

## DUNEDIN CATHOLIC LITERARY SOCIETY.

THE usual weekly meeting of this Society was held on Wednesday September 7, Mr. R. A. Dunne, vice-president, was in the chair, and the attendance of members was small, owing to the inclement weather. Mr. E. Dalton contributed an essay on "Dr. Cahill," which was much appreciated by those present, and Mr. E. W. Dunne read an essay on "Edmund Burke," whose career he briefly sketched. Both gentlemen were accorded a hearty vote of thanks. The usual compliment to the chairman terminated the meeting.

The usual weekly meeting was held again on September 14. The Rev. W. Burke, president occupied the chair, and the attendance of members was only moderate.

Mr. J. B. Callan, V.P., read an excellent paper on "Thackeray," one of the greatest of the more modern novelists. In dealing with Thackeray's life, Mr. Callan said he regretted he had no biography of him, and this was mainly because Thackeray, unlike Carlyle, had left (and had desired to leave) no material for the production of such a work. Thackeray was of an indolent, careless disposition, given greatly to procrastination—"never doing to-day what could be put off till to-morrow," but he was a great humourist and satirist, and true delineator of character. He was possessed of a kindly heart, especially towards the young, and for this reason, Mr. Callan thought his young friends should be inclined towards him. In directing their novel-reading he wished them to take up Thackeray. In his pages vice was not gilded: the evils of drunkenness as well as the evils of other vices were strikingly portrayed; and one of his reasons for admiring Thackeray was the fact that in his writings he always deprecated vice. Thackeray, too, always took nature as he found her, and thus we noticed in his works that the personage who presented the best appearance did not always possess the best talent or the most intelligence. Mr. Callan during the evening read some extracts from the author's works, "The Newcomes," "Pendennis," and "The Sketch-Book," and his selections were both enjoyable and instructive to his hearers. In reference to "The Newcomes," the character of Colonel Newcome was the finest gentleman ever drawn in any novel. Mr. Callan, in conclusion, said he had dealt very briefly with his subject's works, having omitted to refer to "Vanity Fair," "Esmond," etc., but on another occasion he would give a continuation of the paper, and then go more fully into the works.

Mr. P. Carolin proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Callan, which was seconded by Mr. R. A. Dunne, and carried unanimously.

The rev. president referred in complimentary terms to Mr. Callan's paper, and the business was concluded by tendering the rev. president a hearty vote of thanks for presiding.

## A STUPID CALUMNY.

(From the New York Sun.)

A WRITER in the North American Review for July discusses "Irish Aid in the Revolution," in a spirit worthy of Massachusetts Mugwumpery, of true-blue Toryism, or, indeed, of Know-Nothingism. For the chief characteristic of the Mugwump is to assume complete knowledge when he possesses less than half; to breathe a spirit of disdain and supercilious superiority which was the vitality of Toryism during after the Revolution; and it is the essence of Know-Nothingism to belie the merits of and suppress the truth about those whom it is pleased to denigrate "foreigners," as the best means of expressing contempt for them. All this is in the short but vicious essay on "Irish Aid in the American Revolution."

The writer asserts that the Irish "cannot point to a single man like Lafayette, Kosciusko, Pulaski, or Steuben; but there was Conway," and there was "Conway's cabal." He quotes from Bancroft whose treatment of this portion of history, is inadequate and misleading, both as to the Irish in the American army and in relation to the sympathy of the people of Ireland with the Revolution. He even puts Grattan in the attitude of hostility!

There are, happily for truth, many sources of information on this question of which Mr. Bancroft did not avail himself. There is, for instance, the report of the committee of the House of Commons printed in 1785, and to be found in the British Museum, although rare outside of it. Edmund Burke was a member of the committee whose duty was to inquire into the conduct of the American war. Among the witnesses was Major-General Robertson who had served in America twenty-four years. He should have known, therefore, whether any assertion about Washington's army was likely to be substantially true. He swore that General Lee informed him that half the patriot army "were from Ireland." Even in the troops that came with Lafayette will be found the names of well-known Irishmen. The staff itself included refugees from Ireland, who were glad to get a whack at their ancient enemy.

As to names to match any in the annals of the war, who else but a Know-Nothing could forget—all Irishmen or the sons of Irishmen—Anthony Wayne, Knox, Washington's Secretary of War, and the Navy; Hand, Washington's Adjutant-General; Stephen Moylan, Richard Butler, the Sullivans, one of whom commanded the Northern division; Stark, Fitzgerald, Washington's beloved aide-de-camp? Who will venture to say that any man, native or of foreign birth, eclipsed, during the Revolutionary strife, the glory of Barry, the father of our navy? The writer alludes to the legend that the soldier who tried to poison Washington was an Irishman, who did it for an English bribe. But he forgets to tell how Irish Jack Barry scorned the bribe with which Lord How tempted him. He forgets or does not know that "Conway's cabal" was so-called merely for alliteration; that Conway was an insignificant member of the jealous clique, which included Gates, Schuyler and Lee, none of them Irish; that Conway was believed, in the words of Sullivan to Washington, "to have been imprudently led into it," and that he wrote a manly apology to Washington. What did the English Lee and the English Arnold?

