

### THE EDUCATION OF THE LOWER CLASSES CONDUCTIVE TO MORALITY AND GOOD ORDER.

An epocha is now begun, in which the human mind has taken wing towards a nobler flight than it ever attempted before, and the change which it promises forebodes the greatest consequences. The diffusion of knowledge among men of every rank is now becoming so general, that, in half a century, the lowest classes of society will contain a larger proportion of men who will be able to reason soundly, than, four centuries ago, could have been reckoned in the highest; and modern cottagers will soon be better instructed than feudal chieftains ever were.

Yet there are who view this dissemination of instruction with apprehension, and suppose that it will turn the minds of artizans and labourers from their necessary employments.—Neither does a comparison between the happiness and misery, the morality and vice, of the instructed and uninstructed districts at home and abroad—a comparison so much in favour of the former—destroy the prejudice.

The inconveniences of all that is new are sometimes the first effects that are felt, and the most powerful instruments are those which must be used with the greatest skill. That the novelty of instruction may give some inexperienced minds exaggerated notions of their own importance, can easily be imagined; but a habit of knowledge will dispel these effects. In the dead of night men grope about as they can, and avoid danger by chance or dexterity. When on a sudden day appears they are almost blinded by it, but the hour of noon shows every thing as it is.

But let it be supposed that insurrection and idleness were the themes inculcated to-day, would not the hunger of tomorrow correct them? Let the husbandman throw away his plough—the weaver his loom—the shoemaker his last—would not the ills which these men would immediately experience force them back to their occupations? If imagination were to triumph for a time, and folly to usurp the place of truth, the drudgery of life in these necessitous regions would soon

bring back reason. Practice has shown that equality is a vision, and indefinite liberty the worst of tyrannies; and sound instruction, which is but the record of practice, will teach men to avoid them. The result of education to the poor will be, to teach them that there are moral hardships in this world, his share in which it is the duty of every man to endure.—*Chenivix on National Character.*

### THE POETS ACCOMPANIMENT.

FOR THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

For my music I demand  
Finger raised of moving hand,  
Bowing head, and lips comprest,  
That murmur not, though scarce at rest,  
And, with every varied rhyme,  
Mark the thought, and mete the time.  
Forehead, which the tender vein  
With a violet streak doth stain,  
Shaded by the brown lock's maze,—  
For my spell forbids to raise  
The white hand, that would repress  
And reprove each truant tress,  
Lest it break the deep suspense  
Of delighted thought intense.  
O'er that snowy forehead flit  
Gleams that do illumine it,  
Swift they come, and swift they flee,  
Felt by her, and felt by me,  
Fain, methinks, would they repose  
On that bed of placid snows,  
But must fly, like glancing thought,  
For repose is suffered not.

I too challenge from thine eyes  
Sympathy and sweet surprise;  
Eyes that smile—because they must:  
Yet the smile speaks half distrust;  
Pleased—yet scarce easy in such pleasure,  
With a too forward poet's measure.

A.

### THE HOLESTONE, COUNTY OF ANTRIM.

On a rocky eminence in the townland of Ballyvernish, about one mile from the village of Doagh, stands a large whinstone slab, called the *Holestone*. This stone is upwards of five feet in height above the ground, and near the base six feet eight inches in circumference, and ten inches in thickness. At about three feet from the ground there is a round hole perforated through it, sufficient to admit a common-sized hand; it has evidently been made by art, but there is neither record nor tradition respecting the purpose for which it was erected, nor by whom.

