

COMMONWEALTH NOTES

NEW SOUTH WALES.

In the course of his address at the opening of St. Patrick's School-church, Bondi, on a recent Sunday afternoon, his Grace the Archbishop of Sydney referred to statements about cremation. "Cremation is anti-Catholic," said his Grace. "It is anti-religious. The Church allows it in time of warfare and epidemics. It is not to be taken as Christian burial, and the Church has decided that a Catholic who would order his body to be cremated, is guilty of sin, and will be deprived of Christian burial. In the laws of our Plenary Councils of Australia, there is a decree that any person who orders his body to be cremated is not to have Christian burial. It is now Canon Law. The body of a Christian is a sacred thing, and is to be put in sacred ground. An angel guards the grave and all have hope of resurrection. If you desecrate the cemetery, it is the same as a church. The Church claims the right of having cemeteries."

In replying to a vote of thanks for presiding on the same occasion, his Grace said he wished to publicly recommend the cause of returned soldiers. They had suffered and fought and died, and acted as most gallant soldiers, and now many of them are returning to Australian homes. "The priests tell me," his Grace continued, "that our Australian boys come home splendidly and religiously. I would be glad to get a lot of them together in a retreat, or, at all events, in a body. We are not indifferent to them. Let everybody be interested in regard to returned soldiers. Give them every help you can. Look on them with approval and gratitude, and that in itself will be some recompense."

At the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Sydney, continued on Saturday, March 22, a motion was carried representative of Irish-Australian sentiment in New South Wales to have the principle of self-determination immediately applied to Ireland. His Grace the Archbishop, the Most Rev. Dr. Kelly, who moved the motion, declared that Australia was regarded as a larger Ireland, and Ireland was true to the sacred cause of religion and nationality, though opinion was poisoned by statements that the Irish were lawless, would not do their duty at the front, and wanted a republic. De Valera had been called a felon. He (the Archbishop) had a letter from him—a manifestation of his mind and heart—showing that he would welcome such a Home Rule as we had here.

VICTORIA.

Despite the strenuous efforts made in certain quarters to bolster up the action of the superintendent (Dr. Wickens) and the matron (Miss McKinnell) in their fight against the expressed wish of the Health authorities to hand over the charge of the Exhibition Influenza Hospital to the Rev. Mother Rectress and her band of Sisters and Brothers, ample evidence is now to hand that there was every justification for the proposed change, in the interests of those who were the victims of the epidemic (says the *Tribune*). Repeated complaints in regard to the lack of proper administration in the hospital has necessitated some sort of inquiry on the part of the authorities, and the reports received by Dr. Robertson from the superintendent and matron are not only unsatisfactory, but are, in some instances, absolutely contradictory. For instance, in regard to the complaints that death-bed scenes are virtually public, we find the superintendent and the matron offering opposing opinions. The matron tells us that such statements are "absolutely untrue," while the superintendent asserts that such scenes are "absolutely unavoidable." Then we have Dr. Wickens telling us that the complaints that patients had to do for other patients what should have been done by the nursing or orderly staffs was "wholly nonsense," and he follows this up with the assertion: "Some patients have at times attempted to do things for others which had not been ordered, and that these patients had been told to desist." On the other hand, the matron, in her

report, suggests that had she been allowed to choose her own partly-trained nurses, things might have been different. Both the superintendent and the matron agree that the Exhibition Building was totally unfit for hospital purposes. If that was so, why was the building chosen? Surely attention should have at once been drawn to this fact by those who had taken the responsibility of management. One thing is quite certain—viz., that there has been lamentable bungling and inefficiency, and the sooner a searching inquiry is made into the affairs of the hospital the better it will be for all concerned.

QUEENSLAND.

At a recent notable gathering held under the auspices of the Queensland Irish Association, his Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Duhig, Archbishop of Brisbane, in responding to the toast of the Archbishop and clergy, said he had had the pleasure since becoming an Archbishop of doing something to revive Irish memories on this side of the water. He referred to the perpetuation of the names of Irish saints, such as St. Laurence O'Toole, St. Ita, and St. Brendan of Kerry, in schools and churches in Brisbane. Referring to the presence of Mr. Huxham and other Protestant members of Parliament, his Grace said that Ireland owed a debt of gratitude to her Protestant patriot sons. Ever since the struggle for freedom began in Ireland she had trusted her Protestant leaders and they had never failed her. From Robert Emmet to Charles Stewart Parnell, they had all proved staunch and true. He had often asked people how they would feel if tomorrow they were deprived of Home Rule in Queensland—how they would feel if our State Government and Parliament were taken from us, not to say our Federal Government. We should feel that we were in an intolerable position. It was utter hypocrisy to talk of giving the right of self-determination to small nations, and yet withhold it from a small nation that had fought for it longest and deserved it most. Today there was more than one Ireland—the Ireland at Home—to reckon with. There were the Irelands abroad—in America, Australia, and Canada. Those were the Irelands that never forgot. The eyes of the world were on Ireland and on President Wilson. It was most unfortunate that as Irishmen they had lost their faith in the British Government. There had not been a British Prime Minister since Gladstone and Campbell-Bannerman who had honestly tried to keep faith with Ireland. The Home Rule Act had been shelved, and would remain shelved until the Peace Conference, he hoped, would take it down from the shelf, and put it, or rather a better measure, into operation. Irishmen must do something more than talk. They should have a magnificent Irish demonstration in Brisbane. Irishmen and Irish-Australians should make their voice heard at this particular time. He spoke of the continent-wide agitation in America, having for its object the impressing upon President Wilson of the urgency and justice of Ireland's claims and of his pressing them at the Peace Conference. He had read that Generalissimo Foch proposed soon to visit Ireland, to show his appreciation of the great services rendered by Irishmen in the war. In his (the Archbishop's) opinion, Generalissimo Foch's visit would have a greater significance than that. It would be a great pity if the people of Australia became prejudiced over the Irish question. Englishmen and their descendants in Australia, who were so sensitive about the honor of their Motherland, ought to bear in mind that Irishmen had a Homeland, too, and were sensitive about her honor and liberty. St. Patrick's Day processions in the great Australian cities of the South were prohibited, unless they were carried out under conditions that would brand the Irish people as disloyalists, and they were not prepared to accept those conditions. They had had to fight the censorship, which was exercised in Australia more strictly than in any other British Dominion. Allied with Irishmen's love of country was love of God, and that dual love in the Irishmen's hearts was so powerful that nothing could overcome it.