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## DOUGLAS HYDE and the GAELIC REVIVAL

By PATRICK SULLIVAN

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THE spirit of Ireland is awakening. The denationalizing process has been halted. The old folk-lore, songs and patriotism are coming back together. At last the people of Erin have learned the lesson that the only way to bring about organic unity is by the cohesive force of an ideal, a sentiment. A mere political movement is only a body. That body must have a soul which is more than political. The soul for the present Irish movement is furnished by the revival of the Gaelic language and literature. The cry is "Ourselves alone!" not in any narrow or selfish sense, but in consonance with that inward law which provides that a man or a nation must develop along the lines of his or its own individuality and not along the lines of the individuality of some other man or nation. This is the lesson of liberty.

Outward conformity is inward atrophy. Self government is the best government because it requires one to bring out his own powers and capacities. One nation cannot impose its will on another nation without brutalizing itself and enfeebling its subject. All these things are involved, even though they may seem to be involved indirectly, in the Gaelic revival. Nothing so unites a people as its history, but what unifying force is there if the history is forgotten or buried in an unknown tongue? This spirit of the

It is difficult to give tangible figures in connection with such an intangible movement, but the modern mind has developed so great a passion for statistics that nothing is considered complete unless it contains some rows of more or less inaccurate numerals. A sure way to stir pride in a Yankee is to quote him figures about the growth of something or other American. Political, financial and industrial literature simply bristles with statistics. If this tendency continues, it will be no very distant day when we shall think in digits instead of words. The orator blunders of millions and billions, the newspapers throw figures around recklessly, and even the poets no longer restrict themselves to one kind of numbers. This affection for digital literature is by no means confined to Americans, the English appetite for numerical guesswork being quite robust. Pardon this digression, but figures and Gaelic seem incongruous—a language contemporaneous with Greek and Latin, full of sweet old legends, mystical with poetry and magic with mystery! And then, in its very presence, to lug in by the heels a bunch of statistics! But every one else has done it, and the spirit of the age demands it, so there is no escape.

Twelve years ago, when the Gaelic League was founded, the original Irish language was taught in less than a dozen schools; six years ago the number had increased to 105; today over 3,000 schools teach Gaelic. While the tongue of the fathers has been in constant use among a few of the peasants in the west and south of the island, there was practically no study devoted to it a dozen years ago. Now it is being studied by over a quarter of a million.

The Gaelic League has been organized only about twelve years ago and in the beginning of its existence had an uphill fight, yet today it has over 100,000 members, with branches in practically every great city in the world. For example, there are at least eight societies in New York and probably 25,000 persons who speak Gaelic; there are several of the leagues in Boston and Chicago and others in Philadelphia, Buffalo, Washington, San Francisco and other smaller cities throughout the United States and Canada. But those outside of Ireland are merely contributors to those on the old soil itself. There is a revolution in progress, and none the less a real revolution from the fact that it is in the thought world rather than the physical world. All classes of Irishmen are concerned in it, from peasant to peer and from scholar to unlettered workman. It has proved a great unifying force, having appealed alike to Protestant and Catholic, landlord and tenant and men of all shades of political belief; it has furnished a common interest, a magnet to draw all Irishmen together; it has not only brought back the old stories, the old songs, but has likewise revived the old dances, the music of

old harps and bagpipes and, more than all, the old spirit. In the last century England had decreed that Gaelic should die. It was not taught in the schools, and children were punished for speaking it. Under these restrictions the ancient tongue was almost lost for two generations. It was like a flame that had nearly gone out, but just as it was flickering up for the last time a hand threw upon it new fuel and a mouth blew it back to new life.

Every great event in human development, every revolution, every religious or political or industrial movement, can be traced to some one man. Souls are the highest things in the world; the only really vital and casual things, in fact. Every human event has some soul for its center. The Gaelic revival is not an accident. It did not come by chance; nothing does. It was brought into being by a man, as everything human is. God works through souls. The divine makes history, but makes it through God-silled men and women. Outward things lie plastic to be molded and shaped by man. Creation is ready for him who comes in the divine image. Men are the live things in an inanimate world, the conscious things in a world of unconsciousness; the real things in a world of shadows. If you would find the soul of history, find it in great men.

The man in the Gaelic revival is Douglas Hyde, William Butler Yeats, the Irish poet and playwright, who is likewise a leader in the work, says this age in Erin will be known as the age of Hyde. It would perhaps not be too much to say that Hyde is the most popular man since Barnet, and this notwithstanding the fact that he is a Protestant. As president of the Gaelic League ever since its inception he has been warmly supported in his work by Catholic priests and has been ardently seconded by Protestant Orange-men.

Dr. Hyde is still a young man, only in the forties, and the best of his life should be still before him. He is a ripe scholar, an orator, a poet, a playwright and a leader of men. He went

among the plain people to carry on the crusade for the Gaelic renaissance, feeling that the mere support of scholars was not enough. Nor did he leave the scholars with him. Many of them shrugged their shoulders; many others openly discouraged the movement. Gaelic was taught in none of even the Irish colleges. A professor in one of the Dublin universities once asked a fellow professor, "What is Gaelic?" "A language made up of shockingly spelled adjectives," was the reply. That was the attitude of culture. But the masses responded more readily. Every reform that means anything comes from the bottom. It is surprising that on a question so purely scholastic as this the impulse to push the movement forward should come from the so-called uncultured classes. But the hearts of the plain folks are true and respond to every true cause.

Douglas Hyde has made his appeal to them, and as a result he has given Erin a new ideal and dream, has reunited the people, has opened the storehouses of a rich and ancient literature and, in a word, has helped the Irish nation to find itself.

