



INTERIOR OF A DONEGAL PEASANT COTTAGE: TYPE NOW PASSING AWAY.

### IRELAND OF TODAY

There Has Been a Decided Change for the Better.

### RESULTS OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE

Enormous Sums of Money Sent Back to the Old Country.

### POPULATION IS INCREASING

(Copyright, 1900, by Seumas MacManus.)

Public attention has been so absorbed in politics for the past decade or two, so far as Ireland is concerned, that the social and industrial regeneration which has been going on has been almost entirely overlooked. Yet it has been so far reaching and rapid, there have been such changes for the better—in the last twenty years chiefly—that we can now say, gladly and truthfully, Ireland is a regenerated country.

The changes in ways and means have been so radical as to surprise outsiders. The picture of Ireland in the foreign mind today is that of the Ireland of half a century ago. The real Ireland is different. It is now comparatively prosperous and its people are comparatively happy. Except in a few more remote and barren parts, the former hard struggle for existence is not known today and the pinch of hunger is not felt. We have more ease, more leisure, more of the comforts of life, and we look forward with less anxiety to the morrow.

Thanks to political agitation, the remedial laws—though still far from perfect—have given to the poor struggling farmer a certain security to which he was a stranger. His rent is lower and is not withheld from improving his land by the apprehension of increased rack-rent. Partly as a consequence of this and partly as a consequence of the possession of a little more wealth, his land is better tilled and drained, and he rears more stock and of a better quality. The resulting ease of mind is conducive to a more energetic moral progress. We have no system of compulsory education, but the Irishman's respect for learning amply fills its place. So, matter how much he needs, his children's work at home or on the farm, they are sent off every day, one or two or three miles, to the nearest primary school. So, of the rising generation in Ireland, fully 95 per cent will be educated.

When Irishmen fled from Ireland. It would have been absurd even to dream of such a state of things fifty years ago. It has been variously estimated that from half a million to a million people died of starvation in the years of 1845-1847 and 1848, though Ireland's shipping ports were thronged with ships laden with cattle and corn for export. A futile revolution of young Irishmen gave the English government the excuse to advocate the shipping of our people to America and elsewhere, and the landlords concluded that bullocks and Scotchmen would be more profitable on the Irish hills than the starved and shivering Celt. So, scourged by three scourges, the landlords, the government and the famine, our people were driven to the ports and sent forth in crowded and pestiferous thousands swarmed westward over the ocean.

The history of the emigration of these years is so full of interest and so full of fearfulness to the history of the famine itself, for untold thousands of those huddled together in these plague ships perished on the ocean. Ever since, from the old Ireland to the new, there has been a white way under the ocean paved with the bones of our people, and their hills. Yet, in spite of it all, Ireland is today a country of Celts and prosperity; and, because of it, there is no longer any famine in the old Ireland, believe there is no more important factor than the new Ireland—the Ireland that has grown up and flourished on the plentiful fruit in the United States of America.

How has America benefited Ireland? In several ways. It has benefited Ireland, primarily, by the vast sums of money which have been flowing in a steady stream eastward over the ocean in the last half century; it has benefited Ireland by relieving its congestion, and it has benefited Ireland by its moral influence.

The flow of cash from America to Ireland cannot easily be realized. It has been far greater than any person, save superficially acquainted with the facts could suspect. To get an adequate idea of it, one must have lived among the peasantry in remote parts where every family is represented by one, or two, or three, or five in America, and where the American letter, with its unfeeling order, is ever coming. When the boy and the girl leave home for the New Island (as it is put in our Gaelic) the one thought ever present in their minds is, not how they will benefit themselves, but how they will benefit their father and mother and the brothers and sisters they leave behind. And of all those, the number is very, very small that ever forget or neglect the loved ones at home, who, night and morning, on their knees, pray a "Pater noster," to God and Mary, for the absent one.

