

AN IRISHMAN IN MANILLA.

The following amusing and in some measure instructive letter has appeared in the 'Bombay Catholic Examiner' of the 29th of August: MANILLA, Philippine Islands.

The day after I wrote to you I left for Manilla, in the Philippine Islands, and arrived there on Friday, the 7th inst. It is the most hospitable place I was ever in. I was not two hours on shore when I got an invitation to a large ball, which, of course, I accepted, and went there; it was splendidly got up; about three hundred were there, all Spanish, some of whom speak English pretty well, so I managed to get on well enough. The heat so was great that I could not dance fast dances. Thermometer 98 Fahr. I danced one regadoor (quadrille), that was all. The girls were beautiful, at least some of them; but they all look pretty, at all events their dress makes them look so. A long veil, either white or black, as the case may be, thrown over their heads; The music was splendid, the supper just the same as at home, and the ices equally as good. Our dresses (the gentlemen) all white, which looks to my eye, accustomed as I am to a black evening dress, as rather strange at first. White coat, white waistcoat, and white trousers, and made of the lightest materials. I never was in so hospitable a place. I slept on shore every evening, everyone fighting to see who would have me, to bring me out to drive in their carriages, which, as matter of course, I had the use of. They all drive out on a place called the Calasado, which would remind you of the Salt-hill road in Galway. This Manilla is a place that you could walk into any house and hang up your hat. Manilla is the most Catholic place I ever was in, the English are the only Protestants there, and with the exception of the English chapel, no Protestant church is to be found in the whole of the Philippines; the inhabitants there walk about with scapulars, not hidden from view, as at home, but outside the clothes; also a cross and beads. Monks and priests to no end: the monks, though they are the richest people in the land, go about without shoes, and in a plain cotton dress, with a robe round their waists and their heads shaved. Under the sun there are not a happier race than the lower orders of the Philippines. There is no such thing as a beggar; not even one did I see, and yet there are no poor houses. Every one has enough, every one is cleanly dressed, and the cottages extremely clean; those who need relief have not to go and suffer the scorn of a common master of a work house, as at home, but go the monasteries, and there the good old monks listen with pity to their sorrowful tales, and give them relief—not temporary assistance—but never cease until they have that man in his old position of earning his bread, no matter what the expense may be; and that is the way they spend their large income. I wish you saw the happiness of the peasants here and then compare them with those at home. The natives are all Catholic all over the Spanish island. It is strange how all over the East, in the settlements, the natives and Indians all become Catholics, while in the Protestant settlements not one will become a Protestant. In China the Catholics are making great strides. The Chinese women are becoming Catholics very fast; the reason is plain, they are badly treated (that is the women) in China by their husbands; in fact, looked upon as an inferior race; cannot sit in the high places in the Chinese place of worship, and it is a common practice for men to beat their wives. I have in China seen the Catholic missionary going about with shaved head and tail, dressed exactly like a Chinaman, preaching right and left that women had an immortal soul as well as men, and just as high in the order of creation and as much to do with the salvation of the world. The consequence is, all the women follow them and become Christians, and then bring up their sons and daughters in the Catholic faith. I saw very many in Canton coming to be baptized. There are splendid churches in Manilla; the altars exceed anything I ever saw. One of the altars is as large as that of Gardiner's street, in Dublin, about 12 feet long, 12 high, and of solid silver. I saw another of mother-o'-pearl and gold; it stood about 10 feet, which, when lighted up, had a grand effect. The high altar in the Church of St. John, at Malta, is nothing to it. The high altar in the Archbishop's chapel is the grandest thing I ever saw—silver and gold, mother-o'-pearl and precious stones; the music delightful; Mozart's immortal No 12, sung by five hundred voices, and an organ, the like of which I never heard; and then the artillery blazing away without the walls of the cathedral during the elevation. Oh, you have no idea of the grandeur of Catholic worship in Catholic countries! On Whit-Sunday evening I saw the procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the streets, and thousands upon thousands of little children strewing flowers before it. Since I left Europe I have not seen a place I like half so much; indeed China is a place you could not enjoy yourself so much as at Manilla. What disgusted me more than anything in Canton, was to see the natives eating cats and dogs. I don't envy them their dainty dish. The beggar-square is a shocking place, where all the beggars are thrown in to starve. The temple of five hundred gods is a beautiful building in Canton. I must now conclude. I shall send you some photographs I took here and at Alexandria, also several views of the pyramids, which, if you like, you can send to the 'Illustrated London News.' There is certainly a very strange custom in the Philippines—one, I should say, that was ridiculous—and that is, the extraordinary custom of having game cocks perched on every man's shoulder. Cock fighting is an amusement all classes are fond of. No doubt, cruel, you will say; but, however, not more cruel than hunting a poor hare for his life, as at home.

ARREST OF ONE THOUSAND PERSONS.—The 'Telegraph' repeats the reports of a Socialistic conspiracy in Russia, and adds that 1000 persons, including many ladies, have been arrested. A commission has been appointed to investigate the conspiracy, the exact object of which is still unknown. Several persons of exalted rank are said to be implicated. A vast amount of money seems to have been at the disposal of the conspirators. The arrests since the discovery of the plot have been so numerous that a perfect reign of terror exists in St. Petersburg. It was proposed that the police should search every house in the city in a single night.

