

mical, as well as more efficacious, for all the purposes intended by workhouses, to establish the denominational system in the administration of the Poor Law relief. The vast majority of the inmates of Irish workhouses are Catholics. The great bulk of the ratepayers belong to the same creed, while fully three fourths of the officials are Protestants. Now, we are opposed to sectarian bigotry, but we do advisedly declare such a state of things to be unsatisfactory—some would say grossly unfair. If the ratepayers of Ireland were polled to-morrow, we venture to predict that only an infinitesimal minority would be opposed to the denominational system in the application of Poor Law Relief. The State has formally sanctioned this system in the Reformatory and Industrial Schools' Acts with the very best results. We would apply it in this wise. Consolidate the unions by grouping a number of neighbouring workhouses into one. In many cases, at present, workhouses are principally kept up for the benefit of a few officials. Let those workhouses intended for the use of Catholics be transferred to the management of certain religious orders, whose labour would be duly subject to the inspection of the representatives of the ratepayers and of the State. A half, if not two-thirds, of the present Poor Law taxation could thus be remitted, as the religious orders would seek no profit, but barely a subsistence for themselves and those entrusted to them. With regard to the Protestant and Dissenting workhouses, we would leave the appointment of the officials to the ecclesiastical authorities of the respective religious communions, subject to the approval of the Local Government Board. By the grouping system, no injustice would be done to any creed; for, no matter how few or how scattered the pauper members of any persuasion might be, they would, by being collected into one workhouse, become entitled to all the pecuniary and other advantages enjoyed by the creed of the mass of the population. An allowance per head, for inmates and officials, would, in our opinion, be the fairest way in which to apportion the poor rates. By the establishment of Union Rating, the whole country would be placed on a level, and by the local grouping of workhouses, injustice to prosperous districts, for the benefit of the chronically poorer, would be prevented. Such a system, of which we have only given a hasty outline, would have, in addition to many other recommendations, the great advantage, that by it we should be spared those wretched squabbles, in which politics and polemics are so unavoidably intruded, at the election of every dispensary doctor, and other workhouse official throughout Ireland, and of which the dissatisfaction that attended the recent appointment of a schoolmistress for Roscrea Union, may be taken as a sample.

"LOOK ON THIS PICTURE, AND ON THIS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN 'EVENING POST.'

Roscrea, January, 1874

On an elevated plateau overlooking this town is situated a branch of the Sacré Cœur Convent, which, though presenting to the external beholder no evidence of architectural beauty, yet interiorly exhibits a beautiful illustration of the Royal Prophet's allusion to the Catholic Church—"Omnis gloria filiae regis ab intus"—"All the glory of the king's daughter is from within." This religious educational establishment contains generally from 115 to 120 inhabitants, consisting of about 80 young ladies, from every country in Ireland; 15 lay sisters and 25 choir nuns, from almost every country in Europe, among whom may be included the young, innocent Madam Paulina Stojniowska, from Poland, the Ireland of the East, as well as the daughters of our own dear Ireland, the Poland of the West. Like their Divine Model, who, to manifest the unbounded love of His affectionate Sacred Heart for poor fallen humanity, exchanged the bliss of Heaven for the misery of earth, these good religious ladies have left their country, their home, given up not only the comforts, but the luxuries of life, in order that they might minister to the poor and afflicted, and impart to the youth of the various grades of society the inestimable advantages of a religious and secular education. At the head of this establishment is a French lady, revered and venerated by the poor of Roscrea and its neighborhood, esteemed by all who enjoy the happiness of her acquaintance, beloved by all who have had the good fortune to have been confided to her solicitous and matronly care. A conspicuous place in this establishment is occupied by a daughter of our own dear Erin, whose splendid annual income is spent principally in erecting commodious, comfortable schools for the benefit of the Irish poor, a substantial specimen of which may be seen here in Roscrea. On some of these religious devotes the duty of not only training and instructing the above mentioned 80 young ladies in all the varied accomplishments which the present advanced state of society expects, but of also teaching them what may still be more necessary—how they may become useful members of society by the faithful discharge of those various duties which require industry combined with economy. A few more attend to the education of about 40 day pupils belonging to what is called the middle class, and several of them are occupied in the National Schools, wherein are educated about 350 of the humblest class belonging to this and the adjacent parishes. There is even a portion of the establishment set apart for the very small children who are brought in the arms of their mothers, and left there during the day, while they themselves are thus enabled to attend to their domestic duties, or to earn a few pence while employed in some useful occupation. In addition to all those engaged in the various duties already enumerated, there are a few more far advanced in years who might appear to the worldly-minded not only useless, nay, burthensome, but whose occupation is in reality more meritorious than even those of the rest, for it consists in imparting comfort and consolation to the poor broken-hearted child of affliction and sorrow, who is never refused admittance by the angelic portress of the Sacré Cœur. The union, the harmony and kind feeling that prevails among the members of this religious community reminds one of the happy times of the early Christians, of whom St. Paul says that "they had but one heart and one soul." A stranger paying a visit to the beautiful church of St. Cronan, on hearing the merry sound of the voices of the 80 young boarders during recreation time must acknowledge that they at least are strangers to any of the many miseries with which the outer world abounds. The eagerness with which they look forward to the first

Friday in September—the day fixed for their return from vacation—the many letters which pass through the hands of the Superioress from those whose connections with the convent has long ceased, letters which abound with fond recollections of happy school days gone by—are a strong proof that, if any place can be called a "heaven on earth," it is the Sacré Cœur of Roscrea. For this establishment, and farm of 15 acres attached to it, only a small rent is paid, but the taxation of every description is enormous. The annual expenditure of the whole institution is about £2000.

