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Correspondence

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NESSA.

BY L. M'MANUS.

Author of "Lally of the Brigade," "The Silk of the Kine."

(The scene of this story is laid in Ireland, in the time of the English Commonwealth, 1654.)

CHAPTER III.

(Continued).

The old man went swiftly toward her. "Sing me a song," she said, and turned her gaze again on the courtyard.

The harp stood near. He took it and tried the strings with long, nervous fingers. Walcot leaned his arms on the table and fixed his eyes on the board. The twilight had fallen, but the girl's face and figure had caught a gleam from the after-glow that lingered in the west. The rest of the hall was in gloom. Tadhg struck a chord and broke into a lively prelude. After he had played a few bars he sang with a voice that had still some mellow notes.

Walcot listened without lifting his gaze from the table. The words were Gaelic and unintelligible to him. Presently he caught the name Belk, and looked up. He looked at Nessa. She sat in the same stiff, graceful pose, her left hand on the hound's head, a cloud in her eyes.

The song ended in a loud, triumphant call. A few vibrating notes rang through the hall and there was silence. Nessa rose. "I do not like your song, Tadhg of the bards," she said, and went up the hall. She passed Walcot again without a glance, with an impassivity as if she had forgotten him. The line came in his forehead as he watched her ascend the stair. Then he rose from the table and went toward Tadhg.

"Why is Belk's name in your song?" he asked.

"It is not his name," was the answer, "It is a word, *ole*; bad is the meaning of it."

"I shall hang you yet," said Walcot, and turned away.

The next morning he ordered Tadhg to bring his horse. Then he bade him tell Nessa that he must speak to her. The old man went to the girl and gave the message. Nessa told him that she would not go to the officer; that he must come to her. Tadhg returned to Walcot. He said his mistress would see him in her withdrawing room.

Walcot heard this answer in silence, and followed him to the apartment. The girl held a Gaelic manuscript in her hands, and did not look up as he entered. Una sat near, spinning.

Walcot bared his head. "What is your name?" he demanded.

She did not raise her eyes. "Nessa Ni Connor," she replied.

He drew a book from his pocket and wrote down her reply.

"And the names of the man and woman?" he continued, his glance on the paper.

She gave them, her gaze still lowered.

"Your age and theirs?"

"Tadhg O'Wig is 65," she answered. "Una Ni Hanlon is 70, and I, I am 18."

He entered her answers without comment. "What is your substance?" he said presently.

"Tadhg knows it," she replied, and went on reading. Walcot turned to Tadhg.

"It was once great and as a king's," said the latter. "But now there is but a garran, five cows and a winter's plow."

Walcot inserted the statement and turned again to Nessa.

"You must attend to my words," he said. "I have a command to give."

She looked up and he went on. "It is my duty to command you to leave this house. By the third week in August you, this old man and woman, must be gone. You may move your substance."

Nessa could not speak for a minute. But she saw her danger in the midst of her anger. Her face grew white; she looked away.

"By what right do you give this order?" she asked.

"I give it in obedience to an order that deals with your race. You must obey."

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

Continued.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

TO THE EDITOR ALL IRELAND REVIEW.

