

NOTES OF NEWS FROM IRELAND.

THE IRISH MAYORS.—A letter has been issued from the Chief Secretary's office which has created considerable feeling in Ireland. The letter intimates that—

"The new commissions to Her Majesty's judges for the holding of the various courts of assizes and commissions do not include the names of the Lord Mayors or Mayors, and their attendance at the sittings of the various courts will therefore be unnecessary." This is regarded as an insult put upon the municipalities in consequence of the attitude of Ireland in regard to the South Africa war. The Lord Mayor of Dublin was excluded in a similar way during Mr. T. D. Sullivan's tenure of office; and it was not until the Liberals returned to power several years later that the name of the chief magistrate of the Irish metropolis was restored to the commission. Formerly the Lord Mayor was authorized by charter to attend in state. The Judicature Act now leaves the matter to the discretion of the authorities.

MOTHER OF SEVEN SOLDIERS.

An Irish woman, Bridget Gavin, is the mother of seven sons, all of whom are soldiers in ranks of the British army; but she is an inmate of Doncaster Workhouse. Last week, in the Imperial House of Commons, Mr. Wyndham was asked by Mr. William Redmond whether any steps could be taken towards making provision for the poor woman. Mr. Wyndham answered no. All he could suggest was that the War Office should strongly recommend those responsible for the administration of the various charitable funds now being disposed of to make provision for this poor Irishwoman who has given so much to the country. We are pleased to say that this recommendation has been immediately acted upon, and that provision has been made for the old lady's maintenance for a year by the proprietor of the "Daily Telegraph."

AN IRISH POST OFFICE.

How badly Ireland is in need of a Local Legislature may be gleaned from the following remarks of a correspondent—

"There is not a town in the United Kingdom for its size that has such a lamentable lack of post office accommodation as Navan. I happened to be passing through the town the other day, and was asked by a friend to go in and inspect the premises in which the postal and telegraph business for a population of between 5,000 and 6,000 is transacted. What I saw more than surprised me. The office consists of one square room hardly 8 feet in height and not more than 20 feet each way in space. In times of great stress of business such as Christmas and Easter the crowd is so great that the public have to stand outside the door while the atmosphere inside from the packed mass of humanity struggling to be served is suffocating. In this unhealthy den seven officials are obliged to work for several hours a day. Surely a wealthy department like the post office should be able to find suitable premises elsewhere in the town to keep pace with the business done."

WEDNESDAYS IN THE HOUSE.

A contemporary, referring to the action of the Irish Parliamentary representatives securing the first free Wednesday in the House, says—

"The Scotch and Welsh wiseracres decided that the first three Wednesdays would be appropriated by the Government on the discussion of the Address. Only one Wednesday was taken, and the two that remained were seized by Ireland—one for the Local Government Bill, and the other for the Evicted Tenants."

It is thus that an Irish paper attributes this first success to the recent re-uniting of the party—

"One of the immediate fruits of unity was the happy arrangement, which gave the Irish members the opportunity of seizing the first free Wednesday of the session for the discussion of an Irish measure. It was Mr. Parnell who originated the party practice of balloting in a body to secure as many Wednesdays as possible for the ventilation of Irish grievances. Before his time every Irish member acted independently, and his prospects of success were represented by the members balloting—usually about 300—against his own individual chance. With 86 members balloting as one man the chances were increased from 300 to 1 against, to a little more than 3 to 1. Thus it happened in the old days that all the Wednesdays were monopolised by Ireland. In the chacs following the "Split" the practice lost its value from the division of the Party into sections, and from the fact also that the other nationalities—Scotland and Wales, adopted the Irish method of bringing their respective requirements to the front."

MR. DAVITT'S ILLNESS.

As an evidence not only of the popularity of Mr. Davitt, but also of the high esteem in which he is held by his very opponents, we find an organ whose principles are antagonistic to his, thus referring to his ill health—

"The announcement made by Mr. Michael Davitt, in a letter which he

has addressed to a local paper, that he is in a state of ill-health and compelled to seek a temporary residence in a warm climate, will be received, even by his political opponents, with feelings of deep and sincere regret. We have constantly differed from Mr. Davitt in our view of public affairs, and we have often had occasion to comment severely on his action in political matters, but we have never failed to recognise that the fact of his past sufferings in the cause of Irish national freedom entitles him to generous treatment, even at the hands of those who are compelled to disagree with, and to censure his, course in connection with the existing political situation. There must be few Irishmen who will not agree with us in the assertion that Mr. Davitt's prolonged absence from the rank of the National forces would be a serious loss, and we feel that our readers will be unanimous in re-echoing the hope which we now express that his present illness may be of short duration, and that ere long he will be enabled to return to Ireland fully restored to health and strength."

