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Ireland's influence on eighteenth century English literature

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IRELAND'S INFLUENCE ON
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE.

O U T L I N E.

INTRODUCTION.

Historical, political, social.

SWIFT.

STEELE.

GOLDSMITH.

BURKE.

EDGEWORTH.

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IRELAND'S INFLUENCE ON EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Anne, daughter of James II, ascended the throne of England in 1702. She had inherited along with some of the amiable qualities, the obstinacy, the prejudices, and the superstitions of her race. She fully believed in the Divine Right of kings, and publicly announced her intention of "touching." Her reign has been characterized as one of corruption in high places, and brutality in low.

The royal power was really in the hands of the Duchess of Marlborough, who ruled the queen in everything from questions of State to details in dress. Eventually the Duchess was superseded by Mrs. Masham, who likewise obtained absolute control of the queen, and her influence led to a dismissal of the Whig ministers, and to the Peace of Utrecht. And so "the insolence of one waiting-woman, and the cunning of another, changed the future of Europe."

Politically the country was divided between the Whigs and Tories--the political successors of the Roundheads and the Cavaliers. The policy of the former party has always tended to limit the power of the Crown, and of the latter to limit that of the people. The Whigs were pledged to exclude the Stuarts from the throne; the Tories were determined to keep peace with the Catholic powers of Europe and to restore the Stuarts. The Whigs adhered to Low Church, the Tories to High Church principles, and the bitterness of political strife was increased by theological dispute.

Anne was involved in the War of the Spanish Succession--a war to maintain the balance of power which the success of France, in establishing the grandson of Louis XIV on the throne of Spain, would destroy. The Duke of Marlborough, one of the ablest English generals, led the

English forces. Marlborough was remarkably successful in war, but avaricious, unscrupulous, and perfidious.

It was during the reign of Anne that the first daily newspaper was issued in England. This was the germ which we find so well developed, later, in Richard Steele's wonderful periodical essays.

In 1714 George ascended the throne, and the Whig party came into power. He was a stupid, careless old man, who knew no English, and left the government in the hands of Sir Robert Walpole. This responsibility for the ministry devolved upon Walpole, who was henceforth called the Prime Minister.

During this reign the South Sea Company was formed to pay off the National Debt through profits of the slave trade between Africa and Brazil. The government approved of the scheme, stock rose rapidly, a speculative craze followed, ruining thousands when the bubble burst in 1721.

During this reign and the following Walpole openly bribed members of Parliament, bought votes, managed elections by gifts of titles, honors, and bank notes, and proved most effectively "every man has his price."

George II ascended the throne in 1727. He had more in common with the English people than his father had, but his delight was in "knocking royal heads together on the continent."

Morally, this age was in a most dreadful condition. Intemperance was increasing steadily both among the men and women. A great religious revival began about this time, and received, in derision, the name of "Methodism." John Wesley, an Oxford student, was the leader. The movement swept all over the country, giving new life and spirit by which the National Church was "provoked to good works."

The Young Pretender came to Scotland in 1745, with seven followers, and succeeded in arousing the Highland clans. His temporary power was destroyed utterly at Culloden-where he was defeated, and where all hope for the restoration of the Stuarts died.

After almost incessant struggles the English Empire in India was established in 1757. In 1759 England won Canada from France through Wolfe's victory at Quebec, and, by the Peace of Paris in 1763, Spain ceded Florida to England, so that England then had control of the Eastern half of the continent, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi.

George III, 1760-1820, prided himself on his self-will. He was determined that the American colonies must share the burden of taxation caused by the continental wars. George regarded the Colonies as the field for surplus population--good or bad--and as the place where the favorites of the crown might make fortunes. Various taxes, obnoxious to the colonists, were imposed, regardless of all the opposition both in America and England. These taxes, particularly the Stamp Act, were a violation of the principle that the king could not take the subject's money without the subject's consent. "No taxation without representation" became the war-cry. The opposition became so strong that the ministry was forced to repeal the act.

