

Dublin Notes.

(From Contemporaries.)

THE fate of compulsory education in Ireland, for the present at least, has been definitely decided. The warning given by Mr Sexton as regards the amending scheme has effected this. The Government cannot easily deal with the measure this session. In fact it is almost certain that they will not attempt to pass the Bill, especially as Mr Morley will not be able to aid the Government out of the fix into which their educational policy of masterly inactivity has brought them.

Infantile mortality, which is evidently not diminishing, has called forth renewed attention on the part of several public men within the past few months, and we observe that the Duke of Fife, speaking at a recent meeting of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, made it the subject of some strong remarks, not merely as regards the mortality itself, but the traffic in lives by means of insurance. Belfast has also done something to recall men's minds to this serious question, and we think that our coroner is certainly entitled to a large share of the people's gratitude for the services he has rendered through the additional light his investigations have thrown on the subject.

The post of judicial Sub-Commissioner under the Land Acts, left vacant by the death of Mr Frederick Le Poer Trench, has been given to Mr Michael Crean. Mr Crean will bring to the performance of his duties a trained experience of the work and a most favourable record for justice and efficiency. He was for a considerable period a Sub-Commissioner, but his decisions proving less acceptable to the landlord party than they desired, his services were discontinued. He was, after a time of exclusion, appointed to a minor position in the Land Commission Office, from which during the illness of Mr Le Poer Trench he was recently told off for temporary duty as Sub-Commissioner. As before, he did his work honestly and well, and his appointment to the vacant office secures for a post of increasing importance a competent official, whose past record is a fair test of his impartiality and sound judicial discretion.

Except during political agitation or agrarian disturbances, it has long since been generally admitted that Ireland is one of the most peaceable countries on the face of the earth. Amidst the trying experience through which she has passed in recent years some even of her friends were inclined to believe that she had finally forfeited her ancient reputation. Now that she is undisturbed by politics and landlords, the real character of the people becomes manifest. Within living memory there has been no lighter calendar of offences than at the present winter assizes. This applies not only to serious crimes, but also to smaller offences. In Connaught, the most Irish part of Ireland, if one may use such a paradox, the judges have had almost nothing to do. Their journey through that province was little more than a pleasant excursion and a dignified parade. Leinster is strikingly peaceable, too, though the returns show a number of minor offences, mostly assaults arising from drink. These are no doubt to be attributed to the numerous public houses in Dublin, and the still more numerous houses of the same kind which, in proportion to population, are to be found in Irish provincial towns. In Munster, too, the cases though rather numerous are insignificant in character, and are mostly the remnants of land war saturated in some measure with intoxicants. Strange to say, "loyal" Ulster has the worst record, but even there the criminal calendar cannot at all compare with the long list of criminals, murderers, thieves and swindlers that are brought up for trial four times a year at Liverpool Assizes. The people are giving evidence of patience, good sense, and law-abiding behaviour, which is surely the best argument that if allowed to rule themselves they will not ruin themselves. This state of affairs is not the result of coercive action. Only the ordinary law is in force. Whipping violent people, even desperate criminals, into subjection is seldom effective. How much less effective, nay, how exasperating must it be in the case of those who do not deserve the lash.

American exchanges to hand are full of sketches of the career of the Irish-American warrior-statesman, General Shields, in anticipation of the dedication of his statue in Washington. Major-General James Shields was born the 6th of May, 1807, at Altmore, near Dungannon. He was the eldest of three brothers, his father—who had gone to America, and become a citizen of the United States—dying while he was yet very young. When but sixteen years old he set out for America, leaving his paternal property at Altmore to his mother and brothers. His career in the States was one long record of successes. His daring bravery in the Mexican War of 1847 obtained for him a great reputation. He was elected U.S. Senator, afterwards, for Minnesota, and later still for Missouri, and enjoyed the unique honour of having represented in the Senate three States. At the breaking out of the Civil War he offered his services to the Government, was appointed Brigadier-General of Volunteers, and commanded a division in Banks' army, in the Shenandoah Valley, where, on the 22nd of March, 1862, he defeated "Stonewall" Jackson at Winchester, winning the most glorious

record of all. Being severely wounded by a splinter from a shell on the day previous to the battle, he issued his orders from a litter upon which he was borne to the field. President Lincoln nominated him Major-General; but the jealousy of a miserable clique of politicians prevented the confirmation of his appointment by the Senate. General Shields then retired from service, and became a resident of Carroll County, Missouri, of which State he was appointed Adjutant-General. Afterwards, as we have said, he was elected Senator for that State. He served out the short term, and then returned to his farm in Carroll County, where he died on June 1, 1879. America has at length rendered a fitting tribute to his memory.

