

LAST EDITION.

THURSDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 4, 1904

DAME RUMOUR AND CITY PROGRESS.

Rumour's tongue has been busy lately, and one or two canals have been eagerly discussed by the citizens. One of these was the generally accepted statement that the confectionery works of Messrs. Geary, of Charlotte's Quay, had been, or were to be immediately closed, and that in consequence a good number of employees had been thrown out of employment. One of the reasons given for the step, was that the manufactured confectionery could be sent over from Germany, France, and other places, carriage paid, and sold in the British market at a less price than the local cost of the sugar used in its manufacture. Then, again, possibly in consequence of the numerous applications for assistance from the Guardians, it has been freely stated that the Limerick Clothing Factory has been shut up, while yet another rumour had it that some wealthy Jews were in negotiation for its purchase, and that the present "small army" of workers there were to be dispossessed by detachments from the sweating dens of White-chapel and elsewhere. If either of these rumours had any foundation in fact, it would indeed be a serious look out for the workers in the city, but happily they have not. As far as Geary's is concerned, a representative of the "Limerick Chronicle" has investigated the matter, and his report is briefly "Geary's have not closed up, nor are they going to." This, therefore, disposes of that rumour, and we are glad it is so. In the interview with Mr. Geary that gentleman was kind enough to give his opinion as to the cause of the "slump" in the confectionery trade. This, he pointed out, was due to the fact that bounties have been taken off sugar in continental countries and duty put on here. For instance in France, people were paying 7d a lb for sugar until bounties were taken off, when sugar fell to 5d, a price at which sugar was never sold in France at any previous period. Then in Germany, Belgium, France and other countries, the refiners kept up the price at home, and whatever surplus sugar was left was sent to this country. In this country sweet manufacturers were paying (until the duty was put on) about 9s per cwt delivered here. Now they were paying over 15s per cwt., there having been a duty of 4s 6d. per cwt. added. This had a serious effect on the confectionery trade throughout the Kingdom, and it is the prevailing belief that not a single manufacturer made money last year. There are so many manufacturers, that the public won't pay in advance for confectionery. They are all fighting for a share of what is going, and while some manufacturers might desire to raise the price, there are others who are prepared to work at a loss in the hope of getting a share of the business.

which ever provided gossip to interest the people. It is curious how a rumour once started goes the round, and is implicitly believed in by those who pass it on, never troubling to ascertain whether it is right or wrong. We have been told that we are practically on the eve of an industrial collapse. It is our pleasing duty to give the facts as they are, and our encouraging hope that the pessimists will be proved to be entirely wrong for many a long day to come. There is need for work for those who are willing to do it. It would be nothing short of a calamity if our industrial enterprises could not provide that work for our people. Happily, public spirit is not diminishing, and for this the workers themselves, and the city which would suffer, have reason to be devoutly thankful.

CURRENT COMMENT.

CORPORATION DAY MEETINGS.

We have reason to believe there is a strong feeling within the Council Chamber and outside it, that Councillor Sheahan's motion in favour of holding day meetings of that body should not be allowed to drop. It suffered defeat at the last meeting when there was not a full Council present, but if brought on again will, we trust, meet with the success it deserves. Meetings of the Cork and Dublin Corporations—in both of which it will be remembered the democratic element is largely represented—are held by day. Why Limerick should be an exception we fail to see. We feel assured that some *modus vivendi* could be arrived at by which the labour members could attend the Council meetings at noon, just as many of them have for years attended the public bodies in the city which meet in the day time, and of which they are members. There can be no question that the business would be more expeditiously discharged in the day time than at night, for the presence or the interruption of the "gallery" would probably in the former circumstances be conspicuous by its absence. Such, at all events, was the case, except on rare occasions, under the old regime. Then, again, day meetings would we should think, be a convenience to the officials, and lastly, if they are to be considered at all—the members of the Press, who under present circumstances after their ordinary day's work, have to spend their evening as well in the heated atmosphere of the Council Chamber. From every point of view, therefore, we say that a reversion to day meetings is desirable—and we are not without hope that in the end it will commend itself to the good sense of the majority of the members of the Council.

ALIEN DUMPING.

Among the several interesting matters touched on in the King's speech, there is one which is likely to have a far reaching effect on the industrial community of Great Britain. This is the projected legislation dealing with the alien problem. For a long time Great Britain has been the dumping ground of all sorts and conditions of aliens, who neither add to the commercial prosperity of the country nor to its peace and order. The time has long since come when some effort should be made to prevent the rag-tag and bobtail, the scum of other nations

industries, and throws British workmen out of employment, it would be hard to beat the following circular letter just received by a leading firm of London dry goods merchants. It is dated from a well-known German hotel in Finsbury Square:—

28th January, 1901.

Dear Sir,—I beg to inform you herewith that I have come over to this country with a splendid collection of COTTON BLOUSE MATERIAL for the summer season, ranging from 2 1/2d. to 11d. per yard. The patterns are of the latest fashion, and sold at an exceptionally low price. My house, Messrs. ——— & Co. VIENNA, being one of the largest and best known manufacturing firms of Austria, we introduce their quite new designs into this country at any price, quite disregarding their own profit (italics ours). Our two large warehouses at ——— and ——— in Austria enable us to get even the largest orders executed within the very shortest time. In addition to this, we always have a large stock. Should you feel inclined to profit by this opportunity, kindly advise when it is convenient for me to call upon you, and oblige me to do so.

