

are no longer guided by definite principles. Politicians think you are speaking a foreign language if you mention principles to them. Conscience is supposed to be a count of heads. The Ten Commandments are forgotten. Read the newspapers and you cannot doubt that fact! The Catholic Church alone has been faithful to the true ideal of education. She has never acquiesced in the boycotting of God, and, with heroic self-denial, her children have in their poverty provided schools in which teachers insist that the law of God is the sure hope of happiness here and hereafter. Other Churches see now that the godless schools are coming to mean empty churches and that their one chance of holding their people is to give them schools in which education is not a sham and a snare. We have our schools; others would have them too if the Christian sense of the community were not so atrophied that it permits a Government to starve the souls of the young. In a word: the Government is doing nothing for the formation of character, and without that there is no education. Which is equivalent to saying that the radical reform must begin not with the schools, but with the Government. It is time the people saw to it.

## NOTES

### William Carleton

High, very high, among Irish prose writers the name of Carleton must always stand. This peasant, who forsook the religion of his pious parents, who threw in his lot for a time with the blackest and bitterest bigots in Ireland—where bigots are blacker and bitterer and savager than in any other part of the world—who knew misery intimately and often went hungry to bed without much prospect of beginning the next day with a good meal, or with any sort of meal at all, who loved athletic gatherings and uproarious wakes where drink was plenty, was little short of being a genius of the first rank. His apostasy, and his connection with the Reverend Otway and the *Christian Examiner*, led him to write not a few disgraceful attacks on the faith of his parents; and there is no doubt that he earned whatever bread he broke with that galley by exhibitions of renegade bitterness and offensive bigotry in his contributions to anti-Catholic organs in Ireland. He wrote to order about confession and about the Irish priests, and while doing so he did not starve. In spite of all this, the fact remains that Carleton is read freely among Irish Catholics—or at least used to be read up to a few decades ago. His shortcomings and faults are to a great extent pardoned or overlooked, and his works might be found on the small shelves of a farmer's library in many parts of the country. Catholics have been kinder to him than he was to them; perhaps they made due allowances for his failings, and in their charity forgave many sins on account of the love for Ireland, for her ancient faith, and for her men and women, which wells out as it were in spite of him.

### "Traits and Stories"

The best known and most appreciated of his works used to be the *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, his first really solid literary achievement. Yet here, too, the animosity against the clergy breaks out, and he draws ugly caricatures of the finest body of priests in the whole world. We read the book while still very young, and it always left an unpleasant impression of the writer on our mind; but even then we could not get away from the interest of the sketches and they gripped our imagination, although we were too young to realise the literary value of the work. The pictures of Father Corrigan, of Father Rooney, and of Father McGuirk were drawn to please, not Irish Catholics, but Protestants for whom he wrote and from whom he expected payment for his defamatory writing; but side by side with them he gave us also Fathers Kavanagh, Molloy, and O'Brien, whom he represented as kindly, good men, devoted to the people, and free from ignorance and

bigotry. And when he leaves the priests and comes down to the laity he writes in a manner which explains why, in spite of his bitterness, and in spite of that terrible fact that he is an Irish turncoat, the people love him in their hearts. No man who ever wrote of the Irish peasantry understood them better. They were bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; and the fun and frolic, the sunshine and shade, the joy and sorrow of the people in the years during which Ireland was under the heel of the rackrenting, spendthrift, immoral landlords, are all reflected in Carleton's pages. Notwithstanding his apostasy, he does splendid justice to the grand Irish faith and to the peerless Irish purity which was the true patent of nobility of his oppressed and plundered fellow-countrymen. And a time came when his better instincts urged him to wield in defence of his own kith and kin the powerful pen which he had once prostituted to bigotry and calumny. In sympathy with the *Nation* which sounded the clarion note of Irish freedom and awoke the slumbering people to a consciousness of their wrongs, Carleton's Irish blood went aflame too at the challenge of Davis and Duffy to the people to cast away their chains and rid themselves of the "scandal of content" in their slavery. Under the fire of this inspiration he wrote *Valentine McClutchy, the Irish Agent*, a book of burning condemnation of the corrupt gang of profiteers and vampires who had drained the Irish nation of its resources for years. It is the most terrible book in Irish literature; and after years we still feel vividly the anger and revolt against English laws which its first reading awoke in us. The Orangemen, the Soupers, the Charter Schools, the Grand Juries, the gang of human bloodhounds that hunted down the Catholic peasants at the landlord's behest, the corrupt practices of Protestantism, are all exposed in words of fire; and over against all that Sheol of iniquity are set pictures of the persecuted people that no other writer has ever surpassed. The priest who moves like a saint among the sufferers and the wronged is a strikingly powerful presentation of the *Sagart a run*, beloved by the Irish people whom he has ever helped and comforted and restrained when they had no other friend on earth; the farmers, drawn true to life, are as pious and God-fearing as their enemies are hypocritical and immoral; the women and the girls, exposed to every temptation that the diabolical minds of wicked men could bring to bear against creatures over whom they had almost the power of life and death, are models of simple goodness and types of perfect purity. *Valentine McClutchy* is a work of genius. Its awful realism, its passion, its literary power, are enough to set Carleton on a high pedestal had he never written another book.

### Other Works

Among his other works we may recall as well worth reading *Fardarougha the Miser*, in which he contrasts a monster of avarice with wonderful scenes of Christian charity and deep Catholic piety, and *Tales for the People*, first of which is the story of Art Maguire, dedicated to Father Matthew, depicting strikingly the power of drink over its victims, and as usual giving us a portrait of Catholic womanhood that compels admiration and reverence. For the *Irish Library* he wrote *Paddy Go-Easy and his Wife Nancy*, which in spite of adverse criticism from super-sensitive people is a highly educational work, contrasting the results of indolence and carelessness with the fruits of industry and attention to business. *The Black Prophet*, which some consider his best book, is a picture of the Famine of 1847, and no pen ever described more vividly and sympathetically what the Irish people then endured. It is a document of human suffering and of untold misery, but it is relieved by passages which pay a magnificent tribute to the pity and resignation of a people to whom religion was more than all else in this world; and again in this story we have another Irish heroine of such ideal beauty of person and character as he knew how to paint. *The Emigrants of Ahadarra*, *The Squanders of Castle Squander*, and *The Black Baronet*, are others of his works which are now hardly