THE LETTER BOX.

VERSACHOYLE GOOLD ESTATE, WEST LIMERICK.

TO THE EDITOR.

Ulster Buildings, Waring Street,
Belfast, 5th September, 1906.

Dear Sir,—In the North of Ireland we do not realise the extraordinary revolution that is silently and peacefully taking place in the South under the Land Purchase Acts. Of all the estates in Munster, the history of the Versachoyle Goold estate in West Limerick, the sale of which has just been concluded, is probably the most interesting, and I should say the most instructive; and with you indulgence I shall refer to it briefly for a two-fold purpose viz:—(a) to refute the charges of bigotry and intolerance levelled time and again against the Catholics of the South, and (b) to exemplify the changes that are passing over the face of that province. The estate was purchased in 1817 by Serjeant Goold, who was a master in Chancery, a co-temporary of O'Connell, and a professional rival not unworthy of that great man. Both were engaged in most of the important cases of the time on opposite sides. One of the oldest surviving tenants on the estate, as venerable in years as he is tenacious of memory, remembers meeting O'Connell and Goold, and can recall many interesting incidents in their careers. One I shall mention, as it has reference to the estate to which I am referring. In the early thirties O'Connell was engaged defending prisoners charged with conspiracy and sedition at the Cork Assizes, and Goold, who was prosecuting for the Crown, was having the best of O'Connell, and convictions seemed inevitable. O'Connell, knowing that the serjeant was irascible, frequently interrupted him for the purpose of irritating him and throwing him off the trend of his arguments, and ultimately, after Goold had referred to certain estates with which the prisoners were connected, O'Connell interjected:—"What about that property you purchased in West Limerick from Lord Courtenay, where, if you turn out a two year old in May it comes in a yearling in November with the horns of a four year old?" This inflamed the serjeant, and enabled O'Connell to pull off his prisoners. Both were life-long friends, and I quote the following incident to show how intimate their friendship was. The serjeant was notoriously "near," and on one occasion O'Connell was walking through a dark passage in the serjeant's house when the latter said—"O'Connell, be careful, or you will break your neck." The reply was—"It would be more difficult, Tom, to break the fast here that one's neck." Goold, although a Crown official, boldly avowed to Castlereagh his hostility to the Union, and to the last opposed it. He was a brilliant speaker, and was known as "Goold of the silver tongue." The serjeant was an excellent landlord. When the estate was purchased Europe was held in flames by war and exorbitant prices were paid for farm produce. After Waterloo the prices went down with a bang, and the rents then payable became impossible. The tenants requested the serjeant to have them readjusted, and this he willingly consented to do. He appointed an arbitratur in his behalf and asked the tenants to appoint one to represent them. Both fixed the rents without even the intervention of an umpire, and so moderate were they, the rents remained practically undisturbed until the sale of the estate a few weeks ago. The estate passed in succession to the serjeants three sons in the order of age, and ultimately to his great-grandson, Mr. Goold Versachoyle, who has just sold, as already explained. The relations between landlord and tenant were harmonious and satisfactory until the youngest son, the Archdeacon, came on the scene, and the scene then changed, and the change was swift. Steeped in feudalism, the Archdeacon regarded himself a demigod and his tenants serfs, whose chief duties, in his view, were to earn rents and worship at the shrine of the feudal deity. Shortly after succeeding to the estate he built a dwelling-house at the head of Athea village, which is situate in the heart of the property. He also erected a church within two hundred yards of the house, and simultaneously distributed Bibles among the tenants on the estate, and scattered broadcast among them polemical literature and religious tracts. Up to this no Protestant had settled on the estate, and there was no Protestant church within a radius of eight miles. No person could or ever would take exception to the Archdeacon introducing members of his denomination to the parish and erecting a church for them at which to worship, and no misunderstanding or feeling would follow if he had not tampered with the religious convictions of the Catholics. A few Protestant families came to reside on the estate, and from the time they settled there to the present the relations between them and the Catholics have been of the most exemplary character, as will be seen later on. The archdeacon inaugurated a system, I won't say of proselytism, but akin to it, which led to feuds and demoralisation over the estate. He did not in time realise the harm he was doing, nor did he see until too late that he might as well have attempted to alter against the laws of gravitation the courses of the brooks and rivulets that meander over his property as to seduce the Catholics from the fold of their Church. Men were employed at different centres to distribute tracts and take the names of persons who were willing to read them. They were paid in proportion to the numbers enrolled, and once each month those enrolled marched to Listowel, a town eight miles distant, entered the Protestant church, underwent some examination, after which they 'drew their pay," and went off smiling, "winking the other eye," to the nearest public-house, and that which they received for "soup" they handed to the publican for drink. Thus the demoralisation proceeded, and only for the fact the thing would have been ludicrous and laughable in the extreme. The society which the archdeacon induced thus to operate on his Catholic tenantry soon saw they were being humbugged, and the ungodly thing fizzled into the air, where it still dwells, and will until the day of judgment, awaiting its reward. It was inevitable that procedure of that kind would exercise the minds of the spiritual directors of the people, and hot controversies followed for years, until they culminated in a number of charges being preferred by the archdeacon against the Reverend Martin Ryan, administrator of the parish, and one of the finest priests Munster ever gave the Church. An ecclesiastical court was duly formed, and a day appointed to hear the charges. The priest accompanied by his parishioners