Very respectfully yours,

Comment on the above is needless, but cannot refrain from asking what effect this of thing is likely to have upon the employment and wages of the operatives in similar industries in Great Britain.

THOUGHTS FOR TO-NIGHT AND TO-MORROW.

Onward, onward let us press  
Through the path of duty,  
Virtue is true happiness,  
Excellence true beauty.  
James Montgomery

Speak gently ! it is better far  
To rule by love than fear;  
Speak gently ! and let no harsh word  
mar  
The good we may do here.

Hangford

NEWS-NOTES AND NOTICES.

FIRMNESS WHICH IS REQUIRED.

The New Urban Council at Kilrush begun well in one respect at all events seems that what our reporter calls "a curious practice" has hitherto been in vogue with regard to the employment of those who should keep the streets and roads clean. An overseer is furnished with a list of those who take on, and those he may not. He has the power to dismiss any man, even though he knows that man is not doing his work or giving satisfaction. This is a nice state of affairs, another evidence of how labour controls itself. Kilrush road users should be glad to see that the end of that sort of thing is at hand. The Council have determined to stop it, and "fair day's wage for a fair day's work" will in the future not be quite so one-sided a statement as it seems to have been lately. Kilrush. "The cleansing of the Augean has evidently begun. At the same time it is difficult to understand the penny-wisepound foolish policy adopted with regard to annual horse fairs. Nowadays advertising is the soul of business, and the best business men value it. However, as to the effect of the light under the bushel, we must, as our respondent says, wait and see.

CANNOT FIND TIME TO GET MARRIED.

The Duke of Norfolk seemed to be embarrassed to find a spare day even for his wedding. The date originally fixed for the event was Wednesday, February 10th, 1901.

price at home, and whatever surplus sugar was left was sent to this country. In this country sweet manufacturers were paying (until the duty was put on) about 2s. per cwt. delivered here. Now they were paying over 12s. per cwt., there having been a duty of 4s. 6d. per cwt. added. This had a serious effect on the confectionery trade throughout the Kingdom, and it is the prevailing belief that not a single manufacturer made money last year. There are so many manufacturers, that the public won't pay in advance for confectionery. They are all fighting for a share of what is going, and while some manufacturers might desire to raise the price, there are others who are prepared to work at a loss in the hope of better times. His firm was about to cast confectionery business on this account, but when going into a close investigation they found that the confectionery business was so closely connected with the manufacture of biscuits that they could not separate one from the other. There has been formed in Ireland a Confectioners' Association, whose idea is to increase the price, so that more prosperous times are anticipated. Then with regard to the Clothing Factory, the Vice-Chairman of the Guardians yesterday intimated that it had been closed, but, again, we are happily able to say, that is not true. Short time there has been, but with the advent of new and extensive orders just obtained, there is every probability that work will continue in full swing, and give employment to as many as heretofore. Perhaps the most curious rumour of all that the people have been busying themselves about, is that with regard to the Jews. All sorts of things, possible and impossible, have been stated as "facts." As for the assertion that the Jews were about to carry on the Clothing Factory, we have inquired into this, too, and find that there is absolutely no truth in it. The present proprietors have no intention of giving it up, and from the best sources we have ascertained that there was never the remotest idea on the part of the Jews, nor even a suggestion, for acquiring that or any other trading concern in the city. It is, however, true that some of the Jews who deal in a small and petty way, on the weekly instalment system, among the poorer classes of the community, have decided to give up their business and go elsewhere. The reason assigned for this is the determination of many of the more unscrupulous customers not to pay their debts already incurred, and the difficulty of doing business as heretofore. In other words, though the Jews admit that they are no longer physically molested, several of them have been practically ruined by the recent agitation, and find it difficult to make both ends meet, a thing which they declare the poorer ones among them, engaged in the drapery and kindred trades, have only just been able to do even while the weekly sixpences and shillings were paid up regularly. Of this matter, however, we not not seem to have heard the last, for we are informed that it has been taken up officially by influential Jews in England, and one of the first moves will be a question in the House of Commons at an early date, to be followed, as soon as practicable by other action in Parliament by members of the Jewish community inside the House of Commons and outside of it. Then, arising out of the Jewish question, Dame Rumour has been particularly busy with the name of the Rev. Father Creagh, who, it has been asserted, was about leaving the city, some quid nunc even going so far as to mention his new appointment. This rumour, however, has, we are assured, been completely set at rest by the rev. gentleman himself. Speaking to his congregation this week, he said: "I hear it is rumoured in the town that I am about leaving you. Well so I am, for a time, but only for a fortnight, in order to conduct a mission in Belfast. Then I shall be back again to work among you as usual." This should dispose of the statements so freely made that Father Creagh was about to be superseded on account of his recent address relative to the Jews, for if any one should know, it is certainly the rev. gentleman himself, whose word is to be preferred to the most busy-tongued rumour.