

purpose to establish the independence of their country, and leaves no room to doubt of their ultimate success. In like manner, the large contributions of the Madras Catholics (as poor as the Irish and possessing little of their natural and characteristic generosity) to every work of charity and religion, shows that the spirit of the Gospel has penetrated deeply into their souls, and consoles us with the assurance that that spirit will continue, under the direction of a zealous and enlightened clergy, to produce the happiest fruits of religion. No foreign clergy could in any time arouse in a people sunk into religious indifference, this spirit of religion and charity. It is only the Irishman, who is fully acquainted with the workings of the voluntary system in his own land, that could draw forth into active operation the resources of this poor and struggling mission, and thereby make it flourishing and independent. The friends of temperance at home will be rejoiced to learn that Father Mathew's Society is established here on a firm and permanent basis. Bishop Fennelly is a zealous, I had almost said an enthusiastic advocate of total abstinence. He is a picture of good health—like the Apostle himself, a practical illustration of the advantages of temperance. The Irish priests are, I believe, without an exception, pledged disciples of Father Mathew. The society numbers, I am told, upwards of 3,000 members in India. I can say, from my own observation, that temperance has been the harbinger of every blessing to the Irish Catholic soldier. A short time ago no soldier was seen to frequent the Sacraments in India. But where a station is blessed with an Irish Catholic chaplain, there temperance is established—there the faithful are edified by the comfortable appearance of the soldier and his family, and by their regular monthly approach to the Holy Communion. When Doctor O'Connor arrived in Madras, in 1836, weeks and months passed away without a single communicant except the students he brought with him. At present the number of communicants in the cathedral church alone on Sundays is hardly ever under fifty, and it is often four and five times that number. I have been told by one of the clergy that upwards of 13,000 persons made their Paschal Communion last year. This would be incredible to one acquainted with the religious indifferentism prevalent in Madras five or six years ago, if he did not witness the salutary measures of reform introduced by the clergy. Such was the state of degradation to which, through the negligence and incompetence of the clergy, religion was reduced, that I thought all attempts to re-establish it quite hopeless. That degradation and its constant indifferentism, no longer characterises the religion of Madras. It is respectable, independent and

flourishing. From statistical reports of some of the missions in Madras and in the Interior, published in 1842, and one or two during the last year, I find that no less than 1,131 persons have been received into the bosom of the Catholic Church within the last six years: 258 from the errors of Protestantism, and 876 from Paganism. I regret that I have not a more accurate account of conversions in the vicariate since the arrival of the British Clergy. The *Catholic Expositor* is the only source of information at present available, and its reports are confined to some churches of the vicariate, and in many instances gives no account of those converted since 1842; so that the actual number may be double or treble what I have stated. The clergy and people are anxiously looking out for the arrival of a party of young clergymen preparing for the Madras Mission in the Missionary College at Dublin. Their services are much required. There are various missions altogether destitute, and several are provided with but one Priest when the services of three or four would be necessary. I ought to have mentioned that Dr. Fennelly is making every effort to raise a priesthood in India. He has twenty-four very promising boys in his ecclesiastical seminary in Madras, and for their support a considerable sum has been contributed by the people. Adieu for the present. I will probably send you further interesting particulars by the next mail.

A CATHOLIC OFFICER.

The Barrackpore Mission (says the *Bengal Herald* received by the Overland Mail) is increasing. 12,000 native Catholics, hitherto attached to schism, have submitted to the Right Rev. Dr. Bonnard, V. A., of Pondicherry. The Bishop of Europe is now Archbishop of Chyrra. Bishop Whelan, of Madras, has left for Europe, after being most gratefully addressed by his diocesans.

HACKNEY.

To the Editor of the Tablet.

Sir—One of those events which, with the blessing of God, is now of such frequent occurrence, took place on Whit Sunday at the temporary chapel of this mission—the public profession of the Catholic Faith by a lady, 22 years of age, sister to a clergyman of the Church of England. At the conclusion of High Mass the Convert was conducted to the entrance of the Sanctuary by two other ladies, who had, themselves, some short time ago, also become converts to the Catholic Faith, where they remained kneeling while the Rev. John Lecuona addressed a most moving exhortation to the recent convert from the altar, at the end of which, with all that solemnity could effect, the usual prayers were said, and the convert read her pro-