

subjects. He is regarded as the Father of English poetry, and the metrical paraphrase now extant and known as "Cudmon" is a singularly graphic description of sacred scenes. He was the wonder of his time for this gift of song, and lived long among the monks of Whitby. He was cheery in his talk; and when he drew near his end, he asked for the last Sacraments, before receiving which he solemnly declared he had friendly disposition toward all men. He inquired how long it would be before the brethren would assemble for Matins. On being answered, he said: "Good! Let us wait for that hour." They waited. He then signed himself with the cross, lay back on his pillow and died amid the music of the sacred hymns he loved so well.

For Our Lady Readers.

AN IRISH WIFE.

EARL DESMOND'S APOLOGY, by THOMAS D'ARCY M'GEE.

[To understand the "thread" of this poem it is necessary to note that "in 1837 the Statute of Kilkenny forbade the English settlers in Ireland to intermarry with the old Irish under pain of outlawry." James, Earl of Desmond, was one of the first to violate and defy the law; he took an Irish wife, a lady named McCormack. The Earl was himself an accomplished poet, and D'Arcy M'Gee in the following poem represents him as giving sound reasons why he would rather "break" the law than his "heart."]

I would not give my Irish wife
For all the dames of the Saxon land;
I would not give my Irish wife
For the Queen of France's hand;
For she to me is dearer
Than castles strong, or lands, or life—
An outlaw—so I'm near her,
To love till death my Irish wife.

O what would be this home of mine?
A ruined, hermit-haunted place.
But for the light that nightly shines
Upon its walls from Kathleen's face!
What comfort in a mine of gold,
What pleasure in a royal life,
If the heart within lay dead and cold,
If I could not wed my Irish wife!

I knew the law forbade the bans—
I knew my king abhorred her race—
Who never bent before their clans
Must bow before their ladies' grace,
Take all my forfeited domain,
I cannot wage with kinsmen strife—
Take knightly gear and noble name,
And I will keep my Irish wife.

My Irish wife has clear blue eyes,
My heaven by day, my stars by night—
And twin-like, truth and fondness lie
Within her swelling bosom white.
My Irish wife has golden hair—
Apollo's harp had once such strings—
Apollo's self might pause to hear
Her bird-like carol when she sings.

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I would not give my Irish wife
For the Queen of France's hand;
For she to me is dearer
Than castles strong, or lands, or life—
An outlaw—so I'm near her,
To love till death my Irish wife.

AN IRISH MOTHER.

I wonder if she is still in the Old Land the blessed Irish mother, who put a cap around her comely face between the twenties and thirties, and covered her brown waves from sight. To her simple soul marriage meant consecration, the man who chose her need not concern himself about the little tendernesses, her affection was as fixed as the stars. He might be unreasonable, exacting, nay, in trying times he might be cruel, but his faith in the Divine right of husbands was unshaken. She would have the children reverential to their father, even if she should have to renounce a little to effect it, and with what loving sophistry she explained away his weaknesses! She never understood a constitution, political or physical, but when sickness was in the family her pathetic care made the poor broth strengthening and the bitter medicine sweet. No sleep, no rest, no peace for her while the shadow of death lay across the threshold; and how hard it was due to under her beseeching eyes, but if a summons had really come, she would hold a crucifix to the dying lips, and the beloved son or daughter carried the sound of her voice with them to heaven, for what Irish mother but could say the prayers for the departing soul! Not even the story of her country's wrongs could embitter her guileless nature. The mantle of her charity covered even the cruel Sassenagh, and sometimes, secretly, not daring to let it be known, she recommended them to the Virgin Mother. If her belief in her husband was strong, who could measure the confidence she reposed in the brave boys who overtopped her at sixteen! Anything evil in them her glory and her delight? Impossible! They were always white boys in their mother's eyes, however dark and desperate in the sight of those who dwell in palaces. Her unquestioning trust and earnest teaching kept them pure and honest in their early days, and later when they discovered their dear mother was only a simple, illogical, unlettered woman, their loyalty and devotion deepened to find what wonders

she had worked with her few talents. What a tragedy Shakespeare could have woven round her, haunted all her life by a phantom ship at anchor in some harbour, waiting till the children of her love were old enough to take passage and leave her for ever! How sorrowful must have been her joy on seeing them rise to the stature of men and women! I wonder if she is still in the Old Land, stealing out of her lonely home at nightfall, and looking with her tender eyes always eastward! And when no one is by, falling on her knees and lifting her hands in such intensity of supplication that they touch the hem of His garment, and her blessing falls on her flesh and blood in the far-off land; her faith has made them whole. If flowers emblematic of their lives could spring from the dust beneath it would be easy to find the grave of the Irish mother.

