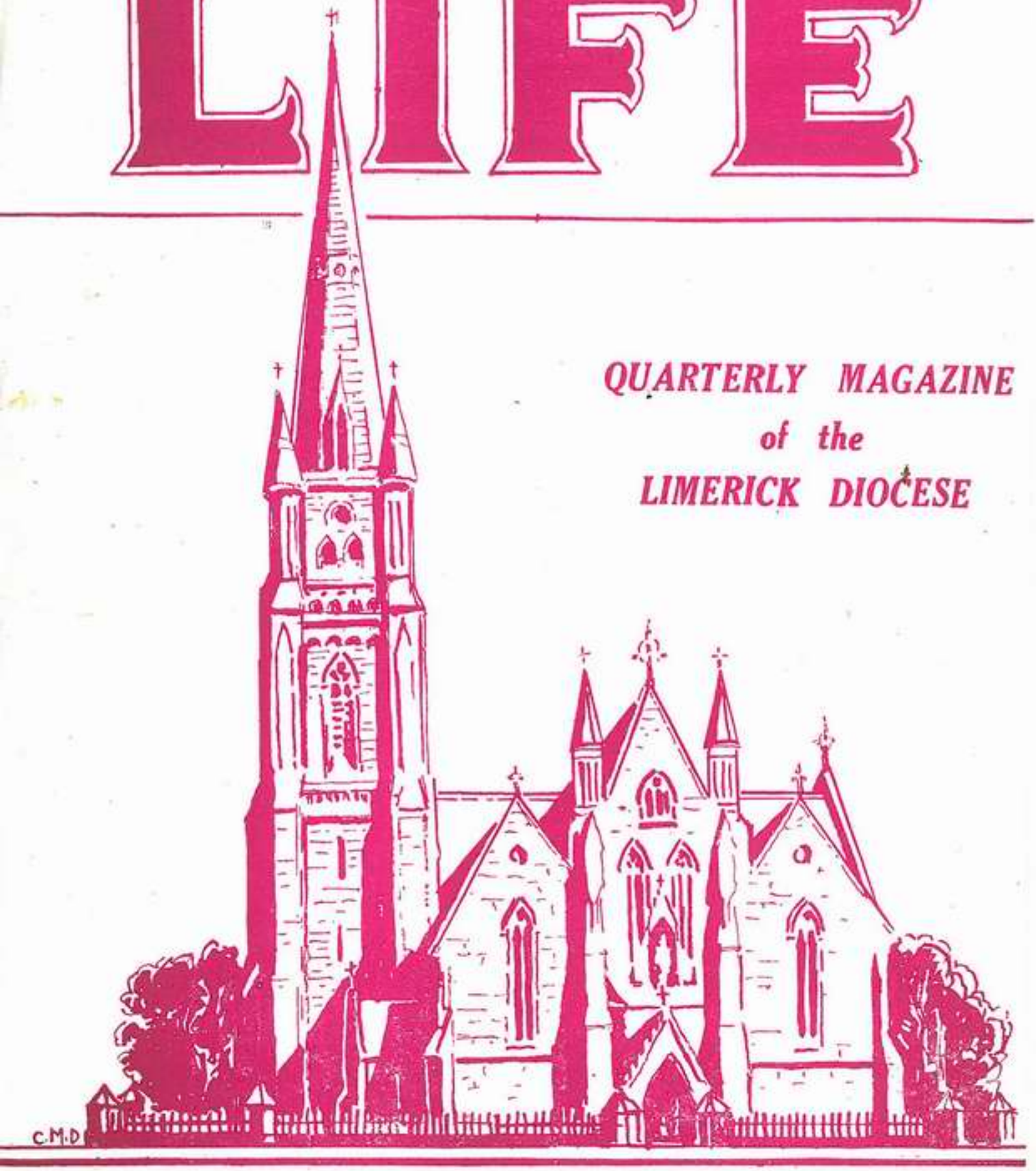
CATHOLIC LIFE



QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
of the
LIMERICK DIOCESE

OCTOBER, 1954 PRICE 6d.

Catholic Life

A Quarterly Magazine of the Limerick Diocese under the Patronage of His Lordship, Most Reverend Patrick O'Neill, D.D.

All Communications and Letters to be addressed to
The Editor, "CATHOLIC LIFE", St. John's Presbytery, Limerick

Single Copies 6d. each. **Annual Subscription: 2/6 post free.**

Nihil Obstat :
Jacobus Cowper, S.T.D.
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur :
✠ PATRICIUS,
Episc. Limericensis.

The next issue of "Catholic Life" will be published on Sat., 18th December.

Vol. 1, No. 3. OCTOBER, 1954

The Bishop Appeals to His People

Rev. and dear Fathers and Brethren :

In the Lenten Pastoral Letter of this year I stated that it would be necessary to appeal to the people of the Diocese on behalf of our Cathedral Church and our Diocesan College.

The people of St. John's Parish continue to contribute with wonderful generosity towards the cost of the renovation of the Cathedral. Hitherto, they have borne alone the considerable burden of providing for ever-recurring repairs. Now that the fabric has been made safe for many a year, the help of the whole diocese is needed to provide the large amount still required.

If there should be any who doubt or question the need of a new Diocesan College, a view of any similar institution, in any diocese of Ireland, should suffice to convince them. Indeed, in recent years, many of the Diocesan Colleges, already splendid establishments as compared with ours, have been expending large sums in extension of buildings and improved equipment, to meet

the increasing demand for secondary education. In the case of St. Munchin's College no extension is possible, and the present accommodation is entirely insufficient.

We have in our possession a suitable site for a new College, and while we cannot hope to provide a complete structure in a short time, it is our aim to build what we can as soon as possible, according to plans which will allow of extension as our resources permit.

Therefore, I now appeal to the generosity of all our people for the means necessary to carry out our intentions. I have no hesitation in putting the claims of our own diocese above all other claims on their charity. I appeal to every individual, to every family, to every business and industrial concern to help us to maintain and provide necessary institutions worthy of our diocese. I appeal to the clergy and to the teachers in our schools to enlist the interest and co-operation of the youth on our behalf. And finally, I appeal to those who may have the disposal by will of charitable funds to remember the needs of the Diocese of Limerick.

From this date forward, Mass will be celebrated monthly at St. John's Cathedral and at St. Munchin's College for the benefactors of the diocese.

A collection will be held in all the Churches of the Diocese (except those of the city) on SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th, and in the Churches of the City on SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10th.

Subscriptions sent directly to me, or to the Clergy, will be gratefully acknowledged.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

✠ PATRICK,

Bishop of Limerick.

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FATHER CASEY AND HIS TIMES

IT is a far cry to the days of the great Fr. Casey, who was born in Kilbeheny in 1844 and died in 1908 in Abbeyfeale, after 40 years' continous apostolate as C.C. and P.P. of that parish. Since then, two global wars in a generation have livened up the pace of history so sharply that the youth of to-day may well be pardoned for saying that nobody could be great in the old Rip Van Winkle world because nothing great happened then. But it is the things implanted from above, love of God, country and suffering humanity that will uplift this sordid old world until the end of time.

Fr. Casey is not mentioned in history, his fame was purely local, but he was a great man for his people in the sense of the oft repeated adage, that it is only a great card player who plays a bad hand well. Fr. Casey never had a strong suit during his long, persevering struggle. His baby eyes opened on the "Bad Times," mounting quickly to the awful catastrophe of the "Big Famine of Black '47." That reads like macabre fiction in this age of prosperity, but John Mitchell calculated in cold figures that over two millions were swept away by famine and the subsequent raging pestilence, "cholera morbus" as the terrified peasants called it. It paralysed the minds of the survivors: a very old man said to me "even the birds didn't sing during the Famine." There was only one wild idea, fly from the charnal house. They fled in their hundreds of thousands in the "coffin ships" to the western main scourged all the way by hunger and renewed outbreaks of fever. This seemed the end, but humanity is not all bad. Foreign governments, the young American Republic in the forefront, sent food, clothes and money to the helpless and this shamed our then alien Government into giving beggarly public assistance, so the cadre of a nation was still left when Father Casey was ordained in 1870. But how conserve it in face of fresh and more insidious assaults ? The Cromwellian sword was exchanged for the evictors' battering ram and the people were thus attacked on their weakest points, hunger and terror of another Famine.

SAVE THE PEOPLE

Ireland was still overpopulated even after Black '47: there were no industries to absorb the evicted or the surplus population: no money except a little Irish-American and most of that went to the rackrenters. The emigrant ship seemed the only way out and the alien Government approved and even offered state-aided emigration to her own colonies. The landlords, unlike the Pharoah of old,

clamoured for an exodus: corn would no longer pay the rackrents after the Repeal of the Corn Laws, but cattle would, if the small holdings were cleared and consolidated into foreign-owned ranches. "The Clearances" cost Ireland infinitely more than all her previous defeats on the battlefield. It was a crucial time and for a few years everything pointed to starvation, deportation, and consequent extermination of the Irish at home, with the old sod left to the planter, the herdsman and his dog. Save the people somehow. That was the racking thought in many a compassionate soul. Lose them and all was lost; the poor but sacred Irish home, the Sunday Mass congregation, Irish Catholicity and the ancient Irish nation.

