

yielded anything that she was not compelled to yield, and we know that Lloyd George has not exactly a reputation for honor and good faith. We know also that de Valera will not be deceived by the Welshman as Wilson was, and we can trust him never to leave the Catholics of Ulster in the power of the Orange mob that celebrated the twelfth of July this year by burning or looting 146 Catholic homes in the city of Belfast. We call the attention of our readers to the significant fact that our New Zealand day-lies steadily persist in cloaking the hideous crimes of the people whom Lloyd George allowed to arm themselves for the extermination of Catholics.

NOTES

Classical Standards

Cicero, Caesar, Nepos, Virgil have been handed down to us as models of what Latin ought to be. We have accepted them tamely, and set them up as standards by which we judge others. What is not in accordance with their canons we condemn; if a modern writer of Latin writes as they wrote we praise his style; we reject as decadent the Latin of vigorous and gifted writers of a later age because their language is not that of the Augustan age. One wonders how far we are right. Leo the Great is esteemed highly because he has somewhat of the quality of Caesar; Jerome and Augustine and Gregory are dismissed because they differ from the rigid standard. Is it not possible that the difference may be due to excellence? It is like heresy to say so, but we are not so sure that it is not the case. Take the English language: Dryden, Addison, the translators of the Bible are classics, and as such are studied by those who take English literature seriously to-day. Judged by them George Moore, Pearse, Wilde, Dunsany, Morley are short of the standard; but are the latter really inferior as writers of English prose? Has there been no development? Is the English language to-day the same language that it was centuries ago? If we regard the question from a common-sense point of view and leave out of consideration preconceived notions of questionable value, most people, apart from schoolmasters, would probably have the courage to assert that the prose of the best moderns is better than that of the ancients. Apropos of this topic, here is an appreciation of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, by Mr. Vincent O'Sullivan, in the *New Witness*.

St. Augustine's "Confessions"

"Such was the temperament needed to produce a book so ardent and sensational, so vivid and original, as the *Confessions*. Augustine had no model; his book was a new thing. How hard it was to do is shown by the fact that though many others have tried to do the like it has never been equalled. Nearly two thousand years old, it is as fresh as if it were published yesterday. Possibly his very reluctance to give details aided him in the choice of details. Although he makes no attempt to put himself in a good light, we end by loving the gracious youth, pensive, or at times unruly, and also the harried and driven man, with his tortures, mental and physical, as we do not love at all Cellini or Rousseau, not to mention all the modern people who have written their memoirs. Some of the things he writes, such as the squabble between Monica and the maid-servant, have that homely and attaching realism we associate with Fielding and Goldsmith and Sterne. Augustine had only his own genius to prompt him to write those things, for he could not think the harsh theologians of his time would relish them.

"The style of the book is a marvel. In another book of his Augustine gives some indications as to style. Poets, he says, introduce barbarisms and solecisms to give their writing more flavor. A piece absolutely perfect is tiring by its very perfection. Never was anything less true than the assertion that the style

of the *Confessions* is unstudied. On the contrary, he listened to himself writing, as much as Flaubert, or Pater, or, to come nearer the style of his own book, the author of *Religio Medici*. There is the beautiful passage on 'The Queen of Colors, the Light,' where the words seem like a soft and gently dancing light. Again: *Nisi quia fuderam in harenam animam meam*—'I had spilt my soul on the sand.' What a picture is there! But it is hardly possible to open the *Confessions* without coming on a striking phrase, while the phrases, deliberately constructed with a view to assonance, are as numerous as the chapters. The form of the book, a continuous address to God, is the hardest a man could pitch upon, and it is from the rhetorical devices needed to bring anecdotes of everyday life into the current of so mighty a soliloquy that arises now and then a superficial air of insincerity. It would, indeed, be a shame if Augustine the metaphysician and theologian were used to blot out Augustine the artist."

Irish Books

A reader asks us to suggest a list of Irish books such as might be useful for those interested in parochial libraries. Parochial libraries are of course most desirable, and our personal opinion is that the priest who does not try to keep one going ought to be starved out. In such libraries works that Catholic readers might refer to for an account of their faith, of the Church, of its history and development, and for replies to the charges made against religion by heretics and infidels ought to hold first place. There ought to be a department for history, another for science, one for poetry, and one for fiction. Now Irish books might come in under several of the foregoing heads, but as we take it that our opinion is asked concerning works of fiction we will confine ourselves to them, and to such as are likely to appeal to the general reader. For Irish historical novels we recommend the works of Mrs. Sadlier, Mrs. Pender, William O'Brien, Standish O'Grady, Samuel Lover, Charles Lever, and James Murphy. For general fiction we might name Carleton, Maria Edgeworth, Rosa Mulholland, Gerald Griffin, Canon Sheehan, and McDonnell Bodkin. For humor and sport readers can rely on George Birmingham, Dorothea Conyers, Somerville and Ross, Seamus MacManus, and Father Fitzgerald. Almost without exception the works of all these writers are clean, wholesome, and inoffensive, and may be read by young and old. Those who love a good hunting novel will find Dorothea Conyers satisfying. We could name a dozen of her stories that we have read with delight, and with the appreciation that a youthful training in the vicissitudes of the great Irish sport alone can give. *Peter's Pedigree*, *Aunt Jane and Uncle James*, *The Thorn Bit*, and, above all, *The Strayings of Sandy* are as near as possible to being IT. The sporting novels of Somerville and Ross may be even better from a purely literary point of view but they are marred by snobbishness and by needless offences to Nationalist feeling. Of George Birmingham (who is a Church of Ireland rector) be it said to his credit that bigotry is foreign to his soul, and we remember with gratitude how he once stood up in an Ulster Assembly or Synod and contradicted those who were telling lies about their Catholic neighbors. *Spanish Gold*, *The Major's Niece*, *The Island Mystery*, and *Doctor Whitty* are all good, and you ought to see a doctor at once if they fail to make you laugh. It is hardly worth while dwelling on the subject of Irish books of purely literary merit. Readers who can appreciate such will not need to be told where to find them. But if a charitable librarian wants to be advised in order to procure them for others, we should say that George Moore is unquestionably literary and questionably moral: some would say the man is an ass. Katharine Tynan tells us she is *distinguishé*: we have never discovered it yet. Father Sheehan made a hit with *My New Curate* and then fell away gradually. William O'Brien's novels are very good from all points of view. Many think Carleton's *Fradorougha* is the best Irish novel. A recent novel by Daniel Corkery—*The Threshold of Quiet*—has won wide recognition. Aodh de Blacáin's *Holy Romans* is a notable