

In all his verse, and his prose I may say too, Davis labored to cultivate national feeling, and to arouse national confidence; he did not seek a literary fame nor did he pour out his soul in the marts. Hence, his verse, though undeveloped, must be estimated apart from the studied beauties and excellences of great poets of leisure, who wrote from motives of expression, personal fame, notoriety, gain, or vanity. He wrote for Ireland; to foster nationality, and to arouse nationality. Any comparison between him and the others would be unfair and absurd. Hence, his national verse is indeed the very "blossoming of his own sincere believing soul, and the greatest evidence of its health, excellence, and beauty." "Its melody is balsam to the senses," he writes of national poetry. "It is the playfellow of childhood, ripens into the companion of manhood, consoles age. It presents the most dramatic events, the largest characters, the most impressive scenes, and the deepest passions, in the language most familiar to us. It magnifies and ennobles our hearts, our intellects, our country, and our countrymen—binds us to the land by its condensed and gem-like history; to the future by example and aspiration. It solaces us in travel, fires us in action, prompts our invention, sheds a grace beyond the power of luxury round our homes, is the recognised envoy of our minds among all mankind, and to all time."

Some of the finest and most soul-stirring of Davis's national and historical verse are such pieces as "The West's Awake," "A Nation Once Again," "The True Irish King," "The Geraldines," "The Fate of King Dathi" is a poem of much faithful imagery. Whoever that has heard or read "Fontenoy" and "The Battle Eye of the Brigade" for the first time can subdue the wellings of the fighting spirit that surge up within as the themes lead up to the tents of the "Wild Geese," their toasts and carousals, the battle, the victory of the exiles, and the last sad scenes—the unknown, unmarked graves of those brave wild sons of Irish peasants "from Dunkirk to Belgrade."

One who knew and loved Davis truthfully wrote of his poetry:—"It is a mere garland of flowers, whose fruit was doomed never to ripen; a reliquary of undeveloped genius, but recently awakened to a consciousness of its own power." Davis died young; but not before he breathed a portion of his own fervid spirit into the mind of his country. He delivered his message, and passed quietly away into the realm of realities—to the blinding vividness of everlasting beauty, love, and freedom, where, let us piously hope, all pure, true, simple, kindly men and women shall realise the fulness of themselves in Him Who is the Chiefest Eternal Good.

WEDDING BELLS

WOODS—SULLIVAN.

At St. Joseph's Cathedral, Dunedin, on Wednesday, October 15, Mr. Frederick Woods, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. D. W. Woods, Dunedin, and Miss Kathleen Sullivan, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Sullivan, Belleknowes, Dunedin, were united in the bonds of Holy Matrimony. Rev. Father Henry Woods, of Liverpoolgill (cousin of the bridegroom) officiated. The bridesmaids were Miss Myra Lane, Dunedin, and Miss Dorothy Hart, Lawrence. Mr. L. Woods (brother of the bridegroom) was best man, and Mr. J. Sullivan (brother of the bride) was groomsmen. The bride, who was given away by her father, wore a frock of ivory crepe de Chine and georgette, trimmed with pearl beads, also a wreath and veil, and carried a beautiful bouquet of white flowers. Miss Lane wore a frock of blue georgette relieved with a lemon shade of the same material, with lemon and blue hat, and carried a bouquet to match, and Miss Hart a frock of shell pink crepe de Chine with hat of lemon and pink, and also a bouquet to match. The bride's gift to the bridegroom was a set of ebony hair brushes; the bridegroom's gift to the bride was a diamond ring, and to the bridesmaids silver link handbags. After the ceremony the wedding party adjourned to the home of the bride's parents, where the breakfast was partaken of, Fathers Woods and Kaveney being among those present. The newly-wedded couple subsequently left for the north on their honeymoon.

CONVENT OF SACRED HEART, TIMARU.

A SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR LADIES will be preached by Rev. Albert Power, S.J., to OPEN on the Evening of FRIDAY, January 2, 1920, and to CLOSE on the Morning of WEDNESDAY, January 7.

By applying in time to the Rev. Mother Superior, ladies wishing to make the retreat may reside at the Convent during those days.

J. LEWIS (Late Lewis & Hogan)
95 CUBA ST., WELLINGTON (opp. C. Smith's).

CORRESPONDENCE

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

CATHOLICS AND EDUCATION. TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—In the last issue of the *Tablet* a Parliamentary candidate advertises the same old shibboleth about "free, secular, and compulsory education." Is he really in favor of free education, or is his education to be free only to those who believe that the good God and all His works should be "warned off" the school premises, or is to be free to all, to the abovementioned as well as to those who believe that religion is an absolutely indispensable factor in education?

At a political meeting at Hastings somebody asked the question: "Are you in favor of grants to denominational schools?" I don't like the form of that question. The word "grant" seems to me to convey the idea of "bonus," "gratuity," some kind of favor, something that we are not actually entitled to. The word "denominational" is misleading. As his Lordship Bishop Cleary has shown in his masterly work, *God or No God in the Schools*, the secular schools are denominational schools, just as much as are the Catholic or Protestant schools.

Permit me to suggest that the question be put thus: "Are you in favor of the Government replacing the present sectarian system of education (in which only one section or denomination, the secularists, is provided for at the expense of all) by a national system such as obtains in England, Scotland, Canada, and other parts of the Empire—a system in which each section of the community, Catholic, Protestant, or secular, will have spent on its schools the money that each contributes through taxation for that purpose?"

Or more shortly: "Are you in favor of the Government abolishing religious persecution by spending on Catholic children, and not on others, the money that Catholics contribute through taxation for the education of their children?" The Catholics in the other parts of the Empire—particularly in Scotland—have obtained their rights. Why can't we do the same?—I am, etc.,

T. P. ROBINSON.

Napier.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

INQUIRER.—No; not necessary.

J.W. (1) Of course, God is the only judge of a man's fitness for heaven or hell. But God can surely give knowledge to the society He has left on earth to pronounce on the state of particular persons in the other world. The Church has this knowledge—such is Catholic teaching—and exercises it in the matter of the canonisation of saints. The Church does not make pronouncements on the likelihood or certainty of this or that person being in hell. Yet the Scripture, God's inspired Word, speaks in such an unusually severe and striking way of Solomon and Judas that Catholic scholars and Catholic people generally have always believed that those two unfortunate men are now paying the eternal penalty of their own fully deliberate sin. (2) You have not quite grasped the significance of the ceremony of the renewal of baptismal vows. It is not a question of solemn vows at all, but a serious promise. Afterwards to break that promise would of course be a sin. If it is not possible to fulfil the promise, there is no sin whatever in one's failure. Catholics who make a promise of this sort understand all this quite well. And so the missionary was quite right.

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