

THE MOTHERLAND.

Latest Mail from England, Ireland and Scotland.

The Prophet Jeremiah and the Ark of the Covenant - Is It Hidden in Tara - Death of the Last of the MacGregors - Death of the Last of the MacGregors.

A large 3-m. navigation has been held at Glasgow, near Forth, the occasion being the release of Mr. Michael Daly, arrested tenant from Cork Jail, who he had spent the past month in default of giving bail for his good behavior. His offence was that of assaulting a man named Condon, who took the farm from which he (Daly) was evicted. Some hundreds of people gathered at the South Railway station to meet Mr. Daly. A torchlight procession was formed headed by the brass band of the village.

The All Ireland Committee appointed to organize the country on the financial agitation has met, and made arrangements for a forthcoming convention. The desirability of having the views of all classes in Ireland immediately laid before the Government was considered, and arrangements made accordingly. The committee then adjourned.

At a meeting of the Provisional Committee held at 15 D'Olier street, Dublin, the following letter from Mr. John O'Leary was read:-

January 31st, 1897. My Dear Mr. Lavello—I accept with pleasure the presidency of the Provisional Committee for the '98 Centenary celebration. At no time of my life have I feared to speak of '98, and for a great part of it I strove to initiate the men and methods of that period, and now that I am probably nearing the close of that life, I only regret that I was not able to follow more closely the example set by these heroic men. There has been much talk—mostly, I think, rather foolishly—about unity during the past year and the present one, and I do not care to add to it, though I, too, am all for unity, but rather on the lines of the United Irishman than on any other I know of.—Faithfully yours, JOHN O'LEARY.

Letters were also read from Count Plunkett, Mr. P. Tier and others. The committee had under consideration the preliminary arrangements in connection with the meeting to be convened for the 4th March next, and the draft of an address having been submitted, was settled, and directed to be issued.

A correspondence has been going on in a Dublin contemporary regarding the Ark of the Covenant, which is supposed to be hidden in Abyssinia.

A learned writer in Tuesday's paper points out that the Jewish tradition is that the Prophet Jeremiah hid it in the mountains of Moab. The second tradition is that he carried it to Ireland, and hid it in the "Merrah" or receptacle in the Hill of Tara. This, strange to say, has decided historical corroboration. Certain it is that according to the statement of the Mayo Professor, Rev. Father Keil, an Eastern seer came to Ireland about three years after the overthrow of the first Temple. He was accompanied by an "Egyptian" princess and an attendant named Simon Brug (? Baruch), and he brought with him a stone known as the "Jew phall." This stone is in evidence. It is known as "Jacob's Pillow," and is the coronation chair at Westminster Abbey. The princess married the Heremon or Pentarch of Ireland. Our Gracious Queen is descended from her. The wife of Heremon is buried at Tara in the Meerzech (pronounced Merrah), and meaning receptacle), and it is traditionally reported that the "Jew Ark" is hidden there also. The discovery of Bible treasures in Abyssinia would be without evidential value—no one doubts that such a thing existed—the discovery at Tara would clear up many historical puzzles. But King Menelik seems to be more ardent Archaeologist than the Royal Society of Archaeologists of Ireland.

Mr. Standish O'Grady has been lecturing in Dublin on Ireland in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The Ireland of Elizabeth was very different from the Ireland of Victoria. Dublin was then, a very little city surrounded with great walls, and surrounded by an imposing castle of Norman architecture. Elizabeth's Government was so jealous of Scotch interference that they got an Act of Parliament passed making it death for a Scotchman to be sheriff in Ireland. And one day the Sheriff of Meath driving round the country with his armed attendants met a man whose address was a little strange and suspicious. On questioning him he found that he was a Scotchman, and ordered him to be hanged on the nearest tree, which was done forthwith. In 1689—the year after the Armada—anyone going through Ireland would have found the whole centre of the island dotted with walled cities and towns not large but strong and well able to defend themselves. The lecturer concluded amid applause.

