

Centenarians

The quarterly return of births, deaths, and marriages in Ireland for the period ended June last, which has been issued by the Registrar-General, contains the record of the death from natural causes, at the age of 115 years, of a woman who is reported to have lived in a cabin in Rathangan, Edenderry district, for 30 years. In Termoneckin, Drogheda, a woman, an old age pensioner, died at 103 years. At Caher, Caherciveen, another woman died at 104 years. At Mullinahone, Tipperary, another death occurred at 100 years, while at Portglenone, Ballymena, one at 110 was registered; at Omagh one at a similar age, and at Ballina 104, and Arranmore, Rathdrum, 102.

The Irish Hunter Unequaled

In the *Journal* of the Irish Department of Agriculture there appears a translation of an official bulletin issued by the French Society for the Encouragement of the Breeding of Army Horses, in which the writer gives his impressions of the Dublin Horse Show. He is loud in his praises of the Irish hunter. 'Taken on the whole, the hunters present the rarest unity of type that one could desire; in the case of nearly all certain salient points were invariably the same. An extremely powerful muscular frame is shown, particularly in the massiveness of the quarters; the back thighs, which are so muscled up as to literally stand out well over the hocks, are full, firm, and well rounded. And beneath those muscles, what bones! The hocks are strong, clean, and generally well shaped; the knees are broad and close to the ground, supported on short cannon bones, and of an apparent girth which is often surprising. When we verify their measurements, we often find dimensions of 7.9, 8.3, 8.7 inches and upwards. The depth of chest is remarkable; the lengthy withers put the saddle well into its place, far behind a shoulder which is always well sloped back. These qualities, far from being what are too often thought to be the exception, are found in all the animals, whether they be four, five, or six years old, whether of light, medium, or heavy weight, whether it be a horse at the price of £80 or one at £400. This is the first great lesson which we ought to learn from the Dublin Horse Show; that it is possible, since it is the case, to find in one and the same place more than 800 horses which are all of the saddle-horse type. It is indeed true that in that number some animals are inferior to others—and this is the main point brought out by what we have just said—namely, that it is not necessary to go to the choicest, the elite, to find symmetrical build.

National Education

In their annual report the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland complain of the manner in which their requests for funds are treated by the Treasury. They say:—We have once more to make serious complaint that many proposals which we have felt it our duty to urge in recent years for the improvement and extension of our educational system continue to receive but scant consideration at the hands of the Irish Government and the Lords of his Majesty's Treasury. An English Minister, speaking in Parliament on behalf of the English Board of Education, and reviewing the educational progress of the year, is able to point to a large increase of grants consequent on the ever-widening range of the activities of his department, to discourse at length on the ruralising of elementary education in country districts of England, and the spread of agricultural instruction through evening schools and school gardens connected with primary schools, and to discuss the beneficial effects of State-instituted medical inspection of school children, and increased facilities for physical exercises and training in domestic economy. In Ireland we are, we trust, fully alive to the importance and advantages of such modern developments of educational effort, but our demands for the necessary financial assistance for proposals of a simpler and more obvious kind have hitherto been met with curt refusals. For seven years we have urged on the Treasury the necessity of making grants for the instituting of higher grade national schools. In England and Scotland such schools form a most important feature of primary education; in France and Germany similar institutions have been in existence for many years. The necessity for these schools is not less, but greater, here in Ireland, and the foundation of the National University and the opportunities of higher education thus presented to classes of the people hitherto without these advantages will tend irresistibly to increase the need. Similarly, we have sought permission to encourage the clever pupils of our schools by throwing open to their competition a number of county scholarships. These proposals have been refused.

Not very long ago an insurance agent in quest of new connections was making the round of a village in the south of Scotland.

No response being vouchsafed to his repeated knocking, he was about to retire baffled when he espied a curly-headed youngster peeping round the corner.

'Here, my little man, can you tell me if your mother is in the Prudential?'

'Na,' came the quick response, 'she's in the washin' house.'

