

Northwest Review.

"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND.

Liverpool Catholic Times.

The result of the local government elections in Ireland is something of a puzzle to the political philosophers in the press. They write from London on Irish affairs in an omniscient tone, by which they convey the idea that they are not only familiar with every aspect of the situation, but that they are even better acquainted with it than the people on the spot. It is a notable commentary on their knowledge and intelligence that of all the wiseacres who made forecasts of the elections in Ireland under the new Local Government Act scarcely a single one took the Labor party into account. And yet it is the Labor party who have carried off the honors of war. Some prophesied that the Nationalists would largely increase their power; others that the followers of Mr. Redmond would show that they are gaining ground; and yet others told us that the business people who concerned themselves with mere local interests would thrust the politicians aside. But of what the Labor candidates would do we heard hardly a word. The figures giving the issue of the contests in the municipalities make it clear that the great Labor question has entered into the sphere of public representation with flying colors, and that in all future Irish political and social struggles it must be reckoned as an important factor. The Nationalists have on the whole done well, adding considerably to the number of their representatives in many places. The Parnellites have in the main held their ground. But the Unionists have been practically effaced; so that whatever the elections prove they do not prove that the country is becoming more reconciled with the anti-Home Rule policy.

The editorial sages who in their articles prior to the elections left the Labor party out of the reckoning differ much in their estimates as to what will follow the victory they have achieved. The *Standard* and other Unionist organs profess to read it as a blow at the politicians and to find in it a source of much satisfaction. The fact that the representation has not come under the domination of the Nationalists these organs regard as an almost unmixed blessing. The *Times*, on the other hand, is more alarmed than if the most absolute success had fallen to Mr. Dillon or Mr. Redmond. Its article on the subject is in itself a remarkable production. Whilst it is full of an affectation of superior morality and of that rancour which is responsible for the creation of so much ill-feeling in Ireland it bewails the passing of the Act in language comically pathetic. Wherever the Conservatives are strong, whether in Great Britain

or in Ireland, there the caucus is in operation. Against its ukases the individual Conservative dare not speak—much less vote. If he does so he is at once ostracised from the party. But whilst the caucus is something admirable amongst the Conservatives, it is, according to the *Times*, terribly demoralising to the Irish Labor party. The importation of the American "machine" has, we are assured, been fatal to the legitimate working of the electoral system. The voters are brigaded under party banners by "bosses" who have no interest in the good government of the towns, but who intend to use the town councils for political purposes. They have largely succeeded in their objects. The municipal councils of Dublin, Cork and Limerick have practically excluded under the new system the persons who have hitherto carried on the business of the corporate bodies. What is called the "Labor party" has come conspicuously to the front, and as the "Labor" candidates are without exception extreme Nationalists, not to say Fenians, the Parnellites have more reason than the anti-Parnellites to exult in the returns. In point of fact the city councils of Dublin, Cork and Limerick have passed into the hands of revolutionists, avowed or unavowed. All this because "the distribution of public funds" has been taken out of the hands of the Unionists and placed in those of men who earn their living by manual or mental work. Anyone who has a good knowledge of the old system is well aware that however the public funds may be expended by the newly-elected councillors the mismanagement can not be greater than that for which the grand juries were responsible. The Unionists who composed these bodies as a rule troubled themselves little as to public business unless some post were to be filled or the interests of friends to be served. Then they mustered in full force and helped one another with scarcely a thought of what was due to the public or the country.

We imagine that the electors who are to cast their votes at the county council contests will not relieve the *Times* from the gloomy and despondent state into which it has fallen or accept the advice it tenders in its usual kindly spirit. If the small farmers in Ireland are wise, it says, they will not return the class of members whom the voters of the towns have put upon the new councils as "professional patriots" or professed representatives of labor. But evidently the *Times* has only a very faint hope that they will resist the appeals of the sons of toil. "They have," it appears, "been accustomed to be led by the nose for a long time by priests and politicians, and a habit of mind has been induced

which it is not easy to shake off." Despite the fears of the *Times* we are inclined to think that on this occasion adherence to the habit will be of advantage to the people. Of course men who are not accustomed to the work of public bodies will not all at once grasp the methods of procedure. Some mistakes will occur at first. But we are confident that they will not be numerous and that on the whole business will be transacted with skill. The artisan and labor population in Ireland are amongst the most intelligent of their class in the world, and their representatives will contribute to the new boards a knowledge of practical details which will be invaluable. The training they will receive will bring out their capacities and give them a due sense of the responsibilities imposed upon them, and we are convinced that local government as they will conduct it will steadily tend to promote the progress of the country. In this way it will become a fitting preparation and an irresistible argument for Home Rule.

GRATUITOUS DISTRIBUTION OF THE VERY BEST SEEDS

By the Central Experimental Farm.

