

Clancuilein — History & Character.

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The Story

Of

An Irish Sept

Their Character and Struggle

To Maintain Their Lands

In Clare

By

A Member Of The Sept.

[1896]

Importance of the study of the congenital character of individual members of the sept, in order rightly to comprehend the past, present, and future social and political condition of these people—The character of the members of Clancuilein derived from their history.

GOETHE observes, that the history of a people is their character ; it was from a study of the history of the Celts, that the authorities referred to in the first chapter of this work, formed their ideas regarding the congenital qualities of that race ; and by means of a similar process, we should now be in a position to arrive at some conclusions as to the character of the members of our sept. [1] An inquiry of the kind is interesting, because it may not only give us the key by which to unlock the secrets of the past social and political life of these people, but enable us to follow their subsequent career with intelligence, and so perhaps, without presumption, to forecast their future. In applying this principle to the case of our sept we have the advantage of knowing, that until the early part of the present century, many of them remained pure Iberio-Celts, for they did not intermarry with other races. For instance, if we refer to the pedigree of the Rathfolan branch of the family, we find that from the earliest times, until the close of the nineteenth century the head of the family always married into Celtic families. Further, these people, for some twelve hundred years lived the life of agriculturists, and their surroundings hardly varied throughout this long period. They were never conquered until the time of Cromwell, and their physical conformation and character is at present, so far as we can judge, similar to that which it was when they took possession of Clare in the fifth century.

They were a chivalrous people—that is, a generous, high-minded, and brave set of men ; as an instance in point we may refer to one of their remote ancestors, Connell. As the old historian observes, “ his integrity was such that he delivered up possession of a crown which he was able to defend, because he had no right to it” (p. 66). It must be remembered this was the action of a man who lived in times previous to the introduction of Christianity into Ireland.

Another example of the chivalrous character of these people may be referred to in the case of Sioda (Macnamara), who in the eighth century, having with his sept been deeply injured,

and the sacred mound of Mag Adhair desecrated by the King of Ireland, Sioda, after three days' hard fighting, took the king prisoner. But so far from torturing or punishing the vanquished chief, we are told that Sioda treated him sumptuously, and then conducted him and the remains of his army homewards across the Shannon.

If we pass on to the fourteenth century we are informed by Magrath that De Clare and his Celtic ally, Donough Brian Roe, sent certain of the relatives of Mac-Con (Macnamara) to that chief, with the object of inducing him to desert the cause of Mortough O'Brien, King of Thomond, in favour of the Anglo-Norman baron and his friends. Mac-Con, however, and his followers, without hesitation refused to listen to any treachery of this kind, and he and Clancuilein remained the staunch supporters of their acknowledged ruler ; in fact, it was by the assistance of our sept that Mortough retained his position as Chief of Thomond. This incident occurred at a period when, according to Mr. Freeman, an English Ealdorman not only deliberately betrayed his country to the invader, but that " to do so now became the regular course in the part of royal favourites." [2]

In the year 1370 we find the Earl of Desmond in command of a force of English troops, bent on reducing the O'Briens and Macnamaras to subjection ; the Earl was however defeated, and having been taken prisoner by the Irish was conducted to Clonroad, in co. Clare. Desmond was so impressed with the life and state of society he met with in this distant part of Ireland, that he petitioned King Richard to be allowed to send his young son James (afterwards the famous Earl of Desmond) to be reared and educated by Turlough O'Brien, and his wife Slane Mac-namara, in Clonrad. The earl had to obtain the sanction of the king to this step, because at the time the O'Briens, and in fact all Celtic Irishmen, were accounted enemies of the English, to be hunted down and if possible destroyed like the wild beasts of the forest. We might refer to many other examples from the previous history illustrating the chivalrous character of the leaders of our sept, up to the time of their expulsion from Clare by the English in the seventeenth century. Shortly before that period, we have evidence bearing upon this point given by English officials, who had no love for the men they describe. The first of these references is that of " Lord Deputy Sendeger," dated A.D. 1543. He wrote to Henry VIII. recommending the king to create Sioda Macnamara, Baron Clancuilein, because his " ancestors have in those parties alwayes borne a great swynge, and one that for himself is of honest conformatie whose landes lye holy on the farsyde the Shannon."

