

Old Letters.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

The letter which I give this week may not have much interest for the general reader; but as it refers to scenes and times not too remote, a few extracts from it may be amusing. It is quite possible that some of the readers may take more than a passing interest in its contents. The writer of this letter died in 1900; he was a wealthy lumberman of the Upper Ottawa. He was also an enthusiastic and well educated Irishman. I give the letter as it is, save where it has been so badly cut up and handled that I cannot make out the writing.

Dublin, 2nd Feb., 1891.

My Dear Sir:

As this is nomination day with you in Canada, I bethought myself of sending you a few lines. I have been daily promising myself to do so, but the noise of London, a great, big, Babel, drove everything out of my head. As far as Irish politics go, you know as much as I do about them. It would seem here as if the Parnell storm only cleared the atmosphere, and that in the end the leader will come out on top. I thought of you to-day as I lit my cigar at the door of the Imperial Hotel and looked across Sackville Street at the Post Office. I wondered how it was that I neglected to use that institution and transmit some news to my friends in Canada. It was only the other day I came over on the Hollyhead steamer the "Munster." I found Dublin in a state of festive gaiety, despite Lent, and despite the many sad scenes that darken the spirit of the nation. The Castle is another Rideau Hall on a large scale; the Lord-Lieutenant is quite popular in certain circles; and it is told abroad that the Prince of Wales is coming over here soon to study the situation for himself. (The present King is here referred to.) There is a little cozy spot called "The Angel," just around from the Four Courts, where I like to go and sip some Guinness and listen to the political fellows regulating the future of the Empire in general and of Ireland in a special manner. They have a vague idea that England is in great trouble about Canada, and that the United States will take it from Great Britain. Some predict a war, and rejoice in it as a chance for Ireland to rush in any pay up old scores. But their ideas on Canada are a little hazy. Long before you get this your elections will be over. It is the first time for years that I have not had a hand in the shindy; but I suppose Ottawa will not suffer by my absence.

O'Brien and Dillon were sent to Clonmel and then transferred to Galway. I am going down into the Black North in a few days, and I will write you from there. I had intended going to the continent next month, but things are so interesting here that I will remain a while. If you ever feel like sending me a paper, address me to Hearn's Hotel, Ann street. Clonmel, Tipperary. I will be there in a few weeks and may spend some time in the South. For the present I am off to the North. We have regular winter weather. I mean Irish winter. I have not seen much of the country since I came over; a run to Bray and Killiney and a short excursion into Wicklow where I was taken for a mining prospector, constitute my experiences of Dublin and surroundings. However, I am taking in the city fairly well. It is now growing late; the lights are lit along Capel street, so I will retire and leave the rest of my letter till to-morrow.

Enniskillen,

5th March, 1891.

Here I am! Since I began my letter on your nomination day, I will close it on election day. I wonder how Canada is to-night. Who runs the wigwag on the Hill? Is old Sir John still there, or have the Grits ousted him? Ten thousand such questions came to my mind as I awoke this morning. I looked out at the clouds of the morning, high over the city of the famed dragoons, and I kept on asking myself all these questions. But am I not in Enniskillen? I am at the "White Heart"—and truly it is the reverse of a Black Heart—for all seems hospitality and kindness itself. Yonder wends Lough Erne, the picturesque and beautiful; further off the horizon blends with

the purple heathery hills. The long, lank city of almost a single street is situated in a most beautiful position. I noticed this the more as I returned to town yesterday from a nine mile drive to "Florence Court," the residence of Lord Enniskillen. The demaine is equal to any I have seen in England. In fact, this headquarters of the hydra of Orangism is not so bad a place as notoriety would have you think. The editor of the "Fermanagh Record," Mr. Tremble, told me that the Earl of Enniskillen determined to tear down the Catholic Church that was built opposite the Protestant Church, but was found dead in his bed one morning. They have queer stories about religious troubles here; some of them true, most of them fiction. I could fill a novel for you with all I have heard. I had a boat-row on Lough Erne, and passed Capt. Coleman's place—it is called Bellevue—and I believe it to be superior to "Florence Court." I had a nice evening with Mr. John Cassidy, at his house—he is a merchant grocer here—and another at Mr. McGuire's, who is a wholesale dry goods merchant of great repute. They are known as the McGuire's of the "Diamond," on account of the place where their establishment is situated. I am invited to have dinner with a Mr. McNulty to-morrow—he is the C. T. Bate of Enniskillen. In fact, I have had such a kind reception on every side since I came here that I hate to leave. I amused them well with stories about Canadian backwoods' life. One thing I noticed most particularly here, it is the everlasting presence of the soldiers. They are eternally going and coming; parades, reviews, reveilles, tattoos, generals, and the infernal twang of the key-bugle from grey dawn till after sunset would make you think that the town was under insurrection act. But the girls don't seem to be in any dread of those skinny Highlanders, or red-coated fusiliers. They can tow a gigantic corporal, or a harem-scarem private, about with all the ease of a little tug hauling a big merchantman into the port of Quebec.

