

## THE MONKS OF MOUNT MELLERAY.

Written for the Register by W. H. Higgins.

When revisiting my native land, some time ago, I did not fail to "take in" Mount Melleray. Much had been told me as to the good work the community had been doing, and it was impressed upon me that no better time or place could have been chosen for making a "retreat" than at this monastery on the mountain side, where "contemplation and pety love to dwell."

It was from "the beautiful city of Cork, one fine Saturday morning early in the month of August, that I started by rail, eager to put my intention into execution. Stopping over at Fermoy, where you arrive shortly after two o'clock, on the morning train from Mallow, you have a delay of upwards of two hours before the next train leaves in the direction in which you are going. The old town of "sweet Fermoy" has a population of 6,000, and is the third town in the county of Cork in point of population. It is very pleasantly situated on the banks of the Blackwater—the "Sweet Awinduff" of Spenser. It was, "in the good old times" a favorite resort of the "Rakes of Mallow," whose roisterings have been made known to us in song and story. Now, the extensive military barracks, situated on the north side of the town, and capable of accommodating 3,000 infantry and cavalry, is the great feature of its importance. I paid a passing visit to Loretto Convent, another branch of the Abbey in this city. It was opened less than forty years ago, by two of the good sisters from the parent convent near Dublin. From a very small beginning, it has grown into an educational institution of first importance. There is now a large community. More than ninety boarders were there receiving their education and training. The young ladies were from all parts of three kingdoms, and two of the pupils from far off Australia. One of the teaching nuns (Sister Loretta) was a Canadian lady, educated at the Lindsay convent during the lamented Father Stafford's time, and belonging to a well-known family of that town. She is, I believe, the first and only Canadian nun sent from Canada to Ireland to teach. The practice has been always the other way. It goes to show that the order of things may become reversed with the development of Catholic education in Canada—when trained specialists are required.

The convent buildings are delightfully situated on a rising eminence on the South side of the town. They are of very large dimensions, built of fine cut stone, and cost over twenty thousand pounds, I was told. With well appointed buildings, surrounded by extensive grounds, tastefully planted with groves of shrubberies, and in such a healthy location, and with the superior teaching of the careful ladies in charge, no wonder that this Fermoy House of Loretto has become immensely popular with the parents and guardians of young girls, and grows in prosperity and usefulness—beside the rushing waters of the river beneath the convent walls.

To Lismore, a distance of 15 miles, passing many noble old family seats, and time-worn fortalices, and some exquisite scenery, all along the valley of the Blackwater, you are hurried at railway speed. Lismore is a cathedral town—in fact it was one of the "holy cities" of Ireland at the early dawn of Christianity on the land. It was the scene of the birthplace of Alfred, King of Northumbria, and in after-times rendered yet more illustrious as the birthplace of the celebrated philosopher, Robert Boyle, seventh son of the first earl of Cork. The neighborhood is richly endowed with well-wooded seats and plantations. To the east of the town is the *lia*, or fort, which gives rise to the name of Lis-

More, (Great Fort). The old cathedral is now a dilapidated enclosure, its isolated window arch, displaying high above surrounding objects the delicate tracery of its proportions, and the spot upon which the ruined fragments lie scattered beside the murmuring rivulet challenging admiration of its quiet, peacefully embosomed surroundings.

From Lismore to Cappoquin is about four miles, and seen, even from a railway carriage, nothing can be more magnificent than the scenery. Here the river is spanned by a fine arched bridge. The views on every side of the bright plantations and shrubberies, remains of old castles, and rocks covered with over-green ivy, and parks with the grandest foliage are surpassingly fine. It is admitted that the river banks at this point, and to Lismore, are as fine as the Rhine, the scenery as beautiful and picturesque.

