

A MAGNIFICENT PALACE.

ONE of the sights of St. Petersburg, in the absence of the Imperial family, is the winter palace, with its front 700 feet long, directly facing the Grand Neva at its point of its greatest width. Within the palace one becomes so confused by its extent, the immense number of its rooms and the brilliant magnificence, that he carries away but an uncertain picture of marble halls, ceilings covered with wondrous paintings, pillars of precious stones, with the richest damasks, all making a royal and fitting abode for the ruler over the greatest empire in the world.

The hall called the Saloon of Nicholas is large enough to contain 1,500 persons, and is lighted by twelve immense chandeliers of crystal, which on *fete* occasions blaze with 5,000 candles; at the end are buffets reaching to the ceiling, on which are ranged gold and silver plates, some as much as two feet in diameter, and all displaying marvellous skill of workmanship. At the side of the room opposite to the throne are two tables of solid silver. Around the room stand six high silver candelabra; six more are fastened to the walls, and chandeliers of silver are suspended from the ceiling.

The golden saloon has its doors and all its woodwork covered with solid gilt, and its walls and ceilings are heavily ornamented with gilding. Over the mantel is inserted a long panel of mosaic work, representing an Italian landscape. This panel has a value of \$30,000. The room is furnished with crimson draperies, and contains mosaic tables, vases several feet high of malachite, jasper, etc.; a beautiful fire screen, consisting of one large plate of crimson glass standing in a gilt bronze frame; marble statues and candelabra of lapis-lazuli, and much other elegant furniture. This, I believe, was the saloon of the late Empress, mother of the present Emperor.

The malachite hall has its walls ornamented with sixteen malachite pillars reaching from floor to ceiling, two malachite marble mantelpieces and malachite vases. The doors and trimmings of the room are of solid gilt. One room has remarkable doors, each of which, we are told, cost 4,000 roubles, equal to \$3,000. They are of rosewood, inlaid with wood of the palm-tree, and the panels are ornamented with paintings on porcelain. Another room communicates with the adjoining apartments by several sets of folding doors of tortoise shell, inlaid with a fine pattern in gold, and each pair of these doors cost \$12,000. In still another room each panel of the doors bears a large oval medallion, either of wrought cameo, or an imitation of it, made at the manufactory of Sevres china, near Paris. A very valuable mosaic table, its top representing eight separate Italian landscapes, was, we were told, the gift of Garibaldi to one of the Grand Duchesses. A massive silver mantel set of clock and vases, curiously and heavily wrought, together with the central chandelier in the room, we were also told, was presented by the City of London to the Emperor of Russia, at a cost of \$30,000.—St. Petersburg Correspondence 'San Francisco Chronicle.'

DUBLIN ON SUNDAY.

It is an acknowledged fact that foreigners are more at home in Dublin than in any other town in Great Britain. French and Italian tourists especially love the dear old city. This is not to be wondered at, when one comes to remember that Dublin, albeit not so gay as of yore, still is the home of wit and humor. Its streets, too, have a continental look about them, and its people have that delightfully easy-going way only to be met elsewhere in France and Italy. Your denizens of London, Glasgow, Liverpool, and other large towns, are too matter-of-fact, too full of business for continental folks out for a holiday. Not that Dubliners are idlers—far from it. But they transact their affairs in such an easy-going manner, that it seems more amusement than business. And think of Dublin on Sunday? It is then that the foreigner exclaims, "Ah, it is very much grand—it is one other Paris!"

Of course the theatres and dancing saloons are not open as in the gay French capital, but are not the picture galleries, museums, bowling greens, &c., open for amusement, instruction, and recreation? And here let me remark that there are no people under the sun who attend to their religious duties with such regularity and punctuality as the Dubliners. They are never absent from their places of worship on Sunday morning, but think it no sin to amuse themselves after their fancy for the remainder of the day. And who will say they are wrong?

Just think of the number of delightful spots you can get to from Dublin in such a short space of time—Clontarf, Sandymount, Kingstown, Rathgar, Swords, and hosts of others. You can get to any of the above, except Kingstown, in half an hour by car from the very centre of the city. Kingstown is an hour's drive, but you can reach it by train within thirty minutes. The first mentioned place—Clontarf—is the most northern part of Dublin. It is one of the quietest seaside retreats I know of, except on a Sunday, when its sandy road is thronged from twelve noon till ten at night with gaily-dressed pedestrians and trim vehicles. Who has not heard of the "green lanes of Clontarf, those dear shady walks overhung with trees?" Green lanes they may well be called indeed! And such a network as they are—a regular maze to those who do not know their bearings. And when you are tired of walking through them, and if you do succeed in finding your way out of them, just take a stroll into Burns' Hotel, walk right through the hall and into the gardens. There you may see the Dubliners enjoying themselves, sitting in shady corners, chatting gaily; on the smooth bowling green, playing a match; trying their skill at this "dog's nose;" in the gymnastic corner, trying their horizontal bar performance—all enjoyment, good humor, and plenty of bottled stout. No drunkenness, though, remember. You have heard that the Irish are drunkards; but I will back the Londoners against them any day; and, thank heaven, very few Dublin women will enter a

public-house—I am sorry I cannot say the same for the London women.