I am going in a couple of days to Omagh, about 21 miles from here, but no matter where I go I can never forget Enniskillen and its hospitality.

Omagh, Tyrone,

9th March, 1891.

"Is it possible that I never sent your letter yet?" Such my question as I found it again in my pocket this morning. I am now in too big a hurry to add much to this already long rig-ma-role. I am here in the capital of William O'Brien's constituency. You can never know how great that man is in the eyes of the people who elected him; and whether in prison, or in America, in Tyrone or in Parliament, he is to them the pure, unsullied patriot, the man "without fear and without reproach."

On Main street here I ran across another "White Heart" hotel. I was so well treated in Enniskillen that I resolved to try the Heart of Tyrone; and I found it a warm, generous, open and friendly Heart. There is a pretty little river runs past here—in Canada we would call it a creek. Father McNamee, the parish priest, is building a very fine church here; he asked me to go see it and have dinner with him. His nephew, the curate of the parish, was out in Canada collecting for the Church. He speaks so highly of Canada; Canadians, and their generosity, that the fact of coming from the banks of the St. Lawrence or of the Ottawa is a passport for you to the good will and the homes of the people of Tyrone.

I fear if I keep on I will make you think I have the writer's itch. The next place from which I hope to be able to write will be Michelstown. Remember me to all those who congregated at the Hall, I mean the "boys." May your shadow never grow less. With the best wishes to all my friends in Canada, I subscribe myself, from under the shadow of the historic Round Towers, and the arching sky of old Erin.

Yours very faithfully,

R. N.

THE THIEF'S RUSE.

At Cologne recently a thief chased by the police took refuge in a church and kneeling before the altar claimed sanctuary after the medieval fashion. The police arrested him all the same.

Memories of Irish Homes.

Here is an extract from a book, by an Irish priest entitled "Scenes and Sketches of an Irish Parish," which may recall to the minds of many of our readers scenes of the past. It runs as follows:—

"When Mrs. Coghlan, after putting the younger children to bed, made the usual nightly announcements, 'To yer knees, to yer knees!' Bryan had already been kneeling a good ten minutes, and with all the fervor of his soul had besought the God of Mercy to avert misfortune from his innocent children; adding, however, the invariable ejaculation of the Irish peasant when asking temporal favors, 'Welcome be the will of God!'"

"In the family circle of Bryan Coghlan, the Rosary after supper was never omitted. There was a tradition that, in the old homestead of the Coghans, it was said nightly without any break or interruption for three generations; and the present family would no more think of neglecting it than they would of abandoning the Faith.

"Mrs. Coghlan 'gave out' the Rosary in a low, sweet voice, and in a manner so deeply reverential that one could not listen to her without being moved to sentiments of greater piety and devotion. As she knelt there, with her mild blue eyes raised heavenward and a holy calm and peace radiating from her gentle, spiritual face, one could not help comparing her with the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes in the chapel of Doon; or, if influenced by literary associations, of thinking of Wordsworth's exquisite sentiment:

The holy time is quiet as a nun,
Breathless with adoration.

"Probably about the same hour in thousands of humble homes throughout the land the Rosary was being recited just as devoutly as in Bryan Coghlan's; and we can well imagine the Mother of God and the whole court of heaven nightly bending their earnest gaze on our own little spot of earth, 'our own loved land of sorrow,' and listening with strained and enraptured attention to the full chorus of praise that swells upward from Erin in one grand symphony to the Throne of the Most High.

