

Dublin Notes.

(From the National Papers.)

In his latest speech the magnanimous Mr. Galfour seeks to defile the grave of a high-souled patriot to whom he is no more to be compared than a snarling, cowardly cur to a lion. He waxes wroth with Mr. Gladstone for his noble tribute to the memory of John Blake Dillon, "the worthy father of a worthy son." To Mr. Galfour John Blake Dillon is a dead "rebel and traitor," and he calls on all true Coercionists to spit upon his grave. But in this controversy Mr. Galfour must count, not merely with Mr. Gladstone, but with Mr. John Bright, for whom it is the present fashion for Coercionists to affect a reverent admiration:—"I formed a very high opinion of his character. There was that in his eye and the tone of his voice which marked him altogether for an honourable and just man. I believe that amongst all her worthy and noble sons Ireland has no more worthy or nobler son than John Blake Dillon." This was John Bright's tribute, spoken in the Rotundo of Dublin to the memory of the man whose honourable grave this base and contemptible coward now seeks to defile. In one respect, however, Mr. Galfour gives the lie to his hypocritical associates, whose practice it is to praise dead patriots at the expense of the living. Mr. Galfour confesses the Irish cause in one and indivisible. Irish patriots of all ages—Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet and Lord Edward, Davis and Blake Dillon and O'Connell—were all, in his view, infamous criminals on a level with the pick-pocket and the burglar. We confess we prefer this frank brutality to the hypocrisy which makes an affected admiration for the dead an excuse for reviling the living, who are struggling in the same cause.

The municipal elections which took place throughout the country week ending November 29, resulted largely in favour of the National party; but the chief interest in the contests centered on those in Dublin. Here some very stirring struggles took place, and after very close fights in a couple of cases the Nationalists scored again. Six seats were to be contested, and, aided by some flaws in the register, by which a considerable number of Nationalist votes were lost, the Tories made desperate efforts to capture some of these. They cannot be congratulated on their success, for though they won a seat in the South City Ward, where Mr. Walker ousted Mr. Carroll, they lost one in the Mansion House Ward, where Mr. Tallon triumphed over Mr. Maple. A most strenuous effort was made to oust a Protestant Nationalist, Mr. James Shanks, from the representation of the Royal Exchange Ward; but though the Tory party put forth the most desperate exertions, Mr. Shanks was returned by a considerably augmented majority. The Dublin Corporation are to be congratulated on this result, as Mr. Shanks has proved himself to be a representative well worth having, both from his high character and his admirable business qualities. An attempt was also made to oust Mr. P. Cummins from the representation of the Rotundo Ward, but it resulted in a ridiculous failure. In the gross result the Nationalist strength in the Dublin Corporation remains precisely as it was before the elections came off.

Two great meetings were held on Monday, 24th November, for protecting purchasers who had been allowed the proud privilege of buying at double the value from a marquis and a duke, respectively, and still strange to say, were not happy. At a great gathering of the tenants of the Duke of Leinster, held in Kildare, the devices were made patent by which they had been forced into purchase at an exorbitant price. They now find it impossible to pay the instalments, and, failing payment, they are threatened with eviction without mercy or respite. The forfeiture is inexorable and cruel. Their entire interest will be confiscated for one trifling and inevitable default. They make a piteous plea for relief to the Commissioners who have already publicly declared their inability to help them. The State, into whose power they have now come, is inexorable as a mowing-machine. It can only go straight on and cut them down. Of the 365 tenants who have been rooted in the soil by Lord Ashbourne's patent process, five have been already uprooted by the Government that planted them. If there be no extension of time or reduction of instalments there must be a clean sweep on the estate, as full and prompt payment, the tenants declare, is impossible. A charming sight it will be—and eminently tending to the preservation of law and order—this benevolent Government exterminating the tenantry wholesale on its own account. But its troubles will not rightly begin until it tries to dispose of the evicted farms, which Mr. Townsend Trench, Lord Lansdowne's ex-agent, speaking with all the authority of experience, once accurately described as "a menagerie of white elephants." Under Mr. Balfour's Act the funds for the medical relief and education of the poor and for the support of the insane would all be confiscated to supply the deficiency.

Mr. Balfour again donned the robes of rhetoric which he had temporarily cast aside during his Irish scamper and appeared in all his ancient war-paint on the Liverpool platform, week ending November 22. He delivered one of his belligerent speeches, stuffed full of sneers and jeers, and a more than usual admixture of those peculiar perversions of history which make this statesman's public deliverance so interesting, if not valuable, for future students. So full of gems was the entire address that we would fain give it in all its pristine amplitude and beauty were we not restricted by considerations of journalistic space. But an idea of the character of the oration may be gleaned from a couple of passages in it. In the one, Mr. Balfour went again into the subject of the Mitchelstown "legend," as a reply to Mr. Gladstone's recent versions of the story, and, referring to the famous telegram of Plunkett's, "Don't hesitate to shoot," accepted full responsibility for the message, and defended it on the ground of humanity, as we take it; for he claimed for the order that its issue was the means of averting bloodshed. The audacity of this claim need hardly be pointed out. No one knows better than Mr. Balfour that the instruction, "Don't hesitate to shoot," was a secret order from Plunkett to the subordinate, and the publicity given to it

in these columns was never contemplated by its author; yet now that author takes credit for the beneficent effects of the unforeseen publication. This is not the first time the artless Balfour has resorted to the same paltry trick. The other choice example of Mr. Balfour's regard for truth is his scornful denial of the fact that a man was sent to gaol for merely taking off his hat to Mr. Wm. O'Brien. Mr. Balfour cannot laugh recorded facts, however, out of existence. The story is in print officially. The man who was arrested and convicted for this "offence" was Mr. William Moore Stack, and the person who ordered his arrest who one known as Cecil Roche.

