

FATHER PAT

CHAPTER I

HOME AND SCHOOL LIFE

ON August 2nd, 1859, was born among the Wicklow Mountains a bright, happy, Irish boy, full of life and fun—Henry Irwin, one of a family belonging to the old Church School of Ireland. His father was incumbent of Newtown, Mount Kennedy, from 1863 to 1894, and his grandfather was Precentor of Armagh Cathedral, and Chaplain and Secretary to the Primate, Archbishop Beresford. His great-grandfather was Archdeacon of Emly.

Thus we see that Church feeling was innate in him, and his merry, brave boyish spirit, far from lessening this feeling, only added ardour to it. When a mere child his saying was: "I am going to be a missionary."

In the roomy old family house, "Prospect House," in view of the Wicklow Mountains, Henry Irwin received his first lessons from a lady, who speaks of his sweet and affectionate disposition, willing to share his toys and pleasures, never bearing malice or sullen after punishment. "To do *something* was a necessity to him," she says; he entered into all boyish games with zest, and loved all animals, horses especially. He was a fearless rider, and scoured the country on his shaggy pony. His brother observes: "I believe it was this rough riding in his boyhood that fitted Henry so well for the work to which he afterwards devoted his life. All through his school and college life he studied to train and harden his body in all kinds of manly exercises, always with the one end in view."

At the age of twelve Henry Irwin went to S. Columba's School, intended to be a sort of Irish Eton, of which

Dr Sewell, the brother of the authoress and headmaster of S. Peter's College, Radley, was one of the founders. Archbishop Beresford, Bishop Moberly, Archbishop Magee, and A. J. Beresford Hope were also promoters of this school, which was founded in 1843. When young Irwin went to school, S. Columba's had migrated to Holly Lodge, Co. Dublin. From its earliest days the school had a fine *esprit de corps*, and impressed its pupils with earnest zeal for the Church.

The Rev. R. Rice, Principal of S. Columba's when Henry Irwin was a pupil there, has kindly sent me the following details :—

“Henry Irwin was the eldest of four brothers, of whom three were educated at S. Columba's College, and three of these four have done good work as missionaries. From the first Henry showed high and strong principle, ever ready with his work, ever near the front in the playfield, ever attentive and devout in chapel. These traits became more distinct as he grew. I recall him vividly as the captain of games, as a most useful Prefect, enthusiastic in everything that came in his way, conscientious in his superintendence of meals in Hall, of Dormitory rules, of chapel processions ; always taking the right line, as if by instinct, in matters of discipline, such as bullying and protection of the weak, and in matters of moral tone. He was a diligent learner, though not able to reach the highest rank in scholarship. Very early in life he conceived the desire to be a missionary, and his choice was for a cold climate.”

In all this we see the child as “father of the man.” There was plenty of fun and life in the school. “It was a healthy, free, active life we led,” says one of the pupils. “*I learned how to learn* at S. Columba's College.” The carman who drove the boys used to say, “I think the young gentlemen do leave their heart in the place.” Yes, their hearts were with the old schoolroom, the chapel, the deer park, and the glen ; and many a quaint anecdote is still told among the former *alumni*, such as the following of “Mr Bulmer's magpie,” from *Floreat Columba*, the college annual :—
“Of course many remember Mr Bulmer's magpie. One

scene, in which the bird played an active part, comes back to me.

"We were mustering at drill before the Warden's house, and Sergeant Gibson was brandishing his old umbrella and dressing up the ranks, while stragglers came down from the old schoolroom at a 'double.' Last of all came—why not name him?—Seymour Major, with the choicest of 'tuppenny' buns, brown, glistening and scorbutic with broken lump sugar a-top. It was a toothsome morsel, and, as he 'fell in,' he could not resist the temptation to sample its delights. Up went the Warden's window. 'Seymour, Seymour, what have you got there?' Seymour held forth his late purchase, and explained—hardly necessary, indeed, for the object was large and easily seen—'A bun, sir.' 'Put it down at once, there, on the grass in front.' So Seymour stepped on the sacred spot, 'out of bounds,' as all know, and, to save his luncheon from the damp, put it on the projecting plinth under the common-room window and fell back into his place. Then the Warden's window closed and drill continued. 'First extension movement—lock the thumbs, left in front—one,' etc., etc. And still Seymour's bun simmered in the morning's sunlight. Tragedy, however, hovered near at hand. With a sudden flop and elevating of his tail, dropped Mr Bulmer's magpie before us on the grass, taking a quite disinterested glimpse at Seymour's bun. An awful fear fell on us—Seymour had his name 'taken' twice for gross inattention—could it be wondered at? Nearer and nearer came 'Mag,' and at last, with one light hop, reached the plinth, drove home his beak, and with an irritating 'keck, keck,' like the jarring laughter of an old man, sailed off with his prize to the heights of the Warden's beech.