"Whilst the fourth decade was being said a neighbor and kinsman of Bryan's, Mat Coghlan, lifted the latch of the door and entered. Finding the family at the Rosary, he quietly dropped on his knees, as was customary in such cases, and joined in the responses. At a silent intimation from Mrs. Coghlan, he even said the fifth decade, a privilege of which he seemed to be proud. As he seldom came for a ceilidh so late, Bryan instinctively associated his visit with bad news, and his heart sank.

"The Rosary finished, each spent a considerable time in saying what they denominated 'their own prayers.' Although Mrs. Coghlan, according to an invariable custom, now extending back over many years, had already recited the first two parts of the Rosary (in the morning and at mid-day), and had consequently completed the fifteen decades, or entire Rosary—her daily devotion—nevertheless, she was the last to rise from her knees after completing 'her own prayers.' As a delicate compliment to her in particular, the visitor did not arise sooner; and on-ly then did he exchange salutations with the household.

"Well, Mat, what's the best news?" Bryan observed, apparently in an indifferent way—though, truth to tell, he was deeply concerned about the reply.

"Bad news—very bad news for all of us, I'm afraid," Mat answered, as he leisurely lit his pipe with a live coal, and then tried by various audible drawings and puffings to kindle up the obstinate dunder.

"Although all were awaiting in silence the momentous intelligence, he proceeded, before giving any further information, to 'ready the pipe' with Mrs. Coghlan's knitting needle, and applied another coal to the tobacco with great deliberation and extreme care. In reality all this was a bit of acting in order to break the news.

"The tint-warner was at my house to-day," he said, "and he told me for certain that the new landlord intends to raise the rent on some of the strong tenants next gale-day. He was afraid to come here to tell you himself; he has a mortal dread of Tom here since the time he pitched him into a bog-hole for calling the

Coghans 'bog-trotters.' Sure, ain't we the direct descendants of the famous owd 'Maw' Coghlan, a member of the Irish Parliament in College Green, who owned in owd times as many as a dozen fortified castles in the barony of Garrycastle? Howsoever, it was not to tell yet the family history I came here this late hour of the night. I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news; but as sure as your name is Bryan Coghlan your rent is going to be ru on you, and mine too. God help us both this blessed and holy night, wid our big, helpless families to support; and we hard set enough to struggle round and make ends meet, wid the bad times that is in it!"

"Mat," says Bryan, "I knew this was coming. Before we began the Rosary I felt that some meeya was over us. Do you know but to-night, while I was having a blast out of the pipe, when I looked at the corner and saw all the bags of meal we brought from the mill the other day, and when I seen all the children—God bless them!—around me lookin' so happy and gay, I thought there so brave and hearty, I thought that I didn't deserve to be so comfortable; and that, like Job that Father John preached about last Sunday, God would try me with a touch of poverty and misfortune. But sure if He does, welcome be His holy will! Whatever He sinds must be for our good, Mat avic, even though we mightn't think so ourselves; for our ways aren't God's ways at all times."

CHRISTIANS IN SYRIA

We have before us a most interesting letter from the pen of Rev. Father Angeli, S.J., of Syria, in which he gives an account of the Christian institutions in that land. The fearful massacres of the Christians in the East have awakened considerable interest in all that concerns the land of the rising sun. The largest Jesuit college in the world is at Beirut, in which over two thousand pupils are educated. And all over the surrounding country are schools, both male and female. At Djounie two silk mills have been established, which give work to a vast number of people. In the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, Father Angeli tells of the mission that he gave some time ago amongst these people. The account that the Jesuit Father gives is one calculated to awaken memories of the desert and of the days when the tens of thousands of crusaders left their homes in the West, donned the armor of the Cross, trod the winds of Taurus, fainting under the suns of the Orient, and, at last, beheld, set in the emerald meadows that line Orontes, the white turrets and brown battlements of the Syrian Antioch. Read his graphic account of the mission:—

"At noon an hour is given the hands for dinner. The women who were making the retreat gave up three-fourths of this time to piety. When their very frugal meal was ended they came to the church for the Stations of the Cross. At 5 o'clock the working day is over. Then, immediately, comes supper. This meal consists of olives, red onions and a piece of cheese, figs cooked in sugar and unfermented grape juice is the dessert. There may also be large red radishes which are rolled in bread, and at the bottom of the basket some eggs which are saved for Thursday's dinner.

