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THE MURDER MACHINE

BY

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PREFACE.

THIS pamphlet is not, as its name might seem to import, a penny dreadful, at least in the ordinary sense. It consists of a series of studies of the English education system in Ireland. The article entitled "The Murder Machine" embodies an article which appeared in the *Irish Review* for February, 1913. The article called "An Ideal in Education" was printed in the *Irish Review* for June, 1914. The rest of the pamphlet is a collation of notes made for a lecture which I delivered in the Dublin Mansion House in December, 1912.

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I.

THE BROAD-ARROW.

A French writer has paid the English a very well-deserved compliment. He says that they never commit a useless crime. When they hire a man to assassinate an Irish patriot, when they blow a Sepoy from the mouth of a cannon, when they produce a famine in one of their dependencies, they have always an ulterior motive. They do not do it for fun. Humorous as these crimes are, it is not the humour of them, but their utility, that appeals to the English. Unlike Gilbert's Mikado, they would see nothing humorous in boiling oil. If they retained boiling oil in their penal code, they would retain it, as they retain flogging before execution in Egypt, strictly because it has been found useful.

This observation will help one to an understanding of some portions of the English administration of Ireland. The English administration of Ireland has not been marked by any unnecessary cruelty. Every crime that the English have planned and carried out in Ireland has had a definite end. Every absurdity that they have set up has had a grave purpose. The Famine was not enacted merely from a love of horror. The Boards that rule Ireland were not contrived in order to add to the gaiety of nations. The Famine and the Boards are alike parts of a profound polity.

I have spent the greater part of my life in immediate contemplation of the most grotesque and horrible of the English inventions for the debasement of Ireland. I mean their education system. The English once proposed in their Dublin Parliament a measure for the castration of all Irish priests who refused to quit Ireland. The proposal was so filthy that, although it duly passed the House and was transmitted to England with the warm recommendation of the Viceroy, it was not eventually adopted. But the English have actually carried out an even filthier thing. They have planned and established an education system which more wickedly does violence to the elementary human rights of Irish children than would an edict for the general castration of Irish males. The system has aimed at the substitution for men and women of mere Things. It has not been an entire success. There are still a great many thousand men and women in Ireland. But a great many thousand of what, by way of courtesy, we call men and women are simply Things. Men and women, however depraved, have kindly human allegiances. But these Things have no allegiance. Like other Things, they are for sale.

When one uses the term education system as the name of the system of schools, colleges, universities, and what not which the English have established in Ireland, one uses it as a convenient label, just as one uses the term government as a convenient label for the system of administration by police which obtains in Ireland instead of a government. There is no education system in Ireland. The English have established the simulacrum of an education system, but its object is the precise contrary of the object of an education system. Education should foster; this education is meant to repress. Education should inspire; this education is meant to tame. Education should harden; this education is meant to enervate. The English are too wise a people to attempt to educate the Irish, in any worthy sense. As well expect them to arm us.

Professor Eoin MacNeill has compared the English education system in Ireland to the systems of slave education which existed in the ancient pagan republics side by side with the systems intended for the education of freemen. To the children of the free were taught all noble and goodly things which would tend to make them strong and proud and valiant; from the children of the slaves all such dangerous knowledge was hidden. They were taught not to be strong and proud and valiant, but to be sleek, to be obsequious, to be dexterous: the object was not to make them good men, but to make them good slaves. And so in Ireland. The education system here was designed by our masters in order to make us willing or at least manageable slaves. It has made of some Irishmen not slaves merely, but very eunuchs, with the smoothness and softness of eunuchs, with the indifference and cruelty of eunuchs; kinless beings, who serve for pay a master that they neither love nor hate.

Ireland is not merely in servitude, but in a kind of penal servitude. Certain of the slaves among us are appointed jailors over the common herd of slaves. And they are trained from their youth for this degrading office. The ordinary slaves are trained for their lowly tasks in dingy places called schools; the buildings in which the higher slaves are trained are called colleges and universities. If one may regard Ireland as a nation in penal servitude, the schools and colleges and universities may be looked upon as the symbol of her penal servitude. They are, so to speak, the broad-arrow upon the back of Ireland.

II.

THE MURDER MACHINE.

A FEW years ago, when people still believed in the imminence of Home Rule, there were numerous discussions as to the tasks awaiting a Home Rule Parliament and the order in which they should be taken up. Mr. John

Dillon declared that one of the first of those tasks was the recasting of the Irish education system, by which he meant the English education system in Ireland. The declaration alarmed the Bishop of Limerick, always suspicious of Mr. Dillon, and he told that statesman in effect that the Irish education system did not need recasting—that all was well there.

