Coming from a writer who, though more impartial than any other Irish historian, yet treated Irish concerns with obvious sympathy, this judgment may seem to buttress Mommsen's to such a degree as to overbear all criticism. If authority is to settle the question, it may seem already settled by such a measure of agreement. But the present inquiry has recognised no authority save that of established fact and logical reasoning, and we shall accordingly proceed to analyse Professor Richey's deliverance as we have analysed Professor Mommsen's, taking it first point by point.

- r. Failure. This word is used with a startling laxity. It is applied to the ancient Gauls in respect of their having been conquered by the Romans, as well as to the Irish in respect of their not having yet secured political equality with the rest of the United Kingdom. But on that line of interpretation nearly every race has "failed." The non-Roman Italians failed to begin with, in that they were conquered by the Romans. The Greeks failed in the same way. The amalgamated Romans in turn, after being successful when largely composed of populations who in the terms of the case had failed, failed collectively in that the empire fell before the Germanic barbarians; who again in turn failed, in that one wave was always overrun by another. The Eastern Teutons later failed when they were subdued by the Westerns under Charlemagne. The German Emperors failed when they lost hold of Italy. The Franks failed in that they lost their language, and were absorbed in the mass of the population they had conquered. The Anglo-Saxons utterly failed in that they were subjugated by the Normans; and the later English failed grievously in that after having overrun France they were ignominiously driven out. The Jews failed conspicuously. And so on throughout all history. The expression, in fine, is indefensible.
- 2. Difference of Organisation. It has been hereinbefore suggested that some of the presumptive early races may have been overpowered by others who were inferior to them in the sense of being more animal, more brutal, more habitually pugnacious. But to attribute this or any other delicacy of organisation to the "Celtic" race so-called is quite unwarrantable. They had themselves been conquerors of other races. The Gauls of Cæsar's day, further, really do not seem to have been notable for superiority of perception. And it will be found that at the close of his allocution Mr Richey absolutely contradicts the dictum with which he sets out.
  - 3. Discontinuity of Thought. Mr Richey was here, doubtless,

contrasting the Irish peasant class, as he knew it, with either the English peasant class or the English educated classes. He seems to have confused vivacity and mobility of temperament with disconnectedness of thought. The latter defect is common to the majority of mankind, and goes as often with temperamental slowness as with temperamental quickness. It is probably true that the people of Ireland and of France are as a rule more vivacious than the people of England. The cause for such differences is to be looked for in (1) influences of climate and beverages, and (2) influences of political events, including massacres and rebellions, on the nervous system of a race; such effects being probably heritable, Weismann notwithstanding, But, given the difference in average of temperaments, it does not at all follow that there is a similar difference in continuity of thought or continuity of political action. The Great Rebellion in England and the French Revolution are alike easily to be explained in terms of political causation, without reference to temperaments. And it is simply not true that the "Celtic" nations in the mass show less continuity of feeling and opinion than the others. Professor Richey, as already noted, contradicts himself on this very point. His concluding proposition absolutely destroys that under notice. Both cannot be true. And if we contrast the culture histories of the two races of the definition, we find that neither is true. On the one hand, the "Teutonic" countries which accepted the Reformation proved themselves so far more and not less unstable than those which rejected or suppressed it. The sudden transition from Mary-worship and the reverence for the Mass in England and Germany to ribald rejection of them, proves, if anything at all, that the English and Germans were people with little depth or sincerity of religious conviction. No "Celtic" race, again, ever passed from one extreme to another of temper and social habit, and back again, as "Teutonic" England did in passing from the regimen of James I. and Charles I. to that of the Commonwealth, and then again to that of the Restoration. And no Celtic race has ever passed through such a prolonged series of changes of fashions of thought and feeling as have been passed through in Germany since the rise of Frederick the Great last century. It is specially in "Teutonic" countries, once more, that we meet with the phenomena of religious "revivals," which as such imply a sequel of apathy. The Wesleyan and Salvation Army movements are products of English and not of Irish or French life. And if we contrast the perpetual see-saw of politics in England, the perpetual oscillation between Liberal and Tory

Governments, with the steady preponderance of one principle in Irish politics, we shall at least find no reason to credit the Teutonic people with more fixity of character than the supposed "Celtic."

4. Lack of Military Tenacity. This is a strange misreading of history. The Galli made a far more tenacious resistance to Rome than did the Germani. The Germani, in the nature of the case, drew one signal advantage from the rising under Arminius, which was a piece of successful treachery, not a display of "tenacity" at all. But when the Roman conquest was resumed, the Germani showed no such tenacity as did the Galli. When subdued, they were far more passive.1 In fact, it is quite clear that had Germania lain in such a close geographical relation to Rome as did Gallia; had it been as easily penetrable, and commercially as well worth subduing, it would have been more and not less easily and quickly conquered than Gallia. When Professor Richey proceeds to deal with later Gallic history he becomes astonishingly fallacious. It is an obvious historical fact that the French kingdom was being built up with continuous foresight and patience during centuries in which Germany was a chaos of dissentient States. The case of the conquest of Italy in the fifteenth century is quite misleading when stated as it is by Professor Richey. It was not "lack of perseverance" that made the conquest impermanent, but the nature of the political conditions. The French could not stay in Italy; and they could not govern it from France. The earlier Teutonic conquerors stayed on the soil they conquered; yet even they were upset by each other in rapid succession; and they finally could not subdue the Italian cities. On Professor Richey's principles, the English had proved their complete lack of perseverance by their repeated failure to hold their conquests in France and in Scotland, where they were free to keep foot in the country if they could. The proposition really will not stand a moment's criticism.

5. Art and literature. Here one is almost moved to pronounce Professor Richey's criticism quite incompetent. To what set of "epics" does he refer? What is the Danish epic that has taken a place in universal literature; what the Swedish; what the Russian; what the Spanish; what the Turkish; what the Hungarian? He was doubtless thinking (1) of the Scandinavian Sagas and Eddas; but on the one hand it is now pretty well agreed-on that the Eddas are a product of a Celtic environment and influence; and on the other hand it is surely impos-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See above, p. 81.

sible to pretend that they have a higher place in universal literature than the Arthurian cycle, which is a "Celtic" product. Professor Richey presumably credited to Germany, as an epic of universal acceptance (2) the Nibelungen Lied. But how then could he possibly deny similar status to the Chanson de Roland on the side of the "Celts"? It is idle to reply that the Chanson de Roland shows Germanic influence, for the early German literature was unquestionably inspired by Romance influence. As regards later epics, it seems hardly worth while to continue the discussion. Faust is not an epic; but if it were it proves nothing, for in Germany as elsewhere the epic is now dead. Don Quixote is not an epic; but if it were, it would be the last of Spanish production. It is surely time that such matters were looked at in the light of social science rather than of primitive hypotheses about race qualities. The relative development of music is plainly a matter of social conditions. It was most developed where most effort was made to develope it. In Elizabethan England it stood high. Puritanism threw it out of the line of advance; and with us it is still backward. What Professor Richey said of Irish music was just as true of Scotch music till the other day; and the beginning of higher music in Scotland is simply a matter of spread of culture-influence from elsewhere. When Ireland achieves a reasonable measure of political peace, and is thus free to develop its culture, it will develop in music as readily as in other matters, if not more so. The "artistic temperament" is at least as common in the Irish people as in others. Mozart and Schubert, "Teutons" both, were certainly not specially "industrious" types, but they framed, the one great operas and the other the torso of a great symphony. Oliver Goldsmith, the "Celt," was certainly not a specially industrious type; but he compiled histories of Greece and Rome, and a bulky work on Natural History, besides producing among his more original works a story, a play, and two poems, which for their day represented something like artistic perfection. He had certainly fine sympathies; but these are no more the appanage of "Celtic" races than the faculty of composition and construction is the appanage of "Teutonic." There is no lack of sympathy behind the Folk Songs of Germany; and it happens that Gemüthlichkeit is customarily claimed for themselves by Germans as a prevailing racial characteristic.

6. Cathedral-building. It would be hard to find a more perverse expression of the racial theory than Professor Richey's suggestion that Cologne Cathedral proves the Germans to

possess a faith and perseverance which the Celts lack. Cologne Cathedral simply represents a series of political conditions, some delaying, some determining the final completion. About fifty years ago, Heine made the very incompletion of the Cathedral a ground for exactly the opposite kind of reflection to Professor Richey's. Such are the harmonies of the a priori method. If Professor Richey had turned his thought to the cathedrals of France in general and of Brittany in particular, he could hardly have penned his preposterous sentence. To take the case of Ireland, never politically united since the Renaissance, and forcibly withheld from cathedral-building with public funds for over three centuries,—to take her case and contrast it with the case of the German people and Cologne Cathedral, is to pass out of sight of sane science, not to say of common-sense. In the United States, all creeds and stocks are alike free to raise cathedrals; but it is found that the Irish, who mostly went thither in extreme poverty, have built the finest. And some of us could wish that it were not so. The enemy, again, points to the new cathedral as a proof of the power of the Irish priest; while Cologne Cathedral as we have seen, is to be for even the friendly sentimentalist a proof of the "faith and perseverance of the German people." Thus does the farce of pseudo-science go on.

7. Impermanence and permanence. Here, at the close, Professor Richey's account of things Celtic collapses in helpless self-contradiction. The Celts are credited with a special want of perseverance to attain a given end, as if they had latterly shown a relatively lower average of political faith than the American Colonies in the War of Independence, the American States in the War of 1812, the Germans under Napoleon, the Greeks under the Turks, or the Italians under Austria. They are reproached for an "inability permanently to unite for any definite object," as if the English or any other people were ever "permanently united," or as if a "definite object" were a thing for which any people could permanently unite. Then all at once the whole argument is overturned, and we have the lamentable proposition that "though the Celts do not exert a continued effort to accomplish a given object, yet they will cherish a fixed desire to attain that which they have failed to accomplish." It seems unnecessary to prove at any length that this is nonsense; or that the final proposition as to the traditional fixity and unadaptableness of the Celt is the exact negation of what was previously said as to his changeableness and receptivity.

I do not think there is much left of Professor Richey's racial disquisition, whether as regards his facts or as regards his reasonings. Sooth to say, it is as poor a performance in the way of sociological reasoning as Mommsen's; seeing that no more than Mommsen does Professor Richey examine the ethnological question as to the constituents of the so-called Celtic races. He calls the French half-Gallic. On the same principle he should call the Scotch half-Gallic, the English largely Celtic, and the Irish largely Teutonic. But there is neither basis to his doctrine nor coherence in the statement of it.

If any one still hesitates to dismiss Professor Richey's theory of Celticity, let him at will carry the examination further, to the consideration of further passages in the *History*—also simple reprints from the original *Lectures*—in which the same assumptions are freshly set forth. Let him take, for example, the self-stultifying passage in which the historian makes out in one breath that the Normans in France had altered their character by intermarriage, and in the next breath that after all they kept it substantially unchanged:—

"By intermarriage with French they [the Normans] had lost the tinge of northern melancholy, the deep sympathy with nature, and that love of their lonely homes which their fathers had entertained. In place thereof they had acquired a light and superficial gaiety, a love of pomp and pleasure, and a true sympathy for art; they were no longer worshippers of Odin, but among the most zealous patrons of the churches they had wasted. . . . But one quality the Normans inherited from their ancestors unimpaired—their boundless self-confidence and love of adventure." 1

We have above seen that the Gallic stock, with which the Normans intermarried, happened to have shown the same qualities of self-confidence and love of adventure; so that the assumption of heredity in that one case seems rather gratuitous. On the other hand, if intermarriage is to be held to involve an extensive change of character for the Normans, it must no less involve it for the Germans, the Austrians, the Saxons, and the Irish. Once more the argument is in chaos.

So, finally, with Professor Richey's comment on "the great German Reformation which Dean Milman truly styles 'the Teutonic development of Christianity'—an event wholly repugnant to the Celtic mind." 2... I have already shown that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Short History, pp. 129-130.

this line of assertion is utterly inconsistent with the facts.<sup>1</sup> The Celts of Scotland have for the most part become fanatical Protestants. The Celts of Wales have done the same. There were no more zealous Protestants in Europe than the Huguenots of France, who were finally driven in great numbers into the "Teutonic" countries. According to one line of ethnological doctrine, Calvin was a Celt. According to another, Luther was a Celt, being brachycephalic. A theory which thus falls into one absurdity of self-contradiction after another may surely be held finally to have discredited itself. In Professor Richey's hands it has certainly done so.

If I am asked how such a criticism is to be reconciled with the judgment that Professor Richey is in other respects an excellent and an impartial historian, I can only answer that he seems to me to represent the effects of the survival of a subrational sentiment in a man otherwise rationalistic. He seems indeed to have passed through various stages of thought; and it is doubtful whether, had he lived to write out his Short History as he had planned, he would have held to what he said in 1869 on the subject of race qualities. It is, as I have said, radically inconsistent with his remarks on the natural formation of race character, in the later lecture which is reprinted as the first chapter of the posthumous work.2 Perhaps he had already abandoned the race fallacy all along the line. In any case, his early adhesion to it only shows how much power a widely current and time-honoured fallacy may have over even a critical intelligence; and our business is to argue out the issue on its merits. When we find Newton alternating between true physics and mythical history, we do not for a moment accept the latter on the credit of the former. Nay, when we find that even the physics is fallaciously formulated by reason of theological prepossessions, we recast the formula in terms of accurate philosophy. The rational course with Newton, then, is the rational course with lesser men.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Above, pp. 93-97. <sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 134-135, note, 161-162, note.

