

NOTES ON THE CITY OF CORK CELEBRITIES.

Our ever-attentive friend, Mr. John O'Hea, of Dayton, Ohio, sends us another deeply interesting batch of discursive reminiscences, for which he has the assurance of our most cordial thanks. Our estimable correspondent, in this second series of a saunterer's recollections, recalls the fact that, "previous to the era of Emancipation, our churches and schools in Ireland were hidden in back streets and lanes—the Little Friary, built by Father Arthur O'Leary, in Blackmoor lane, Cork—the Church of St. Francis, in Cross street, with its solitary bell, in a chimney-cleft, to evade the statutes. In 1832, a chaste Doric front was erected by Charles Cottrell; and the Church of St. Augustine was renovated through the eloquence of the illustrious Dr. Doyle, a member of the Order. Father O'Connor, the future Bishop of Salda, was provincial, and at the welcome meeting the Rev. Father Healy, a Franciscan, read an orate and elegant address in pure Latin. The Rev. Dominick Murphy, afterwards Bishop of Madras, Archdeacon O'Shea, author of "Sketches of the Cork Pulpit," and Dean O'Keefe, called by the people the "Silver Tongue of Munster," officiated in SS. Peter and Paul, Carey's lane. A select library was founded by Father O'Leary, from which each member, on payment of a penny per week, received a book—not of the Maturin order of literature. The Dean was a man of fervid piety, imposing appearance, and generous to a fault; his tailor said that he often stripped himself of his clothing, to cover some houseless wanderer. The Deanery was situated between the South Monastery and the Presentation Convent, founded by Miss Nanno Nagle, on grounds once belonging to the Red Abbey of St. Augustine. A square tower is all that remains of this once famous edifice, rising from out of a dwelling built around it by a lucky Irish officer of engineers in the East Indian service, who married a nabob's daughter, returned to Ireland, and built a street, calling it by his own name, Donovan street, set up a carriage and liveried servants, but soon treated the poor lady with marked neglect. She could be partly seen at the curtained windows when her master rode out in state with his boon companions, wringing her hands in deep despair. She disappeared suddenly, while he, to avoid his creditors, fled to France, and soon squandered both fortune and life in debauchery.

The Church of St. Francis was opened with a grand sacred concert, where I first heard the late Michael Balfe sing along with Alban Croft, Miss Shirreff, Paul Bedford, Henry Allen, Sims Reeves (whose brother was local editor of the *Constitution*), artists of European fame. Balfe was the son of a ribbon weaver in the Liberties of Dublin, was a violinist in boyhood, and afterwards an operatic singer with Sontag, Grisi, and Madame Malibran.

with Sontag, Grisi, and Madame Malibran. His operas, the *Maid of Artois*, *Bohemian Girl*, &c., were translated into French, German, and Italian. His songs were the delight of thousands, in many lands, one of them, "The Light of Other Days," will be remembered by posterity. Thanks to the genius of Balfe, the soul-inspiring music of Ireland pervades every courtly capital in Europe, and the ribbon-weaver's grand-daughter leads London society as the brilliant Countess of Waldegrave.

The *Mercantile Chronicle* was edited by the Rev. T. R. England, brother of the Bishop, and author of the "Life of the Rev. Arthur O'Leary," aided by Messrs. Sheehan and O'Leary. Sheehan wrote, "Sketches of the Munster Bar," with Essays on Irish Manuscript. The *Southern Reporter* was then the leading Cork paper. It had Redmond O'Driscoll, Wm. T. Fagan, Michael Joseph Barry, and my friend Thomas Shinturn, on its staff. The latter is now the law reporter for the *Cincinnati Commercial*, as he has been for the last thirty years. John Francis Maguire purchased the *Standard*, called it the *Examiner*, and made it a great success.

The unstamped press, *Captain Rock* in London, *Sentinel*, and *Freeholder*, loomed up promisingly. The first, edited by Joseph O'Leary, died very soon; but the *Freeholder* and *Bolster's Quarterly*, had a few years of existence. The *Quarterly* had a host of contributors—John Windele, who lives in "Blair's Castle that bends to the breeze;" Jas. Roche, of the *Gentleman's Magazine*; James Casey, an imitator of Father Prout; and Bartholomew Simmons, the poet, were the principals. We had then in Cork four stamped and three unstamped papers; while Manchester, the cotton capital, with treble the population, had but three, viz.:—*Guardian*, *Courier*, and *Examiner*. The *Freeholder* flew the Roman satirist's motto at its head:—

"I am proud, yes I am proud to see
Men not afraid of God, afraid of me."

Johnny Boyle, with pen dipped in gall, was a scourge to all delinquents. He was editor, pressman, and carrier. Clad in spencer gaiters, white hat, and green umbrella, he rode round on a Kerry pony, itemizing, and spurring out epigrams and fierce sarcasm.

