

Your country, the most faithful and venerable daughter of the Church, deserves justice from all mankind, and must surely receive it. The Irish people are the oldest and purest nationality in Europe, and their noble adherence to faith and nationality the most glorious record in history."

There we have a splendid echo of the words of the American Cardinal who tells us that it was exactly because of her fidelity to faith and nationality the English oppressors persecuted Ireland and tried to exterminate her people by unspeakable tyranny, cruelty, and fraud; and there, too, we have, in vibrant words that no Irishman should forget, a magnificent proof of the manner in which the noble people of the Continent regard the heroic sufferings of the sons of the Gael, who are insulted and calumniated by the rulers who boast that they are fighting for justice and for the freedom of small nations. Cardinal Mercier has given them the lie. Because liberty is her birth-right, because it is right and just and a nation's divine gift, he claims it for Ireland; and his words are as strong a condemnation of British injustice and perfidy as have ever been written. When President Wilson was pulling England's chestnuts out of the fire we were told what a great man he was: when President Wilson demanded that right and justice should be the basis of the Peace Conference our press howled at him like a kennel of angry puppies. Now that Cardinal Mercier has raised his voice in direct appeal for the rights of Ireland will the champions of small nations attack him as they attack President Wilson, forgetful of the past, unmindful of their shame and their abasement? Does it matter much? Does one more somersault make any difference at this stage, when in spite of perjury and faked plots Sinn Fein has beaten John Bull to the ropes? And, by the way, what do those *seonini* and others who attacked us for our support of Sinn Fein think now when the Irish papers report that Cardinal Logue and Archbishop Walsh—the two Primates—voted for Sinn Fein candidates at the elections? Do we, or for that matter the cause of Sinn Fein, need further commendation? No matter: we suppose the infallible people who told us so often that we were wrong could not help it. Infallibility of the sort that springs from an ignorance so hopeless that it excludes from the imagination the possibility that other people know things is so common here that pity is the correct attitude towards it. We think of one well-paid official who ventured to lecture us on our policy and to tell us things about John Redmond whom we knew from childhood, and we wonder if he will now write an indignant letter to the Irish Hierarchy and protest against their foolishness. In New Ireland there will be no room for *seonini*; but we know some of that class who will develop wonderful agility when Ireland comes into her own: watching the cat jump will tickle their imitative faculties. Is it any wonder that the London *Daily News* calls on Englishmen to realise whither the persecution and the pledge-breaking are leading them: to see squarely the menace of the Irish situation, and "to use all their influence to avert the disaster to the world which this threatens"? The Conference is not yet over.

The Example of America

We have already referred to the whole-hearted manner in which the United States has taken up the cause of Ireland. The demands of mass-meetings in the great cities have been confirmed by Congress and the American Government has called on the champions of the Jugo-Slavs and the Poles to do common justice to the Irish people who have been persecuted by the British for centuries. It is more than an appeal to justice and honesty. It amounts to a threat. America is tired of the disgrace brought on the Allies by them who, while calling on men to fight for the right of self-determination, are denying it to the oldest nation in Europe, and America will not tolerate such hypocrisy. The words of Cardinal O'Connell could not be stronger:

"There is no legitimate length within Christian law to which I and every prelate and priest of America should not be glad and happy to go when the cry of the long-suffering children of the Gael comes to us, and when, as now, before the tribunal of the whole world, the sacred cause of justice to every nation is to be given a public hearing."

And he, speaking at that great concourse of free-men, was not afraid to stigmatise openly the bigots who are responsible for the crimes of England against the land of his fathers:

"It is because the people of Ireland have solemnly kept their sacred word, given to their great apostle, to be faithful to Peter's successor as they would be faithful to Christ, that they have felt the very dust of humiliation. Yes, let us say it frankly and openly, for it is the truth: it is the fidelity of Ireland to all that she holds most sacred which has been the chief cause of her suffering. Are we whose very lives are dedicated to the eternal principles for which Ireland has become a martyr among the nations, so bitten by mere worldly interests as to be mute in this day when all the world of national wrongs and of brutal might is summoned into court? God forbid! In God's name let us speak out fearlessly for God's cause, for the cause of justice to all, weak and strong, small and great, or let us forever be silent."

There, in the words of a great American, is a call for us. America has spoken; Canada has spoken; South Africa has spoken; Australia has spoken. We have allowed William Massey and his associates in the Government of New Zealand to put upon us the dark shame of silence when the cause of justice and truth demands that we should speak. Is it because we want to have a part in the crime committed against a small nation, or because we have no sense of honor and no idea of the meaning of pledges? Or is it because we have fallen so low here that we have not souls of our own, and that we care nothing so long as we can make money? We have good reason—more reason than any people of the world to-day—to ask ourselves these questions and to weigh well the words of the American Cardinal. There is a principle in law that silence gives consent when it is a duty to speak: it was our duty to speak, and still is, as much as it was the duty of those other freemen who believed that there should not be one law for British Prussians and another for German. And if we do not speak out now and at least protest we will go down to our graves under the shame and the dishonor in which our cowardly silence makes us participate. Ireland will win without us: but will that lessen our disgrace? Very rightly we may be told some day that when our Government kept silent, and by its silence approved of the Orange orgies in Ireland, we had no protest to make and were apparently satisfied. Perhaps we can bear to be told that: perhaps we are of the breed to whom scraps of paper mean nothing and who see nothing wrong in the fact that a notorious pledge-breaker is the Prime Minister of England. Well, if so, we are not of the race of those who suffered because they kept the faith of Patrick in spite of the Penal Laws; who were faithful when their priests were hunted by bloodhounds and their chapels burned down; we have nothing in common with the soldiers of Sarsfield who kept faith and sailed away, leaving the English to violate the Treaty of Limerick; nothing in common with all those men and women of the past and present to whom fidelity and truth were more than riches and the favors of kings. And if we have fallen to that level Ireland does not want us and will not have us. We know that there are among us some of that type—*seonini*, demoralised Irishmen, people who have sold their Celtic heritage for a mess of potage. They will do nothing for Ireland and Ireland can do without them. But there are others; and it is to them we appeal to make our voice heard in unison with the voices of the freemen of our race all over the world, and to protest against the Prussianism of that Government which called on us to fight for the very rights which it denies to our own kith and kin.