When you are tired wandering about the garden, return through the hall again, and hire a boat—there are dozens waiting for you just outside the hotel door—in fact, you have only to cross the road to walk into the sea. Take a row over to Kingstown, which you can see sparkling in the summer sun, seven miles across the bay; or pull over to Howth, which looks so glorious to-day. It won't take you long to get to it, for it is only four miles from you. You would prefer a walk? Well, stroll along the beach to that old ruin you see to the left. It was a chapel once—before your great grandfather was born. It is known as Kilbarrack now. The notorious "Sham Squire" is buried there. Just scrape the moss off some of the tombstones, and read the inscriptions. They will give you some idea of the age of the place.

To those who don't care for the seaside Roundtown affords a pleasant Sunday outing. As Clontarf is on the north, Roundtown is the extreme south of the city. You will reach it by tram-car in thirty or forty minutes. If you were to close your eyes from the time you started until you arrived at your destination, you would imagine you were sixty miles from Dublin instead of four. You are almost at the foot of the Dublin mountain. Then there is the walk by the Dodder river, with its overhanging banks and steep slopes. I shall never forget a summer evening spent on those same banks. The bed of the river was almost dry in parts, while in other parts the trout were leaping at the flies. As I sat there, gazing at the wild scenes of rushes, tangled briars, tall trees, rugged banks, and old ruins of bygone bridges, I could not bring it to my mind that I was within ten minutes' ordinary train drive from the centre of Dublin.—F. B. Hudson, in 'Westminster Gazette.'

THE PYRAMIDS.

A CORRESPONDENT writing to the New York 'Evening Post' thus describes his sensations on first viewing the pyramids:

Let us suppose, now, that you never saw a pyramid. You may have reserved those at Geezeh for the last, and if, in your reading, you have ever stumbled upon any speculations as to the original design and motive of the pyramids you may possibly have turned from it as an extremely mouldy and uninteresting topic; but as your donkey, making his last turn, clears the shadowing palms and brings you out upon the desert, you are confronted with something concerning which, as it rises there before your eyes, it is just as impossible not to be curious as it is not to breathe. That huge and towering mass of stone, whose very simplicity of outline and utter absence of ornament lend to it a majestic grandeur and dignity which are all its own—who reared it there? What does it mean? How was it built? What did it hide? And whether or not you have an answer ready for these questions, this at least you know, that those mighty monuments have not been reared in vain. If they were meant to perpetuate the memory of a great people, verily they have done it. The race which could plan such structures and then rear them—the kings who could make their tombs so stable that already they have outlasted fifty centuries, and look down to-day upon the ruins of mightiest empires mingling their dust at their feet—such kings, wicked, cruel, remorseless though they may have been, were men and not children, rulers and not puppets. And yet all this is not the mere superlative of heated imagination, and it is the simple truth. If we can be certified of any fact on earth, then we may be sure of this—that it is more than five thousand years since the supervising architect of the Great Pyramid of Geezeh walked into the throne-room of Cheops and said, "Sire, your tomb is finished." You remember that the pyramids of Sak Karah are even older than this, and while you are trying to grasp this fact, your guide beckons you down into one of the splendid tombs which lie at the foot of these pyramids, and you find yourself surrounded by a wealth of color and a profusion of adornment which scores of centuries have not been able to dim or efface. "Who were the people that did these things?" you ask yourself, and at once piqued and stimulated by your own ignorance of them, you ride slowly back to your dahabeh again, busy with a hundred questions to which a month before you never conceived it possible you could take the trouble to seek for an answer.

ST. FIACRE.

It has been said that Ireland sent religion and gardening to France. We all know what the Monks of the West did for this country, but possibly it is not equally well known that the patron of gardeners, St. Fiacre, whose festival was beautifully celebrated recently, was an Irishman, born about the year 600. He died in France, to which he passed over, in 670, having lived long as a hermit of great sanctity in the Brice country, near Meaux. He founded an hospital there which at first was an asylum for aged gardeners. The good saint, knowing their civilising influence, taught the culture of flowers—and also of fruits—in all his neighborhood. Living near the time of paganism, all the homage once rendered to Flora, Vertumna, and Pomona was turned towards the Hermit from Hibernia. It is believed that he first cultivated the rose in France, the antique rose of Provins, centuries before the Crusaders brought back to this country the sweet rose of Damascus. The Irish St. Fiacre must not be confounded with a more modern French saint of the same name, who, since the days of the Grand Monarque, has given his name to public cabs and coaches. This second St. Fiacre was born at Marly-la-Ville in 1609, and was also a monk of great piety, who predicted the birth and glorious reign of Louis XIV. He founded a chapel which was the origin of the present Parisian chief church of pilgrimage, Notre Dame des Victoires. This holy man was held in such veneration that on the first introduction of public carriages they fixed his likeness on the backs of the new vehicles. Hence the name of Dublin 'Fiacre'.