

## OLD AND NEW WORLD SCENES

### A PRIEST ON HIS TRAVELS.

Speaking at length on the occasion of his welcome home (writes our Christchurch correspondent), the Rev. Father Cooney, pastor of Lyttelton, graphically described his recent journeyings and impressions gained, a summarised account of which will no doubt prove of interest to *Tablet* readers generally. After leaving Lyttelton by the liner *Ionic*, very cold weather was experienced during the three weeks' steaming in southern latitudes to South America. Landing at Monte Video, the fine Cathedral and public cemetery were visited and other notable scenes viewed. Voyaging up the La Plata River, a week was spent in Buenos Aires, a city presenting up-to-dateness in every particular, and marked, too, with every sign of progress. Among the population, Spanish and native Indian, and their descendants, predominate. The city is beautifully laid out, the streets are magnificent, and the tram system the finest seen anywhere. A trip to Mercedes to see old friends was undertaken; and a visit made to La Plata, a beautiful city, replete with handsome buildings and everything on modern lines. This city was built to be the capital of the Argentine Republic, but the seat of Government was eventually removed back to Buenos Aires. The next place of call was Rio de Janeiro, capital of Brazil, where, among other scenes of interest, was the warship, the then centre of an incipient rebellion. A call at the Canary Islands followed, thence to London, which was reached on March 25, where it was snowing vigorously. Staying through four bitterly cold days, interest was quenched and all the sentiment lost. On to Dublin. Father Cooney spent a week in Ireland with his relatives; but the cold being still intense, he sought more congenial conditions and crossed over to France. In that country he visited Rouen, noteworthy because of the association with it of Blessed Joan of Arc, one of the brightest characters of history. Here he viewed the spot of her martyrdom by being burnt at the stake, the tower in which she was imprisoned, and the beautiful Gothic Cathedral. Paris, Lourdes, and Marseilles next received attention, also Avignon, once the home of the Popes, where two were interred in the 13th century. Avignon is probably the only existing example of medieval times, appearing now as it did many centuries ago, and is one of the most impressive scenes possible to gaze upon. Here, too, is seen what must really be the smallest Cathedral in the world, of great antiquity, so much so that its actual age is unknown even to the inhabitants. Lyons, the centre of so much that is ecclesiastical, and the home of so many religious Orders, occupied considerable attention, and was conducive also of deep interest. A trip to Switzerland was next undertaken, with a view to comparing the scenery with that of our own country, the impression being formed that each is possessed of a charm and grandeur all its own. Over to Italy, Florence was visited, thence to Rome, where the privilege of an audience with the Holy Father was granted. On to Naples, and along the Adriatic coast a stay was made at Loretto, where Father Cooney was privileged to celebrate Mass in the house once inhabited by the Blessed Virgin. Venice, with its Cathedral of St. Mark, its greatest attraction, and Milan, also with its famous Cathedral, were viewed. Back to Switzerland to see principally Lake Lucerne, thence up the Rhine, where the Cathedral of Strasburg was seen, also Heidelberg with its famous old castle, which happened, on one of the few occasions, to be lit up, this being in honor of a visit of members of the British Chambers of Commerce. Mayence, and down the Rhine to Cologne, with its glorious Cathedral, were visited, the traveller being greatly impressed with a view of the finest Gothic edifice in the world, admittedly the last word in Gothic architecture. Onward to Amsterdam, where probably the most magnificent park in the universe was seen. The Hague, famous as the seat of international arbitration, and Rotterdam, the capital of Holland, were included in the itinerary of travel. The rev. traveller was much

impressed at the large congregations he saw attending the May devotions in Holland and Germany. In both countries the churches are scrupulously clean and neat, and the behaviour of the people during service most edifying, whilst the numerous religious societies, sodalities, and young men's clubs speak eloquently of splendid Catholic organisation, all denoting a vigor and freshness of religious Catholic life in these old countries almost startling in its intensity, and proof positive, were such needed, of that undying faith in the grand old Church of the Ages. An insight into the lighter and social aspect of the people was gained by a visit to the watering place and health-restoring resort of the Berliners. Over to Belgium, Antwerp and its beautiful Cathedral were visited, and then Brussels. Having seen most that was worth seeing on the Continent in the course of much travelling amid strange scenes and peoples, all of which proved most enjoyable and instructive, Father Cooney, as he says, tired of his own company and turned back to Ireland.

Ireland has wonderfully improved during the past fourteen years. The people are better fed, better housed, and better dressed than formerly. They are also better educated. The study of the Irish language is making wonderful strides and is being taught in all the schools, and not only the old mother tongue, but old Irish customs and songs, music and dances are being re-introduced amongst the people, mainly through the efforts of the Gaelic League. But to Father Cooney the most remarkable feature of all was the great wave of temperance he noticed all over Ireland, but especially in his own native place, Limerick. Nearly every man he met in the streets of Limerick or many of the country towns outside the city, wore on his coat either a cross or a small badge of the Sacred Heart. The cross denoted that the wearer had taken the pledge for twelve months, and the Sacred Heart badge a life-long pledge. Whilst in Ireland he had the privilege of taking part in the Croagh Patrick pilgrimage during last July, and it was a marvellous demonstration of Irish faith. Over 15,000 persons, representing every part of Catholic Ireland, and also the Greater Ireland beyond the seas, there participated, being Irish people from Glasgow and Edinburgh, Sheffield and Liverpool, from nearly every State of America and Canada, and from Australia and New Zealand, all toiling up that steep and rugged ascent of 2500 feet to attend Mass and pay homage to their national apostle. On the summit of Croagh Patrick the apostle of Ireland spent the last of A.D. 441 in fasting and prayer. From this mountain St. Patrick sent his nephew Munis to offer respectful greetings to the newly-elected Pope Leo the Great, and to offer the filial submission and obedience of the infant Irish Church. To Croagh Patrick belongs the glory that on its summit the maiden troth of Christian Ireland was plighted to the See of Rome. How faithfully that troth has been kept all her history is witness. At the close of Lent, before Patrick descended the mountain he had been comforted with divine assurance that the faith he had planted should never fail; he had anchored his Church to the Rock of Peter, and now, standing on the nation's altar, with outstretched hand, turning to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, he lovingly blessed the country and the race which God had given him. The Croagh Patrick pilgrimage is not only an expression of love and reverence for a great historical event, it is a national and public act of faith which gathers together from the ends of the earth around a Mayo mountain side the far-flung children of a common race and creed. After spending over three months in visiting the many places of religious, historic, and scenic importance, Father Cooney left Ireland towards the middle of September. A few days were spent in London visiting friends, among them Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P. In April he had lunch in the House of Commons with Mr. Devlin, who is kindness itself to over-sea Irishmen. He was taken all over the House of Commons and House of Lords, and given a splendid seat in the Strangers' Gallery. With the exception of Lloyd George, he heard all the great speakers on both sides. Leaving London on the fine liner *Athenic* on September 16, a smart run was made to Capetown, which was reached on October 7. Cape-