

Correspondence.

(We are not responsible for the opinions of our Correspondents.)

To the Editor of the NEW ZEALAND TABLET.

SIR,—To Irishmen, the world over, the Festival of St. Patrick, their Patron Saint, is ever a matter of deep and vivid interest, and none the less to the readers of your excellent and independent Catholic journal; and therefore, I presume, a brief description of its celebration, and matters appertaining thereto in this flourishing, though apparently isolated district, will be acceptable to your columns.

The weather here had been for some time genial and bracing, and everything promised well for the annual celebration under the auspices of the Hibernian Society, for the suitable and successful carrying out of which extensive preparations had been previously made; and the committee of management can congratulate themselves on the result, socially, financially, and otherwise. The morning of the 17th was ushered in by a copious down-pour from the bountiful hand of old Pluvius, and was followed by a beautiful and altogether exhilarating sunshine, under whose soothing influence the brethren assembled in their strength at their hall, formed in line of procession, marched to the tune of "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning" to the chapel to assist at Divine Service, and hear from their worthy pastor, the Rev. Father Carew, the usual panegyric, which was ably handled by the rev. gentleman, delivered with singular pathos and effectiveness, and from a religious and national point of view, made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of all present. Everybody seemed deeply moved and at the close of the edifying discourse, the choir chanted that beautiful hymn "Hail Glorious Apostle," which produced a most thrilling effect. After Mass, the procession reformed, and with banners flying, drums beating, and fifes playing, proceeded *a la militaire* along the principal streets of the town, thence to Mr. M'Inerney's paddock, about a mile distant, where a match of "foot ball" was improvised and well contested by some thirty stalwart members of the Society—and creating the most lively interest, reminding one of the "days of old" when those athletic games were more in vogue, and partook more of a national character. It would be trespassing too much on your valuable space to describe in detail the various incidents of this world-wide game; suffice it to say that, though some of the contestants were at times made to kiss mother earth in the orthodox fashion, a finer body I have not seen for some time, and the exhibition of strength and agility called forth my warmest admiration—reviewing in imagination the scenes of my childhood, whose green fields, moss-covered valleys, and brown-tinted hillsides had been, in serener days and more halcyon times, the theatre of similar displays. The match over, the procession again formed, and with the same martial bearing returned to town to the tune of some soul-stirring national airs, and then dispersed to participate in the annual sports which were being inaugurated in the immediate vicinity, and which continued all through the day and the following Monday with unabated and unflagging interest. Thus the day passed off; but the evening was characterised by a reunion of the Hibernians in the Assembly Rooms of Williams' Commercial Hotel, when the memory of "St. Patrick," "The Day we Celebrate," "Our Native Land," "The Hibernian Society," "The Press," &c., were done ample justice too by songs, toasts, and speeches suitable to the occasion.

I fear I have already drawn this correspondence to its limits, but I cannot help alluding to the most successful fête of the season—the Catholic School Children's Pic-nic, which came off on the 20th inst., the day fixed for an event which is ever looked forward to with great anxiety by the juveniles of both sexes, and not unfrequently by those of maturer years—as was evidenced on this occasion. The school committee, with characteristic liberality, extended an invitation to children of all denominations, and at an early hour in the morning assembled to the peal of the school bell, and with suitable banners and other insignia headed by a band, marched under the superintendence of their teacher, Mr. R. Delaney, and his staff of assistants to the sports ground, where amusements, the most enjoyable, were arranged for them by the Committee with the Rev. Father Carew, who was most indefatigable in his efforts to render his young charge as happy and comfortable as possible; and too much praise cannot be bestowed on the ladies who so gracefully presided over the tables at which the rising generation were seated, and to the contents of which they helmed themselves to their hearts content. Altogether about seven hundred persons were on the ground, half of whom at least were children, most of whom, according to ages, participated in the events of the day, whilst the adults indulged in the dance, the swing, or the promenade.

On the whole it was admitted by all to be the most successful affair of the kind that has ever been in Reefton, and a glorious and agreeable finale to the holiday. In conclusion, Sir, allow me to hope that the same unanimity and harmony will prevail at every recurring anniversary of St. Patrick, and that the children's picnic will not be the least item on the programme.—I am, &c.,

Reefton, March 22, 1877.

R. D.

Sir E. A. H. Lechmere writes that he can vouch for the statements recently made as to the mutilation of five Turkish soldiers, who are at present in the military hospital of Scutari, by their Montenegrin captors. These men he saw at the hospital, and conversed with them through Dr. Temple, the physician to the Sultan's household. He was subsequently informed by Sir Henry Elliot that upwards of 100 cases of similar mutilation by Montenegrins had been brought before his notice. Sir E. Lechmere further confirms the fact that the Turkish officials are reluctant to make these cases generally known in Constantinople.

