

# Irish News.

**DUBLIN.—A Witness not easily got at.**—A case came before the Probate Court in Dublin recently, with regard to a will in which it was sought to have the trial postponed for the purpose of taking evidence. The will had been drawn up by Dr. Douglas, of Killeshandra, who had gone some time ago to South Africa. A commission was sent out to South Africa to take Dr. Douglas's evidence, but owing to an informality the evidence could not be used. A second commission was sent out, and the evidence was to have been taken at Pietermaritzburg on October 20. In the meantime hostilities broke out between Great Britain and the Republic, with the result that the Boer troops poured down into Natal, and cut off Dr. Douglas. He resided at that time about 20 miles beyond Glencoe, where he (counsel) would ask his Lordship to take judicial cognisance that there had been, to say the least of it, a rumpus. They had telegraphed to Pietermaritzburg, but could get no account of Dr. Douglas, and they could not be blamed for that, for the War Office were unable themselves to give any account of what was going on in the same place. The general in command there had said he would have this war finished by Christmas, so that if the trial was adjourned until next term they could go on with the case—with or without Dr. Douglas. As there was no prospect of getting at Dr. Douglas for some months the application for adjournment was refused.

**A Conservative Newspaper Changes Hands.**—It was reported in the Irish metropolis in the early part of last month that the well-known Conservative organ, the *Daily Express*, had been purchased by Lord Ardilaun and Mr. Carson, Q.C.

**LIMERICK.—Catholic Chaplains for the Navy.**—An association has been started in connection with the Apostolic College, Limerick, having in view the training of students who as priests will devote themselves to the service of the navy. The title of the association is 'St. Joseph's Royal Navy Fund.'

## GENERAL.

**The Parnell Estate.**—A New York despatch of November 28 says that the Lord Mayor of Dublin and Mr. John Redmond, M.P., sail for England on Saturday. They will carry with them £10,000 subscribed in America to erect a monument to Parnell and save the family homestead.

**The Decline of the Potato.**—It would appear as if potatoes are going out of fashion in Ireland. A paper read before the Irish Statistical Society recently by Mr. R. F. Crawford shows that within recent years their consumption has been steadily falling off. In 1893-5 it amounted to 313lbs. per head per annum, and in 1896-8 this had fallen to 280lbs. Irish emigration may have something to do with the decline of the potato, as Mr. Crawford suggests, though that explanation is not sufficient.

**The Absence of Troops.**—As showing the extent to which Ireland has been depleted of troops in consequence of the South African War (says a Home exchange) it is noteworthy that Kilworth Camp and the military range at Mitchelstown—the largest in Great Britain—are at present in charge of a solitary soldier of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, who has complete charge of 14,000 acres of land, permanent camps, soldiers' home, telegraph and post office, storeroom, etc. A few months ago there were several thousand troops on the ranges, where about 10,000 men underwent musketry training during the summer season.

**A Successful Libel Action.**—A libel action by Mr. Curran M.P., against Mr. Diamond, newspaper proprietor, and ex M.P., occupied the attention of the Lord Chief Justice of England and a jury for a couple of days recently. The plaintiff was awarded £100 damages. We do not propose (says the *Irish Weekly*) to enter in detail into the merits of the case. The query of Lord Russell of Killowen before entering upon its hearing will be echoed by every Irish Nationalist. His Lordship had seen the nature of the case, and asked if, there was any dirty linen to be washed whether that court was the proper place to wash it in. English courts of justice are not ideal places to settle Irish differences, and one cannot wonder at the scarcely veiled disgust of the Lord Chief Justice at the methods his countrymen adopt. One of the few English journals friendly to Ireland, the *Daily Chronicle*, says: 'The libels of Mr. Diamond on Mr. Curran were bad, but they were not so bad as many others.'

**Expert Telephone Operators.**—An official of the Chicago telephone exchange, in reply to a visitor who noted that most of the expert operators were of Irish origin, explained the matter in this wise:—'We are quite willing to employ a Scandinavian, a German, an English or an American girl as one of Irish extraction, and the seeming discrimination against those not Irish is simply the result of failure to find in girls of the fair-haired races that quickness which we must have in all operators. Any girl who has this faculty is readily accepted without reference to her nationality. But this impartial principal of selection works out a seeming discrimination. Go into any one of our large operating rooms, and among the scores of girls at the switchboard you will not see more than two or three girls with blonde hair; learn their nationalities, and you will find that 90 per cent. of them have Irish blood in their veins.' Commenting on this statement, the *Journal of Indianapolis* says:—'This tribute to the mental quickness of the race is the more valuable in that it is voluntary, and the result of an experience showing the survival of the fittest so far as this particular business is concerned. It is not the first inning, however that Irish girls have scored.'

