

IRISH NEWS

IRISH ATHLETICS.

To the Editor *N.Z. Tablet*.

Sir,—I see by Answers to Correspondents that someone had been sneering at Irish Athletes. They evidently are unaware that the Tailtin games were inaugurated in Ireland, A.M. 33.70, or exactly 1829 years before the birth of Christ. In his book on weight-throwing, James S. Mitchell, the great athlete, who has won more championships than any other athlete, states, in addition to the foregoing:—"As these games were instituted 600 years prior to the first Olympiad, the Greeks are therefore indebted to the early Irish for the idea of the Hellenic carnival. In the Tailtin programme throwing the hammer was termed the *rothelea*, which means wheel feat, and the first great champion was Cuhullian, who excelled all the men of his time, A.M. 5099; and, fortunately, perhaps, for the self-esteem of his latest emulators, the exact records of this antique celebrity have never been published. Putting the stone, the parent of all forms of shot-putting, was a popular event of the ancient programme, and through centuries of turmoil and strife remained a popular pastime of the Celt. Scotland, too, has been a prolific nursery for noted stone-putters."

The truth of the latter is borne out at every meeting when the winner of the weight-throwing bears either an Irish or Scottish name, men of Highland descent, and in all "field" events the same applies. A run through the names of the present N.Z. champions bears this out.—I am, etc.,

GERALD ENRIGHT.

HORRIBLE WESTERN STORY: CRIPPLE MUTILATED.

The gruesome circumstances associated with the murder of Ml. Tolan, the crippled Ballina Volunteer, who was done to death at Shraheen, Foxford, while being conveyed in police custody to Galway, were again unfolded at Ballina Quarter Sessions, when Mrs. Anne Quigley, mother of the deceased, claimed £5000 compensation for the loss of her son (says the *Irish Independent* for February 2).

Mr. Fitzgerald Kenny, B.L., for applicant, described it as a horrible murder, and said the miscreants who committed the murder made every effort to cover up their traces. The deceased was a tailor, the sole means of support of his mother and a young nephew. His legs were bowed and his feet were of a curious formation. On April 14 last he was captured in a house in Mill Street in his bare feet. He was wearing a grey suit at the time, and had a tailor's thimble in his pocket. In the police barracks he seemed to have received horrible treatment and when visited by some friends was moaning and in pain.

FEET KNOCKED OFF.

He was kept in his bare feet for a considerable time, but finally a pair of socks were given to him and a dark green overcoat brought him by a Miss O'Hara. Some weeks after his removal a body considerably discomposed was found in a bog at Shraheen. It was dressed in a green overcoat, a grey suit, and various things found in the pocket included a tailor's thimble. The body was brought away to the police barracks, and when in the police barracks it received the most extraordinary mutilation. The feet were knocked off the body apparently by some blunt instrument and seemingly for the purpose of preventing identification, and had not since been seen. An arm was also missing. At this particular time the body was not identified, and it was buried unidentified.

IDENTIFICATION.

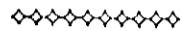
It was only when poor Tolan could not be found anywhere after a search of some months that the body was exhumed and examined by three doctors. Dr. Staunton, who saw it on the occasion it was first found in the bog, would tell his lordship that there was a bayonet wound in

the side, and the doctors who examined it after exhumation found two bullet wounds in the head.

Amongst the witnesses examined were:—Mrs. Quigley, deceased's mother, and Dr. Ferran, T.D., and Dr. Crowley, T.D., who examined the body after exhumation. The latter stated that although the feet had been removed, they were able to state from the curvature of the thighs that the body was that of a man with deformed feet. Mr. P. Callery, B.E., a companion of deceased, definitely identified the remains.

Judge Doyle said there was no doubt that this young man met with a violent death at the hands of those in whose custody he was at the time.

He awarded £750.



"CALCULATED SAVAGERY": "CHAMPIONS OF LAW" IN BALLINA.

"A piece of calculated blackguardism and savagery that even in these times it would be hard to surpass," was the description applied by Mr. Price, K.C., to the conduct of a party of Auxiliaries who in January, 1921, paraded six prominent Ballina merchants—Messrs. Patrick and Michael Beirne, John and Michael Moylett, D. Molloy, R.D.C., and M. Corcoran, U.D.C. Mr. M. Beirne was awarded £200, and each of the others £100 at Ballina.

Mr. M. Moylett, detailing the circumstances, said the Auxiliaries rushed into his house while he was at dinner, and said they wanted him. When he asked to be allowed to take his hat and coat, they said he would not require them, as he would soon be in hell. They brought him to the Moy Hotel with the other applicants, and, after being some time there, they were lined up on the street, with Union Jacks, which they were compelled to hold aloft. After being about 20 minutes standing on the street they were told they would be given a final march round to bid farewell to the town. His brother, John, was compelled to trail a Sinn Fein flag in the gutter, and, accompanied by armed Auxiliaries, who punched them in the sides with revolvers whenever they dropped their hands, they were marched through the principal streets of the town.

EXTORTING FALSE STATEMENT.

At Tyler's Cross, in the centre of the town, they were halted, forced down on their knees in the mud, and compelled to kiss the Union Jacks, which were rubbed forcibly against their faces. The Sinn Fein flag was afterwards burned, while they were beaten to compel them to join in singing "God Save the King."

They were then brought to the Moy Hotel, where an Auxiliary officer gave them a lecture on loyalty, concluding with a warning that if anything happened in the district their places would go up, and they themselves would go down.

On the following day, when a report of the occurrence appeared in the Press, Auxiliary officers called on them, and, under threats of shooting them, tried to extort a statement that they joined in the parade voluntarily, but they refused to sign such a statement.

The other applicants gave similar evidence. On medical advice Mr. M. Beirne and his brother left the country for six months afterwards.

Judge Doyle said he had already expressed his view of the conduct of these people, who claimed to be the champions of law and order and the defenders of person and property, but this much he would add—if there was any town in existence which called for respect and honorable consideration at the hands of these visitors it was Ballina.

The amazing brutalities inflicted on Mayo people would be almost incredible if sworn evidence of them had not been given. The stories told at Ballina Quarter Sessions by the victims of such inhumanity are the first public revelation which the recent reign of terror permitted of the awful sufferings of these unfortunate people. They were taken from their homes and beaten with the butts of rifles and revolvers, and suffered other tortures and indignities in circumstances which aggravated the cruelty of their treatment. They alleged that these sufferings were inflicted upon them without provocation by British forces, as they were unable to give information regarding ambushes which had occurred in their neighborhood.