

arisen in Kilfree, near Gurteen, County Sligo, where five members of one family, living in one house, have been passed for the full sum of 5s per week. There are three brothers and two sisters, and their total ages make a grand total of 380 years.

WATERFORD—Dedication of a Church

The Most Rev. Dr. Sheehan, on Sunday, December 13, dedicated for the Franciscan Fathers the Church of Our Lady, Waterford. There was a large attendance, as might be expected, for the Franciscan Fathers are highly esteemed by the people of the *Urbs Intacta*. The Mayor of the city, attired in his robes of State, accompanied by several members of the Corporation, attended High Mass, which was celebrated by Very Rev. Father Gannon, Provincial of the Order, Limerick.

GENERAL

Sir Horace Plunkett's Views

A speech on Irish land purchase was delivered last week at Birmingham by Sir Horace Plunkett, president of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, and formerly vice-president of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Sir Horace urged the completion of the land purchase scheme, and declared that if Ireland was decently governed during the next twenty years the money advanced would be absolutely secure. He added that a thousand societies of farmers, with a hundred thousand members, had been formed in Ireland since 1889, and the turnover greatly exceeded two millions.

Land Purchase

In reply to a question in the House, the Chief Secretary said that according to the last annual report of the Land Commission there had been, up to the 31st March last, 369,483 cases in which fair rents had been fixed for a first statutory term. The total former rental dealt with was £7,334,438, and the judicial rental was £5,815,931. In 181,637 of these cases a fair rent was subsequently fixed for a second statutory term, a first term rental of £2,635,354 being reduced to £1,902,501. Thus the former rental of £7,334,438 is now represented by £5,353,078. Lands of a rental of approximately £5,000,000 had been sold or were pending for sale under the Land Purchase Acts on the 31st October last, on which date advances had been made in respect of 143,641 holdings, and applications for advances were pending in respect of 173,343 holdings. I am not in a position to say what may be the rental of the agricultural part of Ireland still to be sold under the Land Purchase Acts, nor can I say whether two-thirds of the farms in Ireland are held by tenants who do not pay more than £12 a year rent, but the general census report for the year 1901 shows that 68 per cent. of the total number of agricultural holdings in Ireland do not exceed £15 in rateable value, and that 56 per cent. do not exceed £10 in rateable value.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland

Mr. Birrell, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, in the course of a speech at the annual dinner of the London Magistrates' Club, said that he had been, ever since he joined the Government, unfortunately, a man of strife and contention. That had not been from any desire of his own, for naturally he believed he would get on with his fellow-men as well as most people; but the particular office which he held at the present moment was one which must be, to whoever occupied it—he cared not to what party he belonged—a very vulnerable office. He had known many Chief Secretaries for Ireland, and he never knew one yet of whom a great many things could not be said, and with truth. All he had got to do was to some extent to harden his heart and pursue his course indifferent to criticism, except so far as it was really based upon some very grave and substantial allegation. One could not hope to govern Ireland—or what was called governing Ireland—without coming into violent contact with a very considerable portion, an animated portion, of the population. They would say things about you and against you, and circulate reports about you with fervor and faith. All that one could do was to remember that he had got a very tough job and a very long road to hold. The people of this country must still exercise patience and forbearance, remembering that for a good many of the things they themselves were as much to blame as anybody else. He certainly should be very much disappointed if before two decades had passed Ireland was not, from one end to the other, a contented and, to a considerable extent, a prosperous portion of the United Kingdom. But nobody who came into his position could hope to escape attack. He did not think he should ever occupy another position so troublesome and so difficult as the two offices that he had been connected with, but still, he hoped that when the time came for him to retire from parliamentary turmoil he might be able to carry away with him a happy temper and a deep-rooted conviction that on the whole this country was going to pull through every difficulty.

People We Hear About

The late Sir James Mathew, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, left estate valued at over £60,000 gross.