Sir H. Sidney, in his tour through Clare in 1575, had the " two Macnamaras, chief gentlemen of their country, with him, who if the country were quiet might live like principal knights in England." Sir H. Sidney adds " he could not find one descended in the English race amongst them." Sir A. Chichester again in writing to the Earl of Salisbury in June 1608, observes, that " John Macnamara now in hold is a more popular man than even the Earl of Thomond in his own country." In 1588 Sir R. Bingham, who as Governor of Munster had special opportunities of becoming acquainted with the people living in Clare, writing of Shane Macnamara, observes that he and his ancestors " quietly enjoyed these cesses and rents which were appropriated by the Earl of Thomond." Sir Richard continues, " This much I must write on behalf of Macnamara, that he has always behaved himself like an honest gentleman and a dutifiil subject." In forwarding this communication, the Lord Deputy wrote to Lord Bughley, that the Macnamara referred to, had " during the space of these thirty years very dutifully carried and behaved himself," and adds " there are not two more like him in the whole province." The individual thus described was at the time the representative of Clancuilein in Clare.

Lastly I may quote a remark made by Mr. Frost, in his recent work on Clare. He states that among the members of the sept bearing the name of Macnamara many are still to be found in

Clare, not a few of them labourers, but all derived from the old stock, and he has been struck by “the air of gentility and breeding observable in many humble members of this ancient family.” In spite of adverse conditions, and a complete alteration in their environment, and after the lapse of many generations, the character of these people survives in their descendants, however humble their lot may be at present.

Brave to a fault were the members of this sept, foremost among a tribe whose pride was to lead the van of an advancing force, and who claimed equally as their right the honour of protecting it, and forming the rearguard in times of disaster and retreat ; and so we find them at Clontarf, and in many another hard fought battle. O’Donovan and others well versed in the history of Thomond, assert that had it not been for the personal bravery and devotion of the chiefe of Clancuilein, the O’Briens could not have held their own in Clare, or prevented its falling into the hands of the English. The leaders of Clancuilein placed their lives absolutely at the service of their king as head of their tribe ; they were ready to fight and to die in the defence of his interests, and in these old times war made men staunch and true to one another. We can hardly have a better instance of this than in the case of S. Macnamara, who, when a hostile army approached Quin in A.D. 1378, with a band of his relations entered the camp of the enemy at daybreak, with the object of engaging the leader of the hostile force in single combat. He fought his way onward with amazing vigour, his followers having all been slaughtered ; still he strove to meet the leader of his king’s enemies, but was overpowered and killed.

Then again the action of Mac-Con (Macnamara) and his clan in the memorable battle of Corcomroe. In the neighbourhood of that beautiful abbey, surrounded by the wonderful hills of Burren, one of the most important battles in the history of Clare was fought, and the Macnamaras covered themselves with honour. In the remarkably vivid description which Magrath has left us of this battle there is nothing ferocious or barbarous in the practice, of war, for instance, with reference to the care of the wounded, he observes, they were “no longer foes but brothers in trouble,” the burial of the dead, and other details referred to by this author, contrast favourably with scenes witnessed by the writer, in warfare earned on in our Eastern possessions in the early part of the second half of the present century. The Irish Celt, in his eager pursuit of pleasure, considered fighting as the noblest pastime ; war was one of the chief duties of life, and it was thought honourable to die on the field of battle. The serious side of the subject seldom affected the soul of the gay, light-hearted Irishman.

So long as success in battle depended on a strong arm and individual prowess, the men of Clare held their own against domestic and foreign foes ; but after arms of precision had been introduced these people completely succumbed. The truth was they had not then the means of purchasing guns, and if they had, there was no one to teach them how to use them, or to drill them as soldiers ; they could act as individuals, man against man, but not against trained bodies of troops. As before remarked, after the introduction of powder and shot as destructive agents in war, the Celts of the West of Ireland disappeared as an independent people.

Loyal were the heads of this sept to their own chiefs, as also were their followers to them. However desperate the venture might be, the head of the sept could at any moment command the devoted services of a trained body of his relations and dependants, who were prepared to form round his person and enter the thick of battle ; others have been referred to who would not so much as listen to treachery. When the split took place in the thirteenth century among the O’Briens it became necessary for the Macnamaras to choose which action they should support, and they elected to throw in their lot with Turlough O’Bnen, because he had married the daughter of their chief Lochlain Macnamara, and so in other cases their hereditary qualities bound them to one another and to their rulers ; the freedom of their families, their home

and lands were the objects for which they fought. The devotion of the followers to their chief was the keystone on which much of their action rested. These chiefs were elected by the sept as the fittest men to lead and to rule its members, and so far as the history of Clare extends, we know of no instance of the chief betraying the trust committed to his care ; he had absolute power over the lives and liberties of his followers, but during the twelve hundred years we have followed their history there is no evidence of ill-treatment, tyrannical, or unjust dealing recorded against any one of the heads of this sept These people were not only loyal to their chiefs, but also to themselves ; they did their duty, and were content to leave the issue to be judged of by its results, and in the hands of their bards. After English law had been imposed on the Irish, it is true the O'Briens forsook their former rectitude of purpose, and took advantage of the complicated enactments under the new order of things to filch away the estates of their former devoted followers, but these O'Briens were no longer Dalcasians.