A drive of a little less than four miles from Cappoquin takes you to Melleray. It is made on that vehicle peculiar to the country, the Irish jaunting car, over a very good mountain road, and leading through a wild, rocky and mountainous district. Cars run regularly between the town and the abbey, in connection with the railway, the fare for the single journey being 25 cents. The plantations on the side of the bare mountain serve to point out the abbey grounds in the distance. They are the one green spot, the oasis, in the sterile wilds by which they are surrounded. At the distance of more than a mile the white walls and tall spire of Melleray Abbey come plainly into full view, hanging, as it were, on the steep side of *Cnoc Maol Donn*—*the brown bare hill* that separates Tipperary from Waterford, the monks of Melleray have made their home.

It was 6:15 p.m. when the car drew up before the gates. And now you shall have an account of my visit and the result of my personal observations and enquiries on the spot for whatever they may be worth—nothing at second hand.

On arriving, I was taken in charge by the guest-master. The Revd. Father Maurus officiated for the occasion. I gave my name, handed him my letters, informed him how long I wished to stay, and that I desired to make my retreat. I was then shown to my room in the guest-house, and wrote my name and address in the register. Refreshments were immediately afterwards served in the guest room. And with an appetite, sharpened by the keen mountain air, after the day's travel, never was meal more enjoyed than mine upon that occasion, off the fresh wholesome food set before me. Returning to my room, I read the rules to be observed by guests, hung up in the apartment. Before retiring, my thoughts went back to the old monastic days that I had read about. I brought to mind the Catholic times when the sons, the brothers and kindred of emperors, princes and nobles were sometimes found in the habit of simple convent brothers, in its silent corridors, and in its gardens and cloisters; and lost in the contemplation of bygone ages, and the strangeness of my surroundings, and the deep silence and darkness about me—and thinking, too, of my far away Canadian home—"tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep"—at length came to my aid in peaceful slumbers.

Next morning I was aroused by the tolling of a bell, about five o'clock. I reperused the rules, so as to try and shape my course accordingly. They were as follows:—Rise at 6 o'clock—morning prayer and the angelus, &c. At 6:30 to 7:30, assist at community Mass. 9 o'clock, breakfast. 11, examination of conscience, followed by the angelus. Recreation, 11:30. Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, 12 o'clock. Confession, 12:30, and spiritual read-

ing. Dinner at 2, and recreation after. Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, at 3:30. Spiritual reading and private devotions, 4 o'clock. Assist at Vespers of community, 5 o'clock. Supper and recreation at six. At 7 p.m. assist at compline, the angelus, &c. After that private devotions and meditation. And at ten o'clock extinguish lights.

My room, as were the rooms of all the other guests, was well furnished, carpeted, good bed and mattress and plenty of covering, lounge, racks, small book-stand, orderly toilet table, wash stand, &c., and the walls were decorated with some pictures of the saints.

There were 23 guests in the house on my arrival—some of them Protestants, and one a Church of England clergyman. Of course none of the latter were expected to comply with all the rules just given—which are for the guidance of, and to be observed by Catholic visitors, especially those who desire to make their retreat.

Next day being Sunday, the devotions were somewhat extended, as they always are on Sundays and holidays.

Food is supplied in abundance and of healthy, substantial quality. Bread, butter, eggs and tea for breakfast. For dinner, mutton, ham, cabbage, green peas—the drink being spring water and milk; and ale and porter for those who choose to take the latter beverages. For supper, bread and butter and tea. The diet is varied by roast and boiled joints of beef and mutton and corned beef and pork; and invalids are supplied with broths and delicacies. Fish on Fridays, of course—no flesh meat being served then or on fast days.

The monks of La Trappe, or Cistercians, are a branch of the order of Benedictines. The foundation of the house of Mount Melleray in Ireland, took place under very adverse circumstances. It was not, however, as it is generally supposed, the first site that had been fixed upon, after the suppression of the house in France, in 1831.

Abbot Antony, the head of the latter house, with the consent of the Archbishop of Dublin, in 1830, sent Father Vincent Ryan, prior of Melleray, in France, to Ireland. At a place called Rathmore, near Killarney, a commencement was made, by the renting of a house and 50 acres of land. It was while Father Vincent was there occupied that the suppression of the house in France and the dispersion of the monks took place. On the 1st of December, 1831, there were landed from a French sloop of war, in the cove of Cork, 64 of the dispersed monks, who had chosen Ireland as their future home. They were all Irishmen, and all, with the exception of five or six, went in a body to Father Ryan at Rathmore. They were cast upon the shores of their own "Green Isle" in a state of utter destitution. They were, however, received with humanity and charity, and that kindly sympathy which have ever distinguished the children of St. Patrick.