"If you were to pass through the silk mill while the employees are at supper you would find them gathered into groups, some in the building itself, others in the yard. Sisters have sought out their brothers, cousins their relatives, inhabitants of the same village, each other. Each group has its own special type of physiognomy. During your passage you would, I am sure, often be invited to take part in this modest feast. Sad to relate, you would also find orphan girls who have no baskets, nor parents to sit beside during the meal; they are not, however, without friends, and the contents of many a basket is gladly shared with them. Seated near the orphans you might see two little girls who have recently arrived at the mill. Their well worn clothes and untidy hair does not make them at all shy. They laugh continually and gaily plunge their beautiful white teeth into a stalk of sugar cane, careless of the fact that the juice is running down over their dresses. Princesses at a banquet could not be happier.

"The food of the employees of these silk mills consists principally of bread and fruits. They have great and warm, substantial dishes on Sunday when at home; at the factory everything is dry and cold. About the end of November grapes become scarce, but oranges and sugar cane take their place. During Lent cucumbers are in season; these are followed by apricots, which in

turn are succeeded by the water-melon, red and succulent. This fruit is not so well liked as the cucumber, for the reason that the latter may be thrust into a pocket and eaten at odd moments. In summer all fruits give place to grapes and figs.

"Directly after supper the church bell is heard ringing. Soon along the path from the factory come groups of girls whose brilliant costumes blend with the rose tinted twilight. At the church the men and boys take their places in front; the women behind the railing which divides the nave into two parts; the latter go to their seats with what might be called a bustling silence. The Rosary is said and at the end of each decade a hymn is sung.

"There being no fear, as in the morning, that the bell on the mill will suddenly ring out a summons to work, everyone is willing to stay as long as possible to hear the Word of God. I might speak for more than an hour and never lose the attention of my audience; not one would fall asleep in spite of the ten hours' work which they had performed during the day. Sometimes, it is true, I would notice the glances of one or two begin to wander here and there in search of distraction. At this I would introduce a story or parable or give a practical application to the words I had been speaking. Then I would enter the routine of daily life, unfold the ordinary defects of character, give some advice as to how to correct them, and urge my hearers to repentance. My words would bring forth many visible signs of contrition. All knelt at the end of the sermon, and, after the candles on the altar had been lighted, the litanies of the Blessed Sacrament were recited. The Syriac Rite was used, at which the people were greatly pleased. All took part. We had no organ, but those with good voices expended their best efforts and the result was very commendable indeed. Among the boys who attended the mission were the two best singers in Djounie. They sang at the evening services and added greatly to their attractiveness. At nine o'clock the exercises of the day were over. The congregation filed out of the church in silence, the boys first, then the girls. On Friday four Fathers heard confessions in preparation for the following day."

CATHOLIC PRESS.

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DENTIST.

Walter C. Kennedy,
Dentist,

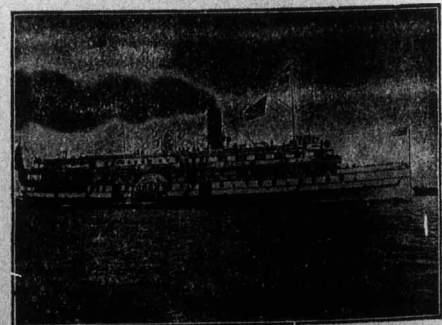
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L. H. MYRAND, Dalhousie St., Quebec

Or to THOS. HENRY, Traf. Manager, Montreal, Can.

NOTES FROM

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH in the occasion of the re-Catholic Church in L. since, the Rt. Rev. delivered a very asto on the subject of the olicity in England. I in 1773, when Rev. was dying at St. Om France, he had been hopes there were for would have said that one single ray of hope from that period gives a sketch of a ce lish religious life and summary is both com instructive, and we gi it reported in an Ame contemporary:—

"In the year 1801 ntics and laymen were p der concessions to the a sort of payment for of the penal laws. Th placed the election of under the government. Himself prevented it. age it would have been ment had had to confir of the Catholic Bishops Pitt had to resign his c Minister because he co that act. So that evil and thank God for it! Go a stage further, a that through O'Connell influence the governme into passing a great ac Catholics. In 1829 was great act of Catholic e That act provoked retal part of the Established five years after it was found the Evangelical Al ed, and as a consequen liance in opposition to l ed a great revival of amongst the people. Then came that most

OUR V



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Chas.