

# Irish News

## OUR IRISH LETTER

(From our own correspondent.)

Dublin, March, 1904.

At long last, the festival of our Patron, St. Patrick, is officially declared a 'Bank Holiday,' that is, a public holiday for all classes and creeds. Of course, the 17th of March has always been kept holy by the Irish Catholics, but this year, for the first time, the day is a State Holiday, and it is a pleasure to record that, although the State permits, nay, encourages the opening of drink-shops on Sundays and festivals, the exceptions amongst the publicans in Ireland were those who did not comply with the appeals of our bishops and priests and of the Gaelic League to close drink-shops on St. Patrick's Day. General sobriety honored our great Apostle's feast, almost every publichouse displaying a the Gaelic League card announcing that the establishment would be closed for 'La Feile Padraig.' Surely the Catholic clergy are doing well in joining hands with the Gaelic League for the common good and for the protection of many things that the present-day spirit of materialism seeks to make its own even here in Ireland.

This effort to have our National Festival kept as a day of strict sobriety is one of the good works in which the clergy and the Gaelic League work hand in hand, and they have, so far, succeeded splendidly, in spite of strenuous opposition, for it must be remembered that they have to work against two strong forces: the Government, which stands just now so much in need of money, and which at all times derives so large a share of its revenue from the drink trade that it lately refused to pass a Bill prohibiting the manufacture or the sale of 'silent spirits,' which, in plain language, is a deadly poison; and the selfish greed that so besets many amongst the licensed traders that they fight a hard battle against every movement that would take even one day's profits from them, although that one day be the festival of our great Apostle.

However, it is a splendid thing to know that comparatively few publicans braved public opinion by keeping open house, and St. Patrick's Day was celebrated as it should be, with piety and sobriety.

### Adulterated Drink.

It is a painful thing to reflect that the Government refuses to give facilities for passing this particular Liquor Bill, in spite of the facts and statistics brought forward by the medical profession and by temperance advocates of every class and creed to prove that much, if not most of the awful increase of insanity in these islands is well known to be due to the sale of poisonous stuff instead of genuine whisky, stuff that is openly prepared in and sent out from Government bonded stores, with the full knowledge of the authorities. Over and over it has been proved that nine tenths of the cases treated as drunkenness are really cases of temporary insanity produced after drinking what would be a very moderate amount of spirits, if pure, and that the repeated use of this really moderate quantity of drink finally produces hopeless lunacy and nearly all the crime that is committed in the country.

I myself know of a case that will illustrate this. A gentleman, a land surveyor, out with his assistant on a raw day in winter, turned into an inn and called for a glass of whisky for himself and one for his man. He saw that the man got one glass, and only one, but he recollected subsequently that it had not been served from the same bottle that he had been served from. They went their way, the surveyor not in the least injured or affected by the dram he had taken, but before half an hour elapsed his companion was, not drunk, but absolutely mad for the time being from the effects of 'killed spirits.' The poor fellow had committed no excess, yet he was in a condition of frenzy that produces so many crimes. These things are well known; year by year, the lunatic asylums have to be enlarged, but it all brings more and more money to the publican and to the exchequer, and so it is up-hill work, desperate work for the clergy and laity who are striving to save the people from degradation and the madhouse. One would sometimes be almost tempted to fear we are a doomed race, so much is done to exterminate us. Everything is done to encourage drinking and emigration—the two drains on the manhood and womanhood of the country.

### Emigration.

The very schools have been found to be emigration agency offices; schoolmasters, if not avowed, certainly secret agents for the emigration companies, which must

pay immense bonuses to their agents to insure the wide-spread secret and open touting there is for emigrants. It was discovered some time ago that the Canadian Emigration Companies were actually supplying our National schools in the rural districts with free copy-books, the headlines being all pithy lines descriptive of the delights of that charmed region of eight long months of snow and ice, Canada: 'Peaches and grapes and apples growing in the open air, free to all!' Think of the schoolboy's mouth watering as he reads! 'Land for nothing.' No mention of the labor of clearing, of the deadly loneliness. 'Sunshine all summer.' No word of the scorching heat to boys and girls accustomed only to gentle warmth. 'Sleighing and tobogganing all winter, under the glorious aurora borealis.' Nothing of the eight months of snow and frost, often 60 degrees below anything ever known in Ireland, and no money to buy sleighs, bells and furs, perhaps not even to buy the bare necessities of life. And beyond all, ah! beyond all, no word of the sorrowful tales of the emigrants who fell by the way amongst briars and thorns!

Something must be done to stop this insane emigration, or there is a danger that while beautiful churches are springing up throughout the land, monuments of the Irish people's love of God and their Faith, there may not be congregations to fill them, and, now that there is hope of the land for the people, that there may not be people, her own people, to till that land. So impressed by this danger have become all who truly love their country and their race, that an appeal has gone forth from the bishops and clergy of Ireland and the Anti-Emigration Society to the Irish abroad, whether in the colonies or the United States, to cease

### The Unpatriotic Work

of urging their relatives and friends at Home to leave home and country and join them in a foreign land, and for what? Only too often for the poorhouse, the asylum, or an early grave. But, above all, they appeal to the Irish abroad not to send pre-paid passage tickets to relatives or friends, for this, it appears, is the temptation that brings about the greater part of this calamitous emigration. It is hoped that this appeal will be responded to. Ireland wants all her sons and daughters to work for their own land, and not, by selfishly flying from it, to let their soil be owned and tilled by the strangers who will fill their places.

As I have said, the clergy and the Anti-Emigration Society are working strenuously to stem the tide, but, alas! the tide still ebbs from our shores and only flows back, now and again to cast some broken wreck-age on the shores near hospital or poorhouse.

And all these deluded emigrants leave behind them! At this time of the year, how many look back, straining eyes wearied with the glare of Canadian snow, snow, snow: across trackless white wastes and again across trackless ocean to this little green island, shining now in all the gay beauty of the daffodil month. The trees are not quite awake yet, only just beginning to open their eyes, but the fields are emerald, the gorse is putting on its golden vest, the primroses are nesting in their hedge, and the daffodils are everywhere, clusters of them, waving and beckoning on their slender stems, keeping time to the music of thrush and blackbird that are filling the air with song.

Yesterday I had a letter from an exile in Canada, and there was a weary sigh in it: 'a long, cold winter, two feet of snow still on the ground, and it's spring now in old Ireland!' How they must long, these exiles, and how they must wish they never had listened to the tempter who so lied, who so deceived them by false promises!

M.B.

## COUNTY NEWS

### ARMAGH.—The Cathedral

The approaching consecration of the fine Cathedral of Armagh (writes a correspondent of the 'Freeman's Journal') may render it opportune to mention that Armagh only became a mensal parish in 1834, on the death of Father James Byrne, the last parish priest of Armagh. Previous to that date the Primate of Armagh mostly lived at Drogheda for a century. Dr. Kelly, Archbishop of Armagh, died January 13th, 1835, and his successor, Dr. Crolly, took up his residence in Armagh. To Archbishop Crolly is due the building of the noble cathedral which now dominates the landscape round Armagh. As late as 1749 the scattered Catholics of the Primatial City had to worship 'in a place of refuge,' and it was not till 1750 that the 'old chapel' was built in the spot since known as 'Chapel lane,' the structure being enlarged in 1806. The foundation stone of the cathedral was laid on St. Patrick's Day, 1840, and the work proceeded apace till Dr. Crolly's death in 1849. Dr. Cullen, his successor, had a short term of office, as he was translated to Dublin in 1852; but

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