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Reviews.

Twenty Years in the Wild West; or, Life in Connaught. By Mrs. Houstoun. Pp. 288. Murray.

THE present condition of Ireland is of the most intensely painful interest. There is no use in attempting to disguise that there is a strong feeling of nervous irritation among the Irish peasantry against the Imperial Government of England; but it is very difficult to satisfy ourselves as to how far the noisy clamour of the discontented few overpowers the expression of the better judgment of the law-abiding and the loyal. The late Prime Minister, not very long ago, uttered the aphorism that Ireland was in a state of "veiled rebellion," and the present Premier gave expression to a similar sentiment when he said that there was in Ireland "a measurable distance" between us and civil war. Though there is, we trust, no immediate prospect of this "measurable distance" being lessened, yet the aspect of affairs in Ireland is undoubtedly very grave. The excitable disposition of a naturally warm and volatile race is being irritated by the exaggerated appeals, and by the semi-treasonous harangues of irresponsible men who, in what Mr. Forster has justly characterized a wicked and cowardly manner, take advantage of the popular feeling regarding the complicated questions relating to land, to incite them not only against the landlords but also against the English Government.

The book before us is most deeply interesting at the present juncture. It gives an animated account of the principal events during a residence of more than twenty years in one of the remotest and wildest corners of Ireland, and an estimate from the authoress' point of view of the character of the people by whom she was surrounded. It must, however, be borne in mind that her description applies only to her own locality, and that she does not profess to speak of the character of the people at large.

Circumstances led the husband of the authoress to rent an estate, consisting of "bog, lake, mountain, rock, and river, to the extent of somewhat under ninety square miles," in the south-west of county Mayo. Her future home was situated amidst the gloomy, but beautiful scenery surrounding Dhulough, or the "Black Lake," and under the shadow of Milrea, "the monarch of mountains." To the south it was cut off from Connemara by the exquisitely lovely bay of the Killeries, and it was separated from the outside world by wild tracts of bog and moor. Both the authoress and her husband went there fully impressed with the idea that absenteeism was the one great evil of Ireland, and that it was the bounden duty of the occupants of land, not only to dwell among the people, but to employ the people themselves. They made a brave attempt to accomplish this object; but it proved an absolute failure. Immediately after their arrival "denunciation from the altar began;" the people were exhorted "to take the law into their own hands against the new settlers," and "to kill, *desthroy*, and 'smash up' with ruthless hand the Saxon invader of their rights;" their "sheep were hurled over precipices, worried by dogs, and stolen and devoured by the enemy who were in league against them;" and, in fact, war seems to have been at once proclaimed between them and the priests and people. Their first manager was a rascal and a thief, with blarney on his tongue and falseness in his heart. They were nearly ruined by him. Another courageous attempt was made—this time with a Scotch manager, and with Scotch herdsmen. Evidently with success, so far as remuneration was concerned; but at

the price of the deeper hatred and more determined opposition on the part of the priests and people. The enmity against the new comers appears soon to have culminated in wild attempts at destruction and revenge. Very early during their occupation, even before "The Lodge," as their house was subsequently called, was completed, the attempt to murder them was made, which is vividly described in the following extract:—

Perhaps never were four individuals more surely marked for destruction than were those who composed an unsuspecting quartette of Saxons travelling one moonlight night in October, along a Connaught mountain road. The party consisted of "the Captain" [as the authoress' husband was invariably called] and myself, our son, aged ten, and an English groom. The short twilight was drawing to a close ere we set out on our return. The road, however, to the foot of the mountain was tolerably good, and for the rest—well, whilst descending on the far side, it only required care and patient driving. To "feel our way," was, as a matter of course, requisite, and impediments on the rock side had to be carefully shunned; nevertheless, to "hug" it in places where the defending wall existed not, and where there was only just space sufficient to admit of our phaeton passing, was absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, there chanced to exist, precisely at the spot where the valley below was steepest, and the bulwark above absolutely *nil*—a few yards of nearly level road, on which horses, eager for home and not carefully held in hand, might be excused breaking into a trot, the which our steeds, stimulated thereto by a very peculiar noise, audible in the stillness of the now utterly dark night, incontinently did; but the gentle amble in which they had indulged scarcely lasted for ten seconds, for, to our surprise, without touch of bridle, they came to a sudden stand. "The Captain," who brooked neither delay nor disturbance, was about to urge them with the whip, when the groom, who had been walking behind, called out excitedly as he made his way with difficulty to the horses' heads;—

"Don't touch 'em, sir! Some one has been and put big stones all across the road, and it's a mercy we were not all in kingdom come this night!"