Messrs. T. M. Healy and Dickson, M.P.s, as arbitrators in the Drapers' estate dispute, have performed a feat which many might think well-nigh an impossibility. They have made an award which is described as pleasing to both parties in the controversy. The decision was delivered on Saturday, November 22, in the Courthouse in Magherafelt. The arbitration was a somewhat singular one in as much as though there were two opposite arbitrators, there was no umpire, as at the outset the two chosen for the office agreed to agree and not to differ. It is not often that matters of monetary dispute are arranged in such an amicable way as this; but those who seek an explanation of the abnormality will find it perhaps in the fact that the principals in the dispute really wanted a friendly settlement and not to perpetuate ill-feeling or create mischief, like the rich interloper in the Ponsonby estate. The Drapers' Company have proved themselves a bright exception to the great body of the London Companies who lord it over the Ulster estates. They acted most generously from the moment the hint was thrown out in Court that arbitration might be resorted to in place of litigation. They closed on the suggestion right off, appointing Mr. Dickson to act for them, while Mr. Healy was nominated as the spokesman for the tenants. A very large amount of arrears had accumulated on the estate—as much through the Company's own ill-management as through the tenants' fault—and these, by the terms of the award, are now wiped out to the extent of about £17,000. The old judicial rental of the property was £4,900; the award now fixes it at £3,600. Those tenants who were evicted are to be reinstated and allowed a half year's rent as a *solatium* for their sufferings. The purchase terms will be arranged on the basis of the revised judicial rents; and it is creditable to the Drapers' Company that they do not seek to make the tenants pay a shilling by way of law-costs. The decision will immediately come before the Land Commission for formal ratification. Why is it that the principal is not adopted elsewhere? What is there to prevent any ordinarily humane Government telling such persons as Olphert, Smith-Barry, Clanciarde and Co., that they must exhaust all reasonable means of settling with their tenants before putting the expense of their unholly exterminating raids upon the taxpayers. There is nothing—not even the want of that which should be an indispensable qualification for the high function of Government—a solicitude for the welfare and preservation of the people whose lives and fortunes are given into its control.

The epilogue to Mr. Balfour's dread farce in Donegal came to an end week ending November 22. We mean the frightful eviction campaign of the destroyer Olphert. That scourge of Donegal has now done his work pretty effectually. He has done his level best to make a desert in Falcarragh. The armies of Attila sweeping over Europe were not more destructive in their way than the proportionate ravages of this hoary old hypocrite; and if the truth were known the barbarians whom Attila led may have been more humane than the emissaries of Olphert who flung out under the drenching rain and the fierce Atlantic mid-winter blasts poor women weak from recent childbirth and poor old men, blind and tottering, into the grave from the weight of patriarchal years. This epilogue to Mr. Balfour's famous play will long be memorable in Ireland from the horror of its circumstances. It was carried out under natural conditions so awful that the officer in command of the well-fed and strong-framed Constabulary, Colonel Milling, thought it just to pay a special tribute to his men, when the "devil's work" was over, on their endurance and good temper while going through the fearful ordeal. What must that ordeal have been to the half-famished, half-naked, feeble peasants whom the old tyrant with a heart of lead flung out *sub Jove* in the appalling weather of last week? When it tried the nerve and endurance of the men of the Royal Irish Constabulary, what can we say of the devoted ladies from England who came over to witness the horror, and saw it through from the opening to the close? Ireland ought never to forget the services of those brave women—Mrs. and Miss Amos, Miss Borthwick, Miss Maud Gonne, and Miss Mary Gonne; and if we had such an institution as a Legion of Honour they would certainly claim its highest decoration for their chivalrous services in Donegal.

"Marry in haste and repent in leisure" is an old proverb which might be applied to other fields of enterprise besides matrimony. It seems to be especially applicable to the case of those misguided farmers who have purchased their holdings under the Ashbourne Act. They will have plenty of leisure to repent during the forty-nine years which must elapse before they get rid of the millstone which their own hands have hung around their necks. Their only hope of relief lies in a makeshift—the extension of the period of repentance; but this is denied them by the recent decision of the Land Commissioners, keeping them to the letter of their bond as regards the period for paying the instalments of the purchase-money to the Treasury. Several meetings of these unhappy purchasers were held lately—the largest one at Kildare last Sunday. Those present were mostly men who had purchased their farms from the Duke of Leinster. They had taken their holdings at what must now be regarded as the exorbitant figure of from 17 to 20 years' purchase, and now they find themselves, as a consequence of the disastrous period for agriculture through which the country is passing, utterly unable to meet the instalments they have agreed to pay. If they would pay those instalments—many of them—they must sell the implements and the stock necessary for the working of their farms; and if they do not pay, out they go, and they lose their all. The tenants on this estate may be said to have purchased their holdings under compulsion. Eviction was staring them in the face, and many of them were seriously in arrears.