

than fifty years. The state of affairs in Holland during the war has been at all times critical, nor has the situation been eased much by the conclusion of the armistice. Bullied and threatened by both parties, the Dutch Government found it difficult to maintain its neutrality during the war, and now that hostilities have been ended it finds it equally difficult to uphold its authority against the enemies of the constitution. Considering the fact that Holland was for centuries the stronghold of Calvinism, and that nothing was left undone to uproot the Catholic religion, it will come as a surprise to many that as a result of the elections during the year, the Catholic party found itself the strongest fraction in the Chamber and that a Catholic priest was called upon by Queen Wilhelmina to take up the reins of government. As things turned out, he found it impossible to form a Cabinet, but the very fact of such a selection will serve to indicate the marvellous progress made by the Church since the days, not so long distant, when a Catholic Bishop was not permitted to live within the confines of the kingdom.

In the United States the entire energy of its Government and of its citizens seemed to have been directed towards a speedy and successful termination of the struggle in Europe. All the resources of the States in men and money and raw material were thrown into the scales against Germany, with what results the entire world can judge. From the very first moment when President Wilson felt it necessary to declare war till the day when the armistice was accepted the Catholics of America, both clergy and laity, without distinction of race or class, responded nobly to the call of the President. They placed themselves and whatever they controlled entirely at his disposal, proving once again, as they had often proved before, that loyalty to the constitution was regarded by Catholics as a sacred duty. Notwithstanding the heavy calls made upon them by public authority, they raised immense sums to enable the Knights of Columbus to carry out their great labors of charity at the Front, and to more than hold their own with the well-organised and well-equipped army of the Y.M.C.A. In the States, as elsewhere, the war has effected radical changes, most of which are likely to remain even after the restoration of peace. Possibly the most remarkable of these, and certainly the most important in its consequences, is to be found in the field of temperance reform. Americans, it is said, do nothing by halves, and without doubt in this case the saying is amply verified. Before the war Total Prohibition, though adopted by many of the federal legislatures, was looked upon with suspicion by a large majority of the population. Since the outbreak of hostilities the movement has gone forward by leaps and bounds, so that at the present time everything seems to indicate that Prohibition will become the law throughout the entire country. Whether the results will justify the claims of its adherents it is impossible to predict, but with the new spirit that has manifested itself in America we may feel tolerably certain that the anti-Catholic bias of some of the prominent Prohibitionist leaders will not succeed in creating inconveniences or dangers for the Catholic Church.

In Great Britain the war has so occupied the public mind, to the exclusion of nearly every other subject, that the passage of two great Education Acts, one for England and one for Scotland, has not received the attention these measures deserve. From the point of view of education, it must be admitted that they mark a considerable step in advance, and the Minister of Education is to be congratulated on the success of his efforts at a time when success seemed impossible. The aim of the Catholics of England throughout the discussion of the English Education Act was to ensure that in the main the principles of the settlement arrived at in 1902 should be maintained. Though they failed to secure all the amendments they desired, they gained most of the essentials, though a great deal will depend upon the spirit with which the Act is worked by the Local Education Authorities and by the Central Council. Here it will be sufficient to quote the verdict of a Catholic Manager who has evidently made a close study of the new Act:—

"The financial burthen (he writes in the *Tablet*, September 28) thrown on Catholics in providing further accommodation, no doubt will be heavy in many cases. The provision of suitable teachers for advanced and continued classes also presents a difficulty, but since the provided schools will have somewhat similar difficulties, we may trust the authorities will not be too exacting at first, and time and opportunity be given to meet them. For my part, I look on the Act as the charter of the poor man's child, and as such I welcome it, with all its difficulties, and