

Irish News.

ANTRIM.—Probable Candidate.

A rumor has been extensively circulated that the Belfast Catholic Association have decided to invite Count Plunkett to contest West Belfast against the present member, Mr H. O. Arnold-Foster, Secretary to the Admiralty.

Death of a priest.

The death is announced of the Rev. R. O'Kane, P.P., Dunloy, County Antrim, one of the most distinguished priests in the diocese of Down and Connor.

DONEGAL.—Diocesan Chapter.

Now that the diocese of Raphoe has its Cathedral, that Cathedral is to have its Chapter, comprising a dean, an archdeacon, and 10 canons. In the 'Irish Ecclesiastical Record' for December there is published the text of the two decrees from the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda in Rome conveying the authority to erect the Chapter and placing the Cathedral under the patronage of St. Eunan and St. Columbkille.

Plots for fishermen.

The Congested Districts Board is completing negotiations for the purchase of about 500 acres of grass lands in the Killybegs district of County Donegal from the landlord, Mr. Tredennick, of Ballyshannon. It is understood that the intention of the Board is to divide the acreage into plots of four or five acres, and give one plot each to the hardy fishermen of the district.

Sale of an estate.

In County Donegal, Ireland, a few weeks ago the Rathmullen estate was sold. On this property was, anciently, the ruins of the great Carmelite house built long before the Reformation; also, the ruins of the great castle of McSweeney, of Fanad, whose better half, Mary, daughter of O'Malley, and wife of McSweeney, of Fanad, once held the castle intact two long weeks against 500 picked English troops. It is said that the new owner may take steps to preserve the ruins of the priory built in old days by McSweeney for the Carmelites.

DUBLIN.—An appointment.

The Rev. Edward J. Byrne, of the diocese of Dublin, has been appointed Vice-Rector of the Irish College, Rome. Father Byrne, who is a distinguished past student of the Irish College, has for some time been attached to the parish of Booterstown and Blackrock.

Death of a religious.

The death took place recently, in the Sienna Convent of Dominican Nuns, Drogheda, of Mother De Ricci, aunt of Mr. John Dillon, M.P., at an advanced age.

LIMERICK.—Day labor.

At a recent meeting of the Limerick County Council the Local Government Board circular as to the action to be taken by the Council in regard to substituting direct labor for the maintenance of public roads, instead of the present contract system, was discussed at considerable length. A scheme of direct labor on all the roads in the county was ultimately adopted.

MEATH.—Tara Hill.

The farm on Tara Hill was recently put up for public auction at the Navan Courthouse, Mr. John Clarke, solicitor, Dame street, having carriage of sale. There were only two bidders—Mr. S. Wilson, Oberstown, and Mr. MacDermott, Kilmessan. The highest amount offered was £2920. This not being considered enough, the executors of the late Mr. M'Nally reserved the farm for private offer.

ROSCOMMON.—Coercion Act.

Mr. John Haydon, M.P., was a few days before Christmas Day sentenced to 21 days' imprisonment under the Coercion Act for a speech delivered at Ballinlough, County Roscommon. Other sentences were: Messrs. Owens, 14 days, Higgins, 21 days; Delaney, one month, Cunnane, one month; Regan, one month and Brett, 14 days. The magistrates consented to state a case as to jurisdiction, and the defendants gave security for their attendance when called on.

SLIGO.—A presentation.

Mr. John O'Dowd, M.P. for South Sligo, and chairman of the Sligo County Council, has been made the recipient of an interesting presentation, which took the form of a substantial sum in gold in a beautifully worked silk purse in recognition of his services in the public interest. Very Rev. Canon Loftus, P.P. Ballymote, presided on the occasion, and the presentation was made by Rev. D. J. O'Grady, P.P. Kash, who with Mr. James Hannan, J.P., acted as joint treasurer to the testimonial.

GENERAL.

Certain to fail.

The 'Westminster Gazette,' commenting on the revival of coercion, as instanced by the Castlebar prosecutions, writes: 'But the particular facts are of less importance than the broad fact that we seem now drifting back into an attempt to govern Ireland by coercion. The attempt is as certain to fail as it has failed before.'

Compulsory sale.

