

Current Topics

Those German Atrocities

Apparently the suggestion made some time ago by Lord Selborne and commented upon in these columns—that the charges of barbarism and cruelty against the Germans in Belgium and France should be inquired into by a competent and judicial British committee—has been acted upon; and the announcement is now made that a British investigation has been in progress and that as a result a report may be expected in due course. We learn from the *Catholic Times* that the evidence collected is such as has been available in England during the past three or four months, and it has been examined by a number of members of the English Bar. The committee which has been appointed to consider the materials consists of Viscount Bryce, who is the chairman; Sir Frederick Pollock, Sir Edward Clarke, Sir Alfred Hopkinson, Professor H. A. L. Fisher, and Mr. Harold Cox. No one will question that these are men who are eminently qualified to perform the work of sifting the accusations which have been so freely made. It is announced that they will accept no statement that is not thoroughly reliable; and that charges will not be brought forward in the report unless they have been proved up to the hilt. That is as it ought to be. If the horrible stories of German atrocities are inventions or exaggerations, the fact ought to be made known, and the German Army so far vindicated; if on the other hand they are true, the world ought to be made aware of the exact nature of the proposition which the Allies are up against.

Progress by Inches

To the lay mind the ever-recurring announcements that the Allies 'have progressed several hundred yards in the Argonne,' or have captured a farm house or a field that was in possession of the enemy, are apt to become monotonous; and they become monotonous because they appear to the layman as trivial and unimportant and devoid of any real practical significance. According to the experts, however, the fact is far otherwise. The bearing of these apparently trifling incidents on the military situation and the very real value of this continued progress by instalments are explained by 'Eye-Witness,' who reports to the British public on behalf of the Government. After describing, in a recent communication to the English press, the nature of the fortified entrenchments by which the German lines are protected, he adds: 'These measures of defence are only such as are to be expected from troops who are well trained and have ample resources and time. And there are, of course, ways in which these can be overcome. But, where these methods are applied, the rate of advance is necessarily slow, and, when it is reported in laconic terms that ground has been gained at a certain point, topographically the gain may amount to only a few yards. Tactically, on the other hand, the progress implied by even such a small step forward may be important, for a trench, a cluster of trenches, the edge of a wood, a building, a village, or a knoll, may have been reached, the possession of which will facilitate further operations.' A contributor to the *London Chronicle* stresses the same point. 'The German front from the sea to Switzerland,' he writes, 'consists probably of the finest system of fortifications known in history. Every hundred yards of trench that is taken, every small advance, however insignificant it may appear in the bulletin of any particular day, represents months of labor and ingenuity lost by the Germans and a serious breach in their defensive armor.'

'In the Name of Humanity'

The tide of public indignation against President Wilson and his Administration for their complicity in the hideous Mexican outrages is gradually rising in America—as well it might. The amazing thing to us is that American Catholics have been so patient; it would not have surprised us if, after the repeated failure

of written protests, the Catholic manhood of America had demonstrated in some such way as would have forced President Wilson to face the situation. That Catholics are getting tired of the President's fair speeches is made clear by an outspoken utterance of the *Sacred Heart Review*, which raises its voice strongly against his policy of procrastination and do-nothing. 'The *Review* has no politics,' says our contemporary, 'but it can not help feeling that the men in Washington who are ignoring protests against our Government's espousal of the Constitutionalists' cause in Mexico must have a very low estimate of the citizens of Catholic faith who form such a large portion of the Democracy of this country. Mr. Wilson may congratulate himself, and pat himself on the back because this country is at peace with all the world; but this country, as represented by his administration is directly responsible for the awful crimes which have been committed in Mexico, and the memory of these, like the ghost of Banquo, will not down; it will not be hidden by fine phrases. The Catholic citizens see it plainly, and they must keep on protesting until the Government retraces its false step and makes such reparation as is in its power for the wrongs it has done in leaguering itself with blood-stained bandits.'

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The indignation is not confined to the Catholic citizens, but is now beginning to crystallize and take definite shape amongst non-Catholics also. 'In the name of humanity,' the Boston Central Labor Union adopted resolutions at its meeting on Sunday, December 20, calling upon President Wilson and the members of both branches of Congress to take the necessary action to put an end for all time to the outrages and the indignities being heaped upon religious and defenceless women and girls by the brutal brigands of the armed military and factional mobs in Mexico.

The resolutions, which were adopted unanimously, were as follows:

'Whereas, The information received through the press and other sources from Mexico relative to the outrages by the armed military upon defenceless women and young girls fills us with horror and makes our blood boil within us at the indignities the religious and peaceful residents of that country have been subjected to;

'Whereas, Every liberty-loving citizen, no matter what color, nationality or creed, holds as the highest and most valued possession the right to worship his Creator according to his conscience, and any and every effort to restrict such worship calls for a vehement protest;

'Whereas, The entering of convents by the mad and infuriated mobs under guise of the military, the outraging of the inmates, whose lives were dedicated to Almighty God in working for His people, the sacrilegious orgy which attended the pillaging of the places of worship, the insults and assaults heaped upon the clergy and their followers are so harrowing and brutal that, even in the most callous person, every instinct of manhood is aroused and calls for a vehement protest against these barbarities; therefore be it

'Resolved, That we, in meeting assembled, respectfully call upon President Woodrow Wilson to protest, in the name of humanity and freedom of worship, against such outrages and indignities; and be it further

'Resolved, That we call upon our members of Congress to take this matter up with President Wilson to the end that such outrages will cease for all time.'

The Boston Labor Union deserves credit for thus initiating an agitation which, it may be hoped, may shame President Wilson into doing his duty.

More 'Tipperarys'

It was inevitable that 'Tipperary'—with its silly words but haunting and now all-pervading melody—should be freely parodied. The French have, of course, their own version; and a very neat version it is. Scotland, too, has caught the infection; and if its 'Tipperary' lines are somewhat guttural, they are at least pithy and expressive. It appears that a Presbyterian