

THEIR THIRD TRIAL.

The Ursulines Open a Convent and Academy in Maine.

The dedication of a new Ursuline convent at Waterville, Me., the other day, served to recall memories of the first foundation made by that sisterhood here in New England, and of the disgraceful events which compelled the good nuns to abandon the convent they formerly occupied on Mount Benedict, over in the Charlestown district.

The coming of the Ursulines to New England was principally due to Rev. John Thayer, who succeeded Pere Rousselet in the charge of Boston's first Catholic church, and who subsequently, while laboring in the Kentucky missions, conceived the idea of establishing in his native city, Boston, a conventual school for the education of Catholic girls. With the approbation of Bishop Cheverus he went abroad to solicit funds for this purpose, and had collected nearly \$10,000, when a fatal illness seized him at Limerick, Ireland, in which city he had taken up his abode. Prior to his death, though, he had secured two candidates for his projected sisterhood, Misses Mary and Catharine Ryan, sisters, who left Ireland, May 4, 1817, and proceeded to Three Rivers, P. Q., where they made their novitiate at the Ursuline convent that had been previously established there. Their novitiate ended, they came to Boston, where they were warmly welcomed by Bishop Cheverus, who assigned them a residence near the old cathedral. The two pioneer nuns were joined in 1818 by their youngest sister and by a cousin, Miss Catherine Molineux, and shortly afterwards two more recruits came to them in Misses Elizabeth Harrison and Catherine Wiseman, both women of American birth. The sisters remained in the convent Dr. Cheverus assigned them up to 1826, but so narrow and confined were their quarters that the health of all suffered more or less, and before 1825 three of their number, the two foundresses and their cousin, had died. The superior, Mother Mary Joseph, who was the last of this trio to pass to her reward, appealed from her death bed to the Quebec Ursulines for assistance, and in answer to her appeal that community sent to Boston Mother Mary Edmond, whose name in the world had been

MISS URSULA MOPPAT. After Bishop Fenwick had succeeded to the administration of the Boston diocese, one of his first acts was to procure for the Ursuline a more commodious and healthy residence than the one they occupied. His choice of a locality fell upon Mount Benedict, and there a new convent and academy were forthwith erected, the Sisters taking possession of the property July 17, 1826. That the new convent was a vast improvement upon the old one may be judged from this description of its grounds: "The whole of this interesting spot is laid out with an eye to the object to which it is appropriated. A large garden, tastefully arranged, occupies the rear of the building, while extensive gravel walks, shaded with forest trees, consisting of the elm, the horse chestnut and the sycamore, afford a large and spacious playground in front. The parts adjacent to the canal are appropriated to meadow, or are culinary purposes. The south side, which is of steep descent, is distributed into a number of artificial falls, where a vineyard of the choicest grapes is planted on *espallier*, affording, at the same time, most delightful walks."

In this peaceful abode the good Ursulines dwelt for eight years happy and contented, their whole energies being devoted to their religious duties and the education of the young girls who were the pupils of their academy, and for whose tuition in, as the prospectus of their academy ran, "plain and ornamental writing, composition, both in prose and poetry, ancient, modern and natural history, chronology, mythology, the use of the globes, astronomy, rhetoric, logic, natural and moral philosophy, chemistry, arithmetic, geometry and botany; every kind of useful and ornamental needle-work, jannaping."

DRAWING, IN ALL ITS VARIETIES; painting in oil colors, also on velvet, satin and wood, and the beautiful style of mezzo-tint and pen and ink painting, with music, cookery, etc., etc." they exacted from each pupil the modest sum of \$20 a term.

