

IRISH NEWS.

A STRIKING FIGURE GONE.

The death of The MacDermott, K.C., at the age of 70 years, which occurred in Dublin, on the 6th inst., removes from the scene a notable figure. For more than forty years he has practised his profession with unvarying success on the Connaught circuit, and in the Dublin Four Courts. A man of great legal acumen and profound learning, he was ever ready to assist his less gifted professional brethren when in doubt or difficulty. He held office in the Liberal Administration as Attorney General from 1892 to 1895, and on the change of Government resumed his old position at the Bar. Two facts militated against his attaining to the Bench, the highest prize in the legal profession, to which he saw so many mediocrities promoted over his head—he was a Catholic and a Home Ruler. Deceased was the representative of the princely house of Coolavin, Co. Sligo, where his ancestors owned much property, including Rockingham, the present viceregal residence. R.I.P.

Commenting on the death of that distinguished man, the Liverpool Catholic Times says:

"The death of The MacDermott, K.C., has aroused public attention in Ireland to the extent to which, so far as the law is concerned, Irish Catholics are handicapped in competition with Irish non-Catholics. The MacDermott should have occupied the Bench, and would undoubtedly have done so but for his Catholic creed. The acknowledged leader of the Irish Bar, it was expected when the Unionists secured their majority in 1886 that they would free themselves from the bad traditions of the system of legal appointments that prevail in Ireland. But the influence of the place-hunting supporters of the Government in the North of Ireland was too strong. The Bench in Catholic Ireland is reserved as practically a monopoly for Protestants. Lord Russell of Killowen, the late Lord Chief Justice of England, considered early in his career whether he should, as a lawyer, remain in his own land; but his knowledge of the manner in which legal posts are filled in Ireland decided him to come to England. Writing to a friend at that time he declared that he left Ireland because there would be no future for him there, inasmuch as he was a Catholic and a lover of his country. He was wise. Had he continued to live in Ireland, he would in all probability never have been on the Bench.

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.—The Saturday Review publishes some strong comments this week on the Government's refusal to bring in a Catholic University Bill. "We sympathize frankly," it says, "with the Irish members in their disappointment that no Government Bill dealing with the University question in Ireland will be introduced this session. We can affect no surprise that their disappointment was expressed in terms of heated indignation. We are very sure that English Nonconformists in so tantalizing a position would give way to far stronger language than did the Irish members of the House. The truth is that nothing but prejudice, fortified by ignorance,

of a section of the Unionists now stands in the way of the University question being settled in Ireland."

DEPRESSING FIGURES.—The elaborately-prepared vital statistics of Ireland for the last quarter of 1903, which have just been issued by the Registrar-General, says the Belfast Irish News, whilst highly creditable to the painstaking labors of the compilers, must be depressing on those who peruse them. The only relieving feature in the grim figures is that there is an apparent decrease in emigration during the three months dealt with in comparison with the corresponding period of the previous year. But pauperism is on the increase. Compared with the averages for the fourth quarter of the ten years 1893-1902, the number of workhouse inmates shows an increase of 1038, and the number of persons on outdoor relief an increase of 256, the total under both heads being 1.5 per cent above the average for the fourth quarter of the ten years.

The estimated decrease in the population as compared with the average of those years is 2.3 per cent. As to the number of emigrants who left our shore in the last quarter of last year, the total is given as 5844 (2409 males and 3345 females). This shows a decrease of 1530 on the corresponding period of the previous year, though it is an increase of 57 on the average for the last quarter of the ten years 1893-1902, and does not, unfortunately, indicate that the flow of emigration has been in any way checked.

In the return under notice a table is given of the estimated population of Ireland at the middle of each of the seventy years since 1829. In that year it was 7,563,879, thence it yearly increased till 1825, when the total was 8,295,061. Since that year the numbers have steadily gone down year by year, till at the middle of 1903 they had dwindled to 4,413,655, showing a falling-off of 3,881,414 since the general census of 1901.

From the date of Catholic Emancipation, from which the statistics given begin, onwards till the "Dark Forties," a steady increase in the population was maintained. Thereafter the tide of emigration set in, with the deplorable results that have been witnessed. The efforts made to keep the people at home within the past two or three years, have not, so far as the statistics go, shown any tangible token of success. The attempts made by the British Legislature, in pursuance of its traditional methods to improve the conditions of life in Ireland, have not so far succeeded in killing the prejudice against English misrule, which have induced so many of the flower of Ireland's youth of both sexes to seek their fortunes—or misfortunes, as it often happens—in other climes.

It is to be hoped, however, that the slight decrease noticed in the emigration statistics for the last quarter of 1903 may prove an augury, that better counsels have prevailed, and that we may look for less discouraging statistics in the future.

The School Question In England.

Once more we remind our readers that the day of decision of the lot of the voluntary schools is near, and nearer, at hand, says the London Universe.