The only temporary cure was some form of human rights for tenants-at-will, as were the vast majority, who had no rights to their miserable cabins, their tiny potato plots or to their bodies or souls, as a notorious County Limerick landlord expressed it. Yet brave Irishmen worked on undaunted even in the darkest hours. Tenant Right movements were started 100 years ago, far too soon after the nightmare of the Famine: The Fenians rose with their clumsy pikes, the revived Irish Party denounced oppression in the gilded hall of the oppressor and though all failed to win either justice or pity, they at least staved off extermination and put a little spirit into the Irish people.

LAND LEAGUE FOUNDED

It was barely 75 years ago, remember, that the resurrection of Ireland began and fittingly in Paschal time. The 17th April, 1879 was a historical day for Ireland, the first big step from serfdom to an independent Republic. On that day, Michael Davitt, an evicted tenant's son, a maimed man, a felon and a ticket-of-leave man for his Fenian activities, founded the Land League to fight Irish landlordism and the mighty power that stood behind it. At first it seemed an utterly forlorn hope. England's might was ready to crush any Irish right. The Irish Clergy, too, and the leading Catholics, shocked by the excesses of continental anti-religious revolutions, held back. Soon, however, it began to be realised that the New Departure, as the Land League was sometimes called, stood for God-given human rights, not for any form of Red or anti-God Socialism. The objects of the League were : stopping, or at least halting, evictions, reducing the intolerable rackrents and ultimately promoting peasant proprietorship. The leaders severely condemned agrarian outrages, but evicted tenants driven to desperation sometimes refused to obey. The League tolerated boycotting as a last resort, and whatever we, in a free country, may think of it from a religious or charitable point of view, it frightened the grabbers who would destroy the new movement.

THE ABBEYFEALE CHALLENGE

A branch of the League was established in Abbeyfeale on September 29th, 1879. At that meeting Fr. Casey advised the tenants to stand fast by the then almost unknown Griffith's Valuation,

which was poles apart from the landlord's rackrents. The tenants joined enthusiastically, paid their subscriptions, received their membership cards and waited hopefully for the October "Gale," which was destined to be a blusterly one. Rent day dawned and the tenants assembled early, each with his membership card stuck boldly on his hat and faced the agent. He was profoundly shocked; this certainly was a revolution from the old cringing manners. He asked them had they come to pay the full rent : no, they had come to discuss Griffith's Valuation, as if it were to be a friendly, academic debate. The great man grew exasperated and gave them a day to choose between full rent or eviction : the ex-serfs put their last bid and bit on Griffith, the dark horse, who had suddenly become a hot favourite. Twenty of the more substantial farmers on that Estate were evicted; the rest were allowed to hang on under notice. Father Casey did his best for the evicted; he hired a large house in Abbeyfeale, long known as "League House" and quartered eight of the families there; the rest were lodged in League huts built on the non-evicted holdings. There was no danger that they would be starved into surrender; young as the League was, it was able to send a weekly allowance. Parnell's triumphant American tour soon swelled the funds. The agent wavered first and hinted at negotiation. Father Casey's side accepted and a settlement was reached at 40 per cent in excess of Griffith's Valuation, a big relief compared to the old crushing rackrents.

Round Two opened livelier when the Land Act of 1881 established Land Courts for fixing Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure and, where possible, Free Sale. Father Casey urged the tenants to demand purchase; that won, the other landlord entrenchments would fall automatically. The agent evicted again, only 10 this time and they got back under an Arrears Act. Next the Ashbourne Act of 1885, the first state subsidised Land Purchase Act, gave offical recognition to the patent fact that peasant ownership was the only real solution of the "vexed" Irish Agrarian Question, though only a beggarly £5,000,000 was allotted for all Ireland. Father Casey again drilled and encouraged his men to strive to win the key point, but the agent counter-attacked by promptly ordering eviction squads to clear the whole estate. Seemingly, the great man had won but it was a Pyrrhic victory. No income whatsoever coming from the "No purchase, no Rent" heroes: no grabbers answering advertisements: nothing growing on the broad acres but inedible weeds. The tenants too, their enthusiasm cooled by the first wintry blasts, began to dread another long spell in the leaky League huts, so the leaders on both sides, unlike the mischievous unconditional surrender advocates of 1945, settled down to parley. And parley they did. I heard it was a vocal Marathon. When the last word was spoken, a final settlement was reached at 19 years' purchase

and the tenants of that estate could say with joy and confidence: "I am owner here."

A GREAT PRIEST

This is the brief history of one Abbeyfeale estate, but the same drab recital of agitation, eviction, suffering and perseverance, culminating in purchase, covers the struggle of the whole parish except one estate where the owner was that "rara avis," a decent Irish Landlord. To the grandsons of the League hut lodgers, sated with the sensationalism of blitz-kriegs, this must read a very dull tale, so a few figures will help to liven it up somewhat. The rent of the largest holding in the estate mentioned was £65 in 1883; after purchase, the annuity was £12. The smallest holding was mulcted for £12 yearly up to the sale, then reduced to £2 odd. In 1883, Father Casey distributed National Assistance to 47 tenant families, 5 families were evicted in one day; in another estate 3 cabins were burned down and the unfortunate tenants lived in League huts till the beginning of the 20th century.

The Imperial Press assailed Father Casey and the other Land League priests as political agitators. Father Casey was never a politician; he stood by the whole people in their sore distress: he agitated for basic human rights, life and a modest pittance to support it: he was a public man by accident, due to the cruel times in which he lived, but he was a great priest from the day of his Ordination till he surrendered his soul to His Maker. The people of Abbeyfeale shouted their "Hurrahs for the Great Father Casey" because he saved them from deportation or extermination, but in their own hearts they reverenced him as a great priest.

SALUTE TO ABBEYFEALE

It is an interesting human speculation to consider how far that influenced the clerical history of Abbeyfeale. The parish has at present the first, or at least one of the leading percentages of native born priests in all Ireland. I have heard from the lips of some of the older missionaries that they were led on by the ideal of their good pastor and perhaps the younger ones of to-day, scattered over the five Continents, are still inspired by the great parish tradition. Father Casey lived among his people, we might almost say say that his parish was his presbytery. He went around doing good and brought the spirit of His master into the League hut, the thatched cabin and the house of sorrow. He improved his Church but attempted nothing artistic when many of his parishioners were still supported by National Assistance, and yet it appeared heavenly to them in contrast to the dark cabins that hemmed in their lives. After the Stanley National Education Act, he started school building to replace the "hedge schools" that had done such valiant work in dark and evil days. He advocated and urged on road making, as did his predecessor, Father Coughlan, because a man then marooned in a pathless West

Limerick bog was more effectively cut off from his parish Church than a Limerick motorist is now from Dublin's Pro Cathedral. This was the material work; the spiritual absorbed him far more. His Confessional was crowded and God alone knows how many tales of sorrow he heard there. Sick calls, that give us priests the privilege of seeing the Irish in their best spiritual light, how they must have appealed to the big-hearted Father Casey. He wore himself out on the saddle and once, in the "Big Fever" of his curate days, he nearly lost his life when he held on too long, though himself badly infected by the fell disease. He was a great priest for his people because he was an eminently holy priest. Every morning he rose early and spent over an hour before the Blessed Sacrament in prayer, meditation and preparation for Mass: that done, he had the Master's blessing for the day's work.

When the sky cleared somewhat, he tried to cheer up his people, who had long been denied the innocent joys of life. "Father Casey's Band" seemed revolutionary in those days of fear, but its national airs put courage and hope into faltering hearts. "Father Casey's Football Team," still its title, made the young rising manhood forget the bitterness of agrarian strife in the manly struggle for the County Championship. His Temperance Hall fostered indoor games and amusements—the Abbeyfealers are still noted card players—and curbed the drink evil, which had become a national menace after the horrors of the Big Famine. And so on, and so on, little things, nothing to make a hero, and yet his grateful people erected a monument to him in Abbeyfeale Square. But his true monument is the happy comfortable homes now dotting his beloved West Limerick hills, the neat Churches of Abbeyfeale priests at home and abroad, the memories and traditions of a sterling friend, and the assurance that their holy old Pastor is interceding for them before the Great White Throne.

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IS IT A RECORD ?

Abbeyfeale parish has a population of 5,000 approximately. At present there are 63 priests, natives of the parish, carrying on Christ's work in all parts of the world. Of these 63 priests, five are attached to the Limerick Diocese.

