

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

HOW CRIME HAS INCREASED IN IRELAND UNDER THE NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE.

THE Land League, with Mr. Parnell, M.P., as President, and Mr. Egan, as Treasurer, was founded in August, 1879, though the agitation against rent had continued from the commencement of the year.

"What is known in Ireland to-day as the National League, is to all intents and purposes precisely the same organization as the Land League, which in 1881 was proclaimed as being a dangerous association."—Mr. Michael Davitt, at Queenstown. *Times*, 27th September, 1887.

Official Returns of Agrarian Crimes and of Persons "Boycotted."

In the year 1879, the agrarian crimes were...	870
In the year 1880, they rose to	2,585
In the year 1881, they rose to	4,439
From January to June, 1882, they rose to...	2,597
On the 12th July, 1882, the Crimes Prevention Act was passed, when agrarian crime fell from July to December, 1882, to...	836
In the year 1883, the agrarian crimes were...	834
In the year 1884, the agrarian crimes were...	744
From January to June, 1885, the agrarian crimes were.....	373
Number of persons wholly and partially "boycotted" from April to June, 1885,...	299
On the 12th July, 1885, the Crimes Prevention Act expired, and during the following six months agrarian crimes nearly doubled and "boycotting" nearly trebled.	
From July to December, 1885, agrarian crimes rose to	543
Number of persons wholly and partially "boycotted" rose to	891
In the year 1886, the agrarian crimes were...	1,025
On the 31st August, 1887, the number of persons wholly and partially "boycotted" rose to	4,556
From January to June, 1887, the agrarian crimes were.....	470
Crimes Act passed, July, 1887.	
From July to December, 1887, the agrarian crimes were.....	399
On the 31st December, 1887, the number of persons wholly and partially "boycotted" fell to	2,469
In the year 1888, the agrarian crimes were...	635
On the 31st December, 1888, the number of persons wholly and partially "boycotted" stood at	712
Total number of agrarian crimes, which include murder, manslaughter, firing at the person, conspiracy to murder, assaults on police, bailiffs, and process-servers, cutting or maiming the person, killing, cutting or maiming cattle, firing into dwellings, etc., etc., to the date given, exclusive of "boycotting"	16,350

—Notes from Ireland.

HOW MR. BRIGHT PREPARED HIS SPEECHES.

WHEN Mr. Bright had to make a great speech he brooded over it day after day. But he did not care to do all his preparation at his desk or in solitude. As arguments and illustration occurred to him he liked to try their effect by talking them over with his friends; and when he was at home, if nobody else was within reach, he talked them over with his gardener. The speech took shape in conversation. Then he made the "notes" which he intended to use when the speech was delivered. He gave an account of these "notes" in a letter in which he said, "As to modes of preparation for speaking, it seems to me that every man would readily discover what suits him best. To write speeches and commit them to memory is, as you term it, a double slavery which I could not bear. To speak without preparation, especially on great and solemn topics, is rashness and cannot be recommended. When I intend to speak on anything that seems to me important, I consider what it is that I wish to impress upon my audience. I do not write my facts or my arguments, but make notes on two or three or four slips of paper, giving the line of argument and the facts as they occur to my mind, and I leave the words to come at call while I am speaking. There are occasionally short passages which for accuracy I may write down, as sometimes also—almost invariably—the concluding words or sentences may be written. This is very nearly all I can say on this question. The advantage of this plan is, that while it leaves a certain and sufficient freedom to the speaker, it keeps him within the main lines of the original plan upon which the speech was framed, and what he says, therefore, is more likely to be compact, and not wandering and diffuse." It was his habit, when he spoke on the platform, to place his notes on the brim of his hat, which stood on the table before him; they were written on half sheets of note-paper. Extracts of more than three or four lines in length which he intended to quote in support of his statements, were usually written on similar half-sheets, separately numbered, and were carefully placed on the table by the side of the hat. His annual speeches to his constituents rarely extended over less than an hour; and they as rarely exceeded an hour and five minutes. But the sheets of notes

varied greatly in number; sometimes he had only four or five; sometimes he had eight or nine; and I think occasionally still more.—*Contemporary Review*.

STEWART, NOT STUART.