Legends of St. Patrick.

At Balbragan, it is said, "an evil one, a bondsman of Satan," thrust a stick through a church window and overturned a chalice the saint was using. "But the Lord," says the legend impressively, "instantly and terribly avenged this fearful wickedness and in a new and unheard of manner destroyed the impious man, for the earth opened, swallowed up this magician, and he descended alive into hell!"

Among the apostle's converts was a white herder named Mochua. "And while sitting together they conversed on holy things, a star fell from heaven and fell between them, and the head thereof rested on the bosom of St. Patrick and the point on the bosom of Mochua," which the holy man fastened was a clasp from an Irish hat that the new convert should become a preacher. "And the staff he in the church still preserved and is called by the Irish 'the flying staff'."

## THE LITTLE PEOPLE AND the FAIRY RING

By NORAH O'CONNELL

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YE don't believe in the little people—the Leprechauns? Arrah, wait till I'm after telling ye what befell Sorley Boy McDonnell on St. Patrick's night wan year ago, and what befell Kitty Creggan the year before on the same night. And it's true for ye, every blessed word!

As he paused for breath the old man drew his pipe from his pocket, lighted it and gazed dreamily over the beautiful Irish landscape. Then he continued: "To begin it we'll understand if I must ax if ye've ever been in a forest, hehndin' the trees, wid a regular thicket-like av grass thicker and darker than the rest? Well, that's a fairy ring. The little people dance on two nights of the year, on midsummer

night and the blessed Patrick's night. "Now, thin, axen! that that blessed saint wint barefooted durin' his life, the little people bring a pair av the beautiful shoes ye ever laid yer eyes on. They, thin, fairy shoes, would fit any wisp, big or little, but to get them that wan must come to the fairy ring on this night at 11 exactly and dance wid the little people the whole hour because 11 and 12. If ye get there and the fairies dance ye see, thin, ye are throwin' over into a quagmire, and a pair of the beautiful shoes ye see in the yard in fact, ye see next year the same shoes, and the same pair of shoes, av ye axen, widout any change, come av the same doct for ye, but it's a fact, however, that the little people dance on two nights of the year, on midsummer

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"I'M HERE TO DANCE FOR KITTY CREGGAN'S SHOES"

old sources creates a silent, invisible, elusive force, with which the mere clumsy weapons of an oppressive government cannot cope. It moves secretly, often unconsciously, but powerfully. The present day is witnessing a veritable Irish renaissance, and as every movement that means anything must do, it is affecting every plane of life. While in itself it has no political object, it is liable to have more far-reaching political effects than anything that has known in a century. One would not imagine that the mere study of a dead language, or one nearly dead, would powerfully affect the industrial life of an entire nation, but the Gaelic revival has done nothing less than that. Before it began the Irish were buying most of their manufactured products from abroad. Now, with the new access of patriotism, they will have none but home manufactured goods, if it is possible to procure them. Factories that had been closed are reopening. An instance will illustrate this. A little match shop in Dublin in which the owner worked alone but a few years since now employs 800 people. The cry of an Irish Ireland rings loud and deep. It stirs a spirit almost dead and thus revives all new energies into the life of the nation—politics, industry, commerce, learning and more than all, love of country. The wide-spread effects from the Gaelic revival may be surprising even to the men who are behind the movement. They certainly have surprised everybody else. Yet great national transformations have started from smaller

causes. It is difficult to give tangible figures in connection with such an intangible movement, but the modern mind has developed so great a passion for statistics that nothing is considered complete unless it contains some rows of more or less inaccurate numerals. A sure way to stir pride in a Yankee is to quote him figures about the growth of something or other American. Political, financial and industrial literature simply bristles with statistics. If this tendency continues, it will be no very distant day when we shall think in digits instead of words. The orator blunders of millions and billions, the newspapers throw figures around recklessly, and even the poets no longer restrict themselves to one kind of numbers. This affection for digital literature is by no means confined to Americans, the English appetite for numerical guesswork being quite robust. Pardon this digression, but figures and Gaelic seem incongruous—a language contemporaneous with Greek and Latin, full of sweet old legends, mystical with poetry and magic with mystery! And then, in its very presence, to lug in by the heels a bunch of statistics! But every one else has done it, and the spirit of the age demands it, so there is no escape. Twelve years ago, when the Gaelic League was founded, the original Irish language was taught in less than a dozen schools; six years ago the number had increased to 105; today over 3,000 schools teach Gaelic. While the tongue of the fathers has been in constant use among a few of the peasants in the west and south of the island, there was practically no study devoted to it a dozen years ago. Now it is being studied by over a quarter of a million. The Gaelic League has been organized only about twelve years ago and in the beginning of its existence had an uphill fight, yet today it has over 100,000 members, with branches in practically every great city in the world. For example, there are at least eight societies in New York and probably 25,000 persons who speak Gaelic; there are several of the leagues in Boston and Chicago and others in Philadelphia, Buffalo, Washington, San Francisco and other smaller cities throughout the United States and Canada. But those outside of Ireland are merely contributors to those on the old soil itself. There is a revolution in progress, and none the less a real revolution from the fact that it is in the thought world rather than the physical world. All classes of Irishmen are concerned in it, from peasant to peer and from scholar to unlettered workman. It has proved a great unifying force, having appealed alike to Protestant and Catholic, landlord and tenant and men of all shades of political belief; it has furnished a common interest, a magnet to draw all Irishmen together; it has not only brought back the old stories, the old songs, but has likewise revived the old dances, the music of

## Saint Patrick's Feast

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