

AMONGST THE LEPERS.

FATHER A. BOUILLON contributes to 'Les Missions Catholiques' the following account of a visit he paid to the Lazar house of Molokai, Sandwich Islands. We translate it for the benefit of the readers of the 'Catholic Review': "On June 8, Monsignor, the vicar apostolic and myself left Father Andrew Bugarmann and set out together for the Lazar house. We arrived at Molokai in the afternoon, and there found awaiting several horses sent out by Father Damien Devonster, and the government agent who directs the establishment, to conduct us to it. This man a leper, and was formerly a journalist. He is at present a Catholic. In the evening of the day of our arrival, the Christian sufferers, assembled in the chapel of St. Philomena to hear me preach. It was terrible to go over this horrible prison made by nature and inhabited by eight hundred prisoners, all of them hopeless of ever being cured, and mostly terribly mutilated by the scourge from which they are doomed to suffer. Many of them have their faces awfully disfigured, some have lost their ears, their noses, their feet, and their hands. A great number cannot go to church but remain in the hospital where Father Devonster instructs them. By taking great care of themselves and avoiding colds, the lepers can live for nearly twenty years. The average number of deaths is one a day. On Wednesday, June 9, high mass was said, during which the lepers executed some music by Mozart, and very well did they render it. In the afternoon Mgr. Margaret confirmed many of them, about 135, but sometimes he had difficulty in finding a clean spot on their faces to place the holy oils. One moonlight night they gave us a serenade. The majority of the musicians had no fingers, but still they performed very well. I asked some if they regretted their birth places. They said no; "that the government took great care of them, far better care indeed than did their own parents. They were very fond of their pastor who was exceedingly kind to them, and, when they were ill, nursed them and gave them tea, sugar and biscuits, and to the poorest, clothes. He treated poor and rich alike. He built their houses and was equally kind to Protestants and Catholics. What a difference there was between him and the Protestant missionaries. Once one of these came to see the lepers out of curiosity, but he did not venture to go near them. Ah! there is a wide difference between the true disciple of Christ and the mercenary who only works for money and fame." The next day we left Molokai. I shall never forget the awful procession of two hundred lepers which accompanied us, with drum and fife at its head, for over one mile beyond the village. Nor shall I ever forget the vicar apostolic's farewell words and benediction. Tears streamed from our eyes, for we were sincerely touched at the sight of these poor wretches rendered happy in their way by the tender mercy of God, and by Christian charity."

THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

THE following well-considered letter appeared in a recent number of the 'Bendigo Independent,' addressed to the editor of that journal:—

SIR,—The position taken by the Roman Catholics in reference to the present system of public instruction appears to be daily gaining strength amongst all sections of the community. It was at first reluctantly admitted that there "was something in what they say," and now it is freely acknowledged that there is a great deal in the views they have so earnestly urged in the defence of religious liberty. The Legislature, in its wisdom or unwisdom, in the year 1872, passed an Act for the purpose, as is alleged, of promoting public instruction. To that measure the Catholic people of this country were almost unanimously opposed. It was carried, however, by a large majority in the Legislative Assembly, and met with but a feeble opposition in the "Upper House" of Parliament. Nevertheless, the Catholics thought, and still think, that the Education Act was a palpable infringement upon the liberty of conscience guaranteed by the Constitution to the people of this country. In Ireland, one of the leading grievances of the Catholics was that they were obliged to contribute to the support of a church to which they did not belong, and the principles of which they strongly disapproved. The removal of that grievance was advocated by the Catholics—not in any feeling of bitterness or hostility to the other denominations, but simply upon the ground that such a state of things was unjust, oppressive, and opposed to the first principles of religious liberty. With the result of their agitation we are all familiar; there is no longer a dominant church in Ireland. It is difficult to perceive any very marked distinction between the position occupied by the Irish people in reference to the Church establishment and that occupied by Victorian Catholics with regard to the law affecting what has been termed "public instruction." That the Catholics are in a majority in Ireland, and in a minority here, cannot legitimately curtail their right to worship God or educate their children according to the dictates of their conscience. In Ireland they were called upon to contribute to the support of a Church, and in Victoria they are required to aid in sustaining a system of education to which they are, and desire to be, strangers. Why should they pay for that which they could not receive without dishonor? The absurdity of calling the system "secular, compulsory, and free" is being made more and more manifest day by day. Secular it may be, in one sense; but in no sense can this secularism be distinguished from sectarianism. The secularists are a "sect" quite as much as Protestants, or Catholics, or Spiritualists. Then it is compulsory! Why, the highest court of judicature in this community has declared the compulsory clause to be almost, if not entirely unworkable. Upon examination, no doubt, it will be found to be still further liable to the operation of the "carriage and six." Then is it free? If "free education" means the present system, it is not only not free, but is a very expensive commodity indeed. How much

