

PEOPLE WE HEAR ABOUT

George W. Russell ("Æ"), who, according to cablegrams, has been appointed a member of the Irish Convention, is not to be confused with George W. E. Russell, ex-M.P., the irrepressible writer of reminiscences. "G.W.E." is English; George is unmistakably Irish. It will be remembered that a suggestion of his in regard to the Convention drew letters of approval from quite a number of Catholic prelates, Protestant dignitaries, and public men. "Æ" is a dreamer and a mystic. If you went into his office at Plunkett House, Merrion Square, Dublin, you would find it more like a painter's studio than a place of business. He is enough of a poet to get a place in the *Oxford Book of Dublin Verse*, and enough of a painter to get his pictures hung at foreign exhibitions. His house in Rathgar Avenue is a centre for intellectuals, poets, and rebels. It was he who discovered James Stephens, one of the most successful writers on the "rebellion." So that it comes with a shock to learn that he helps to earn butter for his bread by being secretary to Sir Horace Plunkett's lively offspring, the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. He is also the editor of an agricultural journal, the *Irish Homestead*, which he has made readable by many lovers of literature who wouldn't know the difference between a buff Orpington and a pure merino.

The Most Rev. Dr. Ilsley, Archbishop of Birmingham, has been the recipient of many congratulations on having entered his 80th year in good health. To the people in his diocese, non-Catholics as well as Catholics, and to a large number of others who have had opportunities of knowing what a great amount of work the Archbishop has done for the Church in this country, it is, we are sure, a cause of much pleasure that his Grace is able, at his advanced age, to discharge the onerous duties of his exalted office. Throughout his long career Dr. Ilsley has given constant proofs of administrative prudence and skill. It is nearly thirty years since he took over the government of the diocese from his able predecessor, Archbishop Ullathorne, and ever since progress under his rule has been steady and uninterrupted. By his devotion to his duties, for the discharge of which he was well prepared, not only by his clerical training and experience, but also by his knowledge as a native of the Midlands, he has gained hosts of friends. It was a profound gratification to them to learn that the Holy Father, recognising his merits, had made him Metropolitan of the new ecclesiastical province of Birmingham, and they will hope and pray that he may be granted yet a considerable number of years to benefit the Church which he has served so faithfully and so zealously.

On June 16, Dr. James Augustin McFaul, Bishop of Trenton, New Jersey, for nearly a quarter of a century, died at his residence in Trenton in his 68th year. Bishop McFaul was a remarkable man in many ways. He took a deep interest in civic matters; he was typically an American Irishman, and his influence was felt far beyond his own flock, and he was the father of the modern method of organising Catholics for civic purposes in the Catholic Federation. He lived to see the little organism which he planted in New Jersey spread through the principal Sees in the United States, and become a great power of nearly 4,000,000 members, recognised as an adjunct to good citizenship by all who took the trouble to examine its objects and methods. And the idea caught on in England, New Zealand, and the various States of Australia, till the Catholic Federation idea seems to be destined to become the method of utilising the articulate voice of the Christian civic problems in this, the layman's century. Bishop McFaul never missed the annual convention of the Catholic Federation held in the principal cities of the United States in August of each year. Even when intellectual and oratorical giants such as Cardinals Gibbons, Farley, and O'Connell, and Archbishops Ireland, Messmer, and Mundelein appeared at the last conference, Bishop McFaul's short address seemed to readers

at a distance to point out the clearest and the most practical path for the Federation. He was always an active member of the executive, and it is safe to say that never was a step taken until Bishop McFaul was consulted. As a writer and lecturer, his fame was nation-wide. He was a member of the New Jersey State Tuberculosis Commission, the United States Catholic Historical Society, and the Irish American Historical Society. He reorganised the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

SCIENCE SIFTINGS

By "VOLT."

Mr. Thomson recently asked the Prime Minister whether, during his visit to England, he brought under the notice of the Imperial authorities the shale deposits of New Zealand as a source for the supply of oil for the Navy? The Minister, in reply, said arrangements are being made by the Imperial Government for an exhaustive report on the mineral resources of every part of the Empire, New Zealand included, and an organisation has already been set up with this object in view.

The output of sandbags in Scotland has become prodigious, and the following marvellous calculations made in France have much interest:—It has been figured out that our sandbags on the Western front, if piled up in a conical heap, assuming them to be full, would make a hill 900 feet high and seven miles round at the base. Their total weight would be more than 800,000,000 tons. If laid end to end, these astonishing bags would encircle the earth 136 times or reach more than one-thirtieth of the way to the sun. Laid on the ground they would occupy 600,000 acres.

At least one celluloid collar was summarily "scrapped" as a result of a lecture given by Nurse Everett at Petone (says the *Post*). One question asked by a member of the audience was as to the cause of his suffering at night from a stiff neck. The nurse at once, without examining the patient, diagnosed the trouble as the result of free perspiration around the neck, conducing to rheumatism, and on closer examination at once spotted the offending collar as the cause of the trouble. The celluloid shuts in the perspiration, which, when cold, causes a chill. She stated that much wrist and throat trouble was caused among nurses when the regulations forced them to wear celluloid collars and cuffs.

A correspondent signing himself "R.F." sent a letter to the editor of the *Lyttelton Times*, inquiring about the mineral wolfram. Inquiries made by a reporter elicited the information that wolfram is used for the preparation of tungsten, and is black in color. It has been found in New Zealand in small quantities, particularly in Stewart Island and on the West Coast. Large quantities of wolfram have been found in Queensland, Portugal, Burmah, and other parts of the world. It is used in the preparation of armor plate. The value of wolfram is determined by the amount of tungsten found in it. At the present time all wolfram produced in the Empire is bought by the British Government for war purposes, the Government giving 55s per cent. per unit of tungsten, or £209 per ton.

It is a remarkable fact that the recent series of earthquakes has been most evident and most persistent in the Wairarapa district (states the *Press*). An explanation of this was sought from a leading geologist. He stated that the centre of the earthquakes had not yet been fixed, as the records were not available, but it was thought that its centre lay out to sea. If so, it might be that the Wairarapa was the nearest land. There was a fault or earthquake line running in the direction of the Chatham Islands to New Zealand, parallel with the Ruahine, Tararua, and Kaikoura ranges. If the centre of the recent disturbances was at the northern end of that line, on which many earthquakes have been plotted, the Wairarapa would be