

## H.A.C.B. SOCIETY, BLENHEIM.

THE members of the Blenheim branch of the H.A.C.B. Society and a few of their friends celebrated the eve of St. Patrick's Day by dining together in the old church, which the Rev. Father Foley has lately had fitted for the girls' school, for which it is extremely well adapted, being quite a credit to the district. The room was tastefully decorated for the occasion of the dinner, and the good things provided doubtless seemed all the more inviting from the fact that those about to partake of them had passed the day on meagre fare that they might regale themselves in the evening free from Lenten restrictions. J. Ward, Esq., J.P., occupied the chair, and Mr. J. Morrison the vice-chair. The Rev. Fathers Foley and McCaughey honoured the Society by their presence, and contributed much to the success of the entertainment.

The toast "Our Holy Father Leo XIII." as natural in such a purely Catholic gathering, was received with enthusiasm, and as becomes Catholics who, when really true to their religion, are ever true and loyal to duly established authority. Her Most Gracious Majesty was also duly honoured. Most of the usual toasts received their share of attention, and amongst the rest as specially welcomed may be mentioned "the clergy," coupled with the name Rev. Father Foley. "The H.A.C.B. Society and the feast we meet to honour," proposed by Mr. Kennedy, was also very heartily received.

The Rev. Father McCaughey, in responding to this the toast of the evening, said:—Mr. Chairman and members of the Blenheim branch of the H.A.C.B. Society, need I say that I am proud to be here this evening; and that for more reasons than one. First, I am proud to be here to join with you in celebrating the anniversary of Erin's Patron Saint (St. Patrick), and cherishing the memory of Ireland; second, to acquaint you of a fact that perhaps you are not aware of, that is: I have had the honour of being enrolled in the ranks of the Wellington branch of your Society. Many years have passed away since, and yet I have never asked for my clearance, so that I am afraid to do so now, lest I might have to "ant up" the arrears. (Laughter.) I think the best thing I can do is to join your branch as a new member. Speaking of the day we celebrate, need I bring you back in memory to the days of yore and times gone by, when St. Patrick first set his foot on Irish soil, and tell you how he found Ireland a pagan nation, and left her Christian. Need I bring you back to those days, and tell you how he anointed her forehead with the ointment of faith, and which, from that day to this, has never been effaced. No! you know it, you believe it. This is something to be proud of; and every Irish heart, in every land and every clime, should bear with delight and say with pride: no nation under the sun has kept the faith as well as Erin's Isle. My friends, as Hibernians, you are to cherish the memory of Ireland, to condole with her in her afflictions, to rejoice with her in her prosperity. But, alas! it is the former part you are called upon to do now. The hand of the oppressor is laying heavily upon the nation; she groans with the burden; what you can do to relieve her do it. At least let your sympathies wait across the broad Atlantic and blend in the voice of the land.—"Let all unite in peaceful agitation, in order to obtain our rights of national legislation."

"The Officers of the Blenheim branch" was proposed by Mr. P. O'Sullivan, and responded to by the President, Mr. James O'Sullivan.

Perhaps the heartiest reception of all was reserved for "the Emerald Isle," proposed by the Chairman and responded to by Mr. Morrison.

The health of the caterer, Mr. McCartney, came in due course, proposed by Mr. O'Neill, and the opportunity was taken to show that Mr. McCartney's efforts were appreciated.

At the conclusion musical honours were accorded the Chairman, whose health was proposed by Rev. Father McCaughey.

## XEROTINE SICCATIVE.

THERE is every reason to believe that the recent explosion on board her Majesty's ship *Triumph* has brought to light the true cause of the lamentable disaster by which the *Doterel* was destroyed, and the lives of 145 officers and men sacrificed on April 26th last. The court-martial which inquired into the sad catastrophe came to the conclusion that it was occasioned by the accidental ignition of the coal gas liberated in the bunkers, and special methods of ventilation were at once adopted on board some of the largest ships in the navy to avoid the recurrence of a similar calamity. By the accident to the *Triumph*, however, a new and startling light has been thrown on the whole matter. That explosion was traced beyond question to the accidental ignition of a "patent drier" known as "Xerotine siccative," and this fact has elicited new evidence with regard to the *Doterel*, making it in the highest degree probable that her destruction was attributable to the same cause.

It would seem that in the year which has just closed there were three very similar explosions on board ships of the navy. The first of these, occurring without fatal results, called the attention of the Admiralty to the dangerous character of the patent driers, and in June last—a considerable time after the warning—"my lords" issued a general circular not nearly specific enough as to the peril to be guarded against—urging caution in the storage of this material. Meanwhile the awful disaster to the *Doterel* had happened, but had been set down to other causes. Then before the year closed came the leakage on board the *Triumph*, the diffusion of the vapour in the ship's compartment, its accidental ignition and explosion, causing the deaths of three men and serious injuries to seven others.