Money was still needed, so a new scheme was devised by which the stock of the half-bankrupt East India Company could be shipped to America with the English duty remitted, but with an impost of three pence per pound, payable by the colonists. The tea was then cheaper for the colonists than for the English themselves, but they refused to buy it because of the principle involved. When the first consignment arrived in Boston Harbor, a party, disguised as Indians, threw it all overboard. The king then declared the port of Boston closed, and the charter of Massachusetts annulled. George would not listen to his ministers, and so war followed.

With the firing of "the shot heard round the world" began, at Lexington, in 1775, the war of seven years' duration, which ended with the defeat of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown. So in 1783 the king read, in the House of Lords, a paper acknowledging the independence of the United States of America.

While the Revolution was in progress the Whigs tried to repeal the severe laws against Roman Catholics, but the feeling of the opposition rose to such a pitch that an outbreak, called the "No-Popery Riots" which caused the deaths of many, and the destruction of much property *resulted*.

During this reign the corruption of the India Company was shown, and this vast monopoly was broken up. Penal codes were changed, and less brutal forms of punishment were introduced.

In 1789 the French Revolution broke out, and England, through her great Nelson, checked Napoleon's idea of invading England. A few years before the union of England and Ireland had been consummated, and now the Parliament of the united kingdom was summoned. But, regardless of Pitt's advice, only Protestant representatives were admitted, and this rather increased the hatred of English rule which the Irish had cherished so long.

The Irish were treated most abominably by the English. No Catholics were allowed to hold office; they were debarred from all positions through which they might rise, politically; marriages between Catholics and Protestants were practically forbidden; tenants were expelled from their farms to give pasturage to cattle; men were deprived of means of livelihood and their children were cast out into the roads- to starve to death; attempts were made to force debased currency on the Irish; laws were passed to suppress all wool-growing, woollen manufactures and other Irish industries; schools were established to make the Irish Catholic children Protestants; and fever and famine aided the English in their suppression of the Irish.

As the century wore on there was less bitterness between the Catholics and Protestants. The penal laws were less rigidly enforced, the rites of the Catholic Church were performed almost openly, altho laws still existed forbidding this; the people were less severely taxed; the morals had improved; domestic virtues, respect for woman, charity, generosity, fidelity to family affection and to friendship, ardent gratitude and devotion

to benefactors--were the traits which marked the lives of the Irish poor to a greater degree than those of any other European race.

A fondness for games and dancing was particularly noticeable in the Irish. In the eighteenth century drunkenness became less universal, and duelling ceased to be a regular custom. As a race they clung persistently to their old homes, traditions, customs, religious beliefs, and affections, and they remained a light hearted, cheerful race. The English tyranny failed to crush their imagination and national spirit, and the joyousness and gayety of their natures.

A great step towards Irish political freedom was made by Grattan when he forced the government to yield to his demand that "the king, lords, and commons were the only powers competent to pass laws for Ireland," meaning that the English Parliament should have no right to make any laws for Ireland, or in any way change the laws passed by the Irish Parliament. This was really a repeal of the act of George I, which had made the English Parliament supreme in the making of Irish laws. This wonderful victory of Grattan was due, partly, to the fact that England was involved in the American war, which was crippling her resources, and depriving her of the military strength necessary to subdue Grattan and his armed "Volunteers." So in 1782 full powers were given to the Irish Parliament which still consisted only of Protestants, and which was elected by Protestants only- and, although it did not mean complete political freedom, yet it was an important step in freeing Ireland from English jurisdiction.

The new Irish Parliament refused to pass the Reform Bill because two of the new leaders, Grattan and Bristol, wished it to grant Catholic suffrage. This aroused the people, and a society called the "United Irishmen" was formed to band together all Irishmen, regardless of creed and political belief, to make more secure the liberties that Ireland had won. At first this society professed loyalty to the Crown, but, owing to the

course of events, it inspired a revolt, with a view of achieving complete independence of Ireland. In 1713 Grattan secured for the Catholics the right to practise as lawyers, and the right to vote for members of Parliament.

George III opposed all efforts for Irish political freedom, and so compelled Pitt to change his policy, and appoint to office in Ireland men hostile to the movement for Irish political freedom, and to bribe the Parliament to reject all measures displeasing to the Crown. This subserviency of the Parliament to Pitt brought about a change in the "United Irishmen;" its meetings became secret, its members were drilled and armed, and many eminent men joined its ranks. French aid was given to the Irish for a revolt, but a great wind-storm prevented, for three weeks or more, the attack, and the French fleet then returned, but not before the English had captured Tone, the leader of the revolt.

