

Irish News

GENERAL.

Fleet-Surgeon Godfrey Taylor, whose name appears in the official list of the missing from the Formidable, was a Wexford gentleman, the son of Mr. Godfrey Taylor, of Fethard, and the brother-in-law of the Hon. Cecil Atkinson, K.C., of the Irish Bar.

Of the members of the Irish Party who have participated in the final victory of Home Rule 13 are survivors of the original party, who voted for Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill in 1885. The names of this 'Old Guard' of Nationalism are:—Messrs. Abraham, Clancy, Condon, Dillon, Nolan, Pat O'Brien, John O'Connor, T. P. O'Connor, J. J. Kelly, John E. Redmond, William Redmond, Sheehy, and Sir Thomas Esmonde.

THE FLAG OF THE IRISH BRIGADE.

There seems to be little doubt (writes a London correspondent) that the flag of the famous Irish Brigade which has hung in the Convent Les Dames Irlandaise at Ypres, and which was reported to have been brought to Oulton Convent by the fugitive nuns, is still in Belgium, but in safe keeping. The statement seems to have originated from the statement that Mr. John Redmond had heard from a niece of his, who was in the Irish Benedictine Convent when the church was struck by German shells, that the grand old flag had been saved. This led to the conclusion that the fleeing Sisterhood had brought it with them to England, where they are at present the guests of the Benedictine Order. The Abbess of the Order corrects the statement, but states that the historic flag is in safe keeping in Belgium.

BRIGHTER DAYS.

The Rev. Father Lane, of Gisborne, who has just returned from a trip to Ireland, informed a reporter that the principal feature of improvements in Ireland was the erection of laborers' cottages by the county councils. The rent was purely nominal (1s a week), and each cottage had an acre or half an acre of land surrounding it. There were over 50,000 of these cottages in Ireland already, and they were a picture of neatness and cleanliness. Prizes were awarded for the best-kept garden plots, and the result could be imagined. 'Another great improvement,' said Father Lane, 'is the old age pension. Each person of 70 years of over is paid 5s a week. The provisions of the Pensions Act are precisely similar to the New Zealand law, but the pensions are not on such a good scale. This 5s a week relieves the old people of anxiety as far as the necessities of life are concerned. I found all round,' said the returned priest, happily, 'that brighter days have dawned for Ireland. The people are still waiting for Home Rule to come into operation, but the war overshadows everything else.'

IRELAND'S DEBT TO FRANCE.

In response to an invitation by the Central News for an expression of opinion in regard to the speech of Professor Kuno Meyer, which is alleged to have been delivered to an Irish audience in New York, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., has made the following reply:—To Germany Ireland has never owed anything. To France, Ireland looked, and not in vain, for sympathy and help during Ireland's darkest hours. In Belgian schools, as at Louvain, the Irish student found for centuries the learning he could not get at home. And these ancient friends, Celtic lands like Ireland, democratic communities like the Irish, are to find Irishmen fighting against and helping the savage invasion of Germany to conquer and hold them down. So far as England is concerned our fight is over, because Ireland has conquered the convictions and the goodwill of the English people. It was part of the contract in the fight for Home Rule that if England conceded good government,

Ireland should concede goodwill, and this treaty Ireland cannot, with honor, treat as a scrap of paper. As to the promises of a separate and independent Ireland which Dr. Meyer professes to offer Ireland in return for abandoning the policy of national honor and national safety, it is not his or his country's to give, and if Germany could conquer England and rule Ireland, I assume that Germany would have the same toleration for her national aspirations and her language as Germany so generously bestows on her Poles, her Danes, and her Frenchmen; but Dr. Kuno Meyer knows that the German navy has as much chance of invading Ireland successfully as of reaching the moon.'

TYNESIDE IRISH BRIGADE.

Mr. W. G. Fallon, writing from Newcastle-on-Tyne to the *Dublin Freeman's Journal*, says:—Just on the passage of the Home Rule Act the project to raise a purely Irish Battalion was discussed in Newcastle Nationalist Club, the scene of many memorable gatherings. Proofs were speedily forthcoming that the proposal would meet with an encouraging response. In fact no difficulty was anticipated. On September 18, however, the War Office was 'unable to accept.' Were not the Northumberland Fusiliers available? But prospective recruits were 'unable to accept' the counter proposal. In justice to the War Office it should be mentioned that the project to establish a 'Tyneside Scottish Brigade' also failed to meet with official approval in the early weeks of the war. At the end of two or three days Irish Nationalist enthusiasm had evaporated. By the middle of October the War Office had repented, and, encouraged by generous financial assistance on the part of Mr. Joseph Cowen—leave was given to establish the 'Irish Brigade.' Result, although thousands of Nationalists had already gone into the 'Fighting Fifths' or the 'Faithful Durhams,' the first list gave 400 names. Two days later there were 500. Irish Nationalist clubs all over Northumberland and Durham became recruiting offices. Three days later—after 'T.P.'s' visit, of course—the first battalion of 1100 Nationalists was all but enrolled. Mr. Cowen's contribution was a further sum of £5000. Colonel Myles Emmet Byrne—healthy name—was appointed commanding officer. By November 6 nearly 1500 Nationalists had presented themselves for enlistment. Thus the vanguard of the second battalion was coming round the corner. Anxieties as to its success were strictly limited to questions whether the imprimatur of the War Office would be forthcoming. But the War Office was also giving the Tyneside Scottish Brigade an amount of trouble. Notwithstanding all this, November 10 chronicled the fact that there were over 2200 Irish recruits in the fortress of the sea-divided Gael within the English lines. A third battalion seemed possible. The incoming Lord Mayor—another Irishman, of course—took a lively interest in the whole business. So did the Mayor of the Borough of Wallsend. His name is O'Hanlon! Then there was the chairman of Newburn Council. On November 16 over 2600 Kellys and Burkes and Sheas were available. That settled it. The formation of a third battalion is a simple proposition with the amazing Irishmen of Newcastle. The organisation of Irish military in Britain marks a new epoch in the history of the Imperial Army.

With a score of Irish recruiting offices opened all over the north country, it is not battalions, but brigades they are visualising. And this despite the four or five thousand Irish recruits who offered their services to English regiments before the War Office had said 'Yes' to the formation of the first battalion. On November 19 the number exceeded 3000. But the daily totals showed signs of declension; not from lack of available and willing talent, but because—as an incensed Donegalman put it—'the Germans had not blown up the War Office.' When several days later Whitehall had not yet sanctioned the formation of the ready-to-hand third battalion, suspicions began to assume the characteristics of certainties. Then—. But no obstacle was too great for these indomitable Irishmen to overcome. At Christmas there were nearly four and a half thousand.