It was at this time that Sir Richard Keane, a Protestant gentleman, had made over to Father Vincent, for a mere nominal rent, about 700 acres of the barren mountainous wild upon which now stands the stately abbey and cloistered grounds and abbeylands of Mount Melleray—so designated after the suppressed French monastery of the same name. The work of clearing was begun without means, or even without a dwelling to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather on this bleak mountain. Seven acres were at first put under cultivation; the peasantry in hundreds generously assisting with their labor in clearing the land. By supreme exertions 25 acres of land were prepared for cultivation and fences made, and a building, 119 x 20 feet, of two storeys erected and made ready for the reception of the brotherhood.

The regular work of building commenced in 1833, and reclamation has

since gone on without interruption until the abbey has reached its present magnificent proportions, with beautifully planted and enclosed grounds and gardens and the sterile wild has been made to "blossom as the rose."

Since the laying of the corner stone by Sir Richard Keane, in August, 1833, affiliations with this abbey have been established at Dubuque, in the state of Iowa, under the appellation Our Lady of La Trappe, New Melleray, and also a branch Irish house at Roscrea. The Dubuque house has given two bishops to the United States—Dr. Smith, the first Superior, having been appointed bishop of Iowa, and his successor, Dr. O'Gorman, bishop of Nebraska.

(CONCLUDED IN NEXT ISSUE.)

## Praise for the Celt.

Mr. Grant Allen, in an article in the *Westminster Gazette*, defends the Irish race from the assaults of a writer of a pamphlet which has been sent him on the supposed "enormous racial differences between Irishmen and Englishmen." He says:

"Transfer the Celtic race to London; in twelve months London would be a equalid waste. The average Irish Celt is helpless now; in all past time he has been, in all coming time he will be, helpless." These are the sort of gems our new friend flings at our heads. We are quite familiar with them, we for whom such people have have but one favorite prescription—submersion for twenty-four hours under St. George's Channel. I will answer this much, from personal experience.

I was brought up in America among Irish Celts. They were the most industrious, thrifty, energetic, long-headed, enterprising people I have ever come across. Starting without capital as day laborers, they saved and scraped till they had earned enough to rent a farm. Then they saved and scraped till they had earned enough to buy it. They then went on from log to frame house and frame house to solid, substantial, stone-built farmhouse. Their sons learned Latin; their daughters went to the convent-school and thumped the piano. Their neighbors had only one complaint against them—"The Irish are so close-fisted!" What made them differ so much from those "idle, improvident Irish" about whom so many ignorant people rail? Why, just equality of opportunity with that notoriously bad colonist, the Saxon Englishman.

Transport your Irishmen to free America or free Australia, and straightaway this creature, incapable of Parliamentary Government, gets at once into his own hands the affairs of the city, the county, the state, the federation. Let me end with an apologue. Said the Englishman to the Yankee, "Who built your towns?" Said the Yankee, "The Irishman." "Who built your railways? Who dug your canals? Who laid out your country?" Said the Yankee, "The Irishman." "And what did the native American do?" the Englishman asked. "I guess he sat on the fence and looked on," said the Yankee. They call that "arduous labor of superintendence." Everything else was done by the idle, improvident, good-for-nothing Irishman.

Prevention of the causes of diseases in poultry-raising is the only successful remedy to combat with them. If the causes are prevented from existing there will never be any trouble. Preventing all but one or two is often where the foothold of trouble steps in. Clean food, pure water, cleanliness in the houses and yards and regularity in feeding and giving just enough are the factors of success.

A dose of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral taken in time has prevented many a fit of sickness and saved numerous lives. This proves the necessity of keeping this incomparable medicine where it can be readily reached at all hours of the day and night.