Pitt now decided to abolish the Irish Parliament, and to have the British Parliament the sole law-making body for the three kingdoms, allowing Ireland to send members to both houses. By wholesale bribery and corruption among both Catholic and Protestant parties this bill of Pitt's was carried, and the Irish Parliament was abolished. This Parliament had never really represented the Irish people, but only the Protestant and English minority in Ireland.

Although this century had been an endless struggle against English rule and constant political agitation, yet it produced men who exerted wonderful influence not only in the political world, but in a vaster field: the field of literature. The first great name of this period is Jonathan Swift.

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin in 1667. Swift's school and college life were passed at Kilkenny School, and Trinity College, Dublin. For

his education he seems to have been dependent on the charity of an uncle, who made the boy feel that bitterness of receiving something at another's hand- in fact, Swift said that his uncle treated him "like a dog." At college he was careless and so neglectful of his studies that he nearly failed to take his A.B. degree.

He acted as private secretary to Sir William Temple- whose wife was related to Swift's mother- for nearly ten years after his graduation. He was treated as a dependent, and the life became so intolerable to him that he took holy orders and went to a little parish in Ireland- a country that he hated. After eighteen months he returned to Moor Park, Sir William Temple's estate, where he stayed until Temple died, and then returned to Ireland. From there he went to London on a mission in behalf of the Episcopal church in Ireland.

Swift quarreled with the Whigs, became a Tory, and wrote many political pamphlets aiding the Tories. The Tory Ministry felt that it could scarcely do without him; in fact, he was one of the most important men in London, but he got little from the government but the hope of becoming a bishop. In 1713 he was made dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. In 1714 Queen Anne died, the Tories went out of power, and Swift returned to Ireland a disappointed man. He passed the rest of his life there, with the exception of a few visits to England.

When the English politicians were endeavoring to oppress Ireland with unjust laws they found Swift the firm champion of the Irish cause. When some one tried to be revenged on Swift for a satire, some of Swift's neighbors attempted to thrash the man; the Dean interferred, so they merely boycotted the fellow, reducing his income twelve hundred pounds a year.

During the last year of his life Swift was hopelessly insane. He died in 1745, leaving his property for an asylum for lunatics and incurables. Swift undoubtedly suffered from an unknown brain disease, and this

disease, the treatment he received in his early years, and the disappointments he suffered probably account for his misanthropy, his coldness, and the almost brutal treatment of the women who loved him.

Swift's affection for the beautiful Hester Johnson, known in literature as Stella, led him to write to her a series of letters, known as the "Journal to Stella," in which he gives much of his personal history from 1710 to 1713 when he was in London.

"The Tale of a Tub" is his greatest satiric allegory. The purpose of the work is to satirize the Romanists and the Calvinists, and to uphold the Episcopalians. In this work there is a combination of the theology and philosophy, of humor and pessimistic philosophy. His satiric definition of happiness as the art "of being well deceived" is an instance of this combination.

Perhaps the most famous work is "Gulliver's Travels." In Lilliput we see a race of men about six inches high. Everything is on a corresponding scale. Gulliver is most powerful here because of his height and strength, and a rival race of pygmies strive to secure his services to obtain a balance of power. But in Brobdingnag all is changed. Men are sixty feet tall, and human beings appear insignificant. A baby tries to swallow Gulliver's head, and Gulliver has a terrific struggle with two rats. In the voyage to Laputa we have a satire on the philosophers. We see the philosopher who has been eight years trying to extract sunbeams out of cucumbers; the beams are to be put in vials, sealed, and "let out to warm the air in rainy, inclement summers," and the philosopher believes that in eight years more, he will be able to "supply the governor's gardens with sunshine at a reasonable rate." The Struldburgs are described in this voyage. They are a race who, altho they have lost every faculty and tie that binds them to earth, are doomed to continue living. This recalls some of Dante's ghastly pictures of torments in his Inferno. The

Yahoos, whom he describes in the voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms possess- or rather are the embodiment of all the despicable qualities of human beings.