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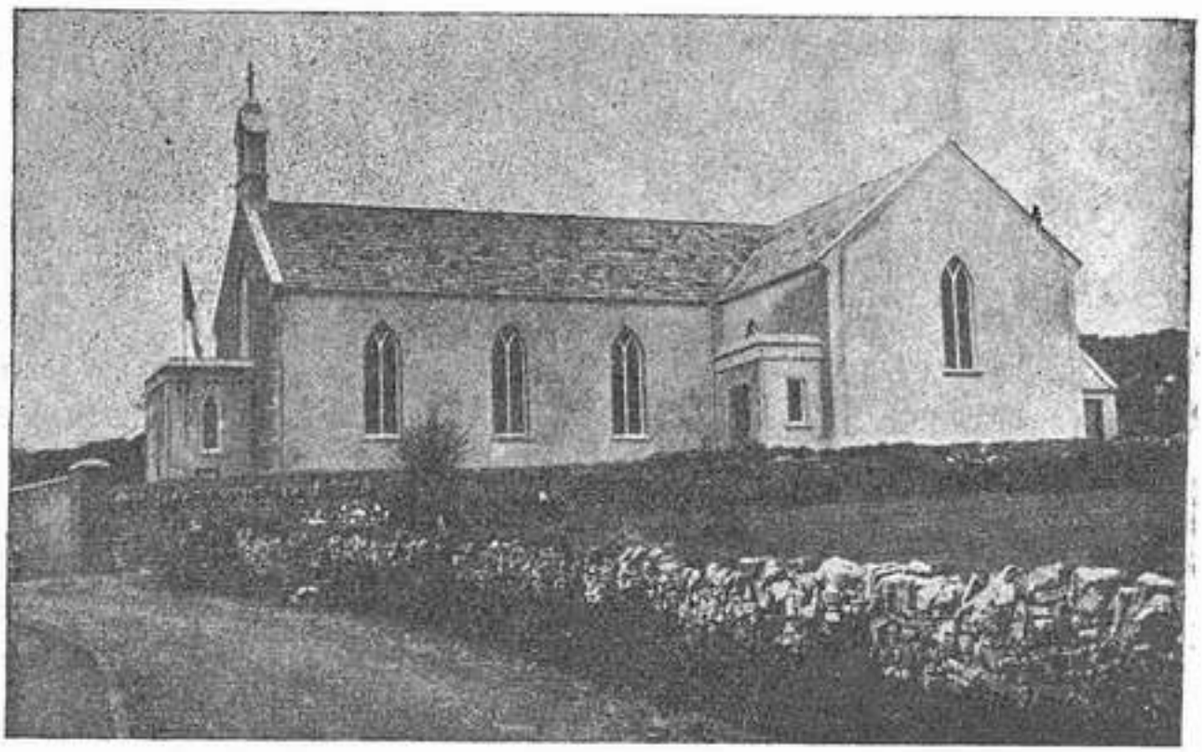
"Our Lord Himself shows us the surest way of having numerous vocations : 'Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest...'

Every Christian mother and father, whatever their social status, must pray to God to make them worthy to have at least one of their children called to His service." Pope Pius XII.

Church at Rockhill

The parish church of Rockhill stands on an eminence affording a wonderful view of the plains of Limerick. The site is truly a rockhill, and this obvious derivation of the place name is just as good as any other. An Mangaire Sugach himself has not been able to trace the origin of the name. He suggests that it may derive from "the Mass Rock," and there is a Mass Rock, a large shelf of stone, on the hillside behind the Church



Rockhill's New Church.

where, according to tradition, Mass was celebrated in the penal days.

Some worthy Maigue-sider might well take a poor view of the parish known as Rockhill. The name is of relatively recent date, wheras Bruree, which is thrown in with it, was once the seat of a government that controlled territory almost coextensive with the present diocese of Limerick. But names apart, the land which holds the united parishes of Rockhill and Bruree is holy ground. When St. Patrick was travelling from West Limerick to Ardpatrick—a route amply marked with holy wells—he is said to have passed through this area. In the western end of the townland of Howardstown, beside Coolrus, is an almost forgotten holy well dedicated to

him. Once it was the scene of a great pattern, now but two or three faithful souls make their way to it, to pay rounds on Lá le Padraig. Tradition tells a very nasty story about the saint's visit to this well. The story goes that the saint took off his boots and left them on the roadside before going to the well to pray, and while he was praying the women of the place came along and stole them. Doubtless, there must have been a misunderstanding !

The parish has long been associated also with our own dear St. Munchin. At least two Bruree churches, An Mangaire Sugach tells us, were dedicated to him within a space of 500 years. Up to quite recently his feast-day, January 2nd, was observed as a parish holiday. A well, dedicated to him, long neglected and forsaken, lies among the rocks, close to the bank of the Maigue, behind the village pump, commonly known as "The Spout."

It is fitting, therefore, that St. Munchin should be the titular of the parish church of Rockhill which has recently acquired a new lease of life. This church on the hill was built in 1842 by Fr. James Ryan at a cost, tradition has it, of £600. This figure would be exclusive, no doubt, of much free labour. When the present parish priest, Canon Kelly, undertook the work of reconstruction a few years ago, it was first thought that a partial renovation would be sufficient. The stone walls of the old structure were still intact after 108 years. But apart from the bare walls and the beautiful High Altar everything else had to be replaced. A new church in effect came into being. The work began on June 1st, 1950, and was completed to allow for solemn opening on December 23rd, 1951. Mr. Sheahan was the architect, and Messrs. Gough the builders. The total cost was £14,533 18s. 8d.

The Bishop presided at the opening High Mass. In the course of his sermon His Lordship referred to a Fr. McNamara, who was Parish Priest from 1704-1737, in the full fury of the penal times. Fr. McNamara must have lived a precarious existence in those days, the Bishop said, and the Mass Rock behind the church must often have been his altar. From those days of priest hunters the dreary, though glorious, tale goes on for many years until Catholic Emancipation. Then the people began to build their churches to replace the cabins and the open-air shrines of mountain and glenside that were so often their only temple.

The priests invited by the parish clergy to take part in the ceremonies were all natives of Rockhill and Bruree. Canon Carroll (

Rathkeale was celebrant, Fr. White the Administrator of St. Michael's, deacon, Fr. Cussen of Foynes, sub-deacon, and Fr. T. Lyons of St. Michael's, master of ceremonies. Canon Carroll of Abbeyfeale and Canon Donworth of Adare, assisted the Bishop at the throne. Canon Martin of Croom was with the parish clergy, Canon Kelly and Fr. J. Lyons, in the choir.

The occasion was one of great joy for the parishioners, a people

High Mass on the day of the opening.

of ancient lineage. Less than 30 years ago, on April 26th, 1925, many who have yet no reason to count themselves old assisted at the opening of the beautiful new church at Bruree. So few years so great labour.

"Praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise Him all ye people. For His Mercy is confirmed upon us, and the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever." Psalms—Text of the Bishop's sermon at Rockhill.

ON LEAVING THE CHAPEL.

Farewell, O Mary; O Christ, farewell,
And keep my soul, till I come again.

A Connacht Irish prayer.

THE ROSARY

Rev. M. Sadlier.

We have seldom been as Rosary-conscious as we have been this year. With Father Peyton's Rallies so much in the news, we have been reminded week after week of the importance of the Rosary. Families all over the world, to the number of ten million, are saying the Rosary. We, "who love Mary more than all the rest of the world," should be able to say that the Rosary is being said by every family in the country.

A world Rosary Crusade was never more needed than it is today. Communism is an ever-growing threat to the liberty of the Church. The various attempts to settle world differences by peaceful means would seem to do little else than give world approval to Communist expansion. In the Rosary, however, we have a powerful defence against the enemies of God and His Church. The Rosary beads, the chain of our devoted service to Mary, is our strongest line of defence. "I could conquer the world," said Pope Pius IX, "if I had an army to say the Rosary."

The most compelling reason for saying the Rosary is its attractiveness as a form of prayer, when it is properly understood and attentively recited. Like any other prayer we begin the Rosary with the Sign of the Cross. We cannot be reminded too often that the Son of God became man to die for us. This, more than anything we could possibly imagine, would be much too good to be true, except that it is true. We go to lay a secure foundation for our prayer by reciting the Apostles' Creed.

A WONDERFUL DEVOTION

The "Our Father," three "Hail Marys" and Gloria which follow centre our thoughts on the One God in Three Persons, the source and object of all true prayer. They serve too as a sort of preliminary check-up. We get our minds and hearts tuned to these prayers that we are going to repeat again and again. Indeed, it is because it is made up of these, the three greatest prayers there are, that the Rosary is such a wonderful devotion. "Say the Rosary," said St. Pius X, "because if piety is becoming tepid and is extinguished in the hearts of many, nothing can rekindle its flame better than the prayer which Jesus taught, the one which the Angel saluted Mary and the one which is constantly chanted around the throne of God in Heaven."

It is always easy to start the Rosary, but five "Our Fathers," fifty "Hail Marys" and five Glorias do not offer much variety.

Mere repetition can have a paralysing effect even on devotion. This is so despite the fact that mere repetition adds a certain solemnity to prayers. Just as the monotonous firing of twenty one guns makes a royal salute, so does the Rosary give a ceremonial acknowledgement to Mary, our Heavenly Queen. Nevertheless, there is a prayerful drowsiness that can fall over a household when the Rosary gets under way. The beads gently slip through sleeping fingers and all is well till the person giving out the decade stays too long on the same bead. The eleventh "Hail Mary" may be his most prayerful effort but, unless the offender gets a nudge before the twelfth, someone is bound to get annoyed about being kept all night on his knees.

SCENES FROM OUR REDEMPTION

It is because the Rosary can too easily become a meaningless repetition of words that each decade has a separate Mystery assigned to it. There can be nothing dull or tedious about it, if the words we say are coloured with thoughts from the drama of our Redemption. Each Mystery brings us a change of scene and we can let our imagination rove in sketching the background and details. It goes without saying that we should be masters in this art, because the Divine Artist is watching every line we draw. The inspiration to mould our lives to the pattern of each new picture will undoubtedly be lost, if our minds begin to wander. We should really mean it when we pray: "grant we beseech Thee, that meditating on these Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise."

October is the month of the Rosary. For families or individuals, who are careless about the daily Rosary, it is just the time to start in earnest. For those who say the Rosary every day it is the time for a special effort to say it better For all it should be no burden but a labour of love, in this Our Lady's Year, to handle the beads and weave a garland of the choicest flowers of prayer for their Mother and their Queen.

