

# THE GREAT WHITE FAIR IN DUBLIN

HOW THERE HAS ARISEN ON THE SITE OF THE OLD DONNYBROOK FAIR  
A GREAT EXHIBITION AS TYPICAL OF THE NEW IRELAND AS THE FORMER  
FESTIVAL WAS OF THE IRELAND OF THE PAST

By BRAM STOKER

THE great white city which has arisen as if by magic in Herbert Park, Dublin, is in itself a revelation to British eyes. There have been many exhibitions in the United Kingdom since the days when the Crystal Palace stood in Hyde Park, but never a one has been able to boast such architectural uniformity, such general fairness of outline. In other countries they may do these things better, but the British builder learns new tricks slowly, and the secrets of massive palaces of seeming white marble, which are built almost in a night and as speedily taken away, are

only now becoming familiar to him. It is safe, therefore, to predict that when his Majesty the King visits the Dublin Exhibition during the coming summer, he will find an outlook which for brilliancy and beauty has never before been equalled in these isles. Given a clear sky of Irish blue and a soft summer sun, one could well imagine oneself in the heart of Italy, or even in the still more luminous atmosphere of the Orient.

As is usually the case in most undertakings of this character, there has been a great deal of controversy and recrimination in the course of its completion, but it is sincerely to be hoped that after the gates of the great Fair are open on May 4 by the Lord-Lieutenant in full state, all bitterness will pass away, and that there will remain full opportunity for a general expression of Irish pride in an object so worthy to evoke it. These gleaming mansions, green lawns, and brilliant flower-beds, standing on the borders of a blue lake, crossed by beautiful bridges, are such as to make glad the heart of every artistic, sentimental Irishman. It is a far cry from this glittering vista to the latter days of the Donnybrook Fair, which forty years ago was accustomed to make this neighbourhood ill-famed throughout the world.

The contrast is perhaps characteristic of the Ireland of yesterday and the Ireland to-day, which this Exhibition, and, in a smaller way, this number of *THE WORLD'S WORK*, seeks to celebrate. The days of Donnybrook Fair and all it meant, the days of the stage Irishman and the stagey Irish play, of Fenianism and landlordism are rapidly passing away, if they have not even now come to an end. Perhaps there has been some joy of living and much humour lost with the passing of the country fair, its merry-makings, its rows,



A PICTURESQUE CORNER



A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CENTRAL PALACE

and its shillalahs ; but there has come in its place a strenuous, industrious spirit, spreading its revivifying influence so rapidly over the old country as to be worth more than even historical bitterness and sentimental joys. Patrick's problem is fast finding its solution in divers ways. Perhaps the many visitors to Ireland whom this Exhibition will attract will be astonished to find here, and outside in the country at large, what wonderful things are being done to start the island upon a new career of industrial progress, aside and beyond affairs political. And if this Exhibition does nothing else than call the attention of the world to this new spirit abroad in an old land, it will serve its purpose well.

#### Introducing Pat to Himself

But there are other purposes which it will serve—for instance, it will introduce Patrick to his new self.

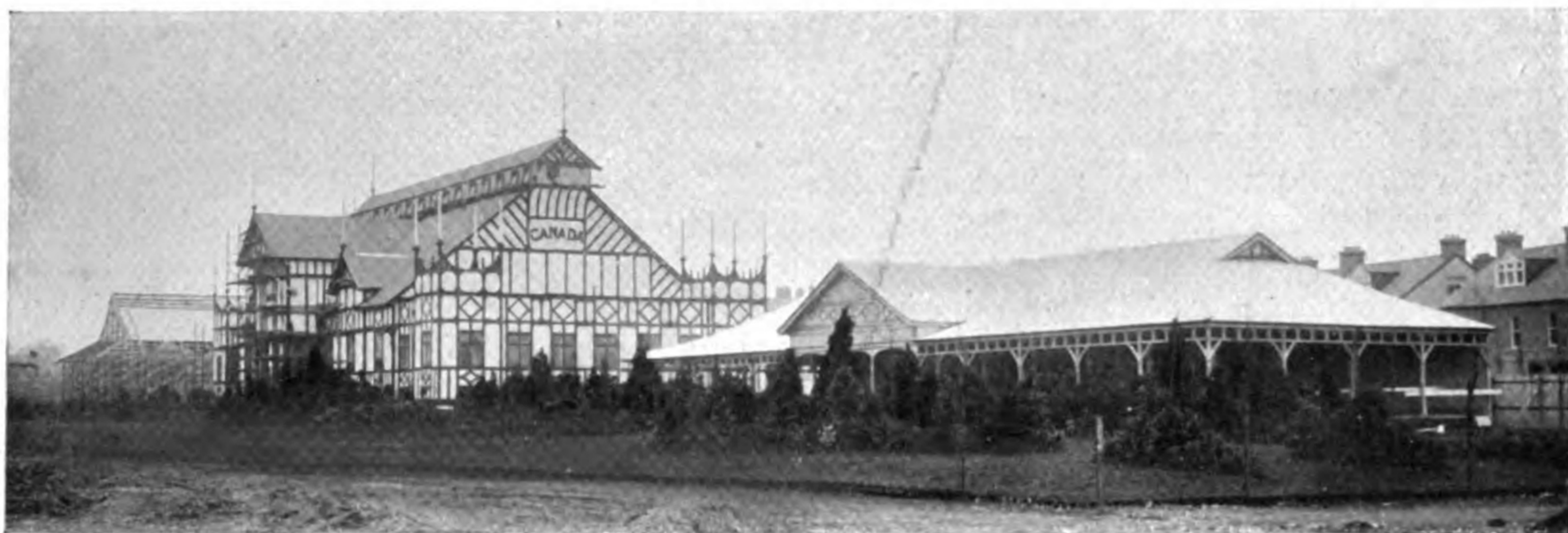
If the value to a country of an International Exhibition is to be measured by the educational facilities thus afforded to its people, there is probably no section of the British dominion which could take from it so much benefit as Ireland can. The geographical position of the island, which stands as the outpost on the Western sea ; its isolation, emphasised by the neglect of many centuries ; and, from the nature of its natural products, a logical lack of transport facilities—all have tended to create for its inhabitants a personal ignorance both of itself and of the outside world. So, too, the great world beyond has become aware of its identity only through external causes ; to only a comparative few of the great bulk of international travellers is the country personally known. And so it is that the functions of such an Exhibition are to make known the whole to each of its parts, with the added opportunity of



