

OUR IRISH LETTER.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE CATHOLIC REGISTER.

DUBLIN, Oct. 2. Once only had I the privilege of meeting Fr. Ring whose name is so well known in connection with the Irish pilgrimages to Rome and Lourdes. It was some five or six years ago at the annual luncheon given by the Bishops at the Rectory, Reformatory to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of Dublin. There seem to be two branches of the Oblates of Mary, the priests who give missions, conduct confraternities and have a House of Retreat attached to their beautiful churches, and monks, who do not take holy orders, but call themselves Christian Brothers and who are extraordinarily successful in the management of reformatories. Before they took their vows a feature and now is one of the most successful institutions of its kind in the British Isles. It is situated in the heart of stern lonely mountains, hills that give one an impression of barrenness, so desolate are they and so far from the landmarks to break the monotony of their bare slopes. The drive there from Dublin via Rathfarnham and Whitechurch is perfectly delightful. Once you clear the suburbs, you find yourself in a charmingly rural country, a few low hills stand out against the mountains and as your steed ambles lazily up the heights, if you have an eye for scenic effect you keep constantly looking behind at the magnificent panorama of city and bay which unfolds itself at every bend of the road. In less than two miles lie across a moor, a lonely desolate upland, where the car track looks strangely white and level between the tufts of purple heather.

The Brothers generally issued three or four hundred invitations for their annual fete. One of the Dublin mountains reminded one of Panchestown in the good old times. In the brilliance of a July afternoon the wide gravelled square with its boundaries of stern gray stone released a little its austere and stately holiday air. It is such a lonely nook and silence is so pre-eminently the keynote of these cold stone walls circled by the overhanging hills, that there is nothing grim about its walls and the fashionable crowd looks so much out of place there as a duto in a hermit's cell. However the severity is only on the exterior. The rooms, whether in the convent or workshops, are bright and airy. The Brothers, who are constant refined tastes, they make each department as attractive as possible, and one comes away with the impression that despite its seclusion, and the rigid enforcement of discipline which the boys' antecedents render imperative, life there is very cheerful.

The Dublin City Fathers are famous for their capacity for consuming luncheons—when they can enjoy them at somebody else's expense—and it may be said that the ladies are not at all bashful in doing justice to their full share of good things. Never will I forget my experience at Glencore. We arrived about 1 p. m. to find the whole place swarming with ladies in complete black and all sorts of hats. Sauntering through the yard my attention was attracted by a group of ladies in a room on the first story. The windows were thrown open, and as I stood looking on, a constant crowd of fair dames entered and another another another refreshment buffet, devouring cakes, claret-cup, fruit, everything they could lay hands on, they ate as if they were fasting at least from that day before yesterday. The ladies were in the garden and a stroll through the garden for the shadowless glare of the crowded platz was delightful. A magnificent doorman was laid in a long hall where the boys play in wet weather. Three rows of narrow tables were very prettily arranged. At the head of the hall white on a table at a special table Fr. Ring, O.M.I., the Rev. Manager of Glencore, entertained the Lord Mayor and other prominent men. When the doors were opened the rush for seats carried us off our feet. At last had taken in the whole room, and made their minds what dainties to attack first. Before me was a dish of fruit crowned with a cluster of purple grapes; while I was undulating my napkin, a lady sitting a couple of yards higher up had secured them. I have a dim recollection of some one's attempting to say grace, but it was drowned in the clatter of knives and forks. The boys' band selection of Irish music; an occasional chord made itself audible. I have sometimes seen people dine, but never before or since did I see such an onslaught on food. I am told the Manager of the House suggests as a lunch for the ladies. For one I was busy helping the ladies at our table to roast duck, while a clergyman sitting opposite carved a glazed tongue. An American lady described St. Francis de Sales as a "pious lion" and as a "wonder" of the distinguished looking priest serving his neighbours with such unassuming courtesy, it seemed to me that the term might be most aptly applied to him. Although the blonde waves of her hair fell about her neck, and her eyes were intensely intellectual, she was dressed with all her face retained the freshness of youth, and benignly was its dominant expression. He seemed so unobtainable regardless of his own comfort, and his own health, that I felt that the air of a man to whom it was an every day incident, that it flattered one's self respect to have him for a vis-a-vis. I did not know at the time that he was Fr. Ring, O.M.I., but his personal appearance and the way in which he served the guests cleared out of the hall directly grace was said, I lingered with two or three others at our table to hear the after-dinner speeches. There was such a calm dignity about him, that I felt that to leave the table would be to lose the table while he remained seated. The Rev. Manager, Father Ring, read the annual report of the

good work accomplished at the Refractory, the state of its finances, etc. He reported and responded to Father Ring paid undivided attention to every word spoken, he applauded even the prospect of the pompous speeches most graciously, and drank every word standing. For me after Father Ring's local Irish speech, I found the city orator hopelessly rapid. I never would have sat them out if it were not that my self-restraint was more than repaid by being able to pay little attentions to Father Ring's speech as he went on. He filled with soda water, lemonade, or any other aerated water available. He used a wine glass, also even the most amiable of teetotalers could not have honoured all the toasts. What a picture of affable dignity as he sat in his black cloth and shawl ably setting off the scene posed of a noble head, his sparkling glass up raised in one hand as he bowed slightly towards the dais before drinking its contents.