In 1835 Lord Mulgrave became viceroy. His viceroyalty was more fortunate than were his novels—"Matilda," "Yes or No." The Municipal Reform Bill passed, and cut in twain the corporate "Friendly knot" of *Pennefeather's Tricks*. The stone Mansion House of their mayor, in which their Orange orgies flourished, was converted into a semi-

nary under the presidency of the accomplished Rev. Wm. O'Sullivan. Oh! blessed change, the halls once echoing to the *Hep! Hep!* of the "Glorious, pious, and immortal" Dutchman now resounded to the "Glorious, pious, and immortal"

step! of the "Glorious, pious, and immortal" Dutchman now resound to the "Glory to God in the highest," and sacred pictures take the place of Royal madmen and gory butchers! The county was to be redeemed. Feargus O'Connor, of Fort Bandon, a nephew of Gen. Arthur Condercet O'Connor, was the selected man. He was of Herculean stature, stentorian voice, fiery hair, fiery temper, and was a Republican by nature. He blew up the borough-mongering aristocrat, a son of Lord Kingston, at the election. In accordance with his pledges, he continued to embarrass the Whig Government in Parliament by pressing the Repeal question to a division. He was sustained by forty-three members. Thereupon O'Connell and he quarrelled about the expediency of the opposition, whereupon he resigned Irish politics, went to England, founded the *Northern Star* as the organ of Chartism, and was returned M.P. for the city of Nottingham.

Mr. John Windele was a devoted antiquarian—a firm friend of the Rev. Mathew Horgan, of Blarney; who often helped him thro' lisses, forts and ruins, to decipher druidical inscriptions of the Ogham, which some scholiasts say was the musical *oc-cum* or *Pelagie*, name of the Minerva. Windele was author of "Historical and Descriptive Notices of Cork and its Vicinity." He was president of the "Peripatetic Club," with head-quarters at his printer's, Luke H. Bolster, 7 Patrick street; but their regular symposium was held in the Old Crown Tavern, kept by Mrs. M'Evars, mother of Dr. John M'Evars, whose son is now fighting for poor France in the Foreign Legion. Bolster was the literary centre of the progressive Protestants, like Dr. William Elliot Hodson (who died a Catholic), Richard Dowden, the humorist; Hon. and Rev. Ludlow Tanson, a brother of Lord Riversdale; Rev. H. Townsend, author of the Statistical Survey of Cork; Rev. Dr. Quarrie, author of "Notices of Carberry;" Rev. N. Dunscombe, the philanthropist,—while we had Geary's, by the stately Exchange; Charles Dillon's, Castle street, publisher in Irish and English; and Healy, of Hanover street, got out the Street Ballads for the wandering gutter-minstrels.

The Misses Brehon, 118 Old George street, were patronized by the clergy. Here I first met the celebrated Father Prout, on a day which was nigh his last. I was a favourite with the Franciscan, Father O'Meara, whose brother wrote "A Voice from St. Helena," and the Rev. Father Bartholomew Verling. We went to Brehons', and Father Russell, O.S.D., an eloquent preacher, in company with a travelling stranger in clerical costume, whose remarks brought pleasure to my thirsty soul. He advanced to the door to examine a new book. Crispin, a gunsmith, kept opposite—a workman placed a gun-barrel in vyce to repair, while I, fearing something terrible, almost dragged the strange Father aside. In a moment a flash followed.

being terrible, almost dragged the strange Father aside. In a moment a flash followed, and a bullet lodged in the pillared-door front. The Father (Prout) raised his head, and thanked his God—then turning to me, overwhelmed my modest self with praise. These hours are consecrated in my memory. "Language fades before thy spell," as Cowley says:—

"Days spent not in toys, lust, or wine,
But search of deep philosophy;
Wit, eloquence, and poesy,
Arts which I loved, for they, my friend, were
thine."

His townsman, Dr. Maguire, said, "The Abbe Frank Mahoney had the eloquence of Virgil, the accuracy of Thucydides, the terseness of Tacitus, the purity of Cicero, the *curiosa felicitas* of Horace; all those eminent masters kept alive the *divina particulam aura* of his old inspiring studies." They began in the ivy-crowned tower of the *Gobhan Sear*, at Watergrasshill, revelled in the rarest relics of poesy, from Greece to Erin, playing wanton with all a sportive fancy—and so metamorphosed the muse by his transmutations, that he fairly puzzled the British crepietarian critics, oscillating between Rome, Paris, and London, as chief correspondent of the *Globe*. He never yet forgot old Ireland, or the glorious Order of St. Ignatius, to which he belonged. He died in Paris, firm in the faith, nursed by his only sister, who, in accordance with his last dying wish, laid him in his native soil, within sound of his own "Shandon Bells":—

"Sounds that wild would, in days of childhood,
Fling around his cradle their magic spells."
— *Boston Pilot*.