THE PAVILION RESTAURANT



DETAILS OF BRIDGE AND DOME, SHOWING USE OF ELECTRIC LIGHT FOR ILLUMINATIONS



THE COLONIAL AVENUE

studying by comparison the conditions, resources and progression of other countries, and of making the country and its work known to other peoples who on such an occasion visit it for purposes of pleasure or business. Inasmuch as Ireland is naturally an agricultural country, the lives of its people are, as a rule, spent in narrow areas. A scattered population can never have the same facilities of travel as one which is mainly grouped in great centres. Again, in aggregations of necessity small, art has little chance for display or development; the lessons of the imagination have few expansive opportunities, and a whole world from which art workers may be drawn remains barren. Through the duration of an exhibition, large numbers of persons of all classes must attend. Special efforts in the way of transport are made, and inducements of all kinds offered; the very existence of such an undertaking has a concentrating effect; a national centripetal force is generated to which an extensive and varied public willingly yield themselves.

Ireland has certain natural advantages which have largely yet to be exploited. In agriculture, all growths can flourish which depend on soft air, moisture, and deep soil. The surrounding seas abound with fish of every kind. The mineral possibilities are as yet but little known; but there are vast areas of fuel-bog, sufficient alone for national wealth.

The newcomers captains of industry need not undertake their fresh responsibilities heavy-hearted. Already there are proofs of the industry and suitability of the people in manufactures, where such

have been undertaken. Indeed, the complete stranger who investigates may be surprised to find here already some individual industrial undertakings, the largest and most successful of their kind in the world.

From the very start, therefore, the originators and organisers of this International Exhibition have—and must have—felt themselves justified in their undertaking. They had, of course, to contend with an initial difficulty consequent on the poverty of the country. For, after all, Ireland is poor, and its population, possibly from political causes, has dwindled in the last sixty years to a little over one-half of its former number.

#### **A New and Better Donnybrook**

To any one who has known Dublin in or before the fifties, the change made in this locality during the interval is amazing. At that period it was more or less of an uninviting waste on the ragged edge of an unimportant stream,



CENTRAL ARCH AND CONCERT-HALL

best known as the site of Donnybrook Fair. Founded more than seven hundred years ago, in the time of King John, it fulfilled for some centuries a useful economic function; but in time it degenerated into a place of such rowdiness that its very name became a synonym for misconduct. I remember an expression which I often heard used of it in my own youth: "The Devil would be in Hell only for Donnybrook." At last it became so notorious an evil that it had to be abolished.