It now transpires that the *Doterel* also carries a quantity of xerotine siccative in her paint room, and this was next the powder magazines. Further, it is known that immediately preceding the explosion some of the hands were employed in moving a vessel containing this very substance, and from which it was leaking and giving off a large amount of vapour. This they were doing, employing

lights in the room, ignorant of the fact that the vapour ignites at a low temperature, and when mixed with the atmosphere detonates with a violence scarcely less than that of dynamite. These data would entirely agree with and explain the fact that in the case of the *Doterel* there were three distinct reports—the first probably being that of the drier, and the other two of the separate chambers of the magazine.

Since the explanations of the *Triumph* disaster one of the carpenters on board the *Doterel* has come forward to describe the storage of the xerotine siccative. It is stated that the room in which it was contained was separated from the magazine only by a thin sheet of steel. A barrel containing the drier had been burst by some means, and the exuding liquid gave off a disagreeable vapour. Hands were set down to "mop up" liquid and to remove the vessel, and this was being done when the ship blew up. The carpenter has no doubt that the siccative became ignited, and that it fired the gunpowder. This was only to be expected, because the steel plate partition did not actually cut off the magazine from the paint store-room, not fitting tight at the bottom, and, as a matter of fact, a portion of the fluid flowed through into the magazine under the metal plate.

This matter will be at once referred to the committee now investigating coal gas explosions in the navy, sitting under the presidency of Vice-Admiral Luard, C. B. The Government, it is understood, have also determined to re-open the *Doterel* court-martial to inquire into the facts above stated.—Exchange.

## THE VENERABLE ALPHONSO D'OROCZO.

BELOW will be found the account of the grand ceremony that took place in the Vatican, on Sunday, the 15th January, for the Beatification of the Venerable Alphonso d'Orocco Religious of the Augustinian order, of the Province of Castille, Alphonso d'Orocco was born in 1500, at Oropesa, a flourishing district in the diocese of Avila. His family was illustrious by blood as well as by the splendour of the highest virtues. His first studies were made at Toledo, and then he passed on to the University of Salamanca, where he made his Theology. In 1521 he entered the Convent of the Augustinians, which had just before become distinguished as the home of St. Thomas of Villanova. He was soon a marked man in the Order, both for his learning and his piety. He was appointed Superior, first of one Convent and then another, and everywhere he left indelible proofs of his prudence in governing. In course of time he became Superior of the Province of Mexico, Visitor of the Canaries, and first Rector of the celebrated College Mary of Arragon, at Madrid. The Emperor Charles V. chose him for his Court Preacher and intimate adviser, and shortly afterwards (A. D. 1556) abdicated the crown of Austria and Spain, and retired into the Convent of St. Justus, in Spanish Estramadura, there to meditate on the truths notified to him by Alphonso. The latter too wished to retire from the court to his cloister; but Philip, who succeeded Charles, would not consent, as he had become accustomed to lay before him the important affairs of the kingdom.

Blessed Alphonso did not confine himself to preaching the word of God; but, being enjoined by the Blessed Virgin in a vision to write, among other works he left one on "the Twelve Privileges of Mary." This vision has been so well authenticated, that it formed the subject of one of the four large paintings, executed each by one of the masters of the day, conspicuous in the Hall in which the ceremony of Beatification took place. Another of these paintings represented Alphonso preaching to the Court of Madrid, on the duties of Princes, in the presence of Charles V, who, soon afterwards, renounced the crown and retired to a monastery.

Here are some of the words addressed to Sovereigns by Blessed Alphonso: "You are called to exercise an authority ordained for the temporal and the spiritual good of your subjects. Your treasure must be the possession of their hearts, your only ambition the desire of making them happy. Let the eloquence of your good example speak aloud to the multitude, let it strike their senses, and induce them to respect and love. All things here below pass away; possession, glory, riches; justice alone is immortal. Obedient to the Church, the inexorable avenger of justice and truth, over whose empire ages pass in succession as do years over your thrones, never cease to be zealous for its triumphs and to maintain its rights. If you violate its laws, you will go straight, sooner or later on to inevitable expiations; retributive justice, such as comes in this world, will enkindle from your very misdeeds the flames that devour them. Do not reject, then, as irksome the reflection that your crown is transitory, a quite useless weight, unless by good works you exchange it for a crown in Heaven."

Has not Leo XIII been inspired from Heaven to authorise the Beatification, at this very moment, of the great preacher in the 16th Century, who in his day preached to Princes in the very words in which Pope Leo XIII himself addressed them as soon as he had ascended the Pontifical throne?

Blessed Alphonso died in 1591, the 19th September. The process of his beatification began very soon after his death, but only in 1732 a decree of the Holy Congregation of Rites declared that he had possessed the Theological and Cardinal virtues in a heroic degree. In 1874, Pius IX approved of two miracles that had been examined by the Congregation of Rites, and in 1875 he signed the Decree for the Beatification.

I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saint.—*Bombay Catholic Examiner.*

A south London postman on Monday discovered a sovereign in a letter-box. Attached to the coin, by means of a hole that had been drilled through it, was a label stating that the money was intended as a Christmas-box for the finder. Last year a similar amount was found in the same box.