

Passages of Classical Learning

Some Passages in the Early History of Classical Learning in Ireland

Dodgson Hamilton Madden

1908

The Address which is printed in this volume was delivered at the inaugural meeting of the Trinity College Classical Society, held in the month of November, 1907. This Society is not as yet in a position to follow the example of the older Historical and Philosophical by printing the proceedings at its opening meetings. I have undertaken to publish this Address on behalf of the Society, with the understanding that should any profit be realized, it shall be applied in aid of the foundation of a classical library for the use of members.

It was necessary to omit a good deal of what I have here printed in order to bring the delivery of the Address within reasonable limits. I have revised what I had then written, adding notes, and printing in an Appendix some extracts from writers whose works are not easily obtainable.

Such information as is to be found in these pages on the subject of classical learning in the early monastic schools of Ireland was collected from the works to which I have referred ; all of which are accessible to the ordinary reader. This part of the Address was intended as introductory to a subject of inquiry to which I had been directed in the course of holiday rambles, during many years, in the by-ways of Elizabethan literature. In this way I had come to learn many things which the writers of Histories and Treatises had failed to teach me, particularly as regards the conditions of life and the degree of education and literary culture which existed up to the commencement of Elizabeth's reign among the upper classes in the part of Ireland which lay outside the boundaries of the English Pale.

Some years ago I added to a Shakespearian library a copy of the edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* which was published in 1586. I was led to an examination of Holinshed's ponderous tomes by the knowledge that they had furnished Shakespeare with the plots of some of his greatest works ; and I was naturally attracted by the description of Elizabethan Ireland contributed by Richard Stanyhurst. Here I found much interesting information in regard to the schools within the English Pale, and the classical learning which was to be found in that part of Ireland before the foundation of Trinity College,

From the same writer I learned also that among the "meer Irish," without the Pale, Latin was not only taught in schools, but generally spoken "like a vulgar tongue." Following up a subject that was new, to me at all events, I learned from other contemporary writers that the Irish outside the Pale were at that time a bilingual people ; that the languages taught in the native schools were Irish and Latin ; that to be a reader of Latin was regarded as the ordinary accomplishment of a gentleman ; and that the Latin language was commonly spoken in the huts of the peasants and the castles of the chieftains. It also became apparent that this knowledge and use of Latin must be attributed to an origin earlier in date than the Revival of Learning, and that it was a survival of the classical learning cultivated in the ancient monastic schools of Ireland.

The period of time to which attention is directed in this Address, extending beyond the advent of Sir Henry Sidney in 1565, is included within the range of Modern History. And yet there was to be found during that period, within the narrow limits of this island, and side by side with the Feudal organization of the Pale, a state of society based on the Tribal system, and retaining many characteristics the origin of which is of extreme antiquity. The Tribal system of jurisprudence, which was not finally abolished until the beginning of the seventeenth century, had no affinity either with Roman Law or with the customs in which the

Feudal system had its origin. This system of jurisprudence supplied to Sir Henry Maine the foundation of his *Early History of Institutions*. The Bardic literature cultivated in the native schools, and patronised by the chieftains, was also of native growth, and, so far as I am aware, retained its original character, substantially uninfluenced by the study of the ancient classics. This feature of the age is not in danger of being overlooked or neglected ; but sufficient attention has not been directed to another feature of this age, not, indeed, of native growth, but traceable to the early years of the Christian era—the permanence in Celtic Ireland of the influence of the early monastic schools, and of the classical learning for which they were famous throughout Western Europe.

It is not surprising that this bygone state of society should have failed to attract the attention of writers who were concerned rather with military operations and political movements, and who lived in an age which cared little for archæological investigation. The incessant wars by which this part of Ireland was devastated during many years of the reign of Elizabeth, the subsequent abolition of the Tribal system, and the ensuing convulsions of the seventeenth century, swept away all visible traces of a state of society which presented many features of special interest. In the age in which we live, when archæological studies and investigations are engaging the attention of students in every part of the world, it seemed worth while to bring the result of my reading before the recently formed Trinity College Classical Society. What I have written is not intended as a serious contribution to the investigation of this period of our history. The facts which I have brought together lie near the surface ; but a superficial outcrop, of no particular value in itself, may be useful as evidence of a rich mine beneath the surface, ready to repay the labour of the patient worker.