A CANADIAN BLIZZARD.

The descriptions of last week's snowstorm that filled pages of our Canadian papers, might well serve the purposes of any Cork, or South of Ireland paper. The story of their snowstorm is a long one, but we can shorten it by extracting a few paragraphs. Referring to Cork, after the storm, one account says—

"Pedestrianism was in all cases most difficult, and it is a matter of surprise that the shopkeepers in the leading streets did not see their way to convenience public traffic, and thereby further their own interests, by clearing away the snow in front of their premises. The trouble entailed thereby would not fall heavily on the shoulders of any one individual and the convenience and benefit to all would be greater. In Patrick street, indeed, no complaint can be made in this respect, but in the other streets those who took the precaution of clearing the spaces before their houses may be described as isolated exceptions. The law, too, provides that it should be done, and it is a matter of wonder that the responsible authorities did not take steps to see that the convenience of the public was ensured. The inadequacy of the cleansing staff of the Public Works Department of the Corporation, too, was shown in their inability to keep the crossings in a fairly passable condition."

Especially in the last few lines do we read a similarity between Cork and Montreal. Here is a brief description, of what we look upon as an ordinary condition of things—

"The residents of Montserrat, Gardiner's Hill, and portion of St. Luke's, and that district, were the greatest victims by the snow fall. Owing to the elevated character of this locality and the absence of any shelter, the snow gathered in drifts in places. At one part of Gardiner's Hill it had covered the ground to a depth ranging from two to four feet. The postman could only call to the doors of the house after wading up to his knees in the soft slushy stuff. The milkman also braved the drifts, but the familiar knock and ring of other early callers were unheard. The electric tram system was in the early morning completely blocked, and it was not till some time after noon that the service was in a workable condition. Cars were first run along for the purpose of clearing the line, and were assisted in this work by an ingenious and novel snow-plough. The block on the system caused the greatest inconvenience to the public, which could be obviated by keeping a few cars running during the night from the time the snow commenced."

MR. HARRINGTON'S SPEECH.

At the annual meeting of the Rotunda Ward National Registration Society, held last week, Mr. T. Harrington, M.P., referred to the recent union of Irish representatives, in Parliament, in the following manner—

"He thought that the country felt great relief in what had taken place during the last couple of weeks; and he was glad to see that amongst the entire population of the country there had been no other expression than one of delight and pleasure at the restoration of unity in the ranks of the Irish Parliamentary Party. For their references to his own part in bringing about that unity he was exceedingly grateful. The task of the peace-maker was not always a popular one, but he had always considered it better in a public man to act according to the dictates of his conscience than merely to seek the passing popularity of the hour. He did not think that Irishmen need be at all humiliated at the quarrel of the last eight or nine years, nor ashamed that they fell out upon such an issue as was presented to the country at that time. He did not know any nation in the world to which the same issue would have been presented under the same circumstances that would not have been likely to divide as the Irish nation had divided. No one, he was sure, was ashamed of the part he had tak-

en in that struggle, provided that that part had commended itself to his judgment, and now that they had come back to join hands in a renewed effort for the liberty of the country, no man would remember it to another that he had been divided against him. The shame would have been in allowing the present generation to pass away without coming together again and making a combined fight for the interests of the country. On one point they might congratulate themselves, and that was that during the long struggle which had divided them not one of the Irish members had gone over to the enemy; they had all remained straight as Nationalists and had held by the interests of their country."

Continuing, he said:—"He was glad to be able to assure the country that the peace was not patched-up peace, and that at that moment the feelings in the ranks of the Irish Party of brotherhood and comradeship were as strong and as firmly established as in the old days when they had marched through the Lob-

THE EVIL OF GAMBLING.

The following is a passage from an article, which appeared recently in the "National Review," (England), over the signature of Dr. Horton, of anti-Catholic fame—

"On the other hand, the Jesuit accommodation to vice is also employed to capture the young, who are restive under the moral restraints which a pure religion imposes. A friend of mine in Manchester told me that he turned one day into a Catholic Church, and heard the most popular Jesuit of that city preaching to a crowd of young operatives, who were all exposed to the great peril of our day—the temptation of gambling. The preacher assured them that he saw no harm in betting. If a man had money he was as much at liberty to lay it on a horse as to spend it on a stall in the theatre. What a relief to the young! Here they find at last a Church which will condone their most ruinous vice. Here they escape from the cruel Puritanism which robs them of their pleasure. Here the golden rule of the Jesuit is put into practice: 'A way may be found for the gratification of every human desire.'"

