

NINETY-EIGHT DEMONSTRATION AT MOUNTMELICK.

Last Monday a public demonstration was held at Mountmellick, the object being the laying of the foundation stone of a memorial cross to the memory of the eleven local men who died for Ireland in sad but glorious '98. The site selected for the memorial cross was in Pound-street, on the spot where in '98 Patrick Dunne, Francis Dunne, Daniel Dunne, Thomas Dunne, William Brock, W. Holohan, John Guilfoyle, Pat Murphy, George Gilligan, Daniel Conroy, and James Deegan were executed in the brutal manner characteristic of the period and the rulers of Ireland. Of the above named eleven men, Brock, was but a boy of eighteen years of age, no other account could be alleged, yet they were subjected to the utmost indignities. The cowardly and brutal Orange Yeomanry, backed by the "soldiers" of England, caused the eleven martyrs of Mountmellick to walk on their hands and knees along the streets of the town from the infamous "Riding House" to their place of execution. Offers of liberty and freedom were given to those men if they would only betray their comrades; but no, that was not the spirit of the men of the Queen's County with its 12,000 enrolled United Irishmen. One of the saddest incidents of the period was the execution of a young boy named Brock, of only 18 years of age, who met his death with all the fortitude and heroism of a martyr, and one of the most pleasing features of Monday's meeting was the fact that scarcely one of the eleven martyred dead was unrepresented on the platform.

The meeting was held in Pound-street, and the platform was erected on the spot where the scaffold upon which the eleven men were hanged in 1798; the foundation stone was the one which supported the "gallows tree," and which has been in the possession of the Morrin family for the last century. Previous to the meeting this stone was conveyed to the site selected for the memorial cross, a large number of people following in the procession which accompanied it. For some reason, which it would be hard to explain, Mr Babbage, D.I., and a number of extra police were present in the town. Previous to the formal opening of the meeting a number of bands paraded the streets playing National airs. Amongst the bands present were the two local ones, the Ballyfin and Monasterevan bands, the latter accompanied by a splendid banner.

Amongst those present were—Messrs John Sheares, Tullamore; H Sheares, F J Graham, M Berrill, P F O'Loughlin, P Nugent, P J Daly, Dublin; A Dowling, Monasterevan; M Bell, do; M J Dunne, T Connolly, E Cullen, A Malone, P Boilard, T Brennan, James Behan, W Curry, J Byrne, J Malone, J Donaher, J Mason, W Kelly, S Vanston, W Shinkins, P Dunne, J Walsh, M Fitzgerald, Thomas Knight, P A Meehan, P I G; P Kelly, T C; Maryborough; Thomas O'Neill, Thomas O'Neill, jun; J Maher, J Delaney, M Hargroves, D Dunne, J M'Evoy, T C, Chairman of '98 Centenary Committee; P Bergin, Hon Sec; Thomas Merrin, P I G, T C; J Williams, G Williams, W Delaney, P M'Connell, Jer O'Connell, P O'Connell, E Bergin, J O'Connell, J Toomey, J Tracey, P Corcoran, F Keating, J M'Evoy, E M M'Evoy, J Darcy, — Fenlon, S Dunne, P J Smith, H Burns, V Scully, T C; W Scully, T C; J Scully, H Scully, E O'Connor, T C; D Conroy, T C; P Hayden, P Cobbe, W Mitchell, J Bennett, J Farrell, J M'Ahon, J Tehan, Maryborough; J Dunne, P L G, Rose-nallis; M Dunne, James Gorman, Clonastee; J Troy, W Moran, P L G; J Moran, W Kelly.

Portarlington — W Lalor, M Cummins, F Dunne, J J Parcell, P O'Shea, P O'Brien, J O'Brien, M Brennan, J Cobbe, J Kearns, W Kearns, W H Burke, J Connolly, P Hogan, P Flanagan, T M'LAYNE, B King.

Arrived at the place of meeting, Mr L M'Evoy performed the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the memorial cross to be erected to the men who died for Ireland in 1798.

On the motion Mr M'Evoy, seconded by Mr Thomas Morrin, Mr W Delaney took the chair. Mr P Bergin, sec. to the meeting, read correspondence which he had received.

