

NEW ORLEANS SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 1869.
A WORD ABOUT GRATIAN.

Our readers are aware of the movement which has been on foot for some time, to erect a monument in the capital of Ireland to the memory of Henry Grattan. As is known, this praiseworthy intention had its origin in the magnanimous action of A. M. Sullivan, of the Nation, who directed that the sum of £400, which had been subscribed to procure a testimonial to his worth and patriotism, should be devoted towards the erection of a monument to one of Ireland's greatest benefactors. Amidst the diversity of opinion which unhappily too frequently prevails in Irish counsels, it is pleasant to witness the unanimity with which the present project is received. Party bias and discord are merged in a common desire to do honor to a man who "found Ireland on her knees, who watched over her with an eternal solicitude, who traced her progress from injuries to arms, and from arms to liberty, and bowing in the august presence of the new-born nation, hailed her with an *eternal perpetuity*." Now that a new era is dawning on Ireland, it is fitting that he who exhausted his physical energies in the English Parliament as the advocate of Catholic claims, should receive, not the homage of a mere party, but of all Ireland.

Under these circumstances, we have thought that the following sketch of this illustrious patriot would prove interesting to many of our readers—particularly the young, who will recognize in him a pure patriot, a profound statesman, and a highly-toned, virtuous man:

An interval of over forty years since the death of Henry Grattan places him at a sufficient distance to enable us to see his character in its proper light—to judge correctly of its dimensions, and to record that judgment in language which shall be totally uninfluenced by the passions and prejudices of the hysterical, unreasoning hatred of political opponents, and the equally inveterate and unreasoning prejudices of political partisans. Every man who has attained to eminence, particularly political eminence, has lived under the constant action of the opposite poles of the social magnet—attracted by the one, repelled by the other. Even little great men, and in fact everybody who is somebody, feels the effects of these opposing influences. Your honest poor fellow, who never "says nothing to nobody," who goes through life as if he did no wrong, losing nobody and by nobody lost, is no object for either attraction or repulsion. Round, smooth, soft, and blushing, he passes over life's journey without causing any fiction; nor is there any angularity in his character to leave an impression on the minds of those over whom he passes. The sentimental biographies of all the individuals of that epoch who have lived since the days of Wolfe or Napoleon tell, in my judgment, of the inventive efforts of men have yet bloomed, and may be told as much whole-some fruit as any which might be cooked in hollow aluminum. Whichever motives and purposes they may have served in their own day, history has only to record of them that—

They sit, and speak, and sleep. What then?

But such is not the case with those who have been eminently distinguished in their day and generation. They may all truly apply to themselves the dictation line, *Non natus, moritur, etc.* Time may, and in truth often does, effect wonderful changes in their regard. The debts which contemporaries should have readily and proudly paid, are too often left to be discharged by succeeding times, which—

—mainly just.

To buried merit rates a tardy burst."

Succeeding times may also judge more accurately of a man's real merits and abilities than the epoch in generation in which he flourished, and that both for intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. Outside the minute analysis and little-tittle of biography, (of which every one is not then *worthy*), nothing but what is really great and important in character descends to posterity. It is with this alone it is concerned, and leaving the follies, the frailties, and little-noms which may have been associated with great men, to repose in the silence of the tomb, in justice of the merits of the great departed by their endeavors and achievements in their respective eras. This is what we shall endeavor to do with the character of Henry Grattan.

