

Current Topics

A Franciscan Kaiser

If one were so credulous as to believe all the stories told by some ministers of untruth who are very active in New Zealand at present, the Kaiser is not only a Jesuit in disguise, but he also masquerades as a Franciscan or a Dominican when the humor seizes him. The Kaiser did *not* perform the ceremony of opening a church in the Holy Land, dressed as a Franciscan. The facts are that he was present at the consecration of a Protestant church in Palestine in 1898, and that by special arrangement with the Sultan he was able to secure a plot of ground which he presented to the German Catholics.

Another Brilliant Effort

We know now that the Kaiser is a Jesuit—or was it a Franciscan he was last? We are reconciled to the fact that Monsignor Gerlach did not call on Carson when he escaped from Rome to Ballyhooley. But the latest revelation leaves us weak and limp from laughter. We give the news as we find it in the Roman letter to the *Catholic Bulletin*:—

"It has just transpired that a report has been circulated and an effort made to create an impression in high ecclesiastical circles in Rome that the Maynooth mission to China was set on foot and is being organised chiefly for the purpose of enabling a number of Irish priests to shirk volunteering as chaplains for service in the British Army and Navy." What shall we do when Elliott hears of that? We suppose, too, that Archbishop Walsh and Cardinal Logue were purposely born over seventy years ago in order to escape being called upon to serve as chaplains!

The Holy Father and Peace

In his prison in the Vatican the Pope is quietly striving for the relief of those who are suffering through the war which he is powerless to stop. And his failure to bring about peace causes him unspeakable anguish of soul as he sees the sorrows and hardships accumulate year after year. In a letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State he still expresses the hope "that the long-wished-for day is not far distant, when all men, the children of the same Heavenly Father, will once again come to regard each other as brethren. . . . May the Divine Redeemer in the infinite goodness of His Heart, grant that counsels of mildness will prevail in the minds of those in power, and that, conscious of their individual responsibilities before God and man, they will no longer resist the voice of the peoples for peace." For beyond a doubt the peoples do want peace. The war is not their war, but theirs is the suffering of it. May it be that when peace does come the power of rulers to plunge their subjects into wars for which they have no will shall have gone for ever.

More About U-Boats

Writing in *The Saturday Evening Post*, Henry Reuterdaahl gives us some information about the German submarines which emphasises the fact that Americans look on them as a grave menace still. He says that the latest U-boats are 1800 tons, that they have heavily armoured conning-towers, which mount five low velocity five inch guns, that they are capable of a very high surface speed, and can travel 250 miles submerged. They operate from Heligoland as a base, and go round the north of Scotland to the scene of operations, some 100 miles south of the Irish coast. The run out and home is a matter of 2700 miles. This takes them nine days, and twelve are spent searching for ships when they reach the field of their activities. He does not minimise the danger as some writers are too much inclined to do. He says, "We must strip to the waist; we must help. . . . The skull and cross-bones still floats free." In view of the fact that the tonnage sunk during the first six months of the year is estimated at

3,000,000 tons, excluding neutrals, the solution of the difficulty is still to be found.

Lowering the Age Limit

It seems to be anticipated that the Government will propose to lower the age limit for military service from twenty to nineteen, and already there are signs that such a proceeding will encounter determined opposition. It is first of all a confession of weakness. It is tantamount to admitting that the manhood of the country has been taxed to its utmost limits and that we have to call on immature boys to keep the ranks filled. It is objectionable also on physical grounds, for it is well known that only strong men whose frames are set and hardened can stand the severe strain of the life in the trenches: indeed, from that point of view we think it is certain that if circumstances permitted, the age should rather be increased than lowered. The moral aspect of the proposal is also serious. Parents have now no illusions as to the awful temptations to which the men are exposed on active service, and they, and all who have the welfare of the young at heart will be very reluctant to agree to a measure which will plunge boys, in many cases, totally inexperienced, into the danger of moral shipwreck. Already protests are raised in various parts of the Dominion against such a measure, which seems as unnecessary as it is unwise.

In the East

It now appears that the Russian Government protested against the action of the Allies both with regard to their intervention in Greece and their methods in substituting one king for another, the Provisional Government holding that nations have the right to choose their own rulers. We must remember that the Greek Church is powerful in Russia, and that its influence would not be lightly thrown in the scale against Greece. However, M. Venezilos is now engaged in reorganising the army, and he announces that he hopes to have 200,000 men ready to take the field in three months. The arrival of Italian reinforcements before Gaza is reported. General Allenby, who distinguished himself in France, has taken command of the British forces. Aeroplanes have been busy bombing the Turkish headquarters around Jerusalem, and it is stated that an aeroplane attack on the fleet at Constantinople had satisfactory results. The Turks have apparently been strongly reinforced in Mesopotamia, and the presence of General von Mackensen has been reported. Mr. Stead points out that as von Mackensen has never gone anywhere without something unpleasant happening immediately after, an enemy offensive may be expected shortly in Asia Minor. In fact, the retiring of the Russians suggests that the advance has begun.

Monsignor Cattaneo

This week we are able, through the kindness of a friend in Rome, to present our readers with a picture of the new Apostolic Delegate to Australia and New Zealand. Advices from Rome state that his Eminence Cardinal Serafini, Prefect of the Propaganda, has consecrated Monsignor Cattaneo titular Archbishop of Palmyra. By invitation of the new Archbishop, his Lordship Dr. Cleary, Bishop of Auckland, was one of the consecrating prelates. Monsignor Cattaneo succeeded Monsignor Bonzano, the present Delegate to the United States, as Rector of the great missionary college of the Propaganda within the walls of which students of every nation on earth are prepared for the priesthood. Monsignor Bonzano's appointment to the responsible position he holds in America has been crowned with success, and from Rome we hear that Australasia has reason to feel proud that his successor is to be her new Delegate. Our late Delegate now holds an office which practically corresponds to that of foreign secretary for the Holy See. Writing of him in the *Catholic Bulletin*, "Scottus" says: "Providence has afforded him many opportunities—in Italy, America, and Aus-