

# The Carmelite News

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WHITEFRIARS — FAVERSHAM — KENT

## The Old Codger

HE was a proper old codger, a queer mixture of eccentricity and common sense. They say that the Irish are the greatest talkers since the ancient Greeks. If that is true, then he certainly was unique amongst the modern Greeks. He used to lecture me for hours. I am not a patient listener—I let my reactions creep too easily into my eye. People quickly know that I am “browned off.” Yet his ideas were so outrageous, so stimulating, so evidently fantastic, and yet so true, that one did not know just how to estimate him.

An artist I know has just risen out of Bohemianism into the age of respectability. He illustrated a book about a salty old English countryman, “*My Uncle Silas*,” by H. E. Bates. In a few simple lines of black and white he gave the essence of atmosphere. I remember a drawing that featured the usual bar fly with his back to the bar, a pint of bitter in his hand, holding forth. He was the essence of all beer drinkers the world over; he was the epitome of all the froth that ever came off a beer stomach. That is how it was with our artist. A man draws what he sees; but what he feels is the heart of the matter.

Of course, the old codger was an Irishman. Married, but his wife was dead. She retired from life because she could not bear the high wind of his conversation. A gentle, high minded woman, educated and passive. I think that the old codger persuaded her to marry him by talking her into a coma.

Yet, he mesmerised me, and although he has now joined the heavenly choir—God help 'em—I still can't see where the old codger was always wrong.

Of the things he used to maintain, one was that the Irish had the most highly

developed sense of social equity of any people in the world. A people born with a sense of justice that will not be defeated.

I have said that he was fantastic. He used to maintain that blondes were primarily an Irish product. I reminded him that the Germans were noted for high productivity in these females and that Scandinavians were unrivalled. He tried to prove to me that blondes first came to Ireland through the Danish invasion, and that the Vikings brought with them their fair haired maidens and that many of them were still to be found in County Wexford. He recalled to me that the Colleen Bawn was just the local blonde.

*“With her hair as white as the seaweed that floats in from the sea.”*

He said that we made the mistake of exporting one of them to America. The Americans have never recovered since. In fact, the demand is now so great that they manufacture them. Well, there was something in what he said.

He maintained that the Irish were, in fact, the only people who were prepared to sacrifice themselves that justice should be done even if the skies should fall. He related to me a story about the West of Ireland. There they brew, or distill, Potteen—or the Mountain Dew.

A crowd of the boys in a western town gathered at the local golf club one Saturday night to celebrate a birthday. They drank all the whisky in the place, refused to insult their stomachs with anything milder and since things were at a deadlock it was decided that one of them should visit the local poteen man. In the West of Ireland you never ask for poteen. You say to the man, “John, is the cow milking?” He may answer, “She is not very good to-day Sir, but she will be



all right next week." To trade bad poteen for good money is called "selling a bad cow."

Now, the poteen man didn't want to sell the stuff because it wasn't ready, but the buyer would not be refused. "It will be all right, the boys won't know whether it is good or bad." So he brought it back. It went the way of all bad liquor.

The boys didn't "rise from the dead" for a whole week, and when they did, they looked on the world with a very queer eye. They met and decided that they had been badly treated and that something ought to be done about it. They went into a huddle and decided that the only way out was to prosecute the poteen man for "selling a bad cow."

The case came on. The poteen man sat in the corner listening to a queue of witnesses who one and all swore that it was the worst cow that they had ever seen; that, in fact, it was unfit for human consumption; that to sell it was dishonest, and even of malicious intent.

After a while, the Judge began to sense an air of unreality in the court, but he couldn't put his finger on the motive. He said to the Clerk, "This court will adjourn for ten minutes and we will open the windows and let in some light and fresh air and also we may let in—a little truth." Then he retired to his room and called the Clerk. "What is going on out there? Tell me or I will put a black mark on your record." "Now your Honour," said the Clerk, "If you will let things go on just as they are, everyone will be happy." "That is not good enough for me," said the Judge. "You tell me what is going on or I will settle the score with you." "Well, your Honour," said the Clerk, "this case isn't about a cow at all, it's about a gallon of poteen—it was very bad poteen and here it is called a 'bad cow.'"