The positions seemed irreconcilable. Yet in the *Irish Review* I quixotically attempted to find common ground between the disputants, and to state in such a way as to command the assent of both the duty of a hypothetical Irish Parliament with regard to education. I put it that what education in Ireland needed was less a reconstruction of its machinery than a regeneration in spirit. The machinery, I said, has doubtless its defects, but what is chiefly wrong with it is that it is mere machinery, a lifeless thing without a soul. Dr. O'Dwyer was probably concerned for the maintenance of portion of the machinery, valued by him as a Catholic Bishop, and not without reason; and I for one was (and am) willing to leave that particular portion untouched, or practically so. But the machine as a whole is no more capable of fulfilling the function for which it is needed than would an automaton be capable of fulfilling the function of a living teacher in a school. A soulless thing cannot teach; but it can destroy. A machine cannot make men; but it can break men.

One of the most terrible things about the English education system in Ireland is its ruthlessness. I know no image for that ruthlessness in the natural order. The ruthlessness of a wild beast has in it a certain mercy—it slays. It has in it a certain grandeur of animal force. But this ruthlessness is literally without pity and without passion. It is cold and mechanical, like the ruthlessness of an immensely powerful engine. A machine vast, complicated, with a multitude of far-reaching arms, with many ponderous presses, carrying out mysterious and long-drawn processes of shaping and moulding, is the true image of the Irish education system. It grinds night and day; it obeys immutable and predetermined laws; it is as devoid of understanding, of sympathy, of imagination as is any other piece of machinery that performs an appointed task. Into it is fed all the raw human material in Ireland; it seizes upon it inexorably and rends and compresses and remoulds; and what it cannot refashion after the regulation pattern it ejects with all likeness of its former self crushed from it, a bruised and shapeless thing, thereafter accounted waste.

Our common parlance has become impressed with the conception of education as some sort of manufacturing process. Our children are the "raw material"; we desiderate for their education "modern methods" which must be "efficient" but "cheap"; we send them to Clongowes to be "finished";

when "finished" they are "turned out"; specialists "grind" them for the English Civil Service and the so-called liberal professions; in each of our great colleges there is a department known as the "scrap-heap," though officially called the Fourth Preparatory—the limbo to which the débris ejected by the machine is relegated. The stuff there is either too hard or too soft to be moulded to the pattern required by the Civil Service Commissioners or the Incorporated Law Society.

In our adoption of the standpoint here indicated there is involved a primary blunder as to the nature and functions of education. For education has not to do with the manufacture of things, but with fostering the growth of things. And the conditions we should strive to bring about in our education system are not the conditions favourable to the rapid and cheap manufacture of readymades, but the conditions favourable to the growth of living organisms—the liberty and the light and the gladness of a ploughed field under the spring sunshine.

In particular I would urge that the Irish school system of the future should give freedom—freedom to the individual school, freedom to the individual teacher, freedom as far as may be to the individual pupil. Without freedom there can be no right growth; and education is properly the fostering of the right growth of a personality. Our school system must bring, too, some gallant inspiration. And with the inspiration it must bring a certain hardening. One scarcely knows whether modern sentimentalism or modern utilitarianism is the more sure sign of modern decadence. I would boldly preach the antique faith that fighting is the only noble thing, and that he only is at peace with God who is at war with the powers of evil.

In a true education system, religion, patriotism, literature, art and science would be brought in such a way into the daily lives of boys and girls as to affect their character and conduct. We may assume that religion is a vital thing in Irish schools, but I know that the other things, speaking broadly, do not exist. There are no ideas there, no love of beauty, no love of books, no love of knowledge, no heroic inspiration. And there is no room for such things either on the earth or in the heavens, for the earth is cumbered and the heavens are darkened by the monstrous bulk of the programme. Most of the educators detest the programme. They are like the adherents of a dead creed who continue to mumble formulas and to make obeisance before an idol which they have found out to be but a spurious divinity.

Mr. Dillon was to be sympathised with, even though pathetically premature, in looking to the then anticipated advent of Home Rule for a chance to make education what it should be. But I doubt if he and the others who would have had power in a Home Rule Parliament realised that what is needed here is not reform, not even a revolution, but a vastly

bigger thing—a creation. It is not a question of pulling machinery asunder and piecing it together again; it is a question of breathing into a dead thing a living soul.

III.

"I DENY."

I postulate that there is no education in Ireland apart from the voluntary efforts of a few people, mostly mad. Let us therefore not talk of reform, or of reconstruction. You cannot reform that which is not; you cannot by any process of reconstruction give organic life to a negation. In a literal sense the work of the first Minister of Education in a free Ireland will be a work of creation; for out of chaos he will have to evolve order and into a dead mass he will have to breathe the breath of life.

