

Irish News

OUR IRISH LETTER

(From our own correspondent.)

Dublin, August, 1903.

'Little Birds in their Nests Agree.'

During the visit of the King and Queen to Dublin I happened to be present at an incident, simple in itself, yet so curious and unusual that it might, under other circumstances, have led to a serious misunderstanding, perhaps a painful scene. Two well-dressed ladies in mourning for the Pope, as their portrait badges showed, were passing by a Protestant Church close to Grafton street. Suddenly, a good-sized egg, flung from above, fell within an inch of one of the ladies and smashed at her feet, splashing all the lower part of her dress. The lady started, passers-by stopped and stared in surprise, then a common-sense idea struck one of the party so grossly attacked: she gazed up at the church and discovered that there was evidently a family row going on amongst the pigeons that built in the flying buttresses of the edifice, and the egg flung out had simply been ejected from the nest in an unseemly scuffle, unworthy of what should be the dove-like conduct of church pigeons. But had this odd occurrence taken place, let us say when the King and Queen were passing by the General Post Office, where pigeons build in hundreds (you must remember pigeons lay a good-sized egg), what might not have been the construction put upon it?

At night I noticed that, alone amongst all the buildings of Dublin, the Orange Hall had a strong guard of police stationed opposite and another guard in readiness round the next corner. Now, the last occasion of illuminations, there was a row at this same Orange Hall, all the windows were smashed and some ugly work took place. It was discovered subsequently at the trial of the Papists—who, of course, were arrested—that the stone-throwing and rowdiness began inside the Lodge, and that the whole thing was got up to bring discredit on Catholic citizens. So this time all such unpleasantness was prevented.

The Motor Car Race.

Of course the great International Motor Car Race stirred us all to great excitement, though, indeed, motoring can scarcely be called sport. It was really a gay time, an animated scene, for at every turn one met all nationalities, all enjoying sight-seeing and recklessly venturing on the Irish jaunting-car, which seems to foreigners a far more perilous proceeding than running a motor race. To see an American, a German, or a Frenchman climb cautiously off or on this unknown machine, and then cling on for bare life, a look, half joy, half terror, on the countenance as the horse dashes lightly away, is a genial sight for the native, who never climbs on or off, but springs, and, once seated, disdains to touch any part of the car. As for motor-race day itself I verily believe I was the only being left in Dublin, except the blind and the halt. The excitement all over the country was unbounded, and not only did the exodus from the capital begin at 2 a.m., but many encamped on the course days before and thousands sat up all night. One enterprising set of youths travelled down to Kildare in a furniture van, the interior of which they had divided into compartments, a dormitory and a dining room; the roof, furnished with seats, made an excellent stand and the four sides of the van advertising boards, by means of which the canny youths netted a tidy sum over and above the cost of living and the hire of the vehicle.

The New Pope

There is very great joy felt in well-informed circles at the election of our new Pope. I have spoken with an authority from Rome who says that all who have had intimate relations with his Holiness (especially in Venice, where he is idolized) say that he is a splendid character; mild and kind, yet firm, and eminently gifted with strong common sense. Precisely the characteristics one reads in his portrait.

St. Swithin's Day.

Do you know anything whatever about St. Swithin in your land? Here, in this land of lakes, rivers and mountains, we all watch anxiously for the state of the clouds on St. Swithin's day, 15th of July, for says the legend:

'If rain doth fall on St. Swithin's day,
Then for forty days the rain will stay.'

Both our own people and the English have an extraordinary faith in the old prophecy, and of a certainty, whether it be St. Swithin or the phases of the moon at that particular season, more often than not we find that if the 15th of July is fair, there is very little, if any,

rainfall during the forty days following; while in the case of a wet or broken St. Swithin's, woe to the farmer who has not saved his hay. This summer a fair forenoon and afternoon on July 15 were followed by an evening's downpour, and ever since a part at least of every twenty-four hours has seen such heavy rains that any farmers, save our ever-patient country folk, would grumble over lost hay or large tracts of meadow yet standing over ripe, sending the sap back into the ground. Yet one only hears from the peasants: 'Well, it's the will of God. We mustn't complain.' Wonderful and beautiful are the faith and patience of the Irish peasant! It is too much the fashion to say that all that had been Americanised out of our country people, but it is not so, I am glad to say. Though there may be some changes from the peasants' ways and thoughts of fifty years ago, faith in and love of God are, if anything, more actively alive than ever; for, now that the restraints and restrictions of old times are removed, there are churches and chapels and convents on every hand and the people are able to give a free bent to the spirit of piety that is inherent in our race; a rich legacy bequeathed to the Irish people by willing martyrs for the Faith, for is it not always true that 'The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians?' Let us hope that the seed will sow and re-sow itself for ever; that our people may even lack worldly wealth rather than win it at the expense of simplicity of heart.

M.B.

COUNTY NEWS

ANTRIM.—Orange Rowdiness

The followers of Mr. Sloan, M.P., and Mr. Trew had several scimmages again on Sunday, August 9, at the Custom House steps, Belfast. Mr. Trew was for some minutes 'in a very ugly position,' and a young man named Musgrave was seriously injured, having received a severe blow of a stick on the forehead.

DUBLIN.—Emmet's Grave

By direction of his relatives, the grave in St. Michan's churchyard, Dublin, in which Robert Emmet is said to have been interred, was excavated recently with a view to ascertaining if his remains were actually buried there.

A Generous Gift

Mr. Andrew Carnegie has offered the Dublin Corporation £28,000 for the erection of a free central library, provided the city levies a rate to support the institution and that a site be given.

GALWAY.—The Prevention of Intemperance

The Most Rev. Dr. O'Dea, Bishop-elect of Clonfert, has been appointed a vice-president of the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance.

KILDARE—Reminiscences

In reply to an address from the people of Ballymount on the occasion of his blessing a new bell, Archbishop Walsh delivered an interesting address. He recalled the fact that his first visit to the district took place forty years ago. He was brought there by Cardinal Cullen, and they travelled on that 'very convenient but not over-pretentious vehicle, an outside car.' On the eve of the great motor race he found himself sweeping past Ballymount upon a very different kind of vehicle, and at a wholly different rate of speed. His Grace referred to the many historic places in the neighborhood, including Mullaghmast, which Cardinal Cullen pointed out to him at the time. It was then, too, that he learned of the famous school that was established in Ballytore in the eighteenth century by Abraham Shackleton, and which numbered among its pupils our illustrious fellow-countrymen, Edmund Burke and Paul Cullen, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin.

LONGFORD.—A New Church

On the first Sunday in August the Most Rev. Dr. Hoare laid the foundation stone of a new church in Ballymahon, County Longford, his native parish, and delivered an eloquent sermon. His Lordship in concluding, said: There are some amongst us—very few, thank God—who grudge God a decent house. These people are annoyed that since we cast off the chains of slavery we have expended on our churches £2,000,000. They ask, like Judas, 'Why this waste?' and the answer is, 'There is no waste. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. We are only giving to God what already belongs to Him.' It is God's wish that we be generous towards Him, Who is the giver of all good gifts, that His house should show forth our faith and our love.

ROSCOMMON.—A Slander Refuted

Mgr. M'Loughlin, of Roscommon, in receiving a presentation from his parishioners made reference to the allegations of Mr. Starkie, Resident Commissioner of Education in Ireland, that the people of Ireland could find plenty of money for churches but none for schools. So far as Roscommon was concerned, that statement