

Irish News

OUR IRISH LETTER

(From our own correspondent.)

Dublin, June, 1905.

The education war is going on briskly here in Ireland. The question, in a nutshell, lies between two parties: on the one side, the Catholic hierarchy and clergy (behind whom the country is solid), who desire to see their flocks remain Christians in whose hearts will remain firmly implanted that old-fashioned, but very wholesome belief that man is created for a higher destiny than to live a brief span here on earth. In the other camp we have the party now, unfortunately, growing daily stronger in the world, whose great end and aim seem to be the subversion of all religion. Into the hands of this latter party many, very many are playing, who would be shocked and indignant if told so much in plain words. But they are doing so, and some Catholics are, unthinkingly, working hard to the same end.

The most extraordinary efforts are now made to entice young Catholics into Trinity College, the latest proselytising device being an offer from Sir John Nutting, who was head of a great Dublin bottling store connected with Guinness and Co. Sir John Nutting offers a certain number of scholarships in Trinity College, Dublin, to boys and girls from the intermediate schools, and, strange to say, these scholarships are open to forms as low as middle grade students! That is to say, boys and girls who have passed a very narrow and merely crammed-for examination, not even in the highest grade of intermediate school curriculum, are offered prizes and may become graduates of the once brilliant Trinity College. What is the meaning of this? It is that far and away the greater number of successful intermediate pupils come from the Catholic unwendowed schools of Ireland and from the Irish middle classes that have hitherto been the backbone of Catholicism in this country, and it is hoped that these bribes will draw such crowds of these youths into Trinity College that the rest of the Catholics will not have an excuse for a just demand of a University of their own. To try and meet this new plan for tampering with the faith of our Catholic youth, the Bishops, the heads of Colleges, and some—let us hope they may be many—of the Catholic laity are establishing scholarships that can only be held in Catholic colleges.

The Vale of Ovoca.

The first part of this letter was written as I was about to start for 'Rebel Wexford' and for a part of the county never visited by me before, often as I had heard of pretty Newtownhamlet and its neighborhood, watered by the beautiful river Slaney. To reach this neighborhood a traveller from Dublin journeys through some of the richest country in Ireland: the Vale of Shanganagh, Bray, Wicklow, pausing awhile in that 'sweet Vale of Ovoca,' Moore has made so famous by writing his sweet, loving lines, wisely describing nothing, but leaving each one to make a picture for himself, according to that which is loveliest in his own fancy. Which suggests the thought that were painters invited to send in to a gallery pictures painted from the ideals suggested by reading Moore's lines, what a gallery of varied landscapes we should have.

And what is the reality of that sweet Vale of Ovoca? Well—it describes the poem. It shows you no grand scenic effect, no rushing cascades, no alpine peaks blue as the skies they seem to pierce, no foaming torrent, no castle perched on hoary rock, no shepherds piping to their flocks, nothing grand, nothing striking, but just a sweet spot to rest in, to stretch at ease when you come there, city-tired or world-weary; stretch there, beneath the trees, and rest, rest, first looking round lazily, dreamily, resting, resting, till, perhaps, you fall asleep and have a long refreshing dream that you are in Tir-na-n-Oig, that Tir-na-n-Oig is precisely the scene your waking eyes last dwelt on; that the music in Tir-na-n-Oig is always a rippling, murmured accompaniment to thrush, blackbird, or robin, sometimes to all three; that Tir-na-n-Oig is a sweet, quiet valley enclosed between thickly-wooded hills, and winding in and out to suit the vagaries of a cool, shallow river which flashes in tiny cascades over boulder and stepping-stone, so that a wanderer by its banks can cross and re-cross at will wherever the sight of a cooler nook far in the woods, or a piece of velvet turf, sunny and soft beneath the foot, tempts him to pass from bank to bank, like a child longing to take every

pleasure. The sky is always sunny in the Vale of Ovoca, at least, often as I have seen it, it has always been so, and therefore I have firm faith in its everlasting blue. The trees are ever vivid green (for no one ever goes to the Vale in winter), relieved by dashes of golden gorse and yellow broom and the fresh lilac of rhododendrons that persist in bursting into bloom even in well clipped hedges. The very fact of the pretty river's shallowness makes it doubly fresh to look at, because it is so rapid that it bursts into little white wavelets over the stones in its rocky bed, while here and there patches of strand, ochre-tinted or silvery grey, give a sunny coloring wherever they are seen. Far up the glen the very iron mines that lend this russet coloring are a pretty picture in themselves, so framed are the rocks and yellow banks in luxurious trees, and flowers, while on every side one sees suggestive openings in the woods and amongst the hills that make the city dreamer—still resting with such a thorough sense of rest—begin lazily to form plans for endless excursions into these cool depths when he shall awake, refreshed and young again, in that sweet Tir-na-n-Oig.

This is Moore's Vale of Ovoca.

M.B.

COUNTY NEWS

ARMAGH—Wedding Gifts

Amongst the numerous wedding gifts to the Marchioness of Bute on the occasion of her marriage were two handsome rosaries presented by Cardinal Logue, one of opals and the other of topaz.

CARLOW—An American Visitor

Rev. James Foley, of Attumwa, Iowa, U.S.A., is on a visit to Tullow, County Carlow, his native town, after an absence of 29 years. He is the guest of his brother, Mr. John Foley, T.C.

DONEGAL—The Bishop of Raphoe

On July 10 the silver jubilee of the Bishop of Raphoe was celebrated in Letterkenny. His Lordship, in acknowledging the presentation of addresses and a testimonial delivered an eloquent speech.

DUBLIN—The Christian Brothers' Schools

At the Christian Brothers' Schools, North Richmond street, the Most Rev. Dr. Walsh presided recently at a large gathering of the friends of the well known institution. Rev. Brother Butler, Superior, gave some details of the work accomplished there recently. His Grace delivered a very important address, in the course of which he dealt trenchantly with the claims of Trinity College to superiority over the Royal University. In the words of a distinguished Fellow of Trinity, now dead, they had been 'branding their own herrings for the last 300 years'—conducting their examinations with closed doors. At length an Act of Parliament was passed to put a stop to this practice as far as the Medical Faculty was concerned. Dr. Walsh astonished all present with quotations from the report made by the Inspectors of the Medical Council on the Medical School of Trinity College. It simply played havoc with the pretensions of Dublin University as far as that department was concerned at least. His Grace announced his intention of giving two University Scholarships of £50 each for competition among the boys of the Christian Brothers' Schools of Dublin—one in mathematics and the other in modern languages and literature.

KERRY—Appointed Canon

The Most Rev. Dr. Mangan, Bishop of Kerry, has appointed Very Rev. P. Hayes, Adm., Killarney, Canon of the diocese.

KILDARE—Death of a Priest

The funeral took place recently at Caragh of the Rev. Austen Kinsella, who was one of the best known of the Kildare clergy. He suffered imprisonment in the Clontarf land war, and was mainly instrumental in the restoration of the evicted to their homes.

KILKENNY—A Grandson of the Liberator

At Foulkstown Cemetery, Kilkenny, on July 6, the remains of Mr. John O'Connell, a son of the late John O'Connell and a grandson of the Liberator, were interred. Deceased, who had served many years in the army, was highly esteemed by all classes in the City of the Confederation, where he settled down on his retirement into civil life.

LEITRIM—Charitable Bequests

The Rev. James O'Hagan, late pastor of Keelogs, Glenade, County Leitrim, who died on March 11 last, left a large number of charitable bequests. They include £100 each to All Hallows College and the Cath-

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