Light-hearted and hospitable.—These qualities seem to have been marked features in the character of many members of our sept ; in the various annals of Ireland frequent references are made to members of the family in terms such as the following : “ Macnamara, chief of Clancuilen, was a charitable and truly hospitable man, who established peace and tranquility in his territory.” Of another member of the family the “ Four Masters” state he “ was renowned for his hospitality” ; of a third, “ he was the best son of a chieftain of his time,” and again of a head of the Rathfolan branch of the Macnamaras, “ he was a sumptuous, festive, bounteous, and humane man” ; lastly, we hear that another of the sept was “ a noble and majestic man and a favourite of women and children, by reason of his gaiety and pleasantry.” In selecting these, out of the many references made to members of this sept, I have not chosen those favourably noticed, and excluded unfavourable mention of members of the family : the latter, if they exist, so far as I am aware do not appear in the annals of Ireland.

The love of money was not a temptation to which Irishmen as a rule were exposed or into which they were likely to fall ; not that they were improvident, but the members of a sept like that of Clancuilen existed without money until the middle of the sixteenth century. The Pope's Nuncio, in one of his most remarkable reports on the people of the West of Ireland in the year 1648, observes that “ they rarely touch money, and as rarely quarrell about it.”

Imaginative.—Mr. Lecky states that Irishmen are endowed in an extraordinary degree with retrospective imagination, which quality he remarks is characteristic of these people. Too many Celts live habitually in dreams, largely drawn from the past, and of future honour and glory to which they have not sufficient perseverance to attain by steady application and hard work. If we refer to any of the able writers who portray the character of Irish men and women, we are struck with the frequent references they make to the scenes and customs of the ancestors of those who play a part in these narratives. The bards were fiill of this ancient lore, and nothing so much pleased the Irish people as to listen to their tales, concerning the part taken by their ancestors in the struggles and troubles through which their country had passed. [3] There are no people under the sun, in which the past plays so important a part in the daily life of those now living, as the Irish. Lover's song put into the mouth of that characteristic Irish servant, Mike, is hardly a burlesque, but rather a true picture of the retrospective imagination of these people. [4]

Sir J. Davis has recorded an interesting example of the devotion of the Brehons to their employers, and the great value they set upon the ancient documents committed to their care. Sir John writes, A.D. 1603, as follows : “ Touching the certainties of the duties and provisions yielded to McGrath out of these lands, they referred to an old parchment roll, which was in the hands of one O'Brislau, a chronicler and principal Brehon of that country ;

whereupon O'Brislau was sent for, who lived not far from the camp, who was so aged and decrepid, as he was scarce able to repair to us ; when he was come, we demanded of him a sight of this ancient roll. The old man seemed to be much troubled with this demand, made answer that he had such a roll in his keeping before the wars, but that in the late rebellion it was burnt among other papers and books by certain English soldiers. We were told by some present that this was not true ; they affirmed that they had seen the roll in his hands since the wars. Thereupon my Lord Chancellor being present with us did minister an oath to him, and gave him a very serious charge to inform us truly of what had become of the roll. The poor old man, fetching a deep sigh, confessed that he knew where the roll was, but that it was dearer to him than life, and, therefore, he would never deliver it out of his hands unless my Lord Chancellor would take the like oath that the roll should be restored to him. My Lord Chancellor, smiling, gave him his hand and his word that he should have the roll re-delivered unto him if he would suffer us to take a view and copy thereof. And with tears in his eyes the old Brehon drew the roll out of his bosom, where he did continually bear it about him. It was not very large, but it was written on both sides in fair Irish characters ; howbeit, some part of the writing was worn and defaced with time and ill-keeping. We then caused it to be translated into English, and perceived how many vessels of butter, and how many measures of meal, and how many porkers, and such gross duties did arise unto McGnth out of the lands." [5]

Credulous.—It has been said with truth that the Celt is endowed with an intuitive appreciation of all that touches the mystic and supernatural ; as an instance in point one may refer to the faith displayed by Moncha, in her father the blind Druid. Stories of this kind fill many pages of early Irish legends, and they made a deep, and lasting impression on the people of the West of Ireland. The credulity of the chiefs and people of Clare during the fourteenth century, is well illustrated by the account which Magrath gives, in all seriousness, of the appearance of a supernatural being on three important occasions, twice to the leader of the Dalcasians, and once to de Clare.