The English thing that is called education in Ireland is founded on a denial of the Irish nation. No education can start with a Nego, any more than a religion can. Everything that even pretends to be true begins with its Credo. It is obvious that the savage who says "I believe in Mumbo Jumbo" is nearer to true religion than the philosopher who says "I deny God and the spiritual in man." Now to teach a child to deny is the greatest crime a man or a State can commit. Certain schools in Ireland teach children to deny their religion; nearly all the schools in Ireland teach children to deny their nation. "I deny the spirituality of my nation; I deny the lineage of my blood; I deny my rights and responsibilities." This Nego is their Credo, this evil their good.

To invent such a system of teaching and to persuade us that it is an education system, an Irish education system to be defended by Irishmen against attack, is the most wonderful thing the English have accomplished in Ireland; and the most wicked.

IV.

AGAINST MODERNISM.

ALL the speculations one saw a few years ago as to the probable effect of Home Rule on education in Ireland showed one how inadequately the problem was grasped. To some the expected advent of Home Rule seemed to promise as its main fruition in the field of education the raising of their salaries; to others the supreme thing it was to bring in its train was the abolition of Dr. Starkie; to some again it held out the delightful prospect of Orange boys and Orange

girls being forced to learn Irish; to others it meant the dawn of an era of commonsense, the ushering in of the reign of "a sound modern education," suitable to the needs of a progressive modern people.

I scandalised many people at the time by saying that the last was the view that irritated me most. The first view was not so selfish as it might appear, for between the salary offered to teachers and the excellence of a country's education system there is a vital connection. And the second and third forecasts at any rate opened up picturesque vistas. The passing of Dr. Starkie would have had something of the pageantry of the banishment of Napoleon to St. Helena (an effect which would have been heightened had he been accompanied into exile by Mr. Bonaparte Wyse), and the prospect of the children of Sandy Row being taught to curse the Pope in Irish was rich and soul-satisfying. These things we might or might not have seen had Home Rule come. But I expressed the hope that even Home Rule would not commit Ireland to an ideal so low as the ideal underlying the phrase "a sound modern education."

It is a vile phrase, one of the vilest I know. Yet we find it in nearly every school prospectus, and it comes pat to the lips of nearly everyone that writes or talks about schools. Now there can be no such thing as "a sound modern education"—as well talk about a "lively modern faith" or a "serviceable modern religion." It should be obvious that the more "modern" an education is the less "sound," for in education "modernism" is as much a heresy as in religion. In both medievalism were a truer standard. We are too fond of clapping ourselves upon the back because we live in modern times, and we preen ourselves quite ridiculously (and unnecessarily) on our modern progress. There is, of course, such a thing as modern progress, but it has been won at how great a cost! How many precious things have we flung from us to lighten ourselves for that race!

And in some directions we have progressed not at all, or we have progressed in a circle; perhaps indeed all progress on this planet, and on every planet, is in a circle, just as every line you draw on a globe is a circle or part of one. Modern speculation is often a mere groping where ancient men saw clearly. All the problems with which we strive (I mean all the really important problems) were long ago solved by our ancestors, only their solutions have been forgotten. There have been States in which the rich did not grind the poor, although there are no such States now; there have been free self-governing democracies, although there are few such democracies now; there have been rich and beautiful social organisations, with an art and a culture and a religion in every man's house, though for such a thing to-day we have to search out some sequestered people living by a desolate seashore or in a high forgotten valley among lonely hills—a

hamlet of Iar-Connacht or a village in the Austrian Alps. Mankind, I repeat, or some section of mankind, has solved all its main problems somewhere and at some time. I suppose no universal and permanent solution is possible as long as the old Adam remains in us, the Adam that makes each one of us, and each tribe of us, something of the rebel, of the freethinker, of the adventurer, of the egoist. But the solutions are there, and it is because we fail in clearness of vision or in boldness of heart or in singleness of purpose that we cannot find them.

V.

AN IDEAL IN EDUCATION.

THE words and phrases of a language are always to some extent revelations of the mind of the race that has moulded the language. How often does an Irish vocable light up as with a lantern some immemorial Irish attitude, some whole phase of Irish thought! Thus, the words which the old Irish employed when they spoke of education show that they had gripped the very heart of that problem. To the old Irish the teacher was *aite* "fosterer," the pupil was *dalta* "foster-child," the system was *aiteachas*, "fosterage"; words which we still retain as *oide*, *dalta*, *oideachas*.

And is it not the precise aim of education to "foster"? Not to inform, to indoctrinate, to conduct through a course of studies (though these be the dictionary meanings of the word), but, first and last, to "foster" the elements of character native to a soul, to help to bring these to their full perfection rather than to implant exotic excellences.