Mr J. J. Aird, J.P., Maryborough, wrote expressing his regret at not being able to attend owing to a prior engagement.

The Rev James E Delaney, P.P., Rose-nallis, wrote as follows:—"Dear Mr Bergin—In reply to the invitation I received from you some days ago on behalf of the memorial committee of the '98 Centenary to attend at the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone of the memorial in Mountmellick, I regret I am unable to be with you, as I am only recovering from a severe cold. Please convey to the meeting that I am fully in sympathy with their objects, and wish them every success.—Yours very truly, James E. Delaney, P.P."

Mr Delaney, who was enthusiastically received, said—My first duty is to thank you for having called upon me to preside at this important meeting to-day of the men of the Queen's County. It is not necessary for me to go into any lengthened remarks as to the subject I have to put before you to-day. There will be speakers to follow me who will deal better with the subject of 1798 than I could, and there is no necessity for me trying to justify before an audience of Mountmellick men the action of the United Irishmen in one hundred years ago (cheers). They rose in dark and evil days for the honour of their homes, for the chastity of their wives and sisters and daughters, and the spirit with which the men of Mountmellick joined the movement in '98 still live in the hearts of the men of Mountmellick to-day (cheers). They would be wanting, however, in their duty if they allowed the present year to pass without making some effort to perpetuate the memory of the eleven martyrs who died in Mountmellick for Ireland in Ninety-Eight. Steps were taken that day and with their aid and approval they would bring their movement they had in contemplation to a successful issue. Future generations would point with pride to where they that day laid the foundation stone to the memory of the men who 100 years ago laid down their lives for Ireland, and they had on the platform, they had as laying the foundation stone of the memorial cross, a descendant of one of the men who was executed on the spot on which they stood 100 years ago—Mr Laurence M'Evoy (loud cheers). He had it himself from the sister of young Brock the story of his execution. He was only a boy of 18 years of age, and was hanged like a dog from the back of a cart in the town in which we stand. He was first asked if he was a United Irishman, and if he was if he would betray them; but he would not. So it was the same old story again. When the United Irishmen were forced to take up arms it was in defence of their homes, and of the chastity of their wives, and daughters. Originally the United Irish movement was a most constitutional one; it was one designed for the amelioration of their Catholic fellow-countrymen, but the members were driven into rebellion and insurrection by the Government of the day. The purpose of the United Irishmen was to obtain by constitutional means the proper rights for their Catholic fellow-countrymen. An Englishman, Mr W. A. Stead, had pointed out in his own unique style and clear way the causes that led to the rebellion of 1798—see quarters on the people, burning, and universal rape. This was what made the people of Wexford rise against their oppressors (cheers).

Mr L. M'Evoy addressed the meeting and returned them thanks for the compliment they had paid him in asking him that day to lay the foundation stone to the memory of the 11 local martyrs who on the 11th and 13th June, 1798, gave up their lives for Ireland in the town of Mountmellick. The only regret he felt was that the ceremony had not fallen into able hands than his. It was a hard task on many of the men who claimed to be descendants of the United Irishmen who were executed in Mountmellick in 1798 to be there that

day—representatives of the eleven men whom the beautiful British Government sacrificed to glut their vengeance in '98. But they died for pure love of their country (loud cheers). Why should he refer to their names? They were household words in Mountmellick to the present day. Young Willie Brock—a boy of 18 years of age—whom Major Jatham brought to the gallows and swung him from it like a dog for no crime but for loving his native land (cheers). He was glad to see there to-day the sons and the grandsons of many of the men who gave up their lives for Ireland one hundred years years ago on the spot upon which they were now standing. Well—

"All are gone, but still lives on
The fame of those who died;
But true men, like you men,
Remember them with pride."

(Cheers.)

Mr P. Bergin read the following resolutions which were proposed by Mr P. Corcoran and seconded by Mr Timothy Connell:—

"That we, the men of the Queen's County, recall with pride the heroism and sacrifices of those eleven martyrs to liberty who gave up their lives for Ireland within the precincts of Mountmellick in the year 1798; and recognising the desirability of perpetuating their memory inaugurate that object by laying the foundation stone of a memorial which shall typify to the future generations of our countrymen the undying love and reverence of the men of this generation for the heroes of 1798."