"There is no moral, I regret to say. 'Mag' survived the theft and the bun for many years.

"But it was rough on Seymour, was it not?"

We find Henry Irwin's name in the College lists of athletes. "Those seem giant days to remember now," writes Mr Orpen, an old "boy" of S.C.C. "Then balls were always over the Marlay wall—such tricks does memory play—and

Henry Irwin kept fielders busy in the vicinity of the Fives Courts, to the weariness of the Bowler." It is said that one mighty ball from Irwin's bat almost struck the head of Mrs Parnell, mother of the redoubted Irish champion, Charles Stewart Parnell, and of Henry Tudor Parnell, a pupil at S. Columba's, of whom it is said that, "silent and imperturbable, he hated games, and was always working. He was a fine classic, and seemed to 'tumble' to Æschylus and Sophocles the first time he tried. Parnell's insight into *Œdipus Rex* was wonderful." The old Columbans knew how to work and how to play with zest and zeal, and we believe that these happy traditions remain.

CHAPTER II

AT KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD

THE next step in Henry Irwin's life was his matriculation at Keble College, in 1878. The deep enthusiasm felt for "Keble" in its early days exceeds, perhaps, anything that we in the colder light of the twentieth century can quite understand. The very name, reminding the students of the poetic leader who gave the impress of his tender imagination to the Oxford Revival, with the principle of "plain living and high thinking," which was the ideal of Keble College in its early days, gave to the place a charm, and added a certain *cachet* to every Keble man. As the present Head of the College (the Rev. Walter Lock, D.D.) has said: "To commemorate the holy memory of John Keble, and to carry on the work he had at heart, Keble College, Oxford, was founded in 1870. Its objects were twofold: (1) to answer to a widespread desire to make University education more accessible to the nation, and especially to those who were anxious to take Holy Orders in the Church of England, and (2) to insure that their education should be in the hands of Churchmen." Here, in an atmosphere corresponding to that which breathed in his own family circle, and which S. Columba's had fostered, Henry Irwin passed the happy years of his undergraduate life, bearing there much the same character as at school. Upright and clean in nature, full of spirits and goodwill, studious, but not attaining to a high rank in scholarship, he was every man's friend, and universally loved and trusted.

His College friend, the Rev. Percy Smythe, Vicar of Kettering, says: "When Irwin first went up to Keble, the College was just beginning to get over the reputation of being a new College in an old University. Some men still referred

contemptuously to the College as *Keble Hall*; and we used still to have sometimes cast at us a very insulting little rhyme which ran as follows :—

“ ‘There was a young freshman of Keble,
Whose legs were uncommonly feeble;
So he chartered a fly
To go down to the High,
A Sabbath-day’s journey from Keble.’

“On the whole, however, the College held its own in the ’Varsity, and its reputation was increased in our day both by recently won triumphs on the river and by the popularity of Norman MacLachlan, captain of the University Cricket Eleven, who was a Keble man.

“The dons in those days were a remarkable set of men; the dear old Warden; then the Rev. Walter Lock (now Warden); Jayne, Illingworth, Herbert Gladstone, and others. The *men* did not strike me as remarkable. They were a level set, and there was an honest, straightforward, manly tone about the College; and though we seemed to ourselves an ordinary lot, there were men among us who were destined to make their mark: Winnington Ingram, now Bishop of London; Mike Rimington, of South African fame; Mackenzie, afterwards Principal of the Academy in Edinburgh; Wilson, afterwards Vicar of Portsea; and Douglas Eyre, so well known among workers in East London. Besides, there were dozens of men unknown to fame who are honestly serving God in their generation. Keble was just the school to turn out clean, hard-working Englishmen; what we might call a good level lot.”

Henry Irwin kept up his reputation as an athlete; he rowed in the Torpids and Eights; played in his College Eleven and in the ’Varsity Fifteen. A letter of his, written at this time, may be of interest :—

“KEBLE COLLEGE,
Nov. 9, 1878.

