

GENERAL

Reconstruction of Irish Administration

Mr. Birrell, replying to Captain Craig in the House of Commons on February 13, said the special circumstances which induced the Government to continue Mr. T. W. Russell in office as Vice-president of the Department of Agriculture in Ireland were the qualifications of Mr. Russell for a difficult post and the probability at a not remote date of the reconstruction of the Irish administration.

A Malicious Lie

Mr. John Redmond, in a letter to Mr. Cloin Brown, of the Whitby Liberal Club, has repudiated for the fourth or fifth time a quotation given in the Conservative press to the effect that he said on July 11, 1900, every Irishman in America would rejoice to hear a German army was marching in triumph across England. 'The whole thing,' he writes, 'is a malicious lie.'

The Cultivation of Flax

The area under flax in Ireland, which twelve years ago had fallen to 34,460 acres—the lowest on record—has since shown an improvement, the average acreage for the years 1906-10 having risen to 49,169.

Laborers' Cottages

In the House of Commons on February 9 Mr. Sheehan asked the Chief Secretary if he could state when he proposes to introduce a Bill to redeem his promise that an additional million shall be provided for the purpose of financing the Laborers (Ireland) Act, 1906; if he was aware that this sum will scarcely suffice to meet the immediate requirements of District Councils promoting schemes under the Laborers Acts; if he could declare the intentions of the Government as to the future; and when the proposed amending Bill comes before Parliament would facilities be given for the consideration of urgent amendments which experience has shown to be essential to the due and efficient working of the Act. Mr. Birrell said the Bill would be introduced in a few days. The extra million will be sufficient to provide not only for all immediate requirements but also for all schemes that are likely to be framed in the future so far as can be contemplated.

Losses to the Church by Death

The death of Rev. M. Laverty has taken place at Ligoniel, near Belfast, at the age of 52. Deceased, who had been ailing for close on a year, was a native of Killyfad, County Antrim. He was a brother of Mr. P. Laverty, the well known Belfast solicitor. At Randalstown, County Antrim, on February 13, took place the death of Rev. Michael O'Malley. He was a native of Tower Hill, Cappamore, County Limerick, where he was born in 1845. He was ordained in 1870 and ministered in various parishes of the diocese of Down and Connor, in each of which he earned the esteem of the people. In the diocese of Ferns much regret is felt at the death of Rev. S. J. Cloney, Cloughbawn, which took place after a long illness. The deceased was forty-one years of age. A native of Old Ross, County Wexford, he came of a family that gave to the Church many of its sons, including his brother, Rev. Thomas Cloney, the Administrator of Wexford. Throughout Kerry diocese there is widespread regret at the death of the Very Rev. Canon Davis, V.F., Listowel, in his 82nd year. The Canon, who was very popular, had been parish priest of Listowel for over a quarter of a century, during which period he worked zealously for both the spiritual and temporal interests of his people.

A Challenge

In the *Spectator*, in the congenial columns of which the Anglican Bishop of Durham has given vent to his political antipathies, Mr. Gwynn puts the prelate a question and makes him a challenge (says the *Catholic Times*). The question is whether he has ever remonstrated with the Protestant Unionists in Ireland for their practice of reserving patronage to their own political and religious partisans, or uttered one word of protest against the narrow spirit of monopoly which governs Unionist County Councils and Corporations in Ireland, or shown the least recognition of those instances, neither few nor remarkable, in which Catholic and Nationalist bodies have selected Unionists and Protestants in competition against Catholic Nationalists. Mr. Gwynn reminds this political prelate that in Armagh, where Protestants are 55 per cent. of the population, they hold 94 per cent. of the appointments under the County Council; that in Tyrone, where they are less than half but have a majority of one on the Council, they hold 90 per cent. of the jobs; that in Monaghan, where they are only 34 per cent. of the population, they have 41 per cent. of the appointments; and that 20 per cent. of the appointments in Tipperary, where they are only 6 per cent., are held by the Protestants. The challenge is that the Bishop should produce a single case in which a Nationalist Council has dismissed a Unionist and Protestant official on account of his politics or his religious creed. We shall be much interested to know how the Bishop will reply.