#### HILL BURTON ON THE SCOTTISH CELTS.

§ 1.

That Hill Burton's *History of Scotland* takes a high place among complete histories of modern nations, is commonly allowed among the small percentage of his countrymen who have read it, as well as by the larger and perhaps more respectable class who compromise matters by having it on their shelves. These latter patriots, naturally, are not wont to countenance the suggestion that the work might advantageously have been made a trifle shorter by the relegation of some matter, as for instance the history of the legal and other proceedings against Mary, to separate treatises. It would be an unwarrantable slur on their candour, however, to anticipate from them anything but a fair hearing of a plea for the reversal of one series of Burton's judgments, concerning which his readers are probably well nigh unanimous in protest.

What has mostly struck Scotch and other readers of Burton, certainly, is his impartiality. To the former, accustomed to see sides locally taken with a more than religious fanaticism as to the character of Mary, the Reformation, and the Covenanters, there is something tranquillising and creative of confidence in Burton's dispassionate tone and treatment, which leaves even his militant readers concerned rather to cite him when they can on their own side than to complain of his leniency towards the other. To Englishmen, again, his treatment of the ancient quarrel recommends itself by the same qualities; and Dr Freeman, who doubtless admired such a temper the more because himself devoid of it, was long ago led to praise Burton's unbiassed and scholarly account of the respective doings of Wallace and Edward I. Nothing, indeed, could well be more judicial, more free of rhetoric and nationalist sentiment, than the whole handling of the heroic period in the History, which at this point is peculiarly worthy the quiet study of the author's countrymen.

But Burton all the while had one prejudice of the most robust and aggressive description; a prejudice apparently as intimate and as irreversible as any of those which flourish among his compatriots, and as serious as those which he had been able in his own case to set aside—nay, in a sense more so, because there is no prejudice so potent as one which cleaves to a man who is known and knows himself to be on many points exceptionally unprejudiced. It was not his Pyrrhonism about the Druids and cognate questions—that breaks no bones—but his habitual attitude of tone and temper towards the whole race which, in Scotland and elsewhere, is conventionally called Celtic, with as little notion of the rational significance of the term as can well be in such matters. Burton's use of the name is in itself suspect from the beginning. He early adopts it 1 with no critical investigation of its bearings; and from that point forward he rarely uses it without direct or indirect racial imputation. A restricted racial theory, in fact, pervades his whole history; a theory unchecked by logic, untested by data, unexplained by ethnological or biological science. "Through the mists which conceal from us the details of events," he intimates,2 "we can yet see the large fact that the Romanised Britons were a debased and feeble people. Races moulded by the influence of others generally are so." Now, the measure of truth in this generalisation is to all intents and purposes vitiated by the total absence of the comparative element from the estimate. The Britons, obviously, were no more "under the influence of others" than were many other races in the Roman Empire—for instance, the Gauls and the Spaniards, or even the majority of the inhabitants of Italy, not to speak of the Greeks and many of the Germans. That they made brave and resolute soldiers is admitted: they get the credit 3 for the stubbornness of the resistance of the army of Albinus to that of Severus; and the province "supplied soldiers above the average proportion of its population, if we may judge from the frequency of their use." 4 The whole point is that "there was no military organisation for local self-defence," and that the Britons later succumbed to the Teutons. But this is substantially the history of the whole Western Empire, from north to south; and the Britons were on all fours with the entire Roman population. It is flatly misleading to name them singly and specially as a "debased and feeble people." They really made a much better resistance to the Saxons than the Saxons

<sup>1</sup> I. 172. <sup>2</sup> I. 43. <sup>3</sup> I. 40. <sup>4</sup> I. 44.

did later to the Danes and Normans, or the Teutons in Spain to the Saracens, or the earlier Teutons to the Romans.

Whether or not Burton viewed the early Britons as Celts, he at least transfers at once to the Celts so-called his low opinion of the former—or rather, he may be surmised to have started with Celtophobia, and decided that the early Britons must have been Celts because they were unfortunate. In his inquiry into the Ossianic poems, considered as a possible clue to the life of the early Scots, properly so called, he notes 1 as a reason for denying the authenticity of the collection, the fact that there "A pure and high spirit of Christian chivalry developed itself in a race yet heathen—a race who, when they afterwards ostensibly belonged to the Christian Church, were so noted for treachery and cruelty that for centuries it was deemed a reproach to any civilised Government to employ them in warfare." We need not here stay to ask what sort of an argument this would be against the Ossianic poems—whether these exhibit a "Christian chivalry," or what that may be; whether a race might not conceivably degenerate under hard conditions; or what is proved by the unexplained language as to the employment of the Celts in warfare by "any civilised Government." What is here to be noted is that along with this hostile view of the Celts, Dr Burton started with an equally strong prejudice in favour of the Teutonic or Scandinavian races so-called, having apparently overlooked the opinion, arrived at by Scandinavian ethnologists, that the Teutonic invaders of Scandinavia had absorbed a previous Celtic population. Throughout the Eddas, he early announces,2 "there is ever-striving energy, determination of purpose, the physical power seconding the unbending will, a courage that is manifest not only in contempt of death, but in patient endurance of suffering, a distaste of all politic devices and diplomatic intrigues, and a reliance on honest strength to carry out the mighty designs of a never-resting ambition. There are no applications of gentleness and mercy, but there is a strong sense of justice and an aversion to wanton cruelty." The discerning reader of Burton will probably agree that in the strained rhetoric of this passage there is another note than that of the judicial criticism which is his best quality. And as clear as the note of Teutomania here is that of Celtophobia at the same stage 3:—" It is observable of the Celts, as of other indolent races, that the elements of value to them are not the resources capable of development through industry and enterprise, but those which offer the readiest supply

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I. 175. <sup>2</sup> I. 230. <sup>3</sup> I. 205.

of some of the necessaries of life." The Norse pirates are thus credited with a sheaf of virtues, and with an aversion to wanton cruelty, on the strength of vague inference from the Eddas,1 in the face of the abundant historic proofs that they were grossly and wantonly cruel: the Celts are assumed to be indolent, on no proof offered, but apparently because in some countries they have remained poor, just as the industrious Norsemen do to this day in Scandinavia. On such a plan you may prove anything against any race against which you cherish a prejudice, and anything in favour of one to which you are attached. If the former are poor and of primitive habits, you convict them of indolence; while you find the latter, in a similar case, give proof of fortitude and elevation of mind. If the race you dislike is rich and luxurious you dwell on its vices: whereas your favourite people in growing rich only give proof of their power of succeeding. Heads, our side wins; tails, the other side loses.

### § 2

I have said that Dr Burton adopted the name Celt with no adequate investigation of its bearings; but after beginning to employ it he does recognise, what it is indeed impossible to overlook, that the race so called had become mixed to a high degree early in the dubious historic period. His admissions are remarkable. "We know, historically, that in the west, group after group of Norse invaders were absorbed into the Irish-speaking population. Although the Norsemen were conquerors of the Highland region, and gave its monarchs and lords, the more civilised language [the Celtic] absorbed the ruder though fundamentally stronger [!], and all spoke the Irish together. Thus, in language, the Teutonic became supreme in the eastern lowlands, the Celtic among the western mountains. From a general view of the whole question, an impression—but nothing stronger than an impression—is conveyed, that the proportion of the Teutonic race that came into the use of the Gaelic is larger than the proportion of the Celtic race that came into the use of the Teutonic or Saxon. Perhaps students of physical ethnology may thus account for the contrasts of appearance in the Highlands: in one district the people being large-limbed and fair, with hair inclined to red; in others, small, lithe, and dusky, with black hair." 2 And in a

<sup>2</sup> I. 207. *Cf.* pp. 196, 233.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I say nothing here of the later demonstration that the Eddas owe a great deal to Celtic influence. It is sufficient to judge Burton by his own lights.

footnote 1 he quotes from the Danish writer Clement, whom he admits to be a close observer, the observation that "the inhabitants of the Hebrides proper, Gaelic in speech, as in all the Highlands, are in their features nearer to the Norsemen than to the Celts." 2 Here it is assumed that the strictly Celtic type is actually known, though there is no pretence to show that at any one period there was a whole Celtic people who presented none of those mixtures of type which are in modern times found in Teutonic-speaking just as among Celtic-speaking populations. And yet so rooted is the prepossession of the historian that he can without misgiving complain 3 that neither Tacitus nor Cæsar "shows a consciousness of the radical difference that must have severed the Teutonic from the Celtic." As if the unconsciousness of Tacitus and Cæsar were not, from a scientific point of view, a reason for suspecting that the types of Teuton and Celt were as much mixed in Cæsar's day as later.

What seems clear thus far is that the history of the Scottish nation commences with the recognition of a large Highland and Gaelic-speaking population, in which a large hypothetically Teutonic element has been absorbed. On one principle laid down by Dr Burton, this absorption would seem to imply great virtue in the Celt, for "we know that after a time the Saxon race, through its native vigour, overcame the influences of the Norman Conquest, as in the individual man a healthy constitution works off the influence of a wound or a casual disease." 4 But in Dr Burton's ethnic philosophy it appears to be a property of the Celtic race to throw off (by absorbing) a preponderating Teutonic influence through its native vigour and yet remain as indolent and objectionable as ever. A thousand years later in their history, the Celts still impress him unfavourably. Dealing with the reign of Alexander (1230-45) he notes 5 that "Among the Irish Celts of the western and central Highlands, on the other hand, this policy of planting Norman settlers appears to have been very effective. It is a peculiarity of these

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> P. 196.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Die Nordgermanische Welt, Copenhagen, 1840, p. 301 n. "Norsemen" seems to mean, for Clement as for so many others, one Teutonic type, though the Danes of mediæval history are represented as dark, and their skulls are described as non-Teutonic. The Norwegians, too, are assumed to have been in general fair, though we find them distinguishing one of their Kings as Harold Fairhair. And of course no note is taken of the presumptive Celtic element in the Norwegian as in the Swedish population.

races that they must have leaders—they cling to the institution by a law of their nature; and if the desired dictator and guide do not come in one shape, they will take him in another." Instead of asking the meaning of the latter clauses, let the reader note that the "other hand" has reference to the practice of the "wild men of Galloway" concerning whom it was that the English ancestor of Robert the Bruce at the Battle of the Standard "cried shame" on King David "for leading that ruffianly band of mixed savages against the gentle Norman chivalry who had befriended him." "It was like," says the historian,1 "Chatham arraigning the Government for employing tomahawking Indians in the American war." Now, it was to this that Burton evidently alluded in his previously quoted phrase about the cruelty and treachery of the Celtic race. But in the present connection it appears 2 that these very Celtic men of Galloway, immediately after the Battle of the Standard, "put to death all the French and English strangers they could lay hands on "-doing exactly the reverse, as we have seen, of what was done by the Northern Celts, but very much the same thing as was done by the early Saxons when they invaded Britain. So that it would seem to be a peculiarity of the Celtic race—a law of its nature—at once to cling to the institution of leaders and to overthrow it, to accept Norman lords and to kill them.

Any dispassionate reader of that sentence about the Celtic need for leaders is driven to ask himself whether precisely the same "law of their nature" is not evidently all-powerful among the southern or Teutonic Scots at every period of their history —whether it is not a law of the nature of all peoples in their military and tribal period. There is only one answer. But it becomes the invariable practice of Dr Burton, as he goes on, to mete out to the Highland people a different measure from that he metes out to those of the Lowlands; to blame the former specially and singly for qualities and habits in which they are on all fours with the latter. Again and again does he gird at Celtic "peculiarities" which are not peculiarities at all. "Their one great craving was for immediate leaders to guide and command them. Such they found in the descendants of those Norse warriors who had been their masters of old. They lived under their chief, and did his bidding," etc.3 Now, as the historian himself very clearly sets forth, this was exactly what happened in Lowland Scotland among the "Teutons;"

for the War of Independence, as he makes plain, was carried on by leaders almost wholly of Norman blood-the Flemish Douglases being the only exception. The Lowland Scots in general "craved a leader," and found him in the Norman Bruce: and they clung to that leader, in their national capacity, just as they habitually did in home affairs to their immediate lords, by reason of a "law of their nature." Not only do the feudal strifes of southern Scotland exactly answer to the clan feuds of the Highlands, but Lowland or "Teutonic" Scotland as a whole never showed at any part of her history the slightest fitness for getting along without a King. In no country's annals is the royalist principle more prominent, though in none is there more record of rebellion. King after King was slain or risen against; but every rising claimed a royal head; and nothing is more remarkable in the great Civil War than the unanimity with which Scotland adhered to the monarchic principle while many Englishmen were not only ready but anxious to set up another. In the face of these facts, Burton's generalisation is worthless—the phrase of a partisan who catches at any stick to beat the object of his prejudice.

## § 3.

Other distinctions drawn by the historian will no better bear investigation. "The way of the two" [the 'Goth' and the Celt], he writes, "differed in this wise, that it became the practice of the one to till the soil and enrich himself, while it became the practice of the other to live idly and seize upon the riches of his Lowland neighbour when he could get at them." 2 There could be no idler evasion of a plain scientific principle. Dr Burton knew perfectly well<sup>3</sup> that the Scottish and English Borderers habitually followed exactly the same practices as did the Middle Highlanders, and this because the conditions were substantially the same as regards temptation, gain, and divided government. It was not that in the "dark backward and abysm of time" the Aryan ancestors of the Borderers had perversely developed cattle-stealing propensities, though we know that the early German tribes habitually plundered the Galli and each other; but that actual conditions developed these propensities in the men who were called Borderers because they lived on the boundaries of two hostile States. In precisely the same way the

The reputed founder of the house of Douglas was Theobald the Fleming (1150), who took his title from the Celtic name of the land granted him.

