

THE IRISH QUESTION

A correspondent writes:—I have not seen Æ's memo (there is only one George Russell), but a cart-load of memos would not convince me that the conference or convention being held in Dublin will do anything to settle the affairs of Ireland. The whole business (I am not thinking of Æ.) is a very clever trick of Lloyd George's.

You have a body of men from Ulster who out of their gracious mercy are now willing to let the people outside their territory and supposed sphere of influence, govern themselves. They are unwilling to come under the government of an All Ireland Parliament themselves, and they have been informed time and again by British Ministers and Prime Ministers that they will not be forced into any such settlement. On the other hand you have a body of delegates representing the main body of the people of the country who (outside the trucksters of the "Party") will not endure any kind of partition—temporary or eternal. How can there be any possibility of an agreement between these contending forces. To me it seems there is no *via media*; neither party will compromise.

It is pretty notorious that it is the state of public opinion in the United States that is fixing on the Lloyd Georgian settlements! Last year's effort might have been dumped upon an innocent people if Lord Lansdowne (without intention) had not mercifully saved them. As the people are now wide awake it seems that any arrangement involving partition should stand a poor chance. No one, you may be sure, is better prepared for a failure than David Lloyd George. In the event of a disagreement he can say to America: "We have been willing to let these people govern themselves and even to let them choose what they want in the way of a government. They can't agree amongst themselves. You can't blame us if we sit still and do nothing." In this way Mr. George can eat his cake and have it. England can still pose as the champion of small nationalities and keep Ireland in subjection—with a standing army 150,000 strong.

To explain the election of Count Plunkett and Mr. De Valera I need scarcely point out to you that the hopes of the so-called Sinn Fein party are built in a great measure on the Peace Conference that must of necessity come at the close of the war. Arthur Griffith, the literary protagonist of Sinn Feinism and (in the opinion of Sir Henry Dalziel) one of the ablest journalists in Europe, is working strongly in Ireland for representation at the conference. If the great body of the people demand it, he thinks, the settlement of the question of Ireland, like that of Belgium, Servia, etc., will be in the hands not of England but of all the belligerent Powers who would pay little heed to England's selfish fears. The peddling settlement in the Home Rule Act would give way to one of real national autonomy. It is for these reasons the Sinn Fein party refused to take part in the present conference or convention. It is for these reasons also they are trying to drive the Irish Party out of political power in Ireland. The voters who are supporting them are in the main no more Sinn Feiners than the voters who support the Socialists at the German Parliamentary elections are Socialists. They are men who are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs for which they blame Mr. Redmond and his followers.

Before I leave this question let me quote you a paragraph from a recent number of the *Leader* (Dublin), and portion of an article by the eminent scholar, Father Dineen. The paragraph from the *Leader* says: "Whoever arrange the terms [of peace] of this we may be sure, that such a catastrophic war cannot leave things as they were. Everywhere the necessity will be felt for a peace based on permanent foundations. If Ireland at the conclusion of hostilities is still a menace

to peace, I think Europe and America will feel compelled to consider our case in the general re-adjustment. There are indications that in England this is felt to be the correct view."

Father Dineen, Ph.D., M.R.I.A., says (I give a free translation from the Gaelic):—"There is no doubt that the question of Ireland will be before the Peace Conference. The Germans will do their best to show that Britain is not really on the side of weak States, for if she were she would have done justice to the weak State before her doors. The people of the United States, too, will have something to say on the same question. On that account I do not know what Lloyd George—if he is still Premier—can answer, if Ireland is still unsettled and unsatisfied." You know the writer of this is no politician.

It is evident that the people of Ireland look to the Peace Conference with some hope. As the Irish Party are acting as the obedient servants of Lloyd George, they are losing seats as opportunity offers at the hands of people with higher ideals who trust them no longer.

Personally, I would be glad if a scheme for "full self-government" for all Ireland would be adopted by the Convention. Adoption by a majority, however, would mean nothing if the Orangemen, or even a section of them, constituted the minority. In any case as the Convention is not really representative, a decent minority of any kind would render its conclusions useless for good.

Gisborne

(From our own correspondent.)

July 31.

The treasurer of the local branch of the N.Z. Catholic Federation notified on Sunday that over £12 had been received as a result of the penny collection for the Catholic field service fund.

The Rev. Father Furlong, of Devonport, who had been spending a brief period here for health purposes, returned to Auckland on Monday, July 16. He has the best wishes of very many friends for a speedy and permanent recovery.

The fortnightly social evenings arranged by the Children of Mary, Hibernian Society, and others, are being continued successfully. Mrs. F. Hale donated two valuable prizes for the euchre tournament, and also received donations towards the socials from Mesdames Doherty and G. O'Neill, Messrs. H. Martin, F. Hale, T. Donovan, and E. Williams. Mr. J. J. Martin, winner of the euchre prize at the last social, handed it back for the next social, with a promise to donate an additional prize also.

St. Mary's Schoolroom was crowded last Sunday evening, after devotions, when the Catholics of Gisborne met to enter an emphatic protest against the conscription of our priests and Brothers. The Rev. Father Lane presided and spoke strongly on the present position. The following resolution was passed by acclamation—"The Catholics of Gisborne emphatically protest against, and will resist by every constitutional means, the conscription of priests and Brothers as being inimical to the interests of religion in this Dominion." Copies of the resolution have been forwarded to the Prime Minister, Sir J. G. Ward, Sir James Carroll (Member for the district), and Hon. W. D. S. MacDonald (Member for Bay of Plenty). A meeting on the same subject was also held by the parishioners of Ormond at Makauri on Sunday, when a similar resolution was passed and copies forward to the Prime Minister and local Members of Parliament.

To endure misfortune is greater than to die.—Caesar.

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