

A Book of the Week.

CASTLE OMERAGH.*

Once more has Mr. Frankfort Moore turned his attention to the historical novel, and this time it is the history of Ireland which has inspired him. He has laid his scene in the bloody campaign of that pet saint of the present day, Oliver Cromwell. Some of us may have been interested in a correspondence which has lately taken place in the *Spectator* as to the great service which might be done to the cause of Ireland were a great novelist to arise to treat the history of that sad land as Sir Walter Scott treated his "Caledonia stern and wild." But the good *Spectator* would doubtless recoil in horror from a novelist who could hint at the enormities perpetrated by the fashionable champion of liberty. That the great, tho enlightened Cromwell should be represented as having eagerly hounded on men to toss infants back into the flames, and to receive women on their pikes, as they rushed madly from a burning church, is "most intolerable, and not to be endured."

Therefore, it is perhaps idle to say that Mr. Moore has succeeded, in a way hitherto not usual, in rendering faithfully the Irish character, the greatnesses, the weaknesses, of this emotional, generous, indolent, procrastinating, religious, sanguine people. But let us imagine that all his facts are nightmares; that Cromwell did not—as we all feel sure such a champion of religious liberty could not—have roasted, tortured, hacked, and slaughtered hundreds of men and women whose only crime was Papacy; let us agree that all these things are figments of the brain, invented by the enemies of a truly great man, and still we must own that the descriptions of the life of the country, and of the gay O'Brian of the Tower, are life-like and fascinating to an extraordinary degree. While Cromwell's band are scouring the country, stringing up, burning, plundering, O'Brian does not even post a guard at the Tower Gate. Walter Fawcett, the narrator, riding over to see how things go, finds all open to any chance enemy who might ride down the Glen, and the servants all busy celebrating the event of the recent paternity of Phelim, one of their number. When, after remonstrance on Walter's part, and much simulated indignation on the part of the worthy O'Brian, the servants have been rated for their neglect, the order is given that *as soon as the ball in the kitchen is over* someone is to go and take charge of the postern!

The following passage conveys an excellent idea of the difference between the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic temperaments:—

"It was such acts as these that enabled us to perceive how Cromwell's army should come to be thought irresistible. It was the nature of the great general—and no one will, I think, be foolish enough to deny that Cromwell was a great general—to spare no pains to accomplish his object, so that nothing was left to chance. The Irish were overawed by the constant show of force and forethought; but they hated Cromwell all the more on this account, for they really seemed to think that there was something desperately mean about a commander who made war on a fixed principle. They actually seemed to think that warfare was a game of chance, and that the general who left nothing to chance

* By Frank Frankfort Moore. Constabla.

was on a level with the man who examines the cards before dealing them round."

The siege of Castle Omeragh shows how a handful of men, led by a gentleman with some English blood to temper the Celtic rashness and a Jesuit priest (who is the best creation of the book), made a successful defence of a stronghold against a small detachment of Ironsides. The climax of the story is the siege of Clonmel, where Cromwell for once met his match, and General Hugh O'Neil, by his brilliant strategy, decoyed a whole regiment into the town through a breach, and hacked it to pieces, as some small retribution for the massacres of Drogheda and Wexford.

It is a thrilling story; and the account of the charge of the army of Cromwell, singing their wild Psalms, and coming on in apparently resistless strength, is most convincing in its vivid and descriptive language. One sees and hears the wild scene, and one's heart throbs with those of the brave defenders behind the walls, awaiting their moment to strike.

G. M. R.

The Anonymous.

Sometimes at night within a wooded park,
Like an ocean-cavern, fathoms deep in gloom,
Sweet scents, like hymns, from hidden flowers
fume,
And make the wanderer happy; though the dark
Obscures their tint, their name, their shapely
bloom.

So in the thick-set chronicles of fame
There hover deathless feats of souls unknown.
They linger as the fragrant smoke-wreaths blown
From liberal sacrifice. Gone face and name!
The deeds, like homeless ghosts, live on alone.

—By RUPERT HUGHES in the
Century Magazine.

What to Read.

"New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle." Annotated by Thomas Carlyle and edited by Alexander Carlyle.

"Home Life under the Stuarts, 1603—1649." By Elizabeth Godfrey.

"Paris in '48: Letters from a Resident Describing the Events of the Revolution." By Baroness Bond, née Robinson. Edited by C. E. Warr.

"Typhoon." By Joseph Conrad.

Coming Events.

May 8th.—Meeting of the General Council of the Matrons' Council, Miss Isla Stewart presiding, 20, Hanover Square, London, W., 11 a.m. Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses—First Annual Meeting and Conference, Miss Louisa Stevenson, President, presiding, 20, Hanover Square, 12 and 3.

May 11th to 16th.—To Help Poor Ladies. Sale of Genuine Old Bric-a-Brac, 16, Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, W.

May 20th.—Lord Howard de Walden presides at the Festival Dinner in aid of the Metropolitan Hospital, Kingsland Road.

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