The death of Mr. Nicholas Benziger, sen., is announced from Einsiedeln, Switzerland. Mr. Benziger was born in 1830, and had been actively engaged in the Catholic publishing business for more than half a century. His sterling Christian character endeared him to all who knew him. His widow passed away a few days after his death.

The Right Hon. Sir Frederick Darley, Chief Justice of New South Wales, who has just retired, is in his seventy-ninth year. He was born in County Wicklow, and, after completing his education at Trinity College, was called to the Irish Bar fifty-six years ago. Nine years later he was admitted to the New South Wales Bar, was appointed to the Supreme Court Bench in 1886, and was knighted the following year.

In a new book of good stories Mr. Lionel Tollemache has an interesting anecdote of Mr. Gladstone. He says: 'One stormy day he walked from his hotel at Biarritz to visit me in the room where I am now writing; and I was amazed to see that he had come without an umbrella. On my venturing to remonstrate, he laughingly explained that, if the high wind had happened to turn his umbrella inside out, a picture of him in that forlorn plight would have found its way into half the comic papers! I could not help thinking how little we know of the small worries of great men!'

Sir Gerald Strickland, K.C.M.G., Count della Catena, the Catholic Governor of Tasmania, who, according to the *Daily Mail*, is to succeed Sir H. Rawson as Governor of New South Wales, was born in Malta in 1861. His father was Captain Walter Strickland, R.N., and his mother the only child of Chevalier Bonici Mompalas. He is a B.A. of Cambridge. He succeeded his maternal grand uncle as sixth Count della Catena in 1875, and was knighted in 1897. He was Governor of the Leeward Islands from 1902 to 1904, and was appointed to Tasmania in the latter year. Lady Strickland is a daughter of Earl De La Warr.

Baron Clement von Schorlemer-Lieker, who was chosen by the German Emperor to bear his Majesty's congratulations to the Holy Father on the occasion of the Jubilee of his Holiness, is the son of one of the founders and foremost parliamentarians of the Centre Party and of the organiser of the powerful Peasants' League of Westphalia. He was born in 1856; in 1889 he was Provincial Councillor of Neuss, in 1897 Superior Councillor at Breslau, and in 1899 he became President of the Board of Agriculture of the Rhenish Province. In 1905 he was appointed Governor of the Rhenish Provinces, an office which he still holds and which he was the first Catholic to hold.

In connection with the death of Lord Petre, to which reference was made in our last issue, it is worthy of note that the fourth Baron Petre was committed to the Tower, with other Catholic peers, on the sworn testimony of the notorious perjurer, Titus Oates, and there he died five years afterwards. Thorndon Hall, the home of the Petres, was burned down some thirty years ago, but was rebuilt by the twelfth Baron in the Elizabethan style, of which it was originally a good example. But much more interesting was the still older house on the estate at Ingatesstone, which during past years has had various residents, including Miss Braddon, the novelist, who is supposed to have made it the scene of her well-known romance, 'Lady Audley's Secret.' Within its walls was a genuine priest's hole, or hiding-place, a relic of the days of persecution.

His Holiness the Pope has conferred the Order of Knighthood of St. Sylvester and the Golden Spur upon Mr. Melville, ex-superintendent, Scotland Yard, for services rendered during his professional career in the safeguarding of sovereigns and rulers in many countries of the world. The Order of St. Sylvester is one of the oldest and most prized of Papal distinctions, and was founded by Pope Sylvester in the reign of Constantine. The decoration is in the shape of an eight-pointed cross in gold on a white enamel ground, and carries with it a gorgeous uniform, cocked hat, and mother-o'-pearl sword. Mr. Melville is an Irishman, and was born in Kenmare, County Kerry. He is an officer of the Legion of Honor of France, and has also the Order of Dannebrog of Denmark, the Order of Christ of Portugal, founded in 1317 by Dionysius I., and the Italian Cross of Francis Joseph of Austria.

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