

Irish News.

OUR IRISH LETTER.

(From our own correspondent.)

Dublin, January, 1901.

NEW YEAR FESTIVITIES.

So far, the opening of the new century, as far as Dublin society is concerned, has been all joy and merriment for the little folk. The season for their elders will open with Castle festivities, but the children rush at once into joyous celebrations with the coming of Santa Claus, and this year, more than ever, has been a children's New Year, the most brilliant of all functions having been a juvenile fancy ball at the Mansion House. No scene could exceed in prettiness that of about 1000 happy little boys and girls dancing away as dancing should be done, with their very hearts in their heels, the marvellous variety of their fancy costumes making a rare picture of genuine fairyland such as no imagination could conjure up.

Nor were the children of the poor forgotten, for many a rich feast was spread for the waifs and strays of the city and suburbs, and I must record that the best pantomime of the season was that produced at the Rotunda by orphan boys under the charge of the Christian Brothers; the little fellows not only delighted the public, but netted £300 for a most deserving charity.

FABRICS MADE FROM PEAT.

In my last letter I spoke of great possibilities in the future for the products of our native bogs. I read lately that Herr Zschornor, of Vienna, has been experimenting for the last 12 years with peat, and with the most astonishing results. A building has been exhibited in which everything, 'from the carpets on the floor to the paper on the walls, was made from peat.' It is found that fabrics woven from the fibrous part of the peat have the toughness of linen and the warmth of wool, that there is scarce a textile fabric that cannot be woven from these fibres, and that blankets and other coverings used for horses and cattle have been found to excel in warmth and cleanliness. If all the precious qualities attributed to peat be true, the great peat bogs of Ireland may yet prove a real source of wealth and comfort to this country, and the experiments that have been started or are in contemplation will be watched with great interest over here.

HONOR FOR A PRIEST.

There is a series of 'Manuals of Catholic Philosophy' in use in Catholic colleges. One of these, *Psychology: Empirical and Rational*, is the work of an Irish priest, the Rev. Michael Maher, S.J., now of Stonyhurst, formerly a pupil of Tullabeg, County Carlow. Father Maher's book, noteworthy in many ways, is especially noteworthy in that it shows how full, accurate, and acute were the answers of the schoolmen to practically every question of importance which puzzles the twentieth century psychologists. The Senate of the London University has just decided to confer the degree of Doctor of Literature upon the learned author, in recognition of the excellence of this work, which has reached its fourth edition and has won the highest praise from non-Catholic scholars at home and in America.

THE QUEEN'S DEATH.

Just as I had written these last lines came a messenger with the startling news: The Queen died at half-past six o'clock. Though for three days it was known that the aged Sovereign was passing away, still it was not until the man suddenly announced the fact and I went out a moment into the dark night to listen to the tolling of the passing bell that I realised what a strange, solemn break, as it were, upon the life of every individual in these countries is that sudden ceasing to be of the personality that has always, somehow, been in our lives. We never remember a time that we had not some picture of 'the Queen' stamped in our minds: she was always there; always a real, living part of our world, from the baby days when we first gazed on a bright penny bearing her likeness and associated 'the Queen' with something good. Then came the days when we sat upon the ground, rapt in the joys of an immense old volume of *The Queen Newspaper*. In our mothers' days, illustrated papers were not carelessly glanced at and then flung away; they were carefully preserved and bound (I can see the volumes now: mottled sides and morocco gilt backs and corners), and we, little people, made acquaintance with her Majesty and Prince Albert and a row of sons and daughters, and wondered much and felt disappointed to find that the Queen was dressed in very plain bonnet and shawl and that her little girls were tucked frocks and curious long white pantaloons, instead of being dressed as were the kings, queens, and princesses in fairy tales. Strange, that at the hour of that aged Queen's death, my memory should suddenly leap back to my childhood's thoughts of royal dignity and bliss, to the days when I firmly believed in the saying 'happy as a queen'; and, somehow, that lonely-sounding passing bell, heard as I stood out under the dark sky, brought to my heart a feeling of sorrow for the woman I had known of all my life, yet had never known; a feeling of sorrow for the children to whom she, 'the Queen' to all the rest of the world, was always mother; a feeling of a strange blank, as if something had gone out suddenly from everyone's life. Then, yesterday afternoon, came the booming of guns and the running up of the royal flag that had hung at half mast from the previous day: 'Le Roi est mort; vive le Roi!'

THE KING PROCLAIMED.

