

There are facts which even Unionists may not gainsay—and they are not prone to stick at trifles. These are facts important and encouraging above all, showing how Ireland's struggles for the right of self-government enjoyed by all the great British colonies has enlisted the sympathies and the approbation of all that is liberal-minded, far-seeing, and patriotic among the colonists.

LONDON TRUTH AND THE YOUNG IRELANDERS.

(To the editor of the Sydney Freeman's Journal.)

SIR,—An extract from London *Truth*, published in your issue of last week, expressed sentiments which no one of intelligence could endorse. A society journal, whatever its value in collecting the tittle-tattle of the servants' hall about the drawing-room, or in chronicling the backstairs intrigue of political life, can never be regarded as an authority on questions of historical or political significance, and, in this instance, the writer in *Truth* has gone beyond his depth. At the outset he completely betrays himself by the following sentence:—

"They had started a newspaper, the *Nation*. It was not anything like as well written all round as the *Nation* is now, where genius is more modest. Still there were fine bits in now and then, when the writers forgot themselves enough to be natural, and it was unquestionably a very creditable sort of paper as papers then were."

To understand the humour of the words "as papers then were" one need only remember that Delane's editorship of the *Times* began in 1841, the year before the *Nation's* birth. By the way, did not Dickens' bard, who advertised "Jarley's wax show" in doggerel, condescendingly admit that Bill (meaning Shakespeare) was a good man in his day? To compare the *Nation* of to-day with what it was is ridiculous.

Writing in 1870, Lecky thus speaks of the *Nation*:—"I know few more melancholy spectacles—no more mournful illustration of the National party in Ireland than is furnished by the contrast of that paper with its past. What it is now is needless to say. What it was when Gavan Duffy edited it, when Davis, M'Carthy, and all their brilliant companions contributed to it, and when its columns maintained with unqualified zeal the cause of liberty and nationality in every land, Irishmen can never forget." Nor has the paper improved since the above words were written, for the late A. M. Sullivan, then a survivor of the old band, has never been replaced. In saying that their eloquence was "slack jaw," the writer still further proves his ignorance. As Justin M'Carthy justly observes in comparing Bright and Gladstone, an orator must be judged rather by his highest effort than by all round and consistent excellence, and according to this standard, Thomas Francis Meagher should be reckoned among the first, if not the first, of Irish orators. The literary ability of the Young Ireland party does not need to be defended from the attack of those whom an ironical fate now permits to pose as "gentlemen of the Press." Such past masters as Macaulay and Jeffreys long ago acknowledged it, and Carlyle, not given to hysterics of sentiment, was actually on terms of admiring intimacy with these "wrong-headed young men." In Davis, Denis Florence M'Carthy, Clarence Mangan, Richard Dalton, Williams, "Speranza," Samuel Ferguson, and a host of others too numerous to mention here, the *Nation* commanded an array of genius and talent which it would be hard to collect from the living English-speaking world. Nor is it any more correct to deny their possession of practical ability. Granting the truth of Fletcher of Saltoun's words about the laws and the ballads—and even Carlyle endorses them—Davis may have had more to do than either Parnell or O'Connell in shaping Ireland's destiny. Many of the party died young, all experienced more than a just share of the world's reverses, yet, under the most unfavourable conditions they proved themselves possessed of more than their share of practical ability. They may have shown to poor advantage in the "Cabbage Garden," but before many years all, or nearly all, distinguished themselves in a field bounded only by the poles. Most of them, such as O'Hagan, the Fergusons, Richard O'Gorman, and Dr. O'Doherty, attained distinction wherever their lots were cast, while some of them showed a capacity for even higher things. Gavan Duffy became the leading public man in Victoria, while in New South Wales, Young Ireland left its mark on Bar and politics. With life and ordinary health, Thomas Francis Meagher might have attained the first position, not merely in the State legislature, but in the United States Congress, while it is impossible to conjecture how far the assassin's bullet which cut short the career of Thomas D'Arcy Magee, probably the ablest man of that brilliant band, affected the course of American history. The Young Irelanders need no defence on your part or mine, for both their ability and virtues have long since been acknowledged by their bitterest enemies. I would, however, advise *Truth*—for which, by the way, according to his own admission, Mr. Labouchere, who is rather cynical than "genial," writes very little—to stick to gossip and scandal-mongering and leave Young Ireland alone, for Young Ireland is above the range of the "society" journals.

Yours faithfully,
A '48 MAN.

There was a tragical scene at a funeral in Scotland the other day. A clergyman, who is fond of elaborate ceremonials, officiated, and in proceeding through the kirk-yard to the grave, he thought proper to walk backwards, with his face turned towards the coffin and mourners, and offering a prayer as he went along. As the reverend gentleman headed the procession, there was nobody to warn him when he reached the grave, the consequence being that he fell into it backwards, to the indescribable consternation of the company. He was ignominiously dragged out, only to hear a venerable spectator describe him as a foolish Galatian, and another remarking that the proceeding was "just a vain and silly play." He was lucky not to break his neck or his back.—*Truth*.