And such in very truth was the case. On examination we found that a low barricade had been carefully built right across the road by would-be-murderers—for by what other name can the perpetrators of such a deed be called, seeing that, had the horses swerved but a few inches, a certain and fearful death to all must have ensued? The place was well chosen for the purpose; in fact, it could not have been more artfully devised. The stones were all carefully, even skilfully arranged, precluding the possibility of their having fallen accidentally from the mountain side.

Not long after this another desperate attempt to "desthroy" them was made in a similar ingenious and deadly fashion:—

It was but little past mid-day when we reached the top of the pass, and commenced our descent on the other side. The sun was blazing brightly, and a fresh mild wind was stirring the long grass. Suddenly our ears were startled by an unaccustomed and strangely rushing sound, one that appeared to sweep along the ground, and was clearly advancing in our direction. What could it be? For a few moments we remained lost in wonder, and then the crackling as of burning sticks, and the floating away of some sparks which even the blaze of the sun was powerless to conceal, revealed to us the truth, namely, that the mountains were on fire, and that the flames were advancing with the swiftness of an eagle's flight on either side the narrow road! Would they be swept across it, and thus render our advance difficult, if not impossible, or was the worst evil we had to dread that of the horses taking fright at the approaching flames, and becoming unmanageable in their terror? Before we had time to take more than a troubled note of the situation, we saw, to our relief, running briskly towards us, some of our own staff of Highland shepherds, and they, armed with long sticks and sickles, were actively employed in endeavouring to stop the progress of the fire. This they did by making, after the fashion of American woodsmen, clearances in the track of the flames, which, finding no fuel to feed on, could spread no further. From the Scotchmen we heard that in several other portions of the land the grass had been simultaneously fired,

and that other detachments of their body were busily engaged in preventing the sheep from being burnt alive upon the land, that being their evidently intended fate. By great exertion, and equal readiness of resource, the men at last got the flames under, whilst the number of animals which fell victims to priestly hatred and the blind obedience of the people was, as I rejoiced to hear, but small.

The authoress adds in a note, that "strong suspicion, afterwards fully confirmed, that the fires were not accidental, was at once aroused by this widely-spread conflagration."

The secret of this determined opposition lay in the fact which is not brought prominently forward, but which is alluded to in a subordinate clause of a sentence—they were "new occupiers of land from which its former holders had been ejected." In these circumstances it is not surprising that a tone of sadness, and even of bitterness, pervades the book. The private history of the authoress likewise adds to this sombre effect. Early during her residence in Ireland, she had an accident which lamed her for life; endowed with a clear intellect and literary tastes, she was shut out from congenial society, and fretted at the seclusion; and domestic sorrow and trial befell her, as well as social warfare and persecution. Her estimate of the character of the people must, consequently, be taken with a large quantity of salt, though there is a terrible substratum of reality and truth in all she has written. We miss the joyousness, the wit, and the rollicking fun which, in the hardest times, characterize the Irish peasantry. There is not a solitary flash of humour throughout the book.

Though her life among the mountains was evidently most irksome to her, Mrs. Houstoun honestly endeavoured to suppress her dislike to the people, and to do her duty towards them; but she was unhappily unsuccessful in winning their affections. "My visits," she says, "to the wretched cabins in which our retainers, together with more than one description of domestic animal, resided, were as unwelcome to them as they were distasteful to me." She consequently contracted a dislike to the people, which makes itself very evident in her description of their character. She considers them untruthful:—

I have listened to more than one hypothesis as regards the remarkable and world-known fact, that the Irish are, far and away, one of the most "lying" people on the face of the earth; and I see no reason to deviate from my own notions formed long ago on the subject.

Cowardly:—

A more cowardly people, whether in "small" health or in real sickness, than were my patients, it would be difficult to conceive. The men—no uncommon physiological fact—far exceeded the women, both in impatience and bodily pain, and in the fear of what, "after death," the "clairgy" might do, or cause to be done unto them.

Revengeful. Several sheep were stolen from time to time; but, though tracked to the cabins of the marauders, a conviction against the offenders was only once obtained:—

Early next morning the dire news spread that poisoned "mate" had been forced between the bars of the kennel, and that every dog therein was dead. That this wholesale slaughter was an act of revenge for the incarceration of the convicted sheep-stealers no one for a moment doubted; but all attempts to obtain proof against the doers of the deed proved futile.