“MY DEAR M.—I have had a treat, to hear the two great preachers of Oxford, Dr Pusey and Canon Liddon: I only heard the former’s sermon read by Mr Paget of Christ

Church, as the doctors considered Pusey unfit to preach;—of course it was a beautiful sermon, and Canon Liddon's of this afternoon was not less beautiful.

"We had a large number at Celebration this morning: I think there were about seventy. I wonder more don't avail themselves of the opportunity. You will be glad to hear that I am in the choir; or at least I am a probationer. Freshmen are only admitted as probationers. After the 'Varsity sermon, I and two others went off to High Celebration at SS. Philip and James; it was very nice indeed.

"It is curious to find men having exactly the same wishes as oneself;—one of those who intend to go out as missionaries told me that his choice lay between South Africa and Newfoundland.

"That terrible ordeal 'Smalls' comes before Christmas; I believe it is not so bad as it is pictured, but I shall be very glad when it is over. I have bad luck, as the examination goes in alphabetical order, and they will begin this year from L, so I shall not have any chance of getting to S. Columba's College for the breaking up.—Yours, H. I."

Another letter, simply headed "Saturday," but apparently written about the same time concerning a missionary meeting, shows the joyous interest taken in everything in his new life. Indeed, is *anything* equal to the joy of those young fellows who throw themselves into the best life of the University, life which may not always be intellectual, but is full of gladness and hope, to which steady work is a capital foil?

"MY DEAR M.—I had a treat indeed last night,—one I would not have missed for anything. The meeting took place in the Town Hall, and the room was full some time before the meeting began. The Bishop of Oxford was not there; he was ill. We opened with prayer, and then the Chairman introduced Mr Farler of the African Mission. He was splendid. He began his lecture from the time when he set out with Bishop Steere, for the first time, into the heart of Africa. He had very odd experiences on his journey,

but arrived safely at the first town. Here he said he was very lonely when the Bishop left him,—the only white man among a dense population of blacks. His first sermon was a great success, as the people came from all parts and were very eager to hear the new religion. He told us most amusing stories; one of them was, that knives and forks had never been seen before by the natives, and a large crowd gathered round every day at dinner to watch the white man eating; peals of laughter ran round as each piece was put into his mouth; it was incomprehensible why such trouble was taken when one had fingers ready made. Mr Farler told us that he found the greatest possible advantage in having a knowledge of medicine; and that he never would have got the influence he had obtained if he had not known how to cure the different diseases. The hardest part of doctoring was, that it took an immensity of time to find out what was wrong with the natives; for if you tapped them on the head, they would say *that* was the sore part; and then, if you touched the arm, *that* was the sore part, and so on."

Here we see the same deep interest in mission work that marked Henry Irwin as a boy; with the love of fun which so distinguished him later in his own missionary life, when hardships were relieved by his power of always seeing the humour of the situation.

Another letter, dated "Sunday," speaks of a sermon that Irwin had heard preached by Mr Richmond at S. Barnabas' Church, on the necessity of constant prayer, and advising his hearers to follow S. Paul's example, and remember in prayer those with whom they came in contact during their daily life, whether friends or not.

He now joined the Missionary Association of Keble College, to which the Warden gladly admitted him. He was asked to join the E.C.U., but replied plainly that he did not approve of joining *any* such societies (societies with a strong party bias) while a Freshman. For a similar reason he refused to hear Monsignor Capel, in spite of his reputation for eloquence.

More information we have not as to his College life. He

speaks of playing football frequently, and how no one "who does not know what a delight it is to have every muscle strained to do its best, can appreciate this really grand game."

In the year 1881 Irwin took his degree, and left Oxford, having fully resolved on taking Holy Orders, with the ultimate aim of offering himself for the work of a missionary.

He was already known to his chums as "Pat," from his Irish origin and marked nationality, but it was not till he was in his first curacy that a colleague gave him the *sobriquet* of "Father Pat," which stuck to him ever after.

CHAPTER III

HIS FIRST CURACY—RUGBY

ON leaving Oxford, where he took an ordinary Degree in 1881, Henry Irwin went for a time to Yarlet, as master in the Boys' School there, under the Rev. Walter Earle.

The following account of him is from the pen of Mr Earle himself, now resident at Bilton Grange, Rugby :—

“ Henry Irwin came to Yarlet, if I remember right, straight from the university, and remained about one and a half years.

“ His ideas of the future had not then taken any very definite shape :—his heart was always hot within him, and he threw the whole of that heart so much into the immediate present that it was absorbed in his life with the boys, their work, their play, their everything.