A traveller passing by the convent along the road leading to Templemore may, in a few minutes, reach the gate leading to another institution, commonly called the Workhouse, but which should, properly speaking, be called the poorhouse. In this large prison are immured about 144 paupers of every age and condition, old and young, healthy and sickly, the refuse of the streets as well as the respectable poverty-stricken destitute widow, who had once seen better and happier days. On entering this institution, especially that position occupied by young robust females, you are likely to hear some of them manifesting their discontentment and dissatisfaction by grumbling and scolding, vieing with one another as to the different tasks assigned them, no harmony, no affection, no union, but envy and jealousy combining to render their state deplorable indeed. It may, perhaps, appear paradoxical that there should be any position in the Roscrea Poor-house calculated to excite envy or jealousy. I state the truth when I assert that there are some among the paupers who might be usefully employed elsewhere, quite satisfied to remain when they are admitted in the capacity of servants to the respectable portion of the establishment. The same feelings do not, for the most part, appear to exist among the male portion of this community, for, yielding to the influence of religion, they endeavour to submit to their degradation if not with cheerfulness, at least with patience, in the hope that they may expiate the crimes, or at least the folly of former years by their calm resignation to the cold, dreary, cheerless condition of poorhouse life. A remarkable proof of this, of which I myself was witness, occurred a few years since. In the evening of a special Board day I was called to attend a poor dying man whom I had often attended, and whom I had visited (as I thought for the last time) on the morning of the same day. As soon as I entered the sick ward the poor man exclaimed, "Arra sure he called here after you left me, the villain that turned me out of my few acres, though I didn't owe him a shilling of rent, and my poor daughter, God knows where she is now, or what will become of her." After a few words of consolation I held the crucifix before his glazed eyes. Having snatched it from me he pressed it most fervently to his quivering lips; looking at it most intently for a few moments he cried out, "After all what is what I had to suffer compared to what You had to endure for us all. May God forgive him and me also, I'll soon be better off than ever he was." The Christian charity of this poor dying man, and his appeal to the God of mercy in favor of his cruel persecutor, appeared to me to bear a striking resemblance to that of the Protomartyr of whom the Holy Spirit of God says, "Obdormivit in Domino"—"he slept in the Lord." Coming to the juvenile department, we beheld the poor forsaken children, the offspring, perhaps, of estate and shame—placed under the care of State officials, who, though they may discharge those duties which their patrons impose on them, yet can never succeed in making those poor children in any way useful members of society, for where is the young boy or young girl to be found on coming out of the poorhouse capable of performing any of the humblest common duties of life? For all the happiness and manifold advantages derived from the Sacré Cœur Convent of Roscrea, we are indebted to the teaching of the much maligned Catholic Church. For the public advantage afforded by this Roscrea Poorhouse it would be untimely to withhold from its benefactors their full measure of praise; but, for all the misery, discord and degradation it engenders, I maintain that, notwithstanding all the boasted enlightenment and religious liberty of this nineteenth century, the State stands convicted before the world of the grossest injustice for allowing its representatives—the Poor Law Guardians, elected and non-elected—to impose such an enormous tax as is exacted each year from the people of Roscrea and its neighbourhood. That such a sad state of things ought not to be allowed to continue is the opinion of many, as well as, dear Mr Editor, your's most gratefully,

PATRICK CROWE, C.C.

DEATH OF THE SUPERIOR-GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF THE SACRÉ CŒUR.

THE Rev. Mother Mary Josephine Goetz, second Superior General of the above Order, died at Paris, at the Mother House of the Society, in January, aged fifty-six. Her illness was of comparatively brief duration, for it only began on St. Stephen's Day while preparing for the reception of the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, who said Mass at the Sacred Heart for the congregation of the Children of Mary, on the Feast of St. John. From the moment her indisposition, the seriousness of which she herself at once recognised, became known, the most excessive sympathy and anxiety were manifested from nearly all parts of the world, accompanied by assurances of fervent prayer for the prolongation of a life so precious, but which Divine Providence had decreed had run its useful and edifying course. The Holy Father himself evidenced his solicitude by frequent messages and special benedictions. The presence at her bedside of the Summo and the Cardinal Archbishop further testified to the regard in which she was held by the Church; while the profound sorrow of the community over which she presided, bears witness to the possession of qualities of disposition commensurate with those great intellectual powers of capacity of administration which caused her to be unanimously chosen successor to the foundress of the Order, Madame Barras, whose "cause of Beatification" is now proceeding at Rome. The Order was instituted in 1800, between which date and that of her death, in 1865, Madam saw no less than ninety-four houses established. From the latter year to the present, thirteen new Houses were established, making a total of 117 within three quarters of a century, and that century the 19th! Madame Goetz had the great to witness her re-