Monthly Remittances. The sums remitted by these boys and girls furnish those at home with the means to till and to stock their land much better than they did before, and to live in much greater ease and comfort. There is no more touching and beautiful phase of this question than that presented by the Irish servant girls of America, who toil sorely and perseveringly with the one hope ever in mind—that of remitting the monthly five or ten or fifteen dollars to their poor father at home, the thought of whose struggles often makes them cry over their work in the kitchen.

Ten days before last Christmas I dropped into some of the post offices of New York to watch the long lines of poor Irish girls, each with a yellow application blank in her hand, patiently waiting her chance to obtain the little money order which was to bring cheer and joy at Christmas tide to the cabin hearts of those who were beyond the sea. The goodness and the faithfulness and devotion of these poor girls impressed me so that I said to myself: "Surely, God will not forget a country that produces such women!"

Many Go Back With Their Cash. But over and above the sums of money sent home by the emigrant boys and girls,

there is a great amount taken to Ireland by returning emigrants—men and women who have saved a certain portion of their daily wages, with the ultimate idea of taking it back to Ireland, and by its means spending the remainder of their lives in comfort in the glen, for which, since they quitted their hearts have ever yearned. Just now returns are more plentiful than in any way than ever before; for the increased prosperity of Ireland and its increased comfort and good reports they hear from it induce more and more among those having means to return.

If a servant girl has amassed from \$250 to \$500 she returns rich, marries a small farmer and stocks his farm or adds a new field or two to it by purchase. The girl who returns is not satisfied to go home with so small an amount. His father's farm does not await him. He will not quit America until he can reckon a couple of thousand dollars in his pocket. When he goes home he casts about to find a little farm for sale. He purchases it, builds a house, marries a neighbor's daughter and returns "Yankee" becomes an institution in his own land.

Set a Good Example. This "Yankee" is henceforth a missionary. During his sojourn in America he has gathered—as the Irish quickly do—a notion of American life, its progressiveness and originality. And he takes this notion back with him into the land of dreamers. With the aid of other "Yankees" who have returned to the same districts, he has turned these characteristics to a greater or less extent upon those around him. Having a little money and a good deal of knowledge, he has about working his land in a systematic fashion and showing his neighbors that capital put into the land is not always lost.

The Spread of Enlightenment. Because of reasons for which we are not to blame—and our excuse is written largely over the last few centuries of our history—we were not recently, as a people, so enlightened as we might have been, but today enlightenment is gaining wonderfully among us.

After the public school system the returned Yankee has been the principal educator in all the remote districts. By the winter fireside, at the wake and the wedding, or the gatherings on the hillside or the roadside in summer, he draws around him a circle of neighbors who hang upon his words whilst he scatters the seeds of knowledge and of broader views which he has gained beyond the seas.

Democracy Equality. A further good lesson that our people have learned from the Yankees is that of independence and democratic equality. Two decades ago it was a rare treat to observe the returned one pass his landlord on the road with chin in air, a look of calm indifference in his eye and his hat seemingly glued to his head; now a mere stay-at-home can act the part as nonchalantly.

He has learned well the lesson that it should be in Ireland as it has always been in America, where "one man is as good as another, and a d—d sight better."

Germany's New Policy. Germany, like England, desires to remain at peace with her neighbors. But Germany, like England, is embarking on a policy, and a policy which may diminish the power of the masses on the continent, and had for remaining at peace. Her government is bent on largely strengthening her army—no matter whether or not it will ultimately be carried out—she will scale which the emperor is believed to desire, though probably in a milder form than that of the present.

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### EUROPE IN 1900

Clouds on the Horizon at the End of the Century.

### CAREFUL REVIEW OF THE SITUATION

War Feeling in England and the New German Policy.

### MANY SOURCES OF DANGER

(Copyright, 1900, by L. A. Maynard.)

A lively controversy has been raging in the English newspapers as to whether the twentieth century has already begun or will not begin till the 1st of January next. Though there are many active and resolute combatants on both sides, the balance of argument, as well as of numbers, seems to be with those who maintain the latter view. This one is justified in treating this year as that with which the nineteenth century ends, and taking the occasion to consider what are the sentiments and conditions that surround the expiring months of the century. These are certainly very different from those which would have been predicted forty years ago. England, and, to a large extent, Europe generally, was then rejoicing in, or, at any rate, largely moved by, the hope that an era of general peace and friendly feeling was approaching, when wars would almost be forgotten. On the horizon, and a sense of the common interest which all nations have in the prevalence of good will and the development of commerce, controlling their own, assured the continuance of friendly relations.