“ Being a man of large sympathies,—sunny, patient, untiring, earnest, loving,—he was cut out for a most valuable schoolmaster ; blessed with a vigorous healthy body and sunny nature, he always saw the better side of everybody's character ; and if there was a worse, that worse would safely be confided to Pat Irwin, for a boy knew he was in good hands, and that his master only wanted to be trusted with the whole in order to be a real friend and helper.

“ His life with me was naturally made up of (so called) little duties, but he was too thorough a man not to find a full sufficiency of greatness in the daily drudgery. Each day was ease, happy living, jolly comradeship : I cannot remember a grievance or rub ; all was outspoken, nothing misunderstood, offence impossible.

“ It was a cloudy sad time when he came to tell us that he had made up his mind to take Holy Orders and devote

himself to parochial work ; but his mind was a strong one, and what he meant, his resolution soon put into doing.

“ Well do I remember saying to him (most reluctantly) when he came to acquaint me of his intention : ‘ You are right, you want a bigger field.’

“ I felt he saw a larger future, and that his spirit had subtle powers and latent capabilities that ought to be free to choose what range they fancied.

“ After he left me, he went to Rugby, during 1883. I used to hear of his busy life, his interest in the working men, the new Guild which he had started, his kindness to boys at the big school. He loved my boys and would have them to tea at his rooms, and with that tea many a kind, wise, opportune bit of elder-brother advice would be thrown in.

“ The last time I saw him was here at Bilton Grange on one of his short holidays : he arrived galloping down my drive on Lawrence’s pony : I think I hear him shouting to me : ‘ Here’s my war horse, dear old Lawrence’s Taffy !’ big sou’wester hat on the back of his head, face radiant with health and happiness, not much of the cleric in his attire that day ! but a heart overflowing with goodwill to all men, and an irresistible manly influence which one felt must be the making of his missionary success :—a kind of spirit-magnetism seemed to flow from the shake of his hand and the merry good-natured laugh.

“ I can quite believe that he would wear himself out with work : he could not understand any half measures : ‘ all in all, or not at all,’ was his motto.

“ He came to Yarlet to teach *boys*, and the best teaching he ever gave was to us *men* : if there was any iron in us, ‘ Pat ’ was the iron to sharpen it : no one forgets him, there is no one who does not feel all the better for having known him, and we are assured that his blessed influence must still be circling forth, ever widening out, beyond the cognisance of his fellows, but never lost sight of by the great Omniscient Father.”

Between the happy time at Yarlet and his first curacy, came the deepening spiritual experience of a Theological

College. In 1882 Henry Irwin entered his name at Ely, and remained there for a year, when he was ordained Deacon. The Theological College at Ely was founded in 1876, by the generosity of Bishop Woodford, and has distinguished itself by sending forth priests, manly and hard-working, "into every diocese of England and Wales, into Scotland, Ireland, and far beyond—into Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and India; into Canada and the West Indies."¹

In former days a man proceeded straight from the university to ordination, with the interim preparation only of reading for the Bishop's examination. He then at once took up work in school or parish, and it depended entirely on his Vicar or Rector whether he received any training for his sacred office that was worthy of the name. The wonder is that so many good clergymen were produced by such course; for the gap between lay and clerical life is too great to be bridged over merely by work and daily experience; it needs the calm of retirement, well-directed study, constant and mutual prayer. The spiritual life which has come into the Church of England's junior clergy dates chiefly from the foundation of the Theological Colleges, of which Cuddesdon and Ely may be said to stand first in regard to the number and character of the men emanating from them.

Belonging, as Henry Irwin did, to one of the Irish families which had been most earnest in the revival of Church life under such leaders as Beresford and Trench, he naturally took advantage of the privileges of theological and devotional training recently offered by the newly-founded college. He was respected and liked there, as at school and at the university; and in the "Report of Ely Theological College for 1902" he is referred to in terms of affectionate regret, his touching end being narrated.

Henry Irwin had the good fortune to find his first curacy under the Rev. John Murray, Rector of Rugby, than whom a more wise and ardent spirit never existed. His curates loved him as a father and a friend. Rugby is, in most people's minds, absorbed in the great public school, with the intense

¹ See Canon Newholt's Address at the Festival of Ely Theological College, June 4, 1901.

interest lent to it by the memory of Dr Arnold, who "trusted his boys," and the ever-fresh pages of "Tom Brown's School-days." But a fine town and noble churches exist there ; and for two happy years Irwin acted as curate. He was ordained Priest in 1884, and then again the urgent call to mission work came to him, and (as will be seen) his Rector let him go with regret, but with approval of his choice.