★

In the life of the Cure d'Ars it is told that a certain old peasant used to spend hours before the Blessed Sacrament, never even moving his lips; it seems that he was speaking to God.

"And what do you say to Him?" the Cure asked.

"Oh," replied the old peasant, "He looks at me and I look at Him."

The greatest saints have found no formula more simple or more sublime to express the conversation of the soul with God.

SHORT STORY.

JOE, THE PATCH

By Vincent J. Walker

Good Lord ! Will you just look at it ! Desolation:" Maureen Byrne waved a slim, well-manicured hand at the rocky, mountainous country that slid past the nearly-silent touring car in which she sat :

"Dad !" There was a touch of hysteria in her voice as she addressed the strong-jawed, elderly man at the wheel :

"Dad, why did you have to choose the last place on earth ?"

Her father smiled : "The doctor ordered you rest, fresh air, and I'm going to see to it that his instructions are carried out to the letter." Smile or no smile, there was no mistaking the determination in his voice. Anger etched alien lines on her pretty face, and brought a glint to blue eyes that were made for smiling.

"Tyrant !" she exclaimed, tossing her fair curls indignantly. His smile vanished : If I were a tyrant, Maureen, you would not now be in need of an off-season holiday," he quietly retorted. "Since your mother died," he went on, "you have had too much freedom. That couldn't be helped—I have a business to attend to. All might have gone well—but you have misused your freedom, and therefore stand a chance of losing your health. Whose fault was that, d'you think ?" There was a moment's silence, a heavy sigh, then :

"Mine, dad, of course. I'm sorry. I take back what I said. You're no tyrant—you're an angel."

"That's my girl talking !" He was smiling again, and there was strength and encouragement in his bass growl. "So we'll see vanishing Spring in the hills of the South, and you can paint a bit, and we can loaf around when we feel like it."

"Gosh ! I'm sure I shall put on pounds and pounds !" she interrupted, with consternation in her voice.

"Which is precisely what the doctor ordered !" he was quick to reply, with a nod of his big, grey head. She laughed, and he joined with her, for he loved to hear her laugh.

Three days later she sat on a camp stool, in front of a small easel, in warm, Spring sunshine. So absorbed had she become in her work, that she failed to notice the approach of the ass-and-cart, and the man who walked beside it. When his shadow darkened her easel, she jerked, nervously. The tall man with the beard removed his battered hat, and his weather-bronzed face crinkled in a smile. The patriarchal effect of the beard was offset by the youthful clarity of his twinkling, blue eyes. Mentally, she assessed his age as being somewhere in the early thirties.

"Ye're makin' a brave job of yon," he volunteered, nodding at

her water-colour painting of the valley, with its little sparkling stream. "Ye'll not mind me watchin' ?"

His manner was respectful, his smile disarming. She turned to the easel to hide a puzzled frown. There was a trace of Donegal in his accent, but it was not pure. Of course, she thought, people who travelled a lot were bound to get their original accents a bit shop-soiled. He sat on the ditch on the opposite side of the road, produced a stubby, chipped briar from his ragged jacket, filled it, and puffed contentedly.

"You're stayin' at the new guest-house, I suppose ?" he mumbled, between puffs.

"Yes." She carefully mixed blue with white.

"This is a quare time of the year for ye to be on holidays; ye were sick, mebbe ?"

"No, but I might have been—I was developing 'nerves'."

"Aw," he exclaimed, understandingly, with a wave of the pipe, "Quare, treacherous things, them nerves !"

She stopped painting, and turned towards him :

"Have you ever stood on top of Sugar-Loaf Mountain and watched the Sun rise ?" she asked, with a smile. For a moment he seemed abashed at her sudden changing of the subject. Then he showed teeth, startling white behind the silky, black beard, as he laughed gently and shook his head :

"No ma'am," he replied.

"Neither have I," she declared, "but I'm going to—and what's more, I'm going to paint it."

"D'ye tell me that, now ?" He cocked his head on one side, and gave her a quizzical glance. "D'ye know ye'll have to climb the mountain in the dark ?" She nodded : "That—or sleep the night up there, and I'd prefer the lesser of two evils," she said.

"I wonder ?" There was concern in his voice "Yon's a brave climb by day, never mind by night. If ye were mine, ye'd not be allowed."

"The question doesn't arise," she answered coldly.

"No, ma'am. I beg pardon."

She laughed. How was he to know that her father would have a fit if he knew she intended to climb Sugar-loaf Mountain by night ?

"Oh, it's all right !" she reassured him, "you meant well—I'm going to have a bash at it to-night anyway." As she spoke, she was packing up her equipment. Just as she was about to move off, she asked :

"What's your name, by the way ?"

"Joe, ma'am—they call me Joe the Patch."

"Thanks. Mine's Maureen Byrne. If you're around the district, I might be able to dig you out one of my father's sport's jackets—that one you're wearing looks pretty shook !" There was nothing patronising about her warm smile. They might have been old friends.

"It's kind o' ye, ma'am, but, sure, this one'll do me rightly for

some time to come, thanks all the same." He smiled, and gave her a friendly wave as she set off down the path.

That night, Joe's hooped tent was pitched under the tail of his cart on the grass margin of the road, not far from the path by which climbers reached the mountainside.

At about four in the morning, Maureen Byrne laboured up an ill-defined goat-track on the side of Sugarloaf, her equipment strapped to her back, ruck-sack fashion. A couple of hundred yards behind her, his keen eyes picking out the tiny beam of her flash lamp, Joe the Patch, climbed quietly with a bent-knee'd, in-toe'd action that made his progress seem effortless.

Mentally, he prayed. His knowledge of human nature made him hang back. She must not know he was there, or she might mistake his intentions, and panic. He guessed that she would follow a goat-track. What she did not know was that there were many goat-tracks on Sugarloaf, and most of them ended where wind and weather had bared the smooth, stark granite, leaving foothold for goats, and danger for humans.

She was half-way up just such a rock-face, edging along a narrow cleft, when, suddenly, the cleft ended, and there was nothing but sheer rock at an acute angle. She fretted, impatiently. Hang the thing ! It looked so dead-simple ! She pointed her torch and saw that the summit was only about fifteen feet away. Then, her foot slipped—she made a frantic effort—steadied herself—below, there was a metallic "clink," and the tinkle of broken glass, as her fallen flash lamp struck a rock—her heart was pounding...

She looked down. Far, far below, one of the parking lights of her car glimmered like a fountain-pen flash-light. When she thought of having to find her way down through that velvety darkness, across the bog, to the road, her throat grew dry, and she had to clench her white teeth to keep them from chattering.

She must retain self-control, she thought. Slowly, shakily, she edged downwards. Then, suddenly, her foot found not rock, but space... She slithered, rolled, had the awful feeling of falling through nothingness... Mercifully, she had fainted before she struck the sparse, rock-strewn grass...

She awoke on a stretcher in the drawing room of the guest-house. Although dawn stole over the mountains, the shades were still on the windows, and yellow electric-light sent daggers of pain through her bandaged head. Hastily, she closed her eyes again. A mellow voice seemed to come from afar :

"I'm sorry, Mr. Byrne. I've done all I can, and the fact is that the girl is still in danger. She needs an immediate operation."

"Well, can't you do it ?"

"I'm no surgeon, sir, and I'd need to be a good one to tackle this job."

Cautiously, Maureen opened her eyes again, blinking rapidly to get used to the light. Hazily, she could make out her father, an old man, evidently the local doctor, the hotel staff, a priest, a Garda

sergeant, and in the background, Joe the Patch, all looking very concerned.

"Who could we get ?" There was a desperate note in Paddy Bryne's voice. The doctor was silent for a moment :

"I wish I had the good word for you, Mr. Byrne, but I haven't. John Carmody could have done it—he's in Rome. Ned Lalor and O'Halloran are at a convention in America. The only other one I can think of is Mick O'Rourke, but he got himself into trouble in a car-crash, and he's in jail—"

"Was in jail," the Garda Sergeant gently corrected him,

"He escaped two months ago and has been on the run ever since—they say he skipped to Spain on a trawler."

"Not that it makes any difference." The old doctor heaved a sigh, "What we want is someone here and now."

"Is my little girl to die, then ?" Byrne asked the doctor.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Byrne, but I believe that nothing but an immediate operation will save your daughter's life—that or a miracle."

Smitten to the very heart, as he had never been since his wife's death, Paddy Byrne put his two big fists on his forehead and muttered brokenly. One of the maids sniffed audibly. The Garda Sergeant, a family man, covered his mouth with a big hand, as he stroked his rough chin. The rest of the gathering shuffled uneasily, and looked at the floor. Then, the silence was broken by a cultured, decisive voice :

"Don't worry, Mr. Byrne—I'll operate."

They all turned with the unison of soldiers on parade. Joe the Patch, stepped forward.

"You ?" The Garda Sergeant choked, and his face flushed.

"Yes," Joe the Patch answered, quietly, "I'm Mick O'Rourke."

His were the last words Maureen Byrne heard before lapsing into unconsciousness again.

And so it was that in the kitchen of a guest-house in the mountains of Cork, with his patient on the kitchen table, Mick O'Rourke, clad in the snow-white habiliments of the house-chef, tied a middle-meningeal artery in what was to be the most important operation of his life. The anaesthetic was administered by the local doctor, who was thrilled to see the case of surgical instruments he had received as a gift many years ago, being put to good use at last.