Gulliver's Travels reveals many side lights on the questions of Swift's day. The contest between the Bigendians and the Littleendians about the opening of eggs might well typify the quarrels of the time concerning religion and politics.

Swift is a humorist. His wit is of the satiric kind that enjoys the discomfiture of his victim. Under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff he gave vent to this vein of humor in predicting the death of an astrologer, Partridge,--even publishing an account of Partridge's death, much to that gentleman's annoyance. This controversy was carried on for a long long time--for the wits of the time took up the joke and declared that Partridge was dead; and it served to increase the contempt for astrologers; and it was, indirectly perhaps, the cause of the establishment of the "Tatler" with Richard Steele as editor under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff.

A good example of Swift's irony is seen in his "Modest Proposal." He tried to show the Irish the brutality of rearing large families in crime, ignorance and poverty, and suggested that children, when one year old, be served up on the tables of the great. This paper was misunderstood, as was his paper on "The Abolition of Christianity."

In Swift one can find wit, satire, and irony, but pathos and sublimity are wanting. He is pessimistic yet earnest. The style is natural, and easy, and is distinguished by three characteristics: simplicity, flexibility, and directness.

Richard Steele, the next Irishman to claim our attention, was born in Dublin, in 1672. When he was very young he was left an orphan, and was cared for by an uncle, who secured his admission to the Charterhouse School in London. He was too young to realize what had happened, but some "instinct of sorrow," he wrote, "seized my very soul and has made pity the

weakness of my heart ever since."

From Charterhouse, where he met Addison, Steele went to Oxford, but left college, before taking his degree, to enlist in the House Guards. This new life was full of temptations, especially to one of Steele's temperament, and he did not always successfully resist. So, for his own private use, he wrote a little book called "The Christian Hero", to fix upon his own mind "a strong Impression of Virtue and Religion, in opposition to a stronger Propensity towards unwarrantable Pleasures. This book was considered a huge joke by his fellow soldiers who chafed him unmercifully for urging a course he could not follow.

Steele next tried to write some comedies to purify the thoughts, and correct the vulgarity and wickedness of his age, and to show that wit and immorality are entirely distinct, and that one could be decent without being dull. Jeremy Taylor had attempted this same reform, but Steele proved that kindly satire was more effective than the angriest invective.

In 1709 Steele began the publication of a periodical which he called "The Tatler". This paper consisted of one folio sheet, with double columns, and was sold for a penny. It appeared three times a week: on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Its main purpose was to entertain the masses of the English people, and, while entertaining them, to lead them to a higher mental and moral life. Under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff and in the character of an elderly, good-humored, fastidious gentleman he held up to the people all the absurdities of the time in all classes of society, and gave them all the latest poetry, discussions of plays, and the "foreign and domestic news." Steele first began to show to women a manly homage to their goodness and understanding, as well as to their beauty and tenderness. We have some very pretty pictures of happy home life from his pen. In fact, he did much to raise woman to her proper sphere, and to reestablish the dignity and power of the home.

The wit, keenness, vivacity and truthfulness of these sketches made the paper very popular. Soon Addison began to contribute, for he shared Steele's high purpose, and before long he was a regular contributor. The "Tatler" was discontinued in January 1711, but in March of the same year Addison and Steele started a more famous periodical, "The Spectator," which appeared every day except Sunday.

The elements of the politician as well as the essayist were in Steele. As an ardent Whig he defended the House of Hanover, and was knighted and rewarded with several lucrative offices when George I came to the throne. But as he was always improvident he was constantly in money difficulties, and struggled with debt to the end.

In 1724 Steele left London, and broken in health retired to a country place in Wales. Since leaving Oxford, thirty years before, he had been soldier, dramatist, government-official, editor, essayist, politician and theatrical manager; he had known the "biggest" men of his time; he had experienced praise and abuse. Altho he may not have always been wise, he held to his high ideals, and retained hopefulness and his "fatal gift of sympathy" through it all. He died in 1729.

