

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

“WE ENGLISH”

SIR,

I am not sure whether I am “ingenuous”; I am quite sure that I am impenitent:—

1. Since in his letter Mr. Louis Vincent actually uses the word *partner* of England’s position in the government or misgovernment of Ireland, I take it that he does not really differ from me.

2. Is he, however, correct when he states that the Irish and Scotch have been “employed” as “the tools or hirelings” of England? That is the whole matter in dispute. Is it correct, for example, to suppose that Ulster has been “the tool” of England? Would it be more correct to reverse the proposition and say that England has been “the tool” of Ulster? When Home Rule was shelved at the outbreak of war in 1914, which is more likely to have been “the tool,” Mr. Asquith or Lord Carson?

3. Finally, when he writes that “it is common knowledge that the practice of [Ireland’s] own superior Brehon Law was made treasonable,” he is begging the question with an epithet. I would most certainly deny that the superiority of Brehon Law over English Law is a matter of “common knowledge.”

Yours faithfully,

BEDE JARRETT, O.P.

DICKENS AND CATHOLICISM

SIR,

Miss Martineau’s Autobiography tells of the astonishing anti-popery of Dickens defended by Ley, in *The Dickens Circle* (Chapman and Hall, 1918, p. 324).

The matter was brought up in *The Month* (April, 1919).

No wonder Dickens refused to let anything be printed in favour of Catholicism, when, in 1846, he wrote of “Catholicity, clearly as a means of social degradation”; where-

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fore, "horror of the introduction of Catholic priests and emissaries into their towns seems to me the most rational feeling in the world."

But then Newman, still in his Anglican tradition, wrote : "At the time of the Council of Trent, it is to be feared the whole Roman Communion was bound by perpetual bond to Antichrist."

Some people's brain-storms pass clear away ; and a complete cure is arrived at by some victims of nervous disorders.

W. F. P. STOCKLEY.

DANTE'S MYSTIC LOVE

SIR,

The reviewer of *Dante's Mystic Love*, while extremely appreciative of the book, is distinctly hard on his *confrères*, the other critics. There is, of course, no end to theories about Dante, and meanings read out of or into his text. Is not that all the more reason for taking them cautiously ? Must we accept huge assumptions because they are well meant ? Is it "pedantic," for instance, to object when the lines of a sonnet, excluded from the Oxford Dante and held by Fraticelli to be spurious, are given as authentic because "*we may suppose* Rossetti had fairly good reasons for attributing them to Dante" ? Is it "meticulous" to demand some better support for the contention that extraordinary mystical favours were conferred on Dante *at his baptism* than Purg. XXX, 109 ff. ? In this passage Beatrice rebukes the repentant Dante with the misuse of the great natural powers and spiritual graces rained down on him in his *vita nuova*.

The reviewer takes up a very serious position when he implies that the critical faculty is incompatible with spiritual appreciation : Dante's breadth and power and deep spirituality are all the more evident from the most scholarly study, as the centenary celebrations have proved. And surely "the mind in act pursues the finality whom we call God" when it cultivates accuracy and balance of judgment ?

Yours faithfully,

MARY RYAN.