

IRISH EXILES.

Mr. J. P. Kerr Delivers an Able Lecture.

Under the Auspices of the People's Rights Association—The Deeds of Valor of the Sons of Erin in Foreign Lands—Important Epochs in Irish History Reviewed.

At St. Mary's Minor Hall, says the Irish Weekly and Ulster Examiner, under the auspices of the People's Rights Association, Mr. J. P. Kerr, B.L., delivered an interesting lecture on the subject of the 'Flight of the Wild Geese,' in the presence of a large audience.

The following were amongst those present:—Rev. A. Macaulay, P.P.; Messrs. A. McCreelan, Macaulay, president; A. Savage, vice-president; John Lavery, treasurer; James Cassidy, J. Mathers, James McDonnell, Alderman James Dempsey, James S. Mahon, solicitor; J. F. McKeown, solicitor; Dr. J. M. McDonnell, Dr. Sunberg, P. Laverty, L.L.B., solicitor; Joseph Lavery and Misses Lavery, Wm. Hannan and Miss Hannan, Misses McAllister, M. McAllister, M. McCusker and Mrs. McCusker, P. McGinn, B.A., solicitor; Michael O'Kane, Wm. Harlin, John P. Brennan, J. J. McCarty, J. Cooney, J. Morgan, J. McCarty, James McNulty, Joseph Cassidy, J. Murray, J. Byrne, H. McAlary, Thomas McLain, B. Murphy, Wm. Smith, Thomas Kerr, James Craney, E. Gilmore, P. Gilmore, Joseph Downey, C. McDonnell, James Fitzpatrick, J. Fegart, James Downey, P. Murphy, T. Moore, R. McGinness, P. Quinn, Wm. McLaughlin, J. McLaughlin, J. Woods, B. Kelly, B. McArvey, D. Murray, J. McWilliams, John Smyth, Comber; J. P. Nesbit, A. P. Beattie, James P. Hughes, T. Radcliffe, James McDonnell, James Quinn, Leo Loughran, John J. Loughran, H. Brady, J. McNeill, H. McAtamney, R. McCann, J. P. Ryan, P. McCormick, P. Magee, Wm. Snields, J. Collins, P. McGrade, John Duff, J. Downey, Mr. Hilland, Mr. Bulger, S. McAllister, J. Burns, George Roe, P. Doran, A. McDonnell, C. O'Neill, T. Laverty, Thomas Hogan, J. Gorman, &c. &c.

Rev. Father Macaulay Moved to the Chair. Mr. McKeown, solicitor, said he had great pleasure in moving Father Macaulay to the chair. He was sure the lecture would be a grand one, and that Father Macaulay would be worthy to preside over it. (Applause.)

Mr. Lavery seconded the motion. They had been placed in rather an awkward position owing to the illness of Father Magennis, but they had a good substitute. (Applause.)

Rev. Father MACAULEY then took the chair amid applause. He said he should begin by acknowledging the great honor he had received in being invited to the lecture: to be delivered by their distinguished fellow-townsmen—Dr. Kerr. He certainly felt it a great compliment, and he would sacrifice a good deal in order to enjoy the lecture. He came with feelings of great pleasure to the hall that evening, and he was delighted so many friends had come to appreciate the excellent entertainment which he was certain would be afforded them. There was one thing which marred the pleasure—namely, the fact that Father Magennis had been prostrated by a rather severe attack of illness, contracted owing to the severe duties he had to perform in that district. On that account he had been requested since he came to the hall to represent him. He had then, great pleasure in asking them to listen to the address to be made by the distinguished lecturer. (Applause.)

THE ADDRESS.

Mr. KERR then came forward to deliver his lecture, and was received with applause. He began by expressing regret at the absence of Father Magennis. In introducing his subject, he said it was with the greatest pleasure that he responded to the desire of the Belfast People's Rights Association that he should address them. A living poet had written of their country, 'There is no land like Ireland anywhere at all,' and the more one came to think of it the more striking seemed the aptness of the name given to their land by the Milesians of old. For surely it was an *Innis fail*, an 'Isle of Destiny.' Poor in everything except great heartedness, a mere dot on the coastline of Europe, the name of Ireland was written large over the face of the whole world. More striking still was the fact that it was when Ireland seemed poorest and most forlorn that she exerted her predestined influence most. When the Dane swooped down from his northern fords, carrying ruin before him, like the Destroying Angel of an angry Providence, then it was that the first great 'flight' went forth from the green hills of Eire—the flight of the doves—the flight of the saints and the scholars who, driven from their sanctuary, carried their faith and their holiness and their learning into the mountains of Switzerland, into the forests of Germany, even *ad pedes Petri*, even to Rome itself; and by their grand apostleship won for their land the name, 'Insula sanctorum et doctorum'—the island of the holy and the wise. In their own days, after the black famine years they knew of another and sadder 'flight,' the

