

Current Topics

To Hell or to Connacht

The Christchurch *Sun*, in an article on Mr. Semple, reveals to those who can read between the lines what the editor thinks of Sinn Fein. Cromwell would send all the turbulent Irish to Hell or to Connacht. The *Sun* proposes sending Mr. Semple to Clare. He will be safer there than in Orange Belfast where Catholic prisoners were recently treated with a cruelty from which the Hun might learn much. And if Mr. Semple is a Sinn Feiner he will be glad to know that Cardinal Logue and Archbishop Walsh voted for Sinn Feiners at the elections. What Mr. Semple said to make the *Sun* angry does not concern us here. The sneer of the journalist at the cause approved by Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishops Walsh and Mannix is sufficient evidence of the worth of his opinions. Whether or no Mr. Semple is a Sinn Feiner we do not know; but if he is he is in such good company that the praise or blame of the *Sun* need not worry him.

The Religion of General Foch

Moses, who was the meekest of men, lost his temper when he came down from the Mount and saw his people making fools of themselves. They were his own people, and that made all the difference. There is always a certain amount of pain in seeing the folly of others, but when one has a sense of humor it is possible to derive some amusement from it when the fools are the "others." We have had no little entertainment of this kind during the war, and now that the war is over we are likely to have more. Just for the sake of keeping things going the humorists are at present engaged in solemnly pretending that they believe that General Foch is a good dour Presbyterian. We are told that Colonel Beattie, a chaplain in the Canadian forces, said so, and that it is hardly credible that he would say so before a body of intelligent men if the statement were not true. Having a little experience of the sort of things said to "intelligent" men, even by professors, especially about the Twelfth of July, we refuse to take it as certain that the great Marshal is "an elder in the Presbyterian Church of France." And we are not much moved by the comment made by a certain paper which on its first issue distinguished itself by defaming a Catholic chaplain. The *Southland Times* is inclined to think that the religious convictions of Foch are not a thing to get excited about, and concludes that "Protestants and Catholics may well claim Marshal Foch as a noble example of our common Christian faith." "Common Christian faith" is good. Christian faith is not a common thing; it is one and indivisible, and found only in the true Church, to which Marshal Foch belongs. We have heard a member of the French Mission speak of the Marshal's visits to the Blessed Sacrament; and we have yet to learn that there is anything in common with Protestants in that. However, we will be told that people like Colonel Beattie know more about the General than his own friends; and at any rate those who want to believe that he does will go on doing so. Recently a sapient Scot was heard supporting the Presbyterian claim with philological reasons: Foch is but a corruption of Fox, and what could be clearer! As a correspondent points out, we may now look for an announcement by a Colonel who will tell an intelligent body of men that Cardinal Mercier has become a Presbyterian parson, and that we may hear any day of a service at which he will expound the Confession of Faith, while Marshal Foch will take round the plate! And "what will the editor of the *Tablet* say to that?" One thing is certain: he will not admire the veracity of the P.P.A. organs a bit more than he does at present.

Sinn Fein

We have taken some time here to realise that the Irish people did not change when they helped Sinn Fein to its sweeping victory at the polls. What did change was the Irish Party which had degenerated into a tail of an English Party, false to all its old traditions, blind to all the lessons of history. It may be said, and we say it ourselves, that John Redmond's trust was that of a gentleman dealing with unprincipled tricksters, and we may pity the man for the great mistake he made, but the truth remains that he and his followers sold Ireland and were false to the principles they had learned from Parnell. If further evidence be needed let us read the following words, spoken by Redmond and Dillon before they were contaminated and corrupted by English influence:—

"We tell England plainly that we believe this land is ours. We believe that England has no moral right to oppress Ireland or to rule Ireland at all. 'Ireland for the Irish' is our motto, and the consummation of all our hopes is, in one word, to drive English rule, sooner or later, bag and baggage out of this country."—John Redmond, December 8, 1895.

"I say to you, men of Tipperary, that we would be untrue to our country, and untrue to those who begot us, if we rested content until every vestige of English rule was swept from the fair face of Ireland."—John Dillon at New Tipperary, 1888.

"We specifically deny the moral or legal and constitutional right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland."—John Redmond at Dublin, August 9, 1902.

"This fight will go on, and we tell England frankly that we to-day hate her rule just as bitterly as our forefathers did. We tell her that we are as much rebels to her rule to-day as our forefathers were in 1798."—John Redmond at New Ross, June 23, 1907.

What do these words stand for but the principles of Sinn Fein—the principles of Parnell and Grattan? What do they prove if not that the Sinn Feiners and the people behind them are true to Ireland and the Party false? It needed the Easter Rising and the sacrifice of heroic men to awaken Ireland and to convince the whole nation that it was being betrayed and misled. William O'Brien, Tim Healy, Dr. O'Dwyer, and Archbishop Walsh saw it long ago; but the people did not see it until the light kindled by patriots made it clear for ever.

Cardinal Mercier and Ireland

Those good people who were busily engaged in practising Prussianism on Irish men and women for years past, and then holding up their hands in hypocritical horror that the persecuted people were not ready to rush to be slaughtered for an ungrateful and unfaithful gang of tyrants, used to say, among other lies they told, that the Belgians and the Americans would turn their backs on Ireland because her sons did not believe the promises of men who never yet told the truth and never will tell it if they can help it. Well, we have seen how America falsified their prophecy and how mass-meetings were held all over the United States to protest against the brutal Prussianism of the English and Orange Huns who were responsible for such little peccadilloes as the murder of Sheehy-Skeffington and the persecution of his wife, not to mention also the maltreatment of the wife of poor Tom Kettle who died fighting for the pledge-breakers. Here now comes an opportunity for us to learn how Belgium regards the Irish question and whether she forgets—as the British forgot—that forty thousand Irishmen gave their lives in the ranks of the oppressors of their own country because they believed they were breaking her fetters as well as those of Poland and Belgium. In a letter to Cardinal Logue, Primate of All Ireland, Cardinal Mercier says:

"It is inconceivable that Ireland's right to self-determination and nationhood be not recognised by the free nations of the world at the Peace Conference.

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