Henry Grattan was born in the city of Dublin, on the 2d of July, 1746. His father, James Grattan, was for many years Recorder of Dublin, and represented that city for some time in Parliament. His mother, daughter of Chief Justice Murray, was a lady of considerable estate, for whose family was rather distinguished. One of her brothers was Bishop of Limerick, and another joined military service on many a bloody field on the continent. Henry appears to have inherited a full share of the courageous ardor of the family. During his boyhood he was however, among his playmates, as weak, sickly, and of those who had the pleasure of going to school with him, though he was a student of some peace, partly, perhaps, from additional pleasure of receiving frequent illustrations of the hardness of Grattan's heart. His sense of conductiveness, or personal worth, would say, must have been fully developed—a development which was proved by the numerous bounties, nameless & otherwise, of his schoolfellows on the heads of his schoolfellows. Leaving Grattan in pursuit of his philosophical recreations, for the present, we must go back with the mass of history to a period antecedent to his birth. In order that we may more clearly understand the position of the Irish Parliament, and the circumstances of the time when he entered the political arena. Early in the reign of George II, which exhibited a very lively interest, arose between the Irish and English Houses of Lords, on a question of appellate jurisdiction. In the year 1719, a case of property between Master Shaddock and Maurice Annesley, was decided by the respondents by the Courts of Exchequer in Ireland; but the judgment was reversed on appeal to the Irish House of Peers. Annesley, the respondent, then brought the case before the House of Peers in England, and they affirmed the judgment of the Irish Court of Exchequer. The Irish Peers strongly denied the legality of the appeal to England, asserting that an appeal to the King in his Irish Parliament was definitely in any case in Ireland, and the Irish Judges pronounced their opinion to that effect. The complications and difficulties of the case were still more increased by the infliction of a fine on Alexander Barre, the Sheriff of Ulster, who refused to act upon the orders of the Court of Exchequer and the English Peers, by putting Annesley in possession of his estate. While, on the other hand, the Irish Peers removed the fine, and voted that the Sheriff had acted with becoming courtesy in the matter. All the right and reason of the case appears to have been on the side of the Irish Peers; but, with a powerful adversary so determined to have his way, reason and courtesy had a poor defense.

soil his water still. *Quod null, null;* that is the end of it.

This is the Irish Peers very soon learned from an English enactment, which provided that whereas attempts have been made to shake off the subject of appeal, and to disengage herself from the dominion of this realm; and whereas the Lords of Ireland, in order to themselves a power and jurisdiction co-extensive and almost greater than the courts of justice in Ireland; therefore, etc., it is declared and enacted, etc., that the said kingdom of Ireland, shall be, and of right ought to be, subject unto and dependent upon the Imperial Crown of Great Britain, so long as she shall remain united and annexed thereto, and the King, Majesty, and with the consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons of Ireland, in Parliament, etc., etc., it is declared and enacted, etc., that the said kingdom of Ireland, shall be, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the people of the kingdom of Ireland. And it is further enacted and declared that the House of Lords of Ireland have, not, nor of right ought to have, any jurisdiction to judge of, affirm, or reverse, any judgment, etc., made in any court within the said kingdom, etc., etc." This is the celebrated obnoxious statute, (6th of George I.) which was repealed by the still more celebrated Declaration of Irish Independence, carried in an epoch inseparably associated with Grattan's enduring fame.

By this statute the Irish Parliament was entirely degraded and provincialized. Individual members might occasionally, if they pleased, let off some steam in the shape of rhetorical bluster and figurative rhodomontade; but a real hand nothing to expect from an assembly as utterly bereft of all dignity and independence as the *praise God, Barebone's Parliament of England.*" Well had it been for the character of the Irish Parliament, and for the repose of the unfortunate Irish Catholics, if, when that Parliament was thus rendered powerless for good, it had also ceased to be potent for evil. Individuals and bodies of men sometimes act as if they were covetous for their own degradation. In the depths of the humiliation to which the English Parliament had sunk it, the Irish Legislature found for itself a still lower status, by the penal enactments which its members passed against their Catholic fellow-countrymen. Fortunately, the full and proper treatment of our subject does not require that we should dwell minutely on this disheartening period of our history. We shall, therefore, mention only a few facts, which will sufficiently illustrate the character and spirit of those dreary times. In that same (1719) in which the Irish Parliament was degraded to the rank of a provincial assembly, it passed in fact exempting Protestant dissenters from certain penalties to which they were liable in common with the Catholics, and, as if prompted with a demoniac malignity to make the Papist feel that exemption in favor of the dissenters still more sorely, a bill was brought in in 1723, for still more effectually preventing the further growth of Popery. This bill, however, contained a clause of so atrocious and monstrous a nature, against the Catholic clergy, that the whole barbarous measure was suppressed in England. Thus, for once, in the history of his country, did the Irish Peasant find the statute (6th George I.) a blessing, and the statute of the Lord Lieutenant, by command of his Majesty, as preliminary to asserting to their claim, etc. Not only the *Establishment* of the greatest of all bigamists to Mr. Grattan for the greatest of all bigamists, would be anything but pleasing to a poor Bull, whose back was still smarting, bruised and blackened from a castigation lately received in America, the band playing "Yankee Doodle." 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