

CORK AND KINSALE AND WEST CORK RAILWAYS.

SATURDAY, the 16th inst., was marked by two events of great importance to the western part of the county of Cork—the opening for traffic of the Kinsale Junction Railway, and the cutting of the first turf on the projected line from Bandon to Skibbereen. We take from the local papers some account of these interesting events, both of which are illustrated in our present Number.

A special train started from the Cork terminus of the Cork and Bandon Railway at half-past ten a.m. It consisted of a large number of carriages, containing the persons who had accepted the invitation of the directors to celebrate the event by their presence and approval. The train, having proceeded by the usual Cork and Bandon line of railway as far as Ballinhassig, entered on the new Kinsale branch, which, with the exception of one or two short cuttings, affords a view on each side of the fine country which it traverses. As the train rolled into the terminus at Kinsale a charming birdseye view of the town and harbour was obtained. The line terminates upon the brow of the hill, about north-east of the town, and from that point the town was seen picturesquely nestled in the deep valley formed by the surrounding hills. Beyond the town and towards the left lay the placid waters of the pretty harbour, while the opposite slope was studded with beautiful villas, and, looking from the eminence on which the terminus stands, the whole presented the aspect of a beautiful picture seen through the lens of a camera. The arrival of the train was hailed with cheers by a large crowd of inhabitants of the town, who had turned out to welcome the excursionists, while with the cheering mingled the strains of the band of the South Cork Artillery Militia. Headed by this band, the party proceeded to the military barracks where a review of the fine body of men composing the artillery, commanded by Major Longfield, was held before Major-General Bloomfield. The guests next entered the town of Kinsale, the appearance of which as seen in the full sunlight from the hill on which the railway terminus and the military barracks are situated was charming. At the Royal George Hotel, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion, an excellent dejeuner was provided. Addresses having been delivered by Lieutenant-Colonel Beamish (vice-chairman of the company), Sir John Arnott, and Sir Cusack Roney, the visitors went to witness the laying the foundation-stone of the new Kinsale Hotel, by Mrs. Wood, wife of the indefatigable secretary to the company.

At the conclusion of this ceremony the visitors returned to the railway terminus, where the special train was awaiting them, and at a quarter to three o'clock they started for Bandon, where the principal event of the day was to come off. The arrival of the train at the Bandon terminus was hailed with loud cheers by immense crowds of people assembled along the sides of the line

and in the approaches to the station. Here, as in Kinsale, the whole population seemed to have turned out to celebrate the occasion, and everything wore a holiday aspect. The station-house was decorated with evergreens and various ornamental devices. Within it were drawn up the bands of the 11th Regiment and the West Cork Infantry, which, as the visitors stepped upon the platform, burst out with "See, the Conquering Hero Comes!" In addition to the immense crowds of pedestrians, the road to the spot where the sod was to be cut was thronged by all descriptions of vehicles, and a more animated scene than that presented could not be imagined. The ceremony of turning the first turf was performed in a field close to Lord Bandon's park gate, some distance outside the town. About five o'clock Lord and Lady Carbery arrived on the ground, accompanied by Sir C. P. Roney, Mr. Somerville, Mr. H. W. O'Donovan, Mr. Swanton, Mr. A. Newman, Mr. W. Newman, and Mr. Holland, directors of the railway; the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Bernard, Lady Harriet Bernard, Admiral Sir L. Jones, General Bloomfield, Colonel Beamish, Sir J. Arnott, and others. A handsome silver spade, engraved, and a wheelbarrow of polished oak, manufactured for the occasion by Rowell and James, of London, were presented to his Lordship by the contractors of the rail way, Messrs. Wheatly, Kirk, and Co., of Manchester, and, the sod having been previously prepared, his Lordship raised it and wheeled it off amidst loud cheer, the band playing "God Save the Queen," Sir Cusack Roney then announced the formal commencement of the line, and stated that the really practical part of the works would be begun in ten or twelve days. This announcement was received with loud cheers. Sir Cusack Roney added that he expected to have ten miles of the line open within twelve months, and he congratulated the district upon the work so happily inaugurated that day. The ceremony was then declared at an end, and the vast crowds which had assembled on the ground returned to town. Before closing our notice of this part of the day's proceedings we should add a few facts in reference to the proposed line. It is intended to construct the railway in three sections—the first undertaking being that between Bandon and Ballineen. The works on this section will be commenced simultaneously at both ends, and it is expected that they will be completed in less than twelve months. In that case it is contemplated to carry the line up to Dunmanway within the year—thus opening seventeen miles instead of ten. It is also in contemplation to at once make a short section out from Skibbereen, so that no time may be lost in completing the whole line between the two terminal points.

On the return of the visitors from the inauguration of the works of the railway a sumptuous dejeuner was served in the Town Hall,

Bandon. Over two hundred ladies and gentlemen sat down to table. The chair was occupied by Sir C. P. Roney; and the vice-chairs were filled by Colonel Beamish, Sir John Arnott, M.P., and Mr. Joseph Holland.

[Taken from *Illustrated London News*, Vol. XLIII, 1863, p.599]

