

Irish News

OUR IRISH LETTER

(From our own correspondent.)

Dublin, June, 1903.

The Royal Visit.

The King and Queen are coming, that is a certainty, and the date has been fixed for the 20th or 21st of July. There are debates in political circles as to the amount of nationality that is to enter into the reception of his Majesty. He is credited with a desire to give us Home Rule, and, personally, no one in Ireland is unfriendly to King Edward. We all want to see Queen Alexandra, a woman who has every woman's good word, and that means a very high compliment, for you may pin your faith to the woman who is admired and esteemed by her own sex.

The Viceregal Lodge in the Phoenix Park has been all newly done up, from garret to cellar, in preparation for the Royal Family, although a thorough overhauling and re-furnishing were done when the late Queen came over. Their Majesties, it is said, will visit the Viceroy at his new country residence, Rockingham, formerly the home of Colonel King Harman; spend a short time in Belfast, go south, visit the Cork Exhibition, and probably take a run through Killarney and the congested districts of the west.

Rockingham has been lately rented and in part re-furnished with antique furniture by Lady Dudley. It is a most picturesquely situated country seat, close to Boyle, County Roscommon. Boyle is a town that grew up around a Cistercian Abbey dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded in 1161 and a dependency of the great Abbey of Mellifont, County Louth. In 1197 Cornelius MacDermot, King of Moylurg, died at Boyle Abbey in the habit of the Order. In 1235, the English forces encamped within the walls of the monastery seized upon all its belongings, and even stripped the monks of their habits, as a punishment for assisting the King of Connaught. In 1569 Queen Elizabeth gave the abbey and lands to a layman, and, after many changes of proprietorship the property was given, in 1603, to Sir John King, whose descendants, the Earls of Kingston, and lastly Colonel the Hon. King-Harman, have owned the place ever since.

Rockingham House

is about two miles from the town of Boyle, on the south-west side of Lough Ce, or, as it is Anglicised, Lough Key, and is a magnificent house in the Grecian Ionic style of architecture. The rows of Ionic columns that decorate the facade have a strikingly graceful effect in conjunction with the beautiful scenery of wood and lake amid which the house stands. There are four grand entrances to the demesne, which extends over 2000 acres of richly-planted lands.

Not far off are the picturesque ruins of the ancient abbey, in which were written the annals of Lough Ce, a rich store of historical information, so constantly referred to by all learned Irish writers. The remains now to be seen of the once beautiful buildings are the nave, choir and transept of the church, with a lofty and massive tower. The nave is 131 feet long by 25 feet in width, and is separated from the aisles by a range of massive circular arches supported by circular and clustered columns. The tower is supported by four massive columns 48 feet high, the whole enriched by carvings of varied designs displayed on bases, etc. The grace of windows and arches remains and the extent of ground evidently once covered by the various buildings show that the abbey must have been a noble pile, worthy of the exquisite spot in which the monks of old built it. A wonderful love of the beautiful in nature those early religious had. I have never seen one of their chosen retreats that was not lovely, was not such as we often call 'an earthly Paradise.'

A Record Bazaar.

A few days ago, what we may almost call the bazaar of the century closed, a magnificent success. The net results are not yet published, but not only Dublin, but all Ireland, and indeed all the world, joined hands on this occasion to show the esteem and love our Irish Christian Brothers have won wherever they have gone to work for the education of Catholic youth. The bazaar was held to provide funds for new buildings for the novitiate of the Brotherhood. For over a year preparations have been going on to make the occasion worthy of the cause, and well did the legions of friends of the Christian Brothers respond to the call. The bazaar took place in the Rotunda buildings and gardens, and the temporary erections necessary for stall-holders were of

the most interesting description, being representations of all the most beautiful of the ancient historic ruins that so enrich every county in Ireland. Mellifont Abbey, Muckross, Clonmacnoise, Cormac's Chapel at Cashel, and so on, furnished models for picturesque door-ways, windows, cloisters, towers, the whole a splendid lesson in antiquarian and ecclesiastical lore.

Of a certainty, the Christian Brothers, who have done so much to earn the gratitude of thousands of successful men the world over, could not but feel their hearts dilate with that legitimate pleasure that the reception of gratitude must ever bring, for, from the richest to the poorest, old and young boys in every nook and corner of Ireland worked for them as they would work for their own fathers, so that 'Juvena' will be found to have been, as I said before, the record bazaar of the century.

A Good Work.

Lady Dudley, our Viceroy's wife, is just now making a motor tour through the West of Ireland, she and the Lord Lieutenant having just opened the Cork Exhibition, which is in full swing for the second year, and to which we all wish eminent success.

Lord and Lady Dudley seem generally interested in some useful and kindly schemes for the benefit of the people. One of these schemes is to extend to the very poor districts of rural Ireland a system of nursetending for the sick poor that is a vast improvement on the old plan. It is to establish a much larger staff of trained nurses for house to house visiting, so that each country district should have a regularly trained hospital nurse who will visit the sick in their homes every day, several times daily in cases where such care is required. Wherever I have seen these nurses at work amongst the poor, I have seen that they are really a comfort. They are a class quite apart from those who go amongst the wealthy. Many and very mixed motives bring the latter to their occupation, but those who devote themselves to the poor appear to me to be actuated only by high motives, and, consequently, their work is well learned and well done. Nothing but charity could tempt a woman to take up the life these nurses have to lead. They go, not to homes of comfort and luxury, where there are servants to wait on them, refined surroundings, often agreeable society, good living, and rich presents. No, the nurse for the poor gets a bare stipend and simple lodging, her visits are to the miserable cabins and cottages where it is sometimes impossible to be cleanly; she has to tend her patients in the midst of every discomfort and impediment, to make the best of the little that poverty can supply for the relief of often loathsome disease, to work in crowded rooms, to look daily on all the pain and privation of suffering in the midst of want. She cannot but be a good woman, and I must say I have seen none of these Jubilee Nursetenders (as they are called) who did not deserve admiration and respect. So if Lord and Lady Dudley succeed in establishing a sufficiently large fund to supply one such nurse to each poor country district, they will have forwarded at least one good work in Ireland.

M.B.

COUNTY NEWS.

CAVAN.—A Reminder of the Penal Times

At Gowna, County Cavan, on the feast of Corpus Christi, the foundation-stone of a new church was laid by the Most Rev. Dr. Hoare, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. The stones for the new edifice are being taken from the Mass Rock close at hand, where, in the penal times, the people of the locality met feloniously to worship God. During the work an interesting discovery has been made. Two mounds were brought to view, which, on being opened, were found to contain human remains. Bones were discernable, which, on being exposed to the air, crumbled to dust. The inference is evident, and, according to the parish priest, confirms a local tradition, viz., that the worshippers were surprised during the Holy Sacrifice and massacred and their bodies interred on the spot.

CORK.—The Exhibition

On May 29, in delightful weather and under the most promising auspices, the new Cork Exhibition was opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Lord Dudley was presented with several addresses, and was received with cheers by large crowds. Amongst those who received the Lord Lieutenant at the Exhibition were the following:—His Lordship the Mayor, the Most Rev. Dr. Callaghan (Bishop of Cork), Right Rev. Dr. Meade (Protestant Bishop of Cork), Sir John Chute Neligan (Recorder of Cork), Rev. Father Donnelly, C.M. (Sunday's Well), Rev. Father Walshe (do.), Rev. P. J. Dowling (do.). In reply to the addresses presented by the executive committee of the Exhibition, Lord Dudley spoke of the hopeful outlook in Irish affairs, and, later on, in reply to the toast of his health, he dealt at length with the agricultural and industrial conditions prevailing in Ire-