

Home Rule for Ireland

The following letter appeared in the Christchurch 'Press' of Friday last:—

Sir,—While human nature is what it is, prone to evil and false judgments and unreasoning prejudices, we must be prepared to expect differences of opinion upon all vital questions affecting the public interest. This, if it serve no other purpose, at least secures us from the danger of sinking into a state of dull monotony of thought and action that would be at once disastrous to all human progress and endeavor. On this ground, then, I claim the right to differ with you now, as I have often differed with you before, on the Home Rule question. In your leader of December 19th you seem to me to be singularly, and, may I say, unpardonably defective in logic. "While we are always glad," you say, "to welcome public men from the Home Country, and to listen to their views on public questions, we do not agree that the people of this Colony should be asked to express an opinion on Home politics, especially upon matters with which we have no immediate concern." Now, sir, if Ireland be, as you say it is, an integral part of the United Kingdom, and if New Zealand be, as it undoubtedly is, an integral part of the British Empire, we have a right,

An Unqualified Right,

to give an expression of our opinion upon any great question affecting the interests of the Mother Country, or any part of it, else why did the late Mr. Seddon send out ten contingents to the Transvaal to assist England in suppressing the Boers? Further, what object would any public man have in coming to this Colony to be welcomed even by the editor of the 'Press,' if he dare not try to elicit from the people whom he addresses an expression of their opinion? If you are glad to welcome him, as you say you are, and glad to listen to his views on public questions, what obliquity of vision is it that prevents you from seeing it is to get an expression of your opinion and to enlist your sympathy in his cause that he travels 1200 miles to speak to you? No one on earth to-day even suggests that Ireland is well governed, and if not, why not? And no one denies the right to a member of the Imperial Parliament to state a case for his constituency in any part of the Empire, if by doing so he hopes to obtain some advantage for them. If the permission to state a case be accorded to him, he has a right to expect an expression of opinion upon it, and in the case under discussion that opinion has been given not only by hundreds and thousands, but by millions of people who have heard Mr. Devlin tell of his country's wrongs.

You say that Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom. Then, if it be so, why in the name of justice and fair play is it the only spot on the wide Empire of England where one can never get out of sight of poverty and all the concomitants of poverty, idleness, thriftlessness, dirt and discontent? Why is it the only spot in the Empire where ruin and decay and desolation stare you in the face everywhere you go, and meet you at every turn of the road? Why is it the only place in the Empire from which its people are flying as from a plague spot, or why is it the only place in the Empire where hope is dead and every incentive to industry is crushed out of men's hearts utterly? If it be an integral part of the Empire, why does it not share in the Empire's prosperity? What does the Empire's extension, the success of its arms on land or sea, the increase of its wealth, the expansion of its commerce matter to Ireland? Not two rows of pins; her only interest in these things is the amount of taxation they heap upon her shoulders. To say, therefore, that that unfortunate country is an integral part of the United Kingdom is an unmitigated clap-net. However, as my opinion goes only for what it is worth, I beg, sir, to submit to your readers a few facts which are as indefensible and unjustifiable as

They are Monstrous and Astounding.

Let me first say that Ireland has 300,000 less of a population at the present time than Scotland. In the London 'Daily Chronicle,' of January 20th, 1906, Mr. Arnold White, writing on 'Crimeless Ireland,' tells us that in 1903 there were 2114 criminal convictions in Scotland, while during the same year in Ireland there were 1169, but that in Ireland the cost of the police force was for that period £1,569,214, while in Scotland it amounted only to £529,196. Now, if Ireland be an integral part of the United Kingdom, why, may I ask, does it cost over a million

and a half of money to 'run in' about one thousand or more criminals, while it cost Scotland but half the money to run in double the number? According to Mr. White Ireland is twice as crimeless and ten times as moral as Scotland and yet the law costs and the Land Commission in Ireland total £555,229, while the same business is done for Scotland at a cost of £259,373. The census of 1903 gives the illegitimacy rate of Scotland as being about ten times that of Ireland. Again, the Local Government Board of Ireland costs £79,875, while the Local Government Board of Scotland manages to get through its work at a cost of £15,825. In fine, Ireland with 300,000 less of a population than Scotland, and with but one half its crime, has to pay two millions a year more than that country for the conduct of its legal business. But serious as these financial grievances are, they are not the only one nor the greatest from which Ireland suffers to-day. In a country of which it may be safely affirmed that the large majority of the people are Catholics, every position of trust and emolument is given to Protestants, and from all the higher positions in the country Catholics are religiously excluded. The entire machinery of the law is in the hands of Protestants, in fact everything that is worth having in the country is in the possession of the dominant party. Yet in the face of this we are told that Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom! No, sir, the system of Government in Ireland is rotten, root and branch. It is a disgrace to England; it is the foulest stain upon her escutcheon; it is the one sweltering sore upon the body politic, it is the vilest thing outside the Empire of the Czar, and the sooner we get rid of it and try some other remedy with long suffering and patient Ireland, the better for all concerned.—Yours, etc.,

M. NOLAN.

TEMUKA

(From our own correspondent.)

December 23.

The third conversazione in aid of the furnishing of the new presbytery took place in the Volunteer Hall on Monday evening last. The first part of the entertainment was opened by a piano selection by Miss Spring, after which the following programme was gone through:—Recitation, Mr. F. D. O'Connell; song, 'Doreen,' Mrs. Skinner; song, 'The anvil,' Mr. V. Coira; song, 'The skipper,' Mr. Jordan (encore, 'The land of the Leal'); song, 'Kerry dances,' Mrs. Lynch (encore, 'The harp that once'); Highland reel, Misses Lynch and Brosnahan (encore, Highland fling); song, 'Anchored,' Mr. McDonald; song, 'Mona,' Mr. Milsom (encore, 'The good-bye at the door'); song, 'Why did they sell Killarney?' Miss Beri (encore, 'Bidel'a'); song, 'I may or may not,' Miss Spring (encore, 'Little Irish girl'); song, 'Killarney,' Mrs. Lynch; song, 'Father O'Flynn,' Mr. Jordan. The second part consisted of a drama, 'The Jealous Husband,' which was staged by members of the Catholic Dramatic Club.

On Friday afternoon (says the 'Tuapeka Times') we were afforded the privilege of attending a private song and pianoforte recital given by Miss Mary Woods, L.R.A.M. (Royal Academy of Music, London), who has just recently returned to her home in Lawrence after spending two years at the Royal Academy, London. The items chosen for the recital consisted of selections from the classical masters, Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin, Bach, etc., and were varied so as to exhibit the performer's technique and artistic powers in rendering the works of the great composers. As a pianoforte performer Miss Woods was consistently successful in New Zealand. She was ever ambitious to study music in London under the great professors. Fortunately she was successful (after her preliminary examination at the London Academy) in getting a place under the celebrated German Professor, Oscar Beringer. In singing she was privileged to be a pupil of the world-renowned Professor Alberto Randegger, whom she recognises as a marvellous teacher. Contrasting Miss Woods' performance on Friday with her musical abilities, good as they were, before she left, one cannot but be struck with the wonderful improvement that has taken place both in her vocalisation and pianoforte playing. Her technique and touch are simply wonderful, and musical critics who have had the pleasure of hearing her play and sing freely express themselves astonished at the marvellous improvement she has accomplished in so short a period.