Lawless:—

From long experience of the Irish character, I think myself justified in saying that the majority of the people take a positive pleasure in the mere act of concealing crime, and thus defying laws which it is their nature (simply because they *are* laws) to hate.

Ungrateful :—

Grieved was I, yet not surprised, that those who had been ready, in the days of my *power* to aid them, to fawn upon and to flatter, should, when only the *will* to serve remained, have met me with cold ingratitude, ay, even with contumely and insult.

The bright side of the Celtic character is entirely wanting, and the only good quality put to its credit is strong family affection.

The authoress is very severe on the priests. She regards them, and justly regards them, as the principal cause of Ireland's woes. The real source of discontent in Ireland is the Romish faith, and the consequent withholding the Word of God from the people :—

However difficult [she writes] poor Paddy may find it to make both ends meet, believe me, that the last to suffer from his impecuniosity will be the father who holds in his hands—according to the fixed belief of these benighted people—the power to bind and to unloose, to doom to eternal tortures or to make happy for ever, the souls of his wretched flock.

Again :—

Of the faith which has so greatly tended to make them what they are, these poor blind followers of an interested priesthood have no opportunity of seeing or hearing the lovely, the softening, and the ennobling side. Only on the debasing side of human nature can their mental vision dwell, and only on the lowest of the passions, *fear*, do their remorseless tyrants work. That "honour" should be to them a thing utterly unknown, and "keeping faith" with their neighbours an unacknowledged duty, is far from surprising when we reflect that in their priests' own catechism these words are found :—"A promise need not be kept, if, after making it, circumstances arise which make it inconvenient to fulfil its provisions." The hope held out in the Bible of a blessing on the man who "sweareth to a neighbour and disappointeth him not, though it were to his own hindrance," differs in this, as in many other instances, so entirely from priestly teaching, that the keeping of the Holy Scriptures as sealed books from their flocks seems "the most natural thing in life."

On the other hand, our authoress has not a good word to say for the honest and successful attempt made by the Irish Church Missions to change this state of things in her immediate neighbourhood. She speaks against one of the mission clergy as "a young zealot," who "aired his eloquence in violent tirades against the religion he detested."

Can we wonder [she says] that, when the gauntlet was thus violently thrown down—when strewed by the road-side were frequently found printed papers containing the bitterest abuse and ridicule of the priests—when Scripture readers, mission-sent, forced themselves into the cabins, and *obliged* the inmates, however adverse to the infliction, to listen to the Word of God ;—can we wonder, I repeat, that, under such and other provocations to wrath, the "clairgy" should have accepted the challenge, and done on their side fierce battle in their cause.

We should have thought that, on calm reflection, she would have found she was mistaken in her estimate of the manner in which these missions were conducted. If any individual spoke in the way she describes, he violated the foundation-principle of the Society, which is "to speak the truth in love ;" and we are confident that nothing was said in any hand-bill reflecting personally on the priests themselves, and nothing so bitter against them as she herself has written. One would imagine that the authoress would have appreciated even the temporal prosperity and neatness which in the following extract she describes, with evident approval, as characterizing a Protestant village in those parts ; and that she would have done all that lay in her power to help and cheer those who, amid much difficulty and opposition, such as the recent unprovoked attack on the Rev. H. Nevile Sherbrooke and Mr. Pakenham Law has

prominently brought to notice, were faithfully endeavouring to promote the religion which led to such beneficent results:—

Our course led us through a clean, prosperous, and almost English-looking village—not a pretty one, it is true, for Nature, as well as the art architectural, which is at a low ebb in Mayo, alike forbade that it should be so, but the small houses were both externally and internally clean and neat; more than one boasted of a small flower garden in front of the windows, which were of a fair size, and—no common occurrence in this land—capable of being opened. Take it altogether, no greater contrast could possibly present itself than that which was noticeable between this village, with its small church and white parsonage, its tidy children, and its general look of well-to-do-ness, and the typical Irish village with its clusters of hovels, grimy with the dirt of generations. The sole reason for the amazing contrast is simply this, that it is Protestant, and has been so, as the saying here is, "evermore."