in hundreds, proceeded on the day appointed to Newcastle West, where the court was held, prepared to refute the calumnies in which for the moment he was shrouded. But the archdeacon and the "creatures" who were playing and fattening on his fanaticism were non est. Father Ryan was cheered along the road to his home, where he met with a reception unparalleled in the annals of the parish. The archdeacon did a still more extraordinary thing. The Sunday after the court was held he marched into the chapel bearing a wand which was symbolic of his visit to the Holy Land, while celebrating Mass, and forced his way through the congregation to the altar steps. It would be difficult to conceive anything more trying to the patience of a Catholic than an intrusion like this during the celebration of a function so solemn and dear to them. The archdeacon wanted to vindicate before the congregation certain Catholic ladies from trivial aspersions which neither Father Ryan nor the archdeacon should have noticed. Those ladies were altogether too elevated for the tongue of *maligner* to hurt them. In justice to the archdeacon it must be said he entered the church between the Gospels, and his demeanour was most respectful. He was kind-hearted, of imposing presence, a perfect gentleman and the frailities begotten largely of a feudal atmosphere will be forgotten when his good parts will be remembered. And those frailities I should not now exhume only that I want to point out how much the Catholics endured while the feeling of amity between them and the Protestants remained unbroken. Now, what I want to emphasise is that during all those troublous times the good relations between the Protestants and their Catholic neighbours never waned, as already stated. There are just two Protestant families in that wide estate, and not others within a radius of many miles. I met the head of one of these families (Mr. Gleeson) a few days ago, and he told me that during the fifty years his family have been living in the parish they received nothing but kindness and consideration from their neighbours; that the Catholics always brought home his hay and turf, and that his difficulty was to make a selection from those who volunteered to assist him, they came in such numbers. In the parish there are not two families more respected or more popular, and there is no distinction between Protestants and Catholics in the South except where the Protestant ranges himself on the side of the oppressor or attempts to make inroads on the people's faith. There they cannot understand why there should be any strife over religious matters, and one very intelligent man said to me—"It would be nearly as good as Home Rule if the Boyne could be blotted out of the map. If it could Derry, apprehending the same fate, would probably fall into line with the people and stop their nonsense." The two Protestant families live adjacent to the districts from which most of the moonlighters radiated, and though these men raided every house in Kerry, Limerick and Cork where they suspected there were firearms, they never interfered with the Protestants, and so secure did Mr. Gleeson's family feel that when retiring for the night they didn't even lock their doors. Not only so, but that gentleman tells me that five men unknown to him spoke to him at a fair in Dough, and told him he need have no apprehension, and added, "We won't interfere with your sort." Nor did they. Mr. Gleeson also informed me that when moonlighting was rampant he went with a local Protestant landlord to Kerry for a week's shooting. They stayed at a farmhouse in the district over which the moonlighters rambled mightly, but were not interfered with, and what I am writing of Limerick and Kerry holds good over Munster. Gleeson himself said, "We were as safe as if on board a battleship, and we knew it." The worthy clergyman (Canon Vance), who has for upwards of forty years been officiating at the handsome church built by Archdeacon Goold, and who is one of the most popular clergymen in Ireland, experiences as much respect from the Catholics as they extend to their priests. That venerable gentleman's heart is filled with charity and kindness towards Catholics, and what he has done for struggling Catholics from time to time would take more space to describe than I could reasonably demand. I wish now to give an example of the wonderful confidence the Catholics place in Protestants. Mr. Gleeson, to whom I have already referred, has revealed a little secret to me, now for the first time made public. His father, who is long since dead, was a carpenter to trade, and had his workshop in one of the Archdeacon's outhouses in Athea. He was engaged one evening in 1867, when Fenianism was raging throughout the country, making a coffin, when a man named McMahon, locally known as the "Marshal," and who was the leader of the Fenians in the district, came to him and said he intended to camp with this men that night in the Archdeacon's out-offices. The son says when his father heard this daring resolve of MacMahon he stood almost petrified over the unfinished coffin. He was powerless to stop them, and would go into exile before he would betray them. That night the Marshal and his men slept serenely within thirty yards of the room where the Archdeacon slept, and within 200 yards of the nearest police station. Gleeson kept the secret—and he was right—for if the police were warned they would have been overwhelmed by superior numbers, all well armed, trained and fearless. MacMahon was a powerful man, with as little regard for his life as a Japanese soldier once he sniffed the battle's breeze. I have just visited the Goold estate, and the changes that have taken place there nobody would have the temerity to tell even twenty years ago. The house erected by the Archdeacon—and which he regarded almost as a sacred temple—has passed into the possession of one of the tenants, having been purchased by him, and the bailiffs, rent warners, understrappers, eavesdroppers, and all the baleful concomitants of feudalism are gone, gone for ever, and ther reigns over the estate a feeling of comfort, and confidence and independence such as has not been experienced since feudalism was first forced on a helpless people. It is only fair to add that the last of the Goolds was stripped of all feudal trappings, and left the property after the completion of the sale, leaving behind him memories that will be cherished, and two Protestant families his grandfather brought to the parish half a century ago, and whose welfare and happiness every man in that vast estate heartily desires.

