

Irish News.

ANTRIM.—Breaking Away.

Alderman Lawther, D.L., the High Sheriff of Belfast, has apparently emancipated himself from some curious Belfast notions about Irish affairs. He is old enough to remember the famine and the terrible exodus. 'When I look back,' he says, 'over the heartrending scenes, of the sailing of ships with emigrants from Belfast and other Irish ports, my heart burns with shame, sadness, and regret to see the old timber brigs, or ships, turned into passenger vessels, without ventilation, light, or any suitable sanitary arrangements; the emigrants having most of their own food packed in barrels, their own bedclothes, bundled into a dungeon—to face an Atlantic voyage—of 70 days' duration.' Mr. Lawther does not hesitate to place his finger on the cause of all this Irish distress, which has gone on to the present day—English government. 'Irish officials appointed by one Prime Minister after another, since the Act of Union in 1801 to the present time, I estimate,' he says, 'to have cost millions upon millions. No qualification or fitness for office; solely political influence to begin with, winding up with the usual pension. Fancy,' Mr. Lawther adds, 'such an army to provide for, to enumerate them to compel a return of the money so spent under one head or another, this Board, that Board, and so on, from one sop to meet a cry, so-and-so gets this grant, with the usual political officials attached, and their pensions following, and then another cry is raised, with the like results, leaving the great Land question as far off a final settlement as ever. The past history as shown has been a system of patchwork. Is it any wonder, with such a history, we have the present position of Irish affairs?'

CORK.—Mr. Davitt's Return.

A hearty and well-deserved welcome (says the Freeman's Journal) awaited Mr. Davitt when he again touched Irish soil on his return from participation in the arduous and successful mission in America. The Cork branch of the United Irish League expressed the views and feelings of every Nationalist in Ireland in the eloquent tribute to Mr. Davitt's life-long service in the Irish cause. His description, in his reply, of his experiences on the other side of the Atlantic was eminently encouraging. While the fight is maintained in Ireland, America supports it with cordial sympathy and substantial aid. It is only by apathy or disunion that sympathy can be alienated. Mr. Davitt paid a special tribute to the services on the mission of Mr. Dillon, whose health broke down under the strain of his exertions. In an interview with our reporter, he expressed his view that, apart from the general contributions of the organisation in America, from the fifteen meetings which Mr. Dillon and himself had addressed as much as £10,000 might be expected. Mr. Davitt brings good news to Ireland, and finds good news before him. The organisation grows in strength from day to day. If American support be dependent on the energy of the home movement, then American sympathy is secure. It only needed the tonic of coercion to conclude and complete the work of reunion and organisation in Ireland.

DUBLIN.—The 'Irish People' Prosecution.

The appeal of Messrs. McCarthy, O'Dwyer, and Holland, editor, manager, and publisher, of the 'Irish People,' against sentences under the Coercion Act was heard in the King's Bench Division, Dublin, on December 20. The sentence of two months' imprisonment in the case of the editor was confirmed. In the other two cases the judgment of the magistrate was set aside.

Proselytising

His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin presided on Sunday, December 21, at a largely-attended meeting at the Sacred Heart Home, Drumcondra, and delivered an important address on the working of the Protestant proselytising system, which aims at the kidnapping of the children of the poor. It was, he said, a traffic which its conductors must feel to be debasing, and it was all but inconceivable that they could be so ignorant of the first principles of Christian morality as not to know it was sinful. It was surprising that no authoritative protest had come from the responsible pastors of the religious body in the supposed interests of which it was carried on.

A Successful Teacher.

The unexpected has happened this year in connection with the award of the cup presented by Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., for presentation to the National teacher whose pupils secure the largest number of passes in Irish in the examinations of the National Board. The cup has been awarded to St. Andrew's National School, Great Brunswick street, Dublin, and the teacher who has succeeded in winning the trophy is Mr. Patrick J. Byrne, a member of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League, who a year and a half ago knew only a word or two of Irish. He presented 85 pupils, all of whom passed. Mr. Hickson, Ardara, Lispolo, County Kerry, came next with 84, and Mr. T. O'Scannell, Ballingearry, County Cork, third, with 83 successful pupils. Mr. Scannell has been the holder of the cup for some years, having wrested it from Mr. Hickson in '99, and retained it since. He and Mr. Hickson have practically kept the trophy between them since it was first presented by Mr. O'Brien, and it is rather significant to find a metropolitan school winning it from them now.

