

# OLD LETTERS.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

Before me lies a most precious document, an original manuscript, which will explain itself. But to show how it came into my possession, I must quote from another letter. This first one, from which I take the extract was addressed to my mother, by her brother.

"Clonmel, Aug 17, 1858.

"My Dear Sister:—

I am enclosing you the manuscript of Bianconi's address, before the British Association, at the meeting held in Dublin last August."

I now give Bianconi's letter to my uncle; it runs thus:—

"Dear M—

"Dan Hearn, my own right hand, told me that you would like to have a report of my address before the British Association. You are one of the dear and tried friends to whom nothing can be refused. If you are so interested in horses, cars, harness and the like, you may possibly care to read through the original manuscript, which I now send you. If you cannot make out the writing you are at liberty to guess the meaning. Do not destroy these few pages, as they may be useful some day — although I fear the screeching engines will soon do away with all interest in stage-coaches.

"Ever yours sincerely,

"CHAS. BIANCONI."

I will now transcribe exactly the few pages, in the famous Bianconi's handwriting, that I have before me. They seem to be notes of a lecture rather than a regular address in form.

"Referring to the synopsis of my establishment, submitted in a concise form to your association at its session in Cork, in 1843, I now take the liberty of submitting some further particulars, embracing its origin, with its present condition, and the extent of its operations. My establishment originated immediately after the peace of 1815, having then had the advantage of a supply of first class horses intended for the army, and rating in price from ten to twenty pounds each, one of which drew a car and six persons with ease seven miles an hour. The demand for such horses having ceased, the breeding of them naturally diminished, and, after some time, I found it necessary to put two inferior horses to do the work of one. Finding I thus had extra horse-power, I increased the size of the car, which held six passengers—three on each side—to one capable of carrying eight, and in proportion as the breed of horses improved I continued to increase the size of the cars for summer work, and to add to the number of horses in winter, for the conveyance of the same number of passengers, until I converted the two-wheeled, two-horse cars into four-wheeled cars, drawn by two, three, or four horses, according to the traffic on the respective roads, and the wants of the public. The freedom of communication has greatly added to the elevation of the lower classes; for, in proportion as they found that travelling by a car, with a saving of time, was cheaper than walking with a loss of it, they began to appreciate the value of speedy communication, and hence have been, to an almost incalculable extent, travellers by my cars, where, mixing with the better orders of society, their own moral elevation had been of a decided character. As the establishment extended, its commercial and moral importance I found, as soon as I had opened communication with the interior, the consumption of manufactured goods had greatly increased. The competition of parties availing themselves of the facilities of travelling was so great, that, instead of buying at second-hand, after many profits, they were enabled to obtain the supplies nearer the manufacturer. In the more remote parts of Ireland, for instance—on my opening the communication from Tralee to Cahirciveen, in the South, Galway to Clifden, in the West, and Ballina to Belmullet, in the North-west, purchasers were obliged to give eight or nine pence a yard for calico for shirts, subsequently sold for three and four pence, thus enabling that portion of the population who could previously hardly afford only one shirt each, to have two for a less price than was paid for one, and in the same ratio other commodities came into general use at reduced prices.

"The formation of my first car, conveying passengers back to back, on the principle of the outside car—now so much used in Dublin—was admirably adapted to its purposes, and it frequently happened that, whilst on one side were sitting some of the higher classes, persons as opposite in position were seated on the other. Not only was this unaccompanied with any inconvenience, but I consider its effects were very salutary; as many who had no status were, by coming into casual communication with the educated classes, inspired with the importance of, and respect for, social position.

