

insurrection, amongst them being Thomas Russell, one of the bravest and noblest characters that ever appeared on the page of history, and Michael Dwyer, of Wicklow, who still, as for the past five years, held his ground in the defiles of Glenmalure and Imall, defying and defeating all attempts to capture him. But, beside the men whose names were openly revealed in connection with the plot, and these comprised some of the best and worthiest in the land, it is beyond question that there were others not discovered, filling high positions in Ireland, in England, and in France, who approved, counselled, and assisted in Emmet's design.

Although the conspiracy embraced thousands of associates in Dublin alone, not a man betrayed the secret to the last; and Emmet went on with his preparations of arms and ammunition in two or three depots in the city. Even when one of these exploded accidentally, the Government failed to divine what was afoot, though their suspicions were excited. On the night of July 23, 1803, Emmet sallied forth from one of the depots at the head of less than a hundred men. But the whole scheme of arrangements—although it certainly was one of the most ingenious and perfect ever devised by the skill of man—like most other conspiracies of the kind, crumbled in all its parts at the moment of action. "There was failure everywhere"; and to further insure defeat, a few hours before the moment fixed for the march upon the Castle, intelligence reached the Government from Kildare, that some outbreak was to take place that night, as bodies of the disaffected peasantry from that county had been observed making towards the city. The authorities were accordingly on the *qui vive* to some extent when Emmet reached the street. His expected musters had not appeared; his own band dwindled to a score; and, to him the most poignant affliction of all, an act of lawless bloodshed, the murder of Lord Justice Kilwarden, one of the most humane and honorable judges, stained the short-lived *emeute*. Incensed beyond expression by this act, and perceiving the ruin of his attempt, Emmet gave peremptory orders for its instantaneous abandonment. He himself hurried off towards Wicklow in time to countermand the rising there and in Wexford and Kildare. It is beyond question that his prompt and strenuous exertions, his aversion to the useless sacrifice of life, alone prevented a protracted struggle in those counties.

(To be continued.)

THE SOUL OF IRELAND

[By FRANK HARRIS and GEORGE W. RUSSELL ("A.E.")]

That very able writer, Frank Harris, is now in New York, editing *Pearson's Magazine*. He was formerly the editor of *London Vanity Fair*, of the *Fortnightly Review* and of the *Saturday Review*. He has written several works on Shakspeare (*The Man Shakspeare and the Women of Shakspeare*). His latest journalistic work, prior to his leaving England for America, was the editorship of the *Candid Friend*, a periodical which he founded. In *Pearson's Magazine* for May, there is an article by the notable Irish literateur, George W. Russell, who is perhaps better known as "A.E." Harris says of this article: "This is the best, the most original and truth-telling article I have received in my forty years as editor." It is a decidedly fine and brilliant literary essay, and throws a flood of necessary light on the great and persistent struggle of the Irish people for legislative independence. It is here reproduced:—

The genius of a Dostoevsky or a Balzac may make the character and action of individuals intelligible to us, but who can truly illuminate the myriad being of a nation so that it may be seen in as clear a light. Most thoughtful men approach the soul of the individual with awe, but millions light-heartedly attempt to explain the character of a nation. If between myself and Heaven I had to confess about Ireland I would admit I know nothing truly of its people, though I am of them. I cannot explain to myself how thought quickens in my brain; and if thought or vision ceased I would not know how to kindle them, so far beyond our conscious life are the real springs of imagination and thought. We know little about ourselves or

our race because half the story of life has not yet been told and only the fool is dogmatic. But, though we may not have understanding or certainty, we must act, and that necessity is also laid upon nations and it is in this mood of humility I write about the actions of my countrymen among whom I have lived for the fifty-four years of my life observant of them as my nature allows.

What is the root of the Irish trouble? The Irish people want to be free. Why do they desire freedom? I think it is because they feel in themselves a genius which has not yet been manifested in a civilisation—as Greek, Roman, and Egyptian have in the past externalised their genius in a society with a culture, arts and sciences peculiar to themselves. It is the same impulse which leads an imaginative boy to escape all the traps a conventional family set for him. They wish him to be a doctor, to enter one of the money-making professions. All reason is with them. But the boy hears "music in his soul" and it calls him out of the beaten track. He will say: "I believe the healer's profession is a noble one. I do not despise it. But I wish to be a musician." What is it makes the boy cling to music whether his talent be great or little? We surmise biological or spiritual necessity and his disease is beyond our healing. Force him to attend the wards and he will be a sulky student, a bad doctor, and he will hate with a bitter hatred those who forced on him a profession alien to his nature. If we understand the passion of the boy to be himself we can understand the passion of the Irish nation for freedom. It will not listen to reasonable people who assure it, perhaps truly, that British culture and civilisation are on the whole as good as any. It is not a civilisation Irish people desire for themselves. The theory and practice of empire are hateful to them. The mingling of Norman and Saxon with the Gael which came with the invasions and plantations has not brought about a change of feeling. The new race made out of the union of Saxon, Dane, Norman, and Gael is still dominated by the last, and it looks back to pure Gael as to an ancestral self. The more complex mentality brought about by the commingling of natures is at the service of Ireland and not of its conquerors. The Irish have shown by three hopeless rebellions in every century how loathsome to them is the character in which British statesmen would mould them. I believe that antagonism springs from biological and spiritual necessity. Is it good or evil? I cannot say. The moralist in me will hear of nothing but a brotherhood of humanity, and race hatreds are abhorrent to it. The artist in me delights in varieties of culture and civilisation, and it tells me it is well worth some bloodshed to save the world from being "engirdled with Brixton," the "dreadful outcome of Imperialism" which George Moore foresaw in one of his Irish and more lucid intervals. I do not believe it is possible to make contented Britons out of Irishmen. The military efforts to effect this are vain as the effort of a madman to change a shamrock into an oak tree by pricking it with a needle. In spite of all the proddings of British bayonets the people born in Ireland will still be Irish.

Their nationality is a real thing, They are one of the oldest races in the world, so old that their legends go back to the beginning of time and they have their own myths of creation. There is in Gaelic a literature with epic and heroic tales as imaginative as any in the world. The fact that for the past eighty years the majority of Irish people speak English has but superficially modified Irish character. A nation is a long enduring being, and the thin veneer of another culture spread over it for a couple of generations affects it as little as the Americanism of a young man would be affected who lived in Florence for a year and learned to speak Italian. The Gaelic culture still inspires all that is best in Irish literature and Irish life. There are writers like Yeats, Synge, Hyde, and Stephens who might have won but little repute had they not turned back and bathed in the Gaelic tradition and their souls been made shining and many-colored by the contact. The last great champion of the Gaelic tradition was Padraic Pearse, who led "the astonishing enterprise" of Easter Week, 1916. Pearse had made his soul out of the heroic literature of the Gael, and when I think of what he did and how Ireland reeled after him, I recall the words of Standish O'Grady, an earlier prophet of the Gaelic tradition, who wrote of its heroes and demigods:

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