2 II. 389-90.

3 Cf. VI. 18, 21.

later Highlanders, whose own narrowed territory was unfruitful, took to plundering the rich lands of their Lowland neighbours, doing it with all the more zest because these were an alien race, as Borderer to Borderer. A scientific observer will at once recognise that the case is not one of race bias, but of immediate conditions; but Burton almost always turned his back on science when he had to with the Celts. It never occurred to him to dwell on the fact that those very industrious Lowlanders were the tillers of soil which their justice-loving ancestors had stolen from the Celts. Land-stealing is in a different category from crop- and cattle-stealing. This last is the one form of international piracy that Dr Burton is concerned to blame, because it was the only one which happened to be open to the Celts. He records not only 1 that piracy was more or less officially carried on both by Scotland and England in the days before the Reformation, but that in the beginning of the 17th century 2 the well-to-do skippers of Teutonic Fife 3 acquired their wealth largely by that means. Yet he has no thought here of stigmatising the Scottish seafaring class as habitually living by plundering their neighbours on the high seas. It is only Celts who prove their inherent depravity by systematically levying black mail on those who come in their way. The devices of explanation to which our historian is at times driven are rather more trying to gravity than to temper. Returning to the Celtic problem as it stood at the union of the Crowns, he promptly relapses into what we may call the nescientific attitude after some pages of perfectly sensible analysis of Lowland conditions. The Celts are re-ushered on the scene as "this peculiar people;" and the reminiscence of their Norse elements produces this incomparable reflection: "It would appear that such mixture of a stronger element with the Celtic races (sic) tends to bring the strength and determination of the stronger to the aggravation of the wayward, turbulent, and mischievous propensities of the weaker, as in the English of the Pale, who were said to have become more Irish than the Irish themselves." Grave historiography can thus leave far in the rear the classic case of the Wolf and the Lamb, when it is inspired by a prejudice wearing the guise of a theory. Burton had just been telling of the waywardness, the turbulence, the savagery, the brutal bloody-mindedness, of the Teutonic Border

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> III. 70, 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> It is to be noted, however, that Mr Grant Allen holds the people of Fifeshire, with those of Ayrshire, Perthshire, and Aberdeenshire, for Celts. (Anglo-Saxon Britain, p. 150).

populations; nay, his whole history up to this point had been a record of chronic civil strife and inveterate lawlessness of the Teutonic Scots, the "flocking and fighting of kites and crows," as Milton summed up the infinite brawling of "God's Englishmen" of the pure Teutonic days. Even historiographical prejudice cannot evade the mute appeal of its own pages, and the parallel of Borderer and Highlander is at last grappled with. As thus:-"There was an old element of similarity between the Highlander and the Borderer in this, that both of them indulged in theft. The Borderer, however, was by nature a utilitarian and a tradesman. He drove the beeves of the English because it was the most profitable business he could engage in; when the profession ceased to pay [i.e., when it was suppressed] he dropped it. But it was the nature of the Highlander to be idle, and feed on the produce of other men's labours. It was the necessities of this nature that withdrew them from the Lowland districts, as those whose nature it was to cultivate the ground pressed in on them." 1 Our historian seems the very person to tell the tale of the lady who fell down stairs and died of a broken heart; and he would seem capable of missing the point of the proposition that "incantations will destroy a flock of sheep—if administered with a certain quantity of arsenic." His writing here has the solitary merit of enabling us to understand how Scotchmen could come to be held destitute of humour.

From this point Burton's treatment of everything Celtic is, so to speak, a mere debauch of the personal equation. His ultra-Ricardian economics (it is a grave injustice to Ricardo to father on him the unscientific erection of a mere generalisation from existing practice into a prescription for all practice to come) exhibits itself in the dictum<sup>2</sup> that it is a "peculiarity of the Celtic nature," in the matter of the land, to be unable to "understand the arrangement by which one man was its owner, while another occupied and tilled it "-a piece of sociology which needs no comment beyond a reference to the rather weightier decision of Mill that it is the orthodox Teuto-British land system which is a peculiar thing in human history. We have once more, too, the elastic theory of the dependance of the Celt on leaders: -"The Lowlander, self-relying, gave as little effect as he could to the feudal restraints that bound him to a leader. The Highlander could not do without one. He naturally clung to anyone whom nature placed in a position to command him; and if he could not find a strong-handed warrior to take the lead, he would follow a priest or a Presbyterian minister." 1 Even as did his Gothic neighbour at and after the Reformation! But things have come to such a pass with the historian's Celtophobia that as he goes on he unfalteringly cites it as a fresh crime against the Celts that they would not obey their leaders. At one point in the campaign of 17152 "the Highlanders, still true to their stagnant principles, refused obedience" to their capable leader Mackintosh, himself a Highlander; and in connection with the earlier campaign of Montrose it is noted<sup>3</sup> that "they had a system of discipline of their own, very lax and precarious, and they would work in no other. They would follow no leaders and obey no commanders but those whom the accident of birth" [which had been somewhat important in Lowland history] "had set over them; and the highest military skill was lost in any attempt to control them"—even when their clan commanders strove to enforce such attempts.

The addition of insult to this preposterous tissue of injury is, of course, a small matter. At one place <sup>4</sup> Burton takes up for a moment the suggestion, supported by historical data which he does not pretend to dispose of, that under their own institutions, in a propitious territory, the Celts could get on well enough; and this is how he gets rid of it:—"All doctrines are entitled to a hearing (!); but this one leads to conclusions so unharmonious to all established belief in the blessed influences of peace and industry, that it will require support from a more consolidated supply of facts, than theorists about the Irish and the Highlanders are generally content with"—this with some of the facts lying in his own footnotes!

"O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us!"

§ 4.

We have seen how his primary prejudice has driven the historian to spurious generalisation, to false comparison, to nakedly unjust inference, and finally into an undisguised fanaticism of resistance to all argument which challenged his bias. It would appear that juster views had been pressed upon him; but that all pleadings had only stiffened his unreasoning antagonism to the race he had maligned. It is in this frame of mind that the historian arrives at his crowning generalisation:—"In a naturally industrious and enterprising population, war and con-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> VI. 23. <sup>2</sup> VIII. 301. <sup>3</sup> VI. 363. <sup>4</sup> VI. 29

fusion, no doubt, desolate the land, not only by bringing actual ruin on the produce of industry, but by cutting off the industrious hands. But here the people are indolent, and content with the bounties supplied to them by nature. If their population increases beyond a balance with the natural supply of these bounties, they starve. Thus do we find, by logical conclusion, a race among whom war and murder have a wholesome social tendency; and it is added to the wrongs committed on the Celt that the law and order to which he has been reduced under the rule of the Saxon have

driven him to starvation." 1

This laborious insult is the one semblance of a suggestion, in Burton's eight volumes (so far as I can remember), that "the Celt" has ever been wronged at all. He at times quotes 2 a testimony to Celtic valour and endurance; he necessarily admits, while assuming Norman influence,3 the immense effect of Welsh literature on that of Europe; he concedes, suicidally enough, that the simplicity of rank among the Celts, in strong contrast to the nomenclature of the German Empire, "was a contrast, too, at variance with the usual notions of the Celtic character, as being showy and boastful;"4 and he could not well suppress the fact that when, at the beginning of the 17th century, the Crown confiscated a large part of the Hebrides, including the whole of the Lewis, the Lowland cultivators who were introduced, "after the usual harassments attending an unsuccessful colonisation, returned to their Lowland homes, tired and disappointed, in the year 1609."5 Nor could he evade mention of the fact that alike in the Highlands and in Ireland "the Celt was excluded from the privilege of the law of peace and war; 6" though he sought, somewhat like Carlyle, to balance matters by dwelling on the counter atrocities of the Irish. But of any perception that fate may be tyrannous to peoples as to men, of any scientific comprehension of the not very obscure sociological problem in hand, these volumes give no sign. Under stress of prejudice the historian becomes misleading even in his facts. By way of enforcing his fallacious proposition that the Celts are bad sailors, he states that when the whale-fishing was at its height, the whalers "used to complete the complement (sic) of their crews from Peterhead, Orkney, and Shetland, but never from the Hebrides or the West Highlands," 7 forgetting the accepted view as to the large Norse element in the Hebrides, and failing to ascertain the well-known fact that in our own day the royal navy has been largely recruited

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> VI. 30-31. <sup>2</sup> VI. 28. <sup>3</sup> I. 172. <sup>4</sup> VI. 32. <sup>5</sup> VI. 37. <sup>6</sup> IV. 341. <sup>7</sup> VI. 25.

from these very Hebrides. In a note on language 1 he asserts that Lowland Scotch has taken virtually nothing from the Celts -only "a few words expressive of things existing in the Highlands, as gilly, claymore, pibroch, and the like." As against this, Professor Mackinnon tells us that Jamieson's Dictionary includes several hundreds of Celtic words; and that where Gaelic-speaking and English-speaking Briton meet on something like equal terms, as in Canada, where the scattered population is not dominated by the presence of a literary order, the reaction becomes increasingly apparent. And when the historian asserts 2 that "men of Irish race, even where they have been for generations severed from their country by the Atlantic, fight out in the streets of the American cities the feuds that shook the British empire in the seventeenth century," we are bound to answer that as a general statement this is not true, and that the Celt in America is not more "clannish" than the Lowland Scot. Where facts thus go astray, it is not to be expected that taste will be right: and we accordingly have from the implacable historian the decision that whereas "the Lowlander's plaid was generally of plain light and dark squares, the Highlander, indulging the natural taste of a lower civilisation, delighted in more gaudy colours." 3 A footnote discloses that the last-century writer Martin, in his Account of the Western Isles,4 paid tribute to the "great deal of ingenuity required in sorting the colours, so as to be agreeable to the nicest fancy." But no foreigner would have learned from Burton that the "higher civilisation" of the Lowlands had in his own day eagerly adopted the very tartans in question; and it would only be by watchful induction he would discover that the colourlessness of the Lowland garb a hundred and fifty years ago was one of the results of the atrophy of art at the Reformation.

It would be unwarrantable to omit notice of the one passage in which, near the end of his work, Burton does something like justice to the Celt on one item—the good behaviour of Prince Charles' men in Edinburgh. The concession is sufficiently qualified:—"It is among the most remarkable instances of the influence which a change in surrounding conditions may have on a people signally retentive of bad practices, that there should have been so little plunder in their marches or their abode in the towns. This may be accounted one of the steps in a moral change which has made the Highlanders of the present day remarkably exempt from predatory offences. There are few humble

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> VIII. 544. <sup>2</sup> I. 175. <sup>3</sup> VIII. 528. <sup>4</sup> P. 207.

people among whom property is more safe from aggression than the still poor dependents of the Highland thieves of old " 1

So habituated has the historian become to regarding the Celt as something "peculiar," that even in verbally recognising such an influence as that of "conditions," he must needs term "remarkable" a phenomenon perfectly normal and natural, and in the same breath proceed to speak as if the remaining bad practices of the Highlanders were perversely independent of causal conditions. When he is dealing with the prevalence and the mischief of smuggling in the Lowlands, he never thinks of attributing the evil to a "signal retention of bad practices": here the economist as well as the Teutophile traces the cause to unwise fiscal legislation. But with the Celt it is different. It is no longer his nature to steal: it even becomes his nature to be honest, so that his honesty perhaps does him no great credit; but it is still his nature to be spontaneously objectionable somehow. And after the one concession, the historiographer proceeds to the other detractions above noted, and revels at length 2 in a demonstration of the "peculiarity" that among the Highlanders before the '45 the gentlemen of the clan were large, strong, and well-fed, and the humbler people small and ill-fed; throwing in a final self-annihilative hint that perhaps the ruling caste were at bottom "of a Gothic race" and only the others truly Celts! As if he had not been describing a social phenomenon common to every nation in the civilised world! And as if that ruling caste were not on his own showing a main factor in all the vices of cruelty, indolence, and predacity which he has all along been charging on "the Celt!"

Such is the fashion in which the best and completest History of Scotland deals with that section of the Scottish people which has given its race-name to the nation, and which, since its real union with the rest, has taken an ever-increasing share in the national performance of every order. One does not call the historian's method ungenerous: one does not look to him to be generous but to be in the barest sense just—that is, to be scientific; and on the contrary he is found carrying injustice to the extremes of farce, and compendiously leaving science out of the question. I should be sorry to seem, in discussing such malfeasance, to overlook the merit, the learning, the judgment, which mark the work in other regards, and which will probably keep it long in possession of the field even if all the foregoing strictures become unquestioned commonplaces. They point to an almost

unique flaw in the historian's intelligence, which will doubtless be one day classed as one of the follies of the wise. But the flaw is at least serious enough to call for this much exposure. Human folly becomes rather a dismal thing when it strikes a deep rift of unreason through the laborious work of an industrious and capable scholar, and leaves the readers for whom he wrote divided between disgust and derision. In the circumstances the best service all round would seem to be to try to show precisely the extent of the flaw.

