

Old-age Pensions.

The Old-age Pensions scheme is as it was foreshadowed: you must wait until you are almost on your death-bed before getting it, for 70 is the age at which a man is to be entitled to the small sum of 5s a week. A person having £26 per annum is too wealthy an individual to be considered, but if he has 9s 11d a week of his own he is entitled to the whole 5s, so that he will, with his pension, have 14s 11d per week, while the poor creature who is owner in his own right of, say, 3s a week will have in all but 8s. Shall I, when I come to 70, if possessor of 10s per week, commit a crime if I endow my poorer neighbor with 1d per week?

Then, actual paupers are not to be entitled to any pension. Here is a hardship. In Ireland, for instance, where family ties are so strong, many poor families cannot afford to keep the old man who is past his labor, consequently the poor old man is obliged to go into the hated workhouse. But with 5s a week the aged pauper father could be kept in the home in comfort, while in the workhouse he costs the ratepayers, in his quota of food, lodging, clothes, fire, light, and officials, at least 8s per week.

But the age limit is the hardest feature of all, and it is to be hoped that this clause will be modified. Three pensions are designed for the deserving poor who have worked all their lives and contributed by their industry to the welfare of their country. In the army for many years officers have been forced to retire in the prime of life, on fine pensions; full pay, I believe, but am not certain. The country has thus a large body of costly able-bodied pensioners to support—pensioners, too, who always drew big pay for a very idle life, have lived well, and last a long time after they retire. Why should not the poor get this little sum of £13 per annum at the age of 65. A man has time to grow very thin from hunger in the five lean years between 65 and 70.

M. B.

COUNTY NEWS

CARLOW—A Carnegie Library

At a recent meeting of the Carlow Urban Council the Town Clerk submitted a letter from Mr. Carnegie, in which his original offer of a money gift for the establishment of a free library was set forth as follows:—A gift of £1250, conditional on the council adopting the Free Libraries' Act, striking a rate of one penny in the pound, supplying a free site, and raising by subscription a sum of £500, the interest of which to be devoted to the upkeep of the library. After a discussion a resolution was adopted accepting Mr. Carnegie's offer.

DUBLIN—The Parnell Monument

A commencement has been made with the erection of the Parnell monument in O'Connell street, Dublin. The site is at the head of O'Connell street, opposite the Rotunda. The monument will consist of a triliteral pillar, the statue standing at the side which faces O'Connell street. The whole erection will measure 65ft from the top to the base, and will be 16ft square on the base.

LIMERICK—Death of a Leading Citizen

The death occurred on May 16, at his residence, Osmington terrace, Limerick, of Mr. John Creagh, father of the Rev. John Creagh and Rev. Thomas Creagh, two distinguished members of the Redemptorist Order. Mr. Creagh was seventy years of age, and had been ailing for a considerable time. He held a responsible position in commercial life until his retirement some years ago, and was highly respected by all who knew him. At a meeting of the Limerick Corporation the following vote of condolence on the death of Mr. Creagh was passed:—That we take this, the earliest opportunity of expressing the regret which is felt by the citizens of Limerick at the death of an old and highly esteemed resident, in the person of Mr. John Creagh, of Thomondgate (father-in-law of our respected City Treasurer, Mr. David Finn), who was long and honorably connected with the business life of the city, and whose distinguished sons—Rev. Thomas Creagh, C.S.S.R., and Rev. John Creagh, C.S.S.R.—have shed lustre on the great Order which has wrought incalculable benefits amongst the people of Limerick. That the sympathy and condolence of the council be conveyed by our Town Clerk to the family of the late Mr. Creagh.

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People We Hear About

The recent visit of King Edward and Queen Alexandra to Russia recalls the fact that the marriage of the Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna, the Czar's mother, and sister of Queen Alexandra, provided one of the most pathetic love stories in the annals of Royalty. Before the Empress, who was Princess Dagmar of Denmark, married Alexander III., she was engaged to his elder brother, the Czarevitch, and she loved him with all the fervor of a young, ardent heart. In 1865, at Nice, the Grand Duke Nicholas fell from his horse and was so badly injured that his life was despaired of. His fiancée hastened to him, and never left his side till he breathed his last. The succession to the throne devolved on the Grand Duke Alexander. He stood by the deathbed of the Czarevitch, who, in the presence of the Emperor and Empress, placed the hand of the weeping Princess into his, saying to her with almost his last words, 'Marry my brother; he is true as crystal, and I wish it.' Enforced by political reasons, this bequest was law to the bereaved girl.

The banquet which was tendered last week in London to Lord Dudley, the new Governor-General of the Australian Commonwealth, reminds us that the family fortune had its foundation in a chance customer at the shop of an ancestor in Lombard street. So, at any rate, says tradition. The story goes that in the reign of the first Charles one William Ward opened a goldsmith's shop in Lombard street, and soon afterwards was enabled to purchase at a great bargain a quantity of the finest diamonds, which had been offered for sale by a sailor who had just come ashore. Ward's stock of diamonds soon attracted the attention of the Court, and he obtained the custom of Queen Henrietta Maria, who appointed him her jeweller. The rest of the story can be told in a few words. A Lord Dudley of that day being in want of £10,000 came to Ward and asked for a loan. Fortunately or unfortunately, he was able to offer but little in the way of security, and here Ward saw his chance. He had a son, and Lord Dudley had a granddaughter, and, if Lord Dudley would consent to the match, the money should be handed over. This was accordingly agreed upon, and the fortunes of the family may be said to have gone on increasing ever since that date.

Accompanied by his wife, his son, and three daughters, Mr. Sidney Kidman, the Australian cattle king, one of the most interesting personalities in the Empire, is now in London. Mr. Kidman was born in Australia 51 years ago, and has never been in England before. A modest man, Mr. Kidman was disinclined to talk about himself (says a London exchange), but he was enthusiastic in his praise of Australia. At 14 Mr. Kidman, whose home is at Kapunda, about 50 miles from Adelaide, was earning 10s a week, where the Broken Hill Mine now is. Then he had a single horse. To-day he owns, or is interested in, 49,216½ square miles of country, the acreage being something like 31,668,680. Beginning life as a teamster, he has worked his way up till he is the largest horse-breeder and the greatest cattle-owner in Australia. He owns 100,000 head of cattle and 10,000 horses. He is master of over 20,643 square miles of territory in Queensland, over 7567 in South Australia, and more than 21,000 in New South Wales, the Northern Territory, and elsewhere. He has 32 cattle ranches, and at his home in Kapunda take place the largest horse sales in the world. Several times over 2000 horses belonging to him have been sold at one sale, and next year he expects that he will have 3000 horses at one sale.

Sir Henry Blake, at one time Governor of Hong Kong, and, until last year, of Ceylon, has settled with Lady Blake at Myrtle Grove, Youghal, a house of very great historic interest, for it was there that Sir Walter Raleigh lived and entertained the poet, Edmund Spenser. Sir Walter was chief magistrate of Youghal at the time, and Myrtle Grove, formerly known as 'The House,' was the Warden's residence. There also resided Sir Richard Norris, Sir George Carew, both Lords President of Munster, and the Earl of Cork. Myrtle Grove is a perfect Elizabethan gabled house, with some of the rooms wainscotted and decorated with carved oak. There is supposed to be a secret passage from the dining-room to the old tower of the church. In the garden, according to tradition, is Raleigh's yew-tree, under the shade of which he may have 'drunk tobacco,' as they used to say in those days, and perused the manuscript of 'The Faerie Queene.' The garden is famous. In it was planted the first potato that ever grew in Ireland.