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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A REMARKABLE CAREER. MR. THOMAS MOONEY, better known to us as "Trans-Atlantic," the European correspondent of the *Irish World*, who has just died at Dieppe, in the 90th year of his age, was a man who had run a remarkable career, and whose long life had been full of notable experiences. It enables us to realise vividly the sad story of Ireland to find that a man, even though his life was of more than the general length, and his powers of much more than common strength, who in his youth had heard his elders relate the events which as eyewitnesses they had seen under the penal laws in all their rigour, still survived to lend the Parnell agitation the support of his pen. We learn from the *Irish World*, which gives a biographical sketch of Mr Mooney, that the first impressions of his life were those he had received from the fireside tales told by his grandfather of the days when the celebration of Mass had been a work of danger, and when his father, as a boy, had been posted on some neighbouring ditch to give warning should the approach of the officers of the law threaten the officiating priest with capture and death, and the daring farmer who permitted the divine sacrifice to be offered in his house with transportation. It was natural that one so nurtured should devote his life to the service of his country—and this Thomas Mooney did with the utmost vigour and constancy. He took an active part in the agitation against the tithes, practically commenced, he tells us, by Peter Lawler, of Tinakill, Queen's County, who refused to pay the obnoxious tax, and which, after a struggle of five years, terminated successfully. He was prominent in the fight under O'Connell for repeal, and personally got up the first meeting on the subject that ever took place in England—that held at Manchester on St. Patrick's Day, 1833. At this meeting he had a petition adopted, to which he succeeded in obtaining 27,000 signatures, and which was presented to Parliament by Feargus O'Connor on April 22, 1834. That night, he adds, O'Connell spoke for four hours, recounting the sufferings of Ireland to the House; but the result was a grievous defeat, the motion for the repeal of the union being rejected by 523 to 38. O'Connell then undertook the task of agitating for further reform and the reconstruction of the House of Lords, avenging himself on the Whigs who had betrayed him, and becoming the idol of the English democracy. The time-honoured game of bribery, however, was played once more. An advanced Whig Ministry came into office under Lord Melbourne, and terms of justice to Ireland were offered. O'Connell's friends were promoted to various high offices, and even members of his own family were similarly favoured. He himself was offered a judgeship of the Court of Queen's Bench, with a salary of £4000 a year, which he refused. But Mooney, with a band of companions, seeing the terrible condition of the country, where two-and-sixpence a week was the average yearly wages of the labourers, and where, during thirty weeks of the year, 585,000 people, representing a population of 2,385,000, were out of work and dependent on charity, drew up an address to O'Connell, calling upon him to relinquish both Whigs and Tories, and to lift once more and for ever the standard of repeal. Of this he approved, and recommended the men who addressed him to continue the agitation, and to look everywhere for support. Mooney, then, on his own responsibility, and paying out of his own pocket a quarter's rent in advance, took the Adelphi Theatre in Brunswick street, Dublin, where the discussion of the question was carried on, and where reports were regularly presented on the grievances of the country. The association, which was known as the "Trades Political Union," was afterwards developed into that known as the "Loyal National Repeal Association of Ireland." In an address, drawn up by Mooney, and presented by one of the trades bodies on joining this association the following passage occurred—declaring principles identical with those of the present National League:—"The people of every nation have a primary right to the produce of their native soil, conferred upon them by the mighty Creator of all." Another step undertaken and carried out by Mooney was the establishment of a Board of Irish Manufactures for the promotion of the production and wear of Irish cloth, and of which he acted as honorary secretary until he left Dublin for America, when he

was replaced in the position by the late Dr. (afterwards Sir John) Gray.—His voyage was suggested by addresses received, of support and sympathy, accompanied by contributions in money, from the friends of Ireland in Boston and Philadelphia. He proposed at first that the Repeal Committee should send Tom Steele with an address of thanks, but the proposal was considered premature, and consequently he resolved to go himself, but as a private emigrant he should compromise O'Connell legally by any of the speeches made by him. Mooney's tour in the United States and Canada proved highly successful. He was everywhere accorded a sympathetic hearing, and, while receiving no pay, was the means of having hundreds of thousands of dollars sent from America in aid of repeal. While he was engaged in this work the *Nation* was established in Dublin by Gavan Duffy, and at that gentleman's request he became the American correspondent of the newspaper to which, under the nom'de plume of "Exile," he contributed for seven years.—At this point the biographical sketch published by our contemporary in his issue of May 26, the last received by us, terminates. But we know from Trans-Atlantic's correspondence how consistent to the end was the man who had derived his inspirations directly from the penal days, who had taken part in the tithe agitation and laboured under O'Connell in the repeal movement, in supporting the struggle of the National League. His life, moreover gives us fresh hope, for it enables us to realise how much has been done towards working out the freedom of Ireland even in the lifetime of an individual—a period which, prolonged though it may be, falls infinitely short of the life of a nation.

MORE HOTTENTOTS. It appears, then, that the Irish people are not the only Hottentots with whom Lord Salisbury and his Government are called upon to deal. The *London Daily News* tells us that a fair proportion of the population of England herself is in a somewhat similar condition. Commenting on a query made lately by a prominent writer as to what was to be the destiny of the numbers of children being brought up all over the country in want, and sin, and ignorance, our contemporary says:—"As a matter of fact, we suppose the future of the children will be pretty much the same as the present condition of their parents, and that is not appreciably better than that of the Hottentots or Patagonians." But Lord Salisbury and his Government are too much occupied in endeavouring to perpetuate and aggravate the Hottentot condition of Ireland to find time or thought for the amelioration of the worse condition of things existing in their own country—for degradation among the English masses is infinitely worse than Irish poverty and suffering. Probably, however, the continued existence of the Hottentot or Patagonian element is necessary to the privileges of the classes whose support is Lord Salisbury's first object. At any rate, he is consistent in tolerating that in England of whose existence in Ireland he greatly approves.—Let us always give the devil his due as the old saying has it.

AN IRISH EMPIRE. MR ISRAEL KOHN, now of Santa Fe, New Mexico, but formerly of Valparaiso, has given to a reporter of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* an account of the success of Irish immigrants in Chili, which he represents as extreme. New York, he says, although it is spoken of as under the control of Irishmen, cannot be compared in this respect to Valparaiso, where Irishmen rule, not by force of numbers but by that of character. As, moreover, Valparaiso rules Chili, Irishmen are the rulers of the country, where they occupy much the same position as that held by the English in India, with as beneficial results. Their first arrival in the country took place under the command of Lord Dundonald, who chiefly freed South America from the Spanish yoke, and, who, though himself an Englishman, had for his companion and fellow-adventurers Irishmen almost exclusively. When he left the country they remained there, and they and their descendants have since governed it. Another Irish immigration, however, occurred on the termination of the civil war in the States, when a large number of Clebur's brigade were the immigrants. They organised the army, as some of Lord Dundonald's old sailors had already done by the navy, and when the war with Peru broke out the results were soon made apparent. Everyone expected that Peru would be the victor:—"But the first battle showed the Irish blood and training. Although far outnumbered, the Chilean troops, by