

'STUFFING' THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

RIVERTON.

THE following are the particulars regarding the grade, salary or wages, and religious belief of Government employes in the Riverton district:—Orepuki to Nightcaps—Stationmaster, £150 per annum, 2 cadets, £60 a year each; 1 engine-driver, 12s per day; 1 do, 10s per day; 2 firemen, 9s per day each; 2 cleaners, 4s per day each; 1 guard, 9s; 1 do, 8s. All of these are non-Catholics. Riverton—Stationmaster, £195 a year; cadet, £60; porter, 5s a day. Thornbury—Stationmaster, £185 a year; cadet, £50; porter 5s per day. Otautau—Stationmaster, £185; 2 cadets, £60 each. Out of 20 employes there are two Catholics drawing the princely sum of 10s per day between them. The employes in the Riverton Post Office are—Postmaster, £200 per annum; cadet, £80; do, £60; do, £30. The two lowest salaried officials are Catholics. The clerk of the Magistrate's Court and a cadet at Riverton are non-Catholics. Out of the 26 Government employes enumerated above, four are Catholics, whose combined remuneration does not exceed £250 per annum.

A Vindication of Irish Catholics.

MR. W. A. MCKNIGHT, of Liverpool, a well known business man, upon reading a report of the meeting of the Irish Church Missions in that city at which the charge of intolerance was made against the people of Limerick, his native city, by Archdeacon Madden and Mr. Long, the 'medical missionary,' whose efforts to combine proselytism with medical work have led to so many storms, addressed to Mr. R. Gibson, a Limerick Protestant, the following letter of inquiry, dated 24 and 25, Mathew street, Liverpool, March 19:—

'I enclose you a copy of yesterday's issue of the *North Express*. I will feel much obliged if you will peruse the report of the Irish Church Missions meeting and inform me whether the charges made against the Limerick Catholics of persecuting the members of other creeds are true.'

Mr. Gibson replied as follows, his letter being dated Mulgrave Cottage, Limerick, March 20, 1902:—

'In reply to yours of 19th inst., I have lived for 58 years amongst the Catholics of the South of Ireland, where we are in a minority of about one Protestant to 40 Roman Catholics. I am well known as being a Protestant and a Freemason, yet I have never been persecuted, insulted, or annoyed about my creed by the section of my fellow-countrymen who are supposed by those who don't know them to be the "base, bloody, and brutal Papists," nor by their "tyrant priests." The more I know my Roman Catholic countrymen and women, the more I learn to esteem and respect them. The more I know of their lives the more convinced I become that the average Roman Catholic (priest or people) is less of a bigot and more of a Christian than the average Protestant.

I have no doubt but that there are bigoted, tyrannical, drunken, wicked men and women (priests and people) to be found amongst the Roman Catholics of Ireland, but I am equally certain that the average to be found of such Judas-like people is less amongst them than amongst the Irish Protestants, clergy and people.

Was there not a Judas amongst the twelve chosen apostles of our Blessed Lord? How then can we expect perfection in any earthly Church? Christ tells us plainly the tare not only will grow amongst the wheat, but He distinctly tells us they must be allowed to grow there until God sends His angels to separate them.

If Archdeacon Madden really wants to do as he says, to 'make Christian men and women in Ireland,' then let the Irish Church Missionary Society cease to spend money in stirring up sectarian anti-Christian hatred in Ireland. Let them spend their funds in making real Christian men and women of the worse than heathen of their own churches in Ireland. One young gentleman said to me when I asked him to help me in a church matter, 'With pleasure, Mr. Gibson; you are the first man who ever gave me the chance of doing any unselfish work for others. I am now nine years in Limerick, and no one ever before asked me to do anything that was of use to others, and no clergyman has ever troubled to ask me if I had a soul to be saved or damned.'

'Nonsense,' I said. 'I can hardly believe that a man with your abilities and in your position can have lived here for nine years without someone trying to make you pull in some church tare.'

'I tell you it's God's truth,' he replied; 'not about me only, but about at least a score of other young men whom I know in this city, all of whom would be only too thankful to have an opportunity of doing any good for others given them.'

If the Irish Church Missionary Society want work, let them work amongst their own sects. If they want Irish Roman Catholics 'made Christian men and women,' as they say, let them subscribe to the Christian Brothers or to St. Ita's Home, where boys and girls are taught to be not only Christians, but useful men and women. The Christian Brothers' work and the St. Ita's Home work is more truly Christian work done in a Christian spirit, and does more real good in a year than all the work of all the proselytisers that ever tried to pervert their fellow-Christians who differed from them on matters of doctrine.

We would live unitedly and peacefully together if those who want to make money out of setting us fighting would let us alone.'