Steele wrote frankly and carelessly, and he was honest and direct. In his works we can easily see his goodness and large-hearted sympathy. He was of a sincerely religious nature, loved his fellowmen, was loyal to his friends, and devoted to his family. He was one of the largest, most generous, most human spirits of his time. Altho the age was full of literary bickering and jealousy Steele maintained a calm, wholesome tolerance in all his relations with it. Steele's writings, while they lack the polish of Addison's, are full of charm, sweetness, and, at times, pathos. He, in fact, drew the rough outline which Addison polished off in the charming essays in the "Spectator". Steele himself said: "As for my labors, if they wear but one impertinence out of human life, destroy a single vice, or give a

morning's cheerfulness to an honest mind; in short, if the world can be but one virtue the better or in any degree less vicious, or receive from them the smallest addition to their innocent diversions; I shall not think my pains, or indeed my life, to have been spent in vain." And as we read Steele's papers we can say with Thackeray that "if Steele is not our friend, he is nothing. He is by no means the most brilliant of wits, nor the deepest of thinkers; but he is our friend: we love him as children love with an A, because he is amiable."

Another Irish literary man of this period was Oliver Goldsmith. Goldsmith was born in 1728 in a little Irish village. He was an ugly, amiable, idle, blundering, careless, little boy, but was loving, generous and bright. For a while he studied medicine at Edinburgh, then after some aimless wanderings on the Continent, came to London in 1756, nearly penniless. At London he struggled hard to make a mere living and finally became a hack-writer for booksellers.

While he was striving for literary recognition he became acquainted with Dr. Johnson, and was admitted to the celebrated Johnson Club, to which Reynolds, Burke and Garrick belonged. As Goldsmith was very often in debt, a great part of his writings was done to order under the pressure of many difficulties. Occasionally he wrote rather more for pleasure, and then we have such gems as "The Traveller," "The Vicar of Wakefield," "The Deserted Village," and "She Stoops to Conquer." Altho these works were very successful and brought him fame and pecuniary remuneration still he was in debt, and at his death in 1774 he owed two thousand pounds, but "as he lay dying, the staircase leading to his room was filled with poor outcasts whom he had befriended." The improvident nature of Goldsmith, and his "don terrible" made him always in want thru his ultra-generous alms-giving.

This spirit of humanity is one of the chief distinctions in his works. In both his prose and poetry there is that fatal depth of sympathy, and a

broad point of view. In his comedies Goldsmith led the way towards more natural form of expression. But "The Vicar of Wakefield" is his greatest prose work. This was given to a publisher to release Goldsmith from the clutches of the sheriff, otherwise it might not have even been printed. The hero of the story is an unworldly old vicar who, in the midst of sorrow, injustice, poverty, and disgrace, acts nobly. The plot is poorly constructed, but the story is such a combination of "sweet human emotion" and humor that its defects are forgotten. The charm of the book lies not only in the Vicar, his credulous son, "happy little ones," and his somewhat aspiring daughters, and frivolous wife, but in the humor, grace, and ease of his style, and the air of naturalness and good nature throughout the book.

In "The Traveller" Goldsmith shows us Nature, and shows us that the inequalities in the lot of man are less great than we suppose. In the "Deserted Village" we see the old village, untouched by the wave of prosperity, and floating calmly on, unchanged and unchanging. The poem shows Goldsmith's fine, unworldly nature, and gives us his plea for the cessation of the oppression of the poor, against luxury, and the consequent evils. Altho these poems are written in the classical couplet and belong, unmistakably to the classical school, yet there is an emotion, a human emotion, "warm enough to be felt in spite of the chilling effects of classical influence." In Goldsmith the classical and romantic tastes struggled for supremacy, and though his natural preference was for the romantic, under Dr. Johnson's guidance his style became a mixture of the two. To students Goldsmith is of two-fold interest: as one of the pioneers in the Romantic movement, and also as a genial, humorous, kindly lover of all humanity.

Perhaps the greatest Irishman of this century was Edmund Burke. Burke was born in Dublin in 1729, and at the age of fourteen entered Trinity College, Dublin, and, after taking a degree went to London to study law. There he began his career as an author with his "Essay on the Sublime

and Beautiful." He met Johnson, and became a member of the famous "club." Burke's interests were turning towards politics now, and in 1765 he entered the House of Commons where he soon won distinction by a speech on the repeal of the Stamp Act. The difficulties with the American Colonies, one of the most serious questions confronting the government, gave rise to three of Burke's best speeches, and placed him with the greatest supporters of the Colonists. An English critic and statesman has said that those speeches "are almost the one monument of the struggle on which a lover of English greatness can look with pride." In his "Speech on Conciliation with America" Burke passes over the legal question of the right of the mother country to tax the colonies, and rests the argument on the basis of expediency and common sense. "The question with me is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy."

