

weakened, their spirits cowed, their rents doubled, trebled, sometimes quadrupled, the potato-crop which had been their main-stay doomed to an incurable disease, until it seemed scarcely a mercy that they had survived to be bled and tortured instead of resting under the tender grassy shroud beneath which their kith and kin slept their untroubled sleep." He collected, he says, the statistics of many villages that had formerly been populous, but now were almost wholly swept away. "But the ruin of dead tenants is less to the point than the ruin of living ones. There is hardly a miserable holding for miles around that has not been wrenched up to twice its valuation. The increases were effected by the process known in Connaught as 'stripping the lands'—that is to say, fields which were parcelled out in doubtful divisions among the members of the little communities, as in the vineyards of Champagne, were cut up into separate lots and erected into separate tenancies at enormously increased rents upon the pretext of enlarged holdings. And so what upon the surface would seem to be a judicious way of determining the tenant's rights and putting an end to litigation became by due legerdemain a cruel instrument of oppression. One townland which passed through this subtle crucible went in with a rental of £60 a year, and came out with a rental of £217; and the turbary (right of cutting turf for fuel,) and mountain pasture which used to be thrown in with the £60 had been shorn away in the process. Another which was once yielding £15 a year was with skilful manipulation milked for £70. Gold was wrung out of the very bogs. Upon one estate tenants who once enjoyed a free range of turbary were charged 2s 6d per house for their fuel (which in the matter of eight or nine hundred houses, became an exceedingly handsome feather in the agent's cap). Upon another estate the unfortunate turf-banks were rack-rented from 1s to 4s per man's day's cutting. A man was paying a rent of £7; he reclaimed an acre of bog, and his rent was in consequence raised to £14. A holding on the outskirts of Oughterard which is valued to poor-rates at 15s is rented at £12. One of the most improving tenants in the district, whose holding was rented at £16 10s, was mad enough to build a farmhouse and expend £300 on fencing and draining; his reward is a rent of £40 5s, instead of £16 10s. Not to pester you with cases which have a ghastly family likeness, I will be content with setting down twelve instances taken at random from four different estates, premising merely that the particulars are at the service of whoever shall question them:—

	Old Rent.			Increased Rent.			Poor Law Valuation.				
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		
1 ...	30	0	0	...	55	0	0	...	25	10	0
2 ...	42	15	0	...	81	13	6	...	48	10	0
3 ...	11	0	0	...	34	0	0	...	14	5	0
4 ...	23	0	0	...	80	0	0	...	52	8	0
5 ...	20	0	0	...	36	0	0	...	16	10	0
6 ...	48	0	0	...	68	0	0	...	37	5	0
7 ...	36	0	0	...	81	0	0	...	33	15	0
8 ...	20	0	0	...	50	0	0	...	17	10	0
9 ...	60	0	0	...	309	0	0	...	95	16	0
10 ...	14	0	0	...	62	0	0	...	25	15	0
11 ...	60	0	0	...	105	0	0	...	42	10	0
12 ...	120	0	0	...	206	0	0	...	114	5	0

I have searched in vain for materials to lighten this picture of pitiless extortion. The only land-owner in the neighbourhood of whom I can honestly say a praiseworthy word is Mr. W. D. Griffith, whose lands are let often below and seldom above the valuation, and who, like merciful landlords all the country over, has been first and alone among his neighbours to recognise the pressure of the times by reducing his rents all round to the level of the valuation. You may judge of the contrast between him and his mightier brethren from the fact that one man, who holds a farm from him at £19, the valuation being £18, holds a second farm of precisely the same quality at the other side of the ditch, from another proprietor, to whom he pays £15 1s, on a valuation of £7 10s; and while this man is relieved of a substantial share of his moderate rent by the beneficent landlord, the answer to his appeal to the other proprietor, to whom he has for years been paying 100 per cent. over the valuation, is that he will sell out the whole property rather than give a reduction of a penny. Apart altogether from the misery wrought by sordid usuriousness, I could wring the hearts of your readers with tales of the sufferings heaped upon peasants by the sallies of mere wanton caprice and intoxicated power. I could tell of an old man of high respectability, whose son quarrelled with the agent; how father and son were flung on the roadside together; how the sheriff's myrmidons tore down the roof-tree; how the old man clung to the roofless walls, and haunted them night and day until reason forsook him, and the poor old maniac caught a disease which mercifully killed him; how his stalwart son was driven across the Atlantic, and his five young children into the Oughterard poorhouse. I could tell of another old gentleman (gentleman none the less for his rough coat of frieze) whose deathbed was rudely disturbed by the threat that upon his decease those whom he left after him should dwell there no more. I could name the tenants of a townland who are at this moment under notice to quit under penalty of paying doubled rents, for no other reason in the world than that their little pastures are coveted by a neighbouring grazier. But need I add another bitter sentence to convince the