It would need no great logician to refute this slander, but when a great logician condescends to notice such an attack, and proceeds to pulverize it and its author, there is always matter of interest and benefit to Catholics in his remarks. Father Bernard Vaughan, preaching in Manchester, three Sundays ago, thus dealt with Dr. Horton. Father Vaughan, after an explanatory introduction, said— "That he had seen a good deal of what had been written lately about gambling, and in his judgment most of it might not inappropriately be labelled "Cant." As the supply of "cant" was already in excess of the demand for it, he would not add to its bulk by any remarks of his. It seemed to him men sometimes allowed their feelings to lead them to a conclusion, and then they cast about for a scientific basis, and damaged their cause by putting forward propositions that were ethically untenable. The speaker said his feelings about the evil consequences of gambling (a practice unfortunately only too noticeable in all sections of the community, high and low, young and old) were quite as active as those of the typical Puritan, but he did not intend to permit his feelings to run away with him; he preferred to jockey them. He wished to ride straight, on scientific principles, to a logical conclusion, and he ventured to hope that when he had done they would see for themselves wherein lay the evil of gambling, and would themselves take such measures as would secure them against running into the dangerous occasions of it."

A definition of gambling was given in the following terms—

The idea of gambles, Father Vaughan continued, embraced all contracts in which the parties did not know what they were giving and taking, and in which they could not influence the result. What went by the name of legitimate trade did not come under that description, for the parties knew, or assumed, that there would be no material fluctuations of value before the transaction was completed; but as soon as you got forms of trade where the parties distinctly contemplated fluctuations, they were, in fact, betting upon the rise or fall, and were backing the accuracy of their forecast as truly as if they backed a horse.

So pointed, and of general interest are the following remarks that we give them almost in their entirety. It is not often that this subject is treated in such a practical manner, and brought home to hundreds of thousands who are actually guilty of gambling, in one sense, while condemning it in another one. Father Vaughan thus explains—

All kinds of speculative trade were forms of gambling, and were to be judged by the same rules as indulgence in rouge-et-noir. Of course the gambling element grew more prominent as the fluctuations in value became more rapid, and in that way horse-racing and pitch-and-toss had a worse name before the public than dealings in cotton futures. But let

ties of the House of Commons under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell (applause). They intended to make the policy of their Party so active and so combative that men would not have time to discuss differences amongst themselves. They intended, in a session of Parliament which the Government had no intention of making Irish, to bring Irish claims to the front and to turn the attention of the Irish representatives to the interests of the country alone. There were some who still hung back in doubt as to the reality or permanency of the unity. These people were apt to point, perhaps, to the evidence of newspaper leaders or newspaper paragraphs in support of their contentions, and to gather from these that some question still divided the Party. But whatever outside differences there might be there was no difference in the Party itself, and that Party, as a whole, would give no sanction to any efforts which might be made to disturb its peace or to sever the friendship so recently renewed."

there be no mistake about it; the principle in all these instances was just the same. He was at present dealing with the principle, and not with the particular mould into which it might be run.

All gambling was attended with a certain pleasurable excitement, to which some persons were more sensible than others, but to which very few indeed were wholly insensible. That excitement was more or less independent of the amount of money lost or won, and some persons there were who did not hesitate to purchase it at an assured loss. Thus it could not be supposed that all the people who haunted the tables at Monte Carlo were ignorant of the truth that the conditions of the game were such that, in the long run, they would certainly lose one Napoleon for every 120. He thought that was the cipher that they staked. It was, of course, more pleasant to win than to lose; but who could doubt that Charles Fox found an attraction in hazard quite independent of money?

Nor was it to the purpose to say that the pleasure was unreasonable, and therefore morally wrong. It was felt by men of all races, countries, and times, the old Romans and the modern Chinese and Malays being gamblers as inveterate as any man, say, on Liverpool "Change." If anyone presumed to say that there was no reason for that pleasure he would thereby be only displaying his ignorance of those elements that went to constitute that social being called man. The gambling instinct in man, he was free to confess, did not admit of analysis, and therefore it was that he had to include it among the elementary facts of a man's constitution, like the perception of harmony, etc. He took it, then, that the taste for gambling might reasonably be indulged, under the same conditions as governed every other indulgence. One man had a taste for the opera or for the drama, or for collecting engravings, or stamps, or autographs, and his circumstances justified his spending so much a year on gratifying his tastes. Another had a taste for betting, and he was able prudently to pay so much a year to the bookmakers. His taste might lead yet another to toss handfuls of coin for a scramble in a playground or at a fair, and who shall say that he must not do so provided he was spending no more than he could afford to spend upon his pleasure? Under those circumstances he did not see why one man might not spend on horseracing what another was led to spend on a stall at a theatre.