The services of Irishmen in the Revolution were not limited to fighters. War is not successfully brought to a close by valour only; money is needed; and it was the Irish merchants of Philadelphia who, in 1780, when the treasury was empty and the army in danger of dissolution, came forward with nearly half a million dollars for the cause.

An Irishman, William Thompson, was Secretary of the Continental Congress. John Dunlap, printer to the Convention in 1774 and to the first Congress, and the Printer of the Declaration of Independence, was an Irishman. John Dixon, who read that document to Congress was an Irishman. John Binns, an Irishman, issued at his own expense an engraving of that document, with *fac similes* of the signatures. Nine of the signers were of Irish blood.

The anti-Irish commentator mentions that a number of Irish deserted. So they did; so did hundreds of others of all nationalities. He finds it inconvenient, when mentioning that Lord Rawdon raised a regiment of Irish, which had been denied, to mention also the fact that a Connecticut regiment mutinied in a body and had to be disciplined by Pennsylvania troops.

As to the sympathy of the Irish in Ireland with the Revolution only a phenomenally ignorant writer would raise the question against them. It was perfectly notorious. All that Bancroft can cite is flunkeyish address presented to the King by Lord Kenmare and a dozen or so of his ilk; and Froude, who is no partisan of the Irish declares that these noblemen and gentry, did not represent the Irish people. Their heirs in title and estates presented a jubilee address the other day to the Queen. Some future writer of learning like this commentators' will cite that, as a proof that the Irish people went wild with joy over the Queen's Jubilee. It is true that troops were sent out from Ireland during the Revolution. They did not arrive in time to do any fighting, they were subject to the orders of the King wherever they were stationed, and the action of the Government majority in the Irish Parliament, in merely consenting to send them, was not the action of the Irish people. Only one-ninth of the Irish people were at that time eligible to sit in Parliament—the Anglicans as we should say now; the Protestants, as they were called then. That very incident furnished Grattan with the opportunity to deliver one of his most celebrated speeches of sympathy with and admiration for the Americans. Whoever has any curiosity to know what Grattan believed and said about the war, should go to his speeches to find out.

Whenever news of a patriotic victory was received in Dublin the people were rejoiced, and their joy found appropriate vent, fully recorded. An officer who resigned his commission rather than accompany his regiment to America under the King's orders was made a popular hero. Indeed it would require much space even to summarise the proofs that the Irish, both on this side of the water and on the other, were overwhelmingly in sympathy with us.

## SCENES IN PARLIAMENT.

(From the Nation, August 6.)

ON Thursday night week, after a division on the Land Bill, Mr. Courtney, addressing the Speaker, said:—"While members were leaving the House the member for Loughborough came to my side and remonstrated with me at not being called upon to make an explanation. Whilst he was doing so the hon. member for North Longford approached at the back and addressed him in these words: "Come out, De Lisle," or "Come out here"—"I am not quite sure of the exact words—"if you are a man. If you interrupt me again I will break your neck!" (Sensation.) I did not conceive that I had myself any authority to deal with the matter, and I have asked you to return to the chair in order that you may deal with it." "Is the hon. and learned member for North Longford in his place?" asked the Speaker. "Yes, sir," said Mr. Healy; "it is perfectly true with regard to what has been said by the distinguished Chairman of this House, and I am very glad indeed that a scene like this has attracted so full an audience (loud Irish cheers) seeing that for hours we have been discussing the interests of the Irish tenants to empty benches (Tory cries of 'Order,' and interruptions). If I am interrupted I decline to go on." "I have only one course to pursue," said the Speaker, "if the hon. member will not explain" (great Tory cheering). "I will make an explanation if I am allowed to do so," replied Mr. Healy; "but I will not do so in the face of interruptions ('Oh, oh,' and Irish cheers). I desire sir, in the first instance, perfectly to recognise the fairness with which we have been treated by the Chairman of Committees. I do not think, however, that this is an occasion for any such action as you took with regard to the hon. member for Mid-Cork (Dr. Tanner). I do not think there is any parity between the two cases, or that this is a case at all." Mr. Healy's firm and uncompromising tone greatly disconcerted Mr. Speaker Peel, who expected Mr. Healy to make an act of contrition to De Lisle and the House of Commons. He was never more mistaken. Mr. Peel got up very pale and evidently greatly chagrined, and said in a voice with a good deal of emotion thrown into it, that the tone of the hon. member was not that of one who had been called on to explain language such as had been used. He called on the hon. gentleman to explain it. Mr. Healy quietly said:—"I am endeavouring, sir, to put in the best language I can the position in which I find myself placed. While we are accused on this side of interruption—which is perfectly true, and I freely admit it as far as I am concerned—we consider that interruptions coming from the opposite side are interruptions directed against us personally, and having a distinct aggressive and provocative effect altogether independent and apart from debate (great Irish cheers and Tory cries of 'No'). I can only say as far as I am concerned that the whole incident is hateful to me. I feel, however, no regret whatever for the course I have taken, and I am willing to abide the consequences" (loud and continued Irish cheering). The Speaker—"Then I name you, Timothy Healy, to the House for having violated the order of the House in regard to its decorum."