We are indebted to Mr Irwin's former fellow-curate at Rugby, the Rev. T. H. Parker (now Vicar of Ettington, Stratford-on-Avon), for the following full and interesting account of the life there :—

"Who among the clergy can deny a special affection for one's first curacy, if, at least, the conditions of life in it were reasonably favourable? From the time that thoughts of ordination have occupied the mind of a young man, the place where he would begin his ministry for God, preach his first sermon, visit the sick and poor, and be regarded as holding a sacred office, looms large in his imagination. And when it is settled what and where this shall be, and a preliminary visit has been paid, there is an idealised view taken of Rector and fellow-curates, of Church and district, of the rooms that will be at once a base of operations and a refuge from publicity. I do not know that Irwin, when it was arranged that the Rector of Rugby was to give him a title for ordination, could have easily put his feelings into words, or would have put them into just such words as these. But Trinity Sunday, 1883, was a great day to him, for it brought to an end his year of special training for Holy Orders at Ely Theological College, and launched him on the course to which he had long looked forward, a course of parochial work for two years in some well-ordered parish at home and then pioneer work in mission fields abroad.

"It was the friendly commendation of the Rev. Hedley Vicars, who had been with Irwin at Keble, that brought him to the knowledge of the Rev. John Murray, Rector of Rugby, with the result that he became one of the four assistant curates. The others were, at that time, the Revs. F. Northcote Smith, Hedley Vicars, and A. O. Tisdall ; but in

September, 1883, the Rev. F. Northcote Smith left, and at Christmas the vacancy was filled by the ordination and arrival of Henry Tudway Coney, who had been with Irwin at Ely. The curates now certainly formed a happy family: three of them were Irishmen and three were Ely men, and they were further knit together in the bonds of friendship and by thorough keenness and pretty good capacity. The Rector, moreover, was proud of his curates, and put great trust in them, and the parish was thoroughly well worked.

“It was at that time fairly workable. The population did not exceed 9000, so none of the clergy had more than 2000 people to look after, and their districts were compact. As to churches, besides the Parish Church, which is admitted to be one of Butterfield’s most successful restorations, and which holds about 900 people, there was Holy Trinity Church, technically a chapel-of-ease, but itself larger and finer than most Parish Churches. This was built from designs by Sir George Gilbert Scott, since whose death it has been considerably improved by Mr Bodley, and it holds at least 700 people. And the services were as follows:—Daily Matins in the Parish Church at 7.30, and daily Evensong in Holy Trinity at 5.30: Holy Communion on Sundays was at 7 and at 9 in the Parish Church, and on the first Sunday in the month at 11, while it was celebrated in Holy Trinity Church every Sunday at 8 and on the third Sunday in the month at 11. On Holy Days and on Thursdays there were also celebrations, and sometimes for the sick and aged, for some society or guild, or upon special occasions. So every week each priest on the staff celebrated at least once, and in the matter of preaching, if any preached more than once it was the Rector or the senior curate, and not one of the juniors. The schools in the parish were Church Schools, and the clergy gave religious instruction in them on two mornings in the week, and superintended the teaching on Sundays, and there were several classes and guilds. So there was plenty of work, but not too much. All was carefully arranged at a convocation held at the Rectory, week by week, on Monday mornings, the rule being that nobody outside it was to know when or where anyone was going to preach, and that each member of the

staff, when it was settled what he had to do, was held responsible for it, and for doing it punctually and efficiently.

“ Irwin, therefore, was kept busy during his time at Rugby, and had variety of work, but was not overweighted. In visiting, which was held to be of great importance, he spent two or three hours every afternoon, and he put a good deal of affection and zeal into his district. Through the middle of this ran, like a crooked thread, Gas Street and Pinder’s Lane, where some of the poorest people in the town lived and some of the most unruly. Two public houses kept guard at the top of Gas Street, and at the further end another public house and a lodging house kept watch and ward. The place was honeycombed with courts and alleys, with the usual result that quarrels were frequent and fights periodical.

