

## THE EXCISEMAN.

Written for the Register.

Humorous writers and travellers of whatever sort who talk of Ireland have perennial comfort in the exist-ence of the mountain still and the cautious distribution of its product. A drop of illicit "poten" has come to be one of the "sights" of the country which tourists always count upon. The boys of the mountain regions, now grown into old men, love to tell of their youthful watching for the "gauger" and the futile efforts of that person, whose best efforts were nullified by the watchfulness of the boy.

It is not alone in Ireland that the still is found. In England and Scotland the hills are still utilized to some extent. Georgia and Kentucky "moonshines" are well known products, and even in Canada, and in our own province is a "mountain dew," the makers of which are a thorn in the side of the authorities. The peaceful inland revenue officer is anything but a welcome person in certain parts of the country, places where it has as yet been impossible to suppress the trade. In the mountainous regions of the north, with a fresh running stream by every hillside, the traffic is continuous and next to impossible to eradicate, all the more so as the people are in great part sympathizers with the still men. An instance will serve to illustrate this.

Not long ago a mysterious looking man made his appearance at the office of one of the chief officials of the department. His movements were stealthy, as if fearful of some dire catastrophe overtaking him. Once behind the closed door a sense of relief seemed to pervade his whole being, and in a few minutes he unfolded his information to the secretive man of the law. The result of the interview was that two excisemen, lovers of peace and quiet living, were despatched to a part of the country to which they were both complete strangers. Their instructions were to ascertain whether certain persons, living in a certain concession, near certain cross-roads, and up a certain stream, were carrying on contraband traffic. As a stranger's presence in that section would be quickly reported, the search was at once made, and the distiller's crude appliances were soon on the way to the station. As the train was long since gone, however, there was nothing to do but to seek shelter and keep watch over their find. The proximity of the still may have had something to do with it, or perhaps the officers were tired. From whatever cause they were both asleep before many hours. In the meantime the neighborhood had been aroused and a body of men came down upon the retreat armed with crowbars. The officers were overpowered, their faces blackened, and both securely muzzled. The law has never since seen the outfit. The officers returned crestfallen, and were ever after the mark for a joke.

The joke, however, is not always on the officer. The position is always trying to the steadiest nerves, and a "still hunt" is usually an occasion of great danger. His path is over swamps and mountains, often by the paths known only to the few. If he is on the right scent he generally gets the still, which in the crudest form is simply a hollowed log, sheathed inside with block tin, the upper part covered air-tight with the same metal and fitted with a copper head and spiral tube called the worm. Very often those connected with the traffic give the information. They will approach an officer and give him complete information of a "still-running" as they express it. Sometimes this is done out of personal enmity, sometimes to mislead the exciseman and hold him up to ridicule, but oftener the latter. An officer who was thus furnished not long ago with facts and drawings, came

to a nice looking house, and in the absence of the owner, at once instituted search. Finding nothing, he was about to leave and to his astonishment walked into the arms of a respectable clergyman. It came out in the course of apologies and explanations that the minister had preached on the previous Sunday condemning the practice of illicit distilling, and his parishioners had taken this means of expressing their approval.

It was rough on the officer, but eventually he turned the tables. In a few weeks he had other directions and other drawings, which led him at midnight to a vast swamp. The snow was deep and the roads were all but impassable. This time however, he took the informer along as a pledge of good faith. A drive of twelve miles on a bitter cold night brought them to the swamp. Here the guide weakened. Coaxing, promises, threats were alike unavailing. He would not go on. Finding nothing would serve, the officer returned to his sleigh, pulled a stiff line on his horse and left the informer to his joke and a twelve mile tramp.

## Howells Love for Tennyson.

I have never ceased to adore Tennyson, though the rapture of the new convert could not last, writes William Dean Howells in his literary autobiography, "My Literary Passions," in the September Ladies' Home Journal. That must pass like the flush of any other passion. I think I have now a better sense of his comparative greatness, but a better sense of his positive greatness I could not have had than I had in the beginning, and I believe this is the essential knowledge of a poet. It is very well to say one is greater than Keats, or not so great as Wordsworth, that one is or is not of the highest sort of poets like Shakespeare and Dante and Goethe; but that does not mean anything of value, and I never find my account in it. I know it is not possible for any less than the greatest writer to abide lastingly in one's life. Some dazzling comers may enter and possess it for a day, but he soon wears his welcome out, and presently finds the door, to be answered with a not at home if he knocks again. But it was only this morning that I read one of the new last poems of Tennyson with a return of the emotion which he first woke in me well nigh forty years ago. There has been no year of those many when I have not read him and loved him with something of the early fire if not all the early conflagration; and each successive poem has been for me a fresh joy.

I suspect that I carried his poems about with me a great deal of the time; I am certain that I always had that blue-and-gold Tennyson in my pocket; and I was ready to draw them upon anybody at the slightest provocation. This is the worst of the ardent lover of literature; he wishes to make every one else share his rapture, will he, nill he. Many good fellows suffered from my admiration of this author or that, and many more pretty, patient maids. I wanted to read my favorite passages, my favorite poems to them; I am afraid I often did read, when they would rather have been talking; in the case of the poems I did worse, I repeated them.

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## The Superior of the Augustinians.

The Most Rev. Sebastian Martinelli, ninety-ninth of the long line of illustrious Superiors-General of the Augustinian Order (reaching back to the date of the union of the O.S.A. in 1254), was born Aug. 20, 1848, in the parish of Sant' Anna, Lucca, Tuscany. He is the youngest of five children of Cosimo and Maddalena (Pardini) Martinelli. His eldest brother, the late Cardinal Tommaso Maria Martinelli, and the third son of the family, Father Aurelius Martinelli (now Director General of the Pious Union), also became Augustinian friars.