In Dublin the proclamation of King Edward VII. was kept strangely quiet. When Queen Victoria was proclaimed Queen, hope was high in Ireland. O'Connell and his fellow Catholics had been

helpful in securing the young Sovereign in her rights, from which a strong party were intriguing to oust her. It was believed her Majesty would gratefully remember O'Connell's action and be generous to his country, and so there was a brilliant pageant through Dublin, when the Ulster King at Arms, attended by heralds, noblemen, and a gay throng of citizens, proclaimed Victoria Queen at the Castle gates, at the site of the ancient Tholsel, at the Corn Market, at the Rotunda, at College Green, and at the Mansion House, amid the joyous acclamations of the people. Yesterday, there was a hastily announced meeting of the Privy Council, attended by the Viceroy, the Lord Mayor, three Aldermen of the Corporation, and some dozen or two Law Lords, Officials of the Castle, and others. Immediately after the signing of the proclamation, a procession issued from the Castle into the space outside the gates, and there only, the Ulster King at Arms read the proclamation of the accession to the throne of King Edward VII., hitherto known as the Prince of Wales. The hour at which the ceremony was to take place had not been publicly announced, so that comparatively few witnessed this interesting ceremony. The procession consisted of: two mounted men of the metropolitan police, who led the way; next came a troop of Lancers and the trumpeters; then the Lord Mayor, attended by the sword bearer and mace bearer; the Lord Chancellor and Chief Secretary came next, followed by the other members of the Privy Council, walking two and two, and wearing their robes and levee dress. Athlone Pursuivant came next, on horseback, and after him rode Ulster King at Arms, carrying in his hand the proclamation he was to read, both functionaries arrayed in gorgeous heraldic costumes. The procession was closed by the Lord Lieutenant in one of the State carriages and attended by his private secretary and aide-de-camp. The band struck up the English National Anthem (henceforth to be known as 'God save the King'), Athlone called aloud, 'Oyez! Oyez!' All people are commanded to keep silence while Ulster King at Arms reads the proclamation of his Majesty the King. Ulster then, in a loud, clear voice, read the proclamation, and at its close, waving his staff of office, called out 'God Save the King,' whereupon trumpets rang out and the band again struck up 'God Save the King,' while the booming of the cannon in the Phoenix Park could be distinctly heard firing three rounds of twenty guns. The ceremony over, the procession returned to the castle, and when the Lord Lieutenant reached his State apartments the historic function was at an end.

Had the Queen lived, all arrangements had been made for a three days' visit in April from the Prince and Princess of Wales to Mount Stewart, the Antrim residence of Lord Londonderry, and a subsequent visit of a week to the Viceroy at the Phoenix Park, but it is now decided that the King and Queen will not come to Ireland this year, at least.

What will the new reign mean for this country? It is well known that the Prince of Wales favored Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Gladstone's views on the Irish question, but the King may lack both the will and the power to meddle in the question of legislation for Ireland. We can be very wise, discreetly shake our heads and say: time will tell.

Meanwhile, every Irish heart is softened towards the aged dead Queen, whose heart was broken, it is said, by the many sorrows that clouded the last years of her long reign, and there is not one but says for her that beautiful prayer: May she rest in peace.

A CONTRAST

For some years past a most unseemly wrangle has been going on between the pastor of a Dublin Anglican church, Saint Bartholomew's, and some of his parishioners. The church contained a cross, placed in a conspicuous position; the parishioners maintained this cross to be an unholy, ungodly object and requested the minister to remove it. This the rector refused to do, and after much wrangling over the matter, some members of the congregation stole into the church and smashed the cross. Litigation ensued, and finally, after 'much had been said on both sides,' the case was adjudged a malicious injury, offenders unknown, and the citizens, Catholics and all, have to pay the whole cost.

Now, her late Majesty the Queen, Defender of the Faith, was head of the Anglican Church. His Majesty, Edward VII., succeeds as Head of the Church of England and Defender of the Faith, yet all the descriptions of her late Majesty's lying in State in the Chapelle Ardente at Osborne tell us that upon her bier was laid a gold cross; at the head of the bier hung a picture of the Infant Christ in His Mother's arms, on the wall at one side was a famous painting of the Virgin and Child surrounded by angels; on another a painting of the Visitation, with the inscription: 'Magnificat Anima mea Dominum'; an immense floral cross was opposite the bier, flowers and lights were on the sacred table. A strange contrast to the contention of these Dublin Protestant Episcopalians that the cross is an unholy, ungodly sign of idolatry.

M.B.

COUNTY NEWS.

DONEGAL.—A New Industry.—A Scottish firm—Messrs. Morton and Darvel, Ayrshire—are building a place at Killybegs, Donegal, to accommodate over 100 workers for the purpose of manufacturing 'Turkey' carpets by hand-loom weavers. Much attention has been called to this industry, from the fact that the late Queen Victoria ordered a Donegal carpet. The design chosen is in shaded red of a very fine quality, and on handsome rose-colored ground. The variety of beautiful designs was particularly remarked on by Sir Fleetwood Edwards when conveying the order. This new industry will give employment to many hundreds of girls and boys, and one of the most important features will be the rearing of sufficient sheep on these western highlands to supply the full requirements of a business whose goods are made entirely of wool. This wool will be spun and dyed on the spot. Turning to the statistics on which this industry is based, it is reckoned that one