The prosecutions initiated in the West of Ireland by the Castle (writes a Dublin correspondent) have reference to the differences between Lord de Freyne and his tenantry. The tenantry claim a reduction of rent, and his Lordship refuses it. The United League and its leaders bid the tenants hold out. The Government calls this an illegal conspiracy or incitement. Hence the prosecutions. But the tenants are perfectly law-abiding, as their letter to Lord de Freyne shows. They are unable to pay his Lordship all he demands, but they offer him all he can justly claim and all they can possibly pay. Adjoining the de Freyne estate is the Dillon estate. Lord Dillon agreed some time ago to sell his interest in the land to the tenants on it, and did so. The Government, under the Land Purchase Act, found the money and advanced it to the tenants on loan. Lord Dillon got his price and gives no further trouble. He is done with the business. The tenants are paying back the loan to the Government in annual instalments, and are making their payments with unflinching regularity, the Government itself having fixed the amount of the instalments. But these annual payments are much less in amount than the annual rents demanded by Lord de Freyne from his tenantry on lands immediately adjoining. The de Freyne tenantry cannot pay more than the Dillon tenantry, for they sell in the same markets, and have no advantage over their neighbors. They must go on paying for evermore, while the Dillon tenantry will have to pay only till they wipe out their loans. Hence the crux. The de Freyne tenantry offer their landlord the Dillon scale of payment, but Lord de Freyne stands out for his 'rights.' Hence the friction and the agitation and the prosecutions. If Compulsory Sale were enacted, his Lordship would have to sell at a fixed price, and there would be no trouble. The United League leaders under prosecution are really the proto-martyrs of Compulsory Sale. What they are being prosecuted for to-day will be the law of the land presently.

Home Rule Cause.

Mr. John Redmond and the other delegates who have been visiting the

United States (says the 'Catholic Times') have had a very enthusiastic reception on their return. It must have been peculiarly gratifying to them. When they were leaving for the States there were not wanting prophets to foretell that their mission would prove a failure. The Irish-Americans, it was said, would no longer give them any sympathy or support, and they would come back grievously disappointed. Exactly the reverse of this has happened. As the 'Cork Examiner' observes, Irish-America has broken all its records in its generosity towards the representatives of the Irish people. The leading men of the race in the States have made themselves responsible for £20,000 towards the Parliamentary funds, and there is a practical assurance that as long as the Parliamentary forces continue united and capable of doing good work a similar amount may safely be reckoned on by those who are marshalling the National forces.

The Church and the poor.

A correspondent of the London 'Catholic Times' gives the following extract taken from a recent issue of the 'Guardian' (Anglican):— '... Would that we could learn their secret (the Catholic Church in Ireland) of gaining the obedience—nay, the affection and jealous loyalty—of the poor. Rome can stoop, as the (Anglican) Church in Ireland cannot, down to the uneducated and poor and simple, and bring religion—real, practical, vital religion—within the comprehension and into the lives of the little ones of Christ's Church. Would that we could learn something of her power of dogmatic instruction, her recognition of the house of God as a house of prayer, her work among communicants, her sense of the power and presence of sin, her discipline, and her belief in herself.'

Distribution.

Mr. Ernest Gardner, the Conservative member for the Wokingham Division of Berkshire, evidently does not agree with Mr. Chamberlain's announcement of policy with regard to Irish representation, judging from the following extract from a speech delivered at Wokingham a few weeks since. Mr. Gardner said he confessed he was not one of those who largely advocated alterations in Parliamentary procedure or a very great strengthening of the majority over the rights of the minority. There was a party in the House of Commons whose conduct was very exasperating, but at the same time he could not help remembering that the House of Commons, of all places, was the British home of free speech. They would think he was treading dangerously close to party politics, but they must remember that they might not always be the majority. He could picture the time when the minority of the House of Commons might be the body that had the patriotic feeling of the country, and he was not prepared, without great consideration, to support any alteration that would give the majority at some future time the opportunity of treading upon the minority, which might, after all, be right, as minorities sometimes were. This led him to the question of the Irish representation in the House of Commons, and here again he was not an eager supporter of any proposal—or dealing drastically with the Irish Party. It was impossible to deal with the Irish representation from a punitive point of view, though he admitted that they greatly abused their freedom. He had had the pleasure of conversing with many members of the Irish Party, and he had never found them other than gentlemanly and courteous men, though they did give expression to their feelings in the manner that outraged their fellow-members in the House of Commons and a great many people in