

A TALK WITH MRS. SADLIER.

A CHAT WITH THE AGED AU THORESS.

HOW SHE CAME TO WRITE HER STORIES THAT HAVE DONE SO MUCH TO PRESERVE THE FAITH—HER RECOLLECTIONS OF THOMAS D'ARCY M'GEE, THAT "NOBLE, WARM HEARTED MAN."

A friend of mine was wont to say "that one of the most vivid memories of a busy life was as a boy, lying on the green sward that fringed a little Irish river, reading the 'Fate of Father Sheehy.' His story runs that he could hardly see the print for tears; and so great was his emotion that he thought his little heart would break. Since those days he has wandered far, and read much, but the effect of the heroic life of a priest in the penal times, sealing faith with his life, still continues the most vivid of book impressions. In hearing such a tale, if the listener is as the writer, given to the curious, he will naturally ask, Who wrote the book? To this my friend would reply, with an ominous head-shake, and the sad intelligence that the author had long since joined the majority; to use his own phrase, "had donned the white robe."

This was convincing. Imagine my surprise, a few months ago at a dinner-party in Montreal, to be told that my friend was deceived, and consequently deceiving others; that the author, hale and hearty, still lived, as full of love for Erin, as in the old days when, in burning words and hearty patriotism she told the "Fate of Father Sheehy." "Would I like to see her?" said one of the company, who evidently had a notion that my smile of surprise was one of scepticism. Here I confess to a weakness. A recent critic has noticed it, and, of course, has demanded that I say mea culpa, etc. I say it here. That weakness is to see those who have made life less hard to bear. There are many ways of doing this; very many. Writing books—good books—is one of them. "Would I like to see her?" I turned the phrase up and down in my mind, and without any parley I answered "Yes, I would like to see her, if your kindness will allow you to make an arrangement to that effect." The arrangement was made. A few days later I rang the door-bell of Mrs. Sadlier's modest home. No sooner was the door opened than a genuine Irish welcome fell on my ears, and a warm hand-clasp made me at home.

My host was more than seventy, yet her skin was fresh, the tinge of the rose still lingered in her cheeks, while her gray Irish eyes lit up the face with a sweetness that rarely accompanies old age. Despite her years she is still active, activity rounded with a grace that makes you forget her age. It is only when she commences to speak of the long ago, that you realize her years. As we sat in the little dining room, what a flood of memories she evoked. She had known the most prominent Irishmen of her day. She was the dearest friend of the ill-fated D'Arcy McGee, whose poems, as a labor of love, she edited. Brownson was a "dear friend" who had kept herself and husband to the dawn, listening "to his delightful talk." Her house was Brownson's home in his flying lecturing trips to Montreal. The memory of one of the most original thinkers of America, one whose thoughts were ever high and noble, is enshrined in Mrs. Sadlier's heart.

Listening to her converse, the Brownson of the Review, strong, self-willed, indefatigable, sledge-hammering the pigmies, strewing the ground with their armament, is forgotten for the calm, scholarly kind-hearted gentleman in an easy chair, talking de omni scibile. In the course of our desultory chat I asked Mrs. Sadlier how she became a writer.

"Well, it was in this way, Doctor. I premise that you know I was born in Ireland," and the eyes flashed merrily. "My maiden name was Mary Anne Madden; my birthplace Cooteville, County Cavan, and the year, oh! its so long ago, 1820. Before leaving Ireland, in 1844, I had written a few sketches for

a London ladies' magazine. On my arrival in America I became conscious of my work. Every ship was freighted with emigrants, the best and noblest of Ireland's children. Amid the snares and temptations of their new land, would they hold fast to the faith and love of country? Distance not only lends enchantment to the view; in many cases it wipes it out. Of this I had sad knowledge. These exiles, so full of faith, piety and love for the land that first greeted their eyes, would (alas! that there was such a probability) become careless, callous, and anchor weighed, drift away from the old moorings. You must remember, those were the days of poverty for our race—Banned from Ireland, they landed penniless on these shores. The safeguards of today were then unknown. Credit to these exiles for their building. Priests were few, churches far apart, convents a luxury, while a bitter prejudice was rampant against all things Irish and Catholic. Our own people, owing to the penal laws, and little education. They felt its lack, and the giant efforts they made to build schools and colleges for their children, show how they appreciated what was, through no fault of theirs, wanting to their life. Could I not help? In 1846 I married the New York publisher, Mr. James Saddler, who was asking himself a similar question. He urged me to write.

"What was I to write? What! I had long solved that question. I was to help the priests in their work of saving souls. I would write for, as my friend McGee called them, the 'poor exiles of Erin.' In a simple, easy style, I would paint the land of their love, the gray Irish sky, with, as you have written somewhere, Doctor, 'that spirit bird, the Irish lark, dropping the songs the angels have told him, the green fields, the heath clad hills, rivers, lakes, peat-bogs, everything that responded to a touch on memory's key. Amid these scenes, I would paint that glowing Irish Faith, which like Erin's shamrocks, as sung by McCarthy,

"The more they're trod, rebound the more,
"In weaving the past, sad and lonely."

