

Many thousands of people in Ireland have invested in the German mark, and have a very special interest in the present attempt of the Reparations delegation to draft a scheme for the stabilisation of the mark's elusive value. The fall of the mark, while it has hit banking concerns hardest, has also involved a number of small speculators in comparatively heavy loss. When its value was in the early hundreds small sums representing savings were invested by people in almost every South of Ireland town and village. They now find themselves the owners of paper which, in actual value, is less than so much wrapping paper. Yet there are today many who are ready to speculate in marks, apparently fascinated by the fact that for fifty pounds one can become a mark millionaire. A correspondent suggests that the purchase of a couple of hundred pounds' worth of marks at present prices would constitute a handsome bequest for children coming of age in ten or a dozen years' time, when the mark has resumed a normal value. This naive confidence in the Germans to lay up a store of paper trouble against the future shows the innocence of finance which is always ready for exploitation.

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Discussions on the cost of living generally resolve themselves into denunciations of high prices. Even these are relative, according to a correspondent who complains that in one of the street fruit stands in Dublin he discovered how this doctrine of relativity applied. With a lady friend he approached a street fruit stall to make a small purchase, and found that because they had a comparatively prosperous appearance, he was charged considerably more than a poor purchaser of the same fruit immediately before him. The circumstances remind him of a story of Lord Aberdeen while Viceroy of Ireland. The Viceroy, while on a visit to the West, made a small purchase of eggs in a local shop, and on being charged an exorbitant price got indignant. "Are eggs so very scarce here?" he asked. "Not at all," replied the honest shopwoman, "but lord lieutenants are."

Carrigaloe, where fighting occurred the other day, is not a very formidable place in a gazeteer, but, like the Bells of Shandon, it is one of the places on "the pleasant waters of the River Lee," made famous by Father Prout. Many people, and even Corkonians, who can repeat his verses on Passage as "a Fashionable Irish Watering Place," in which Carrigaloe figures—

"There you may slip in to take a dipping,  
Foremost the shipping that at anchor ride,

Or in a wherry cross o'er the ferry  
To Carrigaloe, on the other side"—

are probably unaware that it was in one of his papers in "Frazer's Magazine" they first appeared as a song sung by the famous Cork painter, James Barry, the friend of Edmund Burke, and one of the most serious of men. As the two sat together at sunset on the Janiculum Hill overlooking Rome, and pondered on the wonderful panorama that lay beneath them. "Then anon," Prout writes, "the sportive spirit would rush upon Barry, and, strongly jarring on the harmony of local reminiscences, amid the awfulness of historic cogitation, would burst forth in a wild and grotesque song composed in honour of the maritime village where he had spent his young days."

The butter buttons referred to in this column reminds a correspondent of the Tongue fields, where a button manufactory flourished fifty years ago, with water-power from the River Poddle. This stream, which rises in the Dublin Mountains, is divided by a stone structure in the shape of a tongue at Kimmage. Portion of the water is there diverted down Harold's Cross, while the other section proceeds by Dolphin's Barn, Marrowbone lane, Pimlico, Blackplitts, and into the Liffey, near Grattan Bridge. In the 18th century the Donville family had rights over this water. Their relative, Lord Santry, was about to be hanged for murder when they threatened to cut off this water supply from Dublin if their kinsman was so badly treated. So Lord Santry was not hanged.

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The letter in the Freeman from Mr. Crawford Hartnell describing what Father Conefrey, O.C., has done for the people of Killoe, Co. Longford, by establishing linen-spinning amongst them, reminds a Northern correspondent of a somewhat similar industry being founded, also by the local Catholic curate, in the little town of Portaferry, Co. Down, about twenty years ago, and of how it grew, through the instrumentality of a Belfast firm, into a big local enterprise. Father J. Kelly, noticing that a large number of the young girls had to leave the town and neighbourhood in search of employment, conceived the idea of introducing an industry he had seen, as a boy, being carried on at Banbridge in another part of the county—hem-stitching and "flowering" of pocket handkerchiefs, pillow cases, and the like, by machinery instead of by hand, as a few of the women of the neighbourhood had been wont to practise it. He raised a couple of hundred pounds on his own security and started with a few machines. The venture did well, and more machines were added by degrees. Father Kelly, after some years, was removed to another parish, and, after a time, a Belfast linen firm took the work over, built a large factory, and laid down an electric plant to drive the machines and light the building. To-day well up to a hundred young girls of the locality are employed in it at good wages. In addition, the firm has been able, by increasing their electric power, to light the town and private houses, down to the poorest fishermen's and labourers' cottages, with electric light at a remarkably cheap figure.

#### DIE-HARDS IGNORE B. AND T. OFFICER

Our London correspondent writes:—  
Major-General Prescott-Decie, who as an officer of the Black and Tans gained notoriety in the South of Ireland, is ambitious of obtaining a seat at Westminster. He had been before the Putney constituency for some months, but it is now stated in the "Morning Post"—which gave him so much of its space in attacks upon Ireland—that he "has not been officially adopted" by the Die-Hards.