About the year 1831 an "escaped" nun, who was none other than a pupil who, because of her refractory conduct, the Sisters had refused to allow to remain at the academy, began telling yarns much similar to those related of late years by women like Edith O'Gorman and Margaret Shepherd. Then, as now, there was a class in Boston not only willing, but eager, to listen to and believe every falsehood that could be invented about nunneries, and the escape one night from the convent, and the recapture by the Sisters in the grounds, of one of the community who had been stricken with insanity, was seized upon by these individuals and distorted into a story of hideous colors. The prototypes of such papers as the *Traveler* took up this story and made the most outrageous accusations against the nuns and the Catholic Church, and Dr. Lyman Beecher played the part which the Miners, the Moxons, the Giffords and the rest of that ilk are enacting here in Boston to-day. The upshot of this Know-nothing agitation was the attack on the convent that was made by a frenzied mob on the night of Aug. 11, 1834, and the result of which was the destruction of the nunnery by fire, after the premises had been sacked by the infuriated rioters.

Only a few years ago a writer in the *New York Times*, who visited the site of the ruined convent, passed this ver-

dict on the mob who destroyed it: "It is sorrowful to realize that this convent riot, unlike the negro riots of 1863, was not the work of illiterate and brutal aliens (?), but of native born Americans, sons by long descent of New England, and heirs of her love of law and order. Bussell, the ring-leader, was

A NEW HAMPSHIRE MAN. He it was who, a day or two before the riot, brutally beat the Irish gardener of the convent for having ordered trespassing women off the convent grounds. In the evidence it was told that Bussell in thrashing the gardener said: "This is the way we do things in this country, evidently thinking this country belonged to his lawless kind, and not to the law-abiding Irishman. The remark of Bussell brought down the house when it was repeated in court. The feeling of the whole vulgar populace was against the convent. Ignorant men and women believed the cock-and-bull stories then current of babies' skulls found on the premises, of refractory nuns incarcerated in dungeons and of the proselytizing influences brought to bear on Protestant pupils." The same writer charges the selectmen and police with having purposely kept aloof from the mob, in order that the convent might be destroyed, which fact is simply the truth; and he calls the sacking of nunnery "a blot of crime and sacrilege upon New England's escutcheon." There are men here in Boston to-day, ministers of the gospel (heaven save the mark!) and demagogical politicians, whose names will readily suggest themselves to the reader, who are doing all in their power to stir up anew the riotous spirit that sixty years ago animated Bussell and his confederates, and led to placing this "blot of crime and sacrilege upon New England's escutcheon," and who have the hardihood to appeal to Massachusetts voters to sustain them in their infamous work! Such individuals would do well to reflect upon the fate that befell their prototypes of 1831. One of the chief actors in the Mount Benedict affair cut his throat a few years after his participation in that crime; others died tragic and shameful deaths, more ended their days in prison, and not one engaged in the shameful affair escaped punishment in some form or other, though a corrupt jury

ACQUITTED THEM IN COURT. The Sisters, after vain efforts to restore their ruined home, sought refuge with the Ursulines of Quebec, principally, though some of them were sent to other convents of their order, and one of them, Sister St. Henry, a niece of the two foundresses, was so overcome with fright that she fell ill and died, a few months after the destruction of the convent, at Roxbury, whither she was taken after the sacking of the nunnery. From 1834 up to within a few years ago the Ursulines made no attempt to re-establish themselves here in New England, where they had been so outrageously treated. A couple of years ago the order opened a house down in Olneyville, R. I., and took charge of St. Mary's schools there, besides conducting a conventual academy. They have since abandoned that field, though, their places being filled by the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame; so that, unless the writer is mistaken, the Waterville convent which Bishop Healy dedicated the other day is their only establishment in this section of the country.

The Ursulines, however, are one of the oldest sisterhoods in America, and as early as 1639 they opened their first convent at Quebec, the foundation of that institution being Marie Guyard-Martin, or Mother Mary of the Incarnation, as she was called in religion. The Three Rivers nunnery, wherein the foundresses of the Boston house made their novitiate, sprang from this Quebec convent in 1697. The first Ursuline institution in the United States dates back to 1727, when Mother Maria Tranchepain, with ten companions, arrived from France at New Orleans. These were the nuns whose successors prayed for victory for the American arms, when

OLD HICKORY FACED PAKENHAM and his British soldiers, and who turned their schoolrooms into an hospital and for three months afterwards tenderly cared for the sick and wounded defenders of the Crescent City. New York secured three Irish Ursulines from Black Rock, county Cork, in 1812, but there coming no postulants for admission to the order, a condition of their being allowed to remain in this country, the three Sisters reluctantly returned to Ireland three years afterwards, and it was not until 1855 that New York obtained another Ursuline community. The Sisters who then came to Gotham were sent from St. Louis, where an Ursuline convent was opened in 1847 by some Hungarian nuns from Oedenburg.