People We Hear About

Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., is now in his sixtieth year; Mr. John Redmond, M.P., is 54, Mr. T. M. Healy is 56, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., is 64, but he does not look it.

Hon. Michael J. Ryan, National President of the United Irish League of America, and actively identified with the business life of Philadelphia, has been elected a trustee of Temple University in that city.

Mr. John O'Connor, M.P., presided at a banquet given in the Inns of Court Hotel, London, on February 11 to the new members of the Irish Party returned at the recent election. The new members were—Alderman Cotton, Mr. P. Crumley, Dr. Esmonde, Mr. J. Fitzgibbon, and Mr. W. H. Redmond.

The Catholics of Belgium are preparing to honor Count Verspeyen, director-in-chief of the *Bien Public*, in celebration of the fiftieth year of his journalistic career. That the Count is in every way worthy of the honors he is about to receive is attested by the fact that the most prominent in the land have given their hearty approval to the proposal.

The Rev. Father Cortie, S.J., who passed through Melbourne the other day on his way to the South Sea Islands, is Professor of Physics in Stonyhurst College, and is the real head of the famous observatory there. The nominal head is Father Sidgreaves, who is unfortunately blind, but his reputation for work in the science of astronomy stands very high. Stonyhurst observers are chiefly concerned in the study of sun spots, on which subject it is the first observatory in England. Father Cortie has been assigned to him a section of the international work, now in progress, of spectroscopically studying and photographing the stars; work mapped out and shared by different observatories. His contributions to the astronomical section of the British Association include papers on the chemistry of the sun and the nature of its spots. In 1906 or 1907 he took a solar expedition to Western Spain, and was reported to be the only observer fortunate enough to obtain a view of the eclipse at totality when the sun was not obstructed by clouds. On this expedition he used the instruments of the Royal Dublin Society.

The recent death of Mr. Michael Cuddahy, the Chicago millionaire, and the appointment of a self-made man, Mr. James A. Farrell, a New York Catholic, as President of the United States Steel Corporation, at a salary of £20,000 a year, bring to mind the fact that another prominent Catholic (Mr. Schwab) has made his way to colossal wealth under very romantic circumstances. It is not quite thirty years since this man of many millions was driving the mail cart between Cresson and Loretto, and filling in his spare hours by working on neighboring farms. A little later he was selling sugar and tea over a grocery counter in Braddock, as a preliminary to driving stakes at a dollar a day for the Carnegie Company. At twenty-two, so rapidly did promotion come in his new sphere of work, he was earning £1000 a year; and three years later we find him superintendent of the Homestead Works on a British Cabinet Minister's income. From this point his advance towards wealth was so meteoric that, long before he emerged from the thirties, he owned shares having a par value of nearly £8,000,000.

Lord Dudley, the retiring Governor-General of the Commonwealth, is only in his forty-fourth year. He was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1902 to 1906, and very few Viceroy of Ireland had been more popular with all classes of the community in the Emerald Isle. Speaking in the House of Lords on February 3, 1908, in opposition to the system of Coercion which had been used by successive Governments in Ireland, he said:—'I would far rather consider the possibility of an amendment in the system of government than fall back upon a permanent attitude of force which some extreme Unionists advocate. And my reason for that can be stated. I believe thoroughly and honestly in the qualities of the Irish race. I believe them to be brave, to be quick-witted, and at heart a loyal people. I believe that the expressions of disloyalty which we, unfortunately, read of from time to time are, as a rule, manufactured articles, and I believe that real disloyalty only exists to a very small extent. Apparently, disloyalty is undoubtedly part of the game in the struggle for national self-government. But, my lords, there is undoubtedly grave discontent and dislike of British government. May I not make an appeal to noble lords who sit upon this side of the House to refrain from attacking, for mere party considerations, a policy which, as I understand it, seeks to allay that dislike by conciliatory methods, and which strives to avoid taking any action which will, if persisted in, inevitably turn discontent into real disloyalty, and which would make it for ever impossible for England to take advantage of and to utilise these great and useful qualities with which, as I think, the Irish people are very richly endowed.'

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