



Recent Events In Ireland.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the most important event that has occurred, respecting the cause of Irish national unity, since the great Irish Race Convention, is the resignation by Mr. John Dillon, M.P., of the chairmanship of the Irish Parliamentary Party. This action of Mr. Dillon shows the sincerity of his desire to promote harmony in the Irish nation, and in the unselfishness of his patriotism. Mr. Dillon it should be remembered, was elected leader not only by the majority of the Irish Home Rule members of Parliament, but by the representatives of Irishmen all over the world, who met in the Irish Race Convention in Dublin. His leadership was therefore doubly endorsed. For the sake of unity he has now retired from that position, a suggestion which was made to him a few weeks ago by the Hon. Edward Blake, who has himself remained a member of the rank and file, from the same lofty motives which has actuated the resignation of Mr. Dillon.

At the opening of a session we cannot exactly see, from this distance, what effect his withdrawal may have on the working of the party in the House; but if his retirement from the leadership could be followed by a similar action on the part of other leaders of sections of the Home Rulers, the whole matter of a permanent union of forces might be brought to a successful issue. It is not so much leaders, as one leader that is required; it is not so much internal successes of factions over each other, as the external triumph of the whole Irish people that is necessary. The man who sacrifices his own ambition at the shrine of his country's cause is a greater patriot than even the most applauded leader. We view with hopefulness and with delight the changes that are taking place in the Old Land; it seems to us that Home Rule is much nearer to us than the world imagines. Revival of the Gaelic language; the securing of municipal franchise; the appearance of a better and more harmonious spirit between leaders; a clearer understanding of what is needed; all these omens foretell something solid in the form of Ireland's political triumph.

Speculation is rife, of course, as to whom the leadership will devolve upon. The name of Mr. Sexton, the editor of the Freeman's Journal, Dublin, is mentioned. No better choice could be made. Those who follow closely Irish national events will remember the almost frantic efforts made by Mr. Healy to induce Mr. Sexton—the greatest orator of the Irish Party, "Sexton of the silver tongue"—to accept the leadership before it was given to Mr. Dillon. Mr. Healy went so far as to offer to retire from public life, if Mr. Sexton would consent to become leader. Mr. Sexton, however, annoyed and disgusted at the divisions then arising in the nationalist ranks, insisted himself on withdrawing from public life. If he could be induced to re-enter the arena in which he formerly did such yeoman service for Home Rule, the question of unity would be settled in a few months. The great meeting which is to take place next month, in accordance with the resolution of the Limerick Board of Guardians, could not do better than call upon Mr. Sexton to take the position of resignation with such noble self-sacrifice by Mr. Dillon.

The name of Hon. Edward Blake has also been suggested for the position. Many there are who are of opinion that he would attract general support, and that his talents and peculiar circumstances might be used to unite the various elements.

Mr. Blake, while now a familiar figure in British politics, is sufficiently a stranger to all disputes to command the respect and confidence of both Parnellites and anti-Parnellites. It would be a great honor for Canada and especially for Irish Canadians.

More recent despatches from London say:—
Mr. Thomas Sexton declines to undertake the leadership of the Irish Party in the House of Commons; and it is probable that Mr. Dillon's successor will be Sir Thomas Henry Esmond, anti-Parnellite, member for West Kerry and senior whip of the Party.

It would seem that Ireland has been stirred into abnormal political activity

by the recent elections in cities and towns under the New Act. The County Elections—and these will be the most important and telling of all—take place in March. Never since the days of O'Connell and his monster meetings has Ireland known such a wave of political excitement,—and yet it is more apparent in its vast and universal spread, than in its fury. The old time rage seems to have given place to a general and limited action, which is more effective in the end. It would be absolutely impossible to refer to the numerous and important meetings being held all over Ireland; in every county, every township, every barony they are taking place. That which took place at Cappawhite, county of Tipperary, on last Sunday week, was a sample, and possibly one of the most important of the season. Thus the Weekly Freeman refers to it:—

"A demonstration, remarkable for unanimity and for an intense enthusiasm, which even the most unfavorable atmospheric conditions could not quench, took place on Sunday at Cappawhite, County Tipperary, under the auspices of the United Irish League. The weather was extremely inclement from an early hour in the morning, but the fierce storm and rain did not prevent the attendance of considerable contingents of stalwart Tipperary men from several districts within a considerable radius of the place of meeting. Different sections of Nationalists were represented, amongst those on the platform being a number of prominent Parnellites, who stood side by side in the utmost good fellowship with their brother Nationalists of a different hue. Mr. John Dillon, M.P., and Mr. Haviland Burke travelled from Dublin for the purpose of attending the meeting."