His Honour returned to court and gave verdict for the defendant on the principle of "Caveat Emptor" which means "Let the buyer beware."

Now that, the old codger maintained, was an example of the high sense of justice, equity and good order that prevails amongst Irishmen. You get punished for your sins, even if they are called by other names. It is not so everywhere!

He had an hotel. It was really a general shop with a bar attached and some rooms

upstairs. It was in one of those small Irish villages built on both sides of a main road. A good wide spacious village where a man could sit in the sun in a deck chair opposite his own house and survey the passing scene. If a man does that long enough he becomes a philosopher, and he is lucky if he doesn't become a prophet.

It was an interesting place. You could buy a tin of boot polish at one end of the counter, and a pint of Guinness at the other. Susan, his wife, presided over it. A high minded woman—a woman of great sensitivity and character. The old codger was also an undertaker, but from the kindness of his heart. Something has to be done about people that die. Susan must have consoled more people in her quiet gentle way than anyone I know and I think that none of them ever felt that she was anything but an angel of light. I will tell you more about Susan later.

One afternoon, as the old codger (let us call him D.J. in future) sat comfortably in front of his hotel, a young man rode up on a motor cycle. He had a brief case slung over his shoulder with leather straps on it. He looked round as if doubtful of his wisdom in getting off his bike and finally he turned to D.J. and said, "Is there any place I can stay around here for a day or so?" Said D.J., "The house is yours." The young man went in, looked at a room, said that it would be all right and that he would return later in the evening. He rode away. There was no bother about signing names. Later that evening he returned, put his bike in the backyard and came in to the sitting-room. He had a meal and then immersed himself in a pile of official looking papers. He had a very concerned look upon his face and of course, D.J. was there to offer such advice as might be necessary. The young man would not say why he was there, what he was doing, and mentioned no future plans. He went to bed and next morning he was off again on his motor cycle.

He came back to lunch, or dinner as they call it in Ireland, took his ease for an hour or two, and did another turn round the countryside. By this time D.J. was getting desperate. His curiosity was at fever point. He decided that the only thing to loosen the lad's tongue was a spot of John Jameson. It was accepted with pleasure.



Then, reluctantly and with diffidence, the young man confided that he was a surveyor employed by the General Post Office and that it was a question of joining up two lines of telephones—a manoeuvre that would make redundant about five miles of telegraph poles. It was something he would have to advise the head office about. The Post Office Authorities would take down the insulators and the wires, leaving the poles standing, but the trouble was, what to do with the poles?

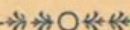
D.J. had a solution ready. It is the business of a philosopher to solve the problems of life. The young man said it would not be necessary to dig up the poles, they could be cut down at ground level and carted away. "Turn them into fire wood for all he cared." Now, there was a great shortage of steel in Eire at the time and D.J. suggested that many farmers would like some of these poles to put up hay sheds and other forms of shelter. The young man promised that he would make the suggestion to head-

quarters. The upshot of it was, that D.J. bought five miles of telegraph poles and made a deposit of £100. The cheque was cashed within a day or so and D.J. found that it was debited against him in his monthly returns. When some time had gone by he began to be nervous. He rang the G.P.O. who assured him that they still needed all their telegraph poles and they knew nothing of the young man concerned. It was then found that the young man had transferred his talents to America.

It was never considered good form afterwards to mention telegraph poles in the presence of D.J. Even any reference to the Post Office was inclined to provoke remarks that were not philosophical.

It is said that the great opportunities of life pass over a man's head, in the night or the early morning. "You cannot prevent the birds of sadness from flying over your head," says Confucius, "but you can prevent them from building nests in your beard." D.J. forgot that.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



## The Similarity

SOME people say that cricket is like the Catholic Church. Both are a source of passionate enthusiasm and attack. Few people are indifferent on the subject. Both are ruled by dogma and discipline; Both are practised with a rigour of ritual, a reverent observance of rubrics and correct liturgical attire. This is an object of pride on the one hand, and a target for ridicule on the other. Who is there that has not met the arm chair critic who has never smelt incense, or tapped the turf? If there is a British way of life, then cricket is it.