SIR,—Seeing that little or nothing has been done or is doing, to illustrate the practical working of the Technical and Agricultural Education Act, I wrote a letter to the Department in Dublin, enclosing a copy of *The Field* newspaper, which is published in London, in which the editor holds in words that convey better than I could express them, views which agree with my own—namely, that not only in Ireland, but in England also, we want practical men to teach the public what to do in the interest of the farming and other classes in the community. What is really needed are a class of instructors, who have themselves been successful farmers and mechanics, who work themselves, not mere theorists, neither do we require scientists, but men, and women too, to whom one would send one's children to be educated and trained in a practical manner. Scientists in the laboratory to investigate and experiment and give us the results of their investigations to be applied as the occasion requires. In a word, we want some institution independent of and outside the ordinary schools and colleges, accessible to all alike, which one can point at, and be identified with as, a School of Art, or training establishment, and take pride in as belonging to the town or district which maintains it. We want also a tillage farm in each county, worked by a farmer, not a chemist or florist, but dealt with as it should be by practical minds, and experiment on the growing of crops, with a view to ascertain whether or not we can grow with advantage more corn in Ireland, instead of rearing cattle and sheep, because a time will come, sooner or later, when we shall want cultivated land, and not grass farms, and as an incentive to industry, I am of opinion that prizes should be given to farmers for the best crop of oats, or wheat or vegetables, and also for the best-kept dwellings and the cleanest and healthiest surroundings at the homestead. Encouragement also should be given for planting trees on the several farms for shelter, as well as for use, and also with a view to investments for the benefit of posterity. I have observed almost the total absence of garden, turnip, or parsnip, or other kindly fruits of the earth. The people appear to have no vegetable for domestic purposes, except the coarse common cabbage, consumed alike by cattle and pigs as well as by man. Celery also, which is such a preventative to rheumatism, should be grown for use, and early york, and the other smaller varieties, should take the place of the common sort for human food. Two crops of the earlier variety of cabbage can be grown while one crop of the common sort

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is being matured. The growth of fruit also should be encouraged, and fruits and vegetables more generally consumed as articles of diet. I am of opinion that the general use of bacon and common cabbage is the cause of dyspepsia, which ailment is the first step of the stage on the road to the Lunatic Asylum. In a word, there are more graves dug with the human teeth than are caused to be opened by any other known form of disease. I should also like to encourage thrift, and have those who occupy labourers' cottages stimulated to grow vegetables for sale and for consumption, and give prizes for the best-kept cottage, and the best cultivated plot attached to them. Regarding the enclosure which I send for insertion with this letter, it is not every farmer who can send a son to Dublin, and pay his expenses. If the education and training is free, or, in other words, if the pupil is instructed and maintained free in Dublin, there would be an incentive and inducement to send one's son to Dublin for training.—I am, yours truly,

H. B. HARRIS.

(COPY.)

SIR—Adverting to your letter of the 24th ult., forwarding cuttings from *The Field*, published on 15th ult., and in reply to your inquiry as to where in Ireland can farmers' sons receive education to fit them to be teachers in practical farming, I have to state that a course of training in practical and technical agriculture is provided for Irish farmers' sons at the Albert Institute, Glasnevin, Dublin, while at the Royal College of Science, Dublin, instruction in the very highest branches of the subject has now been arranged for.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

T. P. GILL, Sec.

To H. B. Harris, Esq., J.P.

[DEAR MR. HARRIS.—I have read your letter with the utmost sympathy. I think there ought to be an agricultural instruction farm in every district where the sons of farmers might learn their business from a man practically acquainted with the best methods, and practising them with evident success. I think there should be also plots where young people might be similarly instructed in the art of growing vegetables and fruit, and, I would add, flowers. I would like to see something of this nature emanating from the Agricultural Department, and hope, and indeed trust, that we shall soon have such instructional farms, large and small, and such plots. Till then I cannot think that any progress has been made in the teaching of the people what is, or ought to be, the principal occupation of the vast majority, viz., how to till the ground.

There is a kindred reform, to which personally I attach great importance, but which is advocated, up to the present, by very few, indeed, and even those, for the most part, recluses and solitary thinkers, without influence or power. It is the right of the people to get at the land, and so be able to profit by that practical instruction of which you have written. The principle has already been admitted, and practically, though not, I think, very wisely carried out in the Agricultural Labourers Acts. Everywhere there is the waste labour, and everywhere, truly, the empty untilled land. To have these two brought together, and into fruitful relations, is a task surely worthy of the best labours of our coming Irish statesmen when they come. At the same time, I confess I am beginning to lose my temper a little at the goings on and the not goings on of that Department. Their last stroke of work was the foundation, in Roscommon, of a great Academy for teaching Navigation! Their second last, the establishment in Rathmines of a Chair from which a learned Professor will teach young Rathmines to despise Irish manufactures, and instruct them in the manners and deportment most suitable for commercial travellers.—Ed.]