Burke was the "interpreter of English liberty," but, as he was naturally a conservative, his love was for "a well-regulated liberty." When the French Revolution broke out with all its violence, lawlessness, and bloodshed, Burke became alarmed, and wrote his "Reflections on the Revolution in France." He saw in this Revolution the loss of the cherished ideals of Europe, of old institutions, of chivalry and of glory. In his "Letters on a Regicide Peace" he opposed a truce with France which he called a "pretended republic of murderers, robbers, and atheists."

As he was a profound thinker he was able to rise above party politics. His earnestness and care for mankind make him forget self, and his political wisdom reaches out beyond the men present. Burke's style has been marked particularly by his mastery of imagery and metaphor, by his breadth of thought and ~~and~~ wealth of expression, by his vast field of knowledge from which he draws his illustrations, and by his strength, earnestness, logical reasoning, vivid imagination and breadth of view. Burke was not eloquent; his style was somewhat stiff and severe, but the effect of eloquence was produced by reason. As a man he was honest and upright,

devoted to the cause of righteousness. It has been said that Burke was, with "Bacon excepted, the greatest thinker who ever devoted himself to the practise of English politics."

Among this group of famous men one woman stands forth as the creator of the novel of national manners. This woman is Maria Edgeworth who was born in 1767 at Hare Hatch, Berkshire, and who never saw Ireland until she was twelve years old. She was educated by her father who devoted himself enthusiastically to the intellectual advancement of his children. In most of her novels Miss Edgeworth had the benefit of her father's criticism, and the introductions were written by him frequently. Miss Edgeworth wrote many essays and tales for pleasure before publication was even thought of.

"Practical Education" was a joint work by father and daughter. But in 1800, two years after the appearance of the treatise on Education, "Castle Rockrent" appeared, and gained for Miss Edgeworth a reputation as a national novelist. Shortly afterwards an "Essay on Irish Bulls," written by Miss Edgeworth and her father, followed. The aim of this essay was to familiarize the English public with Irish humor and pathos.

Within the next seventeen years she produced "Popular Tales," "Leonora," "Fashionable Tales," "Patronage," "Harrington," "Ormond," and "Comic Dramas"- which failed. She then paused in her novel writing to complete her father's "Memoirs", which appeared in 1820, and which were so popular that a second edition was called for in 1821. The next year she published "Rosamond, a sequel to Early Lessons." "Harry and Lucy", a book for children, appeared in 1825, and nine years later her last novel "Helen" was published, followed by "Orlandino," a child's book, and her "Letters for Literary Ladies" which were suggested by a correspondence between Thomas Day and her father, as to the propriety of "female authorship," in which the former defended the negative.

Miss Edgeworth died on May 21, 1849, but not until she had lived to see her works rank as English classics. Scott freely admitted that

he hoped to do as much for Scotland as Miss Edgeworth had done for Ireland, and O'Connell regretted that "one so powerful had not served Ireland as an agitator." Scott and Macaulay admired Miss Edgeworth's writings, and Byron too, altho he spoke of "Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers."

"Castle Rockrent" is one of the most characteristic of her novels, and is brightened with sunny Irish humor. One of the characters, Sir Condy, complained that "he was very ill-used by the Government about a place that was promised, and never given, after his supporting them against his conscience very honorably." "The Absentee" aimed to expose the misery and suffering entailed on the tenantry by the Irish gentry who had deserted Ireland for London, and had left all their affairs to be managed by unscrupulous agents. The characters are life-like, and we see the vain Irish matron trying to impersonate the English lady, the heartless "butterfly" fashionable daughters, the kindly noblemen endeavoring to ameliorate the condition of the tenants, and then the suffering of the peasants, all drawn with a loving hand. "Helen" shows a greater passion and a keener insight into the more subtle moods of the mind than some of the other novels. The moral of this book is that falsehood and deceit almost always bring misery in their wake. "Helen" is more elaborate than some of her other novels, but is full of grace and charm.

