

"TOO MUCH IRISH."

It is sometimes advanced by those who take a superficial view of facts, that in the Catholic press of this country and the United States there is "too much Irish" (editorially says the *North-West Review*, Winnipeg, Canada, of recent date). At the present time there is undoubtedly a ferment of interest throughout the Catholic world due to the arrival of a crisis in Ireland's history. This came about under the natural law of cause and effect. The time arrived when honest, thinking men, actuated by the highest motives, could no longer counsel silence because duty impelled them to speak. The flower of Irish freedom all of a sudden unfolded its petals—stained with the blood of patriots. The appeal was universal. Amongst the first to respond were Cardinal Mercier of Belgium and Cardinal Bourne of England. And was it not Cardinal Gibbons by his presence at the Philadelphia Race Convention who inaugurated the Irish-American drive now having its effect upon the Catholic press of the country? The Catholic Hierarchy do not bring pressure to bear upon any question not exclusively religious without thoroughly weighing its merits as a great moral issue. Evidently Irish freedom is a great moral issue. In some respects, too, it is a great Catholic issue, because the Church recognises Irish loyalty to her teachings as something very closely united with her growth throughout the whole Catholic world. It would be unthinkable that the Irish people, supported by their Hierarchy, could make a solemn and united appeal to their friends everywhere without meeting with a warm and enthusiastic response. This, too, is apart from the controversial merits or demerits of the political aspects of the case. It goes down independently into the treasure-house of human nature itself. In other words, natural flesh and blood could not resist the spiritual and moral pressure of Ireland's claims. If, then, the Irish themselves, together with their co-religionists in Canada and the United States, did not do everything in their power to back up Ireland's appeal, they would show an unthinkable lack not only of duty, but of manhood. The attitude of all Catholic papers printed in the English language at this time is not the most, but the very least, that can be expected of them. To their credit be it said that at the present time all are making the best of their opportunities. No people are better in the work of national self-effacement for the sake of religion than the Irish themselves, and if there are any Catholics not in sympathy with Irish aspirations they should charitably bear in mind the fact that Ireland's contribution to the Catholic cause is not by any means measured by the advocacy of her national aspirations as represented in the Catholic press of to-day.

FATHER DAMIEN.

Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson prefixes to *Lay Morals*, in the Biographical Edition of her husband's work, a most interesting preface dealing with the attitude of "R.L.S." toward the victims of leprosy; the second paper in the volume being the famous letter in defence of Father Damien (says an American exchange). Two or three good anecdotes are told. In one the romance writer offers a cigarette "in the island fashion" (it was in the Marquesas) to a stranger, who takes it, with "the maimed hand of a leper," and after a puff or two hands it back to the giver, who smokes it! "I could not mortify the man," said Stevenson afterwards to his horrified wife. At Molokai, whither they made a voyage to visit the leper settlement, he refused to wear gloves in playing croquet, lest it might remind the young girls of their condition. He revered Father Damien's memory, and studied the life of the priest until there seemed nothing more to learn.

Fancy, then, Stevenson's feelings when he read in a newspaper at Sydney, some weeks later, the letter of a well-known Honolulu missionary, protesting against a monument to Father Damien on the ground that he was a "coarse, dirty man," who had contracted leprosy through his immoral habits! "I shall never forget my husband's ferocity of indignation," says Mrs. Stevenson, "his leaping stride as he paced the room holding the offending paper at arm's length before his eyes. In another moment he disappeared through the doorway, and I could hear him, in his own room, pulling his chair to the table and the sound of his inkstand being dragged toward him."

That afternoon he called together his wife and her son and daughter and told them he had something serious to lay before them; "and then we three had the incomparable experience of hearing its author read aloud the defence of Father Damien while it was still red-hot from his indignant soul." Having finished the reading he pointed out that the matter was highly libellous, and its publication

might involve the loss of his entire substance; but "there was no dissenting voice—how could there be?"

An eminent lawyer was consulted, and pronounced it "a serious affair," as indeed it was. "However, no one will publish it for you," he exclaimed. This was true enough, but the author hired a printer by the day, and the job was rushed through, then the family turned in and helped address the pamphlets, which were scattered far and wide. And thus "Father Damien was vindicated by a stranger, a man of another country and another religion from his own."

Stevenson regretted that he had not waited before writing, till his anger had cooled. If he had, the defence would have lacked something of the quality that makes it unique.

FALSE PROGRESS.

There are those even who call themselves Catholics who find fault with the Church of God and dub her "reactionary" and "unprogressive" (says the *Register*, Toronto). They say the Church should keep up-to-date and adopt all the new fads of social and physical culture. They speak as if the secular world was always progressing in the right direction always. The fact of the matter is that sometimes the so-called progress of the age is merely retrogression. Not only is nothing gained by some of the new fads and fancies of would-be reformers, but something of the old rightness and effectiveness is lost. Take the new fads in teaching, for instance; it is much to be doubted if the new curriculum will educate any minds as great as many of the eminently intellectual scholars and scientists of the old days. Why should the Church be always tagging in the wake of cranks and adapting herself to the changeable fancies of the passing hour? Monsignor Bickerstaffe-Drew says:—"The Catholic Church, we hear folks say, must fit herself to the times. Must she? Is it not rather true that God has already fitted her for all times, because she reflects His unvexed changelessness Who is eternal, and Time's master. 'They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old like a garment, but Thou art always the selfsame.' Shall a weary world, sick of vulgar novelty and noise, turn herself to a Church as novelty-crazed as she is, a Church whose hard brilliance shall coldly reflect, in a million facets, the million fancies of an age that, in place of the Church's perennial, tender, and sane charity for man (with a soul as well as a body), has taken up the mere hobby of philanthropy and can see nothing in man behind his troubled bones and blood?" Men may be improving in the sum of mechanical and scientific knowledge, but it is by no means certain that they are improving in power of intellect, or in holiness and knowledge of God.

ALL SOULS' DAY.

One of the last acts of the late Pope, his Holiness Pius X., was to grant "that on the second day of November of every year the faithful who have been to Confession and Holy Communion, as often as they visit any church or public or semi-public oratory in order to help the dead, and there pray according to the intention of the Holy Father, can gain each time a plenary indulgence to be applied only to the souls in Purgatory." (S. Cong. S. Off., June 25, 1914.) According to the terms of this concession: (1) The indulgence cannot be gained for one's self, but only for the dead. (2) The visits can be made not only to any church whatever, or any public oratory, but even to a semi-public oratory, such as that in a college, convent, hospital, gaol, orphanage, etc. (3) Confession and Holy Communion should be made beforehand. The Confession for any *toties quoties* indulgence may be made on any of the three days before the day of the indulgence, e.g., October 30, 31, or November 1, and the Communion may be made on November 2 or on the preceding day, November 1, as laid down in the decree S. Cong. Ind., March 11, 1908. But those who are accustomed to go to daily Communion (even though they abstain once or twice in a week) need not make any special Confession to gain any plenary indulgences falling during the week. (4) The time for making the visits is November 2. But according to the general principle laid down by the S. Cong. S. Off. (February 15, 1911), the time begins at midday on the previous day, that is, at 12 o'clock on November 1, and ends at midnight on November 2.

It is to be hoped that our Catholic people will avail themselves of this privilege of gaining many plenary indulgences this year, especially for the thousands of Catholic soldiers who have already been hurried into eternity with little time for prayer or penance, during the war.