

IRISH EMIGRATION.

In the decennial period ending in 1851 the population of Ireland was found to have diminished by 20 per cent. In the next succeeding decade a further decrease took place of close upon 12 per cent. A still further diminution of nearly 7 per cent, occurred in the ten years immediately preceding 1871; so that in thirty years the population fell 33 per cent., or from being 8,175,124 to 5,412,377; whilst during the same time in England and Wales the population increased from 16,000,000 to 22,000,000, and in Scotland from 2,620,000 to 3,360,000. In 1881 the population was found to be 5,174,836, and was estimated to be 4,982,376 on the 31st of December, 1883. In 42 years, therefore, the Irish people have suffered a diminution of numbers amounting to 3,192,748, each succeeding period as it went by showing a gradual lessening of the population, until at the present moment we have touched a lower level than at any time since the Union. Although these figures are being constantly quoted, and are familiar to everyone, they deserve none the less to be again repeated, and as a perpetual reminder of the fact that, what with emigration, diminishing ratios of marriages and births and increase of death rates, the Irish race in Ireland are continuing to be depleted at a pace that must, if not speedily controlled, lead to their extinction as a practical factor in the government of the empire. Population is now, more than it ever has been, the basis of political influence, and the fact cannot be too much insisted upon that in every emigrant that leaves our shores there is a diminution of strength and a sinking in vitality for those who remain at home. How rapidly that strength is ebbing may be judged from the fact that in the year 1883, no less than 108,724, far the larger number of these being persons of between 15 to 35 years of age, emigrated from Ireland. If it were certain, or even probable, that these persons were bettering their condition by a change of country, there might be something to console us in the reflection that they were obeying what is almost a law of nature in searching abroad for the prosperity and happiness that they are unable to find at home. But it is only too certain, on the contrary, that at present the prospects are very bad for intending emigrants, and it becomes consequently the duty of those upon whom the people rely for advice and information to use all their power and authority, if necessary, to counteract what under present circumstances we must characterise as the almost insane desire of thousands of young Irishmen and women to get away anywhere out of Ireland. That there should exist a desire of this kind—resembling in its intensity nothing so much as the instinct of certain fishes, only in this latter case instinct leads back to the place of birth and not from it—is hardly to be wondered at, considering the wretched conditions under which the majority of the Irish peasants are obliged to lead their miserable lives. Perhaps no other race in the world except the Jews have held up so long against adverse circumstances, and the thing to be surprised at is not so much that they have managed to maintain themselves so well through a never ceasing struggle as that they have managed to maintain themselves at all. Every new census comes to supply them with an account of diminished trade, decaying industries, cities declining into the rank of towns, towns reduced to the position of villages, and villages disappearing wholesale off the face of the land. In 1879, of the total acreage of 20,328,753 which Ireland possesses, the extent under crops—wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, turnips, etc.—was 5,121,788; and in 1884 this amount was reduced to 4,872,969 acres, showing a decrease of 248,819 in six years, or an average annual diminution of more than 41,000 acres. Only 806,467 acres were devoted to potatoes in 1883, whilst the same crop occupied 1,039,724 acres in 1864. Between 1863 and 1883 the land under cereal crops decreased by 731,207 acres, and that under green crops by 247,569, the net decrease during these 20 years being no less than 607,630 acres of land that had once been cultivated and was still capable of bearing crops, but that for want of hands to till it, and a variety of other circumstances closely connected with this fact, was falling back into a state of nature at a rate of 30,000 acres a year. The oat crop, which in 1864 had covered 1,814,886 acres, had decreased in 1883 to 1,381,904; and again, whilst there were 16,295 acres of fallow or uncropped arable land in 1879, this quantity went on increasing until in 1883 it had reached the total of 25,000 acres. So that whenever we look for increase we are met by evidence of diminished cultivation, lands being taken away from the purposes of agriculture, and allowed to return by regular and constant progress to a state of sterile wildness. A similar story may be told of the chief cities and towns throughout the country, although this fact is by no means as significant as the falling off in the general population, to which reference has been already made. Belfast has considerably increased in numbers, and so, to some extent, have a few other Northern towns; but Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Kilkenny, Tralee, Drogheda, all show signs of a decay which is not functional, but organic, and which, unless under the influences of heroic treatment, is certain to go on until the inevitable end. This is not a pleasant statement to make, nor are these agreeable topics to dwell upon at any time, but no good end can be served by shutting our eyes to facts, which will remain in evidence even if we decline to see them; nor, if we ignore them ever so much, will they fail to present themselves again and again until they are recognised as symptoms of a general disease that is not indeed unaccompanied with danger, but it is yet not without a means of cure if the competent men were allowed to take the case in hands.—*Dublin Freeman*.

The fact that Carter and Co., of George street, are the only Drapers in Dunedin doing a strictly Cash Trade who import their own Goods direct from Home Markets, is the one cause of their being able to sell cheaper than any other firm. Carter and Co. have just opened, ex S.S. Coptic and Kaikoura, 16 cases Men's and Boys' Clothing, and in consequence of the desperate scarcity of Ready Money, they have decided to offer the whole lot, for a few weeks, at landed Cost. Therefore call, inspect, and judge for yourself. Carter and Co., 60 and 62, George street, Dunedin.