About thirty years ago a man put his hand through the aperture of this stone, but was unable to extricate it; on which, those who were with him gave the alarm, and a crowd was soon collected, whose conflicting opinions only served to increase the fears of the person in limbo. Amongst those assembled, was a Mr. O—, a resident in the neighbourhood, who seeing so much needless alarm, determined to be a little waggish upon this occasion. "Fly," said he, to a bystander, "for my powder-horn, and I'll soon free him; I'll blow up the stone in an instant!" At these words, the confusion and alarm of the multitude beggars all description, while the cries of the prisoner, which had hitherto been sunk in the noise, became piercing in the extreme. During the confusion, the gentleman had sent off privately for some vinegar, and on the return of the messenger, with it, he began to pacify the prisoner, and to bathe his hand, which had become swelled in the various attempts made to get it extricated; and he at length succeeded in effecting his liberation, without application to the much dreaded powder horn.

The writer is not aware of any similar stone at present

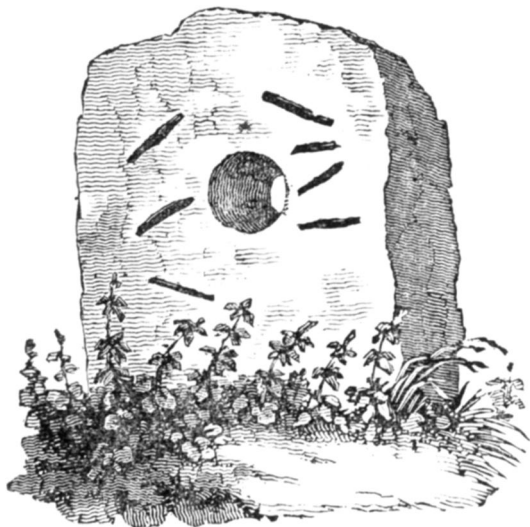


in Ireland; but it is said that within memory, a large stone with a hole through it, stood on a hill, near Cushindall. In Ross-shire, Scotland, there is a stone exactly resembling the above; and near Kirkwall, Orkney, at a place called Stennis, is a large stone standing with a hole through it, said to have been a Druid's altar. The place where it stands is still deemed a place consecrated to the meeting of lovers; and when they join hands through the stone, the pledge of love and truth there given is sacred, and rarely, if ever, has it been broken.

*Carrickfergus.*

S. M.S.

Stones perforated in this manner are to be found in most parts of Ireland, and particularly in the burial grounds attached to very ancient churches. The annexed wood-cut represents one of them remaining in the church-yard of Castle Dermot, and which is inscribed with some ancient Ogham characters or letters, in use in Ireland previous to the introduction of Christianity.



There is also a remarkable perforated stone of this description, inscribed also with Ogham characters, near the church of Killmelcheder, one mile from Smerwick harbour in the county of Kerry. They have, probably, an Eastern origin, for Mr. Wilford informs us, in the Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 502, that perforated stones are not uncommon in India; and devout people pass through them, when the opening will admit, in order to be regenerated. If the hole be too small, they put the hand or foot through it, and with a sufficient degree of faith, it answers nearly the same purpose. P.

### WITCHCRAFT IN KILKENNY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

SIR—I take the liberty of acquainting you with the satisfaction I derive from the perusal of the Dublin Penny Journal, feeling that the expression of approbation (however humble the individual it may come from), must be cheering to an editor. That much good may be done to Ireland by your work if conducted in the spirit which it has hitherto exhibited, no one can hesitate to believe, and that it will receive the encouragement, it appears to me to merit, I sincerely trust.

Among other articles in number 10, now before me, I observe an account of the witchcraft practised at Kilkenny, in 1325, by Dame Alice Kettle or Kettell, (not Kelter, as you have spelled the name, no doubt by a printer's mistake), and upon which you will, perhaps, indulgently receive from me a few observations.

The sketch of witchcraft by Sir Walter Scott, recently published in Mr. Murray's family library, is, indeed, to use his own expressive phrase—"the history of a dark chapter in human nature." Cervantes says, "That witches do nothing which lead to any object," yet it appears evident that that which the tortured imagination of these unhappy persons can confess, leads through so troubled a stream to the fountain of fairy legends.

