

LETTER TO THE PRESS, November 5th, 1872.

By John Patrick Prendergast.

From the appendix of *English Misrule in Ireland* by Thomas N. Burke, published 1873.

SANDYMOUNT, DUBLIN, *Nov. 5*, 1872.

SIR,— Mr. Froude, I believe, is lighting a fire that he has little conception of. Deep as our hatred has hitherto been, at our unparalleled historic wrongs, it is as nothing to the intense detestation we shall hereafter hold the English in. Though the vile English press are unwilling to commit themselves to the support of Mr. Froude's crusade against the exiled Irish until they see the success of it, it is easy to perceive how they sympathize with it, and how gladly they would see the Americans hate us as deeply as they do themselves. For, in truth, the self-imposed mission of this friend and lover of Ireland (God save us from our English lovers!) is to turn the Americans against us. With hypocritical flattery he pretends to seek American opinion. 'We ourselves are at our wit's end,' he says. 'If America will counsel England what to do, she will listen gratefully. And if a time is ever to come when Celt and Saxon are to live side by side in peace and in quiet, it will be when America tells the Irish that they must depend for the future on their own industry.' America has become the Supreme Court of Appeal, he says, with English hypocrisy; and he asks their judgment. But he has already renounced it! Suppose America should say: 'Try our Constitution; give Ireland a Federal Union; make her a State like one of the States of our Union.' Oh, no! Even if that be necessary to Ireland's happiness, England, he tells them beforehand, will not do it. 'She will not commit political suicide by any measure that might tend to separation.'

What he wants, then, is judgment in England's favour, and against Ireland.

His language is that of the hypocrite, and there is poison under that tongue. A more calumnious harangue than his lectures cannot be conceived.

He admits the brutal cruelties of the English, but represents them as called forth by the still greater crimes of the Irish. Witness his approval of Cromwell's massacre of the inhabitants of Drogheda, together with the flower of the English veterans fighting under the King's commission; I leave out the Irish soldiery. But is it come to this, that the killing of ladies, women, girls, and innocent children, which was the sport of Cromwell's soldiers for two whole days, is to be approved of by Englishmen at this time of day?

He (Mr. Froude) did not think it so cruel as the oppression and lawlessness which brought misery into every poor man's cabin. It is plain he knows little of the history of that time. But were what he states as true as it is false, would that justify such a deed?

It is such deeds that bring English power to be hated and finally overthrown everywhere. This very massacre of Cromwell's works at this day. It makes us loathe the name of Englishman as the incarnation of cruelty. It might terrify temporarily; but it fixed National hatred perpetually.

Look at the rebellion of 1798. The English intrusted the Orangemen with the bayonet, and that favourite instrument of theirs for spreading their power—the cat-o'-nine tails. The rebellion was put down, but they have left a hatred that will never be put down. So in India, in the late mutiny. Their floggings, killings, hangings, burnings, blowing away from guns, have left such hatreds that the English there live in anticipation of another outbreak, and the wounds made in 1857 will never heal.

Mr. Froude is now reopening every old wound, and England may perhaps have to curse the day when the cold-blooded hypocrite was born. Listen to him describing his love for the Irish. 'They either,' he says, 'attract strongly or repel strongly.' Him they attracted! During the last thirty years he has been thrown (that is, he has thrown himself) much amongst them. He has spent his college vacations, when a young man, wandering in the mountains. He has lived in peasants' cabins for months together. He was once overtaken by illness in the

wilds of Mayo, and 'the poor creatures,' he adds, with English contemptuousness, 'treated me with a tenderness I can never forget.' And well this viper repays their kindness by slandering the nation; out-slandering, indeed, all our former maligners—and that is no easy task.

Who made this man our judge? He seems possessed of a devil that gives him a supposed dominion over Ireland. Ireland has put money into his purse. In his ten long volumes, his few chapters on Ireland have given the greatest charm to his work. The subject, though old, is ever new and fresh, like the people. He is still determined to make money of us. But now he advances beyond the domain of past history; he sets himself up as our censor, and the guide of America in her opinion of the Irish.

