

princes of Erin 2000 years ago; and the oldest bardic chants and verse-histories mention the gold and jewel inlaid chessboards of the kings.

Of the passionate attachment of the Irish to music, little need be said, as this is one of the national characteristics which has been at all times most strongly marked, and is now most widely appreciated: the harp being universally emblazoned as a national emblem of Ireland. Even in the pre-Christian period we are here reviewing, music was an "institution" and a power in Erin.

(To be continued.)

## BOOK NOTICE

*Heaven Open to Souls*, by Rev. Henry Sempie, S.J. (Benziger Brothers).—To the unknown benefactor who had this book forwarded to us we offer our cordial thanks. It is a good book, and, we believe, a great book. Its sub-title explains its aim: "Love of God above all things and perfect contrition easy and common in souls resolved to avoid mortal sin." It consists of twenty propositions dealing with this thesis, each one of which was thoroughly discussed in theological conferences under the guidance of the author, who now publishes them all (under the inspiration of the late Cardinal Farley) for the "greater glory of God and the consolation, sanctification, and salvation of souls." The scope of the whole treatise is thus set forth in the introductory paragraph: "Are acts of love and perfect contrition so hard in practice here on earth, among the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, as to be rare in fact save in the case of the saints, who are ever few? Or are they so easy with the help of Almighty God's interior graces as to be common among ordinary souls like ourselves, who are resolved to avoid mortal sin?" This is the subject which the author puts before us, and from the words of the sub-title we already know how he answers the inquiry. In a past age, no doubt owing to the prevalence of those poisonous Jansenistic ideas which permeated the whole world of Catholic thought and feeling, it used to be too commonly held that an act of perfect contrition was something heroic and verging on the impossible. People who were conscious of their many sins, but at the same time sincerely desirous of avoiding them, with the help of God's grace, used to rely on attrition, with but a faint hope that they might be truly contrite, when preparing for confession; and deep in their hearts they thought that if they had the misfortune of falling into grievous sin and were not able to go to confession before death, their chance of salvation was very remote. Yet, as we see from this book, the practice of the Church has always been to teach all her children, not merely her saints, how to make acts of perfect love and contrition. Indeed it is remarkable that in Ireland, famed for the chastity of its people, the only form used commonly among the people was and is the act of perfect love. It is so still: it was so in the olden days when the Irish people recited in the old tongue that beautiful act known as the *Gnóimh Croidhe-bhrúghuidh*, which ran as follows: "O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee because Thou art infinitely good and amiable, and because sin is displeasing in Thy sight. I purpose by the aid of Thy heavenly grace, henceforth to amend my life. Amen." As one sees, there is no mention of motives of attrition in this act, which was put into the mouths of all preparing for confession. It is the first great commandment that we love God for His own sake and our neighbor for God's sake. In the prayer which Christ Himself taught us there are many acts of perfect love of God. Each child is bound to make an act of the love of God. It is a dictate of the natural law that we should love God. God imposed this obligation on us, and "He does not command impossibilities, but by commanding admonishes us to do what we are able, he does not ask us for what we are not able, and He aids us that we may be able." It is the author's aim to make it clear that, with God's help all those who have a firm resolution to

avoid mortal sin and to keep God's commandments from some less worthy motive than that of pure love will easily come to make acts of the love of God because He is so lovable in Himself and so good to us. In the twenty chapters of the book the subject is studied exhaustively. The teaching of Catholic theologians of our day is found to support the thesis. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are a proof of it. The difficulties are examined and refuted. Every possible misconception and error is dealt with patiently. The essence of an act of perfect love is made clear. The mind of the Church in the past is shown to be that this act is so far from being difficult that it has been enjoined by God, Our Father, on all His children, and therefore must be easy for all. Reading over the chapters of the book we were reminded of a voice that we shall hear no more, and of the days when we sat under the rostrum of a famous Roman professor to whose hall students used to flock from all colleges. Over and over Monsignor Checchi used to insist, as this author insists, that it was wrong to think of an act of perfect contrition as of something almost impossible; over and over again he told us that in its essence it meant no more than the practical recognition by a sincerely penitent sinner of the fact that God is the supreme Good and that we must order all our thoughts, words, and actions to Him as our last end. We welcome this book, and heartily recommend it to priests and people.

## ON A SINNER DEAD.

Take back your pale pure flowers!  
Love laid sin to her hours,  
Did she live white, that on the stones  
Above her splendid burnt-out bones  
You lay their fearless purity?  
Her life was like a tapestry  
Wherein were woven recklessly  
All things of earth that scarlet be—  
The rowan, reddest berry born,  
The poppy's wide wet mouth of scorn,  
That weed—God knows she loved it well—  
The little stormy pimpernel  
Strange suns, wild downs, and wild, wild stars  
And flame that leaps, and leaping, mars  
These threads she wove at will,  
Until in this dark land,  
God drew them to His hand,  
And weft and woof were still.

E. D.

## FEATHERSTON CAMP NOTES

A well-selected and varied programme consisting of music, singing, and elocution was contributed by a well-known party of entertainers from Wellington in the Catholic Institute on last Thursday evening week. The party included Mrs. Foote, Miss Teresa McEnroe, Miss Agnes Segrief, Private Barnes (N.Z.M.C.), Sergeant Thomson, and Private Howell. Miss Webb was accompanist. The concerted numbers were of high-class standard, and their rendition met with genuine appreciation. Participants in the programme had to respond again and again to recalls, amid the continued applause of the large and enthusiastic audience. At the conclusion of the concert the chaplain thanked and congratulated the performers, and asked the soldiers to accord them three hearty colonial cheers. These were given in such a manner as to leave no doubt regarding the marked success of the entertainment. The party was afterwards entertained to supper in the officers' mess.

## THE MOST OBSTINATE

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