

## ABSENT-MINDED PEOPLE.

"CAN you—ah—er—tell me the number of my room?"

"Yes, sir—95."

"Ah! thank you—guess—ah—I'll go and get ready for dinner," and the absent-minded man lounged away towards the elevator. The hotel clerk looked after the slowly vanishing guest, and then, turning to a *Star* reporter, who was standing near, said:

"I've seen all kinds of men since I've been in this business, but he is the great original forgetter. He has been here now for three days, and I have to watch him like a baby. I'll bet he'll either forget his way to his room, or when he gets there he won't know why he went there."

"What is he—a genius?" asked the reporter.

"I suppose so; he's an inventor, and he don't know anything but cogs and wheels. He ate two breakfasts this morning; he ordered his lunch to be sent to his room yesterday, forgot about it, came down to the office, bought a New York paper, and read until 5 o'clock p.m. He then came up to my desk and inquired calmly of me what it was he had asked for a little while before. I didn't know, and he could give no idea, so I was in hot water until I questioned the waiters and found out about the lunch. It's laughable to you, but it's not so funny for me, because if I don't take care of him he will surely attack the reputation of the house as soon as he gets away."

"Do you have many of these characters to look after?" inquired the listener.

"Never had one like him," said the clerk. "He's the worst; but we have a great many guests who exhibit signs of preoccupation. Perhaps the commonest examples of absent-mindedness which I see is in regard to door keys. In the winter, when business is rushing, a dozen or more keys will have to be replaced every two days. A guest going away will frequently forget to leave the key in the door of his room or at the desk, and will put it in his pocket, so we have to replace it. The house carpenter is about as good a locksmith as any in the city; he has had so many locks to pick and keys to make. Then people leave articles of wearing apparel, books, memoranda, all sorts of things, in their rooms when they vacate. Well, if they are registered correctly, there is no difficulty in returning them their property, even if they forget to write for it; but where a man registers inaccurately or indefinitely, it may sometimes be hard work to find him."

"There was an Englishman here last winter," continued the clerk, "who deposited nearly £900 in Bank of England notes with me. The next day he was called to New York by a telegram, and having plenty of American money in his wallet, he hurried to the cars, without paying his hotel bill, and never thought about his money or anything but his despatch until he reached New York. I have often seen careful people going over a written list and checking the articles off as they pack them away preparatory to continuing their journey." — *Washington Star*.

## A SHAMEFUL CONSPIRACY.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (says *United Ireland*) has practically confessed to Mr. Sexton a piece of police villainy unsurpassed in the pages of "Rody the Rover." A patriotic blacksmith set up business in Tubbercurry, county Sligo. His forge became not only the centre of a roaring trade but the contriving of a shameful conspiracy. With the prayer-book and with the sledge hammer he was equally active in the cause. "After many an action of power and pride" the fate of all daring revolutionists overtook Bartley the blacksmith. Some black traitor gave the police the hard word. They pounced upon the forge, rooted up the floor, and victoriously bore away the little armament of guns and grim etceteras with which the blacksmith was preparing the day of Ireland's freedom. Nothing could have been more romantic. When the bold Bartly sadly but firmly made himself scarce, there were doubtless poetic youths in Tubbercurry ready to match "The Blacksmith of Limerick," with a versical hero of their own, no less smutty of face and no less leonine of heart. But let us not prolong the agony of the tale through three volumes. Detective Director French fell, and with him fell his detective machinery to pieces. Among other interesting revelations, it turns out that the patriotic blacksmith was simply a policeman on detective duty. His armory was an innocent "plant" of Mr. French's. The prayer-book was used to entrap green young men into conspiracies to murder and other like gentle aids to promotion in the force. The guns were lent gratis for whatever outrages the active and enterprising murder-smith could set a-going. The forge was, in plain English, a manufactory of the most diabolical murder, conspiracy, treachery, and perjury under the patronage of the Castle Detective Department, if not by direct and special appointment to his Excellency! That is substantially the upshot of the avowal wrung by Mr. Sexton from our Scotch Chief Secretary.

Yet we are not told that there is to be any special inquiry with respect to a detective department of which such infamies are the monstrous birth. On the contrary, we are left to infer that the policeman lately serving in Tubbercurry in a blacksmith's apron is at present serving in Ulster under the name of Woods, and has doubtless obtained several stripes, if not an autograph letter from Earl Spencer for his services to society. M'Dermott, Noonan, Bartley, the blacksmith—these are but a few of the Detective Director's instruments for the better diffusion of crime and outrage. We are surprised that Mr. Campbell-Bannerman resolutely promises not to give French a fraction of secret-service money and that the Crown will on no account admit him to bail. We would not be a bit amazed if the Crown took effective measures next Commission to "remove" him definitely to penal servitude. They have only to produce the boy Strong, whose evidence they have hitherto entirely suppressed. A few weeks' liberty with pen and ink and papers, might tempt French into leav-

ing the public some startling *memoires a servir* to an understanding of the gulfs of hellish crimes which yawn underneath the present blood-stained *regime* at the Castle. Who knows but peradventure Hallissey the Blacksmith was simply one of French's chickens? His departure for parts unknown may have been only the cover of his translation to the glory of head-constableness in some warm and loyal corner of Ulster. We are thinking of obtaining a correct photograph of the well-beloved Hallissey, that our northern readers may survey the features of their head-constables and sergeants, and see whether perchance Paste-pot Plunkett's joy may not have passed out of his black apron into gold stripes.