In 1847 the New Orleans nunnery established an offshoot at Galveston, and five years after another house was opened at San Antonio. The well-known Ursuline establishment at St. Martin's, Cincinnati diocese, where the late Archbishop Purcell spent so many happy days, and where he died, was founded in 1845, the first Sisters coming from France. Bishop Rappe, who was a chaplain in an Ursuline convent in France before he came to this country and became Bishop of Cleveland, brought the Ursulines to his episcopal city in 1849, and as early as 1834 the order was established at Charleston, though the convent there was abandoned in 1844, and remained closed until 1853, when, at the urgent solicitation of the lamented Bishop England, the Sisters returned to the diocese and resumed their work there.

The Boston house, as before stated, opened in 1818, and from these convents have sprung all the others the

Ursulines now have in this country.—Boston Republic.

DEPOPULATED.

That Word Describes the Actual Condition of Ireland.

The following is portion of a discourse recently delivered in Clones, in the county Monaghan, by the learned Jesuit, Rev. T. A. Findlay. His remarks are based, as will be seen, on the actual figures of the census recently taken in Ireland:

Father Findlay having alluded to the period which elapsed after the Church of Ireland had emerged from her long struggle with the civil powers, said the day of rest has come, and there is peace round about us; but it is a destructive, a wasting peace, a destroying peace, and the elements of destruction within it, be they where they may, are hardly less noxious than open and boisterous elements of proclaimed war. During the last ten years 9 per cent. of the population had left their shores. The life of a nation is as least as precious as the life of a man. And from the altar of God it was not out of place to protest against individual injustices and individual iniquities which destroy and menace the life of the individual. Neither should it be out of place in such a time and under such circumstances to make some protest against public iniquities, wherever they are and whatever they may be, which menace the life of an entire nation. In these figures there is a religious, a distinctly religious, aspect which there is no ignoring. While the population at large has declined 9 per cent. the Catholics of Ireland have declined over 10 per cent.—that is to say, of every ten Catholics or less than ten Catholics in Ireland one has disappeared from the country during the last decade of years. It will be an easy arithmetical calculation for you to make to ask yourselves how long this process must go on until there is not left a single Catholic within the borders of this Catholic land; and if, when you make this calculation, you do not find excuses for me introducing this question here, I shall hold myself inexorable.

This appalling diminution of our numbers, this wholesale decimation—for it is decimation, and more than decimation—of the Catholic Church of Ireland within the ten years, has fallen lightly, is a great deal easier as affecting the religious communities of other creeds which share our right of self-determination.

THE PROTESTANT BODY OF IRELAND during these ten years has lost 6 per cent., the Presbyterian body has lost 5 per cent., the Methodist body has increased some 10 or 13 per cent., but the Catholic body has lost 10 per cent.,—has been decimated, literally decimated. Out of every ten Catholics one has disappeared from the population. The population of the county Monaghan has declined 16 per cent. It is the largest record, the most appalling falling off in numbers, according to the record of the commissioners, or any part of the country. It is not what is called one of the impoverished districts of the country. It is not, in current phrase, a congested district—that is to say, a waste spot where men are huddled together to starve in order that sheep and cattle may have roomy pastures. That phrase will not describe this county; and, nevertheless, with all its assumed prosperity, forming, as it does, a portion of what is called the model province of the nation, from which all the others are to learn the secret of temporal prosperity and temporal success, this county shows a diminution of 16 per cent. as compared with 9 per cent. on behalf of the rest of the nation. And if the general principle holds good that diminution of the Catholic population is greatly larger than the general diminution of any given locality, taking sixteen as the diminution of the county, what I ask you, will be the loss of the Catholic body of Monaghan during the last ten years? Will 17 per cent. will one of every five Catholics in Monaghan, be too much to set down as lost to the Church in that county? It certainly will not. And if you have lost one in every five Catholics in Monaghan in the last ten years, it will not be a very difficult arithmetical calculation to determine how long it will take to clear the country of all its Catholics. Four decades more of this rate of decrease, at a date at which many of those listening to me will be living and vigorous men, there will not be left a single Catholic in this county of Monaghan unless Providence, or the wisdom of men, stimulated, perhaps, by these disasters, comes to the rescue of the Church in some shape or other.

