

as a biographer is his own gentle, affable, loving manner. He looks upon his hero, for the time being, as a very dear and loving friend; he shows his brightest spots; he makes us personally acquainted with him, and after we have read his story we look upon him as an old friend to whom we have been personally introduced. Histories in general are none of the pleasantest reading. There must necessarily be a large quantity of dry detail, but the work before us is written in an easy style of plain narrative which fascinates the reader and makes him as anxious to continue the perusal as if he were in pursuit of the plot of a story. And such a story: plot after plot, march and counter-march, defeat, betrayal, outlawry, exile, honours received in exile, etc.,

The work is one of the best contributions to the history of Ireland during the close Elizabethan reign and the whole of James the First and part of Charles the First's reign. It gives an account of Owen Roe O'Neill, too, and has a very large and valuable appendix. It is not written with the laboured periods of Macaulay, but, with the exception of Green's short history, it is the most readable history we know of dealing minutely with any period of history. Throughout the work there are copious annotations in which the author exhibits that fraternal feeling which was so characteristic a trait of the young Irishmen. The earlier edition of this work was through the intervention of Lord O'Hagan, the means of preserving the church of St. Francis in Rome from confiscation. The work is beautifully printed in clear, bold type, and neatly bound in green cloth, with a vignette, which is a *fac simile* of the signet ring of Owen Roe O'Neill.

It only remains to say that however brilliantly a history may be written, only a limited number of people will take an interest in it, so that after all very few elaborate histories pay from a financial point of view. Therefore it behoves every one who takes an interest in his native land to buy and foster that interest, and by purchasing a copy endeavour in that way to recoup the publisher if not the author. Father Meehan does not write for wealth. The thought of making a fortune out of the elucidation of that half obliterated inscription never entered his mind. But he should not suffer peculiarly by doing that for Ireland which is done in England by State officers at the public expense, and which has been done for other countries long years ago. The materials for Irish history, notwithstanding the labours of O'Curry and O'Donovan, are still scattered among the libraries of the Continent, yet if we only took our fair share of the burden in defraying the expense it should be possible now that photolithography has been so perfected to take copies without depriving the owners of the originals. Father Meehan has recently edited and enlarged "Davis's Essays," also the "Spirit of the Nation," words and music, so that it is quite possible he may contemplate revising and enlarging Mitchell's "Hugh O'Neill" also.

J. S. P.

P.S.—Although this work was only issued in September, it speaks well for our colonial interest in Irish publications that it was in Whitaker Brothers' catalogue in November.

## THE IRISH IN AMERICA.

The following letter has appeared in the Christchurch *Weekly Press* :— I READ some time since in a Christchurch paper a condensed report of a lecture entitled "Personal Impressions of America." It was delivered before the Canterbury Caledonian Society; and the lecturer was Professor J. M. Brown. The report tells us that the learned professor closed his lecture by an eloquent panegyric on America as the greatest nation the world has ever seen.

But the keen far-seeing eye of Professor Brown has detected danger in the distance. During his sojourn in America he discovered quite a group of rocks lying in the onward course of the Great Republic; and he seems to fear, to believe in fact that this greatest of nations will be wrecked on those rocks, and he further tells us that Americans name those very dangerous rocks respectively, Irish, Chinese, Negroes and Mormons. Here is the way he puts it: the paper says, 'Professor Brown described the elements of danger to the Republic which were attributed by the Americans to the presence amongst them of so large a proportion of Irish, Chinese and Negroes: further, the report says, 'The lecturer's theory as to the reason why the Mormons are feared by the gentiles was that the Mormons, like the Irish, are a theocracy, and as such a standing menace to popular institutions.'

Now it seems to me in the face of history, and I think it will seem to all men who are not learned professors like the one in question, that the Americans who look upon the Irish as on element of danger to the Republic, are in about the same proportion to the people of America, as the three historic tailors of Tooley Street were to the people of England. You know when those three tailors made any announcement they made it in this way, 'We, the people of England.' America, of course, must have its Tooley Street tailors, and I am afraid Professor Brown gave a great deal of time to their company.

I have no doubt but that the Professor is quite capable of forming an unprejudiced opinion on most subjects, but in this particular instance I think he hardly gave himself the opportunity to measure perfectly the influence and power of the various forces which are acting on America and influencing her destiny. In reading Professor Brown's lecture, I am reminded of a British statesman, not Lord Randolph Churchill, who went over to Ireland to see for himself, and to know all about the manners and social customs of the people, this eminent man made a great ado about going there in those days, about 50 years ago, and no doubt special prayers were offered up in his parish church for his safety while there. After his return he made in due time a display of all the knowledge he had acquired in his travels. The affairs of a particular district in Ireland were under discussion in the House, and the statesman rose to speak from personal knowledge of the subject. Unfortunately for his reputation, to speak authoritatively there was an Irish Member in the House who knew all about the journey through Ireland. The statesman was asked how

long he stayed at the place, the answer was that his coach put up at it. 'Yes,' was the reply, 'while it was changing horses, and the entire delay was not more than thirty minutes,' which was true. 'You will not be surprised to hear that this statesman's reputation for personal knowledge of Irish affairs was very sensibly lessened in the House after that.'

