

The Catholic Journal

THE LEADING DIOCESAN NEWSPAPER

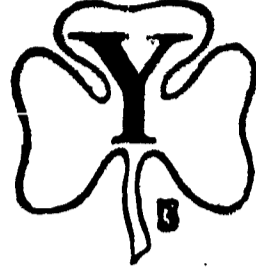
Eighteenth Year, No. 24.

Rochester, N. Y., Friday, March 15, 1907.

The Shamrock, Erin's Flower.

By MARTIN FITZGERALD.

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ES, everybody knows that the shamrock grows in Ireland, but not everybody knows just what the shamrock really is. Even in Ireland there is much difference of opinion as to the identity of the native emblem. Some hold that the shamrock is one plant, while others argue that it is another. Half a dozen plants contend for the honor. In America there are some patriotic Irishmen who will declare that they know exactly what the shamrock is and can distinguish it at sight, but in Ireland several varieties of trefoils or three leaved plants have entered the lists for recognition as the real shamrock, and no man really knows which is which.

As a matter of fact, any trefoil that comes from Ireland is the shamrock when it gets to the United States. It is a three leaved bit of green from the old sod and therefore eminently fit for use in the wearing of the green. The white clover is said to be the most popular candidate for shamrock distinction, though there is also the red clover, while the yellow clover, the wood sorrel, the bird's foot trefoil and a few others present their claims.

Oh, the shamrock, the green, immortal shamrock,
The chosen leaf
Of bard and chief,
Old Erin's native shamrock!

So sang Tom Moore, the immortal, and the shamrock goes, whether it be clover or wood sorrel. The present word shamrock is the generic name in Irish and Gaelic for all trefoils. In the ancient Gaelic tongue and the succeeding dialects it occurs variously as seamrag, seamrog, seamroig, shamroig, shamroice, shamroke, shamroch, shamroote, shamrug, shamroge, seamroige and chambroch. It really means "little clover."

We have, of course, little clovers in the United States, but none of us who are Irish will deign to accept any such specimen as a shamrock. In the streets of New York and other cities there are sold on St. Patrick's day three leaved greens purporting to be the true Irish shamrock, but many of them are merely American clover. Any Irishman can detect the fraud at a glance, because the shamrock leaf is smaller than the American clover.

When the ship comes in from Erin over many a weary mile
It will bear to me a letter from the old green isle.
It will bear to me a letter, an' it may be moist an' wet,
But 'tis in that condition that I most like to get.
For the gur-ril I left behind me, whole, I make my fortune big,
She will make me love her better wid a shamrock sprig.

So it happens that thousands of Irish folk in America await with longing the arrival of the ship that reaches New York just before St. Patrick's day—the last to leave Ireland in time to reach the United States so that mail can be distributed by the 17th of March—in the fond hope and confident expectation that the vessel may have on board addressed to them a letter containing a sprig of shamrock from the old soil. This shamrock-mail is



ST. PATRICK PLANTING THE SHAMROCK. France has the lily and England the rose. Everybody knows where the shamrock grows.

so bulky that sometimes it swamps the facilities of the New York postoffice, and it is estimated that for every sack of such matter sent to New York addresses there are ten sacks addressed elsewhere in the United States.

It is the universal custom for people in Ireland to send their relatives who have emigrated to America these bits of shamrock, so that the loved ones so far away from the native sod may wear the real green of Erin on St. Pa-

trick's day. Very often the letters reach the country in quite a bedraggled condition. Usually the shamrock is moistened before sealing the envelope in the hope that it may keep fresh and green on the voyage. Sometimes too much wetness leaks through the envelope and so-soars the address so that it is impossible to decipher it. In that case the letter goes to a certain department, where it is dried out and an attempt is made to read the address. This failing, the poor little shamrock is entombed in the dead letter office at Washington, where it gives what assistance it can in keeping its own grave green.

It is said that there is practically no traffic in the real shamrock in the United States. Such specimens of it as are worn in caps and hats, in button-holes and on bosoms during the anniversary of the patron saint are, as a rule, extracted from the letters sent by the folks at home. No doubt some dealers now and then get in stock some of the real article, but there is so much clover in the United States which the cows do not devour and it is so cheap and attractive that it is an easy matter to pass it off for shamrock, except in the case of the Irish man or woman direct from the old sod, who discovers the deception at once. It is the "dear little plant" itself which these people demand.

There's a dear little plant that grows in our isle;
'Twas St. Patrick himself, sure, who set it.
And the sun on his labor with pleasure did smile,
And the tear from his eye oft-times wet it.
It grows through the bog, through the brake, through the mireland,
And they call it the dear little shamrock of Ireland.

The legend is a pretty one, and it serves to make patriotic Irishmen feel the old thrill of love of native land when the day of the revered saint comes around. The shamrock undoubtedly is the most famous of all national flowers, though the land where it grows is not now a free nation. In very ancient times the shamrock was used by the Irish for food, the men believing that it made them strong and swift runners. The flowers and leaves were sometimes ground into a meal, which became a substitute for other foods in time of famine.

There has long been a belief even in pagan countries and among the Druids that snakes will not go near the trefoil, which makes its use as an emblem of St. Patrick still more appropriate. The clover in all ages has been held in high regard as a Divine emblem, which is evidenced by the still existing belief in the four leaf clover, or trefraol, as having power to bring luck.

There was a time when English commanders punished Irish soldiers for wearing the shamrock, but that day passed when Queen Victoria ordered the Irish regiments to display the flower as a mark of her appreciation of their bravery in the Boer war.