“ Here, one night early in his career, Irwin came upon a man fighting with his wife. Without a moment’s hesitation he ran in to part them. And when the man’s wrath was turned upon himself—‘ Look here,’ he said, and he promptly pulled off his coat,—‘ if you want to fight anyone, you can fight me.’ The affair was over, and Irwin went to his rooms slightly heated. He had done an unconventional thing; perhaps the old Adam was still strong in his blood, for, truth to say, he had enjoyed himself well.

“ None the less, it would be quite a mistake to imagine incidents like this came often in Irwin’s life at Rugby, or that he was in those days the mission-priest who made himself one with the people in all conditions of life. His photograph gives a different impression, and a truer one. He was, during the first two years of his clerical life, the well-trained young ecclesiastic, brought, and not unwillingly, to sustain his part in a well-ordered and established system, being run, some would say, into ecclesiastical grooves. He was earnest and dutiful, but he was diffident. Full of fun and high spirits with his fellow-curates when work was done, but finding some things far from easy; worrying himself a good deal about his sermons, practising a little elocution, and anxious to overcome a difficulty he found in pronouncing ‘ negligences and ignorances ’ when called upon to say the Litany. He was not yet what he became later, his person-

a temporary sojourn. When he was about to leave Rugby, at Easter 1885, many people wished to give him parting presents, and he accepted a few books, a mariner's compass from the men's Bible Class which used to meet in his room at Glebeview, and a case of sacred vessels for the communion of the sick, subscribed for by the congregations: but when he could do it without hurting their kindly feelings, he pleasantly urged his friends not to load up a missionary with baggage.

"In the *Parish Magazine* for April 1885 the following valedictory note appeared:—'The general regret which is felt at the approaching departure of the Rev. H. Irwin to labour in the distant diocese of New Westminster found expression in a very interesting gathering, at the Coffee Tavern, on Thursday, March 26, the choirs of both churches having invited him to meet them that they might have the pleasure of spending a last evening with him, and of telling him how highly they held him in regard, and how heartily they bade him God-speed in his new work.

"'Mr Irwin's brother clergy were kindly included in the invitation, and a goodly number sat down to a substantial tea. The Rector spoke with much affection and gratitude of the help and comfort Mr Irwin had been to him and his flock, of the brightness he had shed around him, and the simplicity and earnestness with which he had fulfilled his duties; and hoped that some day he would recross the Rocky Mountains and visit Rugby again, where he would always find warm hearts that still remembered and loved him.

"'Messrs W. H. Linnell and G. E. Over for the Parish Church, and Messrs Miller and Orchard for Holy Trinity Church choir, gave utterance in turn to the sincere regret with which all would bid farewell to Mr Irwin, and the deep interest they must ever feel in his future happiness and success. They then begged his acceptance of two beautifully bound books, viz.: "The Imitation of Christ" and "The Christian Year."

"'Mr Irwin, with his wonted cordiality, thanked his friends for their kind words and gifts, and said that it was no new impulse that was severing the tie which had bound them together so happily, but a resolution formed years ago, before

Oxford 'blue,'¹ speedily offered him a place in their team, which thought no small things of itself. He played occasionally, and did them good service; but one Saturday afternoon he returned home with an unmistakable black eye. Tisdall, with whom he lived at that time, made a great effort with a box of paints and his utmost skill to lay on a coat of flesh-colour; but his patient laughed so outrageously during the operation that the result was not very satisfactory. At any rate the Rector on the following day saw beneath the surface, and laid an interdict on a Sunday preacher engaging in football on a Saturday afternoon.

"When Irwin first went to Rugby, he lodged at 112 Railway Terrace; but before long he and Tisdall joined forces, and took a small house in Bath Street, which in those days looked over the glebe allotment gardens, and so was named Glebeview. Mr and Mrs Masters kept house for them, and here they were thoroughly comfortable and happy. They were able also to exercise a little their hospitable spirits. Irwin had two cousins named Wilson at Rugby School who sometimes came to tea, and brought a posse of companions. And late in the evenings there would often drop in a friend or two of their own age and standing, schoolmasters perhaps whose work was done for the day, to have a sociable chat and smoke a quiet pipe. There were other visitors too; sometimes from a distance, but much more often from close at home, who rang the bell and wanted 'to see Mr Irwin, if you please, and could he let Mrs B—— have a grocery ticket?' The Rector made it a general rule that relief tickets were only to be given by the district-visitors, holding that it spoiled a curate's pastoral visitation if he was thought to have them about his person. But somehow tickets were often obtained by these applicants, or something which they liked still better.

