

Some years ago a theologian was asked for his opinion on certain modish bathing costumes worn by ladies more anxious to exhibit themselves than to bathe, and his reply was that it was to a great extent a matter of custom and costume. Public decency safeguarded, he was right. What would cause a shock to one generation excites no wonder in the next; custom and costume have their sway, and even wise and prudent spinsters and staid mothers of families duly make fools of themselves in their wake. To-day the mother, whose mother wrapped her warmly in wool before allowing her forth in the frosty air, cheerfully speeds her own daughter to work or play in a dress that would not be considered prudish for a ball-room. Before the war it was rightly regarded as a hall-mark of foppishness and effeminacy for a full-grown man to wear a wrist-watch; now, owing to the fact that it became impossible for any warrior, military medico, or bellicose chaplain to leave New Zealand without being presented with one by his admirers, the wrist-watch has (almost) ceased to connote a prig. Years ago no man ever removed from one New Zealand village, town, or city to another without having to listen to ten speeches and to accept a pair of hair-brushes. The speeches remain but the wrist-watch has superseded the hair-brushes.

Sound Advice

In a collection of Irish stories by Charlotte Dease there is a remarkably interesting sketch of an old Irish native speaker to whom learned University professors used to come from all over Europe. We are not going to tell the story here, but among the gems of wisdom that fell from the Irish scholar's lips we linger on this one:

"Do you know the worst person to lend a book to?" he once asked. "A priest. And do you know the reason why? If it is a bad book he'll burn it, and if it is a good book he'll keep it, for he'll say that it is more fitting for him to have it than another man."

The old man must have been friendly with the clergy! We know one of them who would not contradict him for the world. Now take another sample of his philosophy:

"You were asking me if I was hungry with no breakfast. Well, I am, but I make it a habit to keep my hunger in subjection. Indeed, I've steeled my mind to let no outward thing trouble it. Whether it's pain of the body or whether it's sorrow of the heart, it's all one. There's nothing in this world worth shed-

ding a tear about only the loss of the grace of God."

Plato, Aristotle, Cato, Seneca, and all ye Stoics and Peripatetics, arise and learn of this Irish peasant. Ex-co-called-Minister-for-Education Hanan, hie thee from Invercargill to the West of Ireland and sit at his feet. Present-so-called-Minister-for-Education Parr, go thou with him. One more quotation. To an ardent Temperance Reformer who came to the island, the old man said:

"Well, your reverence, there may be a great deal in it, and I'm sorry to disoblige you, but this is the way I look at it. God gave me ten Commandments and the Church has given me six. I'm thinking that's enough for any man, without his putting another on himself."

"Holy Romans"

In *Holy Roman's*, an Irish novel by Aodh de Blacam, you will find fulfilled the promise of this writer's earlier work. It is a well-told story of the son of an Irish exile in London, and it deals more satisfactorily than most novels that touch on such problems with the Gaelic revival and the rise and triumph of Sinn Féin. Moreover, it is as well written as it is well told, and from an aesthetic point of view it has few equals among modern novels. Here and there is a note of irreverence but it is in keeping with the characters of the book and not dragged in needlessly as the coarseness and blasphemy are in the works of one who calls himself Conal O'Riordan. We do not propose to give a summary of the novel here. Two passages will be enough to serve as a sample of the spirit of the story. The first occurs in a description of an outing of the London Gaels:

"They were seated too far back from the storyteller's group for their speech to cause interruption, so Fergus went on speaking in a low tone. He talked of the poetic beauty, the delicate wit, the refining spirit of the folk-lore, and began to tell stories himself. When he had finished the tale of the Children of Lir, loveliest of all tales of enchantments, Tessie remarked: 'I heard that story often from my grandfather'—and when Fergus looked a little crestfallen, she added: 'But he never told it half as well as you.'"

"Did you ever think," said Fergus, "what a fine theme that story would make for musical treatment? the sad music of exile at first, with the swan's magic song repeated as a *motif* through what follows: the storms of the Scottish coast, of Iarrus Domhnan, and so on. At last the music of home-coming, mingled with the sad notes of loss, and then the sacred music of the monastery and chords of peace and triumph at the end."

A second passage gives us the author's opinion of the poor old degraded day-lies, all the world over as well as in pre-Sinn Féin Dublin:

"All the same," said Shane, "I'd like to be on a daily. There's some chance there to do something."

"Don't believe it," said the dapper little cynic beside him. "Unless it's to make money. An honest daily is a contradiction in terms, an impossibility. Look at me. I'm the proof. I'm the enlightener of thousands: the guide, philosopher, and friend of all in authority in Ireland. I'll tell 'em all about Germany's brutality towards the Church in places I never heard of at the dictation of Freemasons. They take my leaders as gospel because they're things in print. Who is or was Belinsky?"

"Can't guess," said Shane.

"Nor could I. But I'm writing an article on him to-morrow to prove that if his doctrines are adopted by the Irish working-classes (can't you see them doing it?) the Church will go the same way here as in France. Last night the chief sub-editor came to me and asked could I say which side the Epirotes were fighting on. I gave it up. 'That's awkward,' said he, 'because nobody in our room knows and the flimsy doesn't say: so I don't know whether to put up the heading *Glorious Victory* or *Shameful Atrocity*.'"

"It looks pretty silly," said Shane. "But why