

IRISH NEWS

GENERAL.

A curious incident occurred at Belfast during the recent strike. The strike pickets intimated to Mr. Charles Allen, the managing director of Messrs. Workman and Clark, and to Mr. Saxon Payne, secretary to Messrs. Harland and Wolff, that they would not be allowed to visit their own works.

A committee has for some time been established at Cork for the promotion of Irish traditional music. Already the sum of £500 has been collected, and the committee expects to have £1000 before the end of summer. Belfast is linking up with the movement, Mr. F. J. Biggar, the well-known Gael, offering £50 for every £50 collected for the fund. Mr. Joseph O'Mara, the celebrated Irish tenor, has subscribed £5 and sent his best wishes for success.

In a debate in the Spanish Cortes on Catalonian autonomy, Senor Cambo quoted the Irish Home Rule Bill of 1907, which was withdrawn because it was unacceptable to the Irish Party. Count Romanones replied by reminding him that, after twelve years, Home Rule had not yet been granted to Ireland.

Mr. Devlin, at a meeting in Belfast during the strike, said young girls and little children had to work from 6.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. in overheated rooms and under the most unhealthy conditions, and it was a blot upon modern civilisation. Married women had to work these hours as well as attend their domestic duties. Children of tender years were compelled to work as half-timers on conditions of long hours of sweated labor; and very often under unhealthy conditions. Such things should not be allowed to continue.

Cardinal Logue in ordering a collection in the archdiocese of Armagh to meet the expenses of the beatification of the Irish martyrs, says, the principal evidence taken by the Most Rev. Dr. Walsh occupied a large folio volume, and the expenses of witnesses, printing, etc., were very considerable. The case of the Ven. Oliver Plunket occupied 47 sessions of eight hours each, and three days additional were required for closing up the process. He expected the canonisation would take place shortly and that many Irish men and women would journey to Rome on that occasion. The last canonisation for the archdiocese was that of St. Malachy. Since the time of St. Laurence O'Toole no Irishman had been so honored.

The *Irish Independent* says: The Provisional General Committee of the Irish Centre Party have appointed Messrs. T. O'Dowd, J.P., W. P. O'Neill, C.E., and F. P. Griffith, J.P. (treasurers), and Lieutenant F. J. Welan, a central organisation committee; and a propaganda committee is to be under the direction of Mr. J. Dinsmore, jun., and Captain Scholefield, while sub-committees have been chosen to suggest action on electoral reform (Prof. Oldham and Mr. A. Smith, J.P., directors), public health (Drs. Crofton and Rowlett), judicial reform (Sergt. Sullivan and Mr. W. E. Wylie, K.C.), and development and transit (Messrs. W. P. O'Neill and F. P. Griffith).

General Sir H. Gough has written a letter explaining the Curragh incident. In it he says:—"As for the principles on which I acted, they were certainly unselfish ones, and if the attempt to force Home Rule on Ulster had been made by a military force, with bloodshed and civil war, it would have caused an everlasting and never-to-be-forgotten cleavage and hatred in Ireland far worse than anything that still exists. . . . If ever all Irishmen should unite in thanking God for escaping one act of irretrievable folly, it would be when they think of that Curragh incident."

MICHAEL OG O'LONGAN: SCHOLAR, POET, PATRIOT.

To delvers in the manuscript literature of modern Irish-Gaelic, few names are better known than that of Michael Og O'Longan, poet, patriot, and scribe.

He was an indefatigable copyist of old MSS. The Most Rev. Dr. Murphy, Bishop of Cork, was one of his best patrons, and the books he copied (assisted by his sons) for that prelate are now in Maynooth. For another patron, Mr. James Roche, he copied twenty-eight volumes now in the Stowe Collection of the Royal Irish Academy. But his best MSS. are those in the Betham Collection, also in the Academy. There are twenty O'Longan MSS. in St. Colman's, Fermoy, and many in private hands. Those interested in the work of O'Longan are now collecting a fund to found a permanent memorial to his memory, and Mr. Tadhg O'Donoghue, Professor of Irish in the University College, Cork, is taking a leading part in the good work.

Michael Og O'Longan came of an old Limerick family, and was born near Carrignavar, Co. Cork, on July 31, 1766. From his father, who was a good Irish scholar, he learned much concerning the literature of the language. His early years were spent partly in farming and partly in teaching. He joined the United Irishmen in 1797 in the city of Cork, and by his poems and propagandist labors became of great service to the movement. For some time he acted as letter-carrier to the leaders of the United Irishmen of the south, travelling through Munster in the guise of a poor scholar. It is to these journeys that we owe the preservation of much of our 17th and 18th century poetry. Everywhere he went he copied books and took down poems from the mouths of the old people.

In May, 1798, while Simon O'Donovan was being tried at Cork for high treason, an informer swore that O'Longan was letter carrier to the United Irishmen, and a warrant was at once issued for his arrest. This he contrived to evade by flying into Limerick County, where he remained till times were quieter. He married in 1800 a widow named Mary Crowley, to whom he had been attached before her first marriage. He spent the remainder of his life in the teaching profession in various places in North Kerry, West Limerick, and at Carrignavar, Co. Cork. In 1822 he obtained a small farm at Cnoc Buidhe from Justin McCarthy (representative of the ancient lords of Muskerry), where his family lived till his death, May 17, 1837. He is buried at Whitechurch, Co. Cork.

Michael Og had four sons, two daughters, and a stepdaughter. Of the sons, Peter and Paul helped their father in his copying work. Paul after his death, worked in the Royal Irish Academy under Sir John Gilbert. A younger brother, Joseph, succeeded him. It is to Joseph we owe the facsimile copies of the *Leabhar Breac*, *Leabhar na hUidhche*, etc. Paul O'Longan taught Irish to Thomas Davis, and died in 1866.

Many of the descendants of Michael Og O'Longan still exist and are distinguished in various careers, scholastic and religious. It is hoped that his poems, many of which are of a religious nature, will soon be published. Professor O'Donoghue has the matter in hand.

CENTENARY OF A FAMOUS HYMN.

How many who year by year thrill to the sweetness of that tender Christmas carol, "Silent Night! Holy Night!" know that it was written just over 100 years ago? The *Epworth Herald* calls attention to this first centenary in the following paragraph: "This beautiful carol, sung by all Christendom, celebrates the one hundredth anniversary of its birth this year. It is one of the gifts of the Catholic Church to the world, having being-written by the Rev. Joseph Mohr, an Austrian priest of that Communion. At the age of 23, the author was ordained to the priesthood, and three years afterwards, in 1818, he wrote this hymn for the Christmas service in the church which he served as vicar." It is not known who translated Father Mohr's remarkably poetic hymn into English. But will its Germano-Austrian origin bar it this year from the churches of our separated brethren? The *Epworth Herald* answers this question in the negative. "Out of the clangor of the time its Christmas message still rings true."