THE etymology of this word, which is derived, as everybody knows, from the hereditary office of Great Steward of Scotland, held by Walter Stewart (who by his marriage with Princess Marjory, daughter and heiress of King Robert Bruce, founded the royal line) and, it is said, by the seven generations of his family immediately preceding him; the example of Barbour, Pardon and others of the Scottish chroniclers; the universal custom of the royal house and their subjects for upward of two hundred years after the foundation of the dynasty, all favour "Stewart" as the correct form of the name. It was not until Mary's residence in Paris, as bride-elect, and afterwards as Queen of Francis II., that the French, after their national wont, gallicized the word to suit their own alphabet and accent, in much the same fashion as that in which nearly three centuries later they transformed the patronymic of Napoleon from Buonaparte (the proper Italian form) to Bonaparte, or as the names of our towns appear in such altered guise as "Edinbourg" and "Cantorbery." Orthographical errors of this kind are intelligible, if not defensible, on the part of the foreigner; but it is certainly strange to find the native endorsing them, and, as in this case, practically banishing the original form of spelling from the language in favour of a corruption of alien source.—*All the Year Round*.

A FASHIONABLE MARRIAGE IN RUSSIA.

THE Russians generally marry quite young in the upper classes, and amongst country people even at an earlier age; and to the honour of this society be it said, love marriages are the rule, and marriages for money are very rare exceptions. Dowry-hunting and marriages of interest have not yet made their appearance in Russian manners. Girls of high social position readily marry young officers of the Guard, who furnish the largest contingent of dancers to the balls of Petersburg. During the carnival fêtes the two armies, the army in petticoats and the army that wears epaulets, learn to know each other thoroughly. Friendship springs up, the young man pays court, and one day, without having consulted anybody, two fiancés come to ask of the parents a blessing, which is never refused.

The Church does not marry during Lent, so they have to wait until Easter week. Fashion demands for the celebration of the ceremony the chapel of some private house, if the couple have not sufficient lofty relations to secure the chapel of the palace. A family that respects itself ought to have at its wedding an honorary father and mother, if not the Emperor and the Empress, at least a Grand-Duke and a Grand-Duchess. The honorary father gives the holy image, which some little child related to the families carries in the front of the fiancés. They enter the church followed by all their friends in gala uniform. The ceremony begins; it is very long, and complicated with many symbolic rights; a small table—a sort of moveable altar—is placed in the middle of the oratory; the couple are separated from it by a band of rose-coloured satin; when the priest calls, they must advance, and the first who sets foot on the band, whether husband or wife, will be the one who will impose his or her will in the household. This is an article of faith for all the matrons, who watch them at the moment.

On the table is placed the liturgical formulary, the candles which they must hold, the cross which they will kiss, the rings which they will exchange, the cup of wine in which they will moisten their lips, and which is called in the Slavonic ritual "the cup of bitterness." Pages relieve each other to carry with outstretched arms two heavy crowns, which must be held above the heads of the fiancés while the ceremony continues. At the decisive moment, when the priest is pronouncing the words that bind them together, the couple walk three times around the altar, followed by the crown-bearers; until the third turn is completed there is time to turn back; after that the die is cast, the couple are united for life. Thereupon the singers strike up in their most strident voices the joyous hymn, "Let Isaiah rejoice." The bride and groom then go and prostrate themselves before the Virgin of the Iconostase, and kiss her filigree robe, after which they pass into the neighbouring salon, where they gayly clink glasses of champagne, while the invited guests receive boxes of sweetmeats marked with the monogram of the young couple.—*The Vicomte Eugène Melchior de Vogüé, in Harper's Magazine for June*.

THE BLOODHOUND.

FROM an illustrated article in the June *Century* we quote the following: "Some few years ago the idea of the use of bloodhounds for detective purposes was mooted in the daily papers, and the howl of horror at the barbarity of such a proceeding that it raised from the uninformed was most amusing to those who know the tractability of the bloodhound. He was associated with the tales of slave-hunting in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and 'Dred,' and was supposed to be a ferocious monster, endowed with witch-like attributes, and capable of pursuing his victim successfully under any conditions until caught, when he would certainly tear him limb from limb.