The Freeman then says:—
"The proceedings were a remarkable testimony to the efficacy of the United Irish League in cordially uniting Nationalists, who have hitherto stood apart and in arousing the old spirit which prevailed before '91."

It would be interesting had we space, to give the list of all those present, and show how almost every class and creed was represented. In reply to the address which was read to him, Mr. Dillon recalled the last visit he had paid to Cappawhite, when he came in 1875, to fight for John Mitchell. After some general and patriotic remarks concerning the men of Tipperary, Mr. Dillon made use of the following very significant language—expressions that indicate the trend of Irish sentiment under the new conditions, as contrasted with the former state of affairs:—

"It would be said also that in the ranks of the Irish people of Ireland themselves, there was not sufficient intelligence and sufficient honesty to settle the affairs of their own counties, but that they should go on deputations to Lord Dunraven and other respectable gentlemen to come and instruct them how to manage their own affairs. I believe, from my old knowledge of the people of Tipperary, that, whatever other counties may do, in this country the reign of the Unionists and the landlords is over for ever. I say to you men of Tipperary, when you want to get a County Councillor try if you can get a man who supported John Mitchell. It is a very curious thing, that those Nationalists who have talked to us of practising toleration in the Irish Counties did not preach the same doctrine in the streets of Dublin, because they would not get a hearing. Dublin is an old Nationalist Centre. It is at present, and has been a great Parnellite centre, but when it came to a question of Nationality against Unionism the men of Dublin stood true to the National flag. They sent the Unionists about their business. I would advise the landlords and the Castle to commence practising toleration, and my advice to the Unionists of Tipperary is this, that if they want to have a share in the local government of the Irish Counties they have got three years to the next election, and if they turn Home Rulers and identify themselves with the cause of the people between now and next election, Irishmen are a very kindly people and they will take them into consideration, but that these gentlemen who have persecuted the

people for the past century, who have shown by their actions that they don't trust their own neighbors, should now come whirling to us and ask for toleration is in my judgment the very height of impertinence; and, therefore, I trust and believe, and I am convinced that in this old fighting County of Tipperary the man who wants to be a County Councillor must come forward as a Nationalist and as a tried Nationalist—not a new fangled man that we have not heard of before, but some man who has taken his part in fighting the battles of the people, and has shown by his past record that, when the liberty of Ireland is being fought for, his countrymen and his comrades can look to him to do a man's part. Now, let me say a word on a question that has excited, the greatest possible interest in Ireland and for some time past, that is the question of National unity. Look and see what the country has come to for want of a united Nationalist organization. The land grabbers have taken heart of grace and courage throughout the country, and it is now a matter of boast in some districts by the judges of the land, who ought to be ashamed to allude to such matters—that the number of farms that have been grabbed in the counties in which they are speaking have increased. And what is the reason that they have? The reason is, because the people have lost unhappily the irresistible weapon of a united and powerful Nationalist organization. Without National unity it is impossible to defeat the local enemies, and the persecutors of the people, because I cannot see, I utterly fail to see, any reason why the Parliamentary representatives of the Irish people should not work together in one party. But while I hold that view strongly I recognize that it would not be prudent to attempt to force any men into a conference unless they were anxious and willing to agree, and this I desire to say, that, whether the Parliamentary representatives of the people agree amongst themselves or not, the people have the remedy in their own hands. You have started here a league, an organization which has no relation to the differences between parliamentary representatives. Let the people of this country organize themselves on the old lines of the Land League, and the National League. Let them, if the Parliamentary representatives do not—as I hope they will—come together for the good of their country, make all individual sacrifices that are necessary to bring about the union. I say, if they cannot do so, let the people of the country get together behind them, and let the people of Ireland, when they are furnished with a great organization, which in no way will allow itself to be distracted by past controversies or past differences but will have for its object the vindication of the National right of Ireland to freedom and to the protection of the homes of the people by organization amongst themselves—let that great united organization demand from the Parliamentary representatives, one by one—without any reference to individual sections or individual leaders—that they should come together and work on the old lines of the Parnellite Party for the freedom of their country."