**Death of a Friend of Ireland.**—Irishmen will learn with regret of the death, at the advanced age of 80, of the Right Hon. Jacob Bright, who for close on 30 years had been identified with the Parliamentary representation of Manchester, and took part in most Radical movements of his time. He was instrumental in 1869 in obtaining the municipal vote for women, and strongly agitated for obtaining for them the Parliamentary franchise. While a member of the Society of Friends he took a prominent part in the work of the Peace Society. But he will be ever gratefully remembered by Irishmen for his staunch advocacy of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule policy after his elder brother, the *Tribune*, had parted company with his life-long friend, the then Premier, on that question. Mr. Bright never wavered in his adherence to the principle during his Parliamentary career, which ended with his retirement at the general election of 1895.

**Irish Polo Ponies.**—Like the Irish hunter (says the *Irish Farmer*), the Irish polo pony has already succeeded in making its mark on the other side of the channel. Polo players now admit that for speed, staying powers, and smartness, no other ponies can hold their own against those bred in Ireland. The late Mr. Dryborough, who was a famous exponent of the game, was a great admirer of the Irish bred pony, and was frequently heard to proclaim that nothing could touch a well-bred Irish pony. We are glad to find that the claims of our native horses in this connection are being freely recognised by our contemporaries. Polo pony breeding is at present in its infancy, and a type is scarcely set, but of one thing we may be certain, there is no other country in the world that can produce the equal of the small blood horse of Ireland, which we call a pony. Such courage, intelligence, endurance, activity, beauty, and general adaptability to the game, and to every other purpose consistent with his size and weight, is to be found in no other horse, no matter what the Arab fanciers may say.

**The Irish Population Returns.**—The Irish quarterly population returns for the June to September quarter are not (says the *Freeman's Journal*) pleasant reading. Things are not going as well in Ireland as they were recently, if emigration statistics and marriage statistics have a meaning. The natural increase in the population for the quarter would have been 8,129 if it had not been entirely counterbalanced by an exodus of 11,275 persons. Thus the population was reduced by 3146. The most sinister feature of the emigration return is that it shows a large increase over the figures for the corresponding quarter of 1898. The excess for the three months was 2067, that for August being 11,275. Twelve hundred more girls than lads left our shores. That is not surprising. Though 'early marriages' are the common explanation of Irish poverty by those who know nothing about the facts, the truth is that the Irish marriage rate is the lowest in Europe. The marriage rate for the second quarter was equal to an annual rate of only 4.8. Yet, though that is about a third of the lowest rate for any English shire, it is above the Irish average. It is curious that while our Registrar-General compares the Irish birth-rate and the Irish death-rate with the corresponding English rates—the Irish birth-rate was nearly 30 per cent. lower, the death-rate 15 per cent.—the English marriage-rate is always omitted from these comparisons. The contrast would spoil the moral of any 'prosperity statistics' that he might have gleaned elsewhere. There is only one sign of progress in the quarter's return—paupers, both indoor and outdoor, were slightly fewer. The casualties had no need of the workhouse last July and August.

**The Church Builders of the World.**—Speaking in England recently the Bishop of Achonry said:—'Though I speak in this English city, encircled by those Yorkshire hills, still I feel I am no stranger here, for I speak to many of our own people, in whose veins courses the same Irish blood, in whose bosoms throb the same Irish pulse, in whose souls the old faith is warm, and in whose hearts the old love is all aglow.' Speaking to our Irish people, I ask you to be ever mindful of the fact that those of our race, and land, and blood have been the church builders of the world. Every gorge of Italy's Apennines, every valley by the Swiss Lakes, the vast plains of Germany, the vineyards of France, still show the trace of the Irish churches, still bear the footprints of Irish saints. What our fathers did in the Old World in the far off centuries, that our brethren are doing in the New World in the light of the present day. I must only point where I love to linger. Across the great Atlantic, amidst the States of the Stripes and Stars, beyond the waves of the Indian Ocean in the rising empire of the Southern Cross; there in the leading city of America, by the banks of the Hudson, on the old Manhattan shore, watching over the waters of New York, rise in whitest marble the twin towers of the greatest church in America; and there in the capital of Victoria, on the beautiful bay crowned by the fairest city in the South, the noble Cathedral of Melbourne has just arisen, the pride of the whole Australian world; and both have been erected by Irish energy, and both have been raised by Irish hands, and both are dedicated to our own St. Patrick, who thus watches over our race and protects our people, from the land of the glorious Orient to the land of the setting sun.

**MYERS AND CO., Dentists, Octagon, corner of George street** They guarantee highest class work at moderate fees. Their artificial teeth give general satisfaction, and the fact of them supplying a temporary denture while the gums are healing does away with the inconvenience of being months without teeth. They manufacture a single artificial tooth for Ten Shillings, and sets equally moderate. The administration of nitrous-oxide gas is also a great boon to those needing the extraction of a tooth. Read advertisement.—\*.\*