The greater part of this book refers to the period antecedent to the passing of the Irish Church Act. The authoress remained in Ireland, however, some little time after it had been passed, and she speaks of it in the strongest terms of reprobation:—

Without entering at all into either the political or clerical merits of the question [she writes], it is sufficient to say that the Act was passed at a time when it *appeared* to the Roman Catholic hierarchy that fear of *them* and of what *they* might, in the way of mischief, be able to effect, lay at the bottom of the movement. The "people" themselves never felt the existence of the Protestant State Church, in their country, as a grievance, till they were hounded on to the fray by the priests, and eventually, by that pugnacious, ever restless body, were taught to believe that England found it necessary for her own safety to conciliate and grant benefits to Ireland.

The Church question is, however, confessedly secondary to the Land question, and towards the solution of this Mrs. Houstoun really offers no suggestion. Absenteeism is, in her eyes, the grand defect. Undoubtedly it is; but until the happy time comes when Irish landlords shall, as a rule, reside the greater part of the year among their own people, and the peasantry shall, of their own accord, throw off the priestly yoke, every attempt should be made to win them to the side of loyalty and order. One thing ought never to be done, and that is, to give way to fear. This Mrs. Houstoun strongly condemns; and yet this is the key to the sadness of the whole of her book. Very early in the narrative she and her husband went to an election with a pistol on the cushion of their phaeton; and, during the winter of 1870, "our weapons were ever either in our hands, or on the dining-table, on our beds, or on the 'car' cushions." "The sense of fear," she says a little further on, "one which in truth had latterly rarely slept within me, was stirred by the sounds I heard." She evidently lived in a chronic state of armed distrust and fear. This, we are convinced, is not the right state of feeling in which to live among an excitable and impulsive people like the Irish, who can be bright and brave, true and affectionate, loyal and devoted, when they are sincerely loved and thoroughly trusted.

Christ bearing Witness to Himself. The Donnellan Lectures for 1878–9. By the Rev. GEORGE A. CHADWICK, D.D., Chaplain to his Grace the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Prebendary of Armagh Cathedral, and Rector of Armagh. Second Edition. Pp. 180. Cassell, Petter, Galpin and Co.

ONE of the many interesting notes in this volnme gives a criticism on a certain anti-Christian poem, and at the conclusion of the note we observed the remark: "A poet, perhaps, needs not to be logical, but in that case he ought not to be theological." This remark occurred to us as we

read and read again some striking and suggestive passages in Dr. Chadwick's work. Dr. Chadwick combines the imagination and tenderness of a poet with the research, grip, and judgment of a theologian: he is eloquent, but he is logical, and at the same time deeply devout. There is a freshness in the style and treatment which attracts attention; and not a page will be found either commonplace or dull.

The work thoroughly corresponds to its title, and its argument is ably written from beginning to end. "There is no truth in Christianity," writes Dr. Chadwick, "unless the person of its Founder is great enough to be distinguished from all others, and his words and deeds as far above imitation as the Sermon on the Mount is above the Epistle to Abgarus. The present volume is an attempt to show that the same great Personality is visible in all the Gospels, and is self-consistent throughout every part of them. It assumes the amazing loftiness of the conception (for that is beyond question), and it proceeds to argue that this lofty conception is throughout so manifest and so vital, that ordinary culture and unbiassed judgment should everywhere identify the conception, and be conscious of the life in it." Again: "The four Gospels," writes Dr. Chadwick, "exhibit one coherent and vital conception, one and the same individuality, which is entirely and beautifully human, even when its works are supernatural." Again: "The minutest details of this life, confessedly so noble, are verified by delicate consistencies, exquisite unities, and harmonies of bearing." Miracles, parables, teaching, actions, all the events recorded, bring before us not only the loving-kindness of the Lord, not only "perfect goodness, but its refined methods—the subtle intuitions, the unerring sympathies, the small attentions," in short, a beautiful union of quick sympathy with sharp intelligence, resulting in perfect tact.

In illustration, Dr. Chadwick writes:—

When the paralytic lies before Him, Jesus understanding his gloomy memories and sense that his anguish is retributive, says "Thy sins are forgiven," before saying "Arise and walk."

When the woman with an issue of blood seeks a stealthy blessing, Jesus compels her to be frank; but, when she kneels trembling, He "instantly" reassures her with the tender words, "Daughter, be of good comfort."

When they tell Jairus that his daughter is dead, Jesus "straightway" on hearing the word spoken, says, "Be not afraid, only believe." Nor will He exclude the father and the mother from the chamber, though most of His own disciples may not enter; and when the wonder is wrought, it is He who remembers that her vitality, now active, has long been unsustained, and bids that something be given her to eat . . . . .