does this free education cost the people? The deficiency in the public revenue is mainly owing to this system, and to supply that deficiency additional taxation must necessarily be imposed. And this leads irresistibly to the ludicrous position occupied by the "Upper House" in reference to this question. These hon. gentlemen who object to the Catholics invoking the blessing of the Creator during school hours, but who cannot commence their own deliberations without an amendment upon the Lord's Prayer as it is found in the Holy Scripture, passed the Education Bill with, for them, unwonted rapidity. They are ordinarily described as "slow coaches," but in this particular instance it was a case of "high-pressure express." They are the representatives of the propertied classes. If they do not possess much intellectual power, they undeniably represent broad acres and sheep. What is now their position? The deficiency in the public revenue must be made up. How? Ask the thousands who have assembled throughout Victoria in favor of a land tax, and without difficulty will be found an appropriate reply. Ask the late Minister of Justice—James Macpherson Grant—what that tax means. The hon. gentleman will tell you it means "bursting-up" the large estates, and burst-up they shall be, as surely as the sunlight comes at mid-day. This is a consummation for which the "wealthy lower orders" had scarcely bargained, when they were engaged in the task of promoting "free education." Are they still enamored of the system, and how many of their class will cry "content" to these proposals? It is in vain they now turn imploring eyes upon Sir James McCulloch. Notwithstanding the intrigues of the member for Warrnambool and his highly "respectable" adherents, they—the propertied classes—will have to pay, and when the Education Act is either fairly modified or totally repealed, they will be regarded with pitiless disdain by every true friend of civil and religious liberty.—I am yours, &c., VRA.

MUCKROSS ABBEY AND INNISFALLEN.

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD has "done" the town of Killarney, and gives his impressions thereof in last Sunday's 'Chronicle.' He thus speaks of Innisfallen and

MUCKROSS ABBEY.

The monks have been at rest these hundred years; the roof has fallen to decay, and in the open nave the grass has spread like a carpet under foot, and the ferns hang like ragged tapestries from the chinks in the wall. I doubt if there is any ruin more charming than this; it is not extensive; it is simply complete and satisfying. The trees reach in through the unglazed windows and shake boughs with the sapplings that are sprouting within—very proper and very pretty supplings, that grow close to the high altar and have reason to be spruce and fair to see. That dim cloister at Muckross, how it haunts me! There is a great yew tree growing out of the heart of it and covering the whole with a green roof of leaves. The light that steals into this cloister is so soft and *sentimental*—shall I use the word?—that one easily imagines the rooks to be the ghost of the old monks complaining at the sacrilegious trespass of mere sight-seers, such as myself, for instance. The various tenantless, and now untenable chambers are pointed out by the custodian; but he hurries you from ruin to ruin so that you get but a

GLIMPSE OF THE CLUSTERED CROSSES

In the yard where the dead lie, and the rooks scold at you with hoarse voices for your worldly and careless intrusion. Muckross Abbey is like a petrified sight! It is the sweetest and the somberest, and the most heartrending ruin imaginable. It is like a torn volume of a sacred history, or broken statue of a saint; there is not enough of it to console you in the loss of that which is gone forever; there is too much of it remaining to permit you to forget the magnitude of your loss. The flutter and the fall of leaves in the gusts of warm south wind; a cloister full of shadows; a chapel crowded with weeds breast-high; a refectory haunted of bees and blossoms; a crumbling tower, with the ivy folded about it like a mantle, and a cloud of rooks clamoring overhead—such is the Abbey as I remember it after hours and hours of wholesome loafing that made me familiar with almost every stone in it.

INNISFALLEN.

Sweet Innisfallen, fare thee well!

A verdant island with a ruined monastery scattered over it; winding paths skirt the irregular shores. Every tree grows here, and every charm of nature seems reproduced in little somewhere within its wave washed borders. There have been battles here and monks massacred, but how long it seems! Now there cannot be found a more peaceful retreat; and with the lap of its waves in my ears, and photos of its myriad fluttering leaves and the rustle of the hoof the sheep that feed here, I think of the day, twelve hundred years ago, when St. Finian founded his abbey, and I wonder if he realized then that he was building for the moment, as it were,

Sweet Innisfallen, fare thee well;
May calm and sunshine long be thine,
How fair thou art let others tell,
While but to feel how fair be mine!

That is Tom, again; forgive me. I sleep with the "Melodies" under my pillow these nights. Perhaps I do like Killarney better than I thought; but I might like it better than I do if it were not so solemn. Ireland is the saddest, the most tearful, the loneliest spot on the face of the globe; at least I am beginning to think so.

A new parasol has been invented, having an outside rod which crosses the main shaft about an inch above the fastening of the ribs at the gathers. When closed and used for a walking-stick, the parasol is simply an ingeniously-contrived pair of tongs, and enables a fashionably-dressed lady to pick up a handkerchief or other small article without stooping.