People We Hear About

The death is announced of Mrs. Thomas, a daughter of Captain Marryat, the novelist, who passed away recently at Bruges. Both Mrs. Thomas and her sister, the late Florence Marryat (Mrs. Ross Church), became converts to the Catholic Church, thus adding another to the many literary footprints which mark the road of Rome recruits. Mrs. Thomas was very popular among the English colony at Bruges, where her hospitable house stood near to the Jesuit Church. Her many social gifts were assisted by an excellent memory, which she retained to her last year—which was her eighty-eighth. Of Mrs. Thomas's daughters, one is a nun in Belgium.

The *Westminster Gazette* writes:—While Signor Caruso remains, of course, a shining vocal example of 'Eclipse first,' nothing could be more significant or flattering than the popular interest evoked by the announcement of Mr. John McCormack's only concert appearance in London during the approaching season. This will be, by permission of the Opera Syndicate, at the opening concert of the Albert Hall ballad series. Certainly there has been nothing more remarkable than the advance in his art by the brilliant young Irish tenor during the past season at Covent Garden, and particularly in his appearances with Madame Melba.

A military engineer named Joseph Cugnot, born in Void, France, is said to have made the first automobile nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. He devised a little motor car driven by steam, to transport cannon. Its speed limit was three miles an hour. The French Minister of War encouraged the inventor to try again, and he made a three-wheeled car, which proved so refractory in its movements that it was relegated to the museum as a curiosity. Thirty years ago a movement was started in Void to honor Cugnot by erecting a memorial, but the plan was abandoned. Now it has been revived, and a statue will be erected in his native place.

The Lady Mayoress of London, Lady Knill, is a woman of very religious and charitable sympathies. She is one of the three women in the world who possess the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, given to her for charitable work in the Diocese of Southwark, where she is known as 'Queen of the Poor.' In connection with her charitable work Lady Knill is rather fond of telling the story of a man to whom she gave a pair of boots. Some days later she met the man again wearing his old ragged pair. 'What have you done with the pair I gave you?' she asked him. 'Oh,' replied the old rascal, unblushingly, 'I left them off. These I am wearing are worth ten shilling a day to me.'

Mr. Bernard Partridge, who now becomes the chief cartoonist on the staff of *Punch*, was educated at the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst. He is the youngest son of the late Professor Richard Partridge, F.R.S., President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and Professor of Anatomy to the Royal Academy. Mr. Bernard Partridge got no systematic art training. He began life as an assistant to a stained-glass designer, was afterwards an actor in Benson's Company, and happening to illustrate one of Anstey's humorous stories, was noted by Du Maurier as worthy to be one of Mr. Punch's young men. Within six months, through Du Maurier's influence, he was called to a place on the inner staff of *Punch*.

Mr. Joseph M. Swynnerton, the sculptor, who died last month, had been ill for some time, both in Rome and in London—the two capitals in which he had studios; and the end came to him, at the age of 62, at Port St. Mary, in his native Isle of Man. The works due to his chisel include the statue of St. Winefride at St. Winefride's Well, Holywell (which was blessed by Leo XIII. in a special audience granted to the sculptor in 1896); a memorial bust of Lord Russell of Killowen; a public fountain in Rome which earned the medal given by the Minister for Public Instruction; and a fountain in the Camberwell Art Gallery. For a number of years Mr. Swynnerton was a convert to the Catholic Church, to which he gave all his love, and to the illustration of whose saints and devotions he most delightfully dedicated his art. He leaves as widow a lady famous among contemporary painters.

In an article on the late Lord Spencer in *Reynolds' Newspaper*, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, referring to the time when the Earl became a friend of Home Rule, says no greater conquest was ever made by the Irish cause. His courage in adversity, his honesty, his readiness to fight, made everybody respect this candid admission of the errors of the policy of which he had been so brave and almost relentless an exponent. No man brought greater hope and encouragement to Mr. Gladstone in the desperate enterprise on which that wonderful old man had entered the winter of his long political day. To the Irish cause Lord Spencer gave his unwavering aid for the rest of his career. I see the statement in some Tory papers that Lord Spencer's attachment to Home Rule became lukewarm. Nothing could be less true or more unjust. In season and out of season, in stormy and in fine weather, Lord Spencer never ceased to be one of the most ardent and most convinced and most outspoken of Home Rulers.'