Nor was the case essentially different if money was sought by gambling. All the conditions of a fair contract might be present in a bet. Each horse in the running had its market price, just as a bale of merchandise in any warehouse had. The man who staked his money believed that the horse or the goods would rise in the market, and so he bought at the present price, intending to sell at a future time. He backed the accuracy of his forecast. If he won, the money was fairly his. It was not true to say he had given nothing for it. Had he not exposed himself to the risk of losing, while the other party was content to make the bargain? Let them take the case of a householder who paid a few shillings for fire insurance, and the next day received hundreds of pounds from the unfortunate company. He had backed his house to burn, and his fancy had won; he had the praise of prudence, and no sane person accused him of dishonestly taking money which he had not earned. So, again, if he had insured his life, or backed a horse, or put money on a cricket or polo team.

The evil of gambling was to be sought and found in the liability to abuse; in the almost magnetic hold it got of a man, leading him, only too often, to risk what he could not afford to spend on his pleasures, and inducing him at length not only to stake all that was his own, but what was not his own—perhaps even persuading him to stake trust-money which demanded safe investment. The liability thus to gamble justified the State in restricting by law the opportunities offered to that portion

THE FINANCIAL SIDE OF THE WAR.

Until the Imperial Budget was brought down by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, we could only roughly guess at the enormous cost that the present war in South Africa must entail. The British are proverbially a commercial people, a business-like race; Napoleon called them a "nation of shop-keepers." Now, such a people must see some immense, some by no means calculable, harvest in the "Transvaal," otherwise they would never dream of saddling themselves with such a financial load. New revenue measures are being adopted. Income tax is to be increased to one shilling on the pound, and increased duties will be imposed in beer, spirits, cigars, tomatoes and tea. A loan is to be negotiated. We take the following from the report of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's budget speech:—"The return of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, introducing the budget shows that an expenditure of £154,082,000 has to be provided for in the budget of 1900, 1901. The same statement shows that the Exchequer account of 1899-1900 would have given a surplus of upwards of £5,000,000, but that the supplementary war estimates of £23,000,000 make the expenditure exceed the revenue by £17,770,000."

He next explained the present financial situation, dwelling with satisfaction on the increase of the actual over the estimated revenue, due to the steady and substantial increase of business, and pointing out that as the increase in the value and volume of foreign exports had been quite exceptional it had not been at the expense of home industries. Reviewing the principal items of revenue, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said tobacco had been disappointing, and that the increase in wines had not been as large as expected, perhaps due to the absence of the ordinary winter festivities.

Against the estimated expenditure of £154,082,000 for the coming year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer estimated the revenue on the existing basis of taxation at £116,900,000, or a deficit of £37,000,000.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer characterized the suggested methods of fresh taxation as in no way impracticable, saying the Government felt justified in raising a portion of the war funds by a loan, but, he added, it was also justified in calling upon the tax-payers for an immediate and substantial sacrifice. In this connection he thought they could reasonably anticipate that the more acute and most costly phases of the war would not last long. He asked the tax-payers to subscribe to the cost of the war by an increase of the income tax to one shilling on the pound, which would produce an ad-

ditional £6,600,000. He also proposed that the stamp duties on Stock Exchange contract notes be extended to sales on the Produce Exchange that beer duties would be increased a shilling a barrel of 36 gallons, and that there would be an increase in the duty on spirits of sixpence per gallon; tobacco, sixpence per pound; foreign cigars, sixpence per pound; and tea, twopenny per pound. He anticipated that the above changes would increase the revenue £12,317,000, and he proposed to save £1,640,000 by suspending the sinking fund in relation to certain terminable annuities. He proposed to borrow the rest of the necessary funds. A total of £14,000,000 had to be raised, of which £8,000,000 was now in the treasury, and £35,000,000 would be raised by bond or stock repayable in a term not exceeding ten years.

