

ROME LEITER

(From our own correspondent.)

March 17.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY IN ROME.

Whether it is because of the war or not I cannot say, but never in all my years by the Tiber have I seen the Feast of the Apostle of Ireland celebrated with so much enthusiasm in Rome. On every side the sham-rock is seen worn by Irish, Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, Romans, Canadians, and Scots. And all these nations were represented at the High Mass celebrated in St. Agatha dei Gotthi, attached to the Irish College, by his Grace Archbishop Ranuzzi, Majordomo of the Vatican. Among those present at the banquet, held afterwards in the college, were Archbishop McIntyre (Rector of the English College), and Mgr. Mackintosh, Mgr. Solieri, and Rev. Father Perrin (Rectors of the Scots, Bohemian, and Canadian Colleges respectively), Very Rev. Father David Fleming, O.F.M., Mgr. Sinibaldi, Mgr. Laurenti (Secretary of the Propaganda), Mgr. Verde (Promoter of the Faith), and a large number of other ecclesiastics and laymen.

So that the devotions in the Church of St. Patrick might not clash with those in St. Isidore's of the Irish Franciscans, not until evening was the panegyric of the Apostle preached in St. Patrick's. A large number of priests and students of the English-speaking colleges were in attendance to hear Father Macksey, S.J., of Boston. The following extract shows they were not disappointed:—'Like Master, like man—and St. Patrick was a man of God, Christ's man. Like master, like man—and our Irish forefathers were St. Patrick's men and a Godly people, for Godliness stands in likeness unto God. . . . A holy life is one which is according to the canons of God. A saint is a man whose character is formed by grace and constant exercise to a likeness with the character of Christ the perfect Man.' With this introduction Father Macksey sketched the salient points in the life of St. Patrick, and then launched out into a beautiful tribute to the Irish people. Their faith and their loyalty to the Church of God are spoken of in the whole world. They were called Papists in derision, and they made of it a badge of honor; they were 'Romish' and 'Romanists,' and they did not deny it; their name was Christian and their surname Catholic, but the name they lived, fought, suffered, and died for was Roman Catholic. St. Peter was not a mere name to them, but a reality: the Pope no mere functionary. They were 'Paddies' and priest-ridden, proud to be named after their glorious patriarch, and content to take all their guidance in faith and morals and the defence of both from those whom Christ had sent to preach the Gospel and rule the Church of God. Their Church was no Irish Church, but the Catholic Church; and in their exile and world-wide dispersion they have been ministered to by priests of every nationality—a ministry which they accepted with reverence. It was a prayerful people that St. Patrick left to carry down the faith of Christ. The impress which the man of prayer left upon them is legible in their constant telling of well-worn rosary beads; in their fidelity to morning Mass and attachment to Sunday Vespers, to family prayers, to the praises of the Blessed Mother, in their eagerness to have a son serving God at the Altar, a daughter praising God in the cloister. Their vocations to mission and monastery overflowed into other lands. A census of the clergy of Irish blood would have to circle the globe. Of the Irish monks and nuns who have given themselves to a life of prayer, of study, of neighbor-service, there is no ending. The school-monks of Ireland nursed the light of culture through the darkest days of the Christian era, and kindled with its flame the learning of half the world. Irish nuns, busy teaching the young and in the service of the sick, the orphaned, the aged and infirm, will be found in the western, eastern, and southern continents, wherever the work of the Master calls for sacrifice.

After all a man's religion in his own estimate is worth just what he is willing to pay for it. St. Patrick

taught his neophytes to pay dearly for their religion through all these centuries. They have seen poverty and famine, prison, chains, and martyrdom. They have been deprived of education and robbed of their language. Though the perverter of history might insist that they suffered what they suffered from natural ineptitude and for political rebellion, the penal laws of Ireland and the true story of the Irish persecution from Elizabeth to our day, will show to any discerning mind that the rock of offence was the Catholic Faith of this people. They ceased to be a nation, save in undying hope; they were made serfs of the soil, and yet not allowed to remain on it; they were as muzzled oxen treading out the corn for their masters. They were transported and forced to emigration; they have been made world-exiles, assimilating with every clime, soil, and political condition. Their very faith and loyalty to the Church have been pressed into service against them, and the authority of Rome has been invoked in the past to reconcile them to a bondage which they have borne for the name of Christ. But one thing is beyond all doubt—Ireland has had no regrets over the price she has paid for her faith. The record of that salient fact has been written even in the hearts of those who have never seen her skies. The songs of an exile mother, sung by the crib of babyhood, the tales of an exile father, told by the hearth on a winter's evening, have made us familiar with the faith and the prayer and the sacrifice of the people whose blood we share.

What then does it mean for us? Are we predestined because of the glories of St. Patrick? Are we confirmed in grace because of the virtues of our forebears? Is all the prayer, poverty, and suffering over, and are we to enjoy without effort the milk and honey of triumphant Catholicity? Not at all. The dying testament of St. Patrick to the generations coming after him he embodied in the words: 'God grant that you may aim at still nobler things, and achieve still greater things.'

As might be expected, a good deal of interest centred in the functions held in St. Isidore's of the Irish Franciscans, for three centuries of Irish history cling to its walls, and Luke Waddings' bones rest in its vaults. After High Mass, Rev. Father Leo, C.S.S.R., delivered the panegyric before what must be considered a large congregation in these days of turmoil.

Remuera

(From an occasional correspondent.)

April 22.

Despite the unsettled state of the weather on Saturday afternoon last, the garden fete and sale of work, held in the presbytery grounds in aid of the church building fund, were a marked success both from social and financial aspects. There was an attendance of seven or eight hundred people, and all seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly. In the unavoidable absence of his Worship the Mayor, Rev. Father Doyle performed the opening ceremony. All the side shows and stalls were well patronised. Music was provided throughout the afternoon by an orchestra, which contributed a programme of popular airs. Misses Bannion and Finnerty had charge of the plain and fancy work stall, while the books and works of art were in the hands of Miss G. Finnerty. The sweets stall was looked after by Mr. Rassie, and the amusements and side-shows were conducted by Messrs. Grey, E. Fallon, Bourke, Paget, and Wright. The refreshments were presided over by Mesdames Tole, Duffou, Sims, Oddy, and Porter. On the lawn very interesting and enjoyable drill and dance numbers were gone through by the girls from Remuera and Grey Lynn Convent Schools. Amongst the clergy present were the Right Rev. Mgr. Brodie, V.G., Very Rev. Chancellor Holbrook, and Rev. Fathers Dunphy and Kelly.

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