ANCIENT IRELAND:

Its Literature, Art and Music.

AT an entertainment given recently in Melbourne under the auspices of the Gaelic League the Rev. Father Ganly delivered a very interesting lecture on the 'Literature, art and music of ancient Ireland.' Want of space compels us to condense the report of the lecture which appeared in the *Advertiser*. Father Ganly, after instituting a comparison between the life of an individual and that of a nation, said that the Celtic race having been saved from the demoralising influence of Roman domination its genius created for itself a literature, a legal code, a social hierarchy, in a word a system of legislation equal in many respects to the most cultured nations of antiquity and superior to nearly all pagan races.

If the history of a country be written in its ruins, in the relics which have escaped the shipwreck of ages, there is no land which possesses a more glorious or a more interesting record than Ireland. The stimulation of the intellectual faculties and their development to produce external results are manifested in the life of a people by their proficiency in the arts of civilisation. Among these we shall take six, by which we shall test Ireland's claim to rank among the civilised nations of antiquity.

ARCHITECTURE.

The history of the rise and development of the builder's art in Ireland forms in itself a most interesting subject of study. The buildings of very early times, which we still find in the country, do not differ much from structures of a similar character raised by primitive races in every land, before a knowledge of the principle of the arch was discovered. It is the architecture of necessity.

The first Christian edifices were of a primitive character. They were developed from the pagan model, with such modifications in form as their difference in purpose required. It was during the sixth century that the transition from undressed masonry to dressed and chiseled work took place. The famous Round Towers are said to date their origin from this period. Anyone who has seen these wonderful monuments of Irish skill cannot deny that, in beauty of design, in symmetry of form, in compactness of structure, they compare favorably with specimens of ancient architecture found in any country.

When the monuments of the builder's art in Ireland, from periods ranging from pre-Christian times to the Anglo-Norman invasion, are placed in consecutive order, we can trace the transition from a rude beginning to a style which was distinctively national. The beautiful Abbey of Roscrea, in Tipperary, and King Cormac's Chapel, Cashel, in the same county, are eloquent witnesses of the degree of perfection to which the architectural art had reached in Ireland.

METALLURGY.

One of the ancient Irish records—the *Annals of the Four Masters*—tells us that gold was first smelted in Ireland as early as the year 605, before the Christian era. It is certain that the pagan Irish had a knowledge of mining. Implements of various kinds belonging to the craft have of late years been found in various parts of Ireland. Quantities of gold and silver have been found buried with the dead.

Among the numerous specimens of ancient Irish metallurgy which have escaped the wreck of ages there are three which have acquired a world-wide fame. These are the Chalice of Ardagh, the Processional Cross of Cong, and the Brooch of Tara. They are to be seen in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. An adequate description of these exquisite relics of ancient Irish metallurgy would be impossible. To form any idea of the superb workmanship which characterises even their minutest detail, one has to subject them to a minute inspection.

The Chalice of Ardagh is mentioned by early Irish writers. They give glowing descriptions of what they designate as a peerless work of art. During the Danish invasions this precious treasure was stolen from Clonmacnoise and for centuries was supposed to be hopelessly lost. The robber, Gilcomhain the Dane, of Limerick, was detected and executed for this and other crimes, but he refused to disclose where he had secreted his plunder, which was hidden in the earth at Ardagh, County Limerick. It was discovered there by a young man who since came to Australia, whom I met about 10 years ago in South Melbourne where he was then resident. The Chalice of Ardagh is unquestionably the most perfect example of ancient Irish art yet discovered. It is composed of gold, silver, white bronze and precious stones, and the ornamentation is so delicately and so artistically worked that I venture to say no jeweller of modern times could produce a work equal to it.

The Brooch of Tara is a contemporary of the Chalice of Ardagh. They were probably made by the same artist. They show precisely similar developments of what has been termed the spiral line, or trumpet pattern of ornamentation. Like other works of this class, its basis consists of white bronze, and the ornaments are in gold, silver, niello, enamels, and glass of different shades.

Cong is a small township in the County Galway, possessing historical associations of deep interest. The beautiful work of art—the Cross of Cong—which now holds a place of honor in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, is the proudest boast of the little village. The Processional Cross of Cong is undoubtedly one of the finest specimens of metal work of its time in the Western world. Designed as a reliquary for a portion of the true cross received from Rome by Turlough O'Connor, King of Ireland, in the year 1123, the artist lavished all the resources of his ingenuity on its construction. On the sides of the Cross are inscriptions, the first of which is thus translated: 'In this Cross is preserved the Cross on which the Founder of the world suffered.' This beautiful Processional Cross was originally made for the Archbishop of Tuam. During the so-called Reformation the Cross was con-