The feeding of the four thousand is inspired by thoughtfulness equal to its compassion, because they might faint by the way, since many came from far. And his tact provides against a dangerous rush by making the strong and rude men sit down by fifties on the grass, so that those are easily counted, while we know not the number of the women and children.

He sighs deeply while He says, "Ephphatha" to the dumb man.

He will not snatch away His bound hands to heal Malchus without the gentle courtesy "Suffer ye thus far," so that the only indulgence which He ever asks of his persecutors was indulgence in beneficence to themselves. When M. Renan pronounces this miracle to be "extremely useless" (p. 521) he betrays the failure of all his sentiment to instruct him that a miracle has other purposes than demonstration, and such as no syllogism could replace. Malchus would not have agreed with him.

But the most marvellous exhibition of Christ's power, we read, is the crowning evidence of His sensibility:—

The tenderest of all the Greeks, "Euripides the human," drew no fairer picture than the restoration by Heracles of the wife of Admetos from the grave. Yet the demigod spices for himself, with a little cruelty, the tamer bliss of his beneficence, forcing Alkestis unrecognized, and almost, as they

complain, by violence, into the house of mourning, telling her bereaved husband that the longing for a new bridal will relieve his woe, and playing so roughly with the wound he means to heal, that at last the cry is wrenched from the sufferer —"Silence! What have you said? I would not have believed it of you."

Contrast this Heracles, inwardly exulting in his secret, with Jesus, when the sisters weep for Lazarus. He weeps with them such tears as legend never invented; tears which myriads of mourners know to be most consolatory, most human, most divine. Twice he groans, and the word points to some consciousness of a hostile power to be confronted and overcome. His confident prayer arouses their despondent hearts, and He enlists their co-operation by commanding them to roll away the stone.

And when the great deed is done, when the loved and lost one is restored, at the point when the mighty art of Greece could find no better word for the lips of Heracles than the stupid, yet very natural, boast, "Thou wilt say, sometime, that the son of Jove is an admirable guest to entertain," then the guest of the house of Simon retains His calmness, scarcely seeming to think His miracle an exploit, but quick to observe the restraint and discomfort of the trammelled man, and to recall the bystanders from amazement and surmise to the little services of daily life: "Loose him and let him go."

Can it be that a story thus alive with genuine character, throbbing all over with human sympathies, was "a little of what we now call fraud," and that Jesus, for His part, "blended with it some small complaisance?" (Renan, p. 510).

There are many pungent criticisms on M. Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. We had marked some of these for quotation; but we must content ourselves with the remark that to Renan, as to Strauss and Schenkel, Dr. Chadwick's "Christ bearing witness to Himself" is an admirable reply.

Short Notices.

Metlakahtla, and the North Pacific Mission of the Church Missionary Society. With a Map. Pp. 130. Seeley. 1880.

We heartily recommend this little book, a welcome addition to our store of missionary works. Three chapters are substantially a reprint of a pamphlet "Metlakahtla," published by the Church Missionary Society in the year 1868; almost all the rest is new matter. The narrative of a visit two years ago by Admiral Prevost, the beloved and revered originator of the Mission, is deeply interesting. Such narratives, we are persuaded, are the best answer to the majority of cavils and complaints.

The Possibility of Admitting the Laity to Confer with Convocation "Without any Disturbance of its Ancient Constitution." A Paper read at a Ruridecanal Conference of Clergy and Laity in the Council Chamber of the Guildhall, Bath, June 8th, 1880. By Prebendary Wood, Christ Church, Bath, Rural Dean. Pp. 16. Rivingtons. 1880.

An interesting Paper. The petition agreed upon at this Conference will be found in the Churchman, vol. ii. p. 396.

A Sermon preached in the Chapel of St. David's College, Lampeter, on the 24th June, 1880, when the Chapel was re-opened after it had been enlarged and beautified, in commemoration of the Jubilee of the College, which was celebrated on the 28th June, 1877, by Alfred Ollivant, D.D., Bishop of Llandaff, and formerly Vice-Principal of the College. Pp. 26. Rivingtons. 1880.

We have read this Sermon with interest and satisfaction. Fifty-three years ago, as we learn from a prefatory note, Dr. Ollivant preached at the consecration of the College Chapel; and the present sermon, printed at the request of the Principal and Professors of St. David's, opens thus:—