Fosterage implies a foster-father or foster-mother—a person—as its centre and inspiration rather than a code of rules. Modern education systems are elaborate pieces of machinery devised by highly-salaried officials for the purpose of turning out citizens according to certain approved patterns. The modern school is a state-controlled institution designed to produce workers for the State, and is in the same category with a dockyard or any other state-controlled institution which produces articles necessary to the progress, well-being, and defence of the State. We speak of the "efficiency," the "cheapness," and the "up-to-dateness" of an education system just as we speak of the "efficiency," the "cheapness," and the "up-to-dateness" of a system of manufacturing coal-gas. We shall soon reach a stage when we shall speak of the "efficiency," the "cheapness," and the "up-to-dateness" of our systems of soul-saving. We shall hear it said "Salvation is very cheap in England," or "The Germans are won-

derfully efficient in prayer," or "Gee, it takes a New York parson to hustle ginks into heaven."

Now education is as much concerned with souls as religion is. Religion is a Way of Life, and education is a preparation of the soul to live its life here and hereafter; to live it nobly and fully. And as we cannot think of religion without a Person as its centre, as we cannot think of a church without its Teacher, so we cannot think of a school without its Master. A school, in fact, according to the conception of our wise ancestors, was less a place than a little group of persons, a teacher and his pupils. Its place might be poor, nay, it might have no local habitation at all, it might be peripatetic: where the master went the disciples followed. One may think of Our Lord and His friends as a sort of school: was He not the Master, and were not they His disciples? That gracious conception was not only the conception of the old Gael, pagan and Christian, but it was the conception of Europe all through the Middle Ages. Philosophy was not crammed out of text-books, but was learned at the knee of some great philosopher; art was learned in the studio of some master-artist, a craft in the workshop of some master-craftsman. Always it was the personality of the master that made the school, never the State that built it of brick and mortar, drew up a code of rules to govern it, and sent hirelings into it to carry out its decrees.

I do not know how far it is possible to revive the old ideal of fosterer and foster-child. I know it were very desirable. One sees too clearly that the modern system, under which the teacher tends more and more to become a mere civil servant, is making for the degradation of education, and will end in irreligion and anarchy. The modern child is coming to regard his teacher as an official paid by the State to render him certain services; services which it is in his interest to avail of, since by doing so he will increase his earning capacity later on; but services the rendering and acceptance of which no more imply a sacred relationship than do the rendering and acceptance of the services of a dentist or a chiropodist. There is thus coming about a complete reversal of the relative positions of master and disciple, a tendency which is increased by every statute that is placed on the statute book, by every rule that is added to the education code of modern countries.

Against this trend I would oppose the ideal of those who shaped the Gaelic polity nearly two thousand years ago. It is not merely that the old Irish had a good education system; they had the best and noblest that has ever been known among men. There has never been any human institution more adequate to its purpose than that which, in pagan times, produced Cuchulainn and the Boy-Corps of Eamhain Macha and, in Christian times, produced Enda and the companions of his solitude in Aran. The old Irish system, pagan and Christian, possessed in pre-eminent degree the thing most

needful in education: an adequate inspiration. Colmcille suggested what that inspiration was when he said, "If I die it shall be from the excess of the love that I bear the Gael." A love and a service so excessive as to annihilate all thought of self, a recognition that one must give all, must be willing always to make the ultimate sacrifice—this is the inspiration alike of the story of Cuchulainn and of the story of Colmcille, the inspiration that made the one a hero and the other a saint.

VI.

MASTER AND DISCIPLES.

IN the Middle Ages there were everywhere little groups of persons clustering round some beloved teacher, and thus it was that men learned not only the humanities but all gracious and useful crafts. There were no State art schools, no State technical schools: as I have said, men became artists in the studio of some master-artist, men learned crafts in the workshop of some master-craftsman. It was always the individual inspiring, guiding, fostering other individuals; never the State usurping the place of father or fosterer, dispensing education like a universal provider of readymades, aiming at turning out all men and women according to regulation patterns.

In Ireland the older and truer conception was never lost sight of. It persisted into Christian times when a Kieran or an Enda or a Colmcille gathered his little group of foster-children (the old word was still used) around him: they were collectively his family, his household, his *clann*—many sweet and endearing words were used to mark the intimacy of that relationship. It seems to me that there has been nothing nobler in the history of education than this development of the old Irish plan of fosterage under a Christian rule, when to the pagan ideals of strength and truth there were added the Christian ideals of love and humility. And this, remember, was not the education system of an aristocracy, but the education system of a people. It was more democratic than any education system in the world to-day. Our very divisions into primary, secondary, and university crystallise a snobbishness partly intellectual and partly social. At Clonard Kieran, the son of a carpenter, sat in the same class as Colmcille, the son of a king. To Clonard or to Aran or to Clonmacnois went every man, rich or poor, prince or peasant, who wanted to sit at Finnian's or at Enda's or at Kieran's feet and to learn of his wisdom.