Dispelled Their Hopes. This hopeful view, though it was felt to be endangered by the existence of the Napoleonic empire in France, may be said to have lasted till the war of A. D. 1869 had shown that the risk of conflict between Austria and Russia might at any moment become acute. That war did not in itself produce further disturbance. On the contrary, the triumph of the principle of nationality in Germany and the establishment of the German Empire in central Europe, were by many observers regarded as a guarantee of peace. It was the great Franco-German war of 1870 that dispelled the sanguine anticipations of the optimists and since then the constant growth of huge armaments in the four greatest states of continental Europe has been a source of increasing alarm. During the last seven years, however, there have had repeated panics, threatening the outbreak of strife either between France and Germany, or between Austria and Russia, or between England and Russia, with the probability that any strife between any two of these powers would involve the rest, as well as Italy also.

Clouds on the Horizon. At this moment the horizon, if not actually menacing, is yet heavily clouded. France is, indeed, believed to be in a tranquil mood, and to have accepted a hostage to peace in her coming exhibition, which every one desires to make a success, not only for the credit of the nation, but in respect of the material benefits expected from it. Yet we saw, six months ago, how unstable is the political equilibrium in France and how uncertain the footing of the present pacific ministry. Russia is, however, a strong economic motive for peace. She needs money to complete the gigantic Trans-Siberian railway on which she is engaged, and she may well feel that no gain to be drawn from the embarrassments of a rival would compensate for the loss involved in the interruption of the war of the Pacific. There is, moreover, great reason to believe that the young czar adheres to the humanitarian ideas which prompted him to the ceding of the Hague conference, and that, in the event of a rupture, he would be inclined to acquiesce in the Russian withdrawal from the border of Afghanistan, where Russia might, were she so unfortunately advised, stir up trouble. There is always a restless military party at work in the huge army she keeps on foot, and it needs all the force of a tenacious monarch to keep it in check.

War Feeling in England. As regards England, apart altogether from the need she feels in the prosecution of the present war, one serious change has come over her spirit. She finds, or thinks she finds, her army no longer adequate to the great and growing needs of her empire. Hitherto she has been content to maintain a small force in the West Indies, and the vast citizen armies of the four continental powers, and has rejoiced to think conscription needless. She has, in fact, relied upon her fleet, and has since the Crimean war none but savage or semi-civilized enemies to meet in the field, whether in India or somewhere on the verge of her scattered colonies.

Even where territorial ambitions are contentions with the territories of a European civilized power, as she is content with France in Indo-China and West Africa, and with Germany in East and West Africa, she has been able to trust to the strength of her fleet, since it would have to be by sea only that French or German troops could reach Africa or the East. The British fleet is, of course, supreme on the ocean. Now, however, voices begin to be raised demanding a large increase in the British army—an increase which, as matters stand, is still too soon to say whether the current of feeling will prevail, for something will depend on the course which the present war takes. But it needs no mention that a new and ominous phenomenon in English policy, and one pretty sure to be largely debated during the year on which we are entering.

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Some Great Gains. This hope was so far realized that free constitutions have now been established in countries which formerly groined under tyranny, and the principle of nationalizing has been widely if not universally recognized. The national power and extend the national dominions on all occasions. This, which was the temper of France after the revolution a century ago, has become a temper widely spread through Europe, the emancipation of Greece, Servia, Bulgaria, Montenegro are gains to be grateful for. Indeed, the struggles for liberty and nationality are almost beginning to be forgotten by the new generation, which has no such enthusiasm for these principles as men had forty years ago. But the harvest of peace and good will which liberty and nationality were expected to bear has not come. Popular governments seem just as ready to engage in war as the old monarchies were. 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