She woke up in her own bedroom, feeling that it might have been better if she had died. Her father sat at the bedside. Mick O'Rourke stood behind him, smiling.

"You're all right, now, Maureen," he said, "but you must hurry and get better."

"And you ?" she asked weakly, "I seem to remember hearing "that you're on the run." He smiled : "This roving life is

Concluded on Page 34.

Brancardiers of Lourdes

S. WALSH

One of the most moving sights to be witnessed at Lourdes is that of the daily procession through the streets of the long line of suffering, helpless humanity being drawn or carried from the hospitals to the shrine of Our Lady. While one cannot fail to be filled with pity for the stricken, a feeling of admiration is at once aroused for those who devote their time so willingly and untiringly while acting in the capacity of Brancardiers.

To many the word brancardier conveys little or no meaning, but to anyone who has had the privilege of visiting this shrine of shrines, no explanation is necessary. They are the voluntary workers who bring the sick to and from the Grotto each day, workers drawn from the ranks of all nations—rich and poor, gentle and simple. The sick are the Royalty of Lourdes; the brancardiers their ministering angels and devoted subjects.

The origin of brancardierism, to coin a word, dates back to 1873 when the first big pilgrimage was organised. At Lourdes itself there was no one to help the invalids, with the result that much inconvenience and suffering was caused them. One day an old lady arrived at the station to find there was no means of getting to the Grotto. A French noble-man—Viscount de Roussy— who happened to be at the station, was so moved with pity for her that he at once offered his services. On his way he enlisted the aid of two other gentlemen, and between them brought a grateful woman to Massabielle. The incident inspired those Christian nobles to discuss the formation of an organisation to aid sick pilgrims. The result was the "Hospitality of Our Lady of Lourdes" (1884). From

After the departure ceremony at St. John's.

such a small beginning it has grown to great proportions, so that to-day there is not the slightest fear that any invalid will be left unattended.

Each pilgrimage has its own band of brancardiers, while Lourdes provides regular stewards. As it is deemed a great honour, almost every man and boy volunteers for the "transport" service. How does one become a brancardier ? Nothing easier : Just give your name to one of the Directors and report to a special office in the square, where after filling a simple form, you are then supplied with shoulder-straps and proudly emerge a fully-fledged brancardier, ready to do your part.

In order to explain more fully their duties let us take the Limerick Maria Assumpta pilgrimage as an example, which included

Everyone helps at Lourdes.

some forty invalids, cared for in the Hospital of the Seven Dolours. Very early each morning the brancardiers came and helped to dress, wash and place the sick on stretchers or in wheel-chairs. Mention must here be made of the splendid work done by handmaids, nurses and nuns, without whose assistance the men-helpers could not possibly have managed.

When all was ready they made their way through the already-crowded, narrow streets of the hilly town. Every consideration was shown the brancardiers and their charges and at the Grotto a special place was reserved for them. Mass over, the invalids received Holy Communion after which breakfast was served at one side of the great Square facing the Basilica. Brancardiers went to their hotels for breakfast, but were soon back for the bathing of the sick. Then they returned to the hospital. In the afternoon their services were required at the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament and

the blessing of the sick. Back once more to the hospital and for many the work of the day was over. Not all, however. There were some who, feeling that they could not do enough, spent the nights in turn at the hospital attending to the wants of the patients with a tenderness and devotion touching in the extreme.

As may be gathered from the above, the work of the brancardiers can be long and tiring, yet one never hears the slightest complaint and the only regret is that they cannot do more to relieve the sufferings of their fellow-men. Their influence upon the sick is great; needed help is not sought in vain; their presence at the sick bed inspires confidence; their patience an example to those who weary of long helplessness.

There are, however, many bright sides too. Addressing some other pilgrim in horrible French of the text-book type and receiving an answer in the good old Irish brogue, difficulties in manipulating a wheel-chair which persists in going to the right when it is expected to go left; minor collisions with other drivers; losing one's way in the maze of streets; following (or trying to) the voluble instructions

A BRANCARDIER WE MET.

Ganora Evasio, an Italian, who came to Lourdes in 1949, an incurable invalid. Was cured there, and now returns thanks in a very practical way. The shoulder-straps, peculiar to the brancardiers can be seen in the photograph.

of the French stewards whose motto is "speed and still more speed"—all these incidents will linger long in the memory of those who have taken part in a great work of charity.

Then, when the closing stages have ended and you report at the office to hand in your equipment there is a real feeling of regret that all is over as far as you are concerned; Yes, indeed, but rising above this emotion runs the joyful thought—"I have been a brancardier at Lourdes."

The Red Cross Saint

Rev. James O'Byrne, C.C.

The Red Cross Society is now well and widely known and if we enquire about its origin we will probably be told that it was founded by a Swiss philantropist, named Henri Dunant. Without wishing in any way to detract from the credit that is due to Henri Dunant we can with safety assert that he took his inspiration—and the symbol of his organisation— from the work started by a man who lived three hundred years earlier. That man was St. Camillus de Lellis.

One night an italian mother had a dream in which she seemed to see the son that was soon to be born to her. On his breast appeared a cross and with him were other children wearing the same sign. She regarded this as an omen of evil. She feared that she was about to beget a highwayman, against whom every man's hand would be turned and who would finally be hanged. She herself did not live to see her dream come true. Her son did bear a cross on his breast. His spiritual children also bore this sign, but it was the sign of a new Order, the Ministers of the Sick, and the cross proved to be what it has always been—a sign of salvation.

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

The mother was a good and pious woman. As the wife of a mercenary soldier she had a hard life. Her husband flitted from state to state in the pursuit of his calling. War was his business but the object of the war was no concern of his. It did not matter to him whether the war was just or unjust. He was paid to fight and that he did—moving on to another scene to offer his services when one war ended. Giovanni de Lellis was the typical mercenary. He was, also, an inveterate gambler and only at long intervals did he join his lonely wife, all the lonelier in that her first-born child had died at a young age. A second son was born on 25th May, 1550, at Brenchianico, in Abruzzo (Italy), to the God-fearing woman and the reckless soldier of fortune—Camillus de Lellis, the child of the Cross. The boy showed early signs of the soldier-blood that flowed in his veins. His pious mother exerted little influence over him and the one thought in the boy's head was

to follow in his father's footsteps. The cavalier appearance of his father and the glamour of a soldier's life had captivated him and rendered him impervious to the good influences of his home. His schooling was very casual and he looked forward to the day when he could join his father, be his comrade-in-arms, the sharer of his hazards, his adventures, and all the uncertain glory of war. Camillus also inherited his father's gambling habits. The occasional returns of his father to the home only served to make him all the more eager to be finished with home life and to enter upon all the adventures of a soldier's life. Finally at the age of nineteen, his mother being dead, he left with his father to commence his military career. Between fighting and gambling the pair managed to eke out a precarious existence, but their partnership was not to be of long duration. On the way to Venice to offer their services to the Republic in the war against the Turks the father took ill and died. This was a great shock to Camillus and was aggravated by a small wound that he received above the ankle in their previous engagement. It had begun to fester and rendered it necessary for him to return home. On the way he fell in with two Franciscans and being impressed by their manner he grew ashamed of his dissolute life and vowed to become a Franciscan himself. He betook himself to a Franciscan Convent where his uncle was Guardian and applied to him for admission. His uncle wisely rejected him, whereupon he blithely dismissed all thought of his vow and decided to carry on with soldiering. His wound became very troublesome and needed treatment and he determined to make his way to Rome in the hope of having it cured at one of the Roman Hospitals. He offered himself as a servant at the Hospital of San Giacomo in return for medical treatment. The wound was almost healed when he was dismissed from the hospital in disgrace—for gambling. However, he was well enough to take part in some of the fighting between the Venetians and the Turks. With the defeat of the Turks he was disbanded and soon found himself in very low water. By the use of cards and dice he managed to eke out a living of sorts. A story told of his gambling habits well illustrates the hold that the vice had gained on him. One night in an inn he had got into a card game. He had staked all his money and lost it. In an effort to retrieve it he staked his soldier's equipment, article by article. His sword, his gun, his powder-flasks, his military great-cloak, followed in quick succession—still he lost. He staked his shirt and lost it. He staked the rest of his garments and lost them and, to his shame, he was forced to surrender them publicly. He made his way back

to his lodgings clad in a barrel. Some time later, when on his way back from soldiering in Tunis, he was threatened with shipwreck and renewed his vow to become a Franciscan. He was no sooner on land than he gambled away his money and every article of his soldier's equipment for the second time and was forced to beg his way from town to town. Once again he remembered his vow and actually became a Novice in a Capuchin Convent, but the leg-wound again opened and he had to go to Rome for treatment on the same basis. This time he was a model in the hospital and gained the esteem of the Governors. When the leg healed he returned once more to the Capuchins and after four months the leg once more became septic and he was dismissed for good. Back to San Giacomo once more and this time he realized that his real vocation lay in work in the hospitals.

