

A PROJECTED IRISH SETTLEMENT IN CALIFORNIA.

ONE of the might-have-beens of history, fraught with great possibilities, was the project conceived by an Irish priest Rev. Eugene Macnamara, for colonising the Mexican territory of California with Irish emigrants, as early as 1846. The Californian historian Bancroft, and General John C. Fremont, in his "Memoirs" now being published, give details of the scheme, which came very near to being successful.

Father Macnamara was a zealous missionary who early perceived the great natural resources of California and its suitability for a hardier race of inhabitants than the unenterprising Spanish colonists. He also foresaw the aggressive designs of the American pioneers and realised the weakness of the Spaniards to oppose them. The subsequent shameful spoliation of Spaniard and aborigine alike, by the American conquerors, proves the justice of his apprehensions, although it is by no means certain that a greater misfortune might not have befallen the territory and the continent had his well-meant design succeeded.

For his plan, briefly stated, was to colonise California with Irish Catholic families, a people "moral, industrious, sober and brave," who should stand as a barrier between the Spaniard and the encroaching American. But beyond the honest plan of Father Macnamara lurked a deeper well-laid scheme of the English Government to seize the country, ostensibly, of course, for the "protection of British interests."

Admiral Seymour, of the English Navy, was in Californian waters, ready upon the slightest pretext to plant his flag on the shore, when the dilatory Mexican Government at last gave its assent to Father Macnamara's scheme. But before the slow-moving Englishman could take the decisive step, Fremont on land and an American fleet on sea had hoisted the stars and stripes, and California was a part of the great Union.

"We cannot fail," says Fremont, "to sympathise with the grief of a mind which had conceived a project so far-reaching and which had experienced the shock of overthrow in the moment of its complete success. The time, the thought, the labour of arbitration, the patient endurance with slower or inferior minds—all had resulted in the blank of absolute failure. In the interests of his Church it was a nobly conceived plan: one among the great ideas which affect nations."

General Fremont points to the success of other missions to prove that the 3000 Irish Catholic families whom Father Macnamara had intended to bring out would have proved an inestimable blessing to the country, by reclaiming the wild mountain Indians, and introducing a stable, moral and prosperous civilisation. Yet we cannot feel any regret that the scheme failed. It is best that California should be American. It would have been an incalculable misfortune for the State and the United States had it fallen into the hands of England, as it probably would have done but for American intervention. It is not to be supposed that an Irish colony would have long remained under the rule of weak and slothful Mexico; and it is evident that England only needed a pretext for seizing on the territory. Father Macnamara's scheme was the conception of a lofty and zealous mind too unselfish to apprehend the cunning designs of the Englishmen who gave it countenance. Its failure was no loss to the cause of religion or of human freedom.—*Pilot*.

Cardinal Masotti has been appointed by the Pope to be Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in place of Cardinal Ferrieri, deceased. The new consultors to the same august body are Father Cardella, Jesuit; Father Camilleri, Augustinian; Abbe Smeulders, Cistercian; and Father Lepidi, Dominican.

During the civil marriage, at the Capitol last month, of the nephew of Cardinal Jacobini and Mdle. Abbiadi, the Government official suddenly went mad, and threw ink, books, and all missiles within reach at the heads of the young couple, who happily escaped unhurt, though the bride nearly fainted with fright.

The *Figaro* publishes the following: "Grand reconciliation between France and the Vatican. The French representative at the Vatican has given an assurance of the immediate cessation of all religious persecution in France, and has offered the Pope on behalf of President Grevy a magnificent Sevres vase, and a gold pen to Mgr. Galemberti. Mgr. Moceni also received the grand cordon of the Legion d'Honneur."

Here is something interesting to the Celtic Societies, from the *Pilot's* special correspondent in Rome:—"At an audience given February 1, by His Holiness to the Bishops of St. Brieuc France, the latter made an offering which was particularly agreeable to the Holy Father. This consisted of a magnificent collection of the Encyclicals of the Pontiff, with a translation into the ancient Celtic language. A large number of people in the Diocese of St. Brieuc still speak the ancient Celtic language."

The Senate has made a move in the right direction in providing that the first additions to our navy shall consist of swift cruisers, of which ten are to be built capable of making twenty knots an hour. Senator Hale's Bill provides for the further needs of coast defences, torpedo service, light draught boats for interior waterways and canals, etc; but our main reliance in case of war will be upon a fleet of swift commerce-destroyers. England, for that is the only power with which we are likely to have trouble, is at once among the strongest and the weakest of nations on the sea. Her powerful navy, formidable to attack, would be almost impotent to protect her widespread commerce. The latter is her vulnerable point. American cruisers would make as short work of it as English buccaners used to make of Spanish galleons two hundred years ago. England "wants the earth," as Spain did. She will fail, as Spain did, by the very weight of her wealth. The spoiler of the East Indies will be delivered over to other spoilers, as the conqueror of the Western Continent was America does not covet the plunder, but if war should come, England's weak point shall not be overlooked. It is not in the heel but in the pocket of our friend John.—*Pilot*.

Commercial.

DUNEDIN PRODUCE MARKET.

J. H. KILGOUR, grain and produce broker, reports under date April 20, as follows:—

Wheat.—The market continues quiet, millers being still disinclined to operate. I quote prime milling at 3s 7d to 3s 8d; medium, 3s 5d to 3s 6d. Fowls' feed is somewhat scarce at 2s 8d to 3s 1d.