*United Ireland* of a late date says it has fresh evidence that the notorious James M'Dermott is an emissary in the pay of the police. The outrages he has planned are a part of the conspiracy directed from Dublin Castle to bring discredit on the Irish race. The paper reiterates the charge that Edenburn House, at Tralee, was blown up with an infernal machine which was one of the three sent to the county Kerry by M'Dermott, and which had been purchased with British gold, and Mr. O'Brien says that he had evidence to justify the belief that a large number of the so-called dynamite outrages which had been charged upon the League organizations were really the outcome of plots inspired by fellows like M'Dermott, who, being in pay of the authorities, managed to retain their sinecures by devising or abetting outrages. Mr. O'Brien declares that the Irish Party are determined upon getting at the bottom of the whole business, and that they hope to expose the villainy which the English Government has inflicted upon Ireland in its pretended work of uprooting agrarian crimes. He has the original of a letter written by M'Dermott to a friend, after the latter had left Ireland and reached America, in which M'Dermott admitted that he organized the Mill-street dynamite conspiracy, for which Denis Deasy, who died last May while incarcerated in Chatham Convent Prison, was convicted. In the same letter M'Dermott refers to three infernal machines, which he declares he had despatched to Kerry.

## THE IRISH BOUNDARIES COMMISSIONERS.

MR. SEXTON, M.P., has addressed the following letter to Mr. Gladstone:—

London, Dec. 11, 1884.

Sir,—You are probably aware that the following question stood in my name on the order paper of the House of Commons to be addressed to you on Saturday last:—

"To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he has considered that the work of arranging the new electoral areas provided for by the Seats Bill, a work which in England and Scotland is confided to commissions principally composed of eminent civilians, well known to the general public, will in Ireland fall into the hands of a Government department composed of three military officers quartered on a barrack in Phoenix Park, and acting in connection with another Government department composed of one commissioner only, who has for his official solicitor Mr. George Bolton; whether there will be associated in the work of re-arrangement of electoral areas in Ireland any gentleman possessing the confidence of the Irish people and of the party in this House not represented in the negotiations which led up to the introduction of the Seats Bill; whether the definition of the duties to be performed in England (contained in the letter of the 28th ult. from the President of the Local Government Board to the Secretary of State) are intended also to be applied to Ireland; and whether in Ireland public sittings will be notified and held for the reception of evidence as to the most just and expedient re-arrangement of electoral areas in that country."

I would have addressed this question to you on Saturday had the usual opportunity been allowed. But a motion by Lord Richard Grosvenor for the adjournment of the House, and a "count" at the instance of a supporter of the Government brought the sitting to an end before the question on the paper could be reached. Thereupon I caused my query to be set down for the day on which the House resumes its sittings; and I should not venture now to trouble you but for an intimation given to me by the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant that he had not expected the motion for adjournment of the House, and had made preparation to reply to the questions intended to be addressed to him. The right hon. gentleman has since forwarded to me some written answers, and from these circumstances I am led to the surmise that, like the Chief Secretary, you may not have anticipated the motion for adjournment, and may have been ready and desirous to answer in due course the questions addressed to you and set down in the paper for the day. Indeed, the *Daily News* of yesterday announced—not accurately, but, nevertheless, apparently by authority—that written replies had been already sent by Ministers to all the questions set down for Saturday last by members of the Irish party.

You informed the House of Commons on the 1st inst. in your speeches on the introduction of the bill, that the result of the labours of the English Commission would be "brought under the direct judgment of the House." In the same speech it is laid down, "That confidence in the commission is a very important matter"; and on the 4th inst., in reply to Mr. Chaplin, who asked whether the report and recommendation of the Boundary Commissioners were to be open to any modification by the House of Commons, you said, "It is obvious that great confidence ought to be placed in the report of such a commission. I am willing to suppose that they (the commissioners) will not give satisfaction to the House." These words were evidently dictated by the hope that when the proposals of the commissioner are brought under the direct judgment of the House that judgment may be a ratification by general assent. But I venture to think it is obvious even now that so far as concerns Ireland such a hope cannot in any degree be realised unless due regard is had to the opinion of the Irish people at large in fixing the constitution and determining the procedure of the commission appointed for their country.