Always it was the personality of the teacher that drew

them there. And so it was all through Irish history. A great poet or a great scholar had his foster-children who lived at his house or fared with him through the country. Even long after Kinsale the Munster poets had their little groups of pupils; and the hedge schoolmasters of the nineteenth century were the last repositories of a high tradition.

I dwell on the importance of the personal element in education. I would have every child not merely a unit in a school attendance, but in some intimate personal way the pupil of a teacher, or, to use more expressive words, the disciple of a master. And here I nowise contradict another position of mine, that the main object in education is to help the child to be his own true and best self. What the teacher should bring to his pupil is not a set of readymade opinions, or a stock of cut-and-dry information, but an inspiration and an example; and his main qualification should be, not such an overmastering will as shall impose itself at all hazards upon all weaker wills that come under its influence, but rather so infectious an enthusiasm as shall kindle new enthusiasm. The Montessori system, so admirable in many ways, would seem at first sight to attach insufficient importance to the function of the teacher in the schoolroom. But this is not really so. True, it would make the spontaneous efforts of the children the main motive power, as against the dominating will of the teacher which is the main motive power in the ordinary schoolroom. But the teacher must be there always to inspire, to foster. If you would realise how true this is, how important the personality of the teacher, even in a Montessori school, try to imagine a Montessori school conducted by the average teacher of your acquaintance, or try to imagine a Montessori school conducted by yourself!

VII.

OF FREEDOM IN EDUCATION.

I HAVE claimed elsewhere that the native Irish education system possessed pre-eminently two characteristics: first, freedom for the individual, and, secondly, an adequate inspiration. Without these two things you cannot have education, no matter how you may elaborate educational machinery, no matter how you may multiply educational programmes. And because those two things are pre-eminently lacking in what passes for education in Ireland, we have in Ireland strictly no education system at all; nothing that by any extension of the meaning of words can be called an education system. We have an elaborate machinery for teaching

persons certain subjects, and the teaching is done more or less efficiently; more efficiently, I imagine, than such teaching is done in England or in America. We have three universities and four boards of education. We have some thousands of buildings, large and small. We have an army of inspectors, mostly overpaid. We have a host of teachers, mostly underpaid. We have a Compulsory Education Act. We have the grave and bulky code of the Commissioners of National Education, and the slim impertinent pamphlet which enshrines the wisdom of the Commissioners of Intermediate Education. We have a vast deal more in the shape of educational machinery and stage properties. But we have, I repeat, no education system; and only in isolated places have we any education. The essentials are lacking.

And first of freedom. The word freedom is no longer understood in Ireland. We have no experience of the thing, and we have almost lost our conception of the idea. So completely is this true that the very organisations which exist in Ireland to champion freedom show no disposition themselves to accord freedom: they challenge a great tyranny, but they erect their little tyrannies. "Thou shalt not" is half the law of Ireland, and the other half is "Thou must."

Now nowhere has the law of "Thou shalt not" and "Thou must" been so rigorous as in the schoolroom. Surely the first essentials of healthy life there was freedom. But there has been and there is no freedom in Irish education; no freedom for the child, no freedom for the teacher, no freedom for the school. Where young souls, young minds, young bodies demanded the largest measure of individual freedom consistent with the common good, freedom to move and grow on their natural lines, freedom to live their own lives—for what is natural life but natural growth?—freedom to bring themselves, as I have put it elsewhere, to their own perfection, there was a sheer denial of the right of the individual to grow in his own natural way, that is, in God's way. He had to develop not in God's way, but in the Board's way. The Board, National or Intermediate as the case might be, bound him hand and foot, chained him mind and soul, constricted him morally, mentally and physically with the involuted folds of its rules and regulations, its programmes, its minutes, its reports and special reports, its pains and penalties. I have often thought that the type of English education in Ireland was the Laocoon: that agonising father and his sons seem to me like the teacher and the pupils of an Irish school, the strong limbs of the man and the slender limbs of the boys caught together and crushed together in the grip of an awful fate. And English education in Ireland has seemed to some like the bed of Procustes, the bed on which all men that passed that way must lie, be it never so big for them, be it never so small for them: the traveller for whom it was too large had his limbs stretched until he filled it; the traveller for whom it was

