

## THE IRISH LANGUAGE.

In the House of Commons on Monday night (March 5) Mr. O'Clery asked a question with reference to the fact that while Welsh-speaking children in Welsh National Schools were examined in their native tongue, no such examination was held in Irish National Schools. Sir M. H. Beach, in his reply, said that while inspectors of schools in the districts in which the Celtic language is spoken generally take pains to test the intelligence of the children by translating from English into Irish, the Celtic language in Ireland was in a very different position from that which it held in Wales, being in the former country only a spoken language by the few who use it, while in Wales it was a literary language, in which books and newspapers were constantly being printed. Our national self-love ought never to blind us to the truth, and it is impossible to gainsay the substantial accuracy of the Chief Secretary's remarks. The Irish, or, to speak more accurately, the Erse tongue, has shared to the full in one of the most remarkable philological events of recent times—the decay and extinction of the Celtic family of languages. A hundred years ago there were six dialects of the Celtic spoken in Western Europe—the Erse, spoken by the Celtic inhabitants of Ireland; the Gaelic, spoken by the Scotch Highlanders; the Manx, spoken by the people of Man; and the Cornish, by the people of Cornwall, both Manxmen and Cornishmen being very pure Celts; the Breton, the tongue of the people of Brittany, in France; and the Cymric, the language of the inhabitants of Wales. Of these tongues one is dead—the Cornish; it perished within the present century, and some forty years ago Dolly Pentreath, an old woman who lived near the Land's End, was pointed out as the last Cornish-speaking person in the Peninsula. Manx is at the last gasp, is now only spoken in a few out-of-the-way corners of the island, and will probably not survive the present century. In our own country the recent evidence of the Census, and, indeed, the evidence of our own experience, shows that our own ancient tongue is disappearing, that it is now unknown not alone in our own great cities and towns, but in large districts of the country. Alone of all the daughters of the grand old Celtic mother, the Breton and the Welsh live on in comparative strength. On the wild hill-sides of Armorica, in the valleys of Wales, still dwell races brethren to our Irish race in blood and origin, but more faithful than we have been to that ancient tongue in which was first related the deeds of Arthur, in which Columba preached and Ossian sung, which in the night of the dark ages was the vehicle by which the scholars of Erin communicated to the youth of Europe all knowledge, human and divine. Thirty years ago a band of brilliant young enthusiasts dreamed the dream that the ancient Erse tongue could be revived among the Irish people as a national language. This was a noble and touching dream, but it was only a dream, and has long been abandoned even by enthusiasts. We have our duty, however, by this ancient tongue of our fathers—a tongue dear to us, as are all things which made up the old Celtic nationality. Before it passes away we should endeavour to garner and to treasure all the treasures which that tongue contains—treasures of song, history, romance—treasures illustrating the origin of our race, our melancholy but profoundly interesting National story—treasures to which the fullest justice has been done by living English and Scotch scholars, such as Mr. Arnold and Dr. Blackie. The folklore of the Celt is bright and spirituelle beyond that of all other peoples; the songs of the Celt have—even the imperfect translations of Macpherson—profoundly affected such minds as those of Byron and Napoleon. It would be a lasting disgrace to this nation, the eldest daughter of the Celtic sisterhood, if she not alone allowed the tongue of her sires to perish, but if she made no effort to save the precious treasures it contains.—*Weekly Freeman*.

## HIS FIRST NIGHT AT HIS MASTER'S HOME.

(FROM AN AMERICAN PAPER.)

"I do love a dog," said Mr. Sommerbeck, the owner of the big yellow brick house in Spring-street, out on North Hill. "Man's faithful friend; always devoted to his master; always vigilant in his protection; untiring in his efforts to please; docile under discipline, forgiving in his disposition, kind and faithful, man does not half appreciate him nor understand him. I have bought a dog, one that will in his infantine days be a source of unceasing mirth to us all by his innocent gambols, and, as age develops his sterner qualities, will be a faithful, vigilant guardian of our sleeping hours. Let us love him and deal with him as gently and tenderly, and his very life will be devoted to our service. Come, Herzegovina, come! come in and get acquainted with your friends."

Herzegovina was not a very promising-looking dog. He had a pair of black, headlike eyes, that were set in such a steady stare they never winked, but glared through the tangled mass of grizzly hair that hung over them in a heavy fringe. One of his ears had been run over by a freight train or something, and was broken about mid-ships, the end hanging down like a half-masted signal of distress. The other ear stood up bold upright, like the sample on a lightning-rod wagon. His coat was an indescribable pepper-and-salt colour, and the dog appeared to have grown gray from premature trouble. Every time one of the family spoke to him he started and sidled under a chair or behind the sofa with an agility that could only come from long experience, and when Mr. Sommerbeck stooped down to pat his head the cautious creature gave a howl that made the windows rattle, and dived under the nearest table.

"Never mind," said Mr. Sommerbeck, "never mind; he will learn to know us in a few days. He will learn to know us. Learn to know us. Know us."