With the retirement of Mr. Goold Versachoyle comes the verification of the prophecy of Father Ryan, to whom I have already alluded. Stung by the encroachment of the Archdeacon on his spiritual domain, he said, pointing to the grove in which stands the church erected by the Archdeacon—"The thrush will be heard warbling there when the blackbirds are gone"—(i.e., landlords). But fifty years, and with them the faithful priest, passed away before those words were put to the test.—Faithfully yours,

—E. W. White.

CATHOLIC CLERICAL MANAGERS.

MUNSTER PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION.

A meeting of the Munster Clerical Managers' Association was held at the Royal Hotel, Mallow, on Tuesday, 18th September. The following, representing the various dioceses of the South, were present:—

Cashel—Very Rev. Canon Arthur Ryan, V.G., P.P., Tipperary; Very Rev. Canon Power, P.P., Emly; Very Rev. J. J. Duan, V.F., P.P., Murroe.

Cork—Very Rev. Canon Shinkwin, V.F., P.P., Bandon; Very Rev. Canon Reid, V.F., P.P., Banitry.

Kerry—Ven. Archdeacon O'Leary, V.G., P.P., Kenmare; VeryRev. Canon O'Sullivan, V.F., P.P., Millstreet.

Killaloe—Very Rev. Canon Scanlan, V.G., P.P., Birr.

Limerick—Right Rev. Monsignor Hallinan, V.G., P.P., Newcastle; Very Rev. M. O'Donnell, P.P., Rathkeale.

Ross—Right Rev. Monsignor O'Leary, V.F., P.P., Clonakilty.

Waterford—Very Rev. Canon Flynn, V.F., P.P., Ballybricken.