TO THE EDITOR OF ALL IRELAND REVIEW.

DEAR EDITOR,—May I send you a few quotations from Mr. Lloyd's book on New Zealand:—

"A New Zealander, Mr. Vaile, of Auckland, claims the credit of first proposing the extension of the Post Office principle to railway charges. This is an idea which has

already borne great fruit in other countries, as in Hungary. . . . His first conclusion was that the prime cause of poverty is the inability of the people to make use of the land; and his second, that one great cause of this is the system, or no system, of railway management. By basing the rates on mileage, and putting toll gates at every mile, the railways drive out of the country and crowd into the cities the people and their industries. These must shorten the distance between each other if they are to live. To remedy this, Mr. Vaile invented this scheme for railway zones. Instead of making the railway charge, as now, increase with the mileage, he proposes to make the rates dependent on the average cost of the service and the density of the population, and to vary them, not by the miles, but by stages—miles long longest in the thinly-peopled districts; shortest where the population is dense. . . .

"A prominent Hungarian, Baron Huehner, was in New Zealand when Mr. Vaile was pressing his principle upon Parliament. . . .

"The Zone System of Hungary, which has been so remarkable a success, is but a mutilated version of Mr. Vaile's plan. Its results are well known. Rates were reduced to one-fifth of their former average. The last year of the old system the number of passengers was (in round numbers) 9,000,000. Ten years later this had increased to 35,000,000; and the receipts had mounted from 14,000,000 florins to 27,000,000; while the average distance travelled by each passenger increased in the ratio of 75 to 130. . . .

When every mile adds to the charge, rural traffic is under ruinous inequality as compared with that of the city; the country has to pay the most, and pays nearly all the freight charges. Under the Zone or Post Office System, as worked out by Mr. Vaile, the zone within which the charges would be the same to all points would be made much larger in the country than in the neighbourhood of the cities. . . . Results in Hungary and Russia are the foretaste, like the wonderful development of the Post Office, of the social, industrial, and other benefits to be expected from the radical application to the railways of the rule of uniformity of charges in every direction within the zone. . . . The working men could live in the country in a way impossible now, with gain of independence and earning power.

"The Zone or uniform system would put an end to the oppressive discriminations now so commonly exercised by private enterprise both against persons and places. . . . And with all this the revenues of the railways would increase enormously, as is proved by the experience of the Post Office and of the countries that have adopted modifications of Mr. Vaile's idea.

"Railway rates are now a mystery, and the officials in all countries do their best, as priests of transportation, to heighten the mystery, and their own importance and power with it. There are, Mr. Vaile says, thirty million different rates on the Midland road of England. Fraud and oppression go undetected in such a maze. . . . Here is a New Zealand idea, which, unlike most of its ideas, that country has seen put into practice, though imperfectly, by other nations than itself. But Mr. Vaile's sixteen years' of agitation is likely to bear fruit in New Zealand as well as in Russia and Hungary. . . .

"Mr. Vaile holds that the future supremacy of the world will rest in the hands of the people, who best know how to build and operate railways. . . . Russia has adopted the Zone System with surprising financial results—a warning to the Anglo-Saxon (and Celt, too) to look out for themselves in the struggle with the Slav for Empire." —M.

A CORRECTION.

A GREAT many, at least five, readers have written to tell me that "Leonainie" was not Poe's at all, but Whitcombe Riley's, writing in Poe's manner. I wrote last week to say that I thought it was in Poe's early style while he was—noting! The last word came out in the printed issue as—"nothing!" I would not willingly pronounce a great lyrical poet to be "nothing" at any stage in his career.—Ed.

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