On this day three weeks London will be called on in the person of its municipal electors to elect its sixth County Council from which will be chosen the main body of those who will have it in its power to make or unmake the Education Act, by encouraging or thwarting its fair interpretation.

That the Catholic vote should be cast in favor of those who will pledge, or have pledged, themselves to such an interpretation and administration should go, as the French express it, without saying, and after all the reasons advanced, religious and otherwise, we fear that the obstinate, who fancy like little Egalites they can run with the Catholic hare and hunt with the anti-Catholic hounds, are unlikely to be turned at this hour from their un-Catholic views. Still canvassing

of canvassing. We all know some of this class, the half of the population which does not as a rule mix in municipal elections of any kind, partly because they have no definite opinions, and partly because they know nothing of the candidates or of the questions at issue.

Those we may know of this class it is a duty to canvas even more vigorously than Catholics, for they may as easily be persuaded by the specious representations of the no-religion advocates as by the arguments of fair treatment all round. It is this class indeed, which can, if it chooses to vote at all, elect the London County Council for 1904-1906, a period of three years which must have incalculable effect, good or bad, on the progress of our Catholic schools. To this class the most persuasive arguments, because the shortest, and least to be denied, will be that the advocates of the Voluntary schools subscribe throughout England and Wales, and also throughout London in particular, more than half the money spent altogether on education, whether in the form of rates or taxes—that in return for this more than half they are even now not to receive even half the share of the total money subscribed for the Board schools, given as great efficiency and as many pupils, will receive just as much as the Voluntary schools, and where building and alteration is required all cost of that at the public expense, whereas all building and alteration charges for Voluntary schools must be paid, not from the public, but through private money.

In other words, the supporters of religious training, who, to put it at a low proportion, pay half the rates, will receive half the education rate in return, minus the cost of building, whilst the advocates of godless schools, who, to put them at a high rate-paying proportion, pay half the rates, are to receive one-half of the education rate, plus the cost of building. That is the people who today are shouting, for ends not unlike the promoters of the Ephesian riot, "Great is representation for taxation," are, in reality, so confused in their bawling that they do not see their very cry make for the other side, who should have their fair share of representation, namely, at least half the children taught more than the vague idea of God, which even the pagan Athenians acknowledged, and the pagan Emperor of Rome recognized.

But no, the anti-religious idea of fair representation is that the godless schools should be run by those who favor them, and that the Voluntary schools should be run, not by those who favor them, but by those who might in a hostile district be elected to act contrary to the definite principles involved in the very being of Voluntary schools. That, of course, Catholics would not tolerate, nor Anglicans either, except those who fancy that concession giving to those who want all increases strength. The solid ground on which the fight is made is that these unhappy persons who care not for definite ideas of religion to be taught, should rule the schools of their choice; those who do wish, and for Catholics it is a necessity, to have a proper religious training, mental and moral, should have the running of their schools, for which they are still to pay in public contributions proportionately more than the secularists, though for thirty-three years under the School Board they have paid not more in public contributions, but built and mainly maintained their schools also by their private contributions. It is Catholics indeed who should have representation for their taxation and rating; the secularists have had more than their share all along.

Catholic Schools In Massachusetts.

The annual report of Rev. Louis S. Walsh, supervisor of Catholic schools in the archdiocese of Boston, contains several interesting facts. The report shows a material gain in the number of pupils in attendance at the schools and mentions several new scholarships. Two of these are in Boston commercial schools.

The report shows the successful operation of 79 schools, with a total of more than 45,000 boys and girls, and a teaching staff of more than 900. The schools are distributed over among 69 parishes in five counties over which the jurisdiction of the Boston archdiocese extends.

The city of Boston alone contains 26 of these institutions, this being the total number in Suffolk County, except one, which is in Chelsea. Essex County is next in the number with 22, and Middlesex follows with 19. Norfolk County contains six schools, and there are six in Ply-

mouth County. Nearly all of these institutions now occupy school buildings erected especially for their purposes and which compare favorably with the most modern educational structures.

The pupils in Catholic schools of the State outside of the archdiocese number more than twenty-six thousand, making a total of over seventy-one thousand scholars in Catholic free schools in Massachusetts.

During the past year supplementary work has been undertaken in the way of lecture courses open to the pupils of the higher grades and in the schools of Boston by the extension of the school library system in connection with the city public library.

A French school has been opened in Amesbury in connection with the new French Catholic parish in that place. It is taught by lay teachers.

Two new religious communities of Sisters have been introduced as teachers in schools in Waltham and Salem. St. Joseph's school for boys at Haverhill has been put in charge of the religious society of Marist Brothers.

The report comments favorably on the centenary exercises held by the schools in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the first Catholic Church in Boston, and in this connection mentions the generosity of the interest manifested in the schools by the New England Catholic Historical Society, which presented each school with a large picture of the first Church, the Church of the Holy Cross.