Even afternoon cannot prose for ever, and when he began to read the report of the year listening to the band, some one suggested that you should go and have a cup of tea. Curiosity to see if the guests could possibly eat any more brought me to the tea room. We found it crowded with ladies as well as men, discussing cakes and biscuits as if they had touched nothing since morning. The men seemed quite content with one square meal. How tired the Brothers must have been! How thankful, as you watched the last card, that they had not been between them and Society! After such an experience they must heartily endorse St. Paul's conclusion that "It is better for a man not to marry."

The Irish Agricultural Organization Society held its opening congress in Dublin on September 29th. The founder, Mr. Horace Plunkett, presided, and amongst those who took an active part in the proceedings were the Earl of Mayo, Lord Mountaligon, Sir James Talbot Power, Mr. Plunkett, Mr. Wm. Field, M.P., and a whole host of minor nobodies. The programme of the organization is immense. Some of the resolutions passed unanimously would be more bottling a scene in the United Kingdom. It is a grave and revered Seignours. It is a new thing in Ireland to see landlords and tenants sitting down together to discuss agricultural industries after the fashion of people who have a mutual interest in them. Mr. Plunkett is to be congratulated on having effected so happy a rapprochement. The Society aims at so many practical reforms, reforms absolutely necessary to the prosperous development of agriculture in this country, that it is difficult to see its usefulness marred by some preposterous fads. Mr. Plunkett has a pet aversion. It is the "immense incubus of unnecessary middle profits"—in other words the entire business and trading system between the farmer and the manufacturer who supplies him with manure or the one who, and the individuals who consume his butter and eggs on the other. He calmly suggests to "eliminate" all shopkeepers, commission agents, and all sorts of agents, in fact to make a clean sweep of the commercial population. He does not condescend to suggest where they are to go, or how they are to earn a living. He contents himself with remarking that if he were to do his own programme, we have done all in our power to enable those whose business is disturbed to make the necessary arrangements to meet the altered circumstances. How consoling to the people of this country, that in the programme, we have done all in our power to enable those whose business is disturbed to make the necessary arrangements to meet the altered circumstances. How consoling to the people of this country, that in the programme, we have done all in our power to enable those whose business is disturbed to make the necessary arrangements to meet the altered circumstances.

Some years ago I know a farm produce commission agent who had a splendid connection with the retail trade in Dublin. He got on so well that he set to work to start a creamery company, and succeeded in getting some thousands of pounds in the country that is doing so well in the creamery business. He had in mind to start a creamery company, and succeeded in getting some thousands of pounds in the country that is doing so well in the creamery business. He had in mind to start a creamery company, and succeeded in getting some thousands of pounds in the country that is doing so well in the creamery business. He had in mind to start a creamery company, and succeeded in getting some thousands of pounds in the country that is doing so well in the creamery business.

In the course of his speech he entered fully into the work of the Society, giving a very lucid exposition of how much could be accomplished if those who were inimically in promoting non-cooperation measures. "In this meeting," he said, "we have the germs of the national body, which, if our scheme works out, to take over the work of the Organization Society, and to enter upon the double task of bringing out the resources of self-help and formulating and making effective the farmer's demand for State aid. The conference will be a practical demonstration of the suggestion of the Board of Agriculture for Ireland, the transport of live stock, light railways, trade federation, the bacon industry, agricultural technical schools, creameries, agricultural finance, etc. The speakers were of the greatest magnitude, perhaps of too transcendental capacity—who proved theoretically to their own satisfaction—that the I.A.O.S. shall become a power in

the land which shall speed our great national industry upon the path of progress and prosperity." A prophecy which I can count on would be literally fulfilled, if only its promoters could be their way to conform its program with common sense.

While the conference included many well known names, it cannot be said to have represented the genuine agricultural interests of Ireland. It consisted mainly of delegates from co-operative societies, with a very large sprinkling of what one might call "progressive" agriculturists, many of whom were in the morning papers as amongst those present at a distinguished gathering, and who are always ready to promote any undertaking, so far as such making good, provided it starts under sufficiently "progressive" patronage. We are over-crowded with this class in Ireland, and when they get mixed up with an association they give a tone of unreality to its proceedings, which is apt to alienate the sympathy of the English agriculturists. The presence of a few practical agriculturists at the opening congress alone saved it from ranting as a purely ethical debate.

