

# Irish News

## OUR IRISH LETTER

(From our own correspondent.)

Dublin, March, 1908.

Last year 39,082 emigrants left Ireland. For what? Thirty-eight thousand of them to suffer far greater want and misery than they ever knew at home. There seems little use in the remonstrances constantly made by priests and others, who know the truth about emigrant life, so long as the land is kept locked up from the mass of the peasantry, as most of it still is by those landlords who will not sell and by the delays and impediments of the Land Courts, and so long as the Government aids and abets the emigration agents at home and abroad in the alluring advertisements that gull the unhappy, restless youth of the country. Every post office, every village schoolmaster is a paid agent for the bad work. Everything shows how steadily the drain is injuring the country. The acreage under tillage last year shows it—a decrease of 93,766 acres under corn, green crops, hay, flax, and fruit; meaning a big percentage of the farming class gone to the wall. Yet we have a Board of Agriculture, Congested Districts Board, Local Government Board, Boards enough to plank the whole country over (as somebody says), all manned by brilliant 'experts' who can give book lore on every conceivable subject, but no practice save in drawing salaries. If matters go on at the present rate, in twenty years more every man left in Ireland will be an official of some Board; and then who will pay the taxes that now pay the officials? Even should the Old Age Pensions' Bill pass, as it was said it would this session, who will be left to pay the tax out of which these pensions are supposed to come, for it is not the man with the big income who finds the money, but the tea and sugar of the working man that do it. And as regards this same

Old Age Pension,

the demand of the laboring class is moderate—5s a week at 65 years of age. But statesmen want to make the age 70, which would be just a mockery to the poor, for all know that the man or woman who has had to work hard and live poorly through life is, as a rule, past labor at 65. A pension at 70 would just mean 'live horse and you'll get grass,' for ninety-nine out of every hundred. The 5s a week at 60 could be given by sweeping away the poorhouses, those cold dens of misery and misuse of money that the great O'Connell declared would be the ruin of Ireland. But then, they keep a little army of officials in luxury.

A Link with the Past.

The name of Daniel O'Connell reminds me of the recent death of a lady closely connected with the Liberator and with another man who was once a noted figure in Irish life. Mrs. Morgan John O'Connell died at Longfield House, Cashel, last month. Her husband was the nephew of O'Connell, her father the once well known Charles Bianconi, whose public vehicles, invariably called 'Bianconi's cars,' were the means of opening up traffic throughout all the country districts of Ireland in the middle of the nineteenth century, before railroads were in general use. These cars—long 'outside cars,' finely horsed and accommodating fourteen or sixteen passengers with their baggage—continued to run in remote districts up to a recent date; in fact, they are still run on the coast roads between Galway and Westport in Mayo, Larne and Cushendall in Antrim, and a few other places. Bianconi himself lived to a very advanced age and died about thirty years ago. I recollect him well, for even up to a short time before his death he travelled about the country constantly, and often visited at my home, where he loved to tell the children the romantic story of his boyhood, being always careful to remind us that, though reduced to poverty, his was one of the old noble families of Italy.

A tall, robust, stately old gentleman, with a quantity of silvery hair and always dressed somewhat in the fashion of his youth, with a finely ruffled shirt in which a large diamond sparkled: such is the picture I recall of Charles Bianconi as, having chatted for some hours with the elders, he one night turned to tell the little people his fascinating story that made him seem a second Dick Whittington in their eyes.

In the early years of the 19th century Charles Bianconi came from Italy to Ireland, a poor lonely little lad of twelve, who made out a living by hawking cheap pictures and images all over the country, and managed to feed and clothe himself on three-pence a day. Even that he often saved, for we may be

sure the kind-hearted peasantry heartily welcomed the little foreign orphan to bed and board. Honest, brave, enduring, the lad made his way on, trudging from town to town, from village to village, happy when a farmer on his way to market gave him a lift on the road. These welcome lifts were an inspiration. The boy saw that crowds of the country people had to trudge to market on foot, like himself, hampered with heavy loads that delayed them long and wore out their strength. Many a poor man or woman who could not command a car would gladly give a trifle to be carried cheaply even part of the way. The thrifty lad had saved a little sum of money. He thought out a plan; bought a horse and car and started in a country district on the highroad to a market town, arranging a moderate tariff for conveyance of passengers and their loads. The venture succeeded at once. Before long Bianconi had two cars on the road. Then began the rolling of the snowball: he possessed great organising powers, and, briefly, in an astonishingly short time the long cars were plying in an almost continuous chain from one end of Ireland to the other. Wealth poured in, but Bianconi continued to act as his own overseer. He was constantly on the road, his coach offices were everywhere, and his employees were ever on the alert to keep passengers well served, cars in good order, teams in first-class condition, for Bianconi himself might arrive at any hour of the day or night, might be a passenger on any car, and, while a first-rate master to good servants, woe to those who transgressed by failing in their duty to the public or to their employer.

Deservedly the Italian was soon a wealthy man, honored by all, high and low, a benevolent and pious Catholic, Lord Lieutenant of his county, owner of a fine estate and of the beautiful mansion near Cashel in which his daughter, Mrs. Morgan John O'Connell, has just died, the last of her name, for Bianconi's only son died young, leaving no heir to the honored name of Bianconi.

## COUNTY NEWS

### CARLOW—A Costly Proceeding

A Judge went down from the capital to Carlow last week (says the 'Irish Weekly' of March 28), and the Assizes were opened with all the usual ceremonies. Then his lordship, the grand and petty jurors, the registrars, sheriffs, clerks, lawyers, policemen, tipstiffs, criers, and public found that some miserable woman was charged with stealing a jacket worth 1s 6d. The crimelessness of Carlow, and the costly absurdity of opening an Assize court at the public expense under such circumstances, will not be trumpeted all over Great Britain by the Carrion Crows.

### CORK—Only one Case

Opening the Commission for Cork City on March 22 Lord O'Brien said there was only one case to go before the Grand Jury. 'He was sorry to hear that in an otherwise peaceful city there was some trade disturbance. He hoped it would be borne in mind that though peaceful picketing had received legislative sanction, yet organised attempts at intimidation constituted a criminal conspiracy punishable by law even though carried out under the guise of peaceful picketing.'

### DONEGAL—The Dean of Raphoe

The death took place on March 23 of the Right Rev. Mgr. M'Fadden, P.P., Vicar-General of Donegal and Dean of Raphoe. Deceased was one of the oldest priests in the diocese of Raphoe, and was much revered by all creeds and classes. He was ordained in 1853, and became parish priest of Glenlies after four years. He was afterwards parish priest of Gweedore and Drumholm, and in 1882 was appointed to Donegal town where he ministered ever since.

### DUBLIN—A Fortunate Harness-maker

The great litigation, extending over several years, concerning the property of Sullivan, of Seattle, United States, and in regard to which Commissions sat in Dublin, has at last come to an end, and judgment has been given awarding the estate to the two next-of-kin, Mr. Edward Corcoran, of Dublin, and Mrs. Hannah Callaghan, of Cork, as first cousins of the deceased. Mr. Corcoran was represented in Ireland by Mr. C. P. O'Neil, solicitor, Dawson street, and Mrs. Callaghan by Messrs. Wynne and Wynne, solicitors, of Cork. The American lawyer-Senator, S. H. Piles, who represented the parties in the States and had the management of the litigation there, gets, under a deed given by the parties, half the estate. The formal decision was given in the Supreme Court of Washington State, which affirmed the decision of the local Court in

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