too small had his limbs chopped off until he fitted into it—comfortably. It was a grim jest to play upon travellers. The English have done it to Irish children not by way of jest, but with a purpose. Our English-Irish systems took, and take, absolutely no cognisance of the differences between individuals, of the differences between localities, of the differences between urban and rural communities, of the differences springing from a different ancestry, Gaelic or Anglo-Saxon. Every school must conform to a type—and what a type! Every individual must conform to a type—and what a type! The teacher has not been at liberty, and in practice is not yet at liberty, to seek to discover the individual bents of his pupils, the hidden talent that is in every normal soul, to discover which and to cherish which, that it may in the fulness of time be put to some precious use, is the primary duty of the teacher. I knew one boy who passed through several schools a dunce and a laughing-stock; the National Board and the Intermediate Board had sat in judgment upon him and had damned him as a failure before men and angels. Yet a friend and fellow-worker of mine discovered that he was gifted with a wondrous sympathy for nature, that he loved and understood the ways of plants, that he had a strange minuteness and sublety of observation—that, in short, he was the sort of boy likely to become an accomplished botanist. I knew another boy of whom his father said to me: "He is no good at books, he is no good at work: he is good at nothing but playing a tin whistle. What am I to do with him?" I shocked the worthy man by replying (though really it was the obvious thing to reply): "Buy a tin whistle for him." Once a colleague of mine summed up the whole philosophy of education in a maxim which startled a sober group of visitors: "If a boy shows an aptitude for doing anything better than most people, he should be encouraged to do that, and to do it as well as possible; I don't care what it is—scotch-hop, if you like."

The idea of a compulsory programme imposed by an external authority upon every child in every school in a country is the direct contrary of the root idea involved in education. Yet this is what we have in Ireland. In theory the primary schools have a certain amount of freedom; in practice they have none. Neither in theory nor in practice is such a thing as freedom dreamt of in the gloomy limbo whose presiding demon is the Board of Intermediate Education for Ireland. Education, indeed, reaches its nadir in the Irish Intermediate system. At the present moment there are 15,000 boys and girls pounding at a programme drawn up for them by certain persons sitting round a table in Hume Street. Precisely the same text-books are being read to-night in every secondary school and college in Ireland. Two of Hawthorne's "Tanglewood Tales," with a few poems in English, will constitute the whole literary pabulum of three-quarters of the pupils of

the Irish secondary schools during this twelvemonths.* The teacher who seeks to give his pupils a wider horizon in literature does so at his peril. He will, no doubt, benefit his pupils, but he will infallibly reduce his results fees. As an Intermediate teacher said to me, "Culture is all very well in its way, but if you don't stick to your programme your boys won't pass." "Stick to your programme" is the strange device on the banner of the Irish Intermediate system; and the programme bulks so large that there is no room for education.

The first thing I plead for, therefore, is freedom: freedom for each school to shape its own programme in conformity with the circumstances of the school as to place, size, personnel, and so on; freedom again for the individual teacher to impart something of his own personality to his work, to bring his own peculiar gifts to the service of his pupils, to be, in short, a teacher, a master, one having an intimate and permanent relationship with his pupils, and not a mere part of the educational machine, a mere cog in the wheel; freedom finally for the individual pupil and scope for his development within the school and within the system. And I would promote this idea of freedom by the very organisation of the school itself, giving a certain autonomy not only to the school, but to the particular parts of the school: to the staff, of course, but also to the pupils and, in a large school, to the various sub-divisions of the pupils. I do not plead for anarchy. I plead for freedom within the law, for liberty, not licence, for that true freedom which can exist only where there is discipline, which exists in fact because each, valuing his own freedom, respects also the freedom of others.

VIII.

BACK TO THE SAGAS.

THAT freedom may be availed of to the noble ends of education there must be, within the school system and within the school, an adequate inspiration. The school must make such an appeal to the pupil as shall resound throughout his after life, urging him always to be his best self, never his second-best self. Such an inspiration will come most adequately of all from religion. I do not think that there can be any education of which spiritual religion does not form an integral part; as it is the most important part of life, so it should be the most important part of educa-

* 1912–13.

tion, which some have defined as a preparation for complete life. And inspiration will come also from the hero-stories of the world, and especially of our own people; from science and art if taught by people who are really scientists and artists, and not merely persons with certificates from Mr. T. W. Russell; from literature enjoyed as literature and not studied as "texts"; from the associations of the school place; finally and chiefly from the humanity and great-heartedness of the teacher.