The flag of union has been lifted in old Tyrconnell. The meeting in Donegal, which took place on the same day as that in Tipperary, was even more significant. The Right Rev. Mgr. McPadden, P.P., of Donegal, presided. The list of clergy and laity present fills a whole column of the Freeman. The letter of the Bishop of Raphoe, appears to us to be of such importance that we therefore reproduce it.

The following is the letter of His Lordship:—
"I highly appreciate your invitation for the Donegal meeting on the 21st, though I am unable to be present at it. The time is favorable for voicing the feelings of the people on a variety of public questions; and I do not know any question of greater urgency for our people as a whole than what I understand to be the chief topic of discussion on Saturday."

The most alarming symptom in the condition of our country is the constant rapid fall of the number of its people. In half a century the population of Ireland had dwindled down by one-half.

How could it be otherwise? Men have been swept off the most fertile land in the country to make room for beasts. It is on the best soil the population has most decreased. There

has been no rise except on the waste land in Mayo and Donegal, where the soil is utterly unsuited for the support of human life.

The people have been driven to the bogs, if not to America, and in an agricultural country depending for its prosperity in the main upon the good use of its land, much of the very best soil is uninhabited, and does not yield more than a fraction of what it might produce under skilful cultivation. The cleared land has run wild, the price of cattle has decreased, and, after causing endless misery, the cruel system of grazing ranches is proved to be as unprofitable as it is inhuman.

What is the remedy? To make these grazing tracts of good land available for industrious occupiers in comparatively small farms, at a fair price to the owners, to be fixed by a public and independent tribunal. This is a

The Clashing Factions In the Anglican Church.

FROM A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR.

In our last issue we dwelt upon the indifference of the Catholic as to the clashing of factions in the Anglican Church. Since then the struggle going on between these conflicting bodies has assumed peculiar and complicated forms. The members of the Anglican communion, who feared the Catholicizing of their Church, by means of forms and practices adapted from Rome, held stirring meetings and decided to bring their ritualistic bishops to task. Finding that the said bishops were not so easily overcome, as was at first imagined, the anti-ritualists resolved to appeal to Her Majesty, the Queen, to interfere and put a stop to this "Romeward" movement. Then they concluded that it would be better to have Parliament take a hand and crush out, by force of legislation, the forms and practices of those ritualists, in other words, they thought it to seek redress by requesting the Government to pass sufficiently coercive measures to meet their views. So far, so good! Now, Hon. Mr. Balfour, nephew of the Premier, leader of the House of Commons, and possibly the most influential man in that branch of parliament, has advised them to keep the matter out of the political arena. Mr. Balfour has certainly many very good reasons for tendering such advice—some of these reasons we can conjecture, others we know not: Whether the ritualistic question will or will not come before Parliament, only time can tell. But in any case it is amusing to note the anxiety of the religious magists, who claim to belong to the Church established by Christ, seeking support, sanction and aid—in matters of purely religious nature—from a Parliament. The absurdity of the situation is patent to every Catholic; the wonder is that Protestants cannot see it in the same light.

Let us suppose for a moment that the Anti-Ritualists are possessed of the true faith, and that their Church is the one established by the Son of God. Does it not seem strange that Christ—the unerring, omniscient, eternal founder of that Church—should have left it exposed to such errors without a vestige of His authority delegated to anyone on earth, with-

SOME REFLECTIONS On England's Attitude Towards Ireland.

FROM AN OCCASIONAL CONTRIBUTOR.