### § 5.

It remains to seek for critical explanations; and in looking for the causes of Burton's wrongdoing, as we have sought reasons for more general historic phenomena, one finds some light in the antecedents. To begin with, his Celtophobia seems to have been partly developed by way of a crude sociological reaction against the way of looking at things Celtic which had been set up or strengthened by the sympathetic genius of Sir Walter Scott. After centuries in which Lowland Scots and Englishmen alike had been wont for the most part to regard the Highlander as an insufferable savage, Scott suddenly presented him to the world in colours of poetry on a background of thrilling romance. Scott indeed had not begun the sympathetic movement: the falsetto prose-poetry of "Ossian," concocted by Macpherson on the nuclei of fragments of genuine old Celtic poetry, had had, despite damaging criticism, a wonderful success throughout Europe, supplying as it did a new flavour to a world which was on the way to breaking with worn-out convention and tradition in many things; and the new romantic movement set up in Germany tended in the same direction; so that there was a set of taste towards things Celtic before Scott reinforced it. Indeed, before his time one of the ablest of Scotch scholars, Pinkerton, had had to battle with a good deal of uncritical doctrine concerning supposititious proto-Celtic civilisation. But

The rejection of later forms of this doctrine is the sole reasonable element in the work entitled Celticism a Myth, by J. C. Roger, F.R.A.S., etc., (2nd ed. 1889) a brawling book, whose spirit may be gathered from its deliverances:—"I believe that no man of Celtic race 'ever attained real greatness in literature, science, art, political or military life,' only, I very much doubt if such a thing as 'pure Celtic blood' anywhere exists" (pp. 14-15): "I am content to believe myself of that great Teutonic stock which has ruled the world in the past, and will rule it to the end of time" (pref.). Such are the judgments and tempers to which Burton's ethnography appeals.

Scott's genius at once multiplied tenfold what movement there was, creating not only in Scotland and England but in France and Germany an æsthetic passion for everything Highland. And the salutary result remains to this day, in the modern habit among Lowland Scots of broadly identifying their country with its "Celtic" population, who are so much the most picturesque element in it—this despite all the efforts of Burton, and despite the fact that in the national poet, Burns, there is practically no trace of the new spirit.<sup>1</sup>

It was against this attitude, which had been popular for a generation before, that Burton reacted; and he did so not merely because of his prejudice but because of the way in which that had been reinforced by his training. One of his earlier works is a forgotten treatise on Political Economy, peculiarly arid in its kind, which shows him to have been one of the narrowest of the post-Smithian school of laissezfaire capitalism and competition. Such a thinker, unless safeguarded by a special sympathy, was almost sure to resist what he would regard as the sentimental way of looking at Highland life, past and present; and it is instructive for progressive people to-day to reflect that much of what stood for Liberalism in Burton's youth—the middle-class revolt against landlordism —could be thus fatally narrow in its view of an important social problem, while the Tory Scott, often narrow and foolish and bigoted enough in his attitude to different problems, could yet in virtue of his literary instincts and sympathies rise to a humaner and saner view 2 where many of the so-called Liberals were hidebound in class prejudice.<sup>3</sup> Nowhere was the narrowing down of Smith to commercial purposes more zealously pursued than in Scotland; and Burton was influenced by the specialists in the study. Somewhat thus it came about that the fibre of wooden prejudice in his personality survived all the rationalising influence of the utilitarianism of Bentham, whose works he edited, and of the analytic philosophy of Hume, whose Life he wrote. Burton seems to have been a man in part naturally cut out for a bigot,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Burns's poem to "Highland Mary"—inferior work as it is—would no doubt help to create good feeling; but he shows none of Scott's interest in the past of the Highland race.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Mr Bonar, it is true, remarks of Scott's pictures in Waverley and other novels that "it is the distress of the chiefs that is tragic to him, rather than the misery of the clansmen" (Malthus and his Work, p. 189). But, granting this, it remains true that Scott takes a sympathetic view of the clansmen as men. Compare Rob Roy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cp. Macaulay (chap. XVII., end), as to Tories and Irish last century.

who somehow was delivered from the religious bigotry of his native land only to become an unavowed rationalist with a certain sociological bigotry in place of a religious. His sociological training, such as it was, had doubtless much to do with his notably impartial treatment of a number of national and religious issues in Scottish history which before his time had almost never been treated impartially; but his narrow economics, derived from M'Culloch, coinciding with his irrational prejudice against the "race" which a kindlier sentiment had been idealising among his countrymen and elsewhere in recent times, served to make him a typical bigot among historians in regard to that theme. For him, Celtic history was to be read in terms of the gospel, not of Ricardo, who, be it repeated, was a scientific analyst, but of the adaptors of Ricardo, who were the mere champions of the modern commercial form of society. And the fact that the very high-priest of that cult, of whose economics his own was a restatement, bore a Celtic name 1 while exhibiting an ideally "Saxon" stolidity of temperament, seems never to have availed to shake Burton's confidence in his machine-made solution of the Celtic problem. The Celts had remained poor: then it must be because they were not industrious. They had been cattlestealers at a later period than most of their Lowland neighbours: then they were hereditarily prone to theft. Highland agriculture, albeit on the worst land, was worse than Lowland: then the Celt was anti-agricultural. Q. E. D. His own belief appears to have been that a large percentage of the Highland population was of Teutonic descent; yet he could not so far curb the animus underlying his knowledge as to abstain from setting down the backwardness of the whole Gaelic-speaking population to "Celtic" blood.

The folly of it all is made clear to the intelligence even of the man in the street by the abundant commercial success of the Highland element in Glasgow; and by the all-round success of the same element in Canada and in every other British colony. But the written folly remains, to stimulate still the unreason of the unreasonable when a new question of racial spite arises; yet also to hold up the writer to wiser readers in days to come as a warning of the havoc that a prejudice can work in the intelligence of a historian.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> While the Gordons, Frazers, Chisholms, and some other clans, are loosely classed as "Norman" because called by the names of Norman chiefs, and others are similarly classed as Norse and Flemish, the MacCullochs seem to pass as "Celts," though the Macaulays are said to be Norse, like the Macleods and Macdougalls.

#### J. R. GREEN ON CELTS AND TEUTONS.

§ 1.

It is with much change of feeling that one proceeds from a criticism of Burton's treatment of the Celtic element in Scottish history to a study of John Richard Green's treatment of the Celtic element in early English history. The procedures are as different as the men. Green's sympathetic and kindly nature was incapable of the stolid animosity which, as we have seen, lowers Burton's history in this connection to a mere string of inconsistent aspersions. Green had not had his philosophy of life prematurely moulded, as was Burton's, by a sectarian conception of political economy; and he was constitutionally free of the wilful obstinacy which meets reason with accumulations of sophistry. He seems to have gone on growing mentally to the end, inwardly reshaping his creed in spontaneous loyalty to all new light that reached him. Hence there is something ungrateful in the task of criticising him, especially when one remembers his avowal: "I am only too conscious of the faults and oversights in a work much of which has been written in hours of weakness and ill health," and when one recalls the worn fine face presented by his portrait. It may be possible, however, to set forth some of the shortcomings of his work, in the present connection, without wounding the sympathies he so justly inspired, and without making light of his real merits.

The "Short History of the English People" stands out from its predecessors and rivals in respect of the constant vivacity with which it seeks to bring home all episodes and phases of history to the living recognition of the reader. Green is not content to narrate, or even to comment: he must almost dramatise the most distant and fugitive facts, he must generalise the vaguest forms of knowledge, in a fashion which seems a blend of the method of the literary pulpit and the method of Carlyle. And the wish, in itself so laudable, to make all know-

ledge vital and didactic, finally runs away with the historic function, so that we get word-pictures with colours in them that are not to be found in the authorities, and generalisations so frequent and so far in excess of the real knowledge in hand that they would move us to distrust even if they did not constantly contradict each other. This, however, they do. Green was so possessed by the impulse to generalise that he undertook to reduce to formulas the whole facts of the life of every generation, alike in periods where his matter was too scanty to allow of any save the slightest inference, and in periods where the matter is so abundant and complex that inference must needs be vigilant to the uttermost. And his abundant generalisations are so lightly come by, so hand-to-mouth, so wanting in circumspection, that they upset each other faster than the considerate reader can scrutinise them. To read Green's pages, accordingly, is often to have the sensation of turning a kaleidoscope. Full as he was of a brave industry, it is pathetically intelligible that he should have recoiled from facing the truth that sound thinking is apt to be hard work—harder than even hard reading. His book, in short, has the "defect of its quality." Its great merit is the constant play of ideas, the constant stimulus to thought. Its great demerit is the lack of care with which the ideas are thrown out, the failure to check one by another, and to subject all to critical revision.

We have here to consider how his way of work exhibits itself in his occasional handling of the question of Celtic and Teutonic race-differences. That he set out with an unreasoned Teutonic bias is shown at the outset by his singular dictum that "no spot in Britain can be so sacred to Englishmen as that which first felt (!) the tread of English feet." He wrote for a nation of which millions must be descended from non-Saxon ancestors; and those first comers to whom he points were, on his own showing, troops of ferocious ruffians, who tossed babies on their spears. We might as reasonably reverence the cannibals of an earlier stage in our ancestry, or the pithecoid men of an earlier stage still. Yet Green makes the appeal for reverence in all seriousness. And that he set out with some of the old cut-anddry ethnological presuppositions is shown by his comment on the literature of mediæval Wales: "In the Celtic love of woman there is little of the Teutonic depth and earnestness" 2—a phrase which tells of all the arbitrary absurdity that has ever entered into the discussion. In Green's own history before this time

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Short History, p. 7. <sup>2</sup> Id., p. 157.

there is absolutely nothing to show any special "depth and earnestness" in the Teutonic love of woman; and it is the fact that the earliest English literature in which there is any show of imaginative depth and earnestness in the treatment of sex love—apart from Chaucer, who drew on the French trouvères —is Malory's rendering of the Welsh Arthurian legends. The sole basis for the dogma is the old datum as to the monogyny of the ancient Teutons,—a monogyny which, supposing it to be real, we have seen to be presumably a matter of their climatic, economic, and culture conditions, like the monogyny of the working class in Turkey at this moment, since we know it to have been followed by gross profligacy as soon as the race entered on luxurious conditions of life. That Green was but thoughtlessly echoing a current formula is shown by the more spontaneous comments which follow on that cited. On the strength of one sentence from Gwalchmai he finds the Welsh lover a little of a butterfly, but full of a "childlike spirit of delicate enjoyment, a faint distant flush of passion like the rose-light of dawn on a snowy mountain-peak," and so on, as he puts it in a style which may or may not be Teutonic. But after another citation he decides that "the touch of pure fancy removes its object out of the sphere of passion into one of delight and reverence." Then is the spirit of "delight and reverence" something distant from that of "depth and earnestness?" Or is it "passion" that constitutes the latter qualities? And is it in modern Germany, where the average wife is more of a domestic servant to her husband than in either England or France, that we are to look for the deep Teutonic development of "passion," as compared with the "Celtic" forms of it seen in the fiction and the life of modern Gaul?

When we work down to the bases, or at least the first forms, of Green's conception of the two race-natures, we find that his whole plan consists in characterising as special to the race whatever for the time being it happens to say or do. In one page, we read of the Northumbrian peasantry in the days of Cuthbert that "with Teutonic indifference they yielded to their thegns in nominally accepting the new Christianity as these had yielded to the king"—an odd illustration of the "depth and earnestness" of the race's character. "But they retained their old superstition side by side with the new worship: plague or mishap drove them back to a reliance on their heathen charms and amulets"—even as fickle Celts might go. Turning the leaf, we find 2

that "Cædmon is a type of the new grandeur, depth, and fervour of tone which the German race was to give to the religion of the East"; and Cædmon and the Germans get credit for a new and lofty conception of the devil. "The human energy of the German race, its sense of the might of individual manhood, transformed in Cædmon's verse the Hebrew Tempter into a rebel Satan, disdainful of vassalage to God"—as if Oriental legend had not given the conception to the West ready made. But even in the defiance of Satan "we catch the new pathetic note which the Northern melancholy was to give to our poetry"; and the "English temperament" is declared to have shown "its sense of the vague, vast mystery of the world and of man, its dreamy revolt against the narrow bounds of experience and life." Turning back to the chapter on Welsh literature, we find 1 that "the sensibility of the Celtic temper . . . is tempered by a passionate melancholy that expresses its revolt against the impossible." Thus can men draw up characters for nations. Yet again, the Teutonic mind is credited 2 with re-creating the doctrine of the Atonement by "an elaborate code of sin and penance, in which the principle of compensation, which lay at the root of Teutonic legislation, crept into the relations between God and the soul." As if the said principle of compensation were not developed to the uttermost in the Judaic code to begin with; and as if that were an illustration of "new grandeur, depth and fervour of tone," in religious thought.