It is very much to be desired that the National Party would co-operate with the English agriculturists' efforts to spread the light through the farming classes. If they fall in with his suggestion to form a recess committee to deal with non-contentious matters there can be no doubt that such a committee, bringing the tenant into touch with the landlord, would exercise a wholesome influence on public opinion. It is about time that we realized how very much the practical solution of the Irish question lies in the hands of Irishmen at home.

There are ninety-one societies co-operative societies, with a membership of 8,200, affiliated to the I.A.O.S. The actual business turnover of these societies last year amounted to £240,000, this year is estimated to have increased to £350,000, but I cannot find that there were any profit and loss sheets before the meeting, so that one cannot even guess the net results. Count Moore mentioned that last year they disposed of £68,000 worth of butter for which they secured the very best price that could be got for Irish produce. He does not explain if "the best price" that could be got" was a money-making price. This is just the point where commercial philanthropy generally fails. Society and country do not go well together in harness. The one may be constantly bolstered up by a subscription list; the other to be genuine must not only pay its own way, but show a surplus. It is all very well and good for the people who are engaged in it, but if the up-to-date separator does not make as much money as our grandmothers' churn—one pays dearly for being modern. I have yet to hear of the co-operative creamery that pays a big dividend.

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The I.A.O.S. carry the principle of stamping out "middle profits" very effectively into their business transactions. Last spring a gentleman was asked to put up with the price of the various items for an agent. Their terms were so generous that it would take an enterprising traveller all his time to earn his transfer, and moreover he should guarantee all jobs. "Satisfaction must be given," said the chairman, and the commission agents have evidently been selected to head the list of holocausts.

The Cashel Board of Guardians is reported to have under consideration a proposal from M. de M. Tussard for the purchase of the cottage in which the "wicked lunatic" took place. The future of a crowd of morbid Cockney night owls paying their shilling to gaze on this latest sample of Irish barbarism, does not flatter one's national pride. Surely the Cashel Guardians might have called on some other method of lightening the rates than to traffic in such horrors. I have heard from men who were present at the investigation of this horrible case, and who had ample opportunity of sitting details which never came before the public, that the unfortunate woman's sister-in-law, who had no children, now if her brutal husband had murdered her with a knife, a revolver or any other instrument that Englishmen pull off their faces with his crime would, so to speak, have been his, and when he sought to screen his brutality behind a bluff in the faeries, and induced a crowd of ignorant peasants to aid and abet him in burning a witch, he succeeded in magnifying a pitiful domestic tragedy into a national disaster. The English Press seized the opportunity to proclaim to the world that the whole Celtic race remained to this day steeped to the lips in superstition. We have had to endure such bitter taunts over this savage torturing to death of an English woman that it is inconceivable how any representative body of Irishmen could ever entertain the idea of helping to perpetuate the memory of it by allowing the unallowable misc on scene to be added to the Tussard Chamber of Horrors. What will they do with the purchase money? Surely no man with a spark of Christian patriotism could allow himself to assent to such a sordid transaction.

On Friday, Sept. 27th, the remains of Lieutenant Wilfrid P. Bethell were laid to rest in Glasnovin Cemetery. The young officer whose promising career death terminated so early, was a nephew of the late Cardinal Manning. He came of an old, aristocratic Catholic family in Surrey and was very popular with both officers and men of the Oxfordshire Regiment to which he was attached. When he took up command of a portion of his regiment at the Pigeon House Fort, Dublin, Lieutenant Bethell appeared to be in perfect health, but they was seized with an attack of scarlet fever to which he succumbed in little more than a week. His funeral was most impressive. All the regiments at present stationed in Dublin were unanimously represented. He was buried with full military honours. The whole garrison united to pay a last tribute of respect to this popular young officer. On arriving at the Cemetery the coffin was carried from the gun carriage to the grave, by the sergeants of the Oxford regiment, the second lieutenant acting as pall bearers. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bethell were chief mourners. Deep and sincere sympathy is felt for them in their sad bereavement. The following elegiac couplet attended the funeral: Very Rev. Canon O'Haulon, Chaplain to the forces; Rev. Canon Conlan, Rev. Father Coffey and Rev. Father Parcell, acting Chaplain; Rev. Father H. F. Dwyer, S.J., University College; Rev. G. J. Dunne, Father Deering, O.M.I., Rev. Father Hoey and Rev. Father Brady, Hamilton, Canada.

CHARLES DALTON.

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