The Freeman's Journal of February 6th reports the death of Honorable Francis Fitzgerald, formerly a Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland. This

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The following letters were sent to the editor of The Mail and Empire and refused insertion. They carry their own explanations of the necessity for publication:

To the Editor of The Mail and Empire. You will kindly bear with me, if I ask you to meet another letter on the same old controversy. In this I will eschew as far as possible all technical theological terminology, and use every day language, free from Latinisms and jargon. There is perhaps no Catholic devotion which meets with more of criticism from those separated from Catholic unity than our devotion in this matter under discussion. I do not think that this always comes from prejudice, and a spirit of opposition on their part. It comes often from a misapprehension of our mind, which consists in practice with our other Christian doctrines, viz: with our belief and love of friendship for Christ Himself, as shown by Him for us in the Incarnation, and as desired by Him from us in return. I shall try, if I be directed up that way, to put things to myself, in plain English. Now this link is in a great measure wanting in the minds of our Protestant friends, though not in all of them, and therefore acts of reverence and devotion of this kind seem to them arbitrary and useless, an exorcism on Christianity and even akin to its spirit. This does us a great injustice. Perhaps not meant, but then when coupled with abuse and name calling, and expressions far removed from Christian meekness and charity, and found as they are not infrequently in the writings of men who, if honest readers of our authorized works on religion should know better, prove to us conclusively, though it is the least of our proofs, the unwarrantable nature of their religious beliefs. Neither would it be surprising if, in such circumstances, fragments of quotations removed from their contexts for a purpose can prove corrupt practices in the Catholic Church. Let us see what is the plain teaching of the Catholic Church concerning images. Butler's Catechism on this subject is unquestionable authority, and furnishes to the unprejudiced the plain meaning of our practice:

1st Q. Why do Catholics kneel before the images of Christ and His saints? A. To honor Christ and His saints, whom their images represent.

2nd. Is it proper to show any mark of respect to the crucifix and to the pictures of Christ and His saints? A. Yes, because they relate to Christ and His saints, being representations and memorials of them.

3rd. May we then pray to the crucifix, or to the images of the saints? By no means; for they have neither life, nor sense, nor power, to hear or help us.

The declaration of the Fathers of the Council of Trent is equally clear and instructive. Here are the words of the decree:

The Holy Synod moreover enjoins that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God and of the other saints are to be had, and retained particularly in temples, and that due honor and veneration are to be given to them; not that any divinity, or virtue, is to be ascribed to them, or that they are to be worshipped, or that anything is to be asked of them; or that trust is to be placed in images, as was of old done by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols; but because the honor which is shown to the images of Christ and His saints (i.e. Christ and His saints) which these images represent; in such wise that by the images, which we kiss, and before which we uncover the head, and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ and we venerate the saints, who are believed to be in heaven by the decrees of Councils, and especially of the second Council of Nice which has been defined against the opponents of images.—(xxv. session.)

But it is said that the teaching of St. Thomas in his Summa, part iii., xxv., 4. 3 and 4, is opposed to the teaching of Trent. I do not think so. The well-known statement of the saint, "that the Cross is to be adored with latria," that is supreme worship, is found in the writings of Laurentius quoted by Benedict XIV. (De festo, l. 229): "The language of the saint is not to be misunderstood, and the Fathers of Trent were not unmindful of it when forming above decree. We may," he says, "regard an image in two ways—(1) in itself as a piece of wood or the like, and no reverence is given to it; (2) as representing something else," and in this way we may give to the Cross relatively, that is, to the Cross as carrying our mind to Christ the same honor (relatively) which we give to Christ (absolutely), that is, to Himself. This also agrees with Trent. And it also agrees with Butler's Catechism as above. Neither St. Bonaventura, nor the other doctors draw so slipshodly into this discussion that another doctrine, St. Thomas calls idolatry, "most damnable sin," etc. so does the Council of Trent, and all Catholics look upon it as the gravest crime that can be committed by any creature against his God, and hold it in abhorrence. The Council of Trent, following the second Council of Nice, lays down a rule, regulating the true use of images, and at the same time averting the dangers of idolatry. Further God Himself had become man, which admits Him being represented in art. So that the use of images is no longer held, and as a matter of fact the liberty of the Christian is very different from the bondage of the Jews. Images according to Tridentine Decree are to be retained and honored according to the dignity and honor and glory of the person represented. The object then of images is to set Christ, His Virgin Blessed Mother, His saints and angels before our eyes, as they are themselves in their degrees of honor in the heavenly court. And as Christ is God, and the Father is God, this image, divine adoration (latria), the image, representing Him, whether it be crucifix or statue, and