"I suppose that Irwin, at all times in his life, was willing to give almost anything he had to almost anyone who wanted it. He was no great accumulator of goods, and even what came as a gift often went as a gift, and made with him but

¹ This, I believe, was rather a term of honour than an actual fact.—[EDITOR.]

ality was not developed. He was too fresh from the mould to run free, and it may well be that the time had not come for freedom. At any rate Irwin owned then, and afterwards, that he owed a great debt to Ely and to the dominant influences of his first curacy.

“ Personally he soon became popular at Rugby, but was always thoroughly humble, which was doubtless one reason for his popularity. It was not long before he was on good terms with most of the men and boys with whom he came in contact.

“ Perhaps he was least at ease in a lady’s drawing-room, where he had a tendency to get hot, and to long for the open air. That, it must be confessed, was really his element: his nature was akin to it. And when, in 1884, the definite offer of mission-work in British Columbia came to him, this may have had its influence in making him eager at once to go. His Rector knew from the beginning that after two years’ work at Rugby, Irwin’s intention was to go abroad; that was, so to speak, in the bond; and if he expected to have more than two years rather than less of Irwin’s help, he could not find it in his heart to resist the generous impulse of his curate.

“ I find from the *Parish Magazine* that Irwin went with the workhouse inmates on an excursion to Coombe Abbey within a month of his coming to Rugby, and again with St Andrew’s Guild to the same place a few weeks later. To expeditions of this sort he was in himself almost a pledge of success. Misfortunes, if they occurred, had the same effect upon him that they had on Mark Tapley: his good spirits could always be relied upon to relieve the tedium of a journey, and his good nature to bring out the shy or the neglected. The guild in those days was strong, and, under the care of the Rev. Hedley Vicars, had come to number nearly a hundred men and boys. Their cricket eleven was strong also, but found in Irwin a useful as well as an agreeable member. He was a lively bat, with the capacity to bring off a big hit or two, and in all departments of the game he was a most unselfish player. At football he was even better than at cricket, and the Rugby Town fifteen, hearing of the arrival of a curate who was an

he came to Rugby, when he had felt moved to devote himself to the work of a missionary.

“‘It goes without saying that such an assembly was nothing if not musical, and the songs most appropriately ended with “Auld Lang Syne.”’

“The following month the Rector added these words:— ‘Many will feel interested to hear that our good friend the Rev. H. Irwin left Liverpool on the 1st of May by steamer for New York, whence he will proceed across North America to the scene of his future labours on the western coast of that Continent. Numerous were the tokens of regard offered to him ere his departure, but chiefest of all was a compact and handsome travelling case, containing the sacred vessels and other articles necessary for the administration of the Holy Communion.

“‘In his far-off home this useful and fitting memorial of their affection will often recall to his thoughts the friends he has left behind him.’”

It has not been found possible to procure many of Irwin's letters written to Rugby friends, but the following extracts appeared in the *Parish Magazine*. Writing on September 10, 1885, he says: “I received from Mr Lawrence yesterday the beautifully illuminated list of my friends in Rugby (who had given him the Holy Communion vessels), whom I need not say I remember every time I have to make use of their gift. It seems as if we were all together again now, as I read their names over; and I wish that you would kindly let them know that away here in the wild West such a memory is a wonderful help.”

And again a year later,—“The year and a half I have been here I have had fairly hard but the pleasantest of work. Most of the time I have been in the saddle. Our district is so large, and the population so small and scattered, that there's nothing for it but galloping from Sunday to Sunday, and often on Sunday itself we have fairly long rides between services. . . . I cannot tell you how miserable it is meeting men from the mines who have lost their all, tramping over the country with their blankets on their backs, and not a

cent in their pockets, getting a meal here and there for love, and trying to obtain work." But there were some, he went on to say, who were only too willing to help themselves to other people's property, and he concluded the letter with the account of an adventure by which a member of his congregation had nearly lost his life at the hands of two ruffianly "highwaymen."

In a letter of about the same date, referring to some Prayer-books which had been sent to him, he wrote :—" You cannot think how much they are valued away here in the west. We have so many from the old country who feel better at even the sight of a Prayer-book. . . . I am just now hard at work getting a church built here in Donald, a little railway town of 600 men, and if you know any people who would like to give us help towards furnishing it, I should be thankful for the smallest trifle."

