

Irish News.

OUR IRISH LETTER.

(From our own correspondent.)

Dublin, November, 1900.

If Charles Lever, Samuel Lover, and those other writers of the early part of the century who loved to paint exaggerated pictures of Irish election scenes could only have returned to the flesh for a brief time in the month of October, 1900, how utterly astounded they would be. I doubt if Lever's utmost powers of drawing the long bow could have enabled him to make one paying chapter out of the whole series of elections throughout the 32 counties of Ireland, so quietly business-like have even the humblest electors become since the introduction of the ballot. To be sure, a few of the candidates belabored each other with words here and there, but these were only windy skirmishes, little bladder-battles that made very little noise, indeed, and never a bleeding nose, not to say a cracked skull, even in Tipperary or Clare.

AN INCIDENT OF THE CLARE ELECTION.

And talking of Clare reminds me that only about a month ago I had in my hands the identical wig Daniel O'Connell wore at that famous contest with Vesey Fitzgerald in Clare in 1828, when Catholic Emancipation was virtually won. The relic is in the possession of a well-known collector. The wig-box is in the shape of a great egg, covered with cowhide, hair side out, and is studded round with brass-headed nails. The wig itself is a rather light brown, the shape that all Irishmen know so well as represented in O'Connell's portraits. The story told in connection with this old wig and the Clare election is that Mr Vesey Fitzgerald, O'Connell's opponent in 1828, being a bald-headed and rather plain-looking man, thought to raise a joke on the hustings at the Liberator's expense, it being well-known that O'Connell's fine crop of hair did not grow on his own head. 'Boys,' said Mr Fitzgerald, 'how can a bald-pated old fellow like me compete in the good graces of yourselves and the ladies with a man like my rival, with his fine head of waving, youthful brown locks?' 'Boys!' exclaimed O'Connell, 'I'd scorn to take a mean advantage of Vesey Fitzjarril (a way the humble folk had of pronouncing the name). There, boys (whipping off his wig and displaying a shining poll above his mischievous eyes) now, which of the two bald pates will you have?'

THE RESULT OF THE GENERAL ELECTION.

Of course you long ago know the result of the late general election in Ireland: that the Irish people have steadfastly declared themselves Home-Rulers; that they likewise declared themselves weary of 'Ites' and determined, as far as they can go, to end personal struggles for one man or one party supremacy: they want unity amongst their representatives, Ireland for the Irish, and peace in their native land. This they showed by refusing again to return Mr. Tim. Healy's two brothers and one of his uncles. Not, I think, on account of any widespread personal dislike to these gentlemen, but simply in the hope of securing a practically united party. The country at large, including many bishops and priests, has also adopted Mr. William O'Brien's United Irish League programme, which I have before explained as being simply an organisation for the prevention of land-grabbing by strangers or by creatures of the landlord, and for endeavoring to induce those landowners who have turned vast tracts of the finest land in Ireland into mere cattle ranches, to divide up and let these lands in fair-sized farms to the peasantry who have been turned off the soil and forced to emigrate or to herd together in miserable poverty on the arid mountains and bogs of the poor districts, where life is literally a struggle to get bread out of stones, for very often they cannot raise even the turnips to try to get blood out of. It goes against all reason that, in a small island like this, the soil of which is limited in extent, but so naturally rich and productive that it could support three times its present population in comfort, a few men should hold immense tracts of that rich land, simply to rear herds of cattle, which do not even afford employment to laborers, while millions of people might live at home and fill the land with industry and prosperity. Some time ago, the Most Rev. Dr. Healy, Bishop of Clonfert, and one of our ablest men, wrote very practical words in reference to the present-day incessant talk about teaching the people to cook, and so on. 'First,' said his Lordship, 'let the people have something to cook, and then teach them to make fricassees.' We may add, by way of comment on the teaching of farming by the new Board of Agriculture; first give the peasantry the land, and then you will see how well they know how to till it.

On the whole, the country is satisfied with the elections. Of course, many unknown and untried men have been, in the hurry, put into Parliament; many of them may turn out but poor representatives of the people, but the Irish want to show that they are unanimous in wishing for Home Rule and in sternly demanding unity amongst the men they send to represent them, and simply as a protest in support of this principle, have returned none but those who pledge themselves to be loyal to each other and to stand by the national demand for Home Rule and the land for the people. Already from distant lands, even from Australia, have come messages of warm congratulation on the unity of purpose shown by the electors, and of sympathy and support for the United Irish League.

In Dublin, six Nationalist members, the 'Dublin Six,' have come in once more. Mr. Horace Plunkett, Unionist, failed in being re-elected for South Dublin, because the ultra-Protestant Unionists, Lord Ardilaun at their head, would not support a man who gave some appointments on the new Irish Board of Agriculture to Catholics. When the Conservatives fell out, Mr. Horace Plunkett lost his seat, and the Nationalists of South Dublin showed what

union could effect by returning their man for the strongest Tory borough south of the Boyne. Many Nationalists, who believe in Mr. Plunkett's honesty of purpose, regret the man, but feel that in voting with their fellow Nationalists they acted rightly for the cause of unity and nationality, as Mr. Plunkett candidly declares himself a staunch enemy to Home Rule, though he is of opinion that the Catholics of Ireland should have a Catholic University. His Nationalist opponents believe that the Catholic University question would be speedily and satisfactorily (from their point of view) settled if Ireland had the settling of her own affairs.