Oats.—Supplies are coming forward freely, and as shippers will only operate at lower prices than have recently been ruling, business is somewhat restricted. I quote: Prime milling, 1s 7½d; bright short feed, 1s 6½d to 1s 7d; discoloured lots, 1s 4d to 1s 5d.

Barley.—The demand for malting continues good, and supplies come forward very sparingly. I quote: Prime malting, 3s 8d to 3s 9d; medium, 3s 4d to 3s 6d. Feed and milling are dull.

Chaff.—My sales have been: Best oaten sheaf, £2 12s 6d; medium, £2 5s to £2 7s 6d.

Potatoes.—Best Kakanuis sell locally at £2 10s; Southern, £2 5s to £2 7s 6d.

Grass Seed.—No business doing.

Butter.—There is a fair demand for prime salt in kegs at 7d to 7½d; fresh, 8d, for best mixed cases.

Eggs.—1s 8d per dozen.

GRAIN REPORT.

MESSRS. SAMUEL ORR AND CO., Stafford street, report for the week ending April 20, as follows:—

Wheat.—We cannot record any improvement in the market for this cereal since last reporting, though the arrivals have not been so extensive as hitherto. Millers evince no desire to lay in heavy stocks; still we think that ere long this will be overcome and prices improve accordingly. We quote prime milling up to 3s 8½d, though a small parcel of really tip-top quality brought 3s 10d; medium to good, 3s 4d to 3s 7d; inferior and fowls' feed, 2s 3d to 3s 1d and in good demand.

Oats.—The arrivals have been considerable during the past week, and but for speculation for the Home market and a few small crafts loading coastwise, lower prices would have had to have been accepted, or stored, which of course means expense. Stocks in store are considerably increased, and the demand for Melbourne slight, though had freight been obtainable during the coming week for Sydney a little demand would have taken place for there in consequence. Large quantities of off-colour and thin oats are arriving, and sales of this class are most difficult to effect. We quote bright heavy milling up to 1s 8d; short bright feed, 1s 7d to 1s 7½d; ordinary, 1s 6d to 1s 6½d; inferior and off-colour, 1s 5d to 1s 5½d.

Barley.—Demand great for all sorts, malting especially, but very little offering, which are taken up at up to 4s; ordinary quality, 3s 6d to 3s 10d; milling, 2s 9d; feed, 2s 4d to 2s 6d.

Our actual sales of all classes of grain for the week were 25,602 bushels.

Grass Seed.—A speculative demand on, but at low prices which are far from payable. We sold 1700 bushels during the week at full rates.

MR. F. MEENAN, King street, reports—Wholesale prices, bags included: Oats, medium to prime, 1s 6d to 1s 8d. Wheat: milling, 3s 6d to 3s 9d; fowls', 3s to 3s 3d. Barley: malting, 3s 3d to 3s 6d; milling, 2s 6d; feed, 2s 3d. Chaff, best, £2 15s; straw chaff, dull of sale, nominal. Straw, £2; hay, new oat hay, £3; ryegrass (new), £3. Bran, £3 5s. Pollard, £4. Potatoes: kidneys, £2; Derwents, £2 5s. Butter: fresh, 6d to 9d; salt, nominal, 7d. Cheese, 4d to 5d. Eggs, 1s 6d. Flour: sacks, £9 10s; 50lbs., £10. Oatmeal, £9 10s. Roll bacon, 6½d; sides, 6½d; hams, 9d.

To hear Leo XIII. praised in the Chamber of Deputies at Rome was a novelty. In the "official acts" of the Chamber, the report of Deputy Bovio's speech, November 28, relates that this speaker said that Leo XIII., "a keen intelligence, for a period of 10 years is advancing the policy and the conditions of the Church." His work is not a simple return to scholasticism. "In the seminaries, increased from year to year, Leo XIII. introduces the classical and scientific part (of education), ordered by the State, in such a mode that the Biblical suffers no diminution." He "assists the monastic Orders to re-occupy the school, adapting themselves, at least in appearance, to the regulations of the civil power; and the nobles and fathers of families, timorous and liberal, and a great part of the middle classes, who find the lay-school insufficient or non-existent, send their children to the Pontifical school." Finally, said Deputy Bovio, "he re-arranges his Libraries and Archives, inviting the learned from all parts to prove that the Church was a light to all and an honour to Italy." This, according to the testimony of an enemy, is the work of Leo XIII. The same deputy draws a picture of Italian education and its results, "the degrading results of examinations, of competition, of intellectual production, and of the literary character; the consternation of fathers of families; the monitions of professors and of scholars." And this downward progress has been continued for 26 years. In Italy, Bovio declares, is seen "a religion which is the worship of banks (*bancolatria*), and a literature which is 'sound and fury.'" And he said that he did not see one page which is Italian, thoroughly Italian, that could become a text or a document for the future generation. Then, again, the teachers and professors of the kingdom, either from choice or necessity, give themselves up to many occupations, "reserving for the school the yawning hours." The national revenue, derived from numerous taxes, placed under the protection of the State, is enjoyed by middlemen and societies of harpies, "who build their nests between the Ministries of Public Works and of Finances, while the Italian colleges, once glorious, are now become leaden."—*Pilot*.