In response to this appeal, the Rugby members of the All Saint's Guild, a branch of which was formed at Rugby before Irwin left for New Westminster, sent a brass cross for the altar of S. Peter's Church at Donald, and a silk veil and some linen for use at celebrations of Holy Communion. They also gave a certain amount for some years to the diocesan funds, sending it to the Rev. H. H. Mogg,¹ and £20 was once sent to Irwin direct, probably to help him to get materials for building at Donald, where he laid his own hands vigorously both to the axe and the workman's hammer.

Lastly, there is an interesting and amusing letter written to Mr Masters concerning his clothes, and dated " Kamloops, August 10, 1887." It runs :—" Thank you for the clothes, which arrived safely and are a great blessing to me. You cannot think how nice it is to feel respectable out here, where one has to put on, and up with, almost anything in the way of coats. There is no great symmetry, as you know, in ready-made clothes, and when a parson has only the rainbow colours to choose from it is hard to be quite sombre, and certainly there's little in the ready-made clothes here of the dim religious light. You would hardly know me in many of my costumes. Last trip I started with those riding pants

¹ Secretary of the Missionary Association for New Westminster.

you sent me, but after about 300 miles they went to pieces, and I had to get into a vile kind of garment they call overalls, striped like the zebra, and cut like a sailor's pantaloons. You would open your eyes wide to see a parson at work out here. . . . The hot weather still continues, and it *is* hot, and no mistake ; up to 101 in the shade. But after a certain amount of broiling one's skin gets quite hardened. I am now as hard as a cake and a browned one at that. You can guess that one has a benefit when you have to ride from early morning till the evening under a sun like ours, and that for perhaps a month at a stretch. I finished in June a trip of 570 miles in the saddle, and by the end of that time I was a dirty brown, very like an Indian. . . . I think that the longer I live here the more I wonder why people leave quiet peaceful homes in the old country to rough it in Colonial life. There is absolutely no comfort here for the first five years, and a man must have quite a small fortune with him to give him a good enough start to make a home in that short time. You may be surprised at this, but it has been the experience of many who had all the best of the country to choose from in early days, and have had more advantages than any later comers are likely to get. I am looking forward to having a visit home about Christmas, but I cannot say yet whether I shall get off. Of course, if I do, I shall come to see you all at Rugby, and it will be a greater pleasure for me to see you than you me."

Bishop Sillitoe paid a visit to Rugby in August 1887, and preached in the Parish Church ; but Irwin did not come until 1889 when he stayed a few days, and addressed a meeting in the parochial schools. He came again in 1894, and joined the clerical staff again for a month or so while the Rector was away for his holiday. He was a different man then in many ways from the curate of ten years before, but in spirit he was the same, and a kind and cheery spirit Rugby always found it.

The Rev. C. J. Whitehead, of South Newington Vicarage, Banbury, gives the following account of his friendship with Henry Irwin :—

“ I knew and liked dear Pat Irwin very much ; but my intimacy with him was only too brief. I went to Rugby as an assistant master in Hillbrow Preparatory School in January, 1883 ; and that same year Irwin came to Rugby as curate. During the few years he was there, we made friends, and he was kind enough to invite me to stay with his father in Ireland. I was still at Rugby when he came back from his first term of work as a missionary in British Columbia, where he had already done noble work, especially at Kamloops. The Canadian Pacific Railway was then being constructed, and Pat's work with the very cosmopolitan set of men at work at Kamloops, the head-quarters of that section of the line, was very remarkable.

“ He brought with him on that occasion, a number of photographs, which he showed to the boys in the school and to the masters ; and we had long talks till late at night, when he recounted his adventures to us ; such as, riding 500 miles on one horse in a week ; recovering his horse which had been stolen by Indians ; avoiding an Indian murderer in a vast forest. His influence over the ‘ very rough diamonds ’ he had to deal with was wonderful ; he got them to build churches, and (better still) to attend them, and he pulled many a poor fellow who had gone utterly wrong, straight again.

“ That visit to Rugby was the last I saw of him. He went back to Ireland for a little time when his good father died, and I think he held the living ; but his love for British Columbia was too strong, and he returned there. I remember a friend of mine who had been round the world and had met Pat in British Columbia, telling me that he was the most remarkable man he had come across.”

Yes, truly, a remarkable man was Henry Irwin ; not for intellectual gifts so much as for character. He was the friend of every man. To him every human soul was of intense value : he tried to look on men as the angels do, “ with larger, other eyes than ours ” ; and in this he is an example of the true Socialism—the only sort that will ever work—the socialism which bids a man give his life for others.