

Notwithstanding meteorological the outlook towards the end of June considerably improved. July brought an agreeable surprise in the bulk and of the hay crop which was secured in the country. This large output showing the very meagre results of the year. The heat of July extended till the middle of August, and then the weather deteriorated, till at the end of the month it was entirely broken up. There was a steady lowering of the temperature in the north, the result being that, except in the northern parts of Britain, the harvesting of the hay crop was suspended, and considerable work was done to grain. Through October and into November, the weather was dry and warm, so that the growth of grass and root crops was prolonged to a much later date than in previous years, and great economy was rendered possible in the consumption of dry fodder by stock. In the north, so entirely did the autumn seem to itself to farmers' requirements that so much progress was made with tillage crops of all kinds, and much work was done that is commonly not commenced till the wintering days begin again to appear. The sowing was carried through without a hitch, and was finished at a date which for the north constitutes a record in the experience of the majority of British farmers. The statistics of Great Britain bring to the fact that a check has been given to the movement, which has been going on for many years, of increasing the area under grass, and contracting the area under the plough. The returns for 1897 show that the total area of permanent grass is 48,978 acres less than in the previous year. To this it also be added an increase of 19 acres as temporary grass land intended to be broken up in rotation, and a decrease of over a hundred thousand acres under the crops. The area under wheat is the lowest recorded since 1894, and as a result of an unusually fine sowing season of the present year, it is considered highly probable that the 1898 area for the United Kingdom will not exceed two million acres, and thus attain a level it had not reached for five years. As for Ireland, the area under potatoes is at a low level—or, at least, the lowest recorded for many years. The season generally proved adverse to the crop, and the yield was less than that of either of the two preceding years. Disease was widely prevalent except where spraying was adopted in good time, but even where there was no disease complaints of small tubers were common. To what an extent the cultivation of the potato crop has diminished in Ireland may be seen from the fact that, whilst Ireland had over a million acres under the crop in 1897, it is estimated that in 1898 it will not exceed half a million.

Meeting of the farmers and agriculturists of Ballinagarde and the surrounding districts was held in the large hall of the ancestral residence of Mr F A Croker, for the purpose of hearing an address from Mr Bourne, representing the Agricultural Organization Society, Dublin, with the view of having a co-operative creamery established at Ballinagarde. Mr John Finucane, M.P., occupied the chair, and amongst those present were—Mr F A Croker and Mrs Croker, Rev Mr Luther, Rev Father Kennedy, P.P. Fedamore; Mr James Greene-Barry, J.P., Mr J B Barrington, J.P.; Mr John Russell, junr; Mr Jer Shine, Dr Connolly, as well as a full attendance of the most influential agriculturalists of the neighbourhood. After Mr Bourne's address the project was fully discussed, and finally a large provisional committee was appointed to solicit the practical aid of the farmers in the different districts, for the purpose of establishing a creamery on the co-operative principle, the committee to meet on the 17th of January, 1898, at Mr Croker's residence. (Full report in our next issue).

DEATH OF MRS HARTIGAN, CLOONAGH.

We regret to announce the death of Mrs Hartigan, wife of Mr P Hartigan, J.P., and mother of Mr Francis Hartigan, C.E., Cloonagh, Rathkeale, which took place on Monday evening. Mrs Hartigan was attacked with paralysis on Sunday evening, from which she did not recover. The deceased lady was held in affectionate regard by the people of Rathkeale and the neighbourhood, and particularly by the poor, to whom she had always extended charity and kindness. At the meeting of the Rathkeale Guardians yesterday it was decided to adjourn the business, and a resolution expressing deep regret at her death, and sincere sympathy with her husband and family, was unanimously passed. The funeral took place yesterday afternoon, and was of extremely large proportions, being representative of the people of Rathkeale, and the principal residents for many miles around.

THE OYSTER FISHING ON THE SHANNON.

Our Glin correspondent writes—I regret to state that the oyster fishing in the lower Shannon is a complete failure this year. In the large expanse of water from Tarbert to Foynes there is but a solitary craft engaged in dredging the different beds. In other years quite a small fleet was profitably employed at the business. The loss to the fishermen, both in Clare, Kerry, and Limerick, is very great, and it is to be hoped that an inquiry in their interests will be instituted by the Fishery Commissioners as to the cause of the decline of this important industry, which is felt by persons of experience to be preventible.