Flight of Four Millions of the Home and Snow of their country—gone across the Atlantic to give to the great Republic of America what Providence seemed to forbid to Ireland, strength, stability, and magnificence. But it was to neither of these themes, interesting though they

were, that he would address himself to-night. It was not of apostles or nation builders that he would speak—but of the great band of Irish exiles whose story was at once the pride and sorrow of every student of Irish history—the hundred thousand Irish fighting men who went forth from the shores of Erin to give their lives in quarrels not their own, to shed their blood in the cause of strangers, regretting only that 'it was not for Ireland.' Ireland had a boast which she could maintain without dispute in the face of all Europe—that during sixty years, from 1690 to 1750, when surely and indeed she was a 'most distressed country,' she sent into the armies of France, of Spain, and of the Empire more than a hundred thousand fighting men, whose valour and chivalry won the praise even of cynics like Voltaire and Swift, and wrong from King George the Second a malediction on the law which deprived him of such soldiers. A chance phrase had named these cohorts of heroes the 'Wild Geese'—a phrase not without some appropriateness; but they proved their title to a prouder and a greater epithet when

"On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, like eagles in the sun, With bloody plumes the Irish stand—the field is fought and won."

The Seventeenth Century Closed Sadly for Ireland.

The hopes that had been raised by Hugh O'Neill, by the gallant Owen Roe, by the "daimless Red Hugh" O'Donnell, at the dawn of the century, were blasted by the disastrous defeat of King James towards its close. A historian had said, "A Stuart may have been a gentleman, but he never was a friend." King James fled to France, or as the ballad had it—

'Righ Shemus he has gone to France and left his crown behind, Ill luck be theirs, both day and night, who put running in his mind.' Lord Lucan followed after, with his slashers brave and true, And now the doleful kee is heard— what will poor Ireland do? What must poor Ireland do? 'Our luck,' they say, 'has gone to France what can poor Ireland do?'

Patrick Sarsfield, who was bravely holding his own in Connaught at the time, on hearing of the conduct of James at the Boyne, uttered the historic words, "Change generals and we will fight you over again." When James reached Dublin Castle his cowardice and slanders met with a fit rebuke from an Irish lady. Meeting with the Countess of Drogheda immediately on entering the Castle, he accosted her with the sneering remark: "Countess, your countrymen run well" to which the high-spirited Irishwoman indignantly replied: "Your Majesty is the first to bring the news however." (Laughter and applause.) In the great Valhalla of heroes few would wear prouder laurels than the men who held the bridge at Athlone on the 18th June, 1691. (Applause.) It was at that time a wooden structure. The English were massed in force, and were about to cross it; a mere handful of Irish were there to stop them. On a call for volunteers to cut down the bridge before the English crossed ten gallant men sprang out of the Irish ranks with pick and crowbar, and began to uproot the key-beams. A hail of bullets swept down upon them. Half their number fell to the ground. But even as they lay with life ebbing fast they tried to finish their work before they died. The English artillery again roared out, and the last of the ten heroes lay in his death agony. But ten more leaped out of the Irish ranks and attacked the beams, now red with their countrymen's blood. The English paused ere they rushed across the bridge, but the ten men heeded them not, working at the beams with might and main. Some of the English ran back and began firing at them. One by one they fell; but not till the beams began to quiver and slip away from their sockets. The English then fired a final volley before they rushed across. Three men now alone remained at the other end; two were sinking from their wounds. The last, a brawny Limerick pikeman, yet remained. With one wild wrench he uprooted the last beam, and the end of the bridge swayed a moment. A cry of terror burst from the English as they felt the bridge moving under their weight. Then there was a crash and a yell. The bridge had gone! A sudden roar came up from the bosom of the lordly Shannon, and friend and foe man sank for ever in his gloomy embrace. Limerick fell in October, 1691. Limerick fell, and with it

A Distinctively Irish Brigade was Formed.

The value of the Irish as fighting men was keenly appreciated in France, and French recruiting officers had long been busy in Ireland in enlisting the Irish youth for the service of France. French ships dropped anchor in the harbours of Waterford, Limerick, Galway, and even in Carrick Roads to collect and carry away those detachments and recruits, and in the ships papers they were called "Wild Geese"—a phrase which had puzzled many as to its origin or its application. The first three regiments formed into a distinct Irish Brigade were those which had been raised by Lord Mountcashel, Colonel Daniel O'Brien and Colonel Arthur Dillon. Each of these regiments was composed of ten companies of 150 men each, so that the whole brigade, with its officers, cadets, and staff numbered over 5,000 men. In 1691 the Irish Brigade had still so further increased that it became necessary to raise extra regiments, and before the end of the year the Irish Regiment consisted of two troops of horse guards (Col. Luttrell's), two regiments of horse, viz: Sheldon's Horse and Galmoy's Horse; two regiments of dismounted dragoons, viz: Lord Kilmallock's (King's) Dragoons and Lord Clare's (Queen's) Dragoons; eight regiments of foot, viz:—Limerick Regiment, commanded by Col. Fitzgerald; Charlesmont Regiment, commanded by Col. O'Neil; Dublin Regiment, commanded by Col. Burke; Lord Clancarty's Kerry Regiment, commanded by Col. McElligott; Lord Mountcashel's Regiment, commanded first by Lord Mountcashel himself, but on his promotion to Brigadier-General he was succeeded by Col. Andrew Lee; Dillon's Regiment, commanded by Count Dillon; the King's Royal Irish Foot Guards, better known as Dorrington's Regiment, from the name of their Colonel, William Dorrington. The 'Regiment of Clare,' sometimes called 'O'Brien's Regiment,' sometimes the 'Queen's Dragoons' had become known to fame as 'Clare's Dragoons.' Immediately on its formation it was sent into active service in Italy to serve under Catina in 1691. Its Colonel was Daniel O'Brien, who just as his regiment was started succeeded to the title of Earl of Clare. Full of military ardour, this regiment and its sister battalion, Kilmallock's, or the King's Dragoons, also a dismounted regiment, eagerly competed with each other for