# § 2.

On the general sociological question, Green's decisions are just as ill-established. He sets out, of course, with the assumption that the Teutonic invaders killed all of the Britons who did not fly to Wales or Cornwall. "The extermination of the Briton was but the prelude to the settlement of his conqueror. What strikes us at once in the new England is, that it was the one purely German nation that rose upon the wreck of Rome." This proceeds upon the phraseology of the Saxon Chronicle, which tells how, for instance, when Œlla and Cissa beset Anderida they "slew all that were therein, nor was there afterwards one Briton left." But we know that this kind of statement is often of no value in old narratives by writers better informed and more trustworthy than the retrospective Saxon chroniclers. Cæsar in the second book of his Commentaries on

the Gallic War, as we have seen, speaks of the Nervii as virtually exterminated in his great battle with them, whereas they are found energetically at war with him again in the fifth book. He had put down his impression of the facts at the time of the great battle: it afterwards turned out to be a mistake; yet he did not rectify his first statement. It is extremely unlikely, from all we know of the Germanic tribes, that they would not try to take captives, to make them slaves. Green indeed admits 1 in this very connection that "it is possible that a few of the vanquished people may have lingered as slaves round the homesteads of their English conquerors; and a few of their household words (if these were not brought in at a later time 2) mingled oddly with the English tongue." Oddly indeed, if there were so few survivors. All the real evidence points to the absorption, despite bloody massacres, of a large part of the conquered race, here as elsewhere. Green expressly states 3 that in the conquest of South-eastern Wales by Offa in the eighth century, "as in the later conquests of the West-Saxons, we find the old plan of extermination definitely abandoned. The Welsh who chose to remain dwelt undisturbed among their English conquerors." Now, the value of the record at this point is high; whereas in regard to the account of the proceedings of the fifth century it is very low. And Green admits 4 that "we hardly know anything of the conquest of Mid-Britain, and little more of the conquest of the North." In all probability Offa compromised so readily with the Welsh just because there was already a great deal of Welsh blood in Mercia. Other scholars are now satisfied that many Britons were left in Central as in Western England, in the district of Deira, now Yorkshire, in Northumberland, Durham, and the East Scottish Lowlands.<sup>5</sup> And that Green had been proceeding less on his own study than on a foregone conception is shown by the oblivious way in which, after inserting the above cited passage on the absorption of the Eastern Welsh, he describes 6 the outcome of the Danish invasion of the ninth century:-

"The first sight of the Danes is as if the hand on the dial of history had gone back three hundred years. The same Norwegian fiords, the same Frisian sandbanks, pour forth their pirate fleets as in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> P. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Query, What time? The "few" words are found to amount to some scores. <sup>3</sup> P. 39. <sup>4</sup> P. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Prof. Sullivan, in Encyc. Brit. art on Celtic Literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Pp. 42-43.

days of Hengest and Cerdic. There is the same wild panic as the black boats of the invaders strike inland along the river reaches, or moor round the river islets, the same sights of horror-firing of homesteads, slaughter of men, women driven off to slavery and shame, children tossed on pikes or sold in the market-place" [this after the express denial that there was any attempt by the first Saxons to keep captives] "as when the English invaders attacked Britain. Christian priests were again slain at the altar by worshippers of Woden, for the Danes were still heathen. Letters, arts, religion, governments disappeared before these Northmen as before the Northmen of old. But when the wild burst of the storm was over, land, people, government reappeared unchanged; England still remained England; the Danes sank quietly into the mass of those around them; and Woden yielded without a struggle to Christ. The secret of this difference between the two invasions was that the battle was no longer between men of different races. It was no longer a fight between Briton and German, between Englishman and Welshman. . . . Nowhere over Europe was the fight so fierce because nowhere else were the combatants men of one blood and one speech. But just for this reason the fusion of the Northmen with their foes was nowhere so peaceful and complete."

All the risks of the didactic-picturesque method of writing history are here signally illustrated. We had just been told of the complete and peaceful fusion of a mass of Britons with the Saxons under Offa, despite the difference of race and language; and we are to learn a few pages further on 1 that in the Scotch Lothians "the Scot kings were absorbed into the mass of their English subjects, and renounced their old Gaelic for the English tongue." We are in the same breath told that the fusion of Saxon and Dane came by way of an excessively fierce struggle, and that it was exceptionally "peaceful and complete" because of the identity of race. We are further told that "Woden yielded without a struggle to Christ." Yet on the next page we learn that the readiness of Northumbria, Mercia, and East-Anglia to accept of the Danish overlordship, as being preferable to that of the West-Saxons, "was another sign of the enormous difficulty of welding these kingdoms together into a single people"; and for a number of pages further we are to read of the retention of Danish laws where the Danes were strong, of the treacherous massacre of Danes in the year 1002, and of the four years of Swegen's revenge; the chapter closing with the statement that "Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria remained separate political bodies which no efforts of force or policy seemed able to fuse." The formulas as to fusion without change are merely haphazard rhetoric, which is summarily quashed by the fresh generalisation in the next chapter 1 that

"Under Dane, Norman, or Angevin, Englishmen were a subject race, conquered and ruled by foreign masters; and yet it was in these years of slavery that England really became the England that we know."

It becomes clear that Green generalised on the spur of the moment, as he went along, without pausing to check one thesis by another, without any going back to reconcile the medley. The result is that one almost ceases to attach any value to his summaries of periods. In the revised and illustrated posthumous edition published a few years ago, some of his generalisations are silently transformed, such as that on the legendary outcry of England against King John's submission to the Pope; but that is only one of many hasty propositions, being indeed partially based on apparent documentary evidence, whereas many of his general statements are gratuitous formulas, reached by imagination.

§ 3.

Returning to his estimates of Celtic and Teutonic character values, we find him yet again cancelling some of the most notable of his own generalisations. At the outset we are struck by the fact that, churchman as he was, he is ready to see more good in heathenism than in the contemporary Christianity; and indeed it is notable that, with his temperamental bias to a religious view of things, he is as a rule unhesitating in his avowals of the historic demerits of his order and his church. But it seems as if often it were only sentiment driving out sentiment. "The rage of the [Saxon] conquerors," he writes 2 "burnt fiercest against the clergy. River and homestead and boundary, the very days of the week, bore the names of the new Gods who displaced Christ. But if England for the moment seemed a waste from which all the civilization of the world had fled away, it contained within itself the germs of a nobler life than that which had been destroyed." Now, it is possible to construe the last sentence in a way which will reduce it to abstract truth; but the process reduces it at the same time to insignificance. As it stands, it inevitably suggests that the old British society was not only imperfect but contained within itself no "germs" capable

of development. That would be a monstrous statement, seeing that on a similar basis to that of British Gaul was reared whatever of progressive civilisation Europe reachieved. The Britons certainly had among them as many "germs" of nobler life as had the ferocious horde who invaded them. Nor does Green's own history, finally, give the slightest proof that there were any "germs of nobler life" among the first Saxon invaders. He explicitly admits later, as we have seen, that after five hundred years of chronic intestine war the English seemed no nearer peaceful organisation than at the start; and the slight progress the race made in civilisation in that immense space of time was wholly due to foreign influences—the influence of the lettered Romish priesthood, Irish and Continental, and of European commerce. Why then is the formula about "germs" presented to us? All that survives of the proposition, on scrutiny, is the abstract fact that after some six or seven hundred weary years of semi-barbarism and bloodshed, including a fresh murderous conquest of Saxondom by Danes, and a further murderous conquest of the whole by Normans, there were to ensue some developments of art, science, and letters. If more then be asserted—if it be meant that the life of the first Saxons was nobler than that of the Roman Britons, the disproof lies in the next few pages. The invaders were admittedly semi-savages, who tossed children on pikes, flogged slaves to death, and burned alive women who ran away from bondage. It is only the long subsequent life of their remote descendants, mixed with foreign races, that can be pretended to show any progress in ethics. Would the historian then have ventured to suggest that the same or higher developments could not have taken place on the bases of the Romano-British civilisation had these been left untouched by Teutonic barbarism? It seems inconceivable; yet if he did not mean that the whole passage is but verbiage.

And when we turn to his record of and comment on the early history of the Irish Church, it would seem as if the idea of there being some "nobler germs" in Teutonic than in Celtic blood had been at least temporarily in Green's mind. He has a passage on the relative development of the Irish and English churches which almost necessarily implies that assumption, though it is confounded many times over by his own later propositions.

"Trivial, in fact, as were the points of difference which severed the Roman Church from the Irish, the question to which communion Northumbria should belong [in the seventh century] was of immense moment to the after fortunes of England. Had the church of Aidan

finally won [in the dispute on the keeping of Easter by the Eastern or the Western calendar] the later ecclesiastical history of England would probably have resembled that of Ireland. Devoid of that power of organisation which was the strength of the Roman Church, the Celtic Church in its own Irish home took the clan system of the country as the basis of church government. Trivial quarrels and ecclesiastical controversies became inextricably confounded: and the clergy, robbed of all really spiritual influence, contributed no element save that of disorder to the state. Hundreds of wandering bishops, a vast religious authority wielded by hereditary chieftains, the dissociation of piety from morality, the absence of those larger and more humanizing influences which contact with a wider world alone can give, this is the picture which the Irish Church of later times presents to us. It was from such a chaos as this that England was saved by the victory of Rome in the Synod of Whitby." 1

Here again we have a generalisation made from hand to mouth, under some sectarian side-influence, without regard to the bulk of the relevant facts. It might be summarily disposed-of by reference to the simple facts that Ireland later became the typically docile branch of the Roman Church, and that a few pages earlier <sup>2</sup> the historian had been exhibiting the early Celtic Church as possessing an unparalleled power of organisation.

"While the vigour of Christianity in Italy and Gaul and Spain was exhausted in a bare struggle for life, Ireland, which remained unscourged by invaders, drew from its conversion an energy such as it has never known since. Christianity had been received there with a burst of popular enthusiasm, and letters and arts sprang up rapidly in its train. The science and Biblical knowledge which fled from the Continent took refuge in famous schools which make Durrow and Armagh the universities of the West. The new Christian life soon beat too strongly to brook confinement within the bounds of Ireland itself. Patrick, the first missionary of the island, had not been half a century dead when Irish Christianity flung itself with a fiery zeal into battle with the mass of heathenism which was rolling in upon the Christian world. Irish missionaries laboured among the Picts of the Highlands and among the Frisians of the northern seas. An Irish missionary, Columban, founded monasteries in Burgundy and the Apennines. The canton of St Gall still commemorates in its name another Irish missionary . . . [beside] . . . the Lake of Constance. For a time it seemed as if . . . Celtic and not Latin Christianity was to mould the destinies of the Churches of the West."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Pp. 28-29.

This is a sufficiently headlong account of the matter; but in any case it quashes once for all the other passage cited as to the inherent lack of power of organisation in the primitive Irish Church. It is difficult to understand how one man could write both.

What happened in Ireland later, obviously, was not any mysterious loss of "power" of organisation, but simply a natural absorption of the sections of the Church into the different political interests, just as the Romish Church itself broke up later, and the Anglican still later, and as the Churches in England at this moment are being divided by the conflicting interests of classes. The early missionarism represented no united Irish Christianity, but simply certain centres of Christian zeal set up in Ireland. That the clergy "contributed no element save that of disorder to the state" is true of ancient Ireland as it is substantially true of all Christendom, age after age. And the historian, after speaking of the Irish priesthood as being in a special degree "robbed of all really spiritual influence," goes on obliviously to avow again and again that the English clergy, despite their Romanised organisation, were in the same case. We track these avowals through centuries of the record. Of the sequelæ of the Norman conquest we are told 1 that

"The occupation of every see and abbacy by strangers who could only speak to their flocks in an unknown tongue converted religion from a superstition to a reality as it passed from the priest to the people, and hermit and friar carried spiritual life home to the heart of the nation at large."

Just before, under Edward the Confessor,

"The Church sank into lethargy. . . . Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was the adherent of an anti-pope, and the highest dignity of the English Church was deliberately kept in a state of suspension. No ecclesiastical synod, no Church reform, broke the slumbers of its clergy." 2

Again:3

"The Conquest, as we have seen, had robbed the Church of all moral power"—

—exactly what was said to have happened in Ireland through Celtic deficiency in "power of organisation." To be sure, there

<sup>1</sup> P. 60. <sup>2</sup> P. 66. <sup>3</sup> P. 86.

is a fresh somersault to be turned when, after the account of the horrors of cruelty and anarchy in the reign of Stephen, we learn <sup>1</sup> that "England was rescued from this chaos of misrule by the efforts of the Church"—the simple fact being that the then Archbishop of Canterbury took an active part in inviting Henry the Second to come to England to secure the succession to the crown. After that, we revert to the *status quo*. In the satire of Walter Map, in the thirteenth century,

"Picture after picture strips the veil from the corruption of the mediæval Church, its indolence, its thirst for gain, its secret immorality." 2

As for the Roman organisation, Archbishop Langton, "churchman as he was, protested against the royal homage to the Pope"3 rendered by King John; and the Pope in turn formally annulled the Great Charter.4 As regards culture, physical science, "so long crushed as magic by the dominant ecclesiasticism," 5 was only revived by Moslem contact. The Roman organisation flourishing, "presentations to benefices were sold in the papal market, while Italian clergy were quartered on the best livings of the Church," so that a large section of the population declared that they "preferred to die rather than be ruined by the Romans."6 Thus the salutary organisation found that "its religious hold on the people was loosening day by day;"7 and when an Archbishop of York was excommunicated, "the people blessed him the more, the more the Pope cursed him," even as might have happened in Hibernia. And it was not only the gifted organisation of Rome, with its power of curing chaos, that thus worked ill. England, saved from chaos, was yet tolerably chaotic:

"The same loss of spiritual power, the same severance from national feeling, was seen [13th c.] in the English Church itself. Plundered and humiliated as they were by Rome, the worldliness of the bishops, the oppression of their ecclesiastical courts, the disuse of preaching, the decline of the monastic orders into rich landowners, the non-residence and ignorance of the parish priests, robbed the clergy"—once more! "of all spiritual influence." 8

Thus it came about that, when forced by Edward I. to take part in Parliament, the clergy "sat jealously by themselves," and finally "flung away a power which, had they retained it, would

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> P. 99. <sup>2</sup> P. 115. <sup>3</sup> P. 122. <sup>4</sup> P. 125. <sup>5</sup> P. 133. <sup>6</sup> P. 139. <sup>7</sup> P. 143. <sup>8</sup> P. 144.

have ruinously hampered the healthy development of the state." <sup>1</sup> So that the generalisation as to the blessed differentiation between the systems of the English and Irish branches of the Catholic Church ends in smoke.