Now it seems to me from the whole tenor of Professor Brown's lecture that in his journey through America, he got out of his carriage at the Harvard, Yale and California universities only. I will not in respect to their learning, call these three institutions the three Tooley street tailors of America, but yet I am sacrilegious enough to assert that these American professors may have been very prejudiced men, and very much given to one-sided views of affairs; for mind you, race prejudice can exist with much learning.

Though these prejudices may be very harmless in America, and the possessors of them too few and unimportant to in any way affect the destiny of the Irish race in that country; yet, when such prejudices are taken up as a novelty by our New Zealand professor, and brought over the Pacific Ocean to the plains of Canterbury, and delivered before a Christchurch audience, and after twelve months on the shelves, amidst the learning of Canterbury College, taken down and re-delivered under the auspices of the Caledonian Society, these prejudices, I say, have hereby acquired a dignity in this community that makes it worth while examining the ground on which they rest.

Professor Brown's taste in arranging his subject is beyond question, for I believe he is a literary man, therefore I will not fall out with his classification—Irish, Chinese, Niggers, and Mormons. This, no doubt, may be his learned way of making a levelling stroke at the Irish, for we are, after all, all of us, but sections of the one human race, of which Professor Brown is but a member. True, before the day of Professor Brown's classification, the Irish were found in company with the Chinese, but it was more notably as missionaries to elevate them, than as opium sellers to degrade them. True, the name Irish was, before this, seen allied to the name Negro in the columns of a paper, but it was more markedly as a nation of advocates for the abolition of slavery, than for open sympathy as a nation with the masters who kept them in bondage; but I must admit that I never, before Professor Brown's time, saw the Irish keeping company with the Mormons. By the way, the lecturer did not tell us if he saw, while in America, an Irishman or Irishwoman amongst the Mormons; though he told the Caledonian Society that he had a controversy with a Scotch Mormon.

I pass without question over so much, yet I do not think as an Irishman one should stand idly by while the Professor tells us, after grave deliberation, that by reason of our nationality we are a standing menace to all popular institutions. To all popular institutions mind you, whether they are to be found in the cantons of Switzerland, in America, Australia, or New Zealand, for this is the plain inference. I have, indeed, waited long for some one who could more effectually answer such an obvious calumny, but none of my countrymen bestowing on it the attention which I felt it deserves, I have found my excuse in coming forward, in a passage where Burke says 'there are occasions when any, even the slightest chance of doing good must be laid hold of by the most inconsiderable persons,' and so I have taken advantage of your liberality to show that the history of the Irish race wherever they have settled in America (or, indeed, in any part of the world), proves the unfoundedness of the Professor's assertion; and that the great and rapid growth of the cities which he admired, and the buildings which he so eulogised were in large part fashioned by Irish intellect and built by Irish hands; and that as the great republic herself in her infancy was nourished with Irish blood, so, in womanhood, she has been protected by Irish swords.

To show you that the Irish have been pre-eminent in making America what has been called the grandest nation on the face of the earth, I will tell you what they did to establish her independence, thereby sowing the seed from which many popular institutions have sprung. I will next make plain to you that Professor Brown is not learned in all things; that while he could select many subjects about which he knew something he did, to enlighten us, hit upon one of which he has proved himself to know nothing. Professor Brown has made up his mind that the Irish are a theocracy, and as such like the Mormons, a standing menace to popular institutions. I will show you that the Irish are not a theocracy in Professor Brown's or the Mormon sense; and by the clear testimony of modern events, that while the Irish follow the teaching 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God that which is God's,' they will be found as Christians to be amongst the firmest upholders of any popular institution, Republican or otherwise, that may exist in the country in which their lot is cast.

Finally, I will show that their loyalty to American institutions was not a thing born of the moment to die when the first breath of excitement was over, but that their patriotism is enduring; that they have been faithful in every struggle through which America has passed in quest of liberty.

J. MAHALM

The cold in Rome is reported to be more intense than it has been for years, but in spite of this, and a slight rheumatic attack in the shoulder, the Holy Father takes his daily walks in the gardens of the Vatican. His Holiness continues to be busily occupied with German negotiations.—*Weekly Register*.

The question of Irish crops and prices is attracting wide attention in England. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, in dealing with this subject, declares that whole crops are sold in open market at prices ruling from 20 to 50 per cent. reduction. The responsibility for this falling off in the receipts of the farmers is laid at the door of American competition. The ranchmen and agriculturists of the far West are pouring into the English market ever-increasing supplies of farming products, for which England has been for years Ireland's best customer. The natural result is a constant decrease in the demand for Irish products, and a corresponding fall in prices in Ireland. The competition that is eating the life out of the Irish agricultural industry it is shown is also steadily lowering the value of Irish farming land.