The Irish had, and to the west of the Shannon still have, a firm belief in their “ banshees.” The chief banshee of our tribe dwelt in the lovely wooded rocks overlooking the Shannon above Killaloe ; she accompanied the tribe to battle, “ shreiking and fluttering over their heads, surrounded by satyres and spirits of the valley.” The writer of these pages can well remember hearing his father describe the thrice-repeated wail of the banshee, which he had distinctly recognised, and which foretold the death of a dear friend ; nevertheless, he was a man who had seen much of men and the world.

The emotional or sensitive disposition of the Irish Celts, has been the obstacle above all others which has barred their progress as a people, and prevented them from joining hand in hand for that long and steady pull necessary for the establishment of a nation. The emotional side of their nature leads the Celt to arrive at rapid conclusions, which are by no means always lasting, and so he too frequently lends himself to carry through the schemes of designing or misguided men who, with fluent tongue, persuade him to follow on in the pursuit of social or political phantoms, in place of devoting his best powers of mind and body in a persevering effort to succeed in his calling in life. It has been fairly said that the creed of many Irishmen is, that “ it ought to be”— it must be— it is,” and for no better reason, they too often waste their undoubted talents and energies in efforts wide of the mark at which they aim.

As individuals, the sensitive Irishman easily takes affront, and is apt to fancy himself injured by persons whose only fault is, that they are superior to himself in mental or physical acquirements ; the advancement of another person in life thus becomes tantamount with failure on his part, and so jealousy and unreal grievances are apt to add trouble and bitterness

to the other burdens of life. The sensitive Celt cannot bear the hard blows of his more robust, but coarser neighbours, and is apt to shrink within himself, becoming shy and reserved in the presence of strangers. He can never forget a wrong, especially if perpetrated by one who has been his friend ; for the bond of friendship with the Irish is something very real—one might almost say sacred—and, to him, in proportion is the offence of one who slights this tie. Among his own countrymen, and in polite society where the genius, wit, and vivacity of the Irish gentleman can have full play, he is seen to the best advantage from a social point of view. Beyond the confines of his own island, the Irishman's intense love of nature, deep human sympathy, and yearning for comradeship not unfrequently attract men with almost blind devotion to him. As soldiers and leaders of men, this quality is invaluable ; we could hardly have a better example of this than in the person of the late Lord Mayo, and the remarkable influence he exercised over the native chiefs of India with whom he was brought in contact.

The exceeding brightness of Irish men and women is doubtless due to their emotional dispositions, and is eminently calculated to endow life with a charm, which has a marked influence for good in this careworn age. This element in the Irish character, we may hope, will long continue to throw its cheering light into many a household—a reasonable hope, seeing that Sir W. Petty calculated, in the year 1672, the world contained about a million Irish men and women ; but they were said, as far back as the year 1849, to have increased to no fewer than twenty million people. [6] There is, however, another side to the picture : the qualities which render the Irishman light-hearted make him terribly alive to the pain and grief suffered by others. The anguish of mind thus caused is known only to himself, for the greater his grief the more he conceals his feelings in stolid silence ; his sensitive nature too often shuns sympathy, and can best turn for relief to its own bitterness.

There is one allied trait in the Irish which must be mentioned, and that is untruthfulness. With respect to this grave charge we may, however, refer to the evidence of Englishmen who lived in the West of Ireland in the sixteenth century. For instance, R. Payne states that “ the Irish keep their promise faithfully ; nothing is more pleasing to them than good justice.” This statement was made in the year 1589. Sir J. Davis writing a few years later, states that “ there is no people under the sun that doth love equal and indifferent justice better than the Irish.” We have despatches from English statesmen serving in Ireland, which bear independent testimony to the honourable and gentlemanly bearing of members of our sept in the sixteenth century ; and there is everything in their history to prove that they entertained a high sense of honour, and nothing to show that they were an untruthful race. It is true that, as far back as the time of Henry III., the Irish chiefs stated that the people had been “ remarkable for their candour and simplicity” ; but they add, “ from the oppression and cruelty they had experienced, they became artful and designing.” This degradation in the moral character of a people follows, almost as a matter of necessity, when they are persecuted as the Irish have been until within recent times. We may admit that the character of the Irish Celt has suffered in this respect, and it is well they should realise this fact, and learn to correct the defect under which many of them labour. As the poorer classes become more independent and better educated, they will certainly grow more self-reliant, and, as of old, regain their character for “ candour,” if not of “ simplicity.”

