

GENERAL.

Irish Members of the English Bar.—It is a curious fact that the Nationalist members who cry for Home Rule for Ireland are constantly giving new members to the English bar (says *Reynolds' Newspaper*). Among these we have already such patriots as Mr. John Redmond, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Bernard Molloy, Dr. Commins, and the latest addition is Mr. T. B. Curran, jun., the ever-juvenile and always popular member for North Donegal, who has just been called.

An Irish Football Team in France.—A team of Irish footballers travelled to Paris early in January to meet a French team at a game of Rugby. On the previous day the Irish representatives beat an English team at Herne Hill. After accomplishing this feat they had to travel all night. An ugly journey it is from Victoria to Dover, thence across the Channel, and away to the Gay City, when the winds sweep fiercely over the narrow Strait. But the travellers turned up smiling within a rifeshot of the Louvre, and disposed of the Republican players without turning a hair. It must have been an interesting match—and we hope many like it will be played in the future. Football is a new game in France, but it has enthusiastic advocates in Paris, and they have been practising for some years. That Sunday's struggle was of a friendly character, and that the French appreciated their Irish visitors was shown by the subsequent proceedings.

The Irish Party's Funds.—Lord Tweedmouth addressed a Liberal meeting at Duns, Berwickshire, on January 19. Dealing with Ireland, his Lordship, for the first time in public, referred to the £2000 cheque which he had been accused of giving to the funds of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Not a single sixpence out of party funds that were under his control, or from his private purse, with the exception of £100 which he gave himself, had ever passed through his hand into the hands of the Irish party. Having been consulted by Mr. Blake, treasurer of the Irish Party Fund, as to their diminished resources, he offered to give £2000 out of his own private purse, but after this proposal had been laid by Mr. Blake before his colleagues, he thanked his Lordship, but said it was an offer which it was impossible for them to accept. With regard to the £100 which he had afterwards given in response to an appeal from a meeting, that also had been declined and returned.

Success of Labour Candidates.—The most noteworthy feature of the local Government elections in Ireland (writes an English contemporary) is the existence of a new force in Irish politics which they reveal. The uprise of a labour party is a new development of the popular movement, which must claim the attention and exercise the thought of statesmen of every political hue. It has to be counted with in the present, and will have to be counted with more in the future. The trend in that direction in Ireland is stronger than in England, where the efforts of labour to secure direct parliamentary representation have hitherto been foiled. The example set in Ireland will leave a reflection upon England, and there will doubtless be a reciprocity and combined action between the radical elements in both countries, which will give an additional momentum to this new movement.

Too Many Judges.—The over-manned condition of the Irish Judicial Bench is at present much in evidence. While the Hilary Sittings are in full swing in the Four Courts, Dublin, two judges of the High Court, the Lord Chief Baron and Mr. Justice Madden, have been sitting, by the appointment of the Lord Lieutenant, on a Commission, on which the Lord Chief Baron is the chairman, to investigate the working of the Irish Intermediate Education Act.

Politics not a Factor.—Some rather curious results of liberality to political opponents appear in the local Government elections in some parts of Ireland. The Unionists of Buniskillen placed a Nationalist at the head of the poll, and the Nationalists of Monaghan placed a Unionist at the head of the poll.

TRAPPISTS IN NATAL.

We take the following account of a visit paid to the Trappist Monastery, near Pinetown, outside Durban, South Africa, from the *South African Catholic Magazine*:—At the time of our arrival (writes a correspondent) the monks had just finished lunch, and were filing out of the refectory across the courtyard to the church. On their way they chanted the impressive *Miserere* in a peculiarly high key, that was most solemn and impressive, the sound gradually dying away as they entered the church, where the chanting was continued. The sight of the bareheaded monks, with hair cropped to the very skin, attired, some in white and black habits, others (the lay Brothers) in brown, of the roughest and coarsest material, with leather sandals on their bare feet, chanting on their way to the church, was such as not to be easily forgotten. Among these monks so coarsely dressed, may be found men of noble and gentle birth, of great literary and scientific attainments, who have given up all that the world considers attractive and comfortable for a life of trial and austerity.

Before proceeding on sight-seeing we were invited to partake of the refreshment provided, which, without violating good taste, I may say consisted of coarse brown bread washed down with tamarind wine, a delicious and cooling non-alcoholic drink, oranges, bananas, pine apples, and such tropical fruits as were in season. After our repast we first went into the refectory, and saw the long plain tables on trestles at which the monks have their meals. On these tables there is nothing superfluous. Each monk has opposite his seat a knife and fork, serviette, and a wooden plate, all of the plainest. We next visited the church, which is a long lofty building in the early Italian style, tastefully decorated with frescoes inside. It, like all the other buildings, is most suitably built of red brick, the arches being particularly strong, and indicative of

stability and permanency. The monks in all cases have been their own architects and builders, and their splendid edifices show that they are no tyros at such work.

