

DR. NEWMAN ON MIRACLES.

"MIRACLES to the Catholic are facts of history and biography, and nothing else; and they are to be regarded and dealt with as other facts; and as natural facts under circumstances do not startle Protestants, so supernatural, under circumstances, do not startle the Catholic. They may or may not have taken place in particular cases; he may be unable to determine which; he may have no distinct evidence; he may suspend his judgment; but he will say, 'It is very possible;' he never will say 'I cannot believe it. Such, then, is the answer I would make to those who urge against us the multitude of miracles recorded in our Saints' Lives. We think them true in the sense in which Protestants think the details of English history true. . . . If, indeed, miracles never can occur, then, indeed, impute the narratives to fraud; but, till you prove they are not likely, we shall consider the histories which have come down to us true on the whole, though in particular cases they may be exaggerated or unfounded. Where, indeed, they can certainly be proved to be false, there we shall be bound to do our best to get rid of them; but till that is clear, we shall be liberal enough to allow others to use their private judgment in their favor, as we use ours in their disparagement. For myself, lest I appear to be in any way shrinking from a determinate judgment on the claims of those miracles and relics, which Protestants are so startled at, and to be hiding particular questions in what is vague and general, I will avow distinctly that, putting out of the question the hypothesis of unknown laws of nature (that is, of the professed miracle being not miraculous), I think it impossible to withstand the evidence which is brought for the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples, and for the motion of the eyes of the pictures of the Madonna in the Roman States. I see no reason to doubt the material of the Lombard Crown at Monza; and I do not see why the Holy Coat at Tréves may not have been what it professes to be. I firmly believe that portions of the true Cross are at Rome, and elsewhere, that the crib of Bethlehem is at Rome, and the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul also. I believe that at Rome, too, lies St. Stephen, that St. Matthew lies at Salerno, and St. Andrew at Analfi. I firmly believe that the relics of the saints are doing innumerable miracles and graces daily, and that it needs only for a Catholic to show devotion to any saint in order to receive special benefits from his intercession. I firmly believe that the saints in their lifetime have before now raised the dead to life, crossed the sea without vessels, multiplied grain and bread, cured incurable diseases, and superseded the operation of the laws of the universe in a multitude of ways. Many men, when they hear an educated man so speak, will at once impute the avowal to insanity, or to an idiosyncrasy, or to imbecility of mind, or to decrepitude of powers, or to fanaticism, or to hypocrisy. They have a right to say so, if they will; and we have a right to ask them why they do not say it of those who bow down before the Mystery of mysteries, the Divine Incarnation. If they do not believe this, they are not Protestants; if they do, let them grant that He who has done the greater may do the less."

1876 IN IRELAND.

DUBLIN, December 22, 1876.—The year 1876 has not been one of exciting events in Ireland. Politically, it was an extremely tame period. Under a Tory administration, to which the political sympathies of the vast majority of the Irish people are opposed, no legislation in the direction of reform or amelioration could be expected. The Home Rule party brought forward a motion for a select committee to inquire into the nature of the claim advanced for local legislation, which was defeated, the chief incident in the debate being the eloquent speech of Mr. P. J. Smyth, member for Westmeath, a speech, which it is feared, will cost him his seat. Numbers of bills in the direction of popular demands were introduced, to gratify the vanity of individual members, and as an evidence of Parliamentary industry to their constituents, without the remotest hope of their ever reaching the stage called a second reading. Of these, by far the most important was the Irish University Bill, introduced by Mr. Butt, but which wholly fell through. The only measure of the session was a miserable Municipal Act, restoring to Irish Corporations portions of the privileges which they formerly enjoyed, and which English Corporations still enjoy, in the appointment of sheriffs. No material change took place as regards the representation in the House of Commons. Contention amongst the popular party, in the city of Cork, on the lamented death of the patriotic Joseph Ronayne, led to the return of a Conservative, the first time for years in the capital of Munster. A vacancy in Leitrim, however, balanced this defection, a Liberal and a Catholic having succeeded a Conservative. Just at the close of the year, the death of Sir John Esmonde, M.P., causes a vacancy in Waterford county. Before this event, fifty of the one hundred and three Irish members (Cashel and Sligo boroughs disfranchised) were Catholics, and about seventy-three Liberals, nearly all of them Home Rulers.

It has been a year of fair harvest, average commercial prosperity, diminished pauperism and crimes, vastly decreased emigration, entire freedom from political excitement and agitation, and for almost the first time, in more than thirty years, a slight increase of population. The steady growth of wealth, but far inferior to the rate of progress in England and Scotland, the improvement in the condition of the masses of the people, in food, clothing, and habitations, and the general diffusion of higher comforts amongst the industrial classes are admitted.