Lazy.—The Irish are described as a lazy people. The Pope's Nuncio, writing of them in A.D. 1649, observes that they “ feed only on what the earth produces without labour or trouble, and quietly accommodate themselves to the misery of the times” ; [7] but, he adds, “ this does not prevent them, when instructed and placed in some post under rule and order, from liking and maintaining the course they have adopted.” From one cause and another, including, perhaps, its laws, the population of Ireland had, until after the seventeenth

century, never increased in excess of its food-producing power : the people, therefore, lived on the stock and crops raised on their own lands, that which was taken from the soil being consumed by persons tilling and residing on these lands. Habits engendered under many centuries of life in these conditions may have led to indolence, for subsistence in Ireland in those times required but little exertion on the part of the cultivator. Moreover, the forests were full of game, and abundance of fish lived in the rivers and lakes of the country, and these were for the most part open to the community. We have ample evidence, however, to prove that Irishmen of the present day, when well paid, fed, and under proper discipline, make first-rate labourers, both in their own and in foreign countries ; they are to be trusted under circumstances of great trial and temptation, as, for instance, in the case of the Irish constabulary, who, although enlisted in Ireland, have gone through the past ten years of excitement and trouble in that country, and thoroughly maintained the character of their forefathers. These men were born and bred in Ireland. Neither climate, soil, nor any other surroundings differ in their case from that of the civil population ; but the constabulary are “ instructed and placed in a post under rule and order, and so like and maintain the course they have adopted,” with infinite credit to them-selves and to the country. No doubt, regular habits and, above all, good food, have had much to do in developing the higher qualities inherent in many of these men.

The emotional side of the Irish impels them to a love of music, poetry, and painting, and last, but not least, to flowery language and brilliant ideas, often expressed in the most happy terms ; we have examples of this in the case of Burke, Grattan, O’Connell, and many other distinguished statesmen, and not a few eminent preachers and banisters. A. Young, an Englishman, who had travelled over the continent of Europe, and observed much, writing from Ireland at the end of the seventeenth century, remarks that “ the Irish are infinitely more cheerful and lively than anything we see in England ; having nothing of that incivility and sullen silence with which so many enlightened Englishmen seem wrapt up, as if retiring within their own importance. The Irish love of society is as remarkable, as their curiosity is insatiable ; and their hospitality to all comers, be their own poverty ever so pinching, merits never to be forgotten.” “ Tour in Ireland,” 1776, p. 147.)

At the commencement of this chapter it was stated that a study of the congenital characters of the members of a sept, or any other community of the kind, was not only interesting, but had its value from a practical point of view ; for however much education may influence for good the character of young people, the better we understand our own dispositions, and the nature of the beings we have to train, the more likely we are to be enabled by example and precept to fit them to steer their course aright over the troubled sea of life. How many men are shipwrecked in their career, not from want of ability, but from a want of consistency of character. This infirmity shows itself as we advance from youth to manhood. Consistency of character is the strongest of all forces in moulding a man’s career, since it is true to itself. It is character which inspires confidence among those we are brought in contact with, and is more potent in moulding an individual’s destiny in his present, and future life than intellectual acquirements, or anything else that education, as tested by the modern standards of examination, can possibly bestow. If this be true, surely to know the character of the race to which we belong is something we should endeavour to learn. Beyond this, a right conception of the character of a people is the only rational standpoint from which to study their social and political condition. We may go a step further, and state that sound knowledge of the congenital character of a people is necessary to those who take on themselves the offices of legislators and rulers, for without such knowledge they cannot wisely govern, any more than a surgeon can operate on the human subject without a knowledge of anatomy. It appears from the history of our sept, that from the fifth to the sixteenth century there had been no change whatever in the character of its members ; their social and political relations had become

modified, but not radically altered, because they had been guided by a succession of beings endowed with the same qualities, it was their disposition which, true to itself, was the force ruling their actions, and led to the development of their laws and other institutions, which to them were just and right, inasmuch as they were a reflex of the mind of the people ; and among these people the brand of race is far deeper than the mark of nationality.