The persecution of the Lady Alice Kettell, at Kilkenny, for witchcraft, is, perhaps, one of the earliest upon record.—The Bishop of Ossory, is stated to have been her accuser, and to have charged her and two companions with various diabolical acts; among others, that of holding a conference, every night, with a spirit called Robin Artisson, to whom, as you have related, they were said to sacrifice nine red Cocks, and nine Peacock's eyes.

In this ecclesiastical persecution, the object of which appears to have been to extort money to cover the roof

of St. Mark's Church, in Kilkenny, the connexion with the fairy creed is obvious from the name of the evil spirit. The appellation of Artisson, any Irish scholar will at once perceive has had its origin in the sacrifice said to be nightly offered up, as the translation of it is chicken flesh, ( $\alpha\rho\tau$  art flesh, and  $\gamma\rho\epsilon\alpha\lambda$  isean, a chicken or young bird), and with respect to the name of Robin, I cannot help thinking when Sir Walter Scott tells us, that "by some inversion and alteration of pronunciation" the English word goblin and the Scottish bogle, come from the same root as the German Kobold, he may as well have added poor Robin, if only for the sake of good-fellowship as Robin's punning namesake, Thomas Hood, would have said.

That Robin, however, was the popular name for a fairy of much repute, is sufficiently well-known; but since the mention of his name has accidentally occurred with that of Hood, I may be allowed to observe that the title assumed by, or applied to the famous outlaw, was no other than one which had been appropriated to a denizen of fairy land.—Hudikin or Hodekin, that is little hood, or cowl, being a Dutch or German spirit, so called from the most remarkable part of his dress, in which also the Norwegian Nis and Spanish Duende were believed to appear—

"Un cucurucho tamano,"

to use the words of Calderon. There is in Oxford-street a well-known Coach office, distinguished by the sign of "the green man and still," but why so called I have never had satisfactorily explained by the curious in such matters. The derivation of the Bull and Mouth, the Belle Savage, the Talbot, (old Chaucer's Tabart), and many other signs, which may be quoted in proof of the mutability of things, are familiar to all, yet the origin of the aforesaid Green Man and Still, remains involved in the most mysterious obscurity. I have, however, always been inclined to consider it as remotely derived from Robin Hood; and leaving fancy to fill up the chasm, have found myself willing to translate it as "the forrester and fairy," or the green or woodman, and the still folk or silent people, as the supernatural beings which we call fairies, were not unusually termed—"Das still Volk" being the common German expression.

This long digression, like the treacherous Friar Rush, might readily lead me on from "the merry green wood," until I became bewildered in the mazes of conjecture.—Allow me, therefore, to return to Kilkenny, the scene of Alice Kettell's conjurations.—That town appears to have been peculiarly fatal to witches. Sir Richard Cox, in his history of Ireland, mentions the visit of Sir William Drury, the Lord Deputy, to it, in October, 1578, who caused thirty-six criminals to be executed there, "one of which was a black-a-moor, and two others were witches, and were condemned by the law of nature, for there was no positive law against witchcraft in these days." From that it would appear that the Statute of the 33rd of Henry VIII. against witchcraft had either become a dead letter, or had not been enacted in Ireland.

Ireland has been, in my opinion, unjustly stigmatised as a barbarous and superstitious country.—It is certain that the cruel persecution carried on against poor and ignorant old women was as nothing in Ireland when compared with other countries. In addition to the three executions at Kilkenny, a town, the inhabitants of which were almost entirely either English settlers or of English descent, I only remember to have met with an account of one other execution for the crime of witchcraft. This latter took place at Antrim, in 1699, and it is, I believe the last on record.—The particulars of this silly tragedy were printed in a pamphlet, entitled "The bewitching of a child in Ireland," and from thence copied by Professor Sinclair, in his work entitled "Satan's Invisible world discovered," which is frequently referred to by Sir Walter Scott in his letters on Demonology.

I have to apologise for the length to which my letter has extended, and beg to subscribe myself,

your very humble servant,

Admiralty—London.

T. CROFTON CROKER.