

## ENGLAND'S THANKS

The late Mrs. Clement Shorter contributed to a recent issue of the *Irish Independent* a letter under the heading of "The English and Ireland." The writer, perhaps better known as Dora Sigerson, the Irish poetess, was the daughter of Dr. Sigerson, also a brilliant literateur, of whose recent work our correspondent, "O.B.M.," treated extensively in these columns.

I do not know, says Mrs. Shorter, if the numerous attacks upon the Irish in the English newspapers have escaped your readers' attention. If so, I would like them to know the form at present prevalent in England—for whose sake we are told by Mr. Redmond, "173,772 Irishmen are serving in the army and navy," and whose colony we are desperately agitating to become.

In the *Bystander* they will see a snake with that hideous head, which English artists always draw upon an Irishman's body, if he be not in khaki. It is marked "Sinn Fein." In the *Odd Volume*, a shilling annual produced "in aid of the Bookseller's Provident Institute," they will see Ireland as an ape, and a moose-deer as a Jew. It is a small matter, but a straw shows how the wind blows. The editor who accepts such pictures, and the public that allows them may wonder if the Jewish people or the Irish soldiers at the front will find them as amusing as the artist.

The other night an Irish-Canadian at the Garrick Theatre in London was man enough to rise and protest at a performance making game of the Irish Convention. "What a rotten hole Ireland must be," he heard. He startled the house by flinging a chair at the actors, and was heard shouting. "It's a shame to speak of Ireland so—and the boys at the front!"

It is not many years since Mr. Seymour Hicks was parading a nape upon his stage as an Irish member, nor was it long before the war that an Irishman broke the windows of the office of *Punch* because he objected to a Frenchman being pictured as a monkey on an organ. Thus, though it will be seen that the humorist does not become more brilliant as time moves on, nor does his steady insults become less in spite of 173,772 Irishmen in the field.

That there is a certain humor in the Convention one cannot deny, and no one can see it more clearly than the people who have presented it as a solution of the Irish problem. We have had the word of a least two English Ministers "that Ulster will not be coerced," and we have Sir Edward Carson telegraphing to his friends, "No Surrender." And we have the British Government telling the world it is all in our own hands now to settle the Irish question. And the mountain is in labor—what will it bring forth?

Grattan and O'Connell.

There is amusement, and betting, here as to what Ulster will take without coercion—what Mr. Redmond dare take to get himself back into the graces of his countrymen, and what Ireland will take, that has asked for the liberty promised to small nations; and, most of all, what England will give when the plans are upon the table. Aye, it is humorous, with that humor near to heart-break, so special to Ireland.

Outside the secret chamber of the Convention, Henry Grattan stands with arm uplifted before the empty house which he once made echo with his voice: "I watched by its cradle; I followed its hearse," he seems to speak of the dead Parliament. And again: "The Union has sunk the country," he said. "Ireland held up her head formerly, but she is now a beggar at the door of Great Britain." His back is to that tragic street, where he gathered the Volunteers, the continuation of which brings one to the spot where young Emmet's head was held to the crowd as "the head of a traitor."

To the right of the college, over the wide bridge, is the statue of O'Connell, who declared he would sooner accept the Penal Law Code, "with all its pristine horrors," than the Union; that he would sooner

trust himself to the justice of his Protestant fellow-countrymen than "lay his country at the feet of foreigners." Further up the wide street, called after him, we come upon the figure of Charles Stewart Parnell; he stands before the Rotunda, within whose walls he appealed to the Irish people not to throw him to the English wolves, and upon whose monument one reads: "You cannot put bounds to the progress of a nation."

Parnell's Last Stand.

There I heard him impassionately making his last stand, dying upon his feet, yet afraid not to attend meetings, for fear "they would say I was a coward," "they," alas! being his Irish Party—the party who deserted him because Gladstone desired it. Does Mr. Redmond remember the words of that Leader, he, at least, so bravely followed, when it was not politic to do so—"you cannot put bounds to the progress of a nation."

Always afraid to embarrass the Government of England, this party has ever lost prestige by its own cowardice; and what is the record? Imprisonment for every constitutional leader, from O'Connell to Parnell, from Parnell to Mr. Redmond, and for those others—imprisonment and death, the hangman's rope and the volley.

Humorous! to make a jeer of, no doubt! but surely the lowest form of humor upon earth, the insulting of a brave though weak nation, that it is safe to insult. I have wondered if it is not our own weakness that is at fault. Why was the party cowardly enough to leave Mr. Parnell because of Mr. Gladstone? I have wondered why Mr. Redmond should have postponed the Home Rule Bill so as not to embarrass the Government. I once asked why no English member remonstrated upon the Bachelor's Walk massacre, and one told me "an Irish member had begged him not to raise the question"; it would not be good policy; they expected Home Rule.

I have wondered that none of the members rose in protest against the executions of their countrymen after Easter Week, and if it were true they might have saved Roger Casement if they had asked for a reprieve. I have wondered, wondered, wondered, why they prated of alien princes, of bone-setting, and other purely Empire affairs, or sat like mice during the past tragic year when their countrymen were suffering; and I have wondered what was the answer to the few who asked their aid before the executions.

Ireland Pictured as an Ape.

I have wondered at the Englishman who asked me with a jeer "if Ireland would be satisfied at the Convention, or if it would be another grievance," and I have wondered at the Englishwoman who wanted to know "if Ireland would be a colony." I wondered, for I had seen Parnell in his last fight, appealing to his people: "Don't throw me to the English wolves," and I had seen him thrown. Oh! I wondered if my countrymen could not recognise in this trouble of today the old hand that prepared it yesterday, the arch-plotter, England, setting us one against the other, using our love of country as a lever of disunion. Can we not learn that in the endeavor to please her we have gained nothing, neither by the death of poor Willie Redmond in the war, nor by the serving of 173,772 men in the navy and army. We are pictured as an ape in a humorous picture paper, or jeered at on the stage before an appreciative audience.

How loud down the streets of the ancient city of Dublin echo the feet of the patriotic dead! How strong comes the voice of one gone calling to his party in the secret councils of the Convention: "You cannot put bounds to the progress of a nation."

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER.

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