The following resolutions, amongst others, were unanimously adopted:—

Resolved—(1.) "Having before us the article on local rating in the journal, 'Our Schools,' of the 18th August, also the explanatory one of 1st September, we hereby condemn said article as a dangerous and insidious attack on the position of Clerical Managers—the explanatory one we regard as thoroughly evasive and unsatisfactory—and the suppression of a reply from one of our body we consider unfair journalism. We further declare that this journal no longer possesses our confidence, and we respectfully appeal to the Central Committee to reconsider their resolution of approbation of this journal."

(2.) "That as the Chief Secretary has declared himself open to reconsider the fees for the teaching of Irish, we request him to adopt the scale of fees suggested to him by the Gaelic League."

(3.) "That we regard the action of the National Board in withdrawing mathematics from the list of extra subjects for which special fees were paid, and now making it a compulsory subject in every two-teacher school, on the efficient teaching of which the teachers' increment and promotion will depend, as unfair to the teachers, and we demand that mathematics be reinstated on the list of extra subjects for which fees shall be paid as heretofore."

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1s. each—Eugene Deane, Michael Houlihan Thomas O'Flaherty, William Long, James Hickson, James Kelliher, Pat Connor, M. Quade, P. Scanlon, Thomas Shea, Daniel Sullivan.

KEEP. . YOUR . MONEY . . . in the Country by dealing with Local Firms, and encourage the HOME TRADE movement.

Write any of the following reliable establishments to-day for their prices. (Mention this paper).

Sole Agents for this List.
J. H. Parker, and Co., Advertising Contractors, Dawson Street, Dublin.

Blacking, "Shamrock" brand—Malone Bros., Ltd., Strand-st., Dublin.
Builders' and Plumbers Materials—Baxendals and Co., Capel-street, Dublin.
Boxes for Butter, Eggs, Fruit—Perry's, Ltd., Camden Row, Dublin.
Bikes—J. J. Kelly, and Co., 2 Lower Abbey street, Dublin.
Butter Merchant and Produce Agent—William Nolan, 3, 4 and 5 Burghquay, Dublin.
Catholic Prayer Books—M. H. Gill and Son, Upper O'Connell-street, Dublin.
Central Motor and Cycle Company—6 Fleet Street, Dublin.
Cotton Reels and Balls—"Shamrock," 6 Cord and Crochet.
Church Decoration—Early and Co., 1 Upper Camden Street, Dublin.
Confectionery—Williams and Woods, Dublin.
Dyers and Cleaners—Eustace Bros., 110 and 111 Cork Street, Dublin.
Eyesight Specialists—Pollock Bros., 25 Wicklow-street, Dublin.
Embrocations, Ointments, etc—R Coates and Co., Rathfarnham, Dublin.
Feeding Stuffs—Barmak, Ltd., Fumbally's Lane, Dublin.
Findlater's Guaranteed Bottling J J and S S Years Old Whiskey, 4s. per bottle. 24s. per gallon.
For 10s. the Parcel Post brings 5lbs. Special Blend Tea from Findlater's, Dublin.
Goodbody's Slainte Cigarettes, 5 for 1d.
Goodbody's Slainte Plug, 6½d for 2 oz.
Household Linens—Walpoles,' Suffolk-street, Dublin.
Jams and Marmalade—Williams and Woods, Dublin.
Law Stationers—Ada Yeates and Sisters, 74 Dame-street.
Ladies Underclothing—Walpoles,' Suffolk-st., Dublin.
Metal Polish and Wax Polishes—Malone Bros Ltd., Dublin.
Matches—Paterson's are the best Dublin made.
Monuments and Celtic Crosses—C. W. Harrison and Sons, Gt Brunswick Street, Dublin.
Pickles and Sauces—Williams and Woods, Dublin.
Picture Framers—F. Byrne, Middle Abbey-street, Dublin.
Poplin and Silk Ties, Irish made—Fry's Dublin.
Portable Iron and Wood Buildings—Humphreys, Ltd., 97 Stephen's Green.
Portrait Photographers—Wm. Lawrence, Sackville-street, Dublin.
Printers—J. T. Drought, 6 Bachelor's Walk.
Paints, Oils, etc (Irish Manufacture)—Boyd's 46 Mary Street, Dublin.
Religious Goods—M. H. Gill and Son, Dublin.
Stoves, Portable Boilers, Ironmongery—G. Young, 68 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin.
Stationery—J. Byrne, 56 Middle Abbey st., Dublin.
Sculptors—Earley and Co., 1 Upper Camden Street, Dublin.
Stained Glass—Earley and Co., 1 Upper Camden Street, Dublin.
Tea—Drink Findlater's, Dublin 2s per lb.
Typists—Ada Yeates and Sisters, 74 Dame-st
Window Blinds—Cullen Bros., South King Street, Dublin.