FORMED HIS ORDER

At that time there was no proper organisation in the hospitals. Nearly every town had its hospital but the average hospital approximated very closely to the Casual Ward in the old Workhouses. Time after time plagues devastated whole cities and states. The terrifying dread of contagion resulted in the abandonment of the infected. No one worked in a hospital who could possibly gain a living otherwise. The sick were so shunned for fear of contagion that there was no real care of them. They were left unattended and many an unconsious person was, through carelessness, adjudged to be dead and buried alive. No one knew the state of the hospitals better than Camillus and he conceived the idea of forming a Religious Order to undertake the care of the sick in hospitals. At the age of 32 he set himself the task of becoming a priest. Having neglected school during his youth he had little or no learning and had to start at the bottom. He stuck it out undaunted and was ordained priest in 1584. He then formed his Order, which was to undertake the care of the plague-stricken, of the sick in hospitals and prisons, and of those dying in their own homes. In 1586 the Pope gave formal approval to wear a red cross on their habits as their distinctive badge. On 29th June, of that year, Camillus and his companions—first members of the Order—went to St. Peter's to offer themselves wholly to God in the service of the sick, and for the first time bore in public on their habits the red cross on their breasts, but the cross was no token of disaster. That day marked the beginning of a great reform in the care and service of the sick. On that day Camillus and the Camillians sanctified the Red Cross as the symbol of unselfish Christ-like service of the sick.

A LIFE OF SACRIFICE

Camillus showed an endless charity towards the sick. There was no work too repulsive, no detail of attention too trivial. He and his followers fought with plague after plague, wore themselves out in them, and gave their lives in them. He was not content

with succouring the hospital sick and the poor who came to him, but sought them out in the most wretched hovels and cellars and stables of Rome. He arose during the night to attend to the patients who needed drinks and if he thought that a patient was likely to die during the night he would not leave his side until he had expired, lest in his last moments the sick person might lack the helps and consolation of religion. As new members became available he established new foundations of his Order, and their coming to the various places brought new hope and comfort to the sick and afflicted. During his life-time Camillus was blessed by God with the gift of miracles Spending himself on behalf of God's stricken children he sought no rest until he rendered his great soul to God on the 14th July, 1614. The Church keeps his feast on July 18th.

SYMBOL OF MERCY.

In the Red Cross Camillus has left to the world the emblem of a distinctive spirit. This is the spirit of Christian charity towards Christ's sick and afflicted, the embodiment of the Gospel teaching that bade men see Christ in the lowliest of their brethren and proclaimed that a service done to them was a service done to the Master Himself. The red cross of Camillus has become the universal symbol of the care of the sick. Even in his own life-time his followers had appeared in the battlefields. As early as 1595 the Cammillians were on the battlefield of Strigonia in Hungary; they organised field hospitals in Vienna; they saw service against the Turks in Croatia, and on down through the centuries. At the battle of Solferino in Lombardy the Red Cross Camillians distinguished themselves by their service to the wounded. Henri Dunant was present at this battle and saw the work of the Camillians. It seemed to be more than a coincidence that only a few years later, in 1863, Henri Dunant made his first proposals for international agreements concerning the treatment of the wounded in war and proposed as the symbol of the hospital service a RED CROSS. The Geneva Convention of the following year, revised in 1906, is the international legal basis of the war-work of the various national Red Cross Societies. Notwithstanding the great work of Henri Dunant the credit of being founder of the Red Cross must go to St. Camillus. Dunant derived much of his inspiration from the work of the Camillians at the battle of Solferino and from them took the badge of his organisation. St. Camillus has not received much credit from the world, but the Church has conferred on him the highest title in her gift—that of Saint. In 1886, Pope Leo XIII declared him Patron of the sick and of the nursing profession and inserted his name in the Litanies of the Dying. In 1930, Pope Pius XI declared him the heavenly Patron of every kind of organisation of Catholic hospital-workers, and bore witness anew to that precise work for which God raised up Camillus, making of an adventurer and a gambler the Apostle of the Sick, the Derelict and the Dying: "He was raised up by God to minister to the sick and to teach others how to minister to them."

LOVE OF GOD

Rev P. Houlihan

You remember how Our Lord summed up his teaching for us—"Thou shalt love the Lord, Thy God, with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." Here, Our Lord gives us the secret of life. From time to time, we realize that the pursuits of our life, no matter how interested we are in them, do not satisfy us. We still yearn for something and Our Lord tells us that what we seek is God, God from whom we came and to whom we are destined to return. "Give then," says Our Lord, "the first place in your heart to God and you will be at rest." This is what St. Augustine, who in his youth had been very far from God, experienced, so that he cried: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and nowhere shall we find rest until we rest in Thee."

We would wish, then, to give our first love to God. But first we must know God, for with us love follows knowledge, and just as we get to know any person through what he does, so we get to know God through His Creation. We can see God all round us in people and things and so come to know Him. For instance, when you meet sincerity, that quality that immediately attracts us in a fellow human being, recall that it is the reflection of the truth of its author, Who is Truth Itself.

Again, your eye will sometimes have been taken by the beauty of flowers. You may have stopped to admire the colour and perfect formation of a rose or a lily. Well, the next time you do, recall that this beauty has come from God and is the reflection of His Perfect Beauty. As you walk by a river bank or by the sea at evening, you are surrounded by tranquillity and beauty—recall that the peace and beauty of sky and land are the Peace and Beauty of God.

And you can see the Goodness of God around you in the ripe field of corn, in the majestic tree in full foliage, in the sleek cattle content in their pasture and in people too. For instance, if you have seen the devotion of the Little Sisters of the Poor to those in need, you will have observed how forgetful they are of self in their cheerful, almost gay, absorption in their work for others. In their goodness, their wholesomeness, you can see their God, Whom they love, Who is Goodness Itself.

All that we have been trying to say has been expressed by the

Catholic poet, Francis Thompson, in two lines which he wrote on God's Creation of the daisy.

"His finger pushed it through the sod,
It came up redolent of God."

The first line may be a rather startling way of referring to God's act of creation, but to startle us was the poet's intention since we take so much for granted the daisy's rise from the ground.

"It came up redolent of God," that is, still carrying with it the fragrance of God from Whom it had come and consequently, a constant reminder of Him. And as the daisy the simplest of flowers is "redolent of God," so, as we have seen, is everything else that is beautiful, good or true in the world.

Let us recall this then when next somebody stands by us in trouble or we see the morning sunshine over a green countryside. So, even in this life, we will see God, in fleeting glimpses it is true, but reminding us that we are destined to see Him in all His splendour. And is it not very natural for us to love God, when we think of Him like this as the Source and Perfection of all that attracts our love in this life !

And our love of God will, in turn, inevitably lead us to fulfill the second part of Our Lord's command, which was, you remember, "And thy neighbour as thyself." For as a saint has said, we show our love of God whom we cannot see by our love of our neighbour whom we can see: And what does love of our neighbour mean ? Well, first, it means refraining from injuring him. For instance, you hear something damaging about him and when an appreciative ear presents itself, you feel the urge to pass it on, possibly with many injunctions that it should go no further. When you are tempted like that, only a genuine love of God will give you the motive and the strength to hold your tongue.

Again, when you are asked for help that involves giving, prudence will incline you to examine to what extent the other's need is due to improvidence and lack of initiative. It will emphasise for you the danger of your encouraging idleness and irresponsibility. The love of God, on the other hand, will incline you to examine to what extent your reluctance is caused by that pang that the thought of parting with what is ours brings to all of us. It will rather remind you that Our Lord said that even a cup of cold water given in His name was as if given to Himself.

To take a final example—one that is not uncommon, especially in the country. A "new woman" comes into a house, and there is tension between herself and the old mistress. In time, the old woman becomes an invalid and consequently harder to please, while now requiring more care and attention. There is no natural incentive for the young woman to treat the other well. She finds it a burden and there is no tie of blood between them to make the

burden light. Again, only the love of God will enable the young woman to care for the other and treat her kindly.

You may remember that at the beginning we referred to Our Lord's commandment as the secret of life—and so it is. We all desire happiness. If one were to judge by the popular songs of the day, people seek it now more frantically than ever, but they have forgotten that happiness, like health, is something you think about very much when you have lost it and that the more you seek it the farther it recedes from you. The reason is that seeking for happiness leads to pre-occupation with self, which is, in turn, the chief cause of unhappiness. And the reason that Our Lord's words contain the secret of life is that He teaches us the only way, namely, the love of God, by which we can lose our pre-occupation with self and give more of our attention to others. So will the degree of our love of God determine the measure of contentment and happiness which are to be ours in life.

A DIOCESAN COLLECTION.

In our opening pages we publish the Bishop's Appeal, already familiar to most of you. The Collection has already been held in all Churches outside the city, and on next Sunday, October 10th, it will be held in all the city Churches.

We have not received, as we go to press, precise figures for the Collection already held, but from what we have heard, we know that our people have been very generous.

The need indeed is great. The repairs to the Cathedral have cost about £50,000, and although the parishioners of St. John's have, for some years past, been contributing with untiring generosity, a debt of over £30,000 is still outstanding.

A new Diocesan College, large enough to cater adequately for the needs of our Diocese, will, before it is fully completed, probably cross the £200,000 mark. The figure is enormous, present-day building costs make it so, but we face with confidence the task of providing a College that will serve our Diocese for generations to come.

We hope, therefore, that our city people will make a big effort next Sunday to reduce the debt on our Cathedral, and to make possible an early start on the building of the College.

A SUGGESTION

Any person who wishes to be particularly generous but who is not in a position now to give the whole amount may avail of a Banker's Order to contribute monthly or half-yearly or yearly.