"The growth and extent of railways necessarily affected my establishment and diminished its operation, by withdrawing from it ten two-wheeled cars, travelling daily 450 miles; twenty-two four-wheeled cars, travelling daily 1,620 miles; five coaches, travelling daily 376 miles—thus making a total falling off of 37 vehicles, travelling daily 2,446 miles. Notwithstanding this falling off, the consequent result of the extension of railways, I still have over nine hundred horses, working 35 two-wheeled cars, travelling daily 1,752 miles; 22 four-wheeled cars, travelling daily 1,500 miles; ten coaches, travelling daily 992 miles—making in the whole 67 conveyances, travelling daily 4,244 miles, and extending over portions of twenty-two counties, viz:—Cork, Clare, Carlow, Cavan, Donegal, Fermanagh, Galway, King's, Kilkenny, Kerry, Limerick, Longford, Leitrim, Mayo, Queen's County, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Tyrone, Waterford, Wexford and Westmeath. Anxious to aid as well as I could, the resources of the country, many of which lay so long unproductive, I used this establishment, as far as practicable, to effect so desirable an object. For instance, I enabled the fishermen on the Western coast to avail themselves of a rapid transit for their fresh fish, which, being a very perishable article, would be comparatively profitless unless its conveyance to Dublin and other suitable markets could be insured with in a given time—so that those engaged in the fisheries of Clifden, Westport, and other places, sending their produce by my conveyances on one day, could rely on its reaching its destination the following morning, additional horses and special conveyances being provided and put on in the proper seasons.

"The amount raised by this valuable traffic is almost incredible, and has, in my opinion, largely contributed to the comfort and independence now so happily contrasting with the lamentable condition the West of Ireland presented a few years since. I shall conclude by two observations, which, I think, illustrate the increasing prosperity of the country, and the progress of the people.

First, although the population has so considerably decreased by emigration and other causes, the proportion of travellers by my conveyances is greater—thus demonstrating that the people appreciate not only the money-value of time, but also the advantages of an establishment designed and worked for their particular use and development, now 42 years in operation. Secondly, the peaceable and high moral bearing of the Irish people, which can only be known and duly appreciated by those who live amongst them, and who have, as I have had, long and constant intercourse with them. I have therefore been equally surprised and pained to observe in portions of the respectable press, both in England and Ireland, repeated attacks on the morality of our population, charging them with proneness to violate the laws, and with a disregard of private property; but as one fact is worth a thousand assertions, I offer in contradiction of those statements, this indisputable fact:—

"My conveyances, many of them carrying very important mails, have been travelling during all hours of the day and night, often in lonely and unfrequented places, and during the long period of forty-two years that my establishment is now in existence, the slightest injury has never been done by the people to my property, or to that entrusted to my care; and this fact gives me greater pleasure than any pride I might feel in reflecting upon the other rewards of my life's labor."

O. BIANCONI."

I offer no apology for giving the readers of the "True Witness" this

unique historic, and noble document. Remember that it is an Italian, who by a life-long residence in Ireland became "more Irish than the Irish themselves," who penned this splendid tribute to the moral character of the Irish people. Forty-five years have gone since these pages were written; for forty years the famous Bianconi sleeps 'neath the shamrocks of Erin, and as I replace those well-preserved sheets in my bundle of manuscripts, I feel that I have handled a sacred relic of Irish history.

## Mgr. Conaty's Successor

A despatch from Rome says:—The Pope signed a brief by which hereafter the Catholic University at Washington will be under the jurisdiction of the Congregation of Studies, presided over by Cardinal Satolli.

At the same time the Pope signed a brief appointing Mgr. Dennis O'Connell rector of the Catholic University at Washington.

According to Catholic exchanges, Mgr. O'Connell will go to Washington and take charge in his new responsibility before the end of the university year, probably arriving just before Easter. Bishop Conaty, it is said, will remain there and turn the university over to his successor in due form; the latter will then be made Bishop of Los Angeles instead of Buffalo, as stated in earlier accounts, and that Bishop George Montgomery, of that diocese, will go to San Francisco to become coadjutor to Archbishop Riordan.

The diocese of Los Angeles is a large one, embracing over 300,000 communicants and a large number of important Spanish missions.

The importance of the action of the Pope in transferring the Catholic University from the propaganda to the Congregation of the Studies, appears when it is remembered that but three large Catholic universities are now under the jurisdiction of the Congregation of the Studies, namely, the Jesuit College at Rome, the University of Innsbruck in the Austrian Tyrol, and the Louvain in Belgium. The university here makes the fourth.