A monograph on the early history of classical learning in Ireland would be a fitting outcome of the foundation of a Classical Society associated with Trinity College. During the long years in which the study of the history, language, and antiquities of Ireland was neglected elsewhere, Trinity College sent forth into the world of letters many earnest workers in this field. Ussher (whose name stands second on our roll of students), Bedell, Ware, Harris (the editor of Ware), Leland, Ledwich, Moore, Monck Mason, Graves, Ferguson, Reeves, Todd, Richey, Stokes, Olden, and Atkinson are writers who in different degrees, and in various branches of research, have earned the gratitude of Irish students. These writers, with the exception of Bedell, were graduates of the University of Dublin ; and some of the most eminent had a closer connexion with it. Ussher was a Fellow and Professor, and afterwards Vice-Chancellor ; Ware represented the University in Parliament ; Bedell was Provost, and Leland, Todd, and Graves were Fellows of Trinity College. Stokes was one of our Professors. It would be invidious to select names of living writers. I will only say that the work which is being done at the present day by Irish scholars who have received their education in Trinity College affords full assurance that the ancient traditions of the University will be worthily maintained in the future.

D. H. MADDEN.

May 25th, 1908.

AN ADDRESS.

I OUGHT, I think, to explain how it is that I am about to address the inaugural meeting of the Classical Society of Trinity College. I had no hesitation in accepting the office which the Society desired me to fill ; for I regard it as a duty as well as a privilege to make use of whatever position or influence I may have attained in the University in promoting the cause of classical scholarship. I am one of those who believe that the study of the literature of the older civilizations of Greece and of Rome, combined with the closely-allied subjects of philosophy, ancient and modern, affords to those who are in a position to make it a reality the

highest form of mental training ; and to those who prosecute these studies in after-life they are an abiding source of intellectual enjoyment. Apart from the feelings of gratitude and affection which link us to the classical studies of our youth, there are practical reasons why an association like that which I am addressing should commend itself to all who desire that the standard of liberal education should be maintained. It must, I think, be recognized that, under the conditions of modern life, a classical training, which, to be worth having, involves years of study, *non cuivis homini contingit*, and that an education which may fairly be regarded as liberal, and of a University type, is now possible, of which the study of the languages and literatures of Greece and Rome forms no part. The student who has mastered his Shakespeare, Milton, Berkeley, Gibbon, and Swift, has made *insignes in literis humanioribus progressus*, although to him Sophocles, Homer, Plato, Thucydides, and Aristophanes may be but names. The demands of modern science upon the time of the student are exacting ; and there is a real danger that by idle acquiescence in the current of thought, or through a false estimate of utility, what we regard as the highest culture and the most valuable mental training may be lost to many. To aid in safe-guarding this, their birthright, for students of the Humanities is the object of the founders of this Society.

I had, I confess, some difficulty when I was asked by your committee to deliver the inaugural address at the first meeting of the Society. The discourses at our annual opening meetings ought, in my opinion, to be delivered by scholars of recognized eminence, who might take the opportunity of dealing with subjects of special research. These discourses would be of permanent value, and might, in course of time, form collections which would take their place side by side with the cherished volumes of *Kottabos* and the graver *Hermathena*.

I need hardly say that it is beyond my power to offer you any such contribution. But while I was pondering over the suggestion of your committee, it occurred to me that studies undertaken for a different purpose had brought me in contact with a chapter in the early history of scholarship in Ireland, by which I had been deeply interested, and which might be usefully suggested to the members of our Society as a subject of research. By the early history of Irish scholarship I mean that which precedes the foundation of Trinity College in 1591 ; and the chapter to which I refer immediately precedes that which has been so well written by Dr. Mahaffy in his *Epoch in Irish History*. It relates to the state of learning in Ireland in the early years of the reign of Elizabeth, when the Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, and the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, James Stanyhurst, with some aid from Oxford, endeavoured to re-introduce classical studies into Ireland by the establishment of diocesan grammar schools and the foundation of a University in Dublin. This was in 1565, and Trinity College, as we know, was not founded until 1591. Meanwhile, well-nigh a generation had passed away, and one of the saddest of the lost opportunities in the history of our country has to be recorded.