Meanwhile we are building churches, and we are setting up the

INSTRUCTIONS OF CHARITY and education which religion suggests to us. And, perhaps, you will ask the question wherefore we do so. What is the meaning of an effort of this kind? And you will notice that, perhaps, of all the structures thus raised at the bidding of religion many of them contrast strongly and strangely with the homes of those whose sacrifices they have been set up. This contrast has been often pointed out, and it has been very sneeringly remarked at times that in this country workhouses and the institutions of religion seem to be the only flourishing establishments. Asseverations put it, it is only the homes of pauperism and piety which attain to magnificence in Ireland.

The practical man, as he is called, was, doubtless, abundantly represented among the ancient Jews. The people had to rebuild the city; they had to reconstitute the civil institutions; they had to reorganize the entire nation before they could fitly take their place

among the provinces of the empire. Could not the temple wait? They thought first of the kingdom of God before thinking of the kingdom of Israel. They set up the walls of their temple, and waited for a later opportunity to reconstruct the walls of their city. And it is a policy of this kind, holy in its way, and justified by traditions and by manifestations of God's supreme will in the matter, that the people of Ireland seem in their reorganization of religion to have followed. They emerged from a captivity much longer, and, perhaps, much more severe, than that which the Jews underwent by the water of Babylon. They came forth with sadly shattered fortunes, and loaded with a cruel burden of disabilities. They, too, had a nation to reconstitute; they had civil institutions of various kinds to reconstruct and to reattain; they had to win for themselves a tolerable place in their own land; they had to fight their way to places of power and respectability which were possessed at the time by opponents whom a long ascendancy had taught to regard wealth, rank and power as their exclusive possession in their country. Would not the practical man have said that under these circumstances

THE FIRST DUTY OF THE PEOPLE was to attend to their own material needs, and try to establish their own material prosperity in the country, and later on to think of their duties to religion, that religion could wait, that the Church could wait a little for gorgeous cathedrals and gorgeous parish churches.

The people of Ireland did not understand the matter thus. This practical conception of duty, as it is sometimes called by men to whom the world is the only practical—this conception of duty did not commend itself to the people of Ireland. Like the countrymen of Ezra when they returned to Babylon, they set themselves first to reconstitute the church, and then they would return later to the shattered condition of their material fortunes. This has been the rule, the principle and practice which they followed. Notably has this been the case in this province of Ulster, where the Catholic instinct always strongly asserts itself, and decisively. The great cathedrals of Armagh, of Derry, of Monaghan, have risen in a magnificence which dwarfs the structures of the later constitutional establishments which stand by their side and which far transcend the fallen shrines that they have replaced. The parish churches, the rural parishes and the smaller towns have followed the example of the great ecclesiastical centres. It is not always those to whom religion is made gratuitous and find their churches ready built, who are most abundant in religious faith and sterling religious devotion. It is always beneath the shadows of ancient cathedrals, where the dimness of time is stealing over lofty structures in undisturbed repose, that faith grows dull and torpor creeps over religious devotion. In religion, as in other things, we are stimulated to appreciate that which costs us a good deal to maintain or create. Let us hope, too, that by some means, to be provided by God's providence, to be wrought out by the wisdom of man, the hand of death may be averted from the life of the people, and that they may be preserved here in the land which God has given to your fathers, and that your faith and loyalty may be perpetuated in a nation which shall be as the sand that is by the shore of the sea.

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