

STRIKES AND BUILDING ITEMS IN CORK.

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.

BUILDING business, which for some time past has been at a stand-still in this city and neighbourhood, appears to be showing signs of revival; perhaps the strongest evidence of this is the fact that workmen's wages are on the increase. About the beginning of March, masons sought and obtained an advance of three shillings per week, being an increase of 12½ per cent. on the wages previously paid them. The stonecutters also have endeavoured to get their wages advanced; this has been opposed by the builders, who are members of the local association, on the ground that they (the stonecutters) having been placed on the same footing as that now occupied by the masons, their demand was excessive, and not justified by the state of trade and existing engagements. A strike of the stonecutters followed; many of them have found employment in stone-yards, and the firm of Cockburn and Sons have come to terms with them on the works at St. Finn Bar's. The only works, as far as I can learn, that have been stopped by the strike are those at St. Vincent's, Sundays-Well; the contractor is Mr. M'Mullen.

During the month the carpenters have followed the example set by the other trades, and are now out on strike; they are looking for an advance of three shillings per week. The builders are willing to pay them this increase, but require that the *hour* system should be adopted, which is objected to by the men, so that all the workshops of members of the Builders' Association are without carpenters, as I write. Many of the hands have found employment in brewers and other establishments, but numbers of them are idle, and I expect they must shortly submit to the terms proposed by the builders, which are in fact so reasonable and right that it is to be hoped the association will endeavour to act in this case with the unanimity of purpose which will secure the object in view.

It is to be hoped that all these little differences will be amicably arranged before I write again; and it is a matter of serious consequence that they should be, for I believe there is a bright prospect of active business in store for us during this year. The Fenian excitement has completely subsided, and people are beginning to laugh at their own fears and folly of the past couple of years. There is not a town of its size in the three kingdoms in which architectural improvement has been so much neglected, particularly as regards shops and insurance offices—in fact to the banks alone belongs the credit of having done anything to improve the city, which is so beautifully situated, and possesses all the natural capabilities of becoming the first town in Ireland, a position which it must certainly yet attain, if the people are but true to their own interests.

The principal works in progress here now are the enlarging of the County Gaol, for which Mr. Wm. Atkins is the architect, and Mr. Richard Evans the contractor. These are being pushed on with great vigor, under the superintendence of Mr. George Read, clerk of the works. The new chapel is ready for the roof; it is a pretty building, and it is really a pity that it should be hidden amongst the walls of a prison.

The Cathedral of St. Finn Bar is beginning to show itself, over the high hoarding surrounding it, in all its massive grandeur. The Messrs. Cockburn and Sons, builders, of Dublin, are sparing no effort to force on the works; but it must necessarily be a long time before an approach to completion can be calculated on.

I have heard of several contemplated new works, but it would be premature yet to name them.

DONERAILE.—Tenders have been advertised for school buildings and residence for Christian Brothers in this town. The contract has not yet been declared, but will be immediately, and the works are to be proceeded with at once. The outlay will be about £3,000.