That lesson, my life work, was the preservation of the old faith, and a bit of their heart for green Erin. You cannot understand, Doctor, how the exiled Irish cling to Cusma-ma-cree. How my friend Douglas Hyde would have loved to hear that sentence from the old exile's heart. "One of most popular books, I believe, was 'Willy Burke.' That was a prize story. In those days the Pilot, will the Irish ever forget that name? what has it not done for their race?—was edited by Father Rodden. Dr. Brownson suggested to the editor, and since then my dear friend, the proprietor, Patrick Dunahoe, to offer a prize for the best Irish story. I won it with it 'Willy Burke,' and received fifty dollars. Many a book has come from my pen since 'Willy Burke,' but they have had the same idea ever in mind, faith and fatherland."

Mrs. Sadlier forgot to add that she had inculcated in the exile, love to the land of his adoption. In one of her few poems, "The Irish Soldier of our Civil War on a Battle Eve," blends Erin and Columbia:

"For fighting in Columbian's cause,
I fight for home and sire-land,
For the welcome kind, the equal laws
She gave our kin from Ireland.
Her flag is ours, her glory, too,
For does not all remind us—
That she hath been both loyal and true,
To the land we left behind us."

Mrs. Sadlier was full of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, that "noble, warm-hearted man." One of her stories is worth telling. Between the forties and sixties, it was the usual way at festive gatherings to caricature the Irishman, and put in his mouth in the shape of a song, some brutal fling at his native land. The majority of the prominent Irishmen in Montreal took this as a meaningless joke. Not so the poet. He determined to show his disapproval. It was not long until he had a chance. Asked to a meeting, the usual caricature came along. The audience laughed. Their pleasure was short. At its finish Mr. McGee jumped to his feet, and burning with indignation, lashed the committee for permitting such a vile outrage on an ancient and honorable race. He left the hall, and with him many a shame-faced countryman aroused by his manly attitude. That was the end from both ends towards the centre, then of caricature in the Dominion. I wish his example was followed in the States. The sketches she

quoted in vindication of the poet's love for "his Erin afar o'er the sea," are as applicable to herself:

"Where'er I turned, some emblem still
Roused consciousness upon my track;
Some hill was like an Irish hill.
Some wild-bird's whistle call'd me back."

And again:

"O Pilgrim, if you bring me from the far-off
lands a sign,
Let it be some token still of the Green Old
Land once mine;
A shell from the shores of Ireland would be
dearer far to me
Than all the wines of the Rhineland, or the
art of Italy."

Dinner was done. I rose and with many a cheery word of good-by to the gracious-hearted and noble-souled Irishwoman, who was one of our first pioneers in Catholic American literature, and whose faith was at the bottom of her every written word.

My last sight of her was from a Montreal platform, while reading one of my Adirondack sketches. The sweet, motherly face was nodding approval. A few hours after I was hurrying to my hermitage, in the bleak but loving Adirondacks.

WALTER LECKY,
In the Catholic News.

A NEW CONVENT

AT OUTREMONT—A HANDSOME STRUCTURE TO BE ERECTED.

The Ladies of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary (Hochelaga Convent) have decided to shortly abandon their present quarters at Hochelaga, and to build handsome quarters on their new property at Outremont, where they have acquired a very large farm for the purpose. The building, it is said, will do honor to the locality and will be six stories in height and fitted with all the latest improvements. The building will cost about \$150,000, and will be built of Canadian stone with fire proof divisions.

DEATH OF AN URSULINE.

Died at the Ursuline Academy, Cleveland, April 16, Sr. M. Benedict (Elizabeth Bowan.) The immediate cause of death was paralysis. Deceased was born in Ireland, came to Cleveland with her parents when young and entered the convent at the age of nineteen. She spent thirty years of her life in serving the Lord in the religious life.

The Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated in the convent chapel on Thursday, 8 o'clock. After Mass the remains were taken to Villa Angela, Nottingham, O., and entombed in the Ursuline burial vault.

"AMERICA."

"Walter Lecky, a sparkling, comparatively new Catholic literary luminary says:

A letter from Rome informs me of the arrival of that "amorphous, commonplace, grammarless, idealless twaddle," "America," written by the Rev. Samuel F. Smith. The colossal egotism of this divine is seen in this sentence. He (the Rev. Smith) "trusts" that his unspeakably bad production, "America," "might inspire in the oppressed people of Europe a saving patriotism and a love of liberty." It is safe to say that "America" will remain untranslated, and hence its liberty-inspiring ideas be pigeon-holed in the Vatican."—Exchange.

SARSFIELD OFFICERS.

Sarsfield Court, No. 133, C.O.F., at a recent meeting elected the following officers for the ensuing term: Chas. Burns, chief ranger; R. J. Brogan, vice-chief ranger; A. E. O'Neale, recording secretary; P. T. Brennan, financial secretary; pro tem; M. Kasman, treasurer; T. Cougher, B. Feeney, and F. M. Feron, trustees; J. A. McDonald, medical examiner; B. Feeney, alternate; J. Callen, marshal; J. Guertin, delegate.

BLESSED THE SEEDS.

On Thursday morning at the Cathedral, His Grace Archbishop Fabre officiated at the blessing of the seeds, which always is a feature of St. Mark's Day. The ceremonies were interesting and concluded with the celebration of Mass.

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—MONTREAL—

City and District Savings Bank.

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Shareholders of this Bank will be held at its office, St. James street, on

TUESDAY, the 7th MAY NEXT, at ONE o'clock p.m.

for the reception of the annual report and statements and the election of directors.

By order of the Board,
H. Y. BARBEAU, Manager.
Montreal, 27th March, 1895. 88-4

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