Who will may follow the track further, noting the English Church in the fourteenth century as "shrivelled into a selfseeking secular priesthood"2-"Never had her spiritual or moral hold on the nation been less 3"-small as it has seemed at all points of our survey. "If extortion and tyranny . . . severed the English clergy from the Papacy, their own selfishness severed them from the nation at large." 4 And so on, through the ages, till we learn, 5 after the Restoration, that the Church of England "stands alone among all the religious bodies of Western Christendom in its failure through two hundred years to devise a single new service of prayer or praise." We are forced to conclude that the historian, after putting down certain generalisations at a venture, has forgotten all about them, making fresh generalisations of contrary purport with no sense of anything being wrong. Thus one by one every general principle he has laid down concerning Celtic and Teutonic characteristics is destroyed by his own commentary as well as by his narrative.

It is unnecessary, in this connection, to carry criticism of Green's work any further. I am the less desirous to do so because, apart from the conventional falsisms above dealt with, he shows no persistent racial animosity. His account of the later relations between Ireland and England is substantially impartial, and when he speaks 6 of the "tenacious obstinacy" of the Celtic race, it is not with any air of making "tenacity" a vice in Celts, as is done at times by those wiseacres who quote Cæsar on the fickleness of the Galli and make "persistence" a merit in Teutons. Green's history, in fact, becomes more solid and more sober as he approaches the modern period, in which he was supposed to take a less vivid interest, but for which he had so much more material, so much better guidance, than for his presentment of what he later called "the making of England"—in defiance of his own avowal that the making of England took place from the Danish Conquest to the time of Edward the First. His weakness for hand-to-mouth generalisa-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> P. 174. <sup>2</sup> P. 216. <sup>3</sup> P. 227.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> P. 230. <sup>5</sup> P. 610. <sup>6</sup> P. 444

tion subsists, of course, even when he gets past that period; so that among others we have the unhappy dictum1 that the invention of the Cabinet system by Lord Sunderland, "a man whose political character was of the lowest type," at a time when the character of Parliament had fallen about as low, proves the "inborn political capacity of the English mind." But it is significant that Green's worst miscarriages occur where, dealing with the remote facts of race history, he catches at those formulas of race characterisation which, as we have seen, are in origin but the devices of unscientific men to make ignorant prejudice pass for knowledge. That such a sympathetic spirit could be satisfied with such formulas is indeed a reason for refusing to suppose that they always promote malice, or that it is merely malice which embraces them; but on the other hand the tissue of contradiction into which they have led such a historian is one more lesson to others, if any more be needed, of the utter vanity of racial prepossessions as lights on racial history. Green was without doubt a conscientious historian; but the study of him leaves us realising that the ideal historian must be more conscientious still. He must learn that his reflections, his theories, his generalities, need to be as narrowly tested as his facts-nay, much more narrowly, because where a fact may be established by a few documents, a sound generalisation can be framed only by taking into account at once all the relevant facts known, and reasoning on them with a vigilance of logic proportionate to the scope of the truth at stake.

## VI.

## THE DUKE OF ARGYLL ON IRISH HISTORY.

It is a somewhat piquant fact in the sociological discussion over Ireland that one of the most zealous, vivacious, and ingenious of the special pleadings against "the Celt" in his Irish aspect is the work of one who is commonly regarded as a Celtic chief. Whether the Duke of Argyll be really a Celt in any sense is put by himself in a little doubt. He speaks 1 of "Scotchmen who, like myself, have the same special share that he Edward Bruce had in the ancient Celtic blood of the Irish Scoti." Now, the Bruces were a Norman house, who had married into the Scoto-Celtic royal family after it had been mixed with the Saxon line, so that the "special share" of the ancient Celtic blood in their veins must have been very special indeed to be recognisable. If the Duke is not more Celtic than that, he may feel quite complacent over the difference between his ancestry and that of most of the men who pay his rents. Under the guidance of Dr Hill Burton, many of our modern Highland chiefs have had that solace.

For the purposes of this discussion, however, it matters very little how "the MacCallum More" came to have his Celtic name and following. We have to do with his Grace's politics and historiography, not his pedigree. He has the creditable status of being one of the very few Dukes who can write; and in his Irish Nationalism: an appeal to History, he has done something to meet the reproach of Mr Gladstone, that Unionists as a rule fight very shy of history. He has indeed given Mr Gladstone a fall on the very ground on which he so confidently challenged attack; the Duke's great advantage in the polemic being that he had some of Mr Gladstone's historic formulas to

<sup>1</sup> Irish Nationalism, p. 114.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "The great MacCallum"—the proverbial Gaelic appellation of the head of the house of Argyll. Callum seems to equate with Campbell, which is pronounced Cammel; but the name as spelt is traced to the form Campobello, and so connected with the Normans.

grip upon. Mr Gladstone is an inexact and unscientific writer and thinker, who in a dispute of any breadth is pretty sure to give fine opportunities to an antagonist; and the Duke of Argyll in this case makes the very most of those presented to him. Not that he in turn is exact or scientific: he is really not more so than Mr Gladstone, whose intellectual history corresponds rather closely in some ways with his own. In both men the decisive intellectual limitation exhibits itself in their way of maintaining the opinions in which they were born and bred; and if Mr Gladstone has in certain respects delivered himself from his inheritance where the Duke has not, it may be rather by reason of the pressure of accidents, of political circumstances, than by force of any greater capacity of overruling prejudice at the behest of truth. What neither man has ever done is to pass through the discipline of reluctantly realising that certain of his inherited beliefs are delusions, and of reaching sounder conviction, not by way of mere adaptation to circumstances but by dint of patient analysis and loyal logic. And it may be said with confidence that no man ever attains efficiency as a thinker who has not gone through that experience. The final mark of philosophic mediocrity (by which is not at all meant mediocrity in general capacity) is a persistent adherence either to inherited dogmas or to opinions which are merely the expression of self-interest. When it is possible to feel concerning a disputant, that if born a Mohammedan he would have defended Islam as he defends Christism, or that if born a workman or peasant he would have disliked landlordism as much as he now esteems it, he ceases to be for us anything like a first-rate intellectual force. And that, unfortunately, is how Mr Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll, industrious reasoners as they are, have taught us to feel concerning them. In the case of the Duke one sometimes wonders whether a totally different fortune, to begin with, might not have developed in him a more valid capacity. Born to the purple, and desultorily educated, he began in his youth vindicating the opinions he had received from his surroundings, exhibiting in the process intelligence, dexterity, fair application, literary talent—everything but that vital power of reconsideration, that height of outlook, which marks a man out as really a true or great thinker. Had the young peer been a young commoner, born to labour rather than to dilettantism, he might perchance have turned out differently. But then a peer has such boons of leisure and freedom of view, that if he has but the requisite brain convolutions he ought surely to come to the

use of them. We end by suspecting that the defect is congenital, and that, save for what might have been gained to each mind by a rational culture and discipline from childhood, the Duke and Mr Gladstone alike have made the most of their potentialities.

In this case, the result is indirectly edifying. Mr Gladstone, after living to a ripe age in the midst of affairs, suddenly published his decision that it would be a good thing to concede Home Rule to Ireland. He states as the reason for the suddenness of his decision that he could not before 1885 have foreseen that Mr Parnell and his party would be willing to accept Home Rule without Separation.1 Yet Mr Gladstone does not pretend that he had ever indicated willingness to concede Home Rule to those who formerly asked for it, without Separation. He avows that the subject had been in his mind before the time of his decision, and that he had yet never taken one of his colleagues into his confidence. He contends that this was a perfectly proper line of action.<sup>2</sup> And such is his idea of the way in which great political reforms are to be carried, that he apparently expected his party in mass to accept his decision, and to grant Home Rule to Ireland, without preparation, without gradual persuasion, without any semblance of a transition stage between the attitude of utter repudiation of Home Rule and the attitude of acceptance. To judge from this and other declarations, Mr Gladstone believes that the business of a political leader is not to educate the electorate, not to plan future courses on principle, not to create any body of coherent political opinion, but simply to wait for the upshot of elections, and propose bills in terms of the position of parties. This last, as a matter of fact, is what he did in the case of Home Rule. But inasmuch as he continued to agitate vigorously for Home Rule after his first defeat, in the face of a heavy majority, it is clear that he does not consistently adapt his policy to the state of parties, but that on the contrary he strives determinedly to bring the balance of parties round to his policy, once he has embraced one. The trouble is, that his choice of policy to begin with, though always the expression of a real concern for justice and righteousness, has never been guided by any reasoned set of political principles. He is, in brief, an opportunist; and the reason why he has had so much success of esteem as well as of achievement is that after all he is an opportunist with a conscience—a paradoxical combination which has bewildered as well as exasperated opponents. If Mr

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Special Aspects of the Irish Question, p. 5. <sup>2</sup> Id., p. 6.

Gladstone had fought connectedly and foreseeingly for good causes, taking them up on principle before he was in any way coerced to it, with half the zeal and power with which he has fought for them after they had become identified with his leadership and his retention or recovery of power, he would easily rank as the best and greatest of modern statesmen. As it is, he still ranks among the most benevolent; but for the advantage given by his moral prestige the cause of Liberalism has had to pay a heavy penalty in chronic confusion and loss of character for consistency.

As regards the Irish question, Mr Gladstone's later utterances of course condemn his earlier practice, or at least convict him of long failure to see what he now declares to be the truth. When he was of mature age, he applauded the Act of Union, which he now declares to have been a disgraceful performance. In his old age he began to indict England as the cause of all Ireland's woes from the Strongbow invasion onwards. If the truth be so, he ought to have known and acted upon it long ago, the history of the matter being as legible to him then as now. Reaching his conclusions thus behind time and in haste, he has put part of the case loosely and rhetorically: and here it is that he gives the Duke of Argyll his opportunity. "Who," Mr Gladstone asked, in reply to some of the customary charges of Englishmen against the Irish,—"Who made the Irishman? The Irish, in very old times indeed, if you go back to the earlier stages of Christianity, were among the leaders of Christendom. But we went among them: we sent among them members of our own race. These were mixed with the Irish; and ever since our blood has been mixed with theirs there has been endless trouble and difficulty." This, of course, is very loose rhetoric. The Irish had ceased to be in any sense leaders in Christendom for centuries before the Norman invasion; their life had been full of trouble and difficulty during these centuries, and before; and their civilisation showed few or no signs of progress at the moment of Norman intervention. The "we," too, is of course a very loose way of speaking. To identify ourselves with our supposed ancestors of seven hundred years ago can help nobody to realise past events. By the use of such language, Mr Gladstone has given critical people the right to distrust him as an interpreter of political history. Even when he asserts that "Ireland for more than seven hundred years has been part of the British territory, and has been with slight exceptions held by

<sup>1</sup> Speech cited from Times, May 12, 1887.

English arms, or governed in the last resort from this side of the water," he is gratuitously misleading, seeing that during whole centuries of the period marked-off, Ireland was only in small part held by English arms, or governed from England in first or last resort. Such assertions as these, with many others by less responsible politicians than Mr Gladstone, are among the stumbling-blocks of the cause of Irish Nationalism. False historic statement gives opponents their best opportunity. And the Duke of Argyll's book on Irish Nationalism, which he calls an appeal to history, is in the main a forensic parade round these random sentences of Mr Gladstone, varied by cuts at similar utterances of O'Connell, and politer attacks on some of the historical verdicts of Professor Richey and Mr Lecky.

For its own part, as might have been expected, the Duke's book is as one-sided in spirit, and fully as misleading in purport, as the accounts given by the school of O'Connell, which was merely forensic with a difference; and it can in no way compare as a sociological survey with the works of Dr Richey and Mr Lecky. The Duke admits these writers to be in the main laudably impartial historians. No critic could make that admission concerning the Duke. He begins by vehemently lamenting that "Truth in the hands of a casuist, morals in the hands of a Tesuit, facts in the hands of a special pleader,—all these combined are but a feeble image of the fate of history when it is put to use by professional politicians. And when this position is held by any man who is, or finds it convenient to assume the character of an Ethnogogue,2 then the corrupting influence is aggravated to an intense degree." On this one is led to ask what character the Duke supposes himself to be playing in this work? Does he suppose he is not a special pleader, not a professional politician? Does he suppose that if it constitutes a man an Ethnagogue to plead the cause of Ireland against England, he is no Ethnagogue who maintains on the contrary that England has been substantially blameless, and Ireland always to blame?

For that is the Duke's thesis, put baldly. As we shall see, he feels bound occasionally to assume the virtue he has not, and to avow that in a certain sense, under special qualifications, and with careful reservations, "England" may be said to have sometimes played an ill part in regard to Ireland. But that is only an agreeable forensic strategy: the Duke's purpose, the purport

<sup>1</sup> Special Aspects, p. 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> This word has been coined by Mr Gladstone, who however spells it "ethnagogue." (Special Aspects, p. 269.)

of nine-tenths of his book, is to make out that Irishmen have been generally in the wrong and Englishmen generally in the right, in regard to Irish troubles. To this task he brings the methods of all the types whom he has so ingenuously subordinated to the professional politician—to wit, the casuist, the jesuit, the special pleader. And it remains a historic fact that he is all the while a professional politician—as much so as Mr Gladstone, whose colleague he once was. He has held office; he seeks to influence elections; he has his personal and his class interests to serve as a legislator.

But, putting aside questions of qualification, let us take the Duke's work on its merits. We may pass as substantially valid the bulk of his polemic against Mr Gladstone and O'Connell on the subject of the so-called conquest of Ireland in the twelfth century. We may even admit that it was worth while to controvert erroneous statements on that head. It is the device of the disingenuous critic, when a point in controversy has been made clear by polemic, to pretend that the polemic was not worth while. When errors are reiterated by prominent men, it must always be worth while to expose them, if there is to be any concern at all for truth as truth. The Duke, then, is entitled to his measure of triumph, though, to be sure, it cost him no great research to get at the facts about the invasion of Ireland under Henry II. Even at this stage, however, it is necessary to expose the misrepresentations with which the Duke contrives to pack his side of the case while protesting against misrepresentations on the other side.

