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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

IRISH CLEANINGS.

THERE is an evident desire on the part of the majority of the House of Commons to arrive at the great event of the Session, that is, the introduction of the Home Rule Bill. The various amendments have been moved and rejected—that of Mr Keir Hardie, referring to the neglect of the unemployed, having been made by Government a vote of censure. It was rejected by a majority of 276 to 109. The Tories, however, were hardly prepared to give the pledge that their support would imply. Mr Redmond's amendment for an amnesty to all the treason-felony prisoners was rejected by 397 to 81, the Home Secretary explaining that the dynamiters had been guilty of the most heinous crimes, but had received the treatment only of ordinary criminals. Mr Asquith further denied that there was any intention of releasing Daly, who was sentenced in 1884 to penal servitude for life on a charge of being found at Birmingham with three infernal machines in his possession—and whose release had been sought for by his friends on the plea that he was in a dying condition.

Mr John E. Redmond has informed an Irish Society in America, that in his opinion there is no chance that the Home Rule Bill will pass in the present House.

The death is reported of Mr John McCarthy, M.P. for Mid-Tipperary. Mr Michael Davitt has been returned unopposed for North-East Cork.

A report that the Pope has written to Mr Gladstone proposing the restoration of diplomatic relations is a *canard*, probably intended to aid in raising the No-Popery cry.

The news that the Crown declines to prosecute Mr Pierce Mahoney M.P. for assaulting Mr Mathew Kenny, M.P. in a Dublin court tends to refresh the belief of anti-Irish colonists in the rascality of Irish politicians, and was, perhaps, so meant by the cable agency.

Sir Edward Reid resigns his seat for Cardiff to accept a Government situation and so leaves us to conclude that, after all, Sir Edward's explanation of his views to the Liberal Thousand was not considered sufficient.

The intense interest that centres in the Bill is testified to by the fact that there have been 7000 applications for the 110 seats in the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons, to hear Mr Gladstone's speech.

As to the charges of violence which were brought against the priests of North Meath, and which were considered sufficient to justify some rather strong—in fact some very scurrilous language among ourselves, we find from the full report of the trial that the worst cases resolve themselves into two or three:—A blow, for example, alleged to have been given by a priest who was unknown, whose name no one could tell, and whom no body could identify, an apparition, apparently, summoned up for the occasion—to a woman who had flung a stone at him—and who herself described the blow as a pat on the cheek;—a preventive shove given by a priest named Hughes to a woman who was aiming a stone at Mr Davitt, and a slap with the open left hand dealt by a priest named Clarke to an old man who had been for some time vociferating that Mr Davitt was a murderer, and that the priests came with Government money to sell the people. We cannot speak for the clerical apparition—thin air must whistle its own defence—but where Father Hughes and Father Clarke were concerned, we maintain that the respective offences were comparatively mild. In any case nothing was done that could justify the strong language of which we have spoken.

The dynamite outrage in Dublin, of which, some five or six weeks ago details were rather fully brought here by the cable, was the cause of extreme consternation among the National party all over Ireland. Horror at the occurrence, and the shocking death resulting to a worthy and inoffensive man—that is a constable named Synott whose body was shattered beyond recognition—combined with the perception that it would be made use of by the enemies of Ireland to prejudice the popular cause was general. In all quarters, except those interested in an adverse direction, the conviction was

expressed that the hand of the enemy had been engaged in the deed. Confidence, however, in Mr Gladstone and Mr Morley remained unshaken. The feeling was well voiced, for example, by the *Paris Temps*, which, in referring to the event, spoke as follows:—"We may depend on it that both Mr Gladstone and Mr Morley will continue imperturbably to pursue the course which they have mapped out for themselves." The conclusion of the *Freeman's Journal* was that a proof had been given that "in their hostility to the free conciliation of Ireland, the Coercionists were now assisted and supported by the assassins and the dynamitard."

The Gweedore prisoners who were released, and concerning whom an amendment condemning the clemency of the Government was proposed in the House of Commons, are named respectively Coll, Roarty, Magee, and Rodgers. Of these Coll was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude in October, 1889, for the murder of Inspector Martin. The other three, the uselessness of a defence being proved to them by Coll's trial, pleaded guilty to the charges of complicity in the crime brought against them. Mr Swift MacNeil, one of the Members for Donegal, explains, in a letter to the *Daily News*, the circumstances under which Coll received his sentence. They may be summarised as follows:—The jury was packed; the evidence was that of policemen only, and was condemned as illegally received by four judges out of nine—among the four being Chief-Justice Morris and Chief-Baron Palles—the five others including the judge who had received the evidence in question, and who gave the casting vote. The belief, meantime, all through the locality concerned was that Coll had been completely innocent. As to the other men the Bishop of Raphoe, addressing the Donegal Convention, had recently spoken as follows in their favour:—"It is no pleasure to me," said his lordship, "but a real pain to repeat now what I have said before, that I do not consider the Gweedore prisoners got a fair trial. These men pleaded guilty because there was good reason for believing that if their trials went on they would receive the sentence inflicted on poor Coll, who was decidedly innocent, and I say to you these men are long enough in prison."

ONE of the latest discoveries of science, perhaps ODDS AND ENDS, the most recent of all, is the "exteriorisation of sensitiveness." But what the "exteriorisation of sensitiveness" is it is not so easy to explain. Is it something new under the sun? Not if we may give ear to the superstitions of earlier times. When a witch, for example, in by-gone ages made a figure of wax and stuck it full of pins to produce pains in the body of a living victim, she seems to have been acquainted with the power referred to. Yet it is a man of science, one fully abreast with, if not ahead of, the *fin de siècle* enlightenment who makes us acquainted with this power. We allude to the Colonel Rochas d'Aiglun, a savant who occupies himself with the study of hypnotism. As the result of experiments recently made at the Hôpital de Charité in Paris, this savant announces the discovery of the "exteriorisation of sensitiveness." To be more exact, or if less exact, more comprehensible, we shall explain as well as we can what the "exteriorisation of sensitiveness" means, that is, a union of the feeling contained in a sensitive body with something which is not sensitive, so that whatever is done to this is felt by the sensitive body. Thus, if you kick a chair the man whose sensitiveness has been exteriorised feels the blow—and, in like manner, his sense of feeling can be connected with anything else. The man, we need hardly say, must first undergo a hypnotic process. In this, perhaps, the witch of whom we have spoken had an advantage. She produced the pains in her victim without his having been hypnotised—unless we may suppose that, without his knowledge or consent, the devil had performed the process. But there is still nothing new under the sun. It is strange to find that science in some degree confirms what superstition had fearfully imagined. We may add that possibly this curious discovery may throw a new light on certain nervous sufferings which have hitherto been supposed to be imaginary only.

Musical endurance and non-endurance have recently been rather amusingly put to the test. The cases in question occurred respectively in New York and London, and were, perhaps, characteristic of the different people concerned. In New York—our Yankee cousins being,