

Current Topics

Irish Affairs

From a recent Glasgow exchange we take the following passage, which will give us some idea of how sincere England was when she set forth to free small nations:—

TO KEEP DOWN THE IRISH.

Tanks are being sent to Ireland wholesale. Armored motor cars are there by the hundred. Soldiers are being poured into the country. Aeroplanes, artillery, cavalry, and all kinds of modern warlike equipment are being despatched there. We have not heard as to poison gas, and other such devices—yet.

BUT NO DOUBT THESE WILL ALL COME IN GOOD TIME.

For, forget it not, Liberty and Justice and the rights of small nations, and the self-determination of peoples, are things upon which the Huns of this land have set their hearts.

WHERE THE BRITISH FLAG FLIES, LIBERTY IS ASSURED—TO THOSE WHO FLY THE FLAG!

Is it any wonder that the "Diggers," the "Aussies," and the Americans who went to Ireland were always ready to make common cause with Sinn Fein against the British Government? Is it any wonder that the Russians are asking what does England mean to do in the case of Ireland, and that an Indian told an American audience recently that he could speak for his own countrymen in saying that the cause of Irish freedom was the cause of the freedom of the world? It is clear now that the Peace Congress will be a rank failure and that as soon as it is over England shall have to go to war against a small nation unless English politicians either learn or are taught how to keep their pledges. Whatever be the action of the Congress at Paris with regard to Ireland one thing is certain: Sinn Fein will never again submit to slavery worse than the oppression of the Russians under the Czar. And surely, if the people are driven to rebellion by injustice and cruelty that madden them, the Americans who owe so much to Ireland and whom Irishmen helped in a past day to break their own fetters will not tolerate the extermination of a noble people.

Some Notes on the Recent Polling

A writer in a Christchurch paper, feeling aggrieved that Prohibition did not win, expressed himself freely as to the dirty tactics which marked the recent contest. He was quite right. We hold no brief for the Trade, but we cannot help saying that some of the tricks of the other side which came accidentally under our notice could not be described by any milder word than dirty. We met casually more than one person who was an avowed opponent of Prohibition and whose name was struck off the roll, during a brief absence from home, by some impertinent Prohibitionist. A certain person—we almost said gentleman unthinkingly—visited a certain Catholic institution not a hundred miles from Dunedin. He got from the Superior the names of the inmates, leaving her to believe that his object was to have them put on the roll. Later, an opponent of Prohibition asked if they had been enrolled and was assured in all good faith by the too trustful lady that they had. But the person who took their names took very good care that he kept them in his pocket and not one of them was enrolled as a result of his dirty if clever dodge. Undoubtedly the Christchurch writer was right: the contest was dirty; his friends have good reason to hang their heads for shame, if they are capable of feeling shame. It was brought also under our notice that many persons refused to subscribe on Anzac Day in Christchurch because the soldiers voted against Prohibition. There you have the narrow-minded bigotry of the wowsers clearly illustrated. Nobody must

disagree with them. Even the boys who went away to risk their lives for them must not dare differ from them. And in more than one case offensive expressions concerning the soldiers were used by Prohibitionists who were not fit to wipe the soldiers' boots. The soldiers' voting made one thing clear: the virile and sound manhood of the Dominion is against a narrow-minded and tyrannical interference with the just liberty of the individual; the men who went away because they were led to believe they were fighting for the freedom of small nations made it quite manifest that they were going to have no part with those who would by an act of sheer tyranny impose their will on a minority. Emotional women, wowsers, and a small section of honest people who were unfortunate in being in such company were on one side; on the other were the soldiers, and judging from the soldiers' votes, the manhood of the Dominion generally. The fact that the soldiers' vote came late and was published separately is something to be thankful for. It has, as the Australian press observed, thrown a very clear light on the nature of the voting and given heart to those who through thick and thin stood for freedom. Speaking for ourselves, we opposed Prohibition because we deemed it our duty as Catholics to do so, and further because we held that it is tyranny to curtail rightful liberty by a count of heads. Once again we say that we hold no brief for the Trade and that as we were ready to fight for Continuance now we shall be ready in the future to fight for every reasonable and lawful reform. In reform, wisely and justly promoted, lies the golden mean which we hope to have an opportunity of advocating before long. The Trade is not guiltless; the profiteers are criminal; the people who culpably—and there are such—help to bring misery on some homes are as dangerous as if they were plague-stricken. It has been said that the laws on our Statute Book at present would if rightly enforced go far towards remedying the evil, and we believe there is much truth in the contention. Surely, by upholding the laws the Government could do much to lessen the harmful results of intemperance; surely there is room for greater vigilance on the part of the guardians of the peace, and for exemplary punishment of malefactors. And if such means are tried and found ineffectual there is still the untried remedy of State Control. As Father Keating says in the March issue of *The Month*, "the common Catholic teaching is that total Prohibition is lawful only when necessary to cure a practically universal abuse of alcoholic liquor, or to conserve national resources in a great emergency." As a War Measure it was tried in America; to say that the evil is universal here is unfair and untrue.

P.P.A. Logic

The orators of the P.P. Ass are great friends of ours. We are not joking. When the people who tour the country attacking Catholics are so devoid of reason, so bereft of shame, so far removed from common sense that they drive sensible Protestants to desperation and make honest men protest that they are utterly ashamed of belonging to the same sect as the spouters, they certainly help our cause in the same proportion as they alienate all fair-minded and honest citizens from their own. Still we are told that the P.P.A. lectures are attended by weak-minded bigots and by curious persons whose self-respect is not strong enough to keep them from even remote association with the horsewhipped traducer of the dead. And surely only the very weak-minded could sit out a lecture which has neither reason nor logic to recommend it, of which the sole motive is to stir up sectarian hate among the citizens. Once upon a time it used to be told to such audiences that Catholic schools were inefficient and that they were far behind the State schools; it used to be urged that no aid should be given them even from the taxes of which Catholics are defrauded by the New Zealand Government. But the time soon came when that lie could serve no longer and when it became very evident to everybody who had the average use of reason that our schools were far more efficient than the State

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