1. He asserts 1 that "even the Romanised natives of Britain" had a "splendid literature and art" beside which those of early Christian Ireland "pale a feeble and ineffectual light." This is simple nonsense. The sole literary work left by Roman Britain is the history of the monk Gildas, which is certainly not splendid.

2. He deliberately takes <sup>2</sup> one of the oldest entries in the Annals of the Four Masters, that for the year 10 of the Christian era, telling of a massacre by Carbre the Cat-headed, and sets it down as genuine history; proceeding next to take an entry for the year 227, which tells how Dunlang king of Leinster killed in Munster "thirty royal girls" and "a hundred maids with each of them." No critical reader can accept such a record, with such a date, as real history. It has every appearance of being a redacted myth.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Irish Nationalism, p. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Id., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Rhys, Celtic Britain, 2nd ed., pp. 63-64.

3. In picturing the Irish people during the first seven centuries of our era, the Duke carefully suppresses the fact that the peoples of Anglo-Saxon England lived just such a life of internecine war as did the tribes of Ireland, and that the Saxon invaders of England killed not only women but babes.

4. Alleging that the condition of Ireland from the date of the establishment of Christianity, about 450, went "from bad to worse" for six hundred years—a statement as loose as any of Mr Gladstone's—the Duke asserts 1 that "this steady and continuous decline had gone on notwithstanding long contact and perfect familiarity with the high civilisation of Roman Britain." This is really a much worse sample of "inflated fable" than anything the Duke cites from Mr Gladstone. The sole justification offered for the statement I have italicised is the following:—

"Hundreds, and even in some cases thousands, of Roman coins have been found in Ireland—coins of the first and second centuries. For some centuries the Irish were continually attempting to conquer Britain. For ten years in the middle of the fourth century they are said to have at least partially succeeded, till beaten and expelled by Theodosius in 369. It cannot be said, therefore, that isolation alone, so far as mere knowledge is concerned, was the cause of the long continuance of Irish barbarism. They had seen what civilisation was, and what government meant. And having seen both, the Irish chiefs returned to their own country as chaotic as before, and as incapable of laying even the rudest foundations of civilised condition among their own people."

From this it may be seen what manner of critical conscience rules the Duke, with all his indignant outcry over the "inflated fable" of Mr Gladstone. He builds up a case of concrete censure of the early Irish on the merest shadow of foundation. He has not given the semblance of a proof of a "long contact and perfect familiarity" on the part of the Irish with the civilisation of Roman Britain. Hoards of coins prove nothing but plunder. Such a statement, on such evidence, really amounts to fabrication. The statement that the Irish chiefs "had seen what government meant," and that they returned "incapable of laying even the rudest foundations of civilised condition," is mere reckless romancing. The Duke cannot possibly know whether the Irish chiefs in question did or did not try to set up new foundations among their own people, or what they saw in Britain. He is making a series of specific assertions without the slightest

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, p. 25.

knowledge to justify them. And it is after the extravagant passage above cited that he has the phrase, "But even these facts, striking though they be, are an inadequate exposure of Mr Gladstone's 'inflated fable.'"

Already it is easy to see in what a spirit of prejudice and partisanship the Duke had entered on his task. It may be said for him that he was provoked by the inaccuracies of Mr Gladstone, and by the common Irish tendency to make out Ireland always white and England always black in their interrelations. But if he had looked into the matter with some of the philosophic temper to which he constantly makes pretension, he would have seen that the Irish charges against England are constantly being inspired by gratuitous English attacks on Ireland. A hundred times during the present century Irishmen have approached England with simple appeals for legislative redress, saying nothing of old wrongs; and invariably they have been met with the answer that their troubles are their own fault; that it is their incompetence for industry or agriculture or what not, their shiftlessness and their Celticity, that keeps Ireland backward. It was Mr Bright who pointed out, in his pre-Unionist days, how the appeals of Ireland for help had been met "often by denial, often by insult, often by contempt." That stupid English censure should be met by sharper censure of England as the immemorial oppressor and barbariser of Ireland is a matter of course. And if Englishmen are never to be wiser than the Duke of Argyll, the recrimination may go on forever. As we have seen, he meets extravagance with extravagance, and spleen with spleen. Always claiming to be dispassionate and philosophic, he never for more than a breath gets outside of the atmosphere of reciprocal vituperation.

At times, as I have said, he does come within sight of a scientific standpoint. For instance, such a passage as this:—

"The first and most fundamental of all Irish disadvantages is geographical position. It was a condition involving a long train of consequences. It segregated Ireland from the great stream of European history. It precluded her from the unspeakable benefits of Roman conquest. It kept her away from the civilisation of the Latin Church. It effectually prevented her later subjugation by any superior race. It stereotyped barbarous customs, and prolonged them even to our own day. All happier influences seemed to stop when they landed on the shores of England. There they remained; and nobody cared to push across that narrow sea, into a land covered with dense forests and bogs, inhabited by fierce tribes with no posses-

sions tempting to a comparatively civilised intruder. In later days England seemed to intercept geographically even the benefits of commerce. I have heard the feeling on this matter strikingly expressed by a very clever woman of Irish blood and of Irish marriage, the late Lady Clanricarde—the daughter of George Canning, and the sister of Lord Canning, Governor-General of India. 'You,' she said addressing an Englishman, 'have always been like a high garden wall standing between us and the sun.'"

But even here we have the Conservative animus. The writer here suppresses facts which he has elsewhere recognised: he even states the reverse. It is not true that the geographical position of Ireland "effectually prevented her later subjugation by any superior race"—unless the Duke means that the English were after all not a superior race. He knows that Ireland was effectually subjugated by England at least thrice,—under Elizabeth and James, under Cromwell, under William. And when he says that England seemed to intercept geographically even the benefits of commerce, he knows perfectly well that England had first of all wilfully and zealously striven to destroy the commercial advantages of Ireland. And when he further puts it that every enemy tried to get at England through the back door of Ireland, he will not see that if England had conciliated instead of oppressing Ireland the enemy would have had no more chance at the back than at the front door.

The Duke goes on to point out how far the lack of coal in Ireland has determined the different development of the parts of the British Islands in recent times. But he is evidently much more happy when he is charging economic sins on the Irish Parliament of last century. And the why is obvious. To recognise the past relation of the countries as one in which the people of Ireland suffered inevitably in the nature of things, "England" helplessly playing the part of the high wall between them and the sun—to recognise this would be to admit that it is now the business not only of "England" but of the English legislature to do something to counteract the fatality, which ceases to be irresistible when it is understood. But of course the Duke of Argyll cannot agree to any such course. He is pledged to keep Ireland subordinate to England; pledged to keep the mainly agricultural country under a system of government which, relatively tolerable in a mainly industrial country, 15 in the other fatal to well-being. So he must perforce fall back on all manner of charges against the Irish people-must seek to convince himself and others that the fault lies not in the

land system of which he is a champion and a representative, and from which he gets his wealth, but in the people who pay the rents and get the worst of it.

When the Duke is not directly scolding the Irish, ancient or modern, he is indirectly representing them as congenitally inferior to their neighbours. Thus when he is dealing with the Hibernization of the Normans in Ireland (a fact which might serve to illustrate for any one the truth that it is environment and not race that determines civilisation), he treats the phenomenon as a sad succumbing of the good to the bad, a deplorable yielding not merely of good manners to evil communications, but of the higher species to the lower.

"Even in Scotland," he writes,<sup>1</sup> "we did not altogether escape the Irish danger. Those colonists of Norman blood—and they were many—who pushed forward beyond the central and eastern area in which all the civilisation of Scotland has begun, and from which alone it spread—those Normans who wandered far into the predominantly Celtic area, and who married and settled there—were often tempted to fall, and did sometimes actually fall, under the same influences by which the Anglo-Irish were so fatally seduced."

Now, from the point of view of rational sociology, the phenomenon dealt with simply proves that the Normans in question were themselves but slightly civilised, and had in them no civilising virtue. It is not true that, as the Duke says, they "carried onwards and upwards" the preceding civilisation in England. It was not they, not the invaders, who did the carrying on; it was the culture behind them. Their civilisation was absolutely dependent on the post-Roman, with which they had been lightly inoculated in France; and save for fresh and prolonged contact with Europe, Norman England would have stagnated just as did Saxon England. The Norman, in fact, got his civilisation, such as it was, through the medium of a race which was presumably kindred with that which he encountered in Ireland and in "Celtic" Scotland. There were civilised "Celts" before there were civilised Normans. Then the Duke of Argyll's way of putting things—the tactic of ascribing to the Normans "strong and manly natures" and to the Irish an innate bias to anarchy—is a mere appeal to race prejudice. Believing himself to be in the main a Norman, he does but play the ethnagogue in his own house.

chronic relapse from the semblance of social science into the language of the race-partisan. He quotes in one place 1 with approval the remarkable utterance of Henry the Eighth's Irish Council in 1533:—"As to the surmise of the bruteness of the people, and the incivility of them, no doubt, if there were justice used among them, they would be found as civil, wise, and polite, and as active as any nation." "This," says the Duke, "is the truth"; and he admits the abundant testimony of English writers in the Tudor period to "the many elements of natural genius and virtue in the Irish character." 2 Yet he leaves standing, without a misgiving, such phrases of his own as: "that great body of the Celtic people in the very soil of whose mind these ancient [semi-barbaric] customs were indelibly rooted"; 3 and "a flaw due to the ineradicable effects of the old Irish character." 4 His admission as to the excellences of the Irish character in Tudor times is of itself enough to overthrow his whole anti-Irish case; for by his own showing these merits had been developed in an age in which England had only partially begun to control Irish life. He is always arguing that in the centuries between Henry II. and Elizabeth there had been no possibility of effective English rule, and that the native life was a mere tissue of warfare, massacre, and anarchy. Yet it is out of that state of things that there comes a people for whom, by the admission of English men of affairs, there was needed only justice to make them "as civil, wise, and polite, and as active as any nation." Then there is something wrong with the Duke's picture. Speaking with his own voice, the voice of the landlord and the hereditary legislator, he says,5

"It cannot be too often repeated that what was peculiar to the Celts of Ireland was the survival and even the exaggeration of this custom [coyne and livery] and other equally barbarous customs for long centuries, during which all other races had grown out of them and cast them off."

Here again we have something worse than inflated fable. The implication is that other northern races by virtue of their progressiveness rose above customs in which the Celts remained immovable. This is essentially untrue. Not one of the northern races "grew" out of barbarism. One and all were aided or levered out, by the direct or indirect force of the political and cultural civilisation which had anciently grown up in the region of the Mediterranean, and which spread to north-western

<sup>1</sup> P. 147. <sup>2</sup> P. 149. <sup>3</sup> P. 59. <sup>4</sup> P. 114. <sup>5</sup> P. 58.

Europe by way of Italy. It is true that the northern races, once moved, repeatedly reacted for good: such reaction is one of the great forces of progress in civilisation; and the recognition of it, one would think, might once for all lead all civilised races to bury their animal jealousies and barbaric antipathies, knowing that each can in some way help all. But that the northern races would never have reached civilisation save for the southern contact is clear from every stage in their early and mediæval history; and the one difference between the Irish and the other northern peoples was simply that, as the Duke of Argyll elsewhere unwittingly admits,1 they were "geographically so situated as to be cut off from all the reforming and renovating currents of European history"-England supplying no such aid. Even this admission the Duke cannot make without interjecting that the effect of survivals "is enormous among Celts especially, and most enormous of all among Irish Celts"—this in speaking of Irish life at a period when Ireland had been three times colonised by England, and concerning which Mr Lecky (whom the Duke at this point does not attempt to impugn) decides, on the authority among others of Sir John Davies that the Irish population had by that time become predominantly Anglo-Saxon!2

If the reader has any doubt left as to the element of race bias in the Duke's mind, he may have it cleared up by the passage in which his Grace expresses himself on the subject of the Irish share in the English invasion of Scotland. It is a singular

sample of self-revelation:—

"If we are to allow ourselves to be irrationally affected in our readings and judgments of history by either racial, family, or even the lower forms of national sentiment, I should heartily sympathise with the famous attempt of Edward Bruce to do in Ireland a work at least superficially like the great work his brother had done in Scotland. Scotchmen who, like myself, have the same special share that he had in the ancient Celtic blood of the Irish Scoti—who admire as we all do the heroic character of 'The Bruce'—who are disposed to remember with resentment the ready help which Irishmen then gave, and often have since given, to the enemies of Scottish liberty,—we might be tempted to cherish a natural sympathy with the invasion of Ireland by the Bruces in 1315. But for those who look in History, above all

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 233-234.