I say, to re-introduce classical studies into Ireland, for a yet earlier chapter in the history of classical scholarship still awaits its historian. This deeply interesting chapter is not my immediate subject ; but it could not be passed by without notice in an address dealing with the early history of scholarship in Ireland. Moreover, I believe that an appreciation of the depth and permanence of the impression made upon the habits and intellect of the Scotie people by centuries of classical culture is necessary if we would understand a subject which has not obtained the attention which it deserves—the knowledge of the Latin language and literature which prevailed in the early years of the reign of Elizabeth in one of the two countries into which Ireland was sharply divided.

Until recent years the attention of the student of history was not directed to the monastic schools of Ireland as academies of secular learning, attracting thousands of students, not only from England, but from continental countries, and entitling Ireland to be styled the Uni-

versity of Western Europe, as Athens was of Rome. The association of this part of our history with ecclesiastical history and hagiology has had the effect of diverting the minds of students of classical literature from a field of research well worthy of their attention.

To students of Bede, Ussher, and Ware this field of inquiry was well known. Venerable Bede, writing in the eighth century, bears testimony to the generosity with which Irish professors in the seventh century received pupils, and furnished them with books and teaching. In his *Antiquitates Hiberniae*, Sir James Ware writes : “ Fuisse olim in Hiberniâ scholas insigniores, sive, ut nunc appellamus, Academias, ad quas Hiberni et Britones, ac demum Galli et Saxones, tanquam ad bonarum literarum Emporia confluerunt, ex antiquis scriptoribus, fide dignis, liquido constat.”

In 1886 *Ireland and the Celtic Church* was published by our Professor Stokes. This was followed in 1890 by Archbishop Healy's *Hibernia, Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum*. These works present to the reader, in an attractive form, a great deal of information as to the ancient academies of Ireland. Although Dr. Douglas Hyde's *Literary History of Ireland* is mainly conversant with literature of native origin, it contains evidence of careful research into the classical studies of the monastic schools.

Notwithstanding all that has been written, the desire expressed by Ware, that the course of studies in those schools should be investigated, has not yet been fully realized. By the untimely death of Professor George Stokes we have lost a painstaking investigator and attractive writer, whose paper on “ The Knowledge of Greek in Ireland between A.D. 500 and 900,” printed in the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, brought into prominence a feature of the studies in our ancient schools upon which additional light has been thrown by Professor Sandys, in the volume of his recently published *History of Classical Scholarship*, in which Professor Stokes's paper is referred to :—“ While the accurate knowledge of Latin was declining in Gaul, even Greek was not unknown in Ireland. . . The knowledge of Greek, which had almost vanished in the west, was so widely diffused in the schools of Ireland, that if anyone knew Greek it was assumed that he must have come from that country. The Irish passion for travel led to the light of learning which had lingered in the remotest island of the west being transmitted anew to the lands of the south.” The study of Greek in those schools disposes of the idea that they were mere ecclesiastical seminaries, in which Latin was studied, as the language of the Church.

Professor Bury, in an interesting passage in his *Life of St Patrick*, explains how in the west it was “ a matter of course, and not, at first, the result of a deliberate policy, that the Latin language and literature should accompany the Gospel.” Further on he writes : “ The schools of learning, for which the Scots became famous a few generations after his death—learning which contrasts with his own illiterateness—owe their rise to the contact with Roman ideas and the acquaintance with Roman literature which his labours, more than anything else, lifted within the horizon of Ireland. It was not only the religion, but also the language which was attached to it, that inaugurated a new period of culture for the island, and opened a wider outlook on the universe.” But the classical culture of the Scotie monastic schools soon outgrew the requirements of an ecclesiastical seminary. It included an acquaintance with Greek, which, until the revival of learning, was unknown in the sister island, and it left, as we shall see, a permanent impression on the culture of the higher classes in Celtic Ireland.