Who could possibly go on a cricket field unless dressed in whites with the club badge proudly emblazoned on breast? It would be like a priest going out to say Mass in trousers. Can you imagine anyone going in to bat unless fenced from the knees down with pads? It would be like a bishop parading up the church without his pectoral cross. Maybe that is why the British have such solemn faces. Well played, Sir!



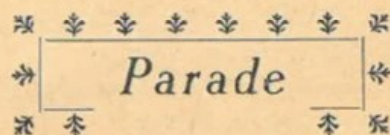
*If a black ant walks on a black stone on a black night. God will see it. (Italian).*

*If you are in the right, you can afford to keep your temper!*

*If you are in the wrong — you can't afford to lose it!*

*All men get what they deserve; only the successful admit it.*

*Fear knocked at the door! Faith opened it! and no-one was there.*



## NATIONAL HEALTH

Medical Officer to new recruit:—"Do you mean to tell me that if you were in Civvy Street you would have come to see me with a complaint like that."

"No Sir," said the new recruit, "I would have sent for you."

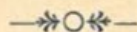
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## JUST TEMPORARY

Lord Mancroft told a story at an Italian dinner in London about a Registrar friend of his. A young couple appeared before him wanting to get married. He explained to them that they would require a special



licence and that would take some days. They were rather confused, but then one said, "But couldn't you possibly mumble a few words over us for the weekend."



### RESULTS OF LUCKY NUMBERS

No. 1 A 6329

MRS. JULIA EGAN, 7, Lord Edward Street, Mountmellick, Leix.

No. 2 A 7155

MRS. E. GALVIN, Ballylaneen, Kilmac-thomas, Co. Waterford.

No. 3 I 153

MISS M. JENNINGS, 8, Monkton Ter-race, Jarrow-on-Tyne, Durham.



### THANKS

Thanks to St. Jude for special favour received. (Mrs.) J. FAVA, Malta.

Thanks to St. Jude for prayers answer-ed. (MRS.) W. TAYLOR, Alderton.

Grateful thanks to St. Jude.  
T. R. BENNETT.

Grateful thanks to St. Jude for great favour received.

N. O'CONNOR, Ballinasloe.

Grateful thanks to St. Jude for prayers answered. MRS. DONNELLY.

Thanks to St. Jude for favour received.

JOSEPH CULLAGH, Templemore.

A thousand thanks to St. Jude for a special favour received. W.J.W.

My grateful thanks to the Saints for their Intercessions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Holy Mother Mary for my five children and my own recovery from tuberculosis, for a good husband and a happy home. Thank God for everything, His Holy Will be done.

E. McCRATH, Newry.

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*Our Coming Novenas*

THE LITTLE FLOWER  
Sept. 25th — Oct. 3rd

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY  
Sept. 29th — Oct. 7th

SAINT JUDE  
Oct. 20th — Oct. 28th

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### Our Burses

	Already acknowledged.		Increase.
The St. Jude Burse No. 2	... £989 6 8	now	£999 6 8
Holy Child of Prague Burse	... 505 4 3		520 4 3
The Holy Face Burse	... 166 19 4		168 19 4
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Burse	... 242 13 6		244 13 6
Little Flower Burse	... 194 12 6		197 12 6
St. Anne Burse	... 55 3 6		56 3 6
St. Anthony Burse	... 128 10 6		129 10 6
St. Martha Burse	... 903 6 6		904 16 6
Sacred Heart Burse	... 605 6 0		612 6 6
St. Philomena Burse	... 26 8 6		26 18 6
Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Burse	... 40 0 0		40 10 0
Our Lady of Dolours Burse	... 10 10 0		16 10 0
St. Pius X Burse	... 4 0 0		4 0 0
J. L. Burse	... 500 0 0		—
Immaculate Heart of Mary Burse	... 12 15 6		13 5 6
Fr. Titus Brandsma	... 2 0 0		—
St. Joseph	... 5 0 0		—

Our Lady keep you ! Yours in Carmel

*M. E. Lynch O.T.*