As above stated, I do not accept the estimate of Davies. But the Duke does not reject it; and in any case the English ingerence had been overwhelming.

things, for the steps of human progress, and who desire to know the causes of its arrestment or decline, it is impossible to be guided by such childish sentiments." 1

The last sentence is open to question, if the Duke means it to apply to himself. The only way to escape being guided by childish sentiments is to cease to entertain them. But the Duke ingenuously confesses that he does entertain them. He is actually "disposed to remember with resentment"—resentment against Irishmen—the fact that when the Edwards invaded Scotland they had in their host Irish contingents, these contingents being led by Anglo-Irish barons, who brought into the field, at their overlord's behest, their Irish retainers. Knowing this, stating this, the Duke asserts 2 that "the Irish of both breeds did their very best to rivet the yoke of England on the rising kingdom which had been established in Scotland by the happy union and common allegiance of both the Celtic and Teutonic races there." I can only say that this way of writing history seems to me miserably unworthy of a statesman. Before reading the Duke's book, I could not have believed that any educated man in Scotland was capable of harbouring a grudge against Irishmen in the mass because certain Norman barons in Ireland about the thirteenth century led to Falkirk and to Bannockburn some troops of the poor devils of kerns over whom they ruled. I have seen nothing in anti-English writing by Irishmen to compare with the Duke of Argyll's remark that in respect of that episode "the Irish of both breeds did their best" to subject Scotland, when as a matter of fact, as he has just been noting, a number of the really Irish chiefs just afterwards invited Edward Bruce to come and be their king and deliver them from the English. The Duke may well talk of being "irrationally affected" by racial and familial and the lower forms of national sentiment. His own avowed sentiment is irrational to the last degree. If it were in any way rational it would be extended to England, the real aggressor in the case; whereas the Duke (being a "Norman" and an English landholder) is resentful only towards the supposititious descendants of the Irish kerns whose Norman leaders led them against Robert the Bruce - descendants who are in these days to be presumed to be Home Rulers. Perhaps the finishing touch of the whole absurdity is this, that the predecessor (I suppose he was not the ancestor: the Duke's family got its lands in another fashion) of the lord of Argyll

in the time of the Scottish War of Independence was the zealous liegeman of the English king. I do not remember how the genealogies go; but when I went to school in Scotland we were taught, among other things, that the Lord of Lorne was one of the most determined enemies of Robert the Bruce, who on one occasion had much ado to escape his bloodhounds. Surely his Grace of Argyll might have let those sleeping dogs lie.

It would be unprofitable, if it were not a little wearisome, to go in close detail through the polemic of a writer who meets the charges of Irishmen against England by taunting them with the fact that some of the presumable ancestors of some of them assassinated the elder brother of Brian Boru. Let it suffice, then, to summarise the Duke's argument against Irish nationalism. It

may be condensed thus:-

1. England, after intervening in Ireland, was not at all in a position to complete her conquest. Therefore she is not to be blamed for having failed to civilise Ireland in the period between Henry II. and Henry VIII. Besides, anything the Irish suffered for a long time after 1315 was due to their own fault in inviting Edward Bruce.

2. England was nevertheless bound to keep her foot in Ireland, and so to prevent any civilising contact between it and any other

European State.

3. Irishmen having been thus "left to themselves," they alone are to blame for all their troubles between 1172 and 1534, as in

the ages before. "The Irish made themselves."

4. In 1535, Irish Catholicism set up a new danger for England, so that she had to conquer Ireland afresh. Confiscation was a natural part of such fresh conquest, and was justified "upon every ground which has been universally acted upon by all nations and governments in the history of the world. There is not a civilised people now existing in Europe which is not living on 'confiscated land.'"1

5. In the same way, Ireland had to be subjugated afresh under Elizabeth in the interests of Protestantism, Protestant England being then "the one great mainstay and defence of all the liberties, political and intellectual, of the civilised world." 2 Anything done to that end cannot be chargeable against England.

6. As the seventeenth century was "mainly occupied by the completion of the necessary work of conquest," it "must be withdrawn absolutely from our reckoning of the time during

which Ireland was in any proper sense of the term under the Government of England." 1 As for the stealing of Irishmen's land by covetous Englishmen, "we may well ask whether it is worse to covet land for the purpose of planting a higher civilisation than to covet cattle for no other purpose than that of mere plunder and robbery." 2 And as regards the persecution of Catholics, we must remember that on the continent Catholics persecuted Protestants. Besides, Catholics in general were always wanting to destroy Protestantism. Therefore England was quite justified in wanting to destroy Catholicism in Ireland. whereas Catholics were religious persecutors, Protestants were thus acting merely on political grounds. They had to harry the Irish people in order to spite the Pope, because the Catholic Church had "inspired the atrocities of Alva in the Low Countries, and dictated the Massacre of St Bartholomew in France"3-in the previous century. In short, the conduct of England towards Ireland in the seventeenth century was "dictated by motives, and under conditions, of almost insuperably coercive strength." 4

7. In the eighteenth century it was very much the same. England no doubt acted on a selfish policy towards Ireland, "but England was not one whit more selfish than all other nations at the same time; and she acted on precisely the same policy, not only towards Scotland but towards her own Colonies and Plantations." 5 So Irishmen had nothing special to complain of. Besides "commercial restrictions are harmless examples indeed" of exclusive dealing "compared with other applications of the same doctrines," to wit, boycotting. So that Irishmen to-day are worse than the Englishmen of last century. Q.E.D. Finally, the Irish Parliament of last century gave bounties to encourage Irish agriculture against English, even after England had "begun to relax her selfish policy" and was "on the way" to other improvements. They thus reached "about the highwatermark of human folly." So much for the eighteenth century.

8. On the whole, England did a great deal of good to Ireland by substituting, in the seventeenth century, English tenures for the old Irish tenures. "But it was too late. Many centuries of archaic usages . . . had left the Irish people in a condition of extreme poverty, and of utter helplessness as regarded any power of emerging from that condition." 6 So it is clear that no blame can attach to England.

Such is the Duke's argument, reduced to its logical essentials,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> P. 195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> P. 194.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> P. 204.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> P. 216.

<sup>6</sup> P. 236.

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and relieved of a quantity of irrelevant or self-contradictory rhetoric. I am disposed to pronounce it the most grotesque process of quasi-sociological reasoning in recent literature. The only thing that saves it from being quite ridiculous even in the Duke's pages is his tactic of inserting every now and then a phrase of concession to common sense and common justice. Every little while, when it is necessary to urge that the politics of distant times cannot be adjudged of in terms of the codes of to-day, he will admit that the Irish of the past are not to be so judged any more than the English. But the real object of the concession is always to whitewash England; and as soon as her defence is thus accomplished the tar-brush is rapidly applied once more to Ireland. Thus the worst crimes of England are made light of on the score that she was no worse than other nations, and did no worse by Ireland than by Scotland and the American Colonies; while the alleged economic errors of the Irish Parliament of a century ago are denounced through page after page, and branded as "the high-water mark of human folly." In the same way, all Protestant persecution of Irish Catholics is made out an act of purely political self-defence against continental Catholicism; while the Catholic action, on the other hand, is without any excuse.

I am in doubt whether it may not be well to leave the Duke's precious argumentation to do its own work, without hampering the process by further explicit corrections of any of his misrepresentations. When one reflects, however, that such a book as his can pass current as good reasoning with a powerful party, and can keep for him the status of an eminent politician, it seems as well to supply some of the simple historical knowledge needed for the full comprehension of his untrustworthiness. It may be put, like the gist of his own thesis, in a compressed form. And it may begin by showing that on the Duke's own admission the English kings after Henry II. might have done much better by Ireland than they did.

1. The Duke's words on this head are:-

"Their long, bloody, and exhausting wars to establish a separate kingdom in France were, in the light of our day, not only useless, bu mischievous and even wicked. If they had only spent one-half the energy thus worse than wasted, in completing the civilisation of their own country, and in effectually establishing their authority over Ireland as an integral part of their dominions, the gain to themselves, and so far as we can see, to us even now, would have been untold."

Of course, after such a passage the Duke had to explain that he meant nothing by it, going on: "But such judgments and speculations are worse than idle—unless, indeed, we take them as lessons in the mysterious course of human follies since the world began." And of course no sound Conservative will meddle with such considerations as that. He will indulge in "such judgments and speculations" only by way of showing what a bad lot the Irish always were. Still, it appears from the Duke's reverie 1 that the blindness and egoism of the English kings wrought evilly for Ireland. And though that is a point hardly worth proving now for its own sake, it is quite relevant as part of the proof to living Englishmen that England in the past has been a "high wall between Ireland and the sun," and that it is their duty to change the situation. If England was bound to keep Ireland from healthful contact with other States in the past, the more reason why she should do something in a contrary direction now.

2. The introduction and maintenance of an alien and bitterly hostile force in Ireland was a clear hindrance to any Irish solution of the problem of tribal warfare. Irish potentialities did not end with Brian Boru, whose fate was that of a score of "Teutonic"

leaders, from Arminius to Barneveldt.

3. The formula that "Irishmen made themselves" is simple folly as science, and is worse than folly in an argument which is always showing that the wrong-doing of Englishmen is a matter of "conditions of almost insuperably coercive strength." The Duke's teaching is in effect that while Irishmen are "made [bad] by themselves," Englishmen are made [bad], if at all, by circum-

stances over which they have no control.

4. The Duke's account of the poverty and backwardness of the Irish before the sixteenth century, in respect of the operation of some of their ancient customs, is uncritical and often misleading. When he asserts 2 that Sir John Davies declared Gavelkind to have been a custom which would have been "enough to ruin Hell, if it had been established in the kingdom of Beelzebub," he makes a bad blunder. Davies' phrase referred to the practice of Coyne and Livery—an utterly different thing. Gavelkind wrought no general ruin. There is a great deal of evidence, to

His Grace's remarks here may be regarded as reminiscent of the time when, in regard to the wanton English invasion of Afghanistan, he vigorously attacked the leaders of the party with which he now cooperates, and who are now just the politicians they were then.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> P. 107.

which the Duke gives no heed, showing that despite the system of Gavelkind and the inter-tribal wars, the condition of the Irish people was not always one of miserable poverty-was often not so miserable as that of English farm labourers has often been in later times, or as that of many tenants of the Duke of Argyll has been in our own generation. Take the account given by the English chronicler Holinshed of the state of Munster before it was depopulated by massacre under Queen Elizabeth:-"The land itself, which before these wars was populous, well inhabited, and rich in all the good blessings of God, being plenteous in corne, full of cattel, well stored with fish and sundrie other good commodities, is now become waste and barren, yielding no fruits, the pastures no cattel, the fields no corne. . . ." Take again the testimony of Spenser:-"Notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentifull countrey, full of corne and cattel . . . yet, ere one yeare and a half, they were brought to such wretchednesse as that any stony heart would have rued the same." Concerning the same episode, Sir William Pelham wrote to the Queen, of "the poor people that lived only upon labour and fed by their milch cows." 1

5. To speak constantly of the barbarism of the Irish, as if other nations were then relatively to them as civilised as we are to-day, is sufficiently disingenuous. The Duke's picture of mediæval Ireland loses much of its colour if compared with an English picture of English life under Henry II.:—

"The universal want of respect for human life is shown in all the chronicles of the period. In London, where Jews were frequently massacred by hundreds, the streets were after sunset given to rapine and murder. That which would now be called crime became the favourite pastime of the principal citizens, who would sally forth by night, in bands of a hundred or more, for an attack upon the houses of their neighbours. They killed without mercy every man who came in their way, and vied with each other in their brutality. . . . False weights, false measures, and false pretences of all kinds were the instruments of commerce most generally in use. No buyer could trust the word of a seller; and there was hardly any class in which a man might not with reason suspect that his neighbour intended to rob or even to murder him." 2

If we go back a generation before Henry II., we find the historian declaring that "no more ghastly picture of a nation's misery has

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See the citations in Mr J. A. Fox's Key to the Irish Question, ch. 29.
<sup>2</sup> Pike, History of Crime in England, i. 141-142.

ever been painted" than that of the horrors of Norman anarchy under Stephen; and no Irish atrocities of any period can outgo those there described. It never occurs to the Duke of Argyll to mention that Henry II., in a campaign in Wales, caused the eyes of the boys whom he held as hostages to be rooted out, and the ears and noses of the girls to be cut off. Yet historians agree<sup>2</sup> that Henry's reign "'initiated the rule of law' as distinct from the despotism—tempered in the case of his grandfather by routine of the earlier Norman Kings." "For the fifty years which followed the Assize of Clarendon [1166] the trial of accused persons was solely by ordeal or 'judgment of God.'"3 The Brehon law in Ireland was certainly more civilised than that at a much earlier date. And after Henry II. had established eighteen itinerant justices—a measure apparently suggested by his French experience—the corruption among them was so great that he had to reduce the number to five, reserving appeals from their courts to himself in council.4

At a later period Sir John Davies declared that "there is no nation or people under the sun that doth love equal or indifferent justice better than the Irish, or will rest better satisfied with the execution thereof although it may be against themselves"—this at a period at which the Duke of Argyll represents them as wedded to barbaric custom. If we turn further to the history of the highly civilised Italy of that period, we find a record of ferocity and wickedness which far outgoes the story of Irish barbarism. Relatively to their culture, the Irish were not more but less bloody and turbulent than their contemporaries in England and Europe. During the Wars of the Roses, again, English life indisputably retrograded to a frightful degree. Quantity for quantity of happiness, Ireland was probably not the more miserable country. It is true that the pro-Irish writers who speak of Irish life since Strongbow as an "agony of seven hundred years," set up the same kind of misconception as does the Duke of Argyll, though speaking with a different purpose. His is to depict the Irish people as unparalleled savages and anarchists for their time. Speaking of Shane O'Neill, he observes 5 that "it is useless and irrelevant to lay any stress on this man's personal character." All the same, he proceeds to lay great stress on it, noting that Shane was a murderer, bloodthirsty and merciless, false and treacherous, profligate in his life, a drunkard, a tyrant, and barbarous in his manners. Now, Queen Elizabeth was false and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Green, Short History, p. 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Id., p. 107. <sup>4</sup> Id., ib.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Id., p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> Irish Nationalism, p. 180.