OPEN COUNTRY COURSING.

CHURCHILL CLUB.

DRAWS FOR THE FORTHCOMING MEET.

A meeting of the Committee of the Churchhill Open Country Coursing Club was held on Sunday.

Rev. P. O'Regan, P.P., Chairman, presided, and there were also present—Messrs. J. D. Carmody, sec.; E. Hickey, assistant secretary; J. Walsh, treasurer; J. Brosnan, vice-chairman; J. O'Sullivan, M. Dunne, etc.

It was arranged that the annual trial meeting be held within a fortnight, and a sub-committee was appointed to make arrangements for same, and fix the date.

The following draws were made:—

Mr. T. Cronin's (Lixnaw) nominee, agst Mr. R. Latchford, Tralee.

Mr. E. F. Shanahan, Abbeydorney, agst Mr. T. Cronin, Lixnaw.

Mr. T. Slattery, Rock-street, agst Mr. P. Brosnan (R.), Lisodigue.

Mr. D. Harrington, Nelson-street, agst Mr. J. Kirby, Barrow.

Mr. J. Baily, Tralee, agst Mr. J. Griffin, Rock-street.

Mr. T. Sugrue, Pembroke-street, agst Mr. J. Cronin, Russell-street.

Mr. Jerh. Brosnan, Lisodigue, agst Mr. J. Baily, Tralee.

Mr. J. J. O'Riordan, Rock-street, agst Mr. J. Walsh.

Mr. F. Latchford agst Mr. T. Healy.

Mr. T. Harty, The Mall, agst Mr. Patrick Brosnan, Lisodigue.

Mr. J. Walpole, Ballyea, agst Mr. J. Kirby, Chapeltown.

Mr. E. Hickey, Ballygarron, agst Mr. J. Carmody, Spa.

Mr. M. Dunne, Lisodigue, agst Mr. John O'Brien, Killenora.

Mr. J. Murphy, Feny, agst Mr. J. Sullivan, Ballygarron.

Mr. M. Delaney, Kilnamartyra.

The meeting decided and wish it to be known, that the rule prohibiting any person but a member to have a dog on the preserves will be strictly adhered to, and any member who lets loose his dog will be prosecuted.

It was decided to appoint two additional gamekeepers on the day of the trials to watch other portions of the preserves.

The gamekeeper stated that there were a large stock of hares on the reserves.

A lot of private business, not of public interest, having been transacted, the meeting adjourned.

The Tralee Motor Garage have sold a 15 h.p. Darracq car to Mr. J. Maher Loughnan of the Royal Victoria Hotel, Killarney. A similar car, their property, has been kept busy by Mr. Loughnan during the tourist season. This makes the ninth Darracq car put on the road in Kerry by the above firm during the past eighteen months, in addition to a number of cars of other makes.

If your Watch or Clock stops, take it to P. O'CROWLEY, 2, Castle Street, Tralee. Orders by post receive prompt attention.

EAVE GUTTERS AND RAIN WATER PIPES FOR HAY SHEDS, &c., &c.

Red and Slate Color Oxide Paint
(Specially Prepared for Iron Roofing).
HALL'S SANITARY DISTEMPER,
At 4d. per lb.; Paints, Oils and Colors at specially Low Prices); Wall Papers, Linoleums, and Floor Cloths, in all the Newest Designs.

HILLIARD'S
HARDWARE HOUSE,
4p NEW