The Congregation of the Studies allows the utmost liberality in the administration of universities. Cardinal Satolli, as the Prefect of the Congregation, only interferes with administrative matters when the orthodoxy of the Church is involved.

The Right Rev. Mgr. Dennis O'Connell who has been appointed to succeed Bishop Conaty as rector of the university, was born in Columbia, S. C., in the year 1851. As a boy he became acquainted with Cardinal Gibbons, who was at that time vicar apostolic of North Carolina. He decided at that time on entering the priesthood and went to St. Charles' College, Ellicott City, as a student of Cardinal Gibbons. After a brilliant course, the cardinal, who had become Bishop of Richmond, sent him to the American College at Rome to study for the diocese of Richmond. He finished the course in 1877 and obtained the doctorate in theology by passing what is still talked of in Rome as a remarkable examination. Immediately after his ordination he traveled through this country with Mgr. Conroy, who was sent here as an extraordinary Apostolic Delegate, and Dr. O'Connell acted as his secretary.

He then entered upon the practical work of the ministry in the diocese of Richmond, serving for a time at the cathedral in that city and afterward as pastor at Winchester, Va. In 1883, when the third plenary council was convoked, Dr. O'Connell was chosen one of its secretaries, and at the end of the council was sent to Rome with its degree to obtain for them the approbation of the Holy See.

While in Rome on that mission he was appointed rector of the American College in 1885, succeeding the Right Rev. Mgr. Hotot, who died one year before. Under his management, the American College made rapid strides in prosperity, and when he resigned its rectorship in June, 1895, after ten years of administration that its future was absolutely secure. During his rectorship Mgr. O'Connell was made a domestic prelate of the Pope, whose confidence and personal friendship he enjoyed in an unusual manner. Since his resignation of the rectorship Mgr. O'Connell has lived abroad, mostly in Rome, devoting himself to studies in archaeology and as pastor of the Church of Santa Maria, across the Tiber.

He has during this period, as well as before, given special attention to the social, economical, and political problems of the times. His wide acquaintance and intimate intercourse with all the leading thinkers of the world have made of him an undoubted authority on those matters.

## Dublin A Century Ago

A hundred years is a long space of time, looking at it from one point of view, very short looking at it from another.

When speaking to a friend lately of the changes which had taken place in Dublin even in the recollection of not at all its oldest inhabitants, she told me of a ball held in Merriam square a little over fifty years ago, to which she had gone in a sedan chair. To the mind of the rising generation a sedan-chair, as a mode of transit, ranks with the Ark or with the curraghs of the ancient Irish. Yet my friend would never be described as a very old lady; she is quite up to the times in which we live in every respect, except for the very antiquated fashion of kindness and courtesy of manner to everyone—a fashion certainly more in consonance with the more leisurely habits of a former age.

It is not by disconnecting the links which join one generation to the other, and looking at the opposite ends of the chain, that we can really observe the difference of the city in the present year from that of a hundred years ago.

The revival of Irish industries is so much spoken of at present that it is interesting to recall a novel means taken in the year 1802 by the Countess of Hardwicke, wife of the then Lord Lieutenant, to encourage a failing trade. The business of straw bonnet and hat making being very much on the decline, many workers in straw-plaiting were consequently thrown out of employment. The Countess, hearing of the distress caused by dearth of work, got up a ball, called the Straw Ball, which was held in the Rotunda on the 26th of March. The following is extracted from a fuller account given by the Dublin "Evening Post":—"It gave us much satisfaction to witness dresses trimmed with ribbons and straw. The dress worn by Her Excellency the Countess of Hardwicke, was fancifully elegant, displaying to the best advantage all the beautiful purposes to which the manufacture of straw may be applied in female attire. . . . His Excellency, the Lord Lieutenant was present also. The gentlemen wore straw cockades and other fanciful uses of the manufacture. The supper was laid out with straw decorations." Whether this unusual entertainment gave the desired impetus to the trade is not recorded.