From the abounding revenue of the year £5,500,000 surplus was available towards the war expenditure, bearing remarkable testimony to the extraordinary industrial activity and commercial prosperity of 1899, which was, he hoped, one of a long series of prosperous years. The improvement was due to the steady and substantial progress of business, and not to the war, which had, in some respects, militated against trade. The increase in foreign trade, both in imports and exports, was greater than the previous year. There had been a remarkable increase in the receipts from the death duties, totalling £17,171,000, of which £2,271,000 was from the estates of millionaires, including £900,000 from the estate of one man, a foreigner, who lived on fifteen shillings a day in a west end London club. That one person, he continued, however unwillingly, had contributed to the exchequer more than the cost of an ironclad. (The foreigner referred to is the late George Smith, the pioneer banker of Chicago, who died October 7, 1899, in his rooms at the Reform Club, London.)

Explaining the proposed loan, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said he believed it would be a mistake to try to raise it by a new issue of consols, as it would create a permanent debt which the nation could not pay off at par until 1923. He thought it would be better that part of the £35,000,000 be reserved, say an amount not exceeding £5,000,000, for a further issue of treasury bills. The rest he proposed to raise by bonds or stocks. He had reason to believe it was possible to take such an issue on very reasonable terms, and he hoped to do so in a way not to insure profit for a few great and wealthy persons, but to bring the whole public into the war loan, and enable them to come to the assistance of the country.

ECHOES FROM FRANCE.

Since the Concordat gave the enemies of the Church in France no special weapon wherewith to paralyze the clergy, the government, at the instigation of the Department of Worship, has decided to forge an arm to its own liking. A correspondent of the Liverpool "Catholic Times" thus mentions the new law, and briefly comments thereon—

"It stipulates that any public criticism or censure on the part of priests of 'Acts of public authority' is to be punished by a term of imprisonment varying from fifteen days to six months. The same prohibition applies to conversation between friends and to private letters. Were this law to be put in force it would end by putting in prison every priest in France. According to it, henceforth no parish priest would be free to teach his flock the way wherein they should go; to tell them that the law of divorce is against the laws of the Church would be to censure the civil power; to inveigh in the mildest manner against the acts of an infidel mayor subversive of religious liberty would be to court imprisonment within a few hours at the hands of that same mayor. The trial of the Assumptionists, the protestations of certain Bishops, and the lively remonstrance of the Archbishop of Aix, have led to this latest mill-stone being hung round the necks of the French clergy. Apart from being handicapped in the exercise of his ministry a French priest has no longer the right of the poorest citizen. A street 'yoyou' may throw up his cap and call the President of the Republic bad name. Nothing is done to him. A priest if he criticises a Government measure henceforth offends the laws of his country. The Archbishop of Aix publicly intimates that he will allow of no subscription being raised for him in his diocese. The 'Croix' has opened a subscription for the five Bishops whose stipends have been suspended."

The special case for which the Draconian legislation has been invented is that of Mgr. Gouthu-Soulard, who wrote a letter condemning the action of the Government regarding certain religious orders. A Paris correspondent thus cleverly explains the case. He says—

"Article 204 of the Penal Code,

which dates from the first Napoleon, provides for the exile of any Bishop or person in ecclesiastical authority criticising or blaming in a pastoral letter any act of the Government or of the public authorities. This did not meet the case of Mgr. Gouthu-Soulard, whose criticisms were not incorporated in a pastoral letter, but were made in a letter addressed to the press. It was felt also that the penalty of exile was excessive, and would not be enforced in our days. So the Government immediately introduced a Bill intended to give them an arm against the Bishop which they could easily use. It takes the form of an amendment of Article 204 of the Penal Code, and provides that Bishops or persons in ecclesiastical authority who shall criticise or censure in a pastoral letter any act of the public authorities shall be liable to imprisonment for a period of not less than three months or more than two years; and that the same persons criticising or censuring the acts of public authorities in any other way than by a pastoral letter shall be liable to imprisonment for a period of not less than fifteen days, and not more than six months. This Bill is an outrageous attempt against the liberty of the clergy, and would hardly be likely to meet with approval in any country but France, or perhaps Italy, but there can be no doubt that it will pass the French Parliament with a tremendous majority, and that public opinion approves of it. So another turn of the screw is given to the already so much restricted liberty of the French clergy. And now when questions of vital importance to the Church of France are at issue, the Bishops will find themselves placed between the alternatives of refraining from criticism or of going to jail."

In our humble estimation this is one of the most tyrannical attempts yet made in France to crush the clergy and the clerical element. Will it succeed? We don't know. But we do know that it is a severe and terrible reflection upon the vaunted "Liberty" of the French Republic.

Not education, but character, is man's greatest need and man's greatest safeguard.