All Miss Edgeworth's novels are marked by humor, grace, and good sense. The plots are not always strong, but the books are interesting character studies, for the characters are natural and capable. They reveal prudence, kindness, sweetness of temper and patience when one would have expected the more heroic qualities.

Miss Edgeworth is distinguished as a realistic and a didactic writer. She has a moral lesson in view, and uses material for that purpose alone. Even with these limitations her pictures of the humor and the pathos of the Irish peasantry are marvellous. Strong passion and love of nature are not

found, but lively dialogues and originality abound in her books. As a painter of national customs she is excelled only by Scott; as a moralist, she is without a peer.

As we survey the realm of English literature we see that from the earliest days it has been moulded by the Irish influence. Some one has said that "English Literature is the expression and outcome, not of the English race, and character alone, but of that character modified and enriched by the Kelt."

The earliest traces of this influence date from the sixth and seventh centuries, and we have the literature of the clergy, in prose, and the legends and stories, in prose and verse, - popular lore handed down by the bards. The hero of these old myths was Finn Mac Cunhal, who lived in Scotland in summer, and in Ireland in winter, and who had, as chief of his hands, Ossian, rendered famous by the Johnson- Mac Phearson episode of the eighteenth century.

There were two great divisions of Gaelic literature: the verse, which dealt with Fingalian and pagan subjects, and the prose which had as subjects either the imaginative stories and romances, or the annals or chronicles of events.

While Finn Mac Cunhal was dear to the Gaels as a national hero, the other branch of the Keltic race, the Kimric, worshiped Arthur and his knights. It is hard to unravel the development of the Arthurian legends, and practically only one thing is clear: that the stories were originally Keltic. And when we assume this to be true we see how great is the indebtedness of the English race if for no other great work than Tennyson's "Idylls."

The prevailing note in the old Keltic lyrical poetry is that of sadness, due possibly to lack of success in war. There is almost no narrative or descriptive element in the poetry which is so marked by

melancholy and mysticism. Mathew Arnold characterizes the Keltic poetry as follows: that is it marked by (1) A quickness of perception, and under this head we have—strange, but helpful table—

For acuteness and valour— the Greeks,

For excessive pride— the Romans,

For stupidity— the Saxons,

For all-surpassing beauty— the Gaels.

(2) Titanism— a hopeless struggle against fate and superior powers,

(3) Certain powers of style— and elevation of verbal manner, a distinction in expression, a feeling effect of finely worded phrases, and an extraordinary diction.

(4) Magical element— introduced to render the forces of Nature particularly effective.

As we sum up the qualities of the Kelts we notice that they are quick-witted, unstable, easily depressed or exalted, sensitive to romance, beauty, or sadness in any form. The following selection gives an illustration of Keltic sentiment, and love of nature:

"The maiden was clothed in a robe of flame-colored silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold, on which were precious emeralds and rubies. More yellow was her head than the flower of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood anemone amidst the spray of the meadow-fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the three mewed falcon, was not brighter than hers."

The early English had certain traits of character that the Kelts lacked, but the mingling of these races produced a wonderful example of the marvellous powers of both these races in the greatest genius of the world—William Shakespeare. He who possessed the vivacity and fancy of the Kelt, and the energy and seriousness of the Teuton, was born on the borderland of

England and Wales, in the forest of Arden.

And this influence, so remarkably shown in Shakespeare's literary output, is no less evident in the eighteenth century writers, altho it has expanded and is seen in many fields. We see it in the mastery of satire, in the gem of the periodical essay, in the representative dramas, in the superb oratory of an unbiased thinker, in the movement for the elevation of woman, in the correction of governmental abuses, in the correction of moral conditions in society. What a list! But the influence does not rest there! Through these writers and their marvellous influence there was a social interchange; conditions in one country were better understood by those living on the other island, and a happier state of affairs was brought about both politically and socially. This change was gradual- for even now it is not complete - but these men first set the stone in motion, and whatever moss of contentment it may have gathered during these years is due to them- whose memory ever has and ever will remain green.

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