Our next turn was to the mill, which is about a mile from the main buildings. The mill is situated at the foot of a hill, in a peaceful valley under cultivation by the monks. Opposite the mill house is a chapel, the gift of one of the nuns, and dedicated to the 'Sacred Heart.' It is a red brick building, of pretty design and workmanship, being nicely decorated inside in Italian style, the handiwork, strange to say, of the Zulu boys stationed at the mission, who have been trained in this respect by the monks. The mill is driven by water power, a fine reservoir or dam having been constructed at the foot of the hill for that purpose. It gives them plenty to do to grind corn sufficient to keep the 600 occupants of the mission going.

From the mill we went into the next compartment, set aside as a printing establishment. Here printing, as well as bookbinding, is done in all its branches. All the books, prayer, hymn, and school, are printed and bound here. Music printing is a specialty with the Trappists. More wonderful, they have their own type foundry, the only one, we believe, in South Africa. They make their own type and stereotype, and in addition have lithographic print of the latest and most approved pattern. Passing into another compartment we came to the carpenter's shop, and next to it was a metal planing machine, where work of the finest is turned out. Besides these shops at the mill, the Trappists have at Mariannhill a bark-grinding mill, blacksmiths', wagon builders', carpenters', cabinet-maker', painters', and tinsmiths' shop, tannery, shoe-making, saddlery, harness-making, photography, watchmaking, hatmaking, and straw plaiting. These form a day's work in themselves to inspect and will give you some idea of the work that is being done at the Monastery. The whole place is a hive of industry. Everyone works from the highest to the lowest, and the result can well be imagined. Returning to the Monastery we climbed the 'Hill of Calvary', so-called because at different stages in its ascent are the 'Stations of the Cross,' or representations of Our Saviour's Passion, cut out of the rock by the monks, who at certain hours may be seen doing the 'Via Crucis.'

On our way back we halted at the Convent, and were shown over the buildings, which are very comfortable, but not nearly large enough for the growing requirements. Here, too, work is the distinguishing feature. The Trappist system of educating the native is to teach him, first of all, the dignity of labour, and then from this proceed to civilise and Christianise him. The monks and nuns are examples to their pupils. As I said, everyone works, so no one has any ground for complaint against another for not practising what he preaches. The native is taught that work is prayer, and the process of education is carried on concurrently with this as the basis of the system. Certain hours of the day are set aside when the natives are instructed religiously and secularly, and other portions are devoted strictly and solely to teaching them trades and all kinds of useful work that will fit them as good artisans or farm and domestic servants. In all the departments I have above enumerated the monks employ native labour and pay for it. Every Kafir gets so much for his work, and this is not given him during his stay at the Monastery, but on his departure therefrom, so that he goes into the world, so to speak, and begins life with a little capital, and having, more valuable still, a knowledge of some trade or useful occupation, on which he can always depend for a living. The natives grow so fond of the monks that many prefer staying with their teachers and employers to starting on their own account. I saw a Kafir blacksmith who had been with them thirteen years. Has was an excellent workman and turned out all the wagon work of the Monastery.

At the Convent we saw Kafir girls being taught to wash clothes and to iron and fold, and to put them away in cupboards fitted up for the purpose. In one room little Kafir girls were plaiting straw for making hats and baskets, others were making the hats and baskets. In another room we saw the girls being taught how to sew and make little odds and ends of dress. The more advanced were using sewing machines, at which, in company with the sisters, they were working merrily, whilst in the highest department, we saw dusky damsels making hand lace and doing fancy work of the most beautiful design under the guidance of the nuns. It was, indeed, an object lesson. There was an air of comfort and peace in the whole place, combined with perfect order, that struck me most forcibly. As we went in and out of each room, an impressive salutation of a religious nature was given us, that was edifying even to a hardened man of the world, and served to remind him that here religion is blended with work.

The Trappists are fortunate in possessing an engineer of the highest attainments in Brother Nivara, who is held in great esteem throughout Natal, where the Government have not been above asking his opinion on certain occasions. In his office we saw plans and drawings of the different churches and mission stations, and from this room were sent out all the plans of the different stations. Mariannhill is 12,000 acres in extent, but the country is so hilly and the soil so poor, that only about 300 acres are worth cultivating. Lourdes, another of their stations, comprises 50,000 acres, 4,000 of which are forest, and is of a far more fertile nature the orchard containing a thousand choice fruit trees. Altogether the Trappists are in possession of 96,879 acres, and have 1,182 children in their schools: 2,200 Christian natives, and about 3,000 heathens, under their immediate influence, besides unlimited possibilities. The monks number 259, of whom 18 are priests and 195 lay Brothers. Of the nuns, there are 225 in South Africa, and 36 in the mother house in Holland.

MR. P. LUNDON, Phoenix Chambers, Wanganui, is still busy putting people on the soil. He has also hotels in town and country For Sale and To Lease Write to him.—*.