

CORRESPONDENCE

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

MISREPRESENTING THE IRISH.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—I have just read a romance by E. Temple Thurston, the title of which is *Enchantment*, and as an alleged portrayal of Irish life and character it, to my mind, rings altogether false, and is liable to create a wrong impression, even amongst Irish-born colonials, not to speak of those who have no knowledge whatever of Ireland or genuine Irish types. In *Enchantment* the stock-in-trade decayed Irish estate and mansion in an extreme state of disrepair, which, it seems to me, might be "written off" with the stage Irishman, are again used up, and the owner of it is an Irish gentleman—save the mark—who never goes to bed sober, and "can carry his liquor like a gentleman"—the author's words. As a matter of fact, according to the author's conception, he is not a gentleman of any nationality, but a rather vulgar horse dealer and a confirmed dipsomaniac. He has several daughters, and the youngest, Patricia Desmond, is the heroine. The characters of the daughters are sketchy, but they are not genuine Irish girls of any class. They are hoydens who run wild on the tumble-down property, "love a horse," and under an assumed frankness of manner with a delicious Irish brogue—you know the sort in this class of fiction—are vulgar enough to discuss each other's intimate characteristics with a young man, a stranger to them, on the first occasion of meeting him. Patricia's mother dies in childbirth, and the author raises the terrible alternative as to whether the mother or child should be sacrificed to save the other. This would not concern us particularly, except that this family are Catholics, and a "Father Casey" is dragged into the question, the theology set forth being, I venture to say, quite unsound. Patricia is vowed by her drunken father to the conventual life if the life of the mother is saved, and subsequently we have a travesty of what we Catholics know the nuns to be in every quarter of the world, though written from a "kindly" Protestant point of view. If you have had patience to read so far, dear Editor, I will tell you my object in troubling you. Is it not time that some protest was made against this class of fiction, or, rather, should not our own people and other people be educated to the absurdity of it? Dickens' characters were avowedly exaggerations, many of them caricatures, but they were faithful to certain types, and hence their value. Authors of E. Temple Thurston's class write with the convincing air of giving you the real Irish type even to the brogue, and would consequently mislead those who do not know Ireland or the Irish people at home. The cultured, refined Irish gentleman and gentlewoman, aye, and the truest man and woman are to be found in Dublin, in Cork, in Waterford, in Limerick, and in all the other Irish cities, and why are not their polished gifts, their high ideals, their genuine Irish character and nature, put before us, instead of the vulgar charlatanism which now does duty for the "Irish gentry"—I hate the word.

You may or may not think this worth your notice in the *Tablet*, and I am sending you herewith a copy of the book to see if you think its perusal worth while. The theological part of it you may think worth dealing with.

We look forward to the *Tablet* every week, and wish the paper and yourself all success and prosperity.—I am, etc.,

P. J. DUNNE.

Ohakune, May 7.

BACK FROM THE WAR

RETURN OF CATHOLIC DOCTORS.

Colonel E. J. O'Neill, C.M.G., D.S.O., reached Dunedin by last-Friday night's express, and found the station and environs crowded by citizens eager to welcome him back from the four and a-half years' service, for which he had conferred upon him the honorable titles now affixed to his name. The Mayor (Mr. Begg) was present, with Colonel Cowie Nicholls, O.C. Otago District, the leading medical men, the Very Rev. Father Coffey, Fathers P. J. and D. O'Neill (brothers of Colonel O'Neill), a number of medical students, and a company of the B Battery, of which Colonel O'Neill was long medical officer. Heartily cheers were given as the colonel appeared, and an address of welcome was delivered by the Mayor. After returning thanks briefly, Colonel O'Neill and Mrs O'Neill were escorted to a carriage drawn by a four-horse team of battery horses, with four outriders, and proceeded through a cheering crowd to their home in Iligh Street.

The colonel left here in October, 1914, with the Main Body, with the rank of major, in charge of a section of the Field Ambulance. In 1915, on Gallipoli, he was created lieutenant-colonel, and took charge of the Ambulance Division. Later, in France, he had command of one of the stationary hospitals, and when the war ended was the O.C. in the Walton-on-Thames Hospital. He received the D.S.O. for work at the Gallipoli landing, and the C.M.G. in January of this year. In the course of a short interview with an *Evening Star* representative, Colonel O'Neill narrated a few facts relating for the most part to the almost revolutionary improvement in the surgical treatment of wounded men which took place in the last two and a-half years of the war. Early experiences showed the necessity of combating sepsis and shock at the very outset, and methods of speedy transport and early treatment proved wonderfully successful. At every regimental aid post there was full equipment for the warming of patients, a first essential with shock; and even transfusion was effected at these advanced stations where necessary. From every regiment men were asked to volunteer for "donors," which was the title given those who opened their veins for the wounded. Special privileges in the way of leave were their reward. A substitute for transfusion, sent up to the front line in sterile containers, was an infusion of gum. "Outstanding work," said the colonel, "that no officer can assess at too high value was that of the stretcher-bearers. The popular idea is, or was, that low category men were good enough for this work. But the fact is that for stretcher-bearers we wanted the best men, and we got the best men. In their work these men were constantly exposed to shell fire and gas, and had to take more risks than the combatants during long "carries." These men would go on and on until they dropped. They were a splendid type—both regimental and field ambulance."

Equally enthusiastic was he of the work of the nursing sisters in the stationary hospitals, sometimes under shell fire, when the wounded were coming in fastest, exposed to the necessity of shifting quarters into the shelter of forests, and dealing all the time with constant casualties, they were all "real men" in their devotion to duty and renewal of energy without rest. Speaking of inoculation for influenza, the colonel said he was inclined to look upon it with favor, from the results he had seen obtained in England. The facts he noted in regard to his own unit were that with inoculation the incidence of influenza was small, and among those who took it the complications were fewer in number.

In conclusion, Dr. O'Neill stated that the exigencies of war had created in a few years immense

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