Professor Sandys agrees with Bishop Reeves and Miss Stokes in looking to continental rather than to Irish sources of information as to the course of study in these seats of learning. “ As regards the literature of ancient Ireland and its remains, it has been observed by Dr. Reeves, that in this country we have to deplore the merciless rule of barbarism, which swept away all domestic evidences of advanced learning, leaving scarcely anything on record at home but legendary lore, and has compelled us to draw from foreign depositories the materials on which to rest the proof that Ireland was really entitled to that literary eminence

which national feeling lays claim to. . . . Our knowledge of the crowds of Irish teachers and scribes who migrated to the Continent, and became founders of many monasteries abroad, is derived from foreign chronicles, and their testimony is borne out by the evidence of the numerous Irish MSS. and other relics of the eighth to the tenth century, occurring in libraries throughout Europe.” [1]

The schools founded by Irish scholars on the Continent were not overwhelmed by a cataclysm like that which swept away from Ireland even the remembrance of its ancient seats of learning. A similar catastrophe overwhelmed the famous monastic school of Iona, which in the sixth century was “ distinguished,” writes Gibbon [2] “ by a *classic* library which afforded some hopes of an entire Livy.” Adamnan’s life of its founder, edited by Bishop Reeves, is deeply interesting, but it affords no insight into the literary and educational work carried on in this famous school.

Professor Sandys’ work suggests that some additional information as to the course of instruction in the Irish Schools may be derived from foreign sources. At Bobbio, for example, “ the monastery founded by the Irish monk [Columban] became a home of learning in northern Italy. In course of time its library received gifts of MSS. of the fourth and fifth centuries, originally transcribed for men of letters in Rome, and others of later date, presented by wandering countrymen of the founder, such as Dungal, the Irish monk who presided over the school at Pavia in 823. The first catalogue, which contained 666 MSS., including Terence, Lucretius, Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Persius, Martial, Juvenal, and Claudian, with Cicero, Seneca, and the elder Pliny, was drawn up in the tenth century The Monastery of St. Gallen has proved no less important than that of Bobbio as a treasure-house of Latin as well as Irish literature.” To the Irish monks who founded Bobbio and St. Gallen he attributes a large share in “ the preservation of some of the most important remains of Latin literature.”

No less remarkable was the interest in Greek literature, of which Professor Sandys’ researches supply important evidence. Some of the instances mentioned by him prove that this branch of learning was cultivated in Ireland so late as the ninth century—the age of the famous Johannes Scotus Erigena, whose name is, being freely interpreted, John the native-born Irishman. A learned Irishman, at the Court of Charles the Great, was asked to explain the double eclipse of 810, and replied in a letter proving his familiarity with Greek and Latin poets, and with Virgil in particular. Another Irish monk, Dicuil, whose Latin treatise on astronomy, written in the ninth century, has recently been printed in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, “ gives,” writes Professor Sandys, “ an impression of very wide attainments by naming the following Greek authors.” He names fourteen, including Herodotus, Homer, Thucydides, and Xenophon.

I know that there are among those who listen to me some who are better qualified than I am to speak of this part of our history. My object in referring to it is twofold. I desire to suggest to the members of this Society a field of research which may well enlist the energies and excite the enthusiasm of an Irish student of the Classics. But I am more especially desirous of calling your attention to its bearing upon the condition of classical learning existing in the middle of the sixteenth century in the part of Ireland which lay outside the English Pale—which, with a full knowledge of the ethnological inadequacy of the term, I will call by the convenient name of Celtic Ireland.

Although many centuries are interposed between the classical culture of the early monastic schools and the period with which I am immediately concerned, a real connexion will, I believe, be found to exist between them.

The student who seeks to acquire a knowledge of the social life of Elizabethan England will find no difficulty in attaining his object. From plays, ballads, satires, pamphlets, jest-books, and books of sport, he will derive even a livelier image of social life than from the

elaborate descriptions of contemporary England contained in books such as Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses* and Harrison's *Description of England*. But if he should happen to be an Irishman, impelled by a kindly desire to acquire some knowledge of the everyday life of his own country, he will find himself at a "cold fault."

"All the native annalists," Mr. Bagwell writes in the preface to his valuable *Ireland under the Tudors*, "are jejune to an exasperating degree. Genealogy seems to have been the really important thing with them; and they throw exceedingly little light on the condition of the people. We are forced, therefore, to rely on the accounts of the prejudiced, and nearly always ill-informed, English travellers and officials."