Honors of the Campaign.

In the fifteen years from 1690 to 1705 almost fifteen thousand Irishmen were killed or disabled by wounds. But the 'Wild Geese' were still flocking over the wave to join the triumphant legions of King Louis. Whitsunday, May 28th, 1706, was a disastrous day for the French, but glorious for the Irish. Those Clare's Dragoons, if they did not win the day for the French on 'Ramillies' bloody field,' at least saved them annihilation. When the baffled French were forced

other place on the Continent unmolested, and to carry with him what ver portable property he could. The French ships offered to carry all who preferred to leave the country to submitting to King William, and in November, 1691, the French fleet weighed anchor and dropped down the Shannon, bearing the most momentous cargo ever ship carried; 10,000 Irish soldiers with black vengeance in their hearts, with the cries of their broken-hearted women ringing in their ears, with the cruelest of all thoughts maddening them, that they had fought, had tried hard, and failed in their fight for the old land, and that now they were going God knows where, to die God knows how, and that after all Ireland, dear old Ireland, was lost to them for ever—no worse than lost—for they could not even die for her; for that in all her woes of the ten thousand swords that would gladly leap from their scabbards in her behalf there was not one that could strike a winning blow. The words of farewell, the heartbroken 'banach lath' of these exiles, as they burst that November day on Shannon's shore, were words of doom for many a 'Saxon cavalier' on whom, ere fifty years had passed, the pent-up vengeance of centuries of wrong was to burst on the blood-solden fields of Ramillies and Fontenoy. (Applause.)

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to yield, the advance of the allies was stopped by a headlong rush of Clare's famous regiment. It would be invidious to say too much of Clare's Dragoons, and to say too little of Dillon's renowned Regiment of Foot—one of the three original regiments in Mountcashel's Irish Brigade. This famous corps, like Clare's, saw service first in Italy in 1693 and in Spain from 1695, where they, with the other Irish regiments for their fierce encounters with their foes, especially during the siege of Barcelona, 1697, were styled by the French Marshal Vendome 'the butchers'—an epithet not altogether complimentary to men in whose hearts still rankled the memory of the Broken Treaty, and whose ears had not yet forgotten the wail of sorrow that burst from the quay of Limerick on that bleak November day six years before, when their ships moved sadly down the Shannon, and the fair hills of Ireland passed from their eyes for ever. (Loud applause.) He would not draw his narrative to a close without referring to one honoured name—that of

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Patrick Sarsfield. Dying, as he did, when the fame of the Irish Brigade was but young, his name was not identified so closely with the deeds of the Brigade as that of the Clares or the Dillons or the Burkes. He was essentially a cavalry officer, and as such was, during his short command, almost always separated from the rest of his compatriots. Hence, when he fell on "Linden's Plain," he fell at the head of French, not Irish soldiers. Many also thought that Sarsfield died on the battlefield. He did not, however. But a fever setting in on his wounds, he died about a week afterwards. The famous words that burst from his lips were, however, well authenticated, and proved how deep was the love of these exiles for the old land. After 1745 the history of the Irish Brigades drew naturally to a close, and that from two causes. After that overwhelming defeat of the English at Fontenoy an idea of the suicidal policy of driving such men into the ranks of their enemies entered into the heads even of George III. and his Ministers, and a milder policy was pursued towards the Irish Catholics, as well as strict precautions against recruiting in Ireland. The second cause was perhaps more effective. The French army was frequently remodelled, and in the course of time the distinctly Irish character of the various regiments was effaced. The forces that culminated in the French revolution also tended to efface the sympathetic union which hitherto existed between Ireland and France. For a reason which they might well guess there were comparatively few descendants of those famed heroes who so lavishly gave their blood in the service of the country of their adoption. Their fate it was to leave, like the Milesians, 'no heir to their company,' but their fame and name did not depend on that. Wherever the name of Ireland was revered the memory of the 'Wild Geese' would be honored. In their ballads they were over and over again reminded that there will one day be a great coming back, and the seers on the watch-towers were told to mark the homing of the fated white flock. It might be that their visions might come true. But for the bands of heroes who left Ireland from 1690 to 1750 there was surely no home coming. For them there was no springtime; it was always harvest, and the reaper was death.

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