"That we herewith declare that the gospel of patriotic union and National effort taught by Theobald Wolfe Tone and the Society of United Irishmen is the only creed of Nationality worthy of adoption by Irishmen truly anxious to secure the National liberties of their native land; and we pledge ourselves to use our utmost efforts to promote a cordial union of all Irishmen with that object for the purpose of crowning the movement of the present year by a fitting commemoration of the centenary of Robert Emmet in 1903."

"That we hereby appeal to all true Nationalists in this and the surrounding districts to aid us by their subscriptions to bring this patriotic undertaking to a successful issue."

Mr J. P. Daly and Mr J. P. Dunne, members of the Central Executive of the '98 Centenary Committee, Dublin, addressed the meeting, mentioning that in 1798 there were 12,000 Queen's County men enrolled in the United Irishmen's Association.

Mr P. A. Meehan, P.L.G., Maryborough, addressed the meeting as follows:—

Who fears to speak of '98?
Who blushes at the name?

Mr Chairman and fellow-countrymen—If there be anyone who fears to speak of '98, if there be any who have cause to blush at the mention of that unhappy period of our country's history, it is most assuredly not the Irish people (cheers). No doubt we look back on that woeful time with very opposite feelings indeed, with feelings of horror, righteous anger, and a natural desire for vengeance for the unparalleled atrocities inflicted on our forefathers in '98. On the other hand we look back with feelings of pride, admiration, and love for the heroic men (and women also) who, in face of the most tremendous difficulties, shouldered their pikes, raised the green flag, and struck a noble and well high successful blow for Irish liberty (cheers), gave their lives willingly in defence of their homes and their country's independence (cheers). We don't fear to speak of '98. We are proud of the record. We honour the memory of the gallant dead who died for Ireland, and we are here to-day to make that admiration take tangible shape, to erect in this town a monument to the local martyrs who were murdered on the spot whereon we stand to-day. God rest their noble souls in peace and inspire and nerve us to do our duty to Ireland (cheers). There is no town in Queen's County where such a memorial could be more fittingly erected, for when all bear honoured scars in defence of country and right, hardly any felt the iron heel of oppression so much (hear, hear). It is but a few years ago since in this town there flouted in insolent pride the flag of Orange ascendancy and religious hate. You tore down that flag, you trampled it in the dust (cheers), and you are here to-day to erect in its stead a monument and a flag, symbolizing the indestructible Faith and National spirit of Ireland (cheers). A Celtic cross, its foundation resting on the martyrs' stone, its arms silently preaching peace, love, and charity to all men, at its base will be written in letters of gold the names of the noble men who gave their lives in defence of the chastity of their homes, religious liberty, and their country's freedom (cheers). Your town was once famous as the centre of many industries, to-day it bears the impress of English mis-government and fraud. But a few years ago, comparatively speaking, you had tanneries, distilleries, breweries. Mountmellick was, in fact, the centre of the woollen industry. All have disappeared under the blighting curse of foreign rule (cheers). The mills are idle, falling into decay, and the homes of the artisans are levelled to the ground, the people gone to make other lands rich with their toil. The *London Times* gloated over the depopulation of Ireland, rejoicing "that 2,000,000 of the Celts were gone," done to death by law-made famine, murdered to make a British holiday.

Gone with a vengeance, quoth John Bull, that surplus population;
Gone with a vengeance, stricken sore, by famine, fraud, and fever;
Shipwrecked on a savage shore, where wreckers watch for ever;
Gone with a vengeance to the Lord, their white lips full of prayer
Imploring the Divine award between them and their slayer.

