

The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

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Lady Aberdeen's Lecture on the Irish Literary Revival.

Impromptu.

God bless thee, Countess fair of Aberdeen!
The more we grow to know thee do we find
ad hail in thee a fitting type, a queen,
Of all that's noblest in true womankind.
By birth a lady, Nature wished to show
The meaning of the word and so designed
That in thy person all the flowers should
grow
That grace the garden of pure heart and
mind
Virtue and beauty bloom with industry
Strong blossom of so many different hues,
And evergreen domestic bliss we see,
While intellect doth light o'er all diffuse.
Alas! too soon thy presence we shall lose.
But long indeed will live thy memory.
ROSE FERGUSON.

Great credit is due to the Catholic Young Ladies' Literary Association for their enterprise in arranging the lecture of last Friday evening. The affair was an unqualified success in every way, and Lord and Lady Aberdeen have repeated their Irish experience and made conquest of a portion of the people, that, here as in Ireland, has been overlooked by most of their predecessors.

On the platform were gathered all the young ladies of the society. Shortly past eight o'clock His Excellency the Governor-General entered, accompanied by Lady Aberdeen, Lady Thompson, Sir Frank Smith, Mr. Hugh Ryan, Mr. J. J. Foy, Mr. Thos. Long, Mr. Patrick Hughes, Hon. T. W. Angho, Mr. B. B. Hughes, and Mr. Eugene O'Keefe, all of whom took seats on the platform. His Grace the Archbishop and Vicar General McCann were seated on either side of their Excellencies. His Hon. the Lieutenant-Governor occupied a box. Other boxes were taken by priests of the city.

After the first part of the musical programme had been rendered His Grace Archbishop Walsh arose to introduce the distinguished lecturer, and was received with hearty applause. His Grace explained that in complying with the formality of such occasions he had a task both pleasant and easy. The Countess of Aberdeen required no introduction to a Canadian audience. Her noble deeds of charity, and her efforts on behalf of distressed humanity had made her name a household word throughout the British Empire, and beyond its bounds. Especially did her sympathies with the exceptional sorrows and sufferings of the Irish people endear her to Catholic hearts. She had learned of the condition and the wants of the Irish people, had discovered their great capacity for the exercise of the industrial and decorative arts, and had striven to relieve the distress and to promote the industries. By her acts a great many girls had for the first time been assisted to earn their living, a circumstance that had brought joy to many cabins and warmth to many hearths. In this way Her Excellency had placed the whole Irish race under a vast debt which could never be repaid. His Grace observed that were he tempted to flattery his respect for those present and for his own office would prevent it; but in this case the unadorned truth was more agreeable than the highest flattery. He would close by expressing in the beautiful Irish tongue, the sentiment of all those present, and bid Her Excellency Oaed Mille Failthe.

As Lady Aberdeen stepped forward the vast audience arose, manifesting the most kindly feeling. Her Excellency said she had looked forward to this occasion with peculiar pleasure.

She considered herself to a degree under His Grace's protection. As to the kind things that had been said about herself she would ask it to be remembered that His Grace is an Irishman (Laughter). When some eighteen months ago she had hesitated before entering upon the work of the Council of Women His Grace had advised and encouraged her, and the Council felt that to him was due much of the success they had experienced. She wished to express thanks for that help and for the gracious and kindly message, a living message, in the person of Father Ryan, whom His Grace had sent to assure them of his approval of their design, and his belief that Catholic societies should cooperate in their work. Her thanks were also offered to the C.Y.L.L.A. for their many acts of kindness during the week.

LADY ABERDEEN'S ADDRESS.

Her Excellency said—"I make no apology for the subject which I have chosen for the address which you have done me the honour to ask me to deliver under the auspices of your society to night, and I wish, at the outset, to relieve any apprehensions as to any even distant allusions to controversial matters, whether religious or political. Happily, this is a subject round which all lovers of their country can meet, however much divided they may be in their opinions, and it is a subject which has special claims on many of us here, who claim connection either by birth or by parentage with that green isle, whose royal and magic sway over her children, even to a remote generation, only once more proves that the greatest thing in the world is love.

"But even outside that charmed circle, are there not many who in their heart of hearts feel a thrill of tenderness for those old far away times of heroic deeds chronicled for us by the wandering bards who upheld amongst those wild warrior tribes the ideals of justice, and honour, and purity, and love so well that a prepared and fruitful soil was found by the great Apostle for his divine message, which was to make Ireland the Isle of Saints, and which would enable her to win truer laurels than those to be gained in warfare, in the fields of learning, and art, and music, and architecture, and missionary labours?"

Does our tenderness for these traditions proceed from a half acknowledged belief that these tales are but traditions, surrounded with merely the halo of charm with which we associate the fairy tales of the nursery?

"If that be indeed the attitude of any here towards this lore of the early centuries of Ireland's history and fame, they lose much, for the spirit which is revealed in these tales of romance and chivalry and heroism largely moulded the character of the people, not only then, but for future times, the estimation in which music, and literature, and art were held, and the justice and mercy which distinguished the Brehon laws of those old pagans should be a source of veritable pride to all who can boast of Celtic blood, and the instinct for constitutional government ruling through the will of the people expressed at these tribal and national gatherings, which were so central a feature in the life of the times is one which may well claim the attention and admiration of the

present generation, who are sometimes tempted to believe that to them belongs the discovery of political freedom.

There could be little scope for tyranny where it was a deep seated custom that no action could be taken by family, or tribe, or people without an assembly. If the lord wanted any special work done by his tenants he called a *Maol at Fiatha*, or "meeting of the tenants," to lay it before them. If the head of a tribe wished his followers to join in some movement he called a *Maol at Tama*, or "meeting of the freeholders" of the tribe to take counsel with them, if a yet greater chief—the "chief of kindred," or *Aire Fine* wished to have the support of the householders of his sept for measures of defence, for the consideration of certain acts of the King or decisions of the court, he would summon an important assembly called the *Mathaugh*. Again there was the *Dal*, or assembly of all the *Aires* or heads of kindred, without whose consent no taxation could be carried out, and finally there was the great *Acnadh*, or fair, held every three years at Tara, or Teltown, in Meath, at Carman, in Wexford, at Alleach, or Armagh, in Ulster, summoned, and presided over by Ard Righ, or High King of all Ireland. There the High King and Lesser King, the nobles, judges, poets, and scholars met to discuss national affairs.

Lady Aberdeen quoted from Mrs. Bryant's volume on Celtic Ireland a description of one of these assemblies, and gave an interesting account of the status of these bards, and the qualifications necessary in order to attain a high rank among them. After referring briefly to the love of literature which prevailed in the land, and the position which was accorded women in the councils of the nation, she continued:—

"But the second proof of the high character of those Breton laws, in which so many resemblances to the common law of England have been found, lies in the fact that St. Patrick when called upon to revise them in view of the conversion of Ireland to Christianity found but comparatively little to alter or to add. Did he and his two Episcopal assistants seek to supersede them by the Roman law? No; we are told that they declared that the ancient Irish code contained the judgments of true nature, which the Holy Spirit had spoken through the mouths of the

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