In Galway there was a fiasco. Through local influences the Hon. Mr. Morris, a Catholic Unionist—the most objectionable sort we have—ousts a Nationalist. In Cork Mr. William O'Brien succeeds Mr. Maurice Healy. In South Meath there is a mystery. Mr. John Parnell, brother to Charles Stewart Parnell, was apparently unprepared to deposit the money necessary for the expenses of a contested election. Mr. John Parnell was the chosen candidate of the people, and when he found an unexpected rival in the field on nomination day, he had but to ask the sheriff for a brief delay, go to a telegraph office and wire to the executive of the National Election Fund for the required deposit, which could have been sent by telegram. However, he did not do this. Mr. Carew, a gentleman who had just been rejected by a Dublin constituency, had an agent present who paid the necessary moneys, and, there being no other candidate proposed, Mr. Carew was declared there and then member for South Meath, without having received a single vote from the men he claims to represent. Mr. John Parnell is not a strong politician, but he is brother to one for whom there are feelings in Irish hearts that lead even many who were opposed to Charles Stewart Parnell's views in his latter days to provide handsomely for this brother and elect him to a seat in Parliament. Mr. Carew, who ousted John Parnell, professed himself quite dismayed upon finding that officious friends had placed him in such a position; so he said, at least, and he stated that he would resign in favor of the candidate chosen by the electors. Mr. John Redmond, who has formally adopted the programme of unity and the United Irish League, has addressed a letter to the public, in which he intimates that Mr. Carew is expected to keep his word and retire. This the latter could have done already by applying for the Chiltern Hundreds, for the granting of which during parliamentary recess there is precedent, but, so far, he has not done so, and some are inclined to think he will not retire, even when Parliament meets. In fact, there is a mystery over this particular seat in Parliament. But, on the whole, the Irish are satisfied with their 82 Nationalist members, and are satisfied that Ireland has done well in showing that there is practically no change in the attitude and sympathies of the people, and that, instead of increasing, dissensions have materially lessened.

THE VICEROYALTY.

It was generally believed that Lord Cadogan was about to resign the Viceroyalty, and rumors were afloat that once again we were to have a Marlborough at Dublin Castle with his young American wife, the great-granddaughter of the New York ferryman, Vanderbilt. However, the daughters of American millionaires who marry British noblemen are liable to forget all the traditions of their self-made fathers and to become far more aristocratic and autocratic than if born amidst the aristocracy, so no sympathy for the 'mere Irish' need have been looked for from the American Duchess of Marlborough had she come to Dublin Castle. But for a time, at least, it has just been decided that Lord Cadogan is to remain in office. Strange that a man like Lord Dufferin, who has been England's plenipotentiary in so many lands and whose family is so long connected with Ireland, should apparently never have been offered the Viceroyalty of his native land. He is a gifted diplomatist, a perfect gentleman in manner, kindly in disposition, and certainly not a Home Ruler, so that he might prove a Viceroy who would be safe for the upholding of British authority, yet a calming element at the head of Irish affairs.

THE NEW CHIEF SECRETARY.

Mr. Gerald Balfour retires from that heart-breaking situation, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and is replaced by a man whose direct ancestor's name is dear to every Irish heart. Lord Edward Fitzgerald's dust lies in a vault within a stone's throw of Dublin Castle. Lord Edward died for Ireland's freedom: Mr. Wyndham, his great-grandson, comes amongst us—so 'tis said—with a heart as anti-Irish as was that of Lord Castlereagh.

Mr. Wyndham, who is reputed to be a handsome likeness of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, is great-grandson to the latter, through Lord Edward's and Pamela's daughter, who married Sir Guy Campbell; her daughter, Madeline, was married to a younger son of the first Lord Leonfield and was mother to Mr. George Wyndham.

It seems strange that any man with a fair future before him should covet the position of Chief Secretary for Ireland, for every man who has spent any time in that office for the last 50 years has left it with either broken health or shattered reputation. The reason is easily found. The men who covet the post, to which is frequently attached far more real power than to that of Lord Lieutenant, usually come to Ireland utterly ignorant of and always out of sympathy with the Nation. They are at once surrounded by, visited by, fêted by, flattered by the men and women whose wealth, power and prosperity depend upon the maintenance of that ignorance and want of sympathy: even a man with a good heart and kindly inclinations cannot resist the (mis)leading strings into which the Irish Chief Secretary at once falls. Friction with the people begins, is met with opposition, misrepresentations lead to anger on the part of the man of power; the angry, and usually illegal, use of that power only leads to more determined resistance on the part of a better organised nation than we had a hundred years ago: the strong official, urged on secretly and openly by those who profit by his angry severity, loses time, temper and self-control, and though he may succeed in worrying and coercing the troublesome Irish, it is to his own loss in the end, and he only leaves the