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helping to raise our minds in adoration and our hearts in love to Him, and to give us a clearer idea of His nature, the highest and of relative respect, because of Christ Himself. Is not the statue, or our gracious Queen more respected and venerated than that of any other person in the empire? Why? Because of her noble and exalted rank, and her exalted position. If her statue, or even the flag representing her power be honored, is not the honor the same high honor as given to herself and is so accepted by her Majesty. Any person or thing representing another is respected according to the dignity of that other. Hence the words of the Council, the honor which is given them images is referred to the objects Christ and His saints which they represent so that through the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads, and kneel we adore Christ and venerate the saints whose likenesses they are. "The Council," says Petrus de B. in articulo, xv. 17, "could not have declared more expressly that the worship of images is simply relative, that is, that they are honored, but that all adoration and veneration is referred to the prototype Christ and His saints in as much as images have of themselves no dignity or excellence to which such honor properly pertains. The Council also states that the Church and remove all possibility of scandal in the good Friday office, when we find the Church inviting the faithful to adore the Cross. It is the suffering Saviour, not the dead wood, which Catholics adore. It is just as natural for all good men to entertain a profound veneration for those who greatly think, or bravely die in a good and holy cause as to love the beautiful cause itself. And it is just as natural to respect the images of those we love, as to love the objects themselves. In fact, the love of the relics and images of the great and good is but the inevitable result of the love we bear the objects to whom it is appertains, and this naturally follow from the Messianic work itself. And after all the frivolous and self-doubting objections which are urged, or argued, yet urged against an impulse so natural and innocent, the human heart will still tell us that it is just and right in itself. Pictures and images of Christ, of His Blessed Mother, and other saints are simply intended to excite devotion, and to sustain in the mind a more concentrated and lively history of the persons and scenes represented. Prose, poetry and painting are only signs or mediums of thought and fact. These different modes of representation are to be used in combination, so that all that the best representation can be had in many cases. For this reason we see works of art and science, as well as of biography, constantly illustrated by drawings, plans and pictures. These are not to be taken as descriptions can be given, while that of poetry is more vivid, and that of painting more touching. When we look upon an image or painting of the Crucifixion, it at once brings to our recollection, by the power of the association of ideas, the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the manner of His death. Now worship like love may be directed to different objects in different degrees. When the lawyer asked our Saviour which was the greatest commandment, He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." By this our Lord did not mean to exclude all love of others, but only required for God our supreme love. For He immediately adds: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mark, xvi., 29.) To love God, and our neighbor, as we love, so He requires our supreme worship, and as He does not, as we have seen, prohibit us from loving others and things representing them, while we love Him supremely, so He does not forbid the relative and images, while we give to Him only the supreme homage of our souls. This I believe to be the Catholic doctrine on images. Any fair minded man who will trouble himself to read our authorized books of Catholic doctrine will do so without bias, will find in this no contradiction but one as Christianity itself, and alike agreeable to reason and the purest expression of our nature. (See La Roma Souteraine, by M. Perret.) I will bring this relative and images, while we give to Him only the supreme homage of our souls. This I believe to be the Catholic doctrine on images. 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