The study of the important facts of Irish history from the point of view of "race" and "religion" has been taken up in many of the high schools and in the last grades of some of the grammar schools. This innovation has the approval of the Archbishop of Boston. In some localities the text books for Irish history study have been furnished to the schools by the local divisions of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, as a mark of appreciative interest in the special work.

Secular Books And Magazines

In view of the fact that the counters of the average book-store in this city are loaded down with secular magazines and novels, more or less sensational in their make-up, the following article from the pen of Mr. John McIntosh, published in St. Vincent's Calendar, is well worthy of a careful perusal.

"Books have been aptly called the 'reflectors' by which the light of God's truth is flashed into the mind. But 'self and passion and prejudice are so many absorbents,' and often there is darkness where light should be, and ugliness and mediocrity and evil too frequently usurp the place of beauty and distinction and goodness. 'Of making many books there is no end.' The world abounds in books, good, bad and indifferent; and small wonder is it in a skeptical and scoffing and pessimistic age like ours when printers' ink flows like water, that the bad and worthless should preponderate. To avoid the positively and professedly bad in literature is not a difficult task for any, though an imperative duty of all. The greatest danger to faith and morals lies not in books confessedly bad and flagrantly immoral. These carry with them their own condemnation—their very wickedness and grossness repulse and shock the decent and the pure.

"No Catholic worthy of the name would knowingly read a book of this description. But how many of the faithful, well meaning and intelligent are inveigled into the reading of books and publications from which they would instinctively shrink in disgust and horror were their real character known. Vice was ever wont to assume fair forms and masquerade in Virtue's garb, and doctrines most monstrous, principles most mischievous and destructive in the highest degree to moral and social order are subtly insinuated, under the guise of wisdom and truth and beauty, into much of the writing of the day. And if Christianity is not assailed as its very corner stone and its principles openly and boldly assailed, it is attacked covertly by innuendo and implication and all the arts of sophistry and misrepresentation are employed to discredit and bring it into contempt.

"Never were greater demands imposed upon the judgment, discernment and good sense of Catholic rea-

ders than at the present time, and never was their responsibility and that of parents and others charged with the education and direction of youth heavier than in this boasted age of 'free thought' and 'free speech,' when liberty, with many, means license, when authority is sneered at and law held in contempt. It is not refreshing to heart or mind to breathe the polluted literary atmosphere of the day; it is not easy to control and guide aright the tendencies of the young and immature mind amid the corrupting influences and distractions of the times. The sensational daily or hourly paper, with its detailed and revolting record of world-wide crimes and scandals and indecencies, and silly gossip and vulgar illustrations, brazenly thrusts itself before the public, and caters to the vicious, depraved and drurient taste of the multitude; and the sordid and venal publishers of these 'yellow' and disreputable sheets assume the air of virtue, pose as public benefactors, and 'moulders' of opinion—and wax wealthy with the tribute money wrung from the unthinking rabble. Is it not time that our Catholic people realized that they share the terrible responsibility of these literary panders precisely in the measure of their countenance and support of them and their methods? Is it not time that Catholic journalism and literary effort received a larger recognition and more generous support? Is it not time, in short, that every decent, and right-minded man and woman in the land insist on the elevation and purity of the press?

"It would be interesting and instructive to know exactly what part of the money annually laid out by Catholics in the United States for literature under its various forms is applied to the support of Catholic literature. It would be interesting, and we venture to say surprising and disconcerting to many to know the number of Catholic homes in this

city into which neither Catholic magazine nor Catholic paper enters from one year's end to another. Books of doubtful utility, novels the latest and most 'popular,' secular magazines and papers they have in abundance; but the pitiable dearth or entire absence of Catholic art and Catholic literature in these families would lead one to question seriously whether they were Catholics at all.

"But in truth and justice be it said that this lamentable condition of affairs is surely, though slowly, improving. Our people are awakening from their lethargy of indifference to an active, enlightened and responsive appreciation of the claims of Catholic literature as an instrument of good and a factor most potent in the betterment of their lives and in their moral, intellectual and social uplifting. This is most encouraging and gratifying to those in care of souls, to each and every one who has at heart the welfare temporal and eternal of his fellows; and is at once the highest tribute to the intelligence and the surest earnest of the loyalty and faith of the Catholic millions of America."

While the awakening is apparent, here and there, considering the efforts put forth by the Church it should be more so. There are Catholic families, beyond question, who would rather subscribe for the most sensational and un-Catholic secular daily than the more reliable Catholic weekly. There are Catholics, moreover, who would rather take Munsey's Magazine, the Metropolitan, the Broadway or worse, than take the Catholic World, Donahoe's or the Rosary. It will take strong speaking to waken such people, but somebody must do it. There is need of its being done.

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