THE MISER'S DIAMOND NECKLACE.

In the year 1740 there lived in the Latin quarter in Paris, a famous miser named Jean Avere. The wealth concealed in the obscure rookery where he resided was believed to be fabulous, and was no doubt really very great. Among his treasures was a celebrated diamond necklace of immense value. This he concealed so carefully that he ultimately forgot its hiding place himself. He sought diligently for weeks, and, failing to find it, became almost insane. This rendered him even less capable of remembrance, and he took to his bed broken in body as in mind. A few weeks later a doctor and an old woman, who had sometimes done odd jobs about his house, were both at his bed-side, seeing that the end was near. As the clock in the neighbouring town tolled one, he ceased his low muttering and sat up and shrieked, "I remember where it is now, I can put my hand on the necklace. For God's sake let me go for it before I forget it again!" Here his weakness and excitement overcame him, and he sank back among his rags, stone dead. Physicians and students are familiar with these sudden outflashings of memory at the great crisis of human fate.

Let the reader consider this while we relate an episode in the humble career of a Signalman, Andrew Agge, who may be found on duty in his box at Cullnaith, a little station on the Midland, twenty-three miles south of Carlisle.

Mr. Agge is on duty nearly every day, and must break his fast without leaving his post. The confinement and mental strain tell on the system. The strongest men cannot stand it long without feeling its effects. It makes one think of the passionate exclamation in Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt,"

"Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap."

Our friend had been at the same work for many years, although he was only thirty-five when these lines were written. In 1884 he began to feel that he was about to break down. "I don't know what ails me," he would say, "but I can't eat." What he forced down produced no sense of satisfaction or strength. Sometimes he was alarmed at finding he could scarcely walk on account of giddiness. He said to himself, "what if I should be seized with this at some moment when there is trouble on the line, and I need all my wits about me?"

Other features of this ailment were pains in the chest and sides, costiveness, yellow skin and eyes, bad taste in the mouth, risings of foul gas in the throat, etc. The doctor said Agge must give up his confining work or risk utter disability. He could not, wife and children were in the way, so he remained at his post and grew worse. But his work was always right, telegrams were properly received and sent, and no train got into trouble through any neglect or fault of his. His disease—indigestion and dyspepsia—took a step further and brought on kidney and bladder trouble. The doctor, at Appleby said, "Mr. Agge, you are poisoned with the foul stuff in your stomach and blood." His doom seemed to be sealed, it was like a death warrant. Six months more rolled by. On duty one morning he was attacked with so great and so sharp a distress he could neither sit nor stand. He says: "I tumbled down on that locker and lay there all the forenoon. Signals might be given, the telegraph needle might click, but I heeded them no more than a man in the grave heeds the beating of the rain against his own tombstone."

He was alone at first, but help arrived, and the poor signalman was carried home. Physicians laboured on his case without avail. Around his bed were his five little children, the mother being absent in an institution, to be treated for a serious ailment.

Here he lay for weeks, part of the time unconscious. Nothing was to be done but to wait for the end. Then the torpid faculties awakened for a moment. *Memory flashed up, and he recalled the fact that a medicine which he had used with benefit years before, and then thrown aside and forgotten, was concealed in a secret place at the signal box.* He sent for it, and took a dose. Soon his bowels moved, the kidneys acted, the pain was ceased, he felt better. With brightened hope he sent to Carlisle for more, it arrived. He used it and in a few days the doctors were astonished to find their patient out of doors, and on the road to recovery. He regained his health completely, and, in speaking of his experience, said to the writer, "What a wonderful thing it was that, on what promised to be my death-bed, I suddenly remembered where I had put that half-used bottle of Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. That flash of memory probably saved me from death."

The Emperor of Germany is not a man who toys with an idea for a moment and then casts it aside. His crusade against duelling is a serious matter, as the students of Strasbourg University have just learned. The student corporations of that university had pronounced a boycott against those who refused to take up a challenge to a duel. The result is that by order of the Government the student corporations have been dissolved for twelve months. This measure is without precedent in the history of duelling in Germany, and it cannot but have a most excellent effect in repressing a practice utterly at variance with the dictates of Christianity.

Signor Finocchiaro Aprile, Royal Commissioner, has decreed the "laicisation" of all the charitable institutions, hospitals, and refuges, which depend directly on the commune of Rome. This, of course, means the banishment of the Religious and *Religieuses* who have served these asylums of charity. The measure is one of particular gravity. The most fanatical Freemasons under the régime of Piaciani, the ex-syndic, respected the Sisters and the Religious, if for no other reasons, from prudence and a leaning to economy. But Crisp has inspired the secret societies with the feeling that they are absolute masters of the situation and that there is no form of audacity which they may not perpetrate. Crisp's object is to make Rome a centre of irreligion so that it may become a continual source of sorrow to the Sovereign Pontiff.