world that, if the people of Connemara are kept for ever suspended over a gulf of ruin, and are at this very hour in danger of toppling in, it is not by the will of God, but by the will of heartless and devouring men?" But it may, perhaps, be said that we present here only gloomy Christmas thoughts to our readers. Still if our fellow-countrymen at home are forced to suffer such things, we may well endure to think of them. There is, however, one consideration connected with them that is full of consolation; it is that we may be convinced many amongst those who are suffering thus piteously this Christmas time are, notwithstanding, comforted, and made able patiently to endure whatever has befallen them by the holy thoughts the season renews, and the faith that cherishes them.

JUDGE BATHGATE AT HOME.

THE first of a series of articles on New Zealand, in *Chamber's Journal* of Oct. 18th, signed "W. C.," and whose contents are, for the most part, derived from conversations held by the writer with Judge Bathgate and from the Judge's lectures, speaks

highly of the advantages offered as a field for emigration by this colony, and should go far towards inducing a desirable class of emigrants to select it as their destination. Of Judge Bathgate himself the writer speaks as follows, testifying that his Honour's well-deserved popularity and his reputation for ability, although doubtless sustained and increased, were not originated in this colony:—"When, thirty years ago, we began to reside during the summer months on the banks of the Tweed, we were fortunate in having for acquaintance, in the neighbouring town of Peebles, a gentleman of agreeable manners, singular sagacity, versatility of talent, great earnestness of purpose, and withal a keen sense of humour and love of anecdote. This was Mr. John Bathgate. Professionally a solicitor and banker, he occupied the responsible position of Procurator-Fiscal for Peeblesshire. Mr. Bathgate was one of those rare individuals who are able at once to 'see the idea.' At the slightest hint, he saw the bearing of a case, which others failed to comprehend. Desirous to promote improvements of all sorts, he took a lead in establishing a railway between Peebles and Edinburgh, which, in spite of dolorous prognostications, has proved a marvellous success; for besides being an eight per cent. line in perpetuity, it has largely increased the prosperity of the district. He had 'seen the idea,' which a number of people who affected to be very wise could not see at all. Useful in forwarding every good work, and never grudging trouble, a pang came over the neighbourhood when he announced his intention of emigrating with his family to New Zealand. 'What could he mean? He was much esteemed, had an excellent business, and got through his varied duties without difficulty.' We happen to know why he contemplated this extreme step. One of his reasons was that his numerous family were growing up, and the settling of them in life might become a source of perplexity. But a more serious reason consisted in an alarming bronchial affection, and he felt that if he tried to encounter a repetition of winters in Great Britain, his doom would speedily be the churchyard. For safety, a warmer and more equable climate was necessary. Moved by these considerations, Mr. Bathgate gave up all his appointments, disposed of his property, and honoured with testimonials of public respect and remembrance, shipped himself off with his wife and family to New Zealand." The manner in which Dunedin obtained its name is described as follows:—"This was in 1863, at which time, as a British colony, New Zealand was still in its infancy. We, in fact, remember the commencement of it in 1840, under the auspices of the New Zealand Association, of which Edward Gibbon Wakefield was the moving spirit. Wakefield's notion was to found settlements of a temptingly denominational character. One, to be called Canterbury, with Christchurch as its capital, was to be specially a home for members of the Church of England. Another, designated Otago, with New Edinburgh as its capital, was to be set aside for Scottish Presbyterians. Possibly, the scheme was of service at the outset in attracting settlers. A prospectus having fallen into our hands, we felt an objection to the name New Edinburgh. Indeed, we dislike all names of places with the word 'New,' such as New York, New Orleans, and so on. The term New Zealand, which, like others of its kind, shows weakness of invention, is particularly senseless and objectionable. With this opinion, we suggested, in a letter to the editor of a New Zealand journal, published in London, that for the name of New Edinburgh might advantageously be substituted the term Dunedin, which is the Celtic name for Edinburgh. The suggestion was embraced by the New Zealand Association, and hence Dunedin became the accepted name for the capital of the province of Otago."

WE have given some food for thought this Christmas-time that is derived from the sad intelligence of SOME CATHOLIC SCHOOLS decay and the total wreck of all hope of prosperity, we now turn with feelings of relief to considerations that contrast brightly with all this and chime in well with the rejoicing that should prevail at the present season. We allude to the reports that reach us from all sides of the condition and progress of Catholic schools in New Zealand. We hear of examinations held