Sebastian went to Rome when he was fifteen years of age, and has dwelt for thirty-one years in the Eternal City. Most of his time has been spent in teaching. He was resident Regent of Studies at the Irish Augustinian Hospice of Santa Maria in Posterula; and (when the government seized that house for public improvements) at San Carlo on the Corso. For many years, he was Promoter of the Causes of the Augustinian Saints and Blessed ones—an office of trust and great honor; in as much as the Promoter is champion, advocate and sponsor of the candidates for canonization before the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

At the General Chapter of the Augustinian Order, convened nearly five years ago, at the Convent Church of St. Monica, Rome (in the very shadow of the Vatican Basilica) Sebastian Martinelli was elected Prior-General of the Hermits of the Order of St. Augustine vice the Most Rev. Pacifico Neno, deceased February, 1889. On that autumn day (the 28th of September, 1889) Father Sebastian was in his cell at San Carlo—knowing nothing about the election. The committee from the Chapter-house, coming thither in the name of the Cardinal President, found the humble friar at his desk (he was a hard student), and despite his tears and protests, insisted on bearing him off to where the brethren were awaiting their newly-chosen chief. Their choice has been well approved by the distinction with which the young Father-General has filled his high and responsible position. He is a member of the Holy Office, that select and supreme tribunal at Rome, which claims the Sovereign Pontiff himself as its Prefect; and which is called to render decision on the weightiest causes and questions of Christendom. He resides at St. Monica's, Rome.

He sailed from Italy on June 21, of the present year, and arrived in New York on the feast of SS. Peter and Paul. He is the only Augustinian General save one (the Most Rev. Paul Micallef, who visited South America in 1859) that ever crossed to this side of the Atlantic; and he came for a visitation of the houses of his Order and to preside at the Chapter convened at Villanova Collego on July 25. Dr. Martinelli is in the very prime of his manhood and usefulness; and possesses a charming personality—a gracious mingling of dignity and ascetic simplicity. He speaks English with ease and fluency; and his many and brilliant gifts acquire a fresh emphasis and adornment from the unaffected modesty of his bearing. To the quick, vivacious ardor of his countrymen, he unites the keen insight and delicate sympathy of the high-bred churchman; and judging of the beauty of his Italian tongue by the excellence of its English adaptability, we felt sure that it fully justifies the truth of the ancient proverb, that there is no language in all Italy so sweet, so musical, as that of the

"Lingua Toscana,  
In bocca Romana."

Lana, as early as 1675, accurately described the differential thermometer, and told how one should be made.

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## A Great Dominican.

Rev. Albert Weiss, a Bavarian priest of the Order of Preachers is the subject of the following highly complimentary paragraph taken from a review of his great work, the Apology for Christianity, in the columns of *Le Propagateur*. Father Weiss was born in 1844.

"This man is a German and a monk, two qualifications which are not indeed sufficient recommendation to Obauvinists and anti-monachists; but he has others. This monk, this Dominican is greater in himself than five or six specialists. A theologian, he had examined the foundations of dogma and morals. A philosopher, there is no system of philosophy with which he is unacquainted. A historian, he is brilliant not alone in accuracy of details, but also in the splendid insight which here and there he exercises upon general periods in the history of civilizations. A jurist, there are about ready for publication two volumes which would establish his reputation as one of the most distinguished lawyers of his country. Ascetic, he has written a book on Christian perfection, "a pearl" which is the delight of pious souls. A controversialist, his pen has produced articles without number. Linguist, he spoke with equal facility his native language, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch and Hungarian, and the University of Munich had few students who were his superiors in the study of Hebrew, Arabic, Sanscrit and the Rabbinical tongue. A litterateur, he has dealt with all peoples and all epochs. A stylist, he is as finished as Taine and as irresistible as Carlyle. A poet, he has composed fugitive verses of ravishing grace and harmony. An observer, he took as much pleasure in listening to the nocturnal chorus of the frogs in a pond, as did La Fontaine in following the funeral cortege of an ant. An orator, he had the penetrating look, the vibrant voice, the transports of touching enthusiasm which in Lacordaire evoked applause under the arches of Notre Dame. And what is more remarkable, the faculties of this man were not subdued under this stress. He has been able to avoid the appearances of mere erudition and to impress the stamp of his lively and original personality. His works are not heavy, such as cumber the earth and repulse the hands that touch them; the ideas they contain are such as will give food for reflection for half a century or perhaps a century."

## A Reminiscence of Pius IX.

Just now, when the centenary of Pope Pius IX. is being celebrated, we might appropriately reproduce the following incident in the life of that great and kind-hearted Pontiff. His generosity was proverbial, and is the subject of many an anecdote to this day among the good people of Rome. A prelate who was witness of innumerable acts of private munificent charity told us how one day Pius IX. found an envelope placed on his writing-table by an unknown hand, containing a large sum of ready money, which was left to him as a legacy by some pious Catholic. The kind-hearted Pontiff soon disposed of his unexpected wealth. Calling one of his chaplains, he requested him to draw up a list of respectable families well-known to be living in poverty and too proud to complain to anyone of their hard lot in life. When the list was laid before His Holiness he himself wrote down a certain amount beside each name, and calling a domestic gave him the entire contents of the mysterious envelope with orders that every penny of it should be distributed according to his list "before the ringing of the 'Ave Maria' that evening!" That his directions were faithfully obeyed, and many a suffering heart made glad that day, it is needless to say.