
Review

Author(s): W. P. W.

Review by: W. P. W.

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Father Duff, the practical and level-headed enthusiast for all that could make for the development of the agricultural welfare of his country side.. These are men whom to know would have been to love. Very beautiful also is the Reverend Mother of the Convent in Bunnahone, with her strong commonsense and her ardent gentleness.

Ralph's father is a retired officer, a man of strong and simple piety, sprung from an old and honourable stock who "had always been Catholics," as he himself expressed it. His influence on his son in companionship and counsel is all for good, but it is neutralized by the well meaning but narrow religiousness of the boy's mother, who is exactly what the Irish peasant calls a voteen. She had cherished the hope from before his birth that her boy would enter the priesthood, and all her strength concentrates itself in moulding him to that end. That she breaks her husband's heart ultimately by doing so is to her part of her sacrifice, and one watches with a fearful fascination the stunting of her soul in her intense desire to save it.

The young priest, full of noble ideals of learning and faith and serviceableness, finds himself involved in one after another blind alley of defeat, cramped by one after another failure of the system under which he has to serve, until at last he is cast out, homeless, motherless, churchless, from his parish and his order, and yet growing nearer to God as his view of life widens and his faith frees itself from the non-essentials which had cramped and clouded it. In one sense the book is a real tragedy, in another it is the victory of faith enduring through trial.

Some of the minor characters of the story are charmingly drawn, humorous and life-like. But those in whose hands the administration lay are characters which one shrinks from describing, men whose coarse self-seeking and unblushing trafficking in sacred things are very painful reading.

In its own particular field it is a book of extraordinary power, and, besides its main interest, is full of vivid touches of Irish life.

J. P.

IRISH WITCHCRAFT AND DEMONOLOGY. By St. John D. Seymour, B.D. Hodges, Figgis and Co. 5s. net.

As the author himself says this book may claim to be an unwritten chapter in Irish History. Though its style is popular and entertaining, it aims at being strictly historical—a narrative of fact rather than of fancy. Mr. Seymour's information is chiefly derived from accounts of witchcraft trials in Irish provincial law courts, though here and there he uses other authorities. Unfortunately his book suffers from the fact that the material supplied by these sources is exceedingly scanty. It does not give any clear and connected account of the nature of the beliefs and

practices which went to make up witchcraft and demonology as they existed in Ireland, nor does it trace systematically the origin, growth, and decline of these superstitions. The book is rather a collection of anecdotes, some of which, it must be confessed, have very little to do with Ireland. These anecdotes give us glimpses of the past, but they do not form a clear and comprehensive picture. Although this may lessen the value of the book for strictly historical purposes, it in no way lessens its interest for the general reader. All the stories it contains are very curious and entertaining; they appeal strongly to our innate love of the mysterious. From beginning to end the book is brightly and cleverly written. We should have liked it to have contained more about the Black Art as it exists in Ireland at present. If the author had possessed some knowledge of Gaelic, and the power of winning the confidence of the country folk, he might have written two or three chapters on this subject alone. He mentions having heard of a woman in the Aran Islands who possesses the evil eye. About three years ago the present writer had an opportunity of speaking to her. She deserves more than a passing reference. The author would have written more sympathetically if he had believed in his subject. He mentions many things, such as the levitation of the fairy-possessed butler, which suggest the phenomena of spiritualism. To do such subjects justice he should have been a spiritualist.

W. P. W.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH IN THE FIRST CENTURY. By William Moran. M. H. Gill and Son. 6s. net.

This book, "Presented to the Theological Faculty of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, as a thesis for the Degree of Doctor," deals with a subject which has of recent years received considerable attention. It cannot, however, be said to throw much new light on the great problems of the origin and development of primitive Church Government, nor does the author appear to have availed himself of some of the most recent authorities on the subject. We look in vain, for instance, for any reference to the works of Bishop Gore or Mr. Turner, who, it would be supposed, are as worthy of consideration as Dr. Hatch or Dr. Lindsay or Professor Harnack, and who certainly represent a no less scholarly side of "Protestant" thought.

The author's theory is of course in line with Roman Catholic views, and his book has the *imprimatur* of Archbishop Walsh. According to the author's theory, each local church was originally governed by Presbyter-Bishops, who exercised a corporate jurisdiction, and this corporate episcopacy gave place gradually to the monarchical.