

READING BOOK

by Days At Rathkeale

VENTURES RECALLED

(IAN, Southampton)

They were worth and turnips, was not to be sneezed workhouse, and, at by a half-dozen hungry school-boys, Father Jerry boys, and trust the "outlaws" to put one hundred have the cooking and other utensils ready when the feast was being prepared. Then, at night, thanks to the generosity of Major-General Lloyd—a gentleman well beloved by the citizens of Rathkeale, and who never forgot the poor of the town at Christmastide—there would be skating by moonlight on Lloyd's Lake at Beechmount, if the ice was strong enough to bear, or, if no moon, by torchlight, and it was like a scene from fairyland to see the reflection of the lights on the ice, and the frost sparkling on the trees, while Jerry Fennell played popular airs on his English concertina, as the skaters glided round and round, keeping time with the music. Yes, those were the days.

OLD TIMES IN THOMAS STREET

I don't suppose for a moment that any citizen of Rathkeale now remembers the Thomas Street hurling, football and cricket clubs, or the Thomas Street fife and drum band, yet, in the opinion of their members—five in number: Paddy and Dick Hayes, Willie Mulcahy, Willie Cagney and myself—they were wonderful combinations. After hours the school playground was our sportsfield, and for hurling and football it was not too bad, as, by short passes, the ball could be kept within the confines of the school ground; but for cricket it was not so good, as a hard smack at the ball sent it flying into Kennedy's field, and it had to be retrieved by going over the school wall, across the road, and then over the field wall, only to find it was "lost ball" in the high grass; or, perhaps, it might take another course down the sloping road to the Railway Station gates, about two hundred yards away; and the fielder had to go after it; cricket was, indeed, a strenuous game as played by our club.

The Thomas Street "fife" and drum band—fourteen whistles and a sixpenny drum—had its band-room in our house—now, I believe, the Post Office—and in the evenings, when we were "out," we gaily marched away up Thomas Street, round by the school, down to the Railway Station, back again, past the R.I.C. barracks, on to the Fair Hill, and then returning to the "band-room," and, what we lacked in musical abilities we made up in the noise made by the shrill tootling of the tin whistles and the banging on the drum.

BACK TO THE THIRD BOOK.

And, now, back again to the "Third Book," and to its lessons, comments on which must, obviously, be very limited.

The first one is appropriately enough the "Story of the River Shannon." I remember it was on a

TESTIMONIAL

To Memory Of Great Teacher

LATE MR. T. M. LOFTUS, B.A.

The death of Thomas M. Loftus, B.A., principal teacher, Emly Boys School, on 6th December, 1946, brought intense grief and keenest sense of loss to his wife and young family. May God console and comfort them. His death brought sorrow, too, and keen sense of loss upon all the people of Emly parish, where for 25 years he had given of his best toward instructing our youth unto truth, justice and judgment.

A profound scholar with many academic distinctions, he had in rare measure the faculty of imparting his scholarship to his pupils. Understanding well the true meaning of education, he drew out and developed the best in each boy. He was unsparing of himself that his boys leaving school for the work-a-day world year after year might be thoroughly qualified to act the part of responsible and intelligent citizens.

Thomas M. Loftus ever retained an affectionate, paternal interest in the boys who had been his pupils, and unobtrusively (one might say all unknown to them) he brought many of them, by his example or by, in season, his cheery word, to join the Confraternity or to enter the ranks of Total Abstinence.

In all activities of the parish, social or charitable, he was at all times ready to serve, to encourage others, to carry the bigger burthens himself. And his high sense of duty and devotedness to his calling would not permit him, even when his health had become impaired, to seek respite until, alas! breaking point was reached.

No wonder is it that there arises on all sides a spontaneous desire to express in some way appreciation of his work and worth, and to mark in tangible form our gratitude for his self-sacrifice.

In response, therefore, to the wish and pleading that are unmistakable of parents, of his pupils over the years, and of his very many friends in Emly and outside of Emly, this testimonial is inaugurated. It will be open until January 20th, 1947, and lists will be published of all subscriptions handed or forwarded to anyone of the undersigned:—

- Rev. L. Meany, P.P., Emly.
- Rev. E. Ryan, C.C., Emly.
- John C. Ryan, Emly.
- Patrick McNamara, Emly.
- D. J. Bourke, Monemore, Emly.
- John Purcell (junr.), Monemore, Emly.
- Michael Q. Ryan, Ballinvrina, Emly.
- Timothy Quinlan, Ballinaveen, Emly.
- Thomas Quish, Ballyhone, Emly.
- Patrick Clancy, Bartoose, Emly.
- Patrick Burns, Duncummin, Emly.
- Ed. Crowe, Duncummin, Emly.
- Patrick Hennessy, Tulla, Emly.
- Patrick Ryan, Rhodus, Emly.
- Patrick Grace, Lisobihane, Emly.
- Ed. Heffernan, Lisobihane, Emly.
- John Gannon, Ballylooby, Galbally.
- Ed. O'Callaghan, Caherline.
- John Bowman, N.T., Pallasgreen.

and Mr. Patrick ("Paddy") Lynch,

LIMERICK LEADER

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1946

Things That Matter

The dying days of the old year are always a time of reflection and review. At such a period most people are inclined to make a sort of general survey of the past and to weigh up the prospects and probabilities of the future. Either by instinct or by deliberate intention they indulge in a moral, social and mental stocktaking that cannot but be all to the good.

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In many ways the twelve months now drawing to a close brought saddening events and experiences. The cry of bitter want was heard from many lands and the hopes of an early and stable peace met many disheartening setbacks. Whether the coming year will see a big improvement in this respect must remain a matter of speculation.

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The international horizon is anything but clear. The Great Powers are showing little inclination to make the furtherance of the common good their sincere objective. For the most part they are obviously manoeuvring for the attainment of their own selfish ends. They give plenty lip-service to noble ideals, it is true, but what they practice in reality is widely divorced from the high principles they so eloquently preach.

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In these circumstances, it is difficult to feel any great optimism as to the ultimate outcome of the proceedings of the U.N.O. Many keen observers indeed, see in the posturing and negotiations of the world's leading statesmen grave threat of even a worse war than the appalling conflict from which humanity has only just emerged. It may be, however, that the mere fear of what such a further struggle would mean will be powerful enough to avert the calamity. The staving off of a third global war would be a blessing in any case, but would be doubly so if secured through full enthronement of all-round and even-handed justice.

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