

The Irish Question.

In the May number of an English review appears an article from the pen of Mr T. W. Russell, under the heading 'What are we to do with Ireland?'

Writing as an Irish Unionist, 'who saw from the beginning that the Home Rulers were the chief objection to Home Rule, but who all along recognised the mistakes, and even the hopelessness of English Government in Ireland,' Mr Russell expresses unfeigned regret that Lord Rosebery did not part with Gladstone in 1886 rather than now, in which case he thinks Gladstone would not have proceeded upon the lines of an Irish Parliament, but would have conciliated Irish opinion by a less heroic measure than the Bill for the Better Government of Ireland, and the Liberal Party would have gone forward in its path, and justified its title as a great instrument of human progress. Therefore, fairly enough, he saddles Lord Rosebery with a share of responsibility for the recent fortunes of the Liberal Party. However, practical-minded Unionist as he is, Mr Russell sees no good in crying over spilt milk.

What is the Actual Situation To-day?

Mr Russell believes the events of 1886 have resulted in two great calamities. Up to 1895 the Liberal Unionists preserved much of their old-time Liberalism. But with the passing of the Workmen's Compensation Act and the Irish Local Government Act, they disappeared as a political force. The Tories had gone as far as they would go. Mr Chamberlain had received his thirty pieces of silver, and the Tories said to him, 'Thus far shalt thou come and no further.' Then came the South African trouble, and the union with Toryism was complete. 'That was the first great calamity that followed from Mr Gladstone's forward step.' A second, and even a greater calamity was caused by the utter collapse of the Liberal party. The Irish Party, too, did not escape the prevailing demoralisation, but they have once more pulled themselves together. For all practical purposes in and out of Parliament the Liberal Unionist is a Tory—only more so. Mr Russell states that 'if Irish landlordism, the drink traffic, and unrestricted betting are to form part of the Unionist policy, there is part of the country—the province of Ulster—which will not tamely submit to such a degradation of politics.' The Liberals are broken and distracted. The Irish, on the contrary, are solid again. 'So long, however,' observes Mr Russell, 'as the Irish Party maintains its position, so long will the Irish question command attention. The calamitous war in South Africa will some day or other come to an end. There, under the Southern Cross, some kind of a settlement, dependent, probably, upon 50,000 English bayonets, will be patched up. But the Irish spectre will remain. New rules will not lay it at Westminster. Coercion will not destroy it in Ireland. Neither Mr Balfour's goodwill nor Mr Chamberlain's spirit will raze the written trouble from the Celtic brain. It will baffle us at every step. Eighty, or even fifty, Irish members at Westminster, hating English government and disloyal to English institutions, backed by their own people at home and throughout the world, will to a certainty cripple every movement in Parliament, and will go far to paralyse parliamentary institutions.'

The member for South Tyrone instanced the recent outburst between Mr Dillon and Mr Chamberlain, for which he declares Mr Chamberlain to have been

Primarily Responsible.

'This feeling of hate,' he says, 'the tension which exists between the representatives of the two nations, is the great and most dangerous fact in the politics of to-day. Can this feeling be obliterated or even allayed? This is a question worth asking, and which I propose to endeavor to answer. Now, first of all, as regards the National feeling, all parties must surely recognise by this time that it cannot be stamped out. Having outlived persecution and the sword, it is not to be wiped out by any parliamentary methods. Why should anyone seek to destroy it? Why should it not be used for the highest and noblest of purposes? If he were vested with responsibilities and charged with the duty of dealing with Irish affairs, Mr Russell outlined the course he would take: 'I should frankly and openly confer with the leaders of the Irish people. I should tell them, what indeed they already know, that in the present temper of the British public their demand for an Irish Legislature, be it a just or an unjust demand, was impossible of realisation. I should ask them, not indeed to relinquish it, because that would be to insult them, to set aside for the time being, and without prejudice, in order that they might co-operate in securing great and clamant reforms for the Irish people. In spite of the prejudice against programmes, I should say to the Irish leaders: 'Here are questions which everyone agrees must sooner or later be taken up and dealt with—(a) the land, (b) higher education, (c) Dublin Castle, (d) private bill procedure, (e) licensing reform, and the government of Ireland, with due regard to the ideas and wishes of the Irish people.' I should promise frank and hearty co-operation in securing these ends. When these great reforms had been achieved it would be time enough to raise afresh the National issue. My contention would be that with these reforms accomplished the demand for Home Rule would have lost much, if not the whole, of its force. The argument from neglect and grievance would be wholly gone. But in any case Home Rule would then have lost almost all its terrors, and the question would be dealt with on its merits. There would have been called into existence something like

A Homogeneous People.'