Were these writers ever so trustworthy, they could give us no assistance in realizing the general condition of Ireland at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The earliest did not visit Ireland until it had been wasted, and reduced to the condition of barbarism which they describe, as the consequence of many years of incessant warfare; nor do they distinguish between the wretched kerns and peasants and the wealthier classes, amongst whom, if anywhere, traces of classical learning would be found.

Spenser first saw Ireland in 1580, and his *View of the Present State of Ireland* was written in 1596. It is in the main a vindication of the policy of his friend and patron Arthur, Lord Grey, the hero of the fifth book of the *Faerie Queen*—*The Legend of Artegall or of Justice*—and the champion of the "Lady which Irena hight."

Fynes Moryson's first visit to Ireland was in 1600, when he served in the war with Tyrone. His *Itinerary* was not printed until 1617. He is described by Mr. Sidney Lee as a sober and truthful writer; and we may accept his testimony as regards the misery and nakedness which he witnessed after the wars, so far as he writes of his personal experience.

Barnaby Rich's *New Description of Ireland* was published in 1610; and few of the writers of the age carry our information further back than the year 1600. Indeed, I cannot find that any of the writers of English books, who are usually referred to as authorities regarding the condition of the Ireland of Elizabeth, had any acquaintance with the country during the earlier years of her reign.

Better things might have been expected of John Hooker, described as "*alias* Vowell," according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, a learned antiquary, and uncle of Judicious Richard Hooker, whose noble style of English prose, chosen by Ruskin as his model, was certainly not derived from a study of his uncle's works. Hooker came to Ireland as solicitor for Sir Peter Carew, whose biographer he became, probably at some time prior to 1568, for in that year he was elected burgess for Athenry,

The business which brought him to Ireland was the recovery for his client of extensive estates to which he laid claim, situated principally in Munster. This province, which was disturbed by local warfare when Sidney became Lord Deputy, had become, he tells us, in the year 1571, so peaceable that "euerie man with a white sticke onelie in his hands, and with great treasures, might, and did, trauell without feare or danger where he would (as the writer hereof by triall knew to be true), and the white sheepe did keepe the blacke, and all the beasts laie continuallie in the fields, without anie stealing or preieng."

When visiting Munster on the business of his patron, he was brought into close contact with Irish lords. Carew, "finding that part of the realme to be now verie quiet and the people well-disposed, he sent first his agent, the writer hereof, to Corke, where and before whom there came Mac Artie Riogh, Corman Mac Teege, Barrie Og, the Omalions, the Odriscols, the Odallies, and sundry others," who met Carew's proposals in a reasonable spirit.

With these exceptional opportunities Hooker could have told us much of the manners, education, customs, and mode of life of the Irish chieftains with whom he was brought into contact. He was the author of the continuation of the History of Ireland from 1577 to 1586, printed in the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*. The only part of Hooker's work which is of value is his report of certain proceedings in the Parliament of 1568, of which James Stanyhurst, "a very grave, wise, and learned man," was Speaker. He reports at somewhat disproportionate length the speech of "a certaine English gentleman (the writer hereof) being a burgesse of the towne of Athenrie in Connagh." [3] The subject was, "The granting of an impost of wine," and he contrived to introduce into his speech allusions to Moses, Camillas, Scipio, Socrates, Themistocles, Miltiades, "and others." But in no part of his *Chronicles*, which were carried down to 1586, does he give evidence of the slightest interest in the educational policy of Sidney and Stanyhurst, nor does he discriminate between the higher and the lower classes of "the Irishrie and savage people." Having exhausted in their denunciation a copious vocabulary, largely drawn from writers of the Old Testament, he adds:—"But concerning the inhabitants in the English Pale, and all cities and towns, the contrarie (God be praised) is dailie seen."

Even as regards the English Pale, we look in vain to the treatises of the soldiers and politicians to whom I have referred, for information as to the condition of education and of classical scholarship—questions which do not seem to have occupied their attention.

Fortunately the services of a learned classical scholar, a member of a well-known Anglo-Irish family resident for some generations in the Pale, were enlisted by the promoter of an important literary venture.