In our next issue we hope to make, with as much detail as possible, a public acknowledgment of the generosity of our benefactors.

ANY QUESTIONS ?

Q—What is meant by a Privileged Altar ?

A—The Indulgence of the Privileged Altar means that the Church grants a Plenary Indulgence to a Mass celebrated for a deceased person, if the Mass is said either at an Altar to which that privilege has been granted or by a priest to whom the privilege has been conceded.

The Indulgence of the Privileged Altar is, therefore, attached either to an altar, so that any priest who celebrates Mass on that altar may gain that Indulgence, or it may be attached to the person of the priest so that wherever he says Mass he may gain the Indulgence. The only other condition is that the Mass be offered for the repose of the soul of the deceased person. On all Souls' Day and on each day until November 9th (inclusive) all altars are privileged, and also all the altars of a church are privileged during the days on which Forty Hours' Prayer takes place.

Q—What is meant by Quarter Tense ?

A—Quarter Tense is a corruption from the French, quarter (four) and Temps (time) being a fast of three days (Wednesday. Friday and Saturday) at the beginning of the four Seasons of the year. These fasts begin on the Wednesday of the first week in Lent, (Spring) on the Wednesday after Pentecost Sunday (Summer), on the Wednesday after 14th September (Autumn) and on the Wednesday after the 13th December (Winter). It is likely that these periods were chosen to offset the pagan and Jewish fasts around the same time of the year.

Q—In what way may we gain the greatest benefit from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass ?

A—The best way to gain the greatest benefit from the Sacrifice of the Mass is to "live the Mass." By "living the Mass" we mean to offer up with the Mass, our life. our will, our hopes, our sorrows and joys. The union of the Sacrifice of the Mass with the sacrifice of our own lives is the shortest road to a life of holiness. Each day, for instance, has its trials. If we offer these to Almighty God at the Altar, when the moment of trial comes the Holy Mass procures for us the necessary graces to endure the trial.

Q—Though the Holy Souls cannot help themselves, can they pray for us ?

A—It is probable that the souls in Purgatory can help us by their prayers, as there seems to be no reason why these souls cannot join in the Communion of Saints in this way and intercede for us as the saints in Heaven do. But, if we have devotion to the Holy Souls, we can be certain that those, to whom the Gates of Heaven were opened by our Masses, prayers and good works, will not forget us in our need.

Q—Which of the Popes reigned the longest ?

A—Pope Pius IX who reigned for 32 years from 1846 to 1878. He was the Pope who defined the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady in 1854 and also the Dogma of Papal Infallibility at the Vatican Council in 1870. He was reigning Pope when the Apparitions of Our Lady to Bernadette Soubirous took place at Lourdes in 1858.

NA GREANNTÁIN

Gearóid Mac Conmiḋe.

I láṫair na h-uaire cuireann na gasúir ar fud na tíre an-spéis ins na greanntáin : Is ceist taḃaċtaċ dúinne go léir, mar sin, na greantáin nó "comics" a meas, ċun a ḟáġail amaċ a ḃfuil fiúġantas ar biṫ ionnta 'san gcóras oideaċais atá in Éirinn indiu. Anois caiṫfid mé a ráḋ ar dtúis naċ aontuiġim in aon ċor leis na daoine a deireann naċ ceart na greanntáin a ḃeiṫ ann ar ċor ar biṫ. Sé mo ṫuairim féin go gcaiṫfiḋ greanntán a oibriú ar nós droiċid. Níl an páiste óg i ndan leaṫanaċ a léiġeaṁ naċ ḃfuil ann aċ an cló aṁáin gan aon léaráidí ċun na smaointe a ċur i n-úil dó. Níl sé deacair do ṗáiste áṁtaċ, rud a ṫuigsint má ḃíonn an cainnt agus na léaráidí fiġte fuaiġte. Oibriġeann an greanntán mar droiċead cun páistí óga a stiúrú go dtí an léiġ teoireaċt. Aċ ní maiṫ an rud é ḃeiṫ ag gríosaḋ na bpáistí cun rudaí a léiġeaṁ muna mbíonn tú cinnte go mbainfiḋ siad tairḃe as an léiġ teoireaċt. Ní ceart ḃeiṫ ag molaḋ léiġteóireaċta ar son na léiġteóireaċta féin. Sé rud atá le meas againn anois ná, cad é an tairḃe atá le fáġail as na greanntáin a ḃíonn gá léiġeaṁ ag na daoine óga go coitċianta ?

CAINNT IS LITRIU.

Furṁór na ngreanntán a ḃíonn sa tír seo, is ins an mBéarla atáid. Aċ ins na greanntáin ní an gnáṫ-Béarla a úsáidtear ar ċor ar biṫ. Tá an litriú go dona go h-an minic ; is deacair é a ṫuigsint aċ fiú aṁáin na focail go mbaintear úsáid asta minic ní ḃíonn siad litriġṫe i gceart. Bíonn an múinteóir ag déanaṁ iarraċta na páistí a ṫreanáil ins an litriú ceart agus le linn na h-uaire céadna ċíonn siad litriú eile ins na greanntáin. An rud a léiġeann siad fágann sé lorg i gcomnuiḋe, agus sa deire bíonn an cuid is mó díoḃ cinnte gur ins na greanntáin atá an litriú is fearr. Tréiṫ eile a ḃainear leis na greanntáin gallda ar fad beagnaċ, ná go mbíonn an caint is an comráḋ ro garḃ ar fad. Más mian le duine a léiġteóirí a ċur ag gáiriḋe nó más mian leis iad a ṁeallaḋ ċun go mbéaḋ omós aca air, sé rud a ḋeineann sé ná leaganaċa agus cortaí cainnte a úsáid naċ gcloistear riaṁ sa gnáṫ cainnt. Anois, tá sé de nós ag gasúir aiṫris a ḋéanaṁ ar ḋaoine eile agus dá ḃríġ sin baineann siad úsáid as na leaganaċa céadna. Ní go ró maiṫ a ṫuigeann a lán aca cad a ḃíonn gá ráḋ aca aċ mar sin féin ní maiṫ an comarṫa é. Leanann droċ ṁúnaḋ caint de'n tsaġas seo mar nuair a ḃíonn gasúir i ndan leaganaċa na mbuaċaillí mbó agus na gcreaċairí a úsáid is minic a ċeapann siad go ḃfuil orṫa beart dá réir a ḋéanaṁ. Ins na

greanntáin má laḃrann duine go tréan sin é le rád go bḟuil sé in a ġairce. Cad iad na sgéalta is mo a ḃíonn ins na greanntáin? Bíonn sgéalta ionnta ag cur síos ar na buachaillí bó agus ar na daoine a ḋeineann ionsaiġe ar na tréada. Bíonn sgéalta ionnta faoi ropairí agus creachairí, a goideann, a marḃuiġeann eile agus a sciobann daoine eile ċun iad a ċoinneál le h-aġaiḋ airgid d'ḟáġail. Ins gaċ greanntán bíonn duine amháin go bḟuil clú agus cáil air mar ġeall ar ċoṫrom na féinne a ṫabairt do gaċ éinne a d'ḟulaing leaṫ-ċuma. Eisean an fear mór gráḋmar, tagann na daoine ċuige agus iarrann siad air cóir agus ceart a ḃaint amaċ ḋóiḃ. Agus baineann sé, conas? Le daoine eile a marḃú, le sgiursreál a ṫabairt ḋóiḃ, len-a dtiġṫe a ḋóiġeaḋ.

DROĊ-IARSMAÍ.

Cuirimís ceist orainn féin anois! An ceart inċinn duine óig a líonaḋ le stuif den tsaġas seo? Níl aon loċt ann má ḃíonn garsúr ag déanaṁ aiṫrise ar iománuiḋe nó peileadóir cáileaṁail, aċ an ceart go mbeaḋ sé ó ṁaidin go h-oiḋċe ag leigint air gur duine dána marḃṫaċ é naċ ceart cur i na ċoinne? "Mar a cuirtear an slat, is mar sin a ḟásann an crann." Ní féidir le crann fás go díreaċ láidir agus a ġéaga a síneaḋ uaiḋ ins gaċ treó go mbíonn an gála ag síor séideaḋ air. Gála nimhneaċ don aos óig an spiorad atá ar fud an domain go léir indiu, agus is gád na daoine óga a ċosaint. Tá meón le fáġail indiu ar fud na tíre seo atá coiṁtiġeaċ dúinne. Tá ár n-oiġreaċt againn, tá a cúram orainn, aċ is mian linn go minic an seod seo a ċaiṫeaṁ uainn agus meón eile a ġlacaḋ ó n-ár gcaraid ionṁuin ṫar muir. Tá sé sin le feiscint anois i n-ár hallaiḃ, ar ṫurasanaiḃ, agus aon áit gur aerach dár muintir. An meón atá ins greanntáin gallda is minic leis gur coiṁṫiġeaċ dúinne é; meón gur nascaiṫe é go minic le smaointe díoġḃálaċa, neaṁ ġlana. Caiṫfiḋ na cúirmiṫeóirí, mar sin ḃeiṫ go h-an ċúramaċ agus tréan iarraċt a ḋéanaṁ cun leiġteoireaċt na ngasúr a stiúrú. Is eascaiḋe scannail a ṫaḃairt do ṗáirtí agus is i ngeall ar sin gur mó an feall é mar gur leanaṁnaí an toraḋ i gcás páirte ná i gcás duine aosta. Is féidir do na cúirmiṫeóirí na greanntáin a ḃíonn gá léiġeaṁ ag na páirtí d'insiúċaḋ go minic. Más Féidir, is Fiú!