When the family retired that night the dog was shut up in the carriage-shed, as it was feared he might feel lonesome, and stray

away from his new home. The last lamp had hardly been put out however, when Mr. Sommerbeck heard strange noises in the yard. Somebody was prowling around the barn. Mr. Sommerbeck groaned as he left his snug bed and leaned out of a window to listen and catch a Centennial cold in his head. Evidently there was something or somebody out in the barn, and the master groaned, and dressed, and went down with his heart in his mouth and a lantern in his hand to reconnoitre. He put his ear against the crack of the door; he heard a rasping noise, as of some one cramming things into a bag. He opened the door, and the first thing he saw was the strip of a buggy-cushion. Then he saw some fragments of stuff that looked like the lining of his buggy, and then his attention was attracted to a kind of geyser of curled hair, and he saw the faithful dog throwing his whole soul into the work of digging for rats, where no rat ever was, in the buggy-cushion. The faithful dog had already gnawed the whip in three pieces, chewed the check-rains and one of the traces up into hard, moist-looking knots, and tore Mr. Sommerbeck's stable-coat and a horse-blanket into carpet-rags.

"One consolation," said Mr. Sommerbeck, "it's evident he's a powerful ratter."

Mr. Sommerbeck sat out in the cold until he was chilled through, and held the dog by the neck, wondering what to do with him.

"Confinement is irksome to him, and makes him restless, maybe," said Mr. Sommerbeck, wondering if he couldn't get the buggy fixed before Mrs. S. saw it. "I guess I'll tie him out."

So he tied him to the back fence with a piece of the clothes-line, and again sought his downy couch. He had been in bed about ten minutes when a howl of most unearthly import smote the air, dying away in a prolonged, shuddering gurgle that lifted every hair on Mr. Sommerbeck's head, and emptied all the shrieking, fainting women in the house into his room in one wailing, hysterical torrent. Again and again the howl came swelling up through the closed windows, as though it wailed out of the very walls of the house, and then would come a series of choking, gurgling gasps and asthmatic groans that were too full of horror to listen to without shrieking. Mr. Sommerbeck could feel his hair trying to lift itself out by the roots, and he tried to shout for the police, but the sound of his terror-stricken voice awed him into silence.

"I will go down and see what it is," he said, in a tone of forced calmness.

He dressed, and took the lantern and revolver and went out. Guided by the terrible sounds, he came to where he had tied the dog. No dog was visible, but the rope that was stretched tight across the top of the fence showed where he was. The docile animal had jumped over the fence, and the rope was just long enough to let his hind legs touch the ground. As long as he could stand the dog could howl till he hushed the railroad whistles, and when his weakening legs buckled and let him down, the rope tightened and shut off his wind in a series of chokes and gurgles that were too awful to think about. Mr. Sommerbeck climbed painfully over the fence and tried to lift the dog back into the yard, and as he pushed the howling animal over the fence, it pawed the top of his bald head until it looked like a map of the Servian war. Mr. Sommerbeck wished the faithful dog at the Centennial.

Then it crawled its hind legs down the neck of his night-shirt, and braced its four paws against the fence and pushed back, and walked all over Mr. Sommerbeck's upturned face, howling all the time. Finally, Mr. Sommerbeck pushed him over and heard him drop with a heavy thump on the ground. Then he tried to climb over himself. At last he got one leg over the top of the fence after many grunts, and with a great groan of satisfaction balanced himself on top. His sudden appearance seemed to fill the dog with terror, and in a flash, just as Mr. Sommerbeck dropped on the inside of the fence, the faithful dog went up like a rocket and shot out of sight on the other, and recommenced his hideous howls and gasps. Mr. Sommerbeck felt as though he couldn't groan deep enough as he prepared to scale the dreadful fence. It was discouraging work, but he got to the top at last, lost his balance, and went down on the other side like a land slide, falling plump on the faithful dog and killing it so quick that the doomed animal never whined a protest. Mr. Sommerbeck limped slowly down the alley, and up the street to the front gate. He got in the house and went to bed, and in response to the anxious inquiries of the women as to what was the matter, he merely told them to pull on the clothes-lines in the morning and they would find out.

We are informed that on Thursday last a son of Christian Hanson, about nine years of age, went to a straw stack near the stable to get some straw for horse bedding. He says that while pulling out the straw a huge black bear seized him by the hip and started with him for the woods. The bear held him in such a way that he could make no resistance, but after running half a mile and leaping a high fence, the beast seemed to get out of wind, and let him drop upon the ground while he stood over him with his great red tongue hanging out of his mouth, panting for breath. The boy says he seized hold of the bear's tongue with both hands, and held on until he raised himself upon his hind feet and scratched him in the face with his fore-paws so hard that he let go and ran. The bear did not follow, and the little fellow made the best time possible towards the house. Mr. Hanson was away from home at the time. The next day he and his neighbours followed the bear's track for some distance, and the citizens of Helen will make it warm for Bruin if he does not return to his hole.—*Glencoe (Minn.) Register, February 13*.

An unexampled opportunity is now offered to housekeepers of laying in a supply of such requisites as china, glass, and ironware. Mr. P. Anderson, of George-street, being obliged to remove from his present premises through the expiry of his lease, is offering his stock of valuable goods at extreme reduction.