These circumstances, coupled with the unfavorable reports from the United States for the last few years, have completely checked emigration to the West. The few that have gone went to join the chief portion of their families on the other side, their passages having been paid in the States. Almost as many have re-

turned to Ireland from the States during the year as have left. I had opportunities of seeing many of those returned, and although few or none have come back intending to remain, all have returned under industrial pressure. A considerable number of those who have come back have emigrated to Australia and New Zealand. The great Republic may now accept the fact that no further material accession of immigration can possibly be hoped for from Ireland. Waifs and strays, dribbles of families will for many years, no doubt, continue to join their relations beyond the Atlantic, but emigration from Ireland, in the past sense, is at an end. People are quite content with the dull, quiet comforts, which, now, every industrious person can command at home, so that the spirit for emigration has died out. At the same time, such is the fascination of the exciting industrial and social atmosphere of the States that no rational emigrant would assent to the supposition that he was going to remain in this sleepy and unfortunate country. Ireland is more happy; America is more prosperous. To combine both is the vexed problem.—'Catholic Review.'

LECTURE ON LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD.

THE third lecture for the season of St. Kevin's Branch of the Catholic Union was delivered at the lecture-hall, Camden street, Dublin, on the 21st ultimo, by Michael Carter O'Meara. Mr. O'Meara apologised for the necessary incompleteness of the sketch which he intended to give. He had rather selected this subject in order to bring before them the education and surroundings of the youth and early manhood of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, to show he never could have organised or consented to take part in the insurrectionary movement with which his name was inseparably connected if it had really been the wild and impossible scheme it had been so often represented; and that the fact of his, a man of position and family, having thrown himself into the agitation was complete proof, if such proof were wanted, that by reason of the policy adopted towards his country by the British Minister it was an impossibility that Ireland could have escaped passing through the ordeal of an insurrection. Lord Edward Fitzgerald was born on October 15th, 1763, being the fifth son of the Duke of Leinster. In the latter part of 1780 a lieutenancy was purchased for him in the 96th Regiment, and in a year after, at the age of eighteen, he was first introduced to the horrors of war at a battle fought in the American War of Independence, where he received a severe wound, and was left for dead on the field. A negro found him and carried him off to Charleston. In after life Lord Edward regretted the part he had taken in this war, and said on one occasion that he had been fighting against liberty. Of him Major Doyle wrote about this time—"I never knew a more lovable person, and every man in the army, from the general to the drummer, would cheer the expression. . . . He had great animal spirits, which bore him up against all fatigue, but his courage was entirely independent of those spirits—it was a valour *sui generis*." In 1783 he returned from America, and was returned member for Athy. In October, 1792, while in Paris, he attended a meeting to celebrate the victories of the French armies, and among the toasts were—"The armies of France: may the example of its citizen-soldiers be followed by all enslaved countries till tyranny be extinct;" and another, still more Republican—"The speedy abolition of all hereditary and feudal distinctions." For this he was dismissed from the army. In 1793, when a vote of thanks was being moved to the Viceroy for a proclamation for dispersing all unlawful assemblies, Lord Edward rose and said, "I give my most hearty disapprobation to that address, for I do think that the Lord-Lieutenant and the majority of this house are the worst subjects the King has." A perfect tumult followed, and when called on for an explanation he said—"I am accused of having declared that I think the Lord-Lieutenant and the majority of this house the worst subjects the King has—I said so, it is true, and I am sorry for it." It was needless to say this explanation was rejected. In the summer of 1796, the United Irishmen determined on appealing to arms; it was then Lord Edward joined the society, and was elected Commander-in-Chief. The lecturer then detailed the events connected with the rising of '98, so familiar to every reader of Irish history, down to the arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, on May 19, 1798, at the house of Mr. Murphy, in Thomas street, when, after a gallant resistance, he was captured by Major Swan and Captain Ryan, of infamous memory, and conveyed to the Castle. There he was subjected to undignified, barbarous, and disgraceful cruelties which were fully stated in a letter from Lord Henry Fitzgerald, his brother, to Lord Camden; and on June 4, 1798, Lord Edward Fitzgerald died. Reviewing generally the state of things at that period, the lecturer concluded:—"For myself I may say I would echo the words of Wolfe Tone—"I would rather be Fitzgerald in his rebel grave than Pitt at the head of the British Empire."

A Sister died recently in Bensheim, Germany, who had the almost exclusive care of the typhus ward in the military hospital during the campaign of 1870-71, and has been ever since that time celebrated for her self-devotion in nursing other typhus patients during the two or three epidemics in this district. Her coffin was borne to the cemetery by twelve veteran soldiers, among whom were several Protestants and Jews, who outvalled the Catholics in their veneration of the deceased. The municipal authorities not only gave a special place for the interment of the Sisters, but have also undertaken to erect a suitable monument at their own expense. The Sisters visit and attend indiscriminately all classes and denominations, nursing in their own houses even Protestants and Jews. The Catholics form a minority of the population, but the love for the nuns is universal, and never has the slightest charge of any kind been brought against them.