The London correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal* says:—I notice that the London papers are giving some prominence to extracts from the anonymous article in the *Fortnightly* on the Irish party. It is not surprising that the article should impose on those who have no means of judging of its value so far as it professes to present an esoteric view of the Irish party and its affairs. As a matter of fact, the pretence of inside knowledge made by the writer is in all important respects transparently false. He appears to have been a diligent collector of malicious gossip from Unionist papers, and adding a few grotesque imaginings, which it is the custom to style "character sketches," he has planted this precious compilation on the confiding editor of the *Fortnightly* as the true inwardness of the Home Rule movement and its leaders. The second article is obviously by a different hand from the first one published under the same title last month. It is equally obvious that while the writer of the former article was in sympathy with Home Rule, the writer of the present one affects a sympathy which is patently insincere in order to aid in imparting a *vraisemblance* to the concoction he presents to his readers. The personal touches which have, of course, attracted most attention, are very audacious inventions. The story about Mr Parnell seeking a secluded place at Mr W. O'Brien's wedding and confiding to a particular friend the opinion that "that man is preparing to displace me," is not by any means even *ben trovato*. I happen to remember that so far from being in an "out-of-the-way corner" on the occasion Mr Parnell was in the the most prominent position, and that he had not a member beside him at all. The rest of the story is equally misconceived. The observation attributed to Mr Parnell is not only improbable as coming from him, but equally so as being applied to Mr O'Brien, or, for the matter of that, to any other of his colleagues. The statement that the administration of the Evicted Tenants' Fund and the Parliamentary Fund was construed and confused in order to deprive Mr John Barry of his position as treasurer of the Parliamentary Fund, and to get rid of his supervision is also utterly devoid of foundation. Mr Barry retained his position as one of the committee of three charged with the disbursement of the payments to members until his regretted retirement from the party. Then, the account of the Boulogne negotiations is entirely imaginative, and is manifestly based on Unionist newspaper reports and comments; in fact, the whole thing in its personal aspect is a tissue of invention which cannot deceive for an instant any one who knows anything of the real facts. It is impossible not to be struck by the resemblance between the manner in which this article is pieced together and the mosaic process invented and patented by the authors of "Parnellism and Crime." Indeed, if Mr Wolfe Flanagan were to be accused of the authorship to-morrow, it is very difficult to say whether he would be in a position to deny it. The article is evidently the work, as I have said, of a man practised in the art of appearing to transform newspaper tags and casual gossip into an indictment, not merely of a party, but of a nation. For if the article means anything it means that Irishmen are congenitally incapable of managing any affairs whatever. Of course, the pretence by which that contention is sought to be sustained is of the flimsiest character, and the gibe at "rhetoricians" the shallowest and emptiest that could be brought forth from the brain of man. What, however, increases the suspicion inevitably created by a perusal of the article as to the sinister source of its authorship is the circumstance that before it appeared certain prominent Unionists knew all about it, and were promising "revelations." They were precisely the same men who knew all about the forgeries of the *Times* before they became matter of public knowledge.

In the current issue of the *Speaker* Mr Davitt replies to the attacks of "X" in the *Fortnightly Review* on Irish leaders living and dead. Writing of the expectation that was based on "the most useful and suggestive paper" which formed the first of the articles on "The Ireland of to-day," says Mr Davitt:—"This expectation vanishes in the pages of the second article, and we find, in the place of some practical proposal, a highly cooked *rechauffe* of a recent party controversy in some Dublin papers."

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