The Palestrina Choir.

The Palestrina Choir, due to the munificence of Mr. Edward Martyn, are about to take over the musical services in the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin. Mr. Vincent O'Brien, who has trained the choir for the past four years, will be the musical director, and Mr. Brendan Rogers will retain his position as organist, a position which he has so capably filled for the past fourteen years. As the appointment of Mr. O'Brien will necessitate his transfer from St. Saviour's Church, Dominick street, the Dominican Fathers have secured the services of a most accomplished English musician, Mr. S. Myerscough, as organist and choirmaster.

Death of a Canon.

The Very Rev. Canon Keon, parish priest of Fairview, Dublin, died on December 22, after a prolonged illness. Canon Keon was ordained priest in 1856, and entered on his duties in the diocese of Dublin immediately. He was curate at different periods in Clontarf, Arranquay, and Westland row, and was appointed parish priest of Fairview in 1879, and in 1885 was made a canon of the archdiocese of Dublin. The deceased was an able and zealous priest, who, throughout the long years of his missionary labors, devoted his whole life to the service of God and to the improvement and elevation of his fellow creatures. He was warm-hearted and kindly in disposition, and imbued with a true spirit of Christian charity. Canon Keon was loved and esteemed by his parishioners, and was very popular with all classes of the community in Fairview and its neighborhood, irrespective of creed or class.

A Good Record.

Since its foundation, some 16 years ago, the Sacred Heart Home, Drumcondra, has been the means of rescuing more than a thousand children from the grasp of proselytisers, who, under the guise of charity, induce poverty stricken Catholic parents to part with their helpless offsprings.

Parliamentary Vacancy.

Mr. Lecky, M.P. for Dublin University, has placed his resignation in the hands of the Provost with the announcement that he will not be seen again at Westminster. Several candidates are in the field. Mr. Seymour Bushe, K.C., pledges himself not to take office of any kind if elected. Mr. Campbell, K.C., formerly member for St. Stephen's Green Division, and present Solicitor-General, will also stand. Other candidates are Mr. Arthur Samuels, K.C., and Mr. Ormsby Hamilton, barrister.

GALWAY.—Archdiocese of Tuam.

The parish priests of the archdiocese of Tuam met in the Cathedral on December 23 for the purpose of recommending a successor to the late Most Rev. Dr. MacEvilly. The Most. Rev. Dr. MacCormack presided at the election.

KERRY.—The Tide of Emigration.

The baneful tide of emigration (says the 'Irish Weekly') has left its lamentable marks in an especial manner in many a district throughout Ireland, but scarcely anywhere more than in Kerry have its evil influences been experienced and deprecated. The number of emigrants who have left those districts each year is, to say the least of it, simply appalling. Many as are the touching exhortations from responsible persons in America, as well as from both pulpit and platform at home in Ireland, concerning the perils of emigration, yet, sad to relate, those exhortations seemingly have no appreciable effect. Onward they go regardless of the adversities, both physical and financial, which many of them must inevitably encounter in the land of the stranger, not speaking of the moral side of the question at all. Those circumstances have naturally produced a dearth of laborers in those districts, with the result that were it not for the introduction and utilisation of machinery, farmers would find it practically impossible to prosecute agricultural operations under existing circumstances. Unfortunately the dearth of laborers occasioned by the exodus of emigrants has not enhanced to any appreciable extent the financial or material circumstances of those who remain at home, as machinery has to a considerable extent dispensed with many features of manual labor. Lack of industrial development is another potent factor instrumental in the promotion of emigration from those districts.

TIPPERARY.—Death of a Clonmel Man.

Mr. Felix O'Neill, a veteran of '48 and '67, died recently at his residence, Lisronagh, Clonmel, aged 82 years. The interment took place on December 16 in the family burial ground, Ballyneale.

Destructive Fire in Thurles.

A few days before Christmas a destructive fire took place in Thurles, resulting in damage to the extent of about £6000. The outbreak occurred in the shop of Mr. P. Rahill, of the Square, and from there spread to the premises of Mr. Maher. The shops of Messrs. Deacon and Ryan were also injured. As the fire occurred during the night, and had taken a strong hold before it was seen, nothing was saved from Messrs. Rahill's and Maher's premises. Great sympathy was felt for the sufferers, and on the following day a subscription list was opened, when the Archbishop of Cashel gave £20 and Messrs. Kirwan a like amount.