The member for South Tyrone would solve the education question by the endowment of a college under Catholic control. In the reform of Dublin Castle he would abolish the office of Lord Lieutenant, and have a member of the Royal Family resident in Ireland instead, with an Irish Secretary of State, having a seat in the

Cabinet, as supreme governor of the country; and he would clear the public offices of the ascendancy faction. He would relegate Irish Private Bills to Dublin, and establish a new licensing authority to control the drink traffic. He adds that a handful of broken and bankrupt landlords should not be allowed to stand in the way of England's reconciliation with Ireland. As to the reception by the Irish Party of his programme Mr Russell is confident 'There cannot,' he says, 'be a doubt they they would loyally co-operate with any party in Parliament to achieve these and similar results. The settlement need not be a party settlement. The whole question, in my opinion, is one for frank conference and discussion. It may be ignored to the definite loss of Ireland and the still greater detriment of England. But although English statesmen may choose to blunder on, Ireland and the Irish people will remain true to their country and their country's needs.' He defines his own position with clear words. He is a Liberal, as in 1886, minus Home Rule. He is a convinced Unionist minus the evil that shelters behind the flag of the Union. The conclusion of his very eloquent commentary on current politics reads thus:—'So far as the House of Commons is concerned I must plough my own furrow. But it is not a lonely one. Light is breaking in the North of Ireland. The hard, dry earth is cracking and breaking up even there. A new spirit is abroad. Men are everywhere beginning to realise that Irish landlordism has used them for its own purposes. The revolt is in progress, and we shall see, I am persuaded, in the not distant future a genuinely United Ireland for sane and sober objects. A man can well afford to face hatred, scoffing, and abuse, to live down calumny and misrepresentation for such a consummation.'

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

June 28.

The Ven. Archdeacon Devoy is at present in the Hawke's Bay district. He will be absent about a fortnight.

The Wairarapa Mounted Rifles, a Native corps, attended the services held at St. Patrick's Church, Masterton, on Thursday last.

Mrs Grace sent a donation of two guineas towards procuring some extras on Thursday last for the patients of Mother Aubert's Home for Incurables.

The weekly meeting of the Literary and Debating Society of the Marist Brothers' Old Boys' Association was held as usual on Monday evening last. The programme consisted of recitations.

The Professors of St. Patrick's College have left for their holidays. Rev. Father Moloney has gone South and Rev. Fathers Taylor and Tymons to Wairoa and Palmerston North respectively.

The sum of £180 was realised by the social held recently in aid of the Sisters of Compassion.

The entertainment of the Catholic children took place at their respective schools on Thursday. The Marist Brothers and the Sisters took charge of the proceedings. The priests of the different parishes visited the schools during the time they were entertained and were thoroughly satisfied that the children had spent a most enjoyable time. The children of St. Joseph's Orphanage were entertained at a sumptuous tea by Mrs T. G. McCarthy. Three hearty cheers for their host were given by the children at the conclusion of the proceedings.

Masses were celebrated at the churches on Thursday for the speedy recovery of the King. At the Church of the Sacred Heart Rev. Father Costello was the celebrant. His Grace the Archbishop and the resident priests were present in the sanctuary. Among the congregation were Sir Joseph and Lady Ward and the Hon. Dr. and Mrs. Grace. In addressing the congregation the Very Rev. Father Lewis expressed the sorrow all felt on hearing of the King's illness and asked the congregation to pray for his Majesty's recovery. At St. Mary of the Angels' Mass was celebrated by Rev. Father Galerne.

NAPIER.

(From an occasional correspondent.)

June 24th.

After last Mass on Sunday a general meeting of the parishioners was held. Rev. Father Goggan, S.M., presided. The rev. chairman laid before the congregation the requirements of the Spit end of the parish, and also the necessity of painting St. Patrick's Church. He stated that a site had been purchased for a church at the Spit. The cost of the land was £125, and in less than a week the parishioners collected that sum, and had £50 besides towards the church fund. The statement was greeted with applause, and the whole congregation unanimously agreed to try and have both works completed before the return of their beloved pastor, Dean Grogan. This they think will be the most fitting testimonial that they could present him with. A strong and energetic committee was formed. Collectors are to be appointed, and everything augurs towards a near commencement of the works.

The ladies of the parish gave an agreeable surprise to the Rev. W. D. Goggan, S.M., on the eve of the feast of his patron, St. William. They invited him to an 'at home.' After the assembly had partaken of the many good things Mrs. E. Brophy, president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, wished the rev. gentleman a happy feast and said many kind things of his priestly zeal whilst amongst them. Miss Flannery then made a presentation of a handsome rug. The Rev. Father suitably and feelingly replied.