A heroic tale is more essentially a factor in education than a proposition in Euclid. The story of Joan of Arc or the story of the young Napoleon means more for boys and girls than all the algebra in all the books. What the modern world wants more than anything else, what Ireland wants beyond all other modern countries, is a new birth of the heroic spirit. If our schools would set themselves that task, the task of fostering once again knightly courage and strength and truth—that type of efficiency rather than the peculiar type of efficiency demanded by the English Civil Service—we should have at least the beginning of an educational system. And what an appeal an Irish school system might have! What a rallying cry an Irish Minister of Education might give to young Ireland! When we were starting St. Enda's I said to my boys: "We must re-create and perpetuate in Ireland the knightly tradition of Cuchulainn, 'better is short life with honour than long life with dishonour'; 'I care not though I were to live but one day and one night, if only my fame and my deeds live after me'; the noble tradition of the Fianna, 'we, the Fianna, never told a lie, falsehood was never imputed to us'; 'strength in our hands, truth on our lips, and cleanness in our hearts'; the Christ-like tradition of Colmcille, 'if I die it shall be from the excess of the love I bear the Gael.'" And to that antique evangel should be added the evangels of later days: the stories of Red Hugh and Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet and John Mitchel and O'Donovan Rossa and Eoghan O'Growney. I have seen Irish boys and girls moved inexpressibly by the story of Emmet or the story of Anne Devlin, and I have always felt it to be legitimate to make use for educational purposes of an exaltation so produced.

The value of the national factor in education would appear to rest chiefly in this, that it addresses itself to the most generous side of the child's nature, urging him to live up to his finest self. If the true work of the teacher be, as I have said, to help the child to realise himself at his best and worthiest, the factor of nationality is of prime importance, apart from any ulterior propagandist views the teacher may cherish. The school system which neglects it commits, even from the purely pedagogic point of view, a primary blunder. It neglects one of the most powerful of educational resources.

It is because the English education system in Ireland has

deliberately eliminated the national factor that it has so terrifically succeeded. For it has succeeded—succeeded in making slaves of us. And it has succeeded so well that we no longer realise that we are slaves. Some of us even think our chains ornamental, and are a little doubtful as to whether we shall be quite as comfortable and quite as respectable when they are hacked off.

It remains the crowning achievement of the "National" and Intermediate systems that they have wrought such a change in this people that once loved freedom so passionately. Three-quarters of a century ago there still remained in Ireland a stubborn Irish thing which Cromwell had not trampled out, which the Penal Laws had not crushed, which the horrors of '98 had not daunted, which Pitt had not purchased: a national consciousness enshrined mainly in a national language. After three-quarters of a century's education that thing is nearly lost.

A new education system in Ireland has to do more than restore a national culture. It has to restore manhood to a race that has been deprived of it. Along with its inspiration it must, therefore, bring a certain hardening. It must lead Ireland back to her sagas.

Finally, I say, inspiration must come from the teacher. If we can no longer send the children to the heroes and seers and scholars to be fostered, we can at least bring some of the heroes and seers and scholars to the schools. We can rise up against the system which tolerates as teachers the rejected of all other professions rather than demanding for so priest-like an office the highest souls and noblest intellects of the race. I remember once going into a schoolroom in Belgium and finding an old man talking quietly and beautifully about literature to a silent class of boys; I was told that he was one of the most distinguished of contemporary Flemish poets. Here was the sort of personality, the sort of influence, one ought to see in a schoolroom. Not, indeed, that every poet would make a good schoolmaster, or every schoolmaster a good poet. But how seldom here has the teacher any interest in literature at all; how seldom has he any horizon above his time-table, any soul larger than his results fees!

The fact is that, with rare exceptions, the men and women who are willing to work under the conditions as to personal dignity, freedom, tenure, and emolument which obtain in Irish schools are not the sort of men and women likely to make good educators. This part of the subject has been so much discussed in public that one need not dwell upon it. We are all alive to the truth that a teacher ought to be paid better than a policeman, and to the scandal of the fact that many an able and cultured man is working in Irish secondary schools at a salary less than that of the Viceroy's chauffeur.

IX.

WHEN WE ARE FREE.

IN these chapters I have sufficiently indicated the general spirit in which I would have Irish education re-created.

I say little of organisation, of mere machinery. That is the least important part of the subject. We can all foresee that the first task of a free Ireland must be destructive: that the lusty strokes of Gael and Gall, Ulster taking its manful part, will hew away and cast adrift the rotten and worm-eaten boards which support the grotesque fabric of the English education system. We can all see that, when an Irish Government is constituted, there will be an Irish Minister of Education responsible to the Irish Parliament; that under him Irish education will be drawn into a homogeneous whole—an organic unity will replace a composite freak in which the various members are not only not directed by a single intelligence but are often mutually antagonistic, and sometimes engaged in open warfare one with the other, like the preposterous donkey in the pantomime whose head is in perpetual strife with his heels because they belong to different individuals. The individual entities that compose the English-Irish educational donkey are four: the Commissioners of National Education, the Commissioners of Intermediate Education, the Commissioners of Education for certain Endowed Schools, and last, but not least, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction—the modern Ioldanach which in this realm protects science, art, fishery, needlework, poultry, foods and drugs, horse-breeding, etc., etc., etc., etc., and whose versatile chiefs can at a moment's notice switch off their attention from archæology in the Nile Valley to the Foot and Mouth Disease in Mullingar. I must admit that the educational work of the Department as far as it affects secondary schools is done efficiently; but one will naturally expect this branch of its activity to be brought into the general education scheme under the Minister of Education. In addition to the four Boards I have enumerated I need hardly say that Dublin Castle has its finger in the pie, as it has in every unsavoury pie in Ireland. And behind Dublin Castle looms the master of Dublin Castle, and the master of all the Boards, and the master of everything in Ireland—the British Treasury—arrogating claims over the veriest details of education in Ireland for which there is no parallel in any other administration in the world and no sanction even in the British Constitution. My scheme, of course, presupposes the getting rid not only of the British Treasury, but of the British connection.

