

was discussed at some length. The question was raised by Canon Forde, of Castlereagh, and the Rev. Mr. Townsend, of Skibbereen, who pointed out that while the Synod was discussing such questions as the superannuation of the clergy, the fact was being overlooked that their congregations were seriously dwindling. The Body should endeavour to find some remedy for the exodus that was taking place from the rural districts. Money, he said, might be advanced for the purchase of land for Protestant farmers, or otherwise strengthening their position, so that they would not be obliged to leave the country. It was pointed out that the Trustees had no power to advance money for such a purpose.

The University Question

Religious prejudices (remarks the 'Catholic Times') are stronger perhaps in Ireland than in any other part of the world. In the creed of the Protestants there is something of the dour character that belongs to the Protestantism of Scotland, to which land a considerable proportion of them can trace their origin. But, strange, to say, whilst hostility to the Catholic religion is giving way little by little amongst the Scots, it is as unyielding as ever amongst the Northern Irish Protestants. That the Presbyterians will reap many benefits from the new Belfast University no one can deny; yet the General Presbyterian Assembly has condemned the scheme by a vote of 396 to 148. In a letter to the 'Freeman's Journal,' Mr. W. J. Johnston, a Presbyterian, and the son of an elder, whilst deploring the attitude of the Assembly, considers it improbable that it will be endorsed by the Presbyterians of Ireland as a whole. Thanks to a number of softening influences they are beginning to take a much more tolerant and broad-minded view of Irish affairs than they have done for a quarter of a century. They are not unmindful of the debt of gratitude they owe their Catholic fellow-countrymen. It was largely due to the efforts of the Irish Nationalist representatives in Parliament that they were freed from the intolerable oppression of the Penal Laws, and a goodly number of them will accordingly refuse to approve of a resolution which was dictated solely by an anti-Catholic animus. Mr. Birrell's proposals are highly commendable if for no other reason than that they would, when realised, help to banish such a narrow and intolerant spirit.

Local Government Bodies

The triennial elections for the County and District Councils and Poor Law Boards throughout Ireland are now taking place (says the 'Freeman's Journal' of May 9), and it is remarkable with what an absence of excitement or conflict they are being conducted. Indeed, over a large area of the country, and especially in the case of the County Councils, the uncontested return is the ordinary incident of the election. Nobody who has studied the financial and practical results of the work of the Councils, now about to begin only their fourth term, can be surprised at this exhibition of confidence. 'The waste and jobbery' which were to 'bankrupt the ratepayers' have yet to make their appearance. Even that censor morum the Local Government Board has testified to the general soundness of the financial management—only one Council falling under the lash of its criticism, not undeservedly—and to the efficiency of the work accomplished with perfect regard to economy. Indeed, the charge of extravagance has so completely broken down and proved so ludicrous on the lips of the critics of popular and Nationalist Local Government, that eminent Tory lawyers have abandoned it for the contrary charge of 'penuriousness,' which is equally unfounded. What a pity a simpler and less complicated plan of local administration was not evolved by the authors of the Local Government Act. Had such a plan been devised the rural ratepayers would now have been even more satisfied with the work of their representatives.

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People We Hear About

Few British statesmen have received as much as £100,000 in official salaries. Mr. Gladstone's total receipts from office came to a little over £102,000; Lord Salisbury's fell just short of £100,000; the Duke of Devonshire has received approximately £64,000; Lord Cross, £74,000; Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, £72,000; Lord Goschen, £70,000; and Lord George Hamilton, £68,000; while Lord Halsbury throws all these into the shade with a total of well over £200,000.

The Prince of Wales has many titles, which are not generally known. For instance, he is Duke of Cornwall, Duke of York, and Earl of Chester in England; in Scotland he is the Earl of Inverness, Duke of Rothsay, Earl of Carrick, Baron Renfrew, Lord of the Isles, and Great Steward or Seneschal of Scotland; in Ireland he is Baron Killarney; while in Germany he is the Duke of Saxony and Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Of course, Wales is represented in the principal title, which was conferred on the Prince when his father became King.

Lord Jersey, who recently entered upon his sixty-fourth year, is probably the only man in the peerage who has seen a duel fought on English soil. It was in 1851, when he was six years old, and it happened at Osterley. The combatants were Sir William Gregory, a sporting M.P., and Captain Vaughan. The latter missed his man, and Sir William, who was seconded by Sir Robert Peel, acted on his advice, and fired in the air. Lord Jersey and his little sisters saw the affair, and ran home to tell their mother, in great glee, that they had seen two gentlemen shooting at one another in the park.

Of the good stories which Dr. Macnamara, M.P., tells concerning school children, the following perhaps is one of the best. On one occasion a school teacher was endeavouring to convey the idea of pity to the members of his class. It was not easy, so he proceeded to illustrate it by a little story. 'Now, supposing,' he said, 'a man working on the river bank suddenly fell in. He could not swim, and would be in danger of drowning. Picture the scene, boys and girls—the man's sudden fall, the cry for help. His wife, knowing his peril and hearing his screams, rushes immediately to the bank. Why does she rush to the bank?' After a pause, a small voice piped forth: 'Please, sir, to draw his insurance money!'

Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, President of the Canadian-Pacific Railway, tells a good story of an applicant for a free pass, showing incidentally how easily telegrams may be misread. Sir Thomas in Montreal got a telegram asking if he should pass Fred White along the line. 'Don't,' Sir Thomas dictated to a clerk; 'let Fred White walk.' A fortnight later Sir Thomas was surprised to get a card with 'Mr. Fred White' on it. He imagined he was to be abused, but still directed the caller to be shown into his private office. 'How are you, Tom?' cried Mr. Fred White. 'Thanks so much for your kindness. Your people did me splendidly.' Sir Thomas, though surprised at his visitor's effusive gratitude, said nothing, but, when he had left, wired to Vancouver for an explanation. The reply came back: 'Acted on your telegram—"Don't let Fred White walk."'

The Hon. Richard Anthony Nugent (says the 'London Tablet'), who has just been elected Governor of the Bank of Ireland, became a director of that institution some years ago, and has served a term as its vice-governor. The uncle of the Earl of Westmeath (who was assistant private secretary to Mr. Chamberlain), Mr. Nugent himself contested the East Galway Division of County Galway, in 1885, as a Liberal. Since 1904 he has been Chairman of the Midland Railway Company of Ireland. Of the fifteen directors of the Bank of Ireland, three are bound by law to be Catholics—a proportion which adds point to Mr. Birrell's recent comparison between the relative distribution of offices among Protestants and Catholics. That the directors among whom Catholics form a minority should have chosen a Catholic Chairman is at least an indication of better things.

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