

Irish News

IRISH-SPEAKING PRIESTS—FREE STATE SCHOOL OF NAVIGATION—IRISH FRANCISCANS RETURN TO LOUVAIN—THE IRISH CHRISTIAN BROTHERS IN ROME—AUSTRALIAN PILGRIMS IN IRELAND.

Before the Gaelteacht Commission evidence was given during the week of the support given by bishops to the preservation of the Irish language. Most Rev. Dr. McNeely, Bishop of Raphoe (Donegal), used Irish frequently, said one witness, and fully 90 per cent. of the priests of the Raphoe diocese were either native speakers or had a conversational knowledge of the language.

Another witness (Rev. D. O'Brosnachain, Killarney), said that Most Rev. Dr. O'Sullivan, Bishop of Kerry, has made it a rule since 1920 that priests before ordination must have a good knowledge of Irish and that teachers in the schools of the diocese should have a bi-lingual certificate.

Gratifying is the announcement that a School of Navigation is about to be established in the Saorstát. This decision is the result of a specially convened meeting of shipowners, brokers, and others interested in shipping, held at the invitation of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Mr. George Fletcher outlined the requirements of the Department of Education as to the syllabus of the proposed School of Navigation. Grants from the Departments of Finance and Education will be available, covering the cost of such a school to the extent of three-fourths—that is to say, the Free State will contribute 75 per cent. to this desirable undertaking.

The famous Irish College at Louvain, founded by the Franciscans, in 1606, has, after many vicissitudes, come again into the hands of the Friars.

They have received a cordial welcome from Cardinal Mercier. They will make it a constituent college of the University.

The college was founded by Father Florence Conry, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam, as a novitiate and house of studies for the Irish Franciscan Friars driven from Donegal, their last regular house of studies in Ireland.

Philip III of Spain, who then ruled Belgium, became a patron of the college, endowing it with a perpetual annual grant of one thousand crowns.

Throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century, and far into the eighteenth, the Louvain College was one of the Continental seats to which Irish students flocked. It was from Louvain that Brother Michael O'Clery was sent to Ireland to find manuscript material for that great record of Irish history, *The Annals of the Four Masters*.

The French revolutionaries confiscated the college in 1793. The last Superior brought it back in 1797. But the property again passed out of his hands in 1822 and remained in alien ownership until a recent date when it was put up for sale and bought in for its original proprietors.

The extraordinary change wrought in Rome by the Irish Christian Brothers has just been acknowledged by the Pope himself. Twenty-five years ago a desperate anti-Catholic campaign was being carried on within the very walls of the Eternal City. It was in part atheistical and in part Protestant. Well-financed Protestant sects were engaged in active proselytism among the Roman poor. Such was the atmosphere when the Holy See called on the Irish Christian Brothers to come and try their skill in disinfecting it.

A *Tablet* (London) correspondent in Rome recently wrote:—"If the Irish Christian Brothers here can look out cheerily at things now, they can remember days of fierce opposition, and there are some of us outside their ranks who, on looking back, can realise what it has meant for Rome and religion to have had an institution fighting steadily inch by inch up from small beginnings to raise, as it has now actually done, a full generation of good Catholic young men, and the best Italians, too, because the best Catholics."

The Papal tribute to the celebrated teaching Order is extremely warm and generous. It is addressed to Brother Hennessy, the Superior-General. Reference is made to the rapidity with which the Brothers began to win the young away from the insidious influence of Protestant propaganda. Catholic schools were quickly supplied for the newer districts of Rome where the antagonists had hitherto succeeded in keeping them from being built. The pupils got a very practical education, a strong item being the study of foreign languages. Secondary education of the most modern kind was provided for thousands of Italian youths, and at the same time they received the inestimable blessing of earnest and accurate Christian education."

The gracious letter of the Cardinal Secretary, marking the silver jubilee of such productive labor, goes on: "To all these good works must be added the learned help of the Christian Brothers in placing their wide knowledge of foreign languages at the service of the Vatican and of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy. For years the Brotherhood has been a faithful and accomplished collaborator in the office of the *Maestro di Camera*. Here, again, is evidenced that devotion to the Holy See which animates the Irish Christian Brothers, while at the same time it renders manifest the confidence they so justly inspire in the heart of the Pontiff."

The special correspondent of the Melbourne *Advocate*, with the Australian Pilgrimage, writing from Dublin under date July 5, says:—

The Carmelite church this morning was packed, four priests distributing Holy Communion. The singing of sodality was very harmonious. I was shown over St. Vincent's

Hospital; which is an old building, but scrupulously clean, as one would expect wherever Sisters of Charity are in command. The Mother Rectress gave me a report of their work, and I was fortunate to procure relics of their foundress, Mary Aikenhead. The out-patients' department is modern and has every up-to-date appliance. . . . Anything like the hospitality of the people of Dublin could not be equalled—except, of course, amongst Australians. The hotels are well kept, and one feels quite at home in them. . . . The Irish are really witty and humorous, as all the world knows. One cannot step on to a tram or enter homes without verifying this.

The pilgrims returned from the South last night, and all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They had many humorous adventures, riding on ponies through the Gap of Dunloe. . . . Killarney, July 9.

From Dublin to Killarney, we passed through beautiful country—"meadows trim with daisies pied"; where cattle and sheep were peacefully grazing, and neat little farm houses nestled behind hedges.

When the train arrived at Killarney station, our carriage door was stiff and would not open. When the cab arrived at the hotel we were regaled with hot scones and tea—and very welcome they were, too. Jaunting cars were brought to take us to the lakes. The writer asked the driver if it was perfectly safe. "Madam, you can do anything but fall out," was the reply. As a matter of fact, we did find them quite safe and comfortable to ride in. We were shown through Muckross Abbey ruins.

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