One perceives the need, too, of linking up the whole system and giving it a common impulse. Under the Minister there might well be chiefs of the various sub-divisions, elementary, secondary, higher, and technical; but these should not be independent potentates, each entrenched in a different stronghold in a different part of the city. I do not see why they could not all occupy offices in the same corridor of the same building. The whole government of the free kingdom of Belgium was carried on in one small building. A Council of some sort, with sub-committees, would doubtless be associated with the Minister, but I think its function should be advisory rather than executive: that all acts should be the acts of the Minister. As to the local organisation of elementary schools, there will always be need of a local manager, and personally I see no reason why the local management should be given to a district council rather than left as it is at present to some individual in the locality interested in education, but a thousand reasons why it should not. I would, however, make the teachers, both primary and secondary, a national service, guaranteeing an adequate salary, adequate security of tenure, adequate promotion, and adequate pension: and all this means adequate endowment, and freedom from the control of parsimonious officials.

In the matter of language I would order things bilingually. But I would not apply the Belgian system exactly as I have described it in *An Claidheamh Soluis*. The *status quo* in Ireland is different from that in Belgium; the ideal to be aimed at in Ireland is different from that in Belgium. Ireland is six-sevenths English-speaking with an Irish-speaking seventh. Belgium is divided into two nearly equal halves, one Flemish, the other French. Irish Nationalists would restore Irish as a vernacular to the English-speaking six-sevenths, and would establish Irish as the national language of a free Ireland: Belgian Nationalists would simply preserve their "two national languages," according them equal rights and privileges. What then? Irish should be made the language of instruction in districts where it is the home language, and English the "second language," taught as a school subject: I would not at any stage use English as a medium of instruction in such districts, anything that I have elsewhere said as to Belgian practice notwithstanding. Where English is the home language it must of necessity be the "first language" in the schools, but I would have a compulsory "second language," satisfied that this "second language" in five-sixths of the schools would be Irish. And I would see that the "second language" be utilised as a medium of instruction from the earliest stages. In this way, and in no other way that I can imagine, can Irish be restored as a vernacular to English-speaking Ireland.

But in all the details of their programmes the schools should

have autonomy. The function of the central authority should be to co-ordinate, to maintain a standard, to advise, to inspire, to keep the teachers in touch with educational thought in other lands. I would transfer the centre of gravity of the system from the education office to the teachers; the teachers in fact would be the system. Teachers, and not clerks, would henceforth conduct the education of the country.

The inspectors, again, would be selected from the teachers, and the chiefs of departments from the inspectors. And promoted teachers would man the staffs of the training colleges, which, for the rest, would work in close touch with the universities.

I need hardly say that the present Intermediate system must be abolished. Good men will curse it in its passing. It is the most evil thing that Ireland has ever known. Dr. Hyde once finely described the National and Intermediate Boards as

> "Death and the nightmare Death-in-Life
> That thicks men's blood with cold."

Of the two Death-in-Life is the more hideous. It is sleeker than, but equally as obscene as, its fellow-fiend. The thing has damned more souls than the Drink Traffic or the White Slave Traffic. Down with it,—down among the dead men! Let it promote competitive examinations in the under-world, if it will.

Well-trained and well-paid teachers, well-equipped and beautiful schools, and a fund at the disposal of each school to enable it to award prizes on its own tests based on its own programme—these would be among the characteristics of a new secondary system. Manual work, both indoor and outdoor, would, I hope, be part of the programme of every school. And the internal organisation might well follow the models of the little child-republics I have elsewhere described, with their own laws and leaders, their fostering of individualities yet never at the expense of the commonwealth, their care for the body as well as for the mind, their nobly-ordered games, their spacious outdoor life, their intercourse with the wild things of the woods and wastes, their daily adventure face to face with elemental Life and Force, with its moral discipline, with its physical hardening.

And then, vivifying the whole, we need the divine breath that moves through free peoples, the breath that no man of Ireland has felt in his nostrils for so many centuries, the breath that once blew through the streets of Athens and that kindled, as wine kindles, the hearts of those who taught and learned in Clonmacnois.