Holinshed's *Chronicles* are known to Shakespearian scholars as the source from which Shakespeare derived the plots of his Histories and of some of his greatest plays. It was part of the design of Ralph Holinshed, a man of large ideas, to prefix to the annals of each division of what is now the United Kingdom, treatises descriptive of its leading characteristics and social condition. Harrison's *Description of England* has been reprinted by the New Shakespeare Society, and thus rendered accessible to the student

The description of Ireland was entrusted to Richard Stanyhurst. His father, James Stanyhurst, was Recorder of Dublin, and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. He was a warm supporter of the educational policy of Sir Henry Sidney, of which I shall have something to say later on. His son Richard, born in 1547, was educated in the school founded in Kilkenny by Pierce, Earl of Ormonde. From Kilkenny Stanyhurst proceeded to Oxford, where he was associated with a literary group of whom Hallam writes that "an injudicious endeavour to substitute the Latin metres for those congenial to our language met with no more success than it deserved; unless it may be deemed success that Sidney, and even Spenser, were for a moment seduced into approbation of it."

One of this group of classical scholars was Gabriel Harvey, the correspondent of Spenser, —the *Hobbinol* of *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*—to whose admiration of Shakespeare's early efforts, as the *Johannes factotum* of a company of players, we owe one of our first glimpses of the struggling playwright. Stanyhurst's unfortunate version of *The first foure bookes of Virgil, his Æneis intoo English Heroicall Verse*, has crowned this school with not undeserved ridicule. Stanyhurst's literary position ought not to be determined by this unsuccessful experiment. His scholarship, though pedantic, was exact; and it is to his interest in classical literature that we owe such insight as we have been able to obtain into the state of learning in the early years of Elizabeth's reign—a subject in regard to which he may be accepted as a trustworthy guide.

His *Description of Ireland* appeared in the first edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, published in 1577. It is full of interest, and there is no part of it more attractive than his

description of the old school in “Kilkenny, the best uplandish towne, or (as they term it) the properest drie towne in Ireland,” the famous foundation which became in time the school of Swift, of Berkeley, of Congreve, and of many eminent men of lesser fame.

“In the west end of the churchyard of late haue beene founded a grammar schoole by the right honorable Pierce or Peter Butler, erle of Ormond and Ossorie, and by his wife the Countesse of Ormond, the ladie Margaret fitz Gerald, sister to Gerald fitz Gerald, the earle of Kildare, [4] that last was. Out of which schoole have sprouted such proper impes, through the painfull diligence and the labour-some Industrie of a famous lettered man, M. Peter White (sometime fellow of Oriall College, in Oxford, and schoolemaster in Kilkennie) as generallie the whole weale publike of Ireland, and especiallie the southerne parts of that Iland are greatlie thereby furthered. This gentleman’s method in training up youth was rare and singular, framing the education according to the scholars veine. If he found him free, he would bridle him like a wise Isocrates from his booke ; if he perceived him to be dull, he would spur him forward ; if he understood that he was the worse for beating, he would win him with rewards ; finalie, by interlasing studie with recreation, sorrow with mirth, paine with pleasure, sowemesse with sweetnesse, roughnesse with mildnesse, he had so good successe in schooling his pupils, as in good faith I may boldlie bide by it, that in the realme of Ireland was no grammar schoole so good, in England I am well assured no better. And because it was my happie hap (God and my parents be thanked) to haue beene one of his crue, I take it to stand with my dutie, sith I may not stretch my abilitie in requiting his good turnes, yet to manifest my good will in remembering his paines. And, certes, I acknowledge myself as much bound and beholding to him and his, as for his sake I reuerence the meanest stone cemented in the wals of that famous schoole.”

Many of these venerated stones have escaped the ravages of envious and calumniating time, for at the west end of the churchyard there is still standing a building, in which a great part of the old school is incorporated. The dormitory is now the diocesan library, and in it I was shown a well-worn copy of Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, containing Stanyhurst’s description of the school, which may, for aught I know, have been presented to his old master by a grateful pupil.