A DISTINGUISHED KERRYMAN.

Surgeon-General W R Rice has had the Jubilee Medal for long and distinguished service just conferred upon him by the Queen. Surgeon-General Rice belongs to an old Kerry family, and studied and took his degrees at the Queen's College, Cork, where he got the medal and some valuable exhibitions. He spent the greater part of his professional career in India, and was Surgeon-General under the Government of India for five years, from which service he retired with a good service pension and with the rank of Surgeon-Major-General and C.S.I.

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S HOSPITAL FUND.

The Prince of Wales, after consultation with the council of his Royal Highness's Hospital Fund for London, has decided to distribute the funds of his hospital for 1897.

mirrors reflected the animated and picturesque throng who engaged in the mazy waltz or lively Lancers. There was also, it should be stated, a very great variety of Indian drapery, as well as many-coloured flags and banners, the whole forming a delightful and ensemble. The stage, which was converted into a supper room, was approachable by two flights of steps laid down in crimson cloth, and at each side a drummer boy was stationed. Notwithstanding the numerous company present the arrangements at the supper tables left nothing to be desired, everyone being served with despatch. The tables, which "groaned" under the weight of good things and delicacies of all kinds, were laid out in the most sumptuous manner by Mr R M Mahon, of Thomas street, by whom the catering was done in his usual faultless style, and won for him unstinted praise all round. In the back ground of this department was the painting of old Limerick, which formed so conspicuous a place at "Garryowen" and "Phonond" fetes, while running along the top of the proscenium was a bar of light which brilliantly lit up the surroundings. Reverting again to the ballroom, it need scarcely be said that ample seating accommodation was found in the dress circle, which was always well filled by ladies and gentlemen, who wished to partake of a dance or two, and gaze from this excellent point of vantage on the romantic scene below, for a Fancy Dress Ball takes one altogether beyond the surroundings of an ordinary dance. The fancy dresses were fairly numerous, and, undoubtedly very diversified, both as regards originality of design and the characters represented. For instance, we had a formidable-looking Indian Chief, in full war-paint, in close and friendly companionship with a clown "dressed up to the nines," with his quaint Alpine-shaped hat perched on his head at a particular angle that looked rather risky so far as "fixity of tenure" was concerned. There was a Back Woodsman and Tommy Atkins chumming it, and we had such like gentlemen dancing with a fair partner who, as her dress betokened, represented a different part of the world: she might be an Italian or Swiss peasant, or from the "Land of the Rising Sun," or she might represent the rank and beau of fashion as it existed in our own realms a century ago. This great diversity and quaintness of dress gave to the scene a peculiar piquancy and added a lot to the spectacular effect. Dancing commenced about 9.30, and during the entire night, and till something like four o'clock yesterday morning, it was kept up with unceasing vigour. This was only to be expected, with splendid floor and the following delightful programme, played in the Dress Circle by the band of the Royal Irish Regiment, under the baton of Mr Chandler:—

- 1 Valse..... Love's Dreamland
- 2 Polka..... Chic
- 3 Lancers..... Old Guard
- 4 Valse..... Mia Cara
- 5 Polka..... See Me Dance
- 6 Valse..... Distant Shore
- 7 Lancers..... Trial by Jury
- 8 Barn Dance..... Pop Cor
- 9 Valse..... In Old Madrid
- 10 Lancers..... Mikad

SUPPER DANCES.

- 1 Valse..... Yours Sincerely
- 2 Polka..... Bonne Bouche
- 3 Valse..... Geisha
- 11 Valse..... Myosot
- 12 Galop..... Always Joyful
- 13 Valse..... Jeunesse Dou
- 14 Polka..... Toujours Gallar
- 15 Washington Post..... Origine
- 16 Valse..... Whisper and I shall Hee
- 17 Valse..... Svenga
- 18 Polka..... River of Yea
- 19 Valse..... Edinburg
- 20 Galop..... John Pe

It may be added that the apartments at either side of the box office were luxuriously furnished as sitting out rooms, and these and the decorations generally were carried out by Messrs T Cañock, and McCarthy and Sons. The committee of the Ball were as follows:—The M