Nearly half a century ago, the famous Doctor Cahill, in a letter addressed to Lord John Russell, made use of these words:—

"England has granted more than one concession to Ireland; she has accorded emancipation, she has allowed the disestablishment, she has given several minor benefits to this land. In the future she will grant still more extraordinary concessions. But in the future as in the past, each one of these must be forced from her, and she will accompany each one of them with some clever and hidden restrictions calculated to neutralize their effects, or else with apparently reasonable conditions which, in time, will

enable her to withdraw that which she has of necessity bestowed. Again, in the same letter, the learned Doctor says:—
"The concessions of the future will be wrrenched from the unwilling hands of England, not at the point of sword or mouth of cannon, not by regular and systematic agitation, but by the absolute force of the new conditions in the world's affairs. Policy will dictate to her that which justice could never cause her to even entertain a moment. The development of commerce, the progress of invention, the augmenting faculties of international communication, the ascendancy of the press, and the cosmopolitan turn of nations, will oblige England

to accord to Ireland privileges and rights that she could not—in the face of the world—refuse to the most barbaric of her new possessions."

Does it not seem that these expressive remarks of that great writer, orator and churchman, find an application in the new attitude of English Government, regarding the Catholic University question in Ireland. True it is that the mighty and effective changes that our age has witnessed, have, as it were, obliged England to deal more fairly with Ireland; or, at least, to pretend, before the world, to act with a degree of justice towards that long persecuted people. It is evident that the non-Catholic commentators on Mr. Balfour's Bill are not seized with the Catholic idea of a university. As far as we can judge, from the published conditions of that measure, it is a non-sectarian, a purely secular institution that is offered to Ireland. It is argued that the Catholics of England have not a university of their own, nor have they asked for one. The Catholics of England are as yet in a great minority, they could not expect to receive concessions that are never accorded to Catholicity, save when the numbers and influence of the Catholics render it impossible to refuse them. In Ireland the situation is entirely different, over two-thirds of the Irish are Catholics, and as such they have rights that cannot be withheld from them, save by the hand of tyranny, and they have claims to privileges that common justice should suggest to the minds of governing statesmen. But, we are told that to grant the Catholics of Ireland a university in accordance with their needs and desires, would be to grant aid to denominational education. It is extraordinary to reflect on England can furnish the semi-barbaric followers of the Prophet with a Mahomedan college at Khartoum; but she objects to supply the Catholic population of Ireland with an institution on the lines of their religious teachings. It is the same old story, over and over again: England spending millions upon Bibles for foreign missions, for people who could neither read English or any other language; while the sword and the gibbet were the signs of her civilizing propaganda in Ireland. The old story— Ireland paying a most disproportionate tax to the English Government, and receiving in return treatment that would be considered disgraceful to a civilized people if practiced on Zulus, Chinese, or Afghans. The old story of England's liberality towards all the world, except Ireland; her generous treatment of every people except Irish; her emancipation of slaves abroad, while forging chains for the serfdom of Christians at home; her magnanimous and unprejudiced acknowledgment of the rights and interests of every imaginable creed, except the Catholic one.

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"AFTER MANY DAYS."

To the Editor of the "True Witness"
A meeting of delegates was held recently, in Ardara (partly in situ— in County Sligo, but forming part of County Mayo, for all purposes), to elect candidates for election to the County of Mayo Council under the new Local Government Act.

The *Bullfinch Herald* of 26th January, in giving a list of delegates, adds the following to the list for Bannymonlon:—

Michael Couricote is, we believe, a descendant of one of the French who landed near Killala, in 1798."

Somebody once said, that a man of any nationality who might take up his residence in Ireland was sure to become an Irishman, but on the other hand, an Irishman settling in any other county, was sure to be still an Irishman, and his descendants would make the same claim. Now, after a hundred years, comes the descendants of the French invader, and it is safe to say that that descendant is "Irish of the Irish."

Yours,
A BALLINA MAN.

C.M.B.A. NOTES.

Branch 232 held a most successful euchre party at Deaman's Hall, on Wednesday last. There were about 250 people present. This branch is forging ahead under its present very efficient management.

Branch 26 will hold another euchre party on Monday evening. The Grand President, Hon. M. F. Hackett is expected to be present. A large number of tickets have been sold.