(A Ċríoc San)

PAIDIR ÓS COṀAIR AN ĊÉAD STÁISIUIN.

A Íosa a ḃí ciúin ós coṁair Píoláid, ná lig dom mo ṫeanga luascaḋ gan smaoineaṁ ar cad tá agam le rá agus conas é rá.

Laḃrás Ó Caḋla.

VANISHING ?

I DON'T THINK SO

Rev. T. Culhane

If we are to believe some of the articles which have appeared in a recent book, "The Vanishing Irish," then we are a very peculiar race of people indeed. Our menfolk seem to be particularly freakish. In fact one writer goes so far as to say that "no woman in her senses would trade even one very moth-eaten Spaniard for a whole team of all-Ireland Hurling Finalists, referee included."

Not very complimentary to our hurling men or to their wives for that matter. How interesting it would be to get comments on this statement from women scattered here and there throughout the country, who seemingly were so foolish and so berefit of common sense as to have married men who have hurled in Croke Park on All-Ireland Sunday.

I know a few of those "unfortunates" here in County Limerick, who seem to be very happy and contented. Their husbands too, strangely enough, seem to be quite normal in every way. If you have any doubt about it, then find out for yourself. The next time you meet an all-Ireland Hurler and/or his wife, enquire if they are feeling abnormal, or perhaps, subnormal would be a better word to use. But I want you to understand quite clearly that I accept no responsibility for the replies you may receive.

Certainly some of the contributors to "The Vanishing Irish" paint a very dismal picture. We have been told that we are a doomed and vanishing race. Our menfolk are woman-shy and marriage-shy, selfish and unromantic, too fond of sport and public-houses. As a result our Irish women are frustrated and unhappy and even if they do eventually get married they are condemned to joyless lives. Perhaps I am being unfair to some of those writers, but I couldn't help feeling that some of them seemed to think that our traditional love of virtue as exemplified in Thomas Moore's lovely song "Rich and Rare" is not such a laudable thing at all !

It did not come as any great surprise, then, to find that the Church was criticized for its attitude towards company-keeping and for its method in teaching matters of morals and marriage. It would appear that we priests have the wrong technique altogether. Too fond of using the word "don't," we must put more emphasis on positive virtue. I wonder if this accusation is justified ? I doubt it. But suppose for a moment we do overstress the negative

side of things, is it not a remarkable fact that when Almighty God was giving the Commandments to Moses, He was very definitely negative in eight cases out of the Ten. "Thou shalt not kill," He said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not steal."

Admittedly there are many unsolved problems in Ireland to-day. Our young people are emigrating. Our marriages are too few and too late. Our menfolk could do with less porter and less pleasure. But we cannot hope to cure our ills by advocating phychiatry on a national scale, or by suggesting that we should soft-pedal for a while one or other of the Ten Commandments. We are a sane people and we are a Christian people. God keep us so. There is no need for undue panic. By all means let us face up squarely to our problems. Let us keep hammering away at them with patience and perseverance. If we try hard enough and long enough we shall solve them eventually.

A HAPPY PEOPLE

At the risk of being called an optimist, I think we have rounded the corner already. Our people seem to be happier and more contented than ever before. They are more prosperous too. Life in Rural Ireland is not at all as dull or as drab as it used to be. The advent of such amenities as Rural Electrification has made tremendous changes for the better. From time to time we may grumble and grouse because the Government dosen't always do things to our liking, but in fairness to the various Governments we have had since we won our freedom, it must be said that they have served us well. We have come on a lot during the past thirty years. We ourselves are not the best judges in this respect. But ask any of our exiles who have come home to Ireland after an absence of 20 or 25 years, and they will tell you of the progress we have made.

Quite recently, I was speaking to a farmer who has met more than his share of trouble and ill luck in recent years. Yet, he is one of those happy men who is always able to face up to disappointments with a smile on his face. "How are you getting on, Joe," I asked him. I was expecting him to say something droll, and sure enough he did. "I can't grumble, Father, Thank God," he answered, "but of course there are waves of misfortune always passing over me." Now, to my mind, the important thing to note in this classic reply is that the waves of misfortune always passed over, and that our friend is still smiling. If this man is typical of our race and I think he is, then there is no need to be unduly alarmed about the future of our country. Waves of misfortune are bound to come; we may be badly shaken and tossed about for a while, but if we trust in God and if we face up to our problems in a calm and courageous manner, we have nothing to fear. We have survived many a crisis before; we can do so again provided we cling to the national assets which have helped us in the past, our Christian way of Life, our sanity, our grit and determination, and, might I add, our sense of humour.

SHORT STORY (continued from page 18).

becoming a bit boring," he replied, "I'm afraid I'll have to go away for a little rest." She bit her lip.

"The boys below say I might get a bit off my sentence for exemplary behaviour." He grinned mischievously.

"If you don't, it won't be for want of my trying !" growled Paddy Byrne, now standing up. The two men shook hands in silence. Maureen's eyes were suspiciously bright. Her father quietly left the room.

"I like a lot of things about you, Joe the Patch," she smiled through her tears. "But above all else, I love the way you pay the piper, although you didn't call the tune."

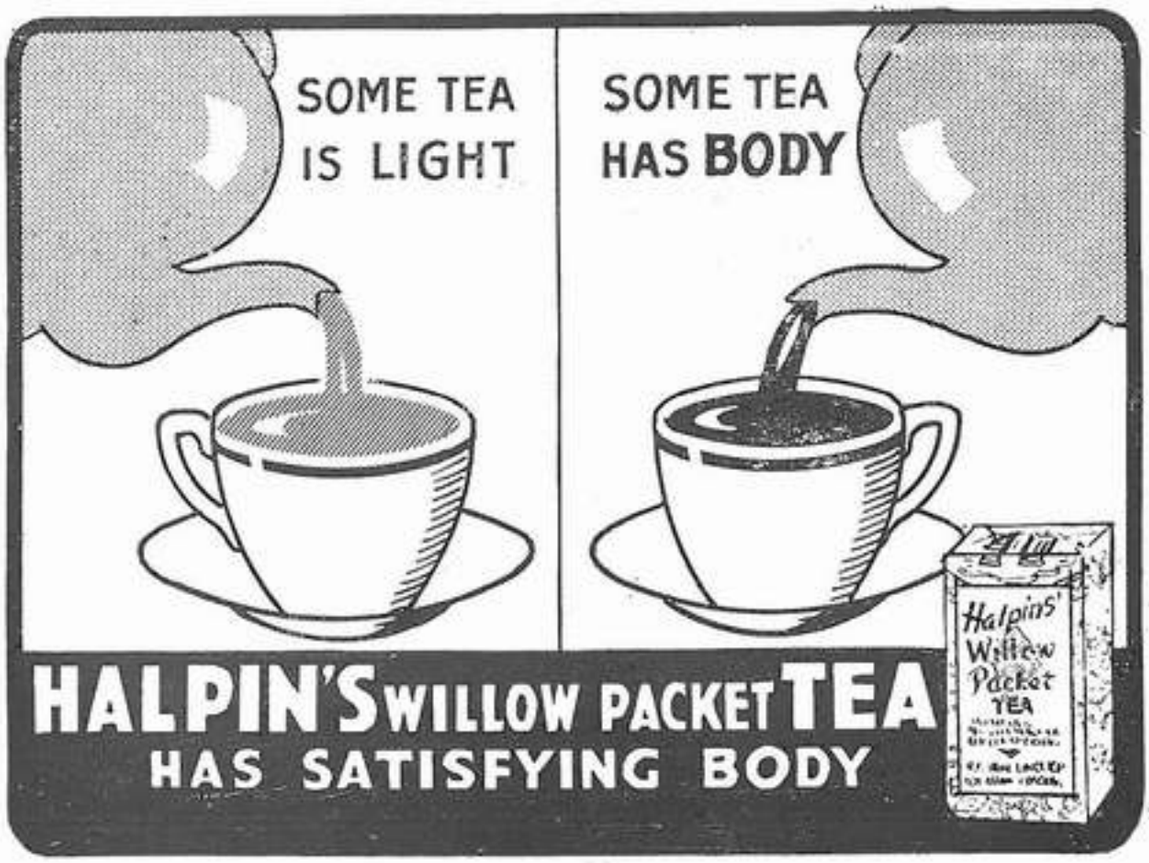
"Didn't I ?" He gripped the wooden foot-board of the bed with his strong, brown hands : "Didn't I exercise the talent God gave me ? And wasn't He kind to let me save you ?" His voice was soft and vibrant.

"You're a very noble man, Joe the Patch," her voice was quiet and sincere; "And whenever they let you out of that place, I'll be waiting at the gate for you, because you must be a wonderful person to know."

"Thank you. That makes it a whole-lot easier," he said.

There was a large, official-looking limousine waiting for him at the door. The two very apologetic, local gardai shook hands with him as he was about to slide into the back seat. The house-staff and the local doctor gave him a cheer. He waved to them as the car slid away, his blue eyes alight with the sheer joy of living. He might have been going to his own wedding.

"CATHOLIC LIFE" is published Quarterly at St. John's Presbytery, Limerick and Printed by City Printing Co., Limerick.



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