It was in this same year that Dublin was visited by a terrific fall of rain, which continued from Wednesday night to the morning of Friday, the 3rd of December. The river, at that time unconfined by any walls, overflowed into the adjoining streets. Patrick street, especially, became so flooded that boats were used there all the third day. Ormond bridge, Ringsend bridge, and some others in the neighborhood of Dublin were swept away.

The Bank of Ireland was then in Mary's Abbey. Although an act had been passed in the British Parliament in June, 1802, empowering "His Majesty's Treasury of Ireland to sell Parliament House to the Governors of the Bank of Ireland;" they were not in occupation until a few years later. During this and the preceding year it had been used for exhibiting pictures. The following year was to see the building put to a still stranger purpose—to serve as a barracks to lodge the soldiers who were engaged in quelling the insurrection of those men who tried in vain to regain by force some of the liberties of their country taken from them by fraud in this very house.

The General Post Office was at that period in College Green, about where the National Bank now stands. It was not removed to O'Connell street until 1816.

This year, 1802, saw the commencement of St. George's Church on the site, known until then, as the Barley Fields, and since called Hardwicke place, the Lord Lieutenant of that name having laid the foundation stone. This year also saw the erection of the King's Inns, Henrietta street—a street long noted for its magnificent houses and also as being the residence of the famous Lady Blessington.

But the very great difference between the centuries is marked by the increase of the conveniences of life—a difference, of course, common to all countries. I read in some of the papers of these days a piteous complaint made by the inhabitants of Great Britain against the Water Pipe Company having left them without water for ten days, and I thought of the indignation caused last year by the Varsity supply being cut off for some hours in

the mid-day. The beautiful wrought iron lamps which still ornament the entrance to some of the old houses are admired and their non-use regretted; but the dim lighting of the thoroughfares, which made private lamps a necessity, is forgotten.

In looking over the old annals of Dublin one item of expenditure appears rather strange—the moderate carriage rates, considering the small amount of competition in those days. We see that a coach could be hired for two shillings an hour; a nobby for 1s 2d, and for the enlightenment of the ignorant, a nobby was one of the old four-wheeled cabs, with the door at the back; and a sedan chair for one shilling and a penny an hour.

The library subscription, when libraries were so much rarer, seems to have remained very much the same for the past hundred years. The terms for admission to the Dublin Library Society, then in Eustace street, were two guineas and an annual subscription of one guinea. Here they had reading and conversation rooms, and supplied their readers with five Dublin and five London papers. So we read; but what the five Dublin papers published in that year were my limited knowledge of periodical literature will not allow me to state. The only names I can recall are the Dublin "Evening Post," and Saunderson's "News Letter." The publication of the "Freeman's Journal" had been stopped a few years previously and not resumed for some years after this date. If readers desire more exact information on this subject, they should consult Dr. R. R. Madden's History of Irish Periodical Literature, a valuable and interesting work which does not appear to be very widely known.

But the greatest change has, needless to say, taken place amongst the Catholic community. At the beginning of the last century there were, if I am not mistaken, only twelve Catholic churches, or, as they were always spoken of in past days, chapels in Dublin and one convent, that of the Poor Clares at Harold's Cross. A remarkable change, certainly, and unendowed hospitals on every side. Amongst the latter the place of honor belongs by right to Jervis street, it being the first of its kind in Dublin; it was founded long before the date of which heads this article. It was commenced in 1718 and opened in 1728.

But has there been a hundred years of progress for Dublin in all respects? In 1802 it was still almost at its best. The Act of Union was too short a time in force for its fatal effects upon society—society in its true and more comprehensive sense, including all classes who go to make up a prosperous city—to be fully realized. But the season of realization was not far distant, and it has been graphically described by one of Dublin's best and most charming historians, writing of it a few years later:—"Dublin sank to the position of a provincial town, and the pecuniary loss to the inhabitants was estimated as equal to the withdrawal of one million annually of circulating cash. The grievance complained of by the citizens was, therefore, anything but a sentimental one. In fact, it was only too evident now that when the Imperial United Standard was unfurled on Dublin Castle, and the bells of St. Patrick's Cathedral rang a peal to commemorate the enactment of the Legislative Union, the flaunting banner was but a sign of irretrievable disaster, and the bells smote the ear as the knell of civic prosperity."

