

People We Hear About.

Miss Gavan Duffy, eldest daughter of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, is to attend the Paris Exhibition as special correspondent for the *Australasian*, in whose pages Miss Gavan Duffy's articles, signed 'An Exiled Victorian' and otherwise, have appeared for years.

Major Murray, of the N S W. Irish Rifles, bound for the war, is a son of one-time Speaker Murray, and an all-round sort of practitioner. He is an Oxford graduate, a prize shot, an expert swordsman, a skilled boxer, a noted footballer, a Parliamentary draughtsman, a barrister, a Crown Prosecutor, and a married man. Also he is 6ft 4in long.

William Marconi, whose wireless telegraphic invention has made him a peer of Edison and Tesla in the scientific world, is not altogether an Italian. His mother is Irish of the Irish. Marconi has lived a good deal in Ireland among his mother's relations, but he was born and educated in Italy. He considers himself fully half Irish, and many of his characteristics are more Irish than Italian. Marconi's first practical experiments with wireless telegraphy were made in Dublin Bay. The first wireless telegraphic newspaper dispatch was printed in a Dublin paper.

The late Judge O'Brien is still remembered in Cork by old citizens as a reporter on the *Cork Examiner*. The Judge led as monastic a life as it was possible for a man in the world to lead. In town or country he went to Mass every morning. During term he always dined at the King's Inns, and few knew where he spent his time between the rising of the Court and dinner in Henrietta street. It was in prayer in the Church of St. Dominic, a church he greatly loved. Among the foibles of the Judge, (says the *Freeman*,) was his extraordinary inattention to sartorial appearances. He was the worst shaved and worst dressed man in Dublin. His shirts were buttonless, his coats always shabby and sometimes actually ragged. A great collector—his house in Merrion square was full of beautiful and rare objects, but the few who entered it found all covered with a thick coat of dust.

Mr John Augustus O'Shea, for whom an annuity is being secured through the efforts of Mr A. P. Graves and others, used to be in considerable request as a lecturer on his military experiences. Once, at Dumfries, he came upon the platform wearing in his buttonhole a daisy, which he quietly removed and held up. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' he began, 'I hold in my hand a "wee modest flower" I plucked this evening from the grave of Robert Burns.' The audience was interested and became enthralled as the lecturer went on to speak of the national poet. Then, suddenly recollecting that Burns had nothing to do with his subject, he stopped abruptly. 'And now,' said Mr O'Shea, 'I will proceed to relate my experiences in the war.' But by this time he had thoroughly engaged the sympathies of his listeners, who would not hear of another subject. 'Never mind the war, sir,' they vociferated, 'give us Robbie Burns.' And he did. This extempore oration afterwards became one of the most popular of Mr O'Shea's lectures.

Monsignor Angelo Fiorini of the Minor Capuchins, who was recently appointed to the episcopal see of Pontremoli, has just invented a simple but extremely ingenious apparatus by means of

which he claims that railway collisions will in future be rendered impossible. It consists of an automatic arrangement, moved by electricity, which warns the driver of the approach of any other train on the same line, and at the same time places him in communication with the station master along the line, so that he can receive alarm signals, announcement of the interruption of traffic, etc. Monsignor Fiorini has patented his invention, which will shortly be adopted on all Italian railways, and the proceeds of which he intends to devote to charitable purposes. The Holy Father has been highly pleased with this invention, which may be the means of saving so many lives, and in token of his satisfaction has addressed a brief to Monsignor Fiorini, bestowing his apostolic blessing on the learned prelate.

Mr. Justice Day, of England, who is not in as good health as his friends would desire, will, it is believed, soon retire from the Bench. His place will probably be taken by another Catholic lawyer, Mr. Joseph Walton, who is a Home Ruler to boot. Mr. Walton has a splendid business, his income being second only, if it is second, to Sir Edward Clarke's. Mr. Walton is married to an Irish lady, a Miss Darcy, sister of Lady Coll, and niece of Mr. Milo Burke, of Dalkey. Sir Gavan Duffy, in his account of his fourth trial for treason, gives a most interesting account of the late Mr. Martin Burke (Milo Burke's father) being called as a juror. 'He was a Catholic,' says Sir Charles, 'but his tastes, pursuits, and interests might be regarded as binding him fast to the class who detested the prisoner at the Bar.' Mr. Butt, who led for the prisoner, Sir Colman O'Loghlen, his junior, and all his friends implored Sir Gavan Duffy to challenge Mr. Burke. He refused, and he tells us why in *Young Ireland*. 'In the gallery, directly opposite the juror's box, sat Mr. Burke's wife and daughter, and I was confident that the Irish hearts of these two women would exercise a silent mesmerism over the juror stronger than any personal or party interest.' Mr. Burke held out all night against the 11 other jurors. Duffy was set free. Mr. Burke's daughter, mentioned above, was Mrs. Darcy, Mrs. Walton's mother.

The death of the Chevalier Antoine de Kontski, at the advanced age of 82, is announced from his native Cracow. Chevalier de Kontski visited New Zealand on a concert tour about three years ago. The *Daily News* says of him that 'he was, five and twenty years since, a well known figure in London musical life. Indeed, some of his fashionable pianoforte pieces, and particularly the still-recollected "Reveil du Lion" and the "Souvenir de Biarritz," were at one time played in every drawing and schoolroom. De Kontski was merely a superficial musician, but he was an excellent pianist of the brilliant school of which Thalberg was the principal exponent. He was particularly noted for the delicacy of his touch and the refinement of his playing. Born in 1817, he was a pupil at Warsaw of Markenski; and at Moscow, in 1830, of "Russian" Field. He lived for some years in Paris, and afterwards at Berlin (where he was Prussian Court pianist) and at St. Petersburg. About 30 years ago he settled in London, where he resided for many years, until, at the age of nearly 70, he emigrated to Buffalo, United States. From there he went on several tours in the Far East, being, it is said, the first pianist to give recitals in China and Japan. Even down to a couple of years ago, when he was 80 years of age, he was still touring and was certainly the doyen of his profession.' When Chevalier de Kontski visited New Zealand he was advertised as 'the only living pupil of Beethoven.'

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