WAIROA.

(From an occasional correspondent.)

A VERY pleasant gathering met on Monday night, July 12, at the residence of the Rev. Father Le Pretre, when the choir assembled to present Miss Harmer, who is about to enter the bonds of matrimony, with a small token of their esteem. The choir-master, Mr. P. Cosgrove, presented Miss Harmer with a very handsome toilet set, which he hoped would always remind her of the good feeling which had always been extended her by the choir. He also spoke about her valuable services, which were prized greatly by the congregation, and hoped her new life would not in any way separate her from helping in the choir.

The wedding of Miss Harmer, of Wairoa, to Mr. Thomas Pearce, of Waiparapa, Wairoa, took place in St. Peter's Church on Wednesday morning at nine o'clock, the Rev. Father Le Pretre being the officiating clergyman. The church was packed to the doors with friends and well-wishers of the bride and bridegroom. Mrs. P. Cosgrove presided at the organ and played the Wedding March. Before the ceremony the Rev. Father, in a few words, impressed on the young couple the duties which they must fulfil to ensure a happy future, and at the same time wished them all the blessings possible. The Mass was then proceeded with, the choir singing Concone's Mass in excellent style. After the signing of the register the bridal party left the church amidst a perfect shower of rice and other projectiles, which were meant as a blessing to the happy pair. The wedding breakfast was held at Mrs. Harmer's (the residence of the bride's mother), where a most sumptuous breakfast was laid in style and done full justice to, about 60 guests being present. The bride was dressed as follows: Handsome white cashmere dress, with silk trimmings; sprays of orange blossoms, with wreath and veil to match. The bridesmaid was dressed in cream nun's veiling, with ribbon trimmings and hat to match. The afternoon was spent in a most enjoyable drive to Fruserhoroa and the festive occasion finished up with a social in Smith's Jubilee Hall in the evening, at which all present thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

ARE WOMEN DEGENERATING?

TO THE EDITOR,

Dunedin, 1897.

SIR.—In these days of ever-increasing competition, when the struggle for existence has become more intense and earnest than it has ever been before in the world's history, the question as to whether women should enter into the pursuits, and assume the vocations, hitherto regarded as exclusively manly, is one of the utmost importance to both sexes. It is not my intention in this short letter, however, to go into this question again, for it has already been discussed in all its aspects, and with great freedom, by many of the greatest thinkers of the day. That women do compete, and successfully too with men is a fact most emphatically proved. But the question which is of the greatest importance to us at the present moment is: Are women physically capable of sustaining the great efforts now required of them both in their home life with its worries and cares, or in the outside world of business and pleasure? Alas! we have not far to seek for the answer. It is written too plainly in the faces and forms of the women and young girls we meet every day in our streets. Pale faces, which should bear the bloom of health, and dull, expressionless eyes, which should beam with life and hope, tell their own tale; and we know our women are paying the penalties due to diseased constitutions, either inherited or resultant from the artificial modes of living and the unhealthy foods of the day. The climate of this country too, with its sudden changes from heat to cold, its dust storms, and its enervating winds is in itself a great strain on the female constitution. It is, then, an undoubted fact that the women of to-day are physically degenerating, and therefore the interesting particulars contained in the following letter, received recently from Miss Adeline Bell, of Napier, proving as they do the marvellous curative powers of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills in all ailments of the female sex, should prove interesting to all readers. This lady gives the following graphic description of her ailments. She says: "I was troubled with cold hands and feet, palpitation of the heart, constant feelings of weariness, headaches, loss of appetite, lack of energy and also swollen feet and legs. The symptoms first appeared about three years ago. Two doctors were consulted about my case and medicines were used, but without avail. I now wish to thank you for the benefit I have derived from your highly-valued Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. They have done me every good and I am now quite another person in health. I can recommend your pills to anybody." In conclusion it may be added that this wonderful medicine has cured numbers of people, not only in Australia, but all over the world, of Rheumatism, Sciatica, Lumbago, Dyspepsia, Indigestion and other ailments.—I am, Sir, yours, etc.—

"PRO BONO PUBLICO."

Dunedin, August, 1897.