(Cheers.) To-day John Bull is paying his addresses to the American Republic seeking its alliance. Our exiled countrymen will have something to say on that matter, and if this political union takes place we may confidently hope one of the articles to get a first place in the agreements will be a full and complete measure of local self-government for Ireland (cheers). I do not purpose, nor is it necessary for any speaker, to go into details of the horrors of '98. You all know the heart-rending story—it is handed down from father to son, it is recited in the lonely cabin on the mountain side and in the valleys, it is talked over at the forge fire when the boys meet, it has found its way to the more comfortable hearthstones, and is now read in the diningroom of the rich. Briefly it is a most awful story of a deliberate, well planned, and most complete plot that was ever hatched for the degradation and destruction of any people. One of the few honest Englishmen of the period, Lord Cornwallis, who was appointed Lord Lieutenant, after the insurrection had been suppressed, writes: "On my arrival in this country I put a stop to the burning of houses and the murder of the inhabitants by the yeomen or other persons who delighted in that amusement, to the flogging for the purpose of extorting confession, and to free quarters which comprehend universal rape and robbery throughout the whole country." There is the story epitomised in a few words. Speaking of the army: "They are totally without discipline, contemptible before the enemy when any serious resistance is made to them, but ferocious and cruel in the extreme when any poor wretches, with or without arms, come within their power; in short, murder appears to be their favourite pastime." Again, speaking of the gentry, he writes: "The encouragement of the principal persons all tends to converse the system of blood, even at my table, when you will suppose I do all I can to prevent it, always turns on hangings, shootings, burnings, and if a priest is put to death the greatest joy is expressed by the whole company." It was against the orgy of hell the Irish peasant rose unarmed desperate to strike a blow in defence of the sanctity of the Christian home, in defence of the chastity of mothers, wives, and sisters, and, oh! the pity of it that all Ireland did not strike together (cheers). What a glorious prospect of possibilities opens before our view had a united shot sent straight from the shoulder of Ireland and aimed at the heart of her foe! What

a different place would Ireland occupy to-day in the world! Alas! it was not so. Only one county made a lengthened and determined effort. Wexford (loud cheers for Wexford) kept on the struggle, and to crush out the insurrection it took 130,000 British troops. It is contended by some well meaning people that the story of past wrongs should not be revived—that the odious memory of '98 should be forgotten (no, no). The most precious heritage of any country is the memory of its dead heroes (cheers). We may forgive past wrongs on proper reparation being made, but we never will forget the men who at any period of our history gave their lives in defence of Faith and Fatherland (cheers). When the British Government puts a stop to the re-enacting, on a small scale it is true, of some of the horrors of '98 by the organised Orange ruffianism of Belfast and other northern towns, where Catholic priests are waylaid and insulted, convents and Catholic houses plundered and wrecked; when they remove the last remnant of Protestant ascendancy and place the Catholic population of Ireland on terms of equality by establishing a system of university education to which the Catholic people are entitled; when they rectify the financial injustice to which Ireland has been subject since the Union and return at least some of the plundered millions; when we receive the full measure of our rights then we are ready to forgive, even if we cannot forget the past (cheers). Until then it is our duty to remember '98 and '48, and to keep before the world the gross wrongs our country suffers, and to let the Government, their aiders and sympathisers know and to keep before them how huge the debt they owe us and how much we have to forgive them. We are not here to promote any propaganda of hatred or illwill between any section of our countrymen, no matter what a man's form of Faith may be, we do not quarrel with him on that score. Is he true to Ireland? Will he work for her welfare? If he does treat him as a brother. March together shoulder to shoulder for the old land and the old cause. We do not forget some of the noblest men Ireland ever produced were Protestant, and Ireland loves and honours them in her heart of hearts (cheers). And now it may be no harm to ask ourselves how do we stand in this centennial year of '98. Have we done our duty to Ireland? How do we act up to the principles of the men of '98? Alas, not well, split up, sectional differences and disputes, the energy and work which belongs to Ireland wasted in ridiculous personal squabbles. Let us lay those disastrous differences at the foot of the '98 martyrs from this day, *ita and ism*. Let Ireland be the word Ireland over and above all, that's the cry. Little will come of your assembly here to-day if the old feuds and factions go on. The best tribute we can pay the men of '98, the best monuments, more lasting than brass, and more valuable than a tower of gold, will be the burying here to-day of every *ite and ism* which is delaying if not destroying our country's cause (cheers). Let us remember the men of '98 when we kneel before God's Altar and pray for their eternal repose. Let us think of them in the fields and in our homes, so that we may be strengthened in our duty to Faith and Fatherland. Let us try to win those of our countrymen to her side, who at present stand aloof or join our enemies, as the great Protestant Poet of '48, Thomas Davis, wrote:—

And oh, it were a gallant deed to show before mankind,
How every creed and every clan might be by love combined.

