

Editorial, 1979

There is an unwritten rule in the Society's unwritten constitution that our Presidents serve a three year term. That 'rule' has been occasionally 'broken', notably by the late Andy Killeen who served for nine years, and the late Charlie O'Malley who resigned, for health reasons, after only one year in office. Our present president, Dr. Robert (Bertie) Cussen, also has been allowed (unanimously, be it said) break the rule, the year 1979 being his fourth in the Society's premier post. For forty-two years he has served as one of the Society's Officers: from 1948 to 1964 as a Committee Member, from 1965 to 1975 as a Vice-President, and from 1976 to 1979 as our President. His term of office has been an ennobling one for the Society, one marked by his dignity, scholarship, humility and gentlemanliness. This latter trait was ever notable, not least during the first few months of his presidency when, on the occasion of the Society's excursion to Inchagoill, in Lough Corrib, he and his family nobly vacated their places on the boat when it was found to be overloaded. *Noblesse oblige* is a much-abused phrase, but here it is truly valid: the new President, without giving it a second thought, considered it his duty to sacrifice himself and his family in order that the ordinary members present might have the opportunity to see the ancient monastic ruins on the island—a noble gesture without parallel in our Society's records. Dr. Cussen is now relinquishing the presidency, but we all hope that he will serve for many more years as, once again, a Vice-President of the Society.

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With this *Journal* the Society breaks new ground: it is supplying a supplement free to all its members. The supplement provides *The Poor Law Records of Counties Limerick, Clare and Tipperary* as listed, introduced, and edited by Dr. S. C. O'Mahony, Archivist for the Mid-West Region. We welcome the idea, and are grateful to the Mid-Western Health Board and the Regional Development Organisation for generous grants towards the publication of these historically valuable records; we regret that through an oversight the supplement's thirty-one pages were not paginated.

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The *Journal* itself is unusually late in appearing, the reasons for which are many, not least the Honorary Editor's. It is hoped, nonetheless, that its contents will prove of interest and value, and that once again they may calm members' ire occasioned by the delay. As ever, the articles and notes are varied, and it is a pleasure to note that the short notes for

the 'Miscellanea' section are still coming. While we do not normally like straightforward republishing of items from the newspapers, we feel that such items as that from the *Clare Champion* published on page 53 ought to be recorded somewhere in a learned journal; indeed, had it come to hand in 1967 it would have been most welcome for inclusion in our special Fenian Centenary number that year—only the unsuitability of a 'Miscellanea' section in the 1968 number, *Studia in Memoriam John Hunt*, prevented it being included in that year, the centenary of the informer's death.

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Once again it is a pleasure to record the Society's grateful thanks to "Shannonside", the Mid-Western Regional Tourism Organisation, for their generous grant-in-aid towards publication of this *Journal*. We are also most grateful to University College, Galway, for a grant towards publishing "An Early Celtic Spanish-North Munster Connection" by Etienne Rynne. The Hon. Editor, furthermore, wishes to record here his personal thanks to Fr. John D. Leonard, our Hon. Secretary, without whose assistance and persistence publication of this *Journal* might have been even later in appearing.