APPENDIX

Regarding the light-heartedness of the Irish, we find them bright as ever in 1790, at which date Sir J. Barrington has given us a description of their sociality as witnessed at Donnybrook Fair. Sir J. states, at the outset of his narrative, that “ he does not know any one trait of character conspicuous alike in himself and brother Pat, save that which is their common disgrace and incentive to all vices, *drinking* : and even in this the English far surpass the Irish.” [8] There can be no question Irishmen (and for the matter of that, their terriers also) have an indigenous *gout* for fighting, and at Donnybrook there was no reserve in this matter. Numerous tents, composed of peeled wattles fixed in the ground at one end and bent over and tied together at the other, were covered with quilts of bedclothes and sheets, blankets, and so on ; some of these tents were fifty feet long, and scattered over the green flat, through which a shallow stream runs dripping under a high bridge. The tent was furnished with a table and forms ; these were not very steady, so that when the whisky got the mastery of some convivial fellow he was apt to fall over, and with him the row of men on his form, prostrating some ten or twenty gallant shamrock boys on their backs. After a certain amount of roaring, laughing, and not a little bad language, the whole party turned out into the open air and amused themselves with wrestling, leaping, cadgelling, or fighting on the green. But it was all a good-humoured proceeding. “ Men, to be sure, were knocked down now and then, but there was no malice in it. A head was often cut, but as quickly tied up by the man who had inflicted the wound.” There was no brutal fighting, no cheats, gamblers, or even pickpockets, perhaps for the very good reason that there was no money worth stealing. Sir J. Barrington states that the fair was “ rich in all the glories of drinking, fighting, kissing, making friends, dancing, singing, and joining sincerely in the dance as if the cloat tied round their heads were a Turkish turban. Whatever happened in the fair, neither revenge nor animosity went out of it with any of the parties.” All of which, Sir J. Barrington remarks, were incomprehensible features, and therefore all wrong and barbarous to the “ most egotistical animal in creation. John Bull, who measures every man’s coat according to his own cloth, and can only fancy an Irish mob to be like a London rabble, and so that Donnybrook Fair was a compound of all the vice, robbery, and swindling which is so dear to St. Bartholomew.”

[1] By congenital character is meant any individual peculiarities, whether structural or mental, with which an individual is born. As the old Celtic proverb has it ; “ If there is an amble in the mare, it will be in the colt.”

[2] “ History of the Norman Conquest of England.”

[3] Mr. A. J. Balfour has well expressed this fact when he stated, “ Anybody who had not realised that the whole history of Ireland consisted of memories, not only of 250 years or 500 years old, he would venture to say had not begun to understand the history of that country” (speech delivered in the House of Commons, June 7th, 1895, in opposition to Mr. Morley’s proposal to raise a statue to the memory of Oliver Cromwell).

[4] “ Oh ! once we were illigant people.
Though we now live in cabins and mud ;

And the land that we see from the hill-top
Belonged to us all from the Flood.
My father was then King of Connaught,
My grand-aunt Viceroy of Tralee ;
But the Sassenach came, and, signs on it !
The devil an acre have we.

“ The least of us then were all earls.
And jewels we wore without name ;
We drank punch out of rubies and pearls—
Mr. Petrie can tell you the same—
But except some turf mould and potatoes,
There’s nothing our own we can call ;
And the English—bad luck to them !— hate us
Because we’re more free than them all !

“ My grand-aunt was niece of St. Kevin,
That’s the reason my name’s Mickey Free !
Priest’s nieces —but sure he’s in heaven,
And his failin’s is nothing to me.
And we still might get on without doctors,
If they’d let the ould Ireland alone,
And if purple men, priests, and tithe proctors,
Were crammed down the great gun of Athlone.”

[5] “ Tracts relating to Ireland,” by Sir J. Davis, Attorney-General in Ireland ; also Vallaney,
“ Col. Hib.,” vol i. p. 161.

[6] “ National Life and Character,” by C. Pearson, p. 69. In the British Isles the Irish Celt
constituted numerically 12 to 64 of the inhabitants in 1672. In 1849 they were 8 to 18 of
the population, and at the present day exceed that proportion.

[7] Rinuccini, “ The Embassy in Ireland, 1645-49,” p. 143.

[8] Sir J. Barrington’s “ Personal Sketches,” vol. iii p. 232.

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