That he will rue his conduct I have no doubt. I have never yet seen any one undertake the running down of Ireland that did not bring his own reputation to ruin. The conscience of the world revolts secretly against the cruel injustice of the deed.

But, be this as it may, Mr. Froude has done what can never be undone.

No Irishman will ever rest satisfied till he is freed from the misery of living under a people who, though they know that the strongest feature in the character of the Irish is their national feeling, yet seek to depreciate the nation with a watchfulness that never sleeps and a malignity that never tires.

The reputation this man has acquired as a historian only serves him the better to slander the Irish. I do not believe he can have made any search into the original sources of any period but that period which his history treats of. If he has, nothing but reckless hatred of the Irish could induce him to represent them as cowards—to represent 200,000 well-drilled Irish, under Ormonde, as driven, like chaff, before Cromwell and 18,000 English!

The English of Ormonde's army refused to fight as comrades with the Irish. 'When Cromwell appeared before the walls of some towns held for the King, the English garrisons opened their gates and gave up their officers—their English officers—to be hanged. All the English garrisons of Munster revolted from Ormonde when

Cromwell was at a distance, and kept them for Cromwell at his approach. At Rathmines, the treachery of some of the English regiments who went over to Col. Michael Jones, the Parliamentarian Governor of Dublin, in the middle of the battle, helped mainly to cause Ormonde's defeat. The Scottish Presbyterians, another part of Ormonde's supposed 200,000 men, were equally indisposed to fight as faithful comrades of the Irish. And the troops of the late Catholic Confederates,—little else but a sudden levy of a mass of peasants,—had no heart to fight under commanders of English blood and interest, though Catholic in religion, who were ready to, betray the cause rather than it should become a national conflict, the only thing that could have rallied the Irish.

The Ulster Irish, called 'the Nunciotists,' were the only body who maintained the cause of Ireland for Ireland's sake. Thus the discipline of these troops of Ormonde is as untrue as the numbers stated by Mr. Froude. Let us pass, then, from this slanderer's charge against the Irish of cowardice (and let all Irishmen, whether their coats be red or green, or blue or black, note it), to the equally false charge he makes against our fathers of a massacre. The Irish Catholics, it seems, rose and massacred an unarmed crowd of 38,000 confiding and unsuspecting Protestants! 'The valet that helped to undress his master over night, stood with a pike by his bedside in the morning.' This sensational drawing, when once indulged in (and Froude, Macaulay, and Carlyle have all sacrificed truth and honesty to this vicious taste), overpowers all the better feelings.

There was no massacre. It was not a rising of Catholics upon Protestants, but of an oppressed nation against their tyrants, in the interest of their rightful King. Mr. Froude defends us from the charge of murdering 150,000. On the best computation, says this friend of the Irish, it was only 38,000.

'An open foe may prove a curse,
But a pretended friend is worse!'

I have, in the Second Edition of the 'Cromwellian Settlement,' appealed to the collection of outrages and murders made by order of the English House of Commons in March, 1642, under a Royal

Commission, composed of seven despoiled Protestant ministers, for the purpose of damning us all to posterity, for disproof of this supposed massacre. And I confidently rest the case upon it. I have read, I think, all the papers of the time, and the result of all is the same.

But enough of this. The lie will be repeated—this and a thousand daily national insults will be our fate—until that which happened in the case of America happens in Ireland. I am old enough to remember when the insulting of the Americans (not long escaped from the yoke) was nearly as much the sport of the English as taunting the Irish (still under it) is now. But from the time of the success of the Americans in their war against the Mexicans, it ceased. As soon as they became weak again (or were supposed to be weak), during the late civil war, the insolence and brutality of the English burst forth again. Then it all subsided again when the Northern States were victorious, and the English became so mean as to submit to be judged by the three *ex post facto* rules of International Law, and to submit to an Award by Arbitrators, in order to cover their shame in paying that fine for their insolence which they saw the Americans were resolved to exact, and these once proud English did not dare to refuse.

As soon as the Irish are feared, they will be honoured by this brutal, this repulsive people.—Your obedient servant,

JOHN P. PRENDERGAST.