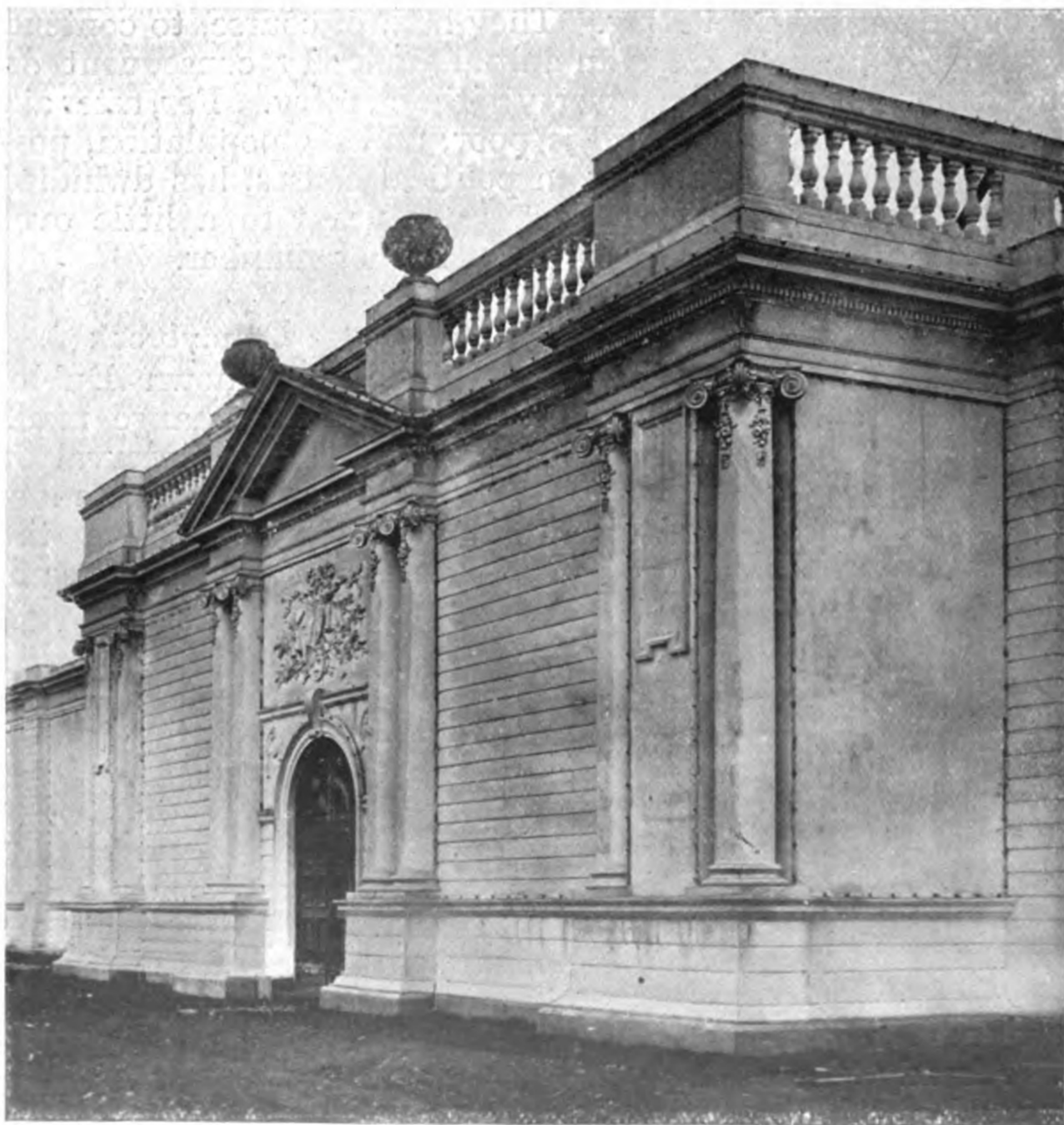
Now on the spot where it flourished has risen, for the purposes of national and international good, a "Lordly Pleasure House," organised and arranged for the display of the direct and indirect results of learning, science and art, and illustrative of that progress which follows in their wake. More than fifty acres have been devoted to this beneficent and ennobling work; laid out in such a way as to afford in the simplest manner a

proper classification of the various exhibits.

### Snow-white Domes and Pinnacles

Dublin stands at the head of a magnificent estuary shut in to the south by an amphitheatre of mountains, and as the main entrance of the Exhibition faces north, the visitor approaching or within the grounds sees the great range of snowy domes and pinnacles standing out stark against the rising hills and towering into a sky of Irish blue—a blue which an American enthusiast poetically compared with "a colleen's eyes"! The entrance building is a huge one, containing a great Concert Hall capable of seating over two thousand people, and a series of Dining and Refreshment rooms sufficient to entertain a vast number of persons. The long corridor through this building, which is in the nature of a bridge, for it crosses a street, is decorated with views of Irish scenery, and allows of a number of minor

exhibits and of those little kiosks and stalls for the sale of souvenirs which are so popular with the larger class of visitors. The southern side of this section faces a great garden where, in the centre of the grounds, is the "Grand Central Palace," a huge building in the style of Italian Renaissance from which stand out four great wings. The centre of this forms a great hall large enough to contain even the greatest concourse of visitors likely to attend at any one time; it is of a diameter of over two hundred feet. It is topped by a dome nearly a hundred feet across and a hundred and fifty feet high.