"The horrible murders committed in the East End of

London last year and the complete failure of the police to trace the perpetrator of these outrages were the means of calling attention once more to the qualifications of this old-time detective. The daily papers were filled with letters advocating his use; but, from the thoroughly impracticable nature of many of these epistles, I fear that the change in public opinion was due more to a strong desire for vengeance on an exceptionally loathsome miscreant than to increased knowledge of the disposition of the bloodhound. At one time the police received about 1200 letters daily containing various suggestions, and of these some 400 proposed the use of bloodhounds. Some of the newspaper correspondents seemed to believe that the police had only to take a bloodhound of any kind to the place where a murder had been committed weeks or months before, and the animal would at once scent out the trail of the murderer in preference to thousands of others and infallibly run the man down.

"In the beginning of October I was consulted by Sir Charles Warren, then the Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, as to the feasibility of employing bloodhounds to track the Whitechapel murderer, and after some correspondence I took two hounds up to London to experiment with. We ran them repeatedly in the parks for the information of police authorities and various representatives of the press, and sufficiently demonstrated the facts that the hounds will run a man who is a complete stranger to them, that when they have come up to their man they will not molest him in any way, and that although the line may be crossed by others they will not change. While in London I never ran them without the line of the hunted man being crossed (often by quite a number of people), but the hounds never once changed. They could carry the line across and for a short way along the gravel paths in the parks, but the experiments made on the London stones could not be considered as satisfactory as we should have wished. Hunting the clean boot on a London pavement is, I believe, the most severe test that any hound can be put to, and will, of course, require special and careful training."

CATCHING A BIG BASS.

"By George! I've got him," exclaims our friend in the chair, and as we hastily look up, he is seen apparently fighting to keep his rod erect, whilst something at the other end is convulsively dragging it downward, with such jerks as threaten to part the line or break the rod. The reel is whizzing in a threatening way, and our friend has a hard time to keep his thumb on the barrel of the reel, and at the same time avoid having his knuckles rapped and torn by the rapidly revolving handle. His left, as yet, grasps the rod above the reel and forces the socket into his groin.

"Bring out that belt, Tom," he yells, and Tom comes jumping down the rocks, in one hand his gaff-hook and in the other a leather belt with a short round pocket sewed on its centre. This Tom hastily buckles about the waist of the fisherman, when, carefully shifting the pole, he places the butt in this pocket and is thus protected from possible injury, which the great leverage of the fish's pulling on the top of the rod can easily produce. The fish, in the meantime, has succeeded in getting away, say three or four hundred feet now, and shows some hesitation. Our friend has carefully kept a pressure on the reel, whilst indulging his majesty in imaginary freedom of running—but which he begins to realize as "uncanny,"—and as our eyes follow the slender thread of the line in its distant entry into the water, it is seen to rise, and presently with a whirl of his tail, the fish shows himself; looking then to our unskilled eyes a very monster, and as he again disappears we unhesitatingly pronounce him full six feet long.

"Oh, no," says our friend in reply to our exclamation, "he is not over a thirty pounder, but he is a good one—see him fight!" and the victim tugs and tugs, with a desperation born of a foresight of his calamity; but in vain, and in another ten minutes he loses heart, and sheers in toward the shore, when our friend is put to all his skill to check and reel him in before he reaches a huge rock inshore for which he heads—just in time! The next wave moves him bodily this side of that rock and the road is clear to warping him in.—*From "Striped Bass Fishing," by A. Foster Higgins, in June Scribner's*.

REFLECTIONS.

STILTS are no better in conversation than in a footrace. Folly must hold its tongue while wearing the wig of wisdom.

It is the foolish aim of the atheist to scan infinitude with a microscope.

When poverty comes in at the cottage door, true love goes at it with an axe.

A vein of humour should be made visible without the help of a reduction mill.

The reformer becomes a fanatic when he begins to use his emotions as a substitute for his reasoning faculty.

Many an object in life must be attained by flank movements; it is the zigzag road that leads to the mountain top.

All the paths of life lead to the grave, and the utmost that we can do is to avoid the short cuts.

The office should seek the man, but it should inspect him thoroughly before taking him.

Humility is most serviceable as an undergarment, and should never be worn as an overcoat.

The Good Samaritan helps the unfortunate wayfarer without asking how he intends to vote.

J. A. Macon, in *Century Bric-a-Brac*.