News of the Week.

FRIDAY.

In the House of Representatives yesterday, Mr. Ross moved the second reading of the Otago Harbour Board Leasing Bill. Agreed to.—Mr. Holmes moved the second reading of the Christchurch Market Reserves Bill. Agreed to.—Mr. Hatch moved the second reading of the Invercargill Loan consolidating Bill. Agreed to.—Mr. Downie Stewart moved the second reading of the Dunedin Cattle Market Reserve Leasing Bill. Agreed to.—Mr. Ormond moved the second reading of the Napier Harbour Board empowering Bill. Agreed to.—Mr. Downie Stewart moved the second reading of the Bible Reading in Schools Bill. He said the bill was introduced for the purpose of giving effect to a very widespread desire that the Bible should be recognised in the public schools of the Colony. If they looked to the countries where civilisation was highest and art and science most extensively known, it would be found that it was in those countries where the Bible was a text-book. He contended that the present education system proved that no man has any moral or religious nature. The Catholics were strongly against that system, the Episcopalians were almost wholly opposed to it, and the Presbyterians were also going in the same direction. He thought if the Bible were read extensively in the schools it would not mean the destruction of the present system. He further contended that no person desirous of local option in education could consistently vote against the bill. The motion for second reading was then put, and lost on a division by 18 to 50.—Mr. Fergus resumed the debate on the Hospital and Charitable Aid Bill. The motion for the second reading was put, and carried on the voices.

A company has been formed to acquire the rights and interest held under agreement at Auckland by a syndicate with La Monte for his gold-smelting process, under the title of the Smelting Company, with a capital of £60,000.

A young man named James Fisher was seriously injured in the Seaward Bush, Southland, yesterday. He was employed as a bullock-driver at Tapper's mill, and while hauling out a log it rolled off against a sapling, which in turn pinned Fisher against the tree he was passing at the time. He was brought to the hospital, where he was found to have sustained injuries to the lower part of the body of a serious character.

The Most Rev. Dr. Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, arrived at Rome yesterday.

All the Powers with the exception of Russia assent to England issuing an Egyptian loan. This is reported as a triumph for the Marquis of Salisbury.

In the House of Commons on Wednesday night Lord Randolph Churchill, Secretary for India, announced that the Government were in receipt of a report from Colonel Ridgeway, in charge of the Afghan Boundary Commission, to the effect that the Russian forces in the vicinity of the Zulfikar Pass were being considerably increased. Russia claims what practically amounts to the command of the Pass, and the Ozar offers to refer the matter of the frontier to a commission, but the Marquis of Salisbury has declined to accede to this. Three thousand Russian troops are now in the vicinity of the Pass. The Boundary Commission has removed to Herat at the request of the Afghan authorities, in order to direct the works being carried out for the defence of that place.

SATURDAY.

In the House of Representatives yesterday the Hon. J. A. Tole moved the second reading of the St. Mary's Convent Property Leases Bill. Agreed to.—Mr. Wilson moved the second reading of "The Napier Gas Company Act 1874" Amendment Bill. Agreed to.—The Hon. J. Ballance moved the second reading of the Land Bill. He said a great necessity had existed for the consolidation of the land laws of the Colony, and there had been no such measure introduced since 1877. He would have wished to bring down a more comprehensive measure dealing with the prices of land and other matter, but he thought there would be no chance of passing it this session. The second reading of the bill was then put and agreed to on the voices.—The Hon. R. Stout moved the second reading of the Stamp Act Amendment Bill, and briefly explained its provisions. Mr. Downie Stewart said the bill would have an oppressive effect by adding 50 per cent. in stamp duty on dealings with land. The motion for the second reading was agreed to.—The Hon. R. Stout moved the second reading of the Deceased Persons Estates Duties Act Amendment Bill, which he said increased the duties on the estates of deceased persons. Agreed to.

General Komaroff states that he was not aware that the Consul's clerk who was flogged by the Russians at Keak was in the British service.

Colonel Stanley, secretary for the Colonies, favours the establishment of an emigration bureau for affording information regarding the Colonies to intending emigrants. Colonel Stanley will consult with the Agents-general on the subject shortly.

MONDAY.

The Wellington correspondent of the *Daily Times* wires as follows:—All day long there have been rumours of dissension in the Cabinet. It may be that this is only a revival of the old rumours, but from what I can gather things are tending towards a change. I do not think that any differences there may be are on any special measure. I fancy Messrs. Stout and Ballance have got the idea that Sir Julius Vogel is slowly—perhaps I might say rapidly—becoming a source of weakness rather than of strength, and that the time is coming when they can afford to throw him over. Their notion is that Messrs. Montgomery, M. J. S. Mackenzie, Barron, Pyke, and a number of others who have been driven away from them might be again incorporated with the party. I think, too, that if Sir Julius Vogel gets his petition money he would himself gladly retire from New Zealand politics, for he can hardly help recognising that he has