

AY, APRIL 21, 1938.

## THE SHANNON RAILROAD BRIDGE

(By F. J. Quilligan)

The original bridge which occupied the same site as the present fine structure, known as the Shannon Railroad Bridge, near Limerick, consisted of wooden piers on trestles, which, being set in position, supported the platform on which the rails rested. These trestles were capable of resisting the tidal flow, the wintry floods, and the heavy gales for which this part of the Shannon estuary is remarkable.

The wooden beams used in building that first bridge had been imported from Russia at the close of the Crimean War, and had been employed in that country so as to facilitate the advance of the Anglo-Frank Allies in their campaign against Russia. The remote cause which led to the Crimean War was due to the fact that the Muscovite Government assumed to itself an authority which did not belong to it, which circumstance Mr. W. V. Morton refers to in his fine story—viz., "The Footsteps of the Master." The author writes: "In the floor of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem there is set a star, and around the star a Latin inscription which says: 'Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.' The removal of this star years ago led to the quarrel between France and Russia which blazed into the Crimean War." During that war England allied herself with France. Before the war was over the Allied armies suffered untold hardships and lost a great number of men.

Winter in the Crimean peninsula is usually long and severe. Many great battles had to be fought; cities and towns and fortifications had to be invested and occupied. All such campaigning necessarily entails long marches; and marching through such a country as Russia was no picnic. But to make matters still worse, the commissariat was defective, and the men had to endure a great deal of suffering in consequence. The further the army advanced away from its base, the greater became the difficulties which had to be overcome.

### THE RUSSIAN AIDS.

During the entire campaign the "Russian Aids" were very active, owing in great measure to a scarcity of washing soap and clean underwear. The only thing the men could do was, after shaking their underwear, turn it inside out. This they did, saying it will take the enemy a twenty-four hours' march before they can reach the front again. And be it understood that those operations were carried out in zero weather, on which account there was no time for a minute inspection.

### A RELIC OF THE WAR.

At the termination of the war, one of the relics of the campaign was the old Metal Bridge, the name by which it was usually known around Limerick. The wooden stanchions, joists, etc., having been purchased in the interests of the Limerick and Ennis Railway Co., were

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### "Pray for the Wanderer."

Miss K. O'Brien's New Book.

"Pray for the Wanderer." By Kate O'Brien. (Messrs. Wm. Heinemann, London. Price 7/6.).

Since the publication of her first novel which gained for her the Hawthornden Prize, Miss Kate O'Brien has written nothing better than "Pray for the Wanderer," published this week. In it she has once again recaptured the delightful atmosphere of Meelick, but with the difference that she now shows us Meelick in 1937, with some traces of Victorianism still clinging about its straggling, leisurely life. Miss O'Brien's latest work is a triumph of composition and clarity of expression. The photographic impressions of Meelick, which are embodied in the story will be very familiar to the Limerick reader.

### THE STORY.

The story centres around a successful playwright who returns to the quiet and peace of his native place to find solace from an unhappy love affair. During his absence for a long number of years time wrought many changes both in his family and his home town. It is in the description of these changes that Miss O'Brien is at her best. The soliloquies of the wanderer range from his own troubles to those of his native country, and once again show the reader the remarkably keen insight of the authoress. The playwright's amusement at the effect of his risqué productions on the minds of his less sophisticated family is well told. His caustic comments on "Dev," the new Constitution, the Shannon Scheme, all go to make a book that will provide delightful reading.

### A BLOT.

We imagine, however, that passages in the book referring to religious matters would have a better effect if Miss O'Brien kept them in her own mind, and certainly their inclusion in the book does nothing to enhance its appeal.

Apart from this rather serious blot, "Pray for the Wanderer" is a splendid piece of work which shows the well-known Limerick authoress at her best.

## The Roman Catechism in Irish

### A Fine Publication

Our readers will be glad to hear that there has been just published by the firm of Brown and Nolan, Ltd., a translation into Irish from the original Italian of the Catechism used in Rome, and over the greater part of Italy. This is the Catechism in which Pope Pius X. took such a great interest. It brings the Christian Doctrine into line with the usages and necessities of modern life. In addition to the ordinary Catechism, the book contains a synopsis of prayers and formulae which must be learned

## LIMERICK CHRONICLE

(Established 1764).

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 1938.

### CIVIC TOPICS.

A few subjects of interest to the citizens engaged the attention of the City Council at the meeting on Tuesday. These call for some comment, in view of the attitude of the Minister for Local Government and Public Assistance, and possible reactions on the services—hospitals and improvement works. The question of the voluntary hospitals has been very prominently before the public during the past five years, due to a proposal of the Hospitals' Commission to put them out of action, and replace them by one to serve County and City. The citizens have not taken kindly to the proposition, which has, apparently, the approbation of the Minister, who cannot have the same knowledge of acquaintance of the benefits conferred by these institutions on the city as the Committees responsible for their management, the medical staffs, and the citizens. The Corporation recently passed a resolution asking Mr. O'Kelly to receive a deputation in order to put the position fully before him, and to clarify points requiring elucidation. Quite a feasible request, and one which the Minister could not refuse with a shadow of reason. The reply received put, as the saying goes, the tin hat on the aspirations of the Council. The Minister points out that as he has already discussed the position with representatives of the city hospitals, he was fully conversant with the facts. Was the Council aware of this when the resolution was adopted? Presumably not, otherwise the request would scarcely be made. At all events, the Ministerial answer is news to the average well-informed citizen, and, even if the position is known to Mr. O'Kelly, he might have acceded to the request of the popularly elected representatives. No matter his cognisance of the facts the people will make a fight for their voluntary hospitals, fortified in the conviction of their great utility in the magnificent service they have rendered and which could be extended and intensified, had they been in receipt of the grants due from Sweepstakes Funds. The Mayor finds consolation for the