TELEGRAMS.

(From our Daily Contemporaries.)

LONDON, March 30.

The Cabinet continues negotiations with Russia, and has resolved to sign the protocol, although it considers the effect of the document will be nugatory in the case of failure on the part of Russia to demobilise her army.

The English Press is not sanguine at the result of the negotiations.

Turkey repudiates foreign intervention. The Council of State have agreed to an address in reply to the Sultan's speech, opposing any claim to Turkish territory, and approving the rejection of the proposals of the Conference.

Mr. Layard is appointed temporary representative at Stamboul. President Hayes has sent a commission to Louisiana, and invited the rival Governors to Washington with a view to the settlement of the election dispute.

The wool sales closed on March 28th. The heaviest fall was in medium and inferior. The reduction was owing partly to the faulty condition of the clip, lambs and choice fleece being scarce, and commanded good prices.

Arrived: Waimate.

April 2.

The ambassadors signed the protocol at the Foreign Office. Earl Derby declared its validity depended upon peace being secured to Montenegro, Russia demobilising, and Turkey disarming. Count Schouvaloff declared that Russia consented to demobilise, and was willing to enter into negotiations with Turkey with a view to mutual disarming, provided the peace of Montenegro be secured.

Turkey is reported to be favourably disposed towards disarming and reforms.

The *Times* and Government organs approve the action of the Cabinet, but dwell on the uncertainty of the situation, as everything depends on Russian sincerity.

The *Daily News* ridicules the whole affair.

The year's revenue is 78½ millions.

THE STATE OF IRELAND.

MR. PIM, formerly a Liberal M.P. for Dublin City, and one of its leading merchants, has delivered an interesting address at the opening of the thirteenth session of the Irish Statistical Society. The address, a retrospect of the labours of the society for twenty-nine years, is practically a review of the gradual change in the social and industrial condition of the country during that period. The statistics with regard to land-holdings are very suggestive, and show that while farms of from one to thirty acres have decreased enormously in numbers, those over thirty acres have increased in proportion. The greatest decrease was in farms of from one to five acres; the greatest increase in those of from 30 to 200 acres, that is in the medium holdings. In crops, during the period between 1844 to 1875, cereals diminished to nearly one-half, while green crops doubled. Sheep have doubled, and cattle more than doubled during the same period. Mr. Pim condemns the decrease of cereals, and cites the case of Scotland to show that the increased culture of cereals and green crops may be co-existent. This part of his report is a bitter comment on the conduct of the landlords of Meath and other grazing sections who have blotted out whole villages and given as guardians for cattle-runs of 200 acres, a herd, and a dog.

The operation of the Irish Landed Estate Courts Mr. Pim notices and commends. Three million acres, or over one-seventh of the whole soil of Ireland, was sold under the Courts, in 6400 estates, to 16,000 distinct purchasers, and realized some fifty million pounds. Their operation has wrought sweeping changes, generally in favour of the tenantry. The quality of the dwelling houses had improved generally, and the mud cabins had almost disappeared. Within the last thirty years 2143 miles of railway had been constructed in Ireland at the cost of 5,900,000. Commerce had considerably increased, the maximum increase being in the northern, and the minimum in the western ports. Belfast and Waterford had trebled shipping trade since 1854. Dublin came next, then Newry, Cork, and Londonderry. The increase of property and profits, based on the Income Tax returns, were in Ireland double, in England two and a-half times, and in Scotland three-fold. Mr. Pim further states that in Ireland well-considered enterprise affords a safe and remunerative field for the investment of capital.

Mr. Pim is evidently a master of statistics—pity he did not carry them a little further. The kingdom of Belgium would have furnished the example. Both countries are chiefly agricultural, and populated by tenant peasantry, cultivating small holdings. The soil and climate of the two countries are about equal. Belgium has an area of 7,273,612 acres; Ireland, about 20,807,680. The population of Belgium is about 4,530,228; if Ireland was as densely peopled in the same ratio, her population would be, in round numbers, 13,000,000; yet Sir G. Nicholls, who made a critical examination of the condition of the two countries, pronounced the condition of the Belgian as infinitely superior to that of the Irish peasant. To account for this extraordinary disparity of numbers and condition, it will not do to say that the bulk of the Irish are Catholics, for so are the Belgians. The causes are to be sought in bad landlords and bad land laws, in absenteeism and union with England—and remedies should be sought accordingly.

The official return respecting deserters from the army places the number at 7759 during the year 1876, and the *Police Gazette* contains the names of 254,749 deserters. The number of men who enlisted at Woolwich during the past three years were respectively 1295, 610, and 897.