

## SOME LANDOR LETTERS TO J. E. FITZGERALD

A MINOR parallel to the literary friendship of Browning and Dommett may be found in the association of W. S. Landor and J. E. Fitzgerald. A group of letters from Landor to Fitzgerald which has recently been presented to the library throws light on this friendship of the colonial statesman, once Canterbury superintendent and native minister, and the poet of independence whose span had already encompassed the lives of Byron, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats.

The letters commence at a time when Fitzgerald was still on the staff of the British Museum, but giving increasing attention to the problem of colonization. They reveal, in addition to the expected interest of one friend in the movements of another, Landor's attitude towards the Irish question on which Fitzgerald had written, and his opinion on colonial matters prompted by the publication of the younger man's work on the Hudson Bay company\*. Forster in his biography has well said of Landor that "the charge was not at any time to be made against him of siding with the strong against the weak, or of passing over the neglected and unguarded." That such was the case is to be plainly seen by the following extract from a letter on the Irish question characteristic of his occasional public utterances, disconcerting to his contemporaries, coming as they did, from a man of spirit and property. "The greater part of the Irish landlords are the vilest miscreants under the canopy of heaven. This calamity will frighten them into the pale of humanity. What would they and the people have done, had they succeeded in dissolving the Union? Were I minister, I would dissolve it to-morrow morning.

"Why does not the queen give up her lands in that country for the benefit of the starving people? They produce her but about six thousand a year, and may be worth two hundred thousand. More land is held under the bishop of Derry than any man in England possesses. So long as any bishop has more than a thousand pounds a year I would withhold any subsidy. I heartily wish the people would rise and right themselves, sweeping off the caterpillars that consume not only their potatoes but their vitals."

\* *An examination of the charter and proceedings of the Hudson's Bay company with reference to the grant of Vancouver's Island. By James Edward Fitzgerald, London: Trelawny Saunders, 1849.*