To the Editor,

For the past ten years systematic efforts have been made to increase the average return and to improve the quality of the cereals and other important farm crops grown in Canada by an annual distribution from the Experimental Farm of Ottawa, of samples of seed of the best and most promising sorts. These varieties have been first tested at the Experimental Farms and only those which have proven to be the very best have been chosen for this distribution. The samples sent out have contained three pounds each, and every precaution has been taken to have the seed in every instance thoroughly clean and true to name, and the packages have been sent free through the mail. Those who have received such samples and grown them with care, have usually had at the end of the second year enough seed to sow a large area, and in this manner careful farmers all over the Dominion have been gradually replacing any inferior and less productive sorts which they have been growing in the past, with superior varieties possessing greater vigor.

By instruction of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, another such distribution is being made this season, consisting of samples of oats, barley, spring wheat, field pease, Indian corn and potatoes. These samples will be sent only to those who apply personally. Lists of names from societies or individuals cannot be considered, and only one sample in all can be sent to each applicant. Applications should be

addressed to the Director of Experimental Farms, and may be sent any time before the 15th of March, after which the lists will be closed, so that all samples asked for may be sent out in good time for sowing. Parties writing will kindly mention the sort or variety they would prefer, and should the available stock of the sort asked for be exhausted, some other good variety will be sent in its place.

WM. SAUNDERS,
Director.

Central Experimental Farm,
Ottawa, February 9th. 1899.

CHRISTIANITY AND IMPERIALISM.

Sacred Heart Review.

The assertion that the Catholic Church has been the cause of the decadence of many nations, and that others have been made to flourish through their adherence to Protestantism, has provoked much discussion. Two weeks ago we published a communication that appeared in the *London Spectator*, and today we produce from the same source another letter bearing on true Christianity and its relation to the spread of empire and mere worldly prosperity.

[To the Editor of the "Spectator."]

Sir: Mr. Hensley Henson's letter to you is interesting and well-reasoned, but it does not altogether satisfy me. The Romans of old in many ways resembled the English. They had high moral qualities, genius for justice, law, and administration, military valor, prudence, dogged perseverance, and the restless, discontented impulse which finds an outlet in imperial expansion. They had, in the field and in council, their Marlboroughs, Clives, Wellingtons, Walpoles, and Pitts. They built an empire at least as remarkable and strong as our own, perhaps more so, and it lasted for centuries. But as this empire became Christianized it declined, and it was a common charge made by writers of that time against Christians that the decline was due to their doctrines, which seemed to sap energy, patriotism, interest in mundane affairs, and the military spirit. When Rome finally fell before Alaric, St. Augustine wrote his "City of God" to prove that the hopes and ideas of Christians were attached to a spiritual state far different from the perishing Roman empire. The anti-Christian writers of the fourth century generalized, no doubt too rashly; but the argument was at least as plausible as that by which Doctor Weildon connects the rise of the British empire with the Protestant Reformation. POST HOC PROPTER HOC. In both cases, it seems to me, the wild generalization contains a certain truth. A race of Christians so sincere and ardent as those of the first centuries did maintain principles and follow ideals destructive to worldly success. Nor, in the modern

world, could any nation as rich and dominating as the Romans arise, without an abatement of that warmth and a relaxation of essentially Christian principles. For the essence of Christianity is that those who wish to be perfect should renounce all things, and that the best should be content with little, should accept their lot, should not strive to war down or conquer others, should fear rather than seek wealth, greatness, and fame. Upon these principles strictly accepted no great empire can be founded. Does it not then follow that, if the English race were to work out its imperial destiny, it must, for a time at least, relax or depart from strictly Christian principles? At the Reformation, perhaps, the ever-existing divergence was greatly and quickly increased, and the English as a race may now be more remote from the "City of God" than are the unambitious peasantry of Ireland, French Canada, or the Tyrol. It may be that, none the less, the English, like the Romans, are fulfilling a high mission, and preparing by their rough labor the field for a mighty development of the faith. My object in writing to you was merely to enter a CAVEAT against Doctor Weildon's doctrine, which may easily turn against his own religion. It does not, for instance, seem unlikely that Japan may soon take rank among the highly civilized, progressive, "great" powers, without accepting the Christian religion. Would this not, according to Doctor Weildon, prove that the Japanese religion, or non-religion, was nearer to the ideal than Roman Catholicism and quite as near as Protestantism?—I am, Sir, etc.

INQUIRER.

HAROLD FREDERIC ON DOCTORS.

The late Harold Frederic, whose Christian-science slayers were recently discharged from custody, was perhaps led to his doom through dislike for the medical profession. He was known to entertain a very unflattering opinion of physicians, and in his last novel, "Gloria Mundi," gave vent to his contempt in the following passage: "He drifted into an attack upon doctors as a class. He denounced them, root and branch, as impostors and parasites who darkened and embittered human life by fostering all the mean cowardices of small-brained people in order that they might secure a dishonest livelihood by pretending to dispel the horrors their own low tricks had conjured up."—*Medical Record*.

Last Tuesday Rev. Father Lebel, S. J., at Portage la Prairie, received into the Church Miss Elizabeth Gerrie and married her the same day to Mr. James Mc Namara, a fervent Catholic.