Forty young men in Waterbury, Conn., have formed a Lenten Club to enforce piety. They will meet on Sunday and Tuesday evenings. Court will be held, with a presiding judge, and for every conviction for flirting, blasphemy, or lying the fine is five cents, which goes into the club's treasury. William Dunphy is president of the club and William McGuinness secretary. It was not the youths were not leading righteous lives that the moral club came into existence; it was a voluntary effort on the part of the young men who believe that their example will be followed by many others.

The total number of children attending Catholic schools and colleges in Milwaukee is 19,042. This shows a remarkable increase in the last ten years—almost 50 per cent. In 1897, the total number of children in Catholic schools was in round numbers, 13,000. A study of the statistics of these Catholic schools gives some unexpected results. Although there are thirteen German speaking parishes in the city and but seven Polish speaking parishes, the Poles have a greater number of children in their parochial schools. There are 7,801 children enrolled in the Polish schools and 6,640 in the German. In the seven parochial schools attached to English speaking parishes, there are 3,310 children enrolled.

Rev. Fred William Wayrich, formerly rector of St. Joseph's church in this city died on Thursday last at Seton Hospital in New York City after an attack of pneumonia. He was 82 years old. He had lived in New York for many years and had been pastor of the Church of St. Alphonsus and the Church of the most Holy Redeemer.

Around the Globe

Catholic News From Many Places

Miss Alice Perry, the first woman in Ireland to qualify for an engineer has been elected County Surveyor for Galway at a salary of £500 a year.

The Rev. Henry Grey Graham, formerly a Church of Scotland minister at Avondale Strathaven, who some years ago joined the Catholic Church and went to Rome to study for the priesthood, has been ordained priest at the Scots College, Rome.

Wherever close census is taken an enormous increase of Catholics is shown. Rev. Anthony Dalla Porta, the pastor of the Springfield, Mass., Italian parish, has completed the census and finds almost twice as much as was first figured.

Very Rev. Lord Archbishop Douglas, uncle of Lord Queensberry, has been admitted into the Congregation of the Redemptorists at St. Joseph's church, Bishop's Stortford, England. Lord Archbishop Douglas was formerly a diocesan priest, and in that capacity did good work at Manchester.

Rev. George Branigan, of Kent, O., is proving himself the friend of the boy in a most admirable way. While in Cleveland recently he visited the Juvenile Court of that city, and offered to place any Catholic boys the court may send him to work in a chair factory at Kent, assuming personal charge of them. The priest's offer was gratefully accepted by Judge Adams.

President Fallieres, acting upon the initiative of the minister of marine M. Thomas has signed a decree suppressing the official chaplains in the French navy. Chaplains of twenty-one years' service are to be pensioned, while others will be given allowances based upon the length of their service. Chaplains in the French army were abolished some time ago.

Before an audience of 3,500 persons the Rev. Frederick E. J. Lloyd, formerly an Episcopalian rector, re-told in the Chicago Auditorium last Sunday evening the story of his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. "My spiritual difficulties began early in life," he said. "I remember many a talk I had with the president of my theological seminary in which I confessed I was not clear on certain points in the faith of the Church of England. Later, in my hours of meditation, in my study, in the pulpit, in the street, everywhere, the voice kept appealing to me, and I could not rest. The Roman Catholic Church, I am convinced, faithfully keeps the commands of the Lord. It faithfully helps those who hear its voice and love its law. Friends, others must be brought to see the truth."

A big mass meeting was held recently in Helena, Mont., to protest against the spoliation of the Church in France. Mayor Lindsay presided. In addition to Mayor Lindsay, addresses were made by Chief Justice Brantley of the Supreme Court, Rev. M. Bateman of St. Peter's Episcopal church and Rev. James J. McNamee of the First Baptist church. As will be seen, the meeting was not a Catholic gathering, but composed of and addressed by men of all creeds. A committee was appointed to draw up suitable resolutions, made up of the following members: F. S. P. Lindsay, mayor of Helena; Theodore Brantley, chief justice Supreme Court; Joseph K. Toole, governor of Montana; James F. McNamee, pastor First Baptist Church; T. G. Martin, manager T. C. Power Co.; Charles T. Perry, president C. T. Perry Co.; Victor Day, vicar-general diocese of Helena.

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Boy For A Holiday

Irish Jousting

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St. Patrick's "Wild Deer"

The Saint's Hymn of Thanksgiving For His Miraculous Deliverance

CONNECTED with the important event of St. Patrick's preaching at Tara there is still preserved an ancient document, a hymn composed by St. Patrick and first written by St. Evin in the year 635. Leogaine, the son of Niall, the king hostile to St. Patrick, invited him to Tymochtrya, a town of Tara—promising to make a public profession of Christianity in the presence of the nobles of his kingdom. Along the road by which the saint was to pass he arranged various schemes for destroying him. St. Patrick, accompanied by eight of his disciples, became aware by Divine revelation of the evil intentions of his enemies, who saw the Christians when

they passed them not as men, but as deer. Owing to this circumstance St. Patrick's hymn, composed after his miraculous deliverance, was entitled "Fith Radha"—i. e., wild deer. The original manuscript of the hymn is in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.

The following is a condensed literal translation of the hymn from the original Gaelic:

At Tara I enter beside the river of Thyne,
The God of slanders, in whom my soul will never
Believe and the pagan power and thimble that I
The virtue of the blood of Christ, with his baptismal power,
The virtue of his death and tomb, his living flesh the
Assurance and the judgment, when many all must
I place between me and the power that makes me
The virtue of his discipline and all his might above,
The host of his suffering church of heaven and my
The invocation of the saint, who God will not
The power of his apostles' work, his disciples all
The study of virgin and every just man's deed
I place between me and the power in this my
I humbly pray that God will send my language
That every sinner's heart and soul may see
Believe in and my soul face and soul see on my
May all the children of God praise me from all
His word be fit with chastity, which slanders may

Kate Kearney's

Got Lige

Lakes of Killarney

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