Warm as was Stanyhurst’s praise of his own school, he is far from suggesting that it was the only one in Ireland which attained the same educational standard. He does not profess in his *Description* to enumerate the schools and schoolmasters of his day. He gives an elaborate list of “the names and surnames of the learned men and authors of Ireland, and what bookes they wrote.” Of these writers ten are described as schoolmasters; and it may fairly be assumed that there were other teachers, in addition to those who had claims to be included in a list of authors. Although the teaching in these schools was not Stanyhurst’s immediate subject, there is some evidence that it was of high order. Of the author-schoolmasters whose Universities are noted, four were graduates of Oxford, and one of Cambridge. Of the entire number of Irish authors, twenty-five are described as of Oxford, and five of Cambridge.

One of these schoolmasters he places on the same level as Peter White of Kilkenny. “Patricke Cusacke, a gentleman borne, and a scholer of Oxford, sometime Schoolemaister in Dublin, and one that with the learning that God did impart to him, gaue great light to his countrie ; he imploied his studies rather in the instructing of scholers than in the penning of books ; he florished in the year one thousand five hundred threescore and six, and wrote in Latin *Diuersa Epigrammata*.”

“Shagens [or Stagens], fellow of Balioll College in Oxford,” was master of a school at Ratough (Ratoath), which must have been one of repute, for in the catalogue of learned men we find “Plunket, baron of Dunsanie, scholer in Ratough to M. Staghens, after sent by Sir Christopher Barnewall, knight, his friendlie father-in-law, to the universitie of Oxford. Where how well he profited in knowledge, as such as are of his acquaintance presentlie perceive, so

hereafter when his workes shall take the aire, that now, by reason of bashfull modestie or modest bashfulness are wrongfullie imprisoned, and in manner stiepled in shadowed couches, I doubt not but by his fame and renowne in learning, shall be answerable to his desert and valure in writing.” It was to this Lord Dunsany, his brother-in-law, that Stanyhurst addressed the Latin treatise to which I shall presently refer.

Here and there we find traces of scholarship in various parts of the Pale, and larger towns. Having mentioned one Peter Walsh, “ a proper youth, and one that would have beene an ornament to his countrie, if God had spared him life,” he writes : “ There dwelleth in Waterford a lawyer of the surname who writeth a verie proper Latine verse.” Waterford seems to have been specially favoured. It was the birthplace of White ; and “ Fagan, a batchellor of art in Oxford, and a schoolemaster in Waterford,” is noted, and also “ one Wise in Waterford, that maketh verie well in the English.”

Thus it appears that in the matter of classical scholarship, as in other respects, the Ireland of the Pale presented a feeble reflection of contemporary England, with indeed important reservations. For from its social life we must exclude the sports and pastimes which gave reality to the now hackneyed phrase, “ Merrie England.” The sense of security and the increased wealth, which led in England to a marvellous development of domestic architecture, were also absent ; and in its academic system the “ studious Universities” found no part. The grammar schools, however, seem to have been founded on the English model ; and those of the Anglo-Irish who could afford the expense completed their education at Oxford or Cambridge, more frequently at the former University.

[1] *Early Christian Art in Ireland*, by Margaret Stokes.

[2] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. zxxvii.

[3] The sequel of this speech is worth noting. “ The time and daie was so far spent above the ordinarie houre, being well neere two of the clocke in the afternoone, that the Speaker and the Court rose up and departed. Howbeit, such was the present murmurings and threatenings breathed out that the said gentleman, for his safetie, was by some of the best of that assemblie conducted to the house of Sir Peter Carew, where the said gentleman then laie and resided.” The next day the opposition did, “ in most disorderlie manner, inveigh against the said gentleman . . . being more like to a bearebaiting of lose persons than an assemblie of wise and grave men in Parlement.” The result was that the said gentleman, who represented Exeter in the English House of Commons, in the Parliament of 1571, at the request of the Speaker, procured and bestowed on the Irish House of Commons an extremely valuable historical document, printed at length in *Holinshed*, entitled, *The order and usage how to keep a Parliament in England in these daies, collected by John Vowell, alias Hooker, and the like used in his Maiesties realme of Ireland*.

[4] Described by Campion in the part of his *Historie* in which he follows the relation of wise and indifferent persons, as “ a rare woman, and able for wisdom to rule a Realme, had not her stomacke over-rul’d her selfe.”

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Edited and uploaded to www.aughty.org

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