A CORNER OF THE ART GALLERY



THE CANADIAN BUILDING

The architecture of this great hall is simple, but it is fine and chaste and of very considerable artistic merit. The extending wings are well proportioned and adapted to their purpose. A pretty effect with a national bearing is produced by the ends of the supporting beams of the roof, which are so shaped as to represent *en masse* a cluster of pendent shamrocks.

#### Art and Industry

At the north-western side of the grounds stands the "Palace of Industries." The section is mainly technical. The "Palace of Mechanical Arts" is an immense building nearly a thousand feet long, occupying more than a third of the entire length of the grounds. At the eastern end of it are power-producing appliances of different kinds. Here, doing active service, are facsimiles of the furnaces of the battleship *Dreadnought*. Here, too, are the great engines and dynamos for producing the lighting of the Exhibition. The other sections of this great building are those of machinery in motion, engineering, and transportation.

At the eastern end of the building, and facing the lake, is the "Palace of the Fine Arts," a building of chaste severity in the Florentine style. In its five halls, occupying a floorage of some thirty-five thousand feet, are to be found works of art of all nations, but naturally the most important section is that devoted to Irish art.

This section consists of three categories of works of art: (a) Those selected from works sent by their authors in response to a general invitation made to "Artists of Irish Birth or Extraction." (b) Works

sent by living Irish artists of distinction in response to individual requests. These include fine specimens of the works of John Lavery, Charles Shannon, J. J. Shannon, William Orpen, George Henry. There is also a selection from the works of the late Walter Osborne. (c) A number of fine examples of the work of the artists of the older Irish school. Some of these have been lent by the National Gallery and some by the Tate Gallery.

A section is devoted to Sculpture, and grouped sections are illustrative of the work of Irish engravers and deceased Irish miniature-painters.

There is, in addition, a very extensive and representative collection of works by British and Foreign Painters and Sculptors, among which are hosts of works whose titles, as well as the names of the painters, are household words.

#### The Great Dominion

One of the most striking features of the Exhibition is the great pavilion erected by the Canadian Government. In it are exhibited not only specimens of Canadian



MR. JAMES SHANKS

Chief Executive Officer, to whose untiring efforts the completion of the Exhibition is chiefly due

productions—minerals, cereals, and industries—but a grouping of stuffed specimens of the fauna of the Dominion.

One section is devoted to “side shows” of various kinds, a huge water-chute, the largest yet built in this country, a switch-back railway, a helter-skelter tower, and many other forms of more or less active amusement such as are loved by the ordinary visitor.

The general appearance of the grounds is very attractive. Wherever it has been possible, the trees already existing have been allowed to remain, and many others, of course of lesser growth, have been added. A lake has been dug out, and forms a pleasing feature of the general view, and will doubtless prove an attractive feature of the pleasure section of the Exhibition.



## AN EXHIBITION IN THE MAKING

THE BIRTH OF AN IDEA—IRELAND'S  
INVITATION TO THE NATIONS—THE  
CRAFT OF THE EXHIBITION BUILDER  
AND WHAT HE HAS LEARNT BY  
EXPERIENCE

By FRANK BONNETT

**I**RELAND “At Home!” This, surely, is the keynote of the exhibition in Herbert Park. It is the graceful and characteristically hearty invitation of New Ireland to the nations, to visit her on her native soil. For while she has spread out her treasures before the eyes of the world, and has displayed in the most attractive form the perfection of those industries for which she has long been famous, this exhibition is much more than a mere “show” or “fair.” It is a sign of the times, an indication that Ireland demands such recognition as has never yet been given her as an industrial nation; desires, too, to sweep away once for all the ignorance and prejudice, not only of her nearest neighbours, but of the rest of the world.

### Ireland for the Irish

“Ireland for the Irish,” *i.e.*, the hope that Irish trade may receive a powerful impetus by means of the display of the country's capabilities before the whole world was, of course, a primary object of the promoters of the exhibition; but at

the same time Ireland opens wide her doors in welcome to her competitors in all parts of the globe, and devoutly hopes that this give-and-take arrangement will end in the mutual advantage both of herself and of her visitors. There is something to be learned on both sides, and if Ireland herself derives the greater benefit from the bargain, no one will regret it. A great, and it is to be hoped lasting, revival of Irish industries should follow this, the most important of Ireland's commercial ventures in the whole of her long and chequered career.

### The Birth of an Idea

The idea of this world-wide invitation found expression four years ago, at a meeting of the Irish Industrial Conference. As sometimes happens, the meeting—held in Dublin on April 15, 1903—was not convened for the purpose with which it was ultimately concerned, and with which its time was chiefly occupied, but with the proposal to establish an Institute of Commerce for Ireland.