A ROMANTIC STORY.

A LEIPSI paper publishes the following story:—About ten months ago a rich patron of sciences and arts in Berlin offered prizes amounting to about 14000 marks each for the best essays on the history of the Middle Ages, astronomy, geology, poetry, and metaphysics; and about 38500 marks each for the best romance and the best poem. A committee of several members of the several University faculties was appointed to award the prizes, and the awards were made a short time ago. A large number of persons competed, and the work offered had a large amount of excellent material among it. The names of the writers were enclosed in sealed envelopes, on the outside of which fictitious names were inscribed. The prize for the essay on metaphysics was awarded to a young man named Max Markmann, who had sent his essay under the name of "Hans Wildenstein." When Markmann's name was announced, a pale, poorly-clad, exceedingly wretched-looking young man stepped forward and was greeted with a hearty round of applause. His hair was thin and already sprinkled with grey, and his whole appearance excited the sympathy of the audience. After receiving the prize he quietly returned to his seat. One after another as the titles of the best essays were announced, the accompanying envelope disclosed Markmann as the author, and the applause grew tumultuous as the young man, looking more weary every time, stepped forward. The excitement among the students was so great that a suggestion would have caused them to carry him off in triumph. The essays all examined, the poems came next in turn, and the prize was Markmann's. Then the romance prize was found to be his. It was entitled "The Village Schoolmaster," and Bethold Auerbach, who was of the committee, pronounced it as one of the most gracefully written stories he had ever read. This was the last prize awarded, but hardly had the fortunate competitor risen to go and receive it when he fell fainting to the floor. A death-like stillness reigned in the hall, while they carried the poor young man into an adjoining room, where the physicians succeeded in restoring him to consciousness, but that was all, for four hours afterwards he was a corpse. His death was the result of long years of deprivation. He was literally starved to death.

GENERAL NEWS.

His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris has received a contribution towards the Church of the Sacred Heart, which has a curious history attached to it. The Abbé de Manneval, of the parish of St. Philippe du Roule, Paris, recently sent him 1000f., which he obtained from Madame de Rothschild under the following circumstances:—When a young man, before becoming a priest, this abbé was an attaché of the French Embassy at Vienna, and one day purchased a little miniature in an old curiosity shop for a few francs. The other day he showed it to Madame de Rothschild, who incautiously pulled the frame off, and to her surprise found written on the inside these words: "Portrait of Madame de Pompadour, given by her to M. de Kaunitz." "I'll give you a 1000f. for your good works, Abbé, if you will let me have this miniature." "Take it, Madame la Baronne," said the Abbé, who the next day sent the 1000f. to the Cardinal with the above story. "I thank you, Abbé," said his Eminence, on receiving the money, "we will make a work of expiation of it, and pray for the soul of the unhappy woman whom the picture represented."

The 'Figaro' informs us that the Marquise de Caux (Adelina Patti) recently sung in Paris for the benefit of the Alsace-Lorraine emigrants. The large sum of 60,000f. was thereby collected for these poor people, and to the amount Madame Patti added a personal contribution of 1600f. In consequence of this act of charity, it seems that orders have been given that "the Diva" shall not be engaged in Berlin, or anywhere else in Germany. Patti, however, is equal to the occasion, and declares that if this is really the case, it is a matter of most supreme indifference to her, as she had not intended going to Germany at all as long as that country has a footing in France. The celebrated prima donna still further offends German susceptibilities by her answer to the letter of thanks which Madame de MacMahon addressed her, in which she declared that nothing pleased her more than to be of service to France, which country, being that of her husband, she now considers as her own.

AN AWFUL TIDAL WAVE.—Additional advices from Macao and Hong Kong report that the damage by the typhoon and tidal wave as more than confirming previous reports. It is estimated that a total of twenty thousand lives were lost. At Macao the typhoon was of the most terrific character. The tidal wave broke on shore with awful violence, sweeping everything before it. When the tempest was at its height, fires broke out in six different places, maliciously caused by pirates for spoils. The church of St. Antonio, and a large number of houses in the neighbourhood were burned down. Many of the people lost everything, and are rendered homeless. Macao was laid in ruins, and the misery thus entailed upon hundreds of its residents is fearful, while the loss of life is enormous. It is computed that over 10,000 lives were lost in Macao alone. Four days after its occurrence, the effluvia arising from the thousands of decomposing bodies was so very great that the soldiers revolted and refused to bury any more bodies. The governor, fearing that a plague would follow if the bodies were not disposed of, ordered them to be burned. Four thousand bodies were cremated. The troops first covered the corpses with tar, and then set the heaps on fire. The loss of lives in and around and in the vicinity of Hong Kong will exceed 4000. A large number of Europeans are among the killed.

Twenty Sisters of the Cross and several Roman Catholic priests were passengers by the steamer St. Osyth, which arrived at Melbourne at the end of last year.