

Answers to Correspondents

OBSERVER.—(a) It is merely a sign of bad manners to call a clergyman by his surname, e.g., to refer to a Father Murphy or the Rev. Mr. Smith as "Murphy" and "Smith." (b) Whistling is regarded as a breach of good manners, especially in the case of females. An old Irish proverb says: "A crowing cock and a whistling woman are heard in hell."

CELT.—There are several books on early Gaelic literature. Douglas Hyde's little manual is excellent. Then there is the larger work in two volumes by Eleanor Hull. For early history and critical inquiries you cannot get better than Eoin MacNeill's books.

STUDENT.—Martial law, by British orders, does not look much like freedom for Egypt. The educational system forced on the Egyptians by the British Government was designed for the continual subjection of the race. Its corner-stones were:

1. The masses must be kept uneducated at all costs.
2. The schools and colleges must produce just a sufficient number of men instructed in such a way as to be merely efficient and subordinate officials to the English master.
3. Self-respect, self-help, self-reliance, self-confidence, sense of nationality, the spirit of independence, and, in short, all that tends to make men great in the real sense of the word, must be systematically eliminated from all schools.
4. The little technical education that there is must be conducted in such a way and in such a spirit as to keep Egypt for ever depending on England for pure and applied science, industry, and trade. (Ibrahim Rashid, in *The Irish Year Book*).

BOOK NOTICES

Celtic Ireland, by Eoin MacNeill;

Phases of Irish History, by Eoin MacNeill;

Women of Ninety-Eight, by Mrs. Concannon;

Daughters of Banba, by Mrs. Concannon.

The Manager of the *N.Z. Tablet* Co. has received a stock of the above named books, all dealing with Irish history. With regard to Dr. MacNeill's two volumes, we can safely say that no serious student of Irish history can afford to neglect them. The author is the greatest living authority on early Celtic history, and in these two works he has given us the harvest of years of patient research. No writer of Irish history can ignore them in future and they dissipate many old fables which were hitherto handed down to us by author after author as true history.

Mrs. Concannon's books are pure gold. She knows her subject and she can write. Apart from the interest of the pages, they are real literary treats in themselves. The *Women of Ninety-Eight* is a moving and pathetic volume dealing with a sad and glorious chapter in the making of Ireland. *Daughters of Banba* is a series of beautiful pictures of the womanhood of Ireland, in every period, and of every class—women of legends, women of the castles, women of the towns, women of the country, and women of the cloister and the cell.

Memoirs of the Future: being Memoirs of the Years 1915-1922. Edited by Ronald Knox (Methuen, 7/6).

The Memoirs are supposed to be written fifty years hence by Opal, Lady Porstock. Needless to say the author is Ronald Knox, a distinguished Oxford convert now a Catholic priest. Some years ago he gave us the story of his conversion in a work of great literary merit which he called, *A Spiritual Arcad*. Readers of that book will be prepared for brilliant writing and for delicate taste in whatever he gives the public, but we doubt if there be any who will not be pleasantly surprised to find in his new book so much keen satire and good humored laughter. Lady Porstock's memories of the events and of the modes of the half-century which has yet to run may be regarded by some as amusing reading, but to us they certainly convey a profound warning. What her faithful pen notes

down from year to year is really to be looked upon as a record of the harvest for which we are sowing at the present time. Thus the book becomes a satire and even a protest against the fads of modern educationists, against the irreligious tendencies of the age, and against the decadence evident in religion, in art, in letters, in everything that matters. The account of her marriage to an American alleged to be taken from the *Daily Mail* some twenty years hence is a fair sample of the humor of the story:

PEER'S DAUGHTER HITCHES MILLIONAIRE ANOTHER AMERICAN COUSIN GETS HIS FROM CUPID.

The U.S. citizen is a brainy lad and it isn't only for titles he comes over this side; I hardly suppose! Wilse Harkness anyhow, Lord Porstock, as he is since those birthday honors set things buzzing, knew a good thing when he saw it. When he found he hadn't foul-hooked an angel (his first impression) he lost no time asking her to nominate the anniversary. So the red carpet will have to be got out against her return to her country seat at Greylands, etc., etc.

Father Knox has written a clever, entertaining book; but it is a serious book all the same. Like the quips of the Court Jesters of other days, it contains deep wisdom beneath its apparent mirth.

Successful Entertainment at Nelson

A very successful entertainment in aid of the church funds, was held recently at the Theatre Royal, before a packed house on each of the three nights (writes a correspondent). The production was one of the best of its kind that local talent has staged, and reflected great credit upon its producer (Miss Beatrice Aydon), who spared no pains to make the performance the success it was. The orchestra, comprising Misses M. Fowler and Flett, and Messrs. Fairweather, Brundell, Mockler, Jackson, and Oakley, did good service, and their two overtures were much appreciated. The programme was well thought out and showed great originality in both dress and dancing. The stage scenery had been very effectively utilised and gave a pleasing background to all items. There was a total of a hundred performers in the production. The boys and girls played up to their parts surprisingly well, as was shown by their eccentric "Gollywog" dance and the presentation of such novelty dances as the "Goblins," and the "Spirit of Pantomime," all of which were well received. Two outstanding children's items were the classical dance, "Spring's Awakening," and the "Powder and Patch" gavotte. Misses E. and L. Reid deserve special mention for their work in the song and chorus, "Smiling," and in the Egyptian dance, "Incense," in which they assisted Miss M. Aydon. The dance, "Tulips' Awakening," by little Ella Robertson was beautifully performed and showed her to be a child dancer of unusual merit. Three songs by Miss E. O'Donnell ("Swanee River Moon"), Miss V. Beel ("Why Should I Cry?"), and Miss B. Aydon ("Alanah") supported by effective adult choruses, proved deservedly popular, as did the song "Merry Moon" by Misses Beel, O'Donnell, Johnson, and Aydon (2). Miss M. Aydon gave two really humorous sketches, "For Love of Mike" and "I'm Fed Up." In the latter she was assisted by Miss V. Beel. Her costumes were most original, and both items received quite an ovation. The Spanish "Cachuca" by Misses W. and M. Berry proved to be a delightful speciality dance. Another outstanding item was the song and dance "Mississippi" by Miss Elva Newman, who played the part of the lisping schoolgirl extremely well. The amount realised totalled £75 net.

The study of American history and traditions is urged by the Rev. Dr. Guilday, professor of history at the Catholic University, as certain to have a wholesome influence towards restoring the old-time chivalry towards womanhood.

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