But at the date of which I write the complete exodus of the richer and more spending classes had not yet taken place. Even if a few had left their establishments were still in the city, and delapidation had not yet begun to prey upon the fine old streets, a state to be seen on every hand a few years afterwards, before the grand and noble houses were converted into charitable institutions or Government offices. Even the houses built about, or after, this year, although not comparative with the buildings of twenty years previously, still prove that the taste of the people had not yet sunk to the level of the suburban villa. The rapid habit of mind of regarding London as the criterion of all that is correct in literature or taste, an almost necessary consequence of the removal of the Legislature to that centre, had not then taken possession of so many of our citizens. No; it is to be feared that characteristic Dublin, social and hospitable, is fast becoming a memory.—Dublin Independent and Nation.

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## VARIOUS NOTES.

**CIVIC ENTERPRISE.**—The Mayor of the city of Leon, Mexico, which has a population of 80,000, has issued an order that every house in the city must be repainted within a month.

**PATENT MEDICINES.**—Patent medicines, nostrums and empirical preparations whose ingredients are concealed, will not be admitted to the St. Louis Exposition.

**RAILROADS.**—At the close of 1901 the United States had a mile of railroad for every 383 inhabitants; in Europe there was one mile for every 2,267 inhabitants, while British India had but one mile for every 12,400 inhabitants.

**A VOLCANO FORMING.**—Prof. Meunier, member of the French Academy of Science, announces that a volcano is forming under the Place Republique, Paris, which sooner or later may become active and blow the city into atoms. The professor came to this conclusion after examining the mineralogical finds made at the bottom of some deep excavations under the city. Other scientists are now investigating the bottom of the hole in the ground to see whether there is any real cause for alarm.

**CASTOR OIL.**—It is estimated that over 600,000 gallons of castor oil are manufactured annually in the United States.

**LEPROSY IN PARIS.**—The revelation that leprosy exists in France to such an extent as to call for the erection of a special hospital has caused quite a scare in Paris. It appears that there are nearly a score of cases under treatment in the St. Louis Hospital, and the municipal council has been asked to vote 25,000 francs for the erection of a special pavilion, so as to isolate them from the other patients.

**BOGUS ANTIQUITIES.**—According to a New York dealer there is an enormous trade being carried on in imitation antiquities. Silver, furniture, pottery and other things that folks buy because of their age are exported to America in great quantities by experts who make clever imitations, and each specimen of antique is credited with being the product of some particular country or city.

**FOR PURE WATER.**—The tunnel which is to furnish pure water to Cleveland, O., from five miles out in Lake Erie is now practically completed, after six years' work, at a cost of \$1,250,000. It runs 100 feet below the lake bottom and is nine feet in diameter. Forty lives have been lost in this work.

**A SCIENTIST'S VIEW.**—According to M. Spring, of Liege, the blue color of the sky is due to an electrical agitation of the air. This conclusion he arrived at after a long series of experiments carried on in his laboratory.

**A QUEE EXPERIMENT.**—A Wyoming ranchman recently had a heifer killed by wolves. He placed strychnine in the carcass. To date he has found eight dead wolves and one coyote beside the remains. The heifer was worth only \$25, and the wolves and coyotes will return to the ranchman something like \$200 in bounty and sale of skins.

**DEER HUNTING.**—The past hunting season of 1902 has been one of the most important for years in the Province of Ontario. The Canada Atlantic Railway alone took from the Muskoka woods no less than 507 deer, totalling 56,936 pounds of venison. This is the largest number ever shipped in one season by any single railway in Canada.

**ST. BRIDGET'S NIGHT REFUGE.**

Report for week ending Sunday, 18th January, 1903.—Males 259, females 30, Irish 146, French 104, English 22, Scotch and other nationalities 17. Total 289.

True love in no way excludes the idea of reward, but it leaves no place for the thought of it.