

A book review by Aleister Crowley from the December 1917 edition of The International.

Democracy in Ireland Since 1913.

This small pamphlet is without publishers' or printers' marks. It contains an account of the murder of Francis Sheehy Skeffington, with an article written by Mr. Skeffington, reprinted from the "Century Magazine." The murder of Mr. Skeffington was, as some statesman or other once said: "Much worse than a crime, it was a blunder." The murder of Mr. Thomas Ashe comes under the same category. In fact, it is always difficult to blame the authors of such atrocities. Naturally enough, they always occur in circumstances where clear reason and common sense are inhibited. These incidents must therefore be classed in a sense as accidents, and moral indignation is really a somewhat primitive reaction.

It is absurd to class Captain Bowen-Colthurst as a monster and a villain. He was simply an officer who completely lost his nerve. At the same time, one cannot expect the man in the street to take this philosophical view of what on the surface is certainly a most infamous outrage, an abomination almost unbelievable; and we must not be surprised that the Irish crudely determine to do away with the entire system which makes such things possible. The real cure does not lie in any political readjustment; a complete advance in civilization is necessary. Cool reason and common sense and presence of mind must become normal to the race. The Irish Republican will reply that that is quite true, and that these qualities will develop best when Ireland is free. It is hard to reply to this contention. But it is equally clear that Ireland will have been freed in vain, if the qualities of cool reason, etc., are not thereby developed. Ireland must cease to be the enemy of England the moment England has ceased to show herself the enemy of Ireland. A. C.