Might be combined, but not forget the source from whence the rose,
As filled by many a rivulet the lordly Shannon flows.

(loud cheers.)

Mr O'Loughlin, Tullamore, addressed the meeting.

Mr Thomas O'Neill, T.C., Maryborough, addressed the meeting. He said it gave him the greatest pleasure to be there that day to join in doing honour to the memory of the men who 100 years ago laid down their lives for Ireland (cheers). It was unnecessary for him to dwell at that late hour that day on the subject which brought them together on that occasion. He offered his sincere congratulations to the men who stood before him that day for their determination and patriotic spirit (cheers). There was one thing which gave him pleasure and hope, and that was the spirit exhibited by the patriotic men of Mountmellick that day (cheers).

On the motion of Mr M'Evoy, seconded by Mr Bergin, Mr Thomas Morrin was moved to the second chair, and a vote of thanks having been passed to the chairman and duly replied to the meeting terminated.

CASTLECOMER COURSING CLUB.

Under the above heading a club has been established in Castlecomer, it might be said revived, because 17 or 18 years ago, the people of this locality often had the pleasure of seeing many a well contested trial between the real bloods of the locality and surrounding counties. The last stake run off here was £25, when a Carlow man had the honour and pleasure of carrying away the prize with his blinded and white dog.

It became known through Mr Wm Dobbs J.P., of Castlecomer, that the respected landlord of the place, R H Prior-Wandesforde Esq, D L, J.P., would be favourable to the sport relating to "pussy," and some few local people set to work at once to form a coursing club. The decision of the preliminary meeting having been forwarded to Mr Prior-Wandesforde, he sent word that he would give a large subscription. Mr Wm Dobbs also gave his assurance that he would do all in his power to further the matter.

Arising out of those kind assurances and the promise of the use of the large preserves of Castlecomer, a committee of the club was formed and Mr Prior-Wandesforde was unanimously appointed patron, and Mr Wm Dobbs Chairman. The other members of the committee are—Mr R Hall, Massford (the owner of the late Royal Harry), vice Chairman; Mr J J Cantwell, treasurer; and Mr W J Curran, a well-known coursing man, secretary; Mr J Dobbs, Mr J Ring, Mr James Fogarty, Mr Richard Copely, Mr Thomas Pierce, Mr M White, Mr D McDonnell, Mr Dan Deevy, Mr J Ryan, with power to add to their number.

The ordinary subscription is to be 10s per annum; 5s to be paid on entrance and 5s when called for, but many times this amount has been promised by some members.

Considering that the movement is only a week old it is satisfying to have to record the fact that already 22 members have paid in their subscriptions and twice this number is secure.

We expect to see the names of many of our Kilkenny, Carlow, and Athy sporting friends, as well as those of many from more distant places among the list of members of the Castlecomer coursing club, and to be able to treat them to a few days' good fun over the Beech and Coolalthe before the 1st of February, 1899, but not after box hares.

RACING IN ENGLAND.

During the racing season of 1898 1,921 races were decided in England, of which 2 were run over a distance of four miles, 8 of three miles and under four, 53 of two miles and under three, 228 of one mile and under two, 556 of one mile, 252 of six furlongs and under a mile, and 822 of five furlongs and under six furlongs. The horses that took part in these races numbered 3,571, of which 1,364 were two year olds, 1,039 three year olds, 517 four year olds, and 651 five year olds and upwards. There was an increase of 74 three year olds and 45 five year olds and upwards, and a decrease of five two year olds and 99 four year olds, as compared with the runners of 1897. Without including prizes to second and third horses, £473,660 was won during the year in England, £23,538 in Ireland, and £11,822 in Scotland. A sum of £139,388 was distributed in handicaps for three year olds and upwards, £135,232 in weight-for-age races for three year olds and upwards, three and four year olds or weight-for-age races for three and four year olds only, £10,448 for all ages or two and three year olds, and £52,232 for selling races and selling handicaps, excepting those for two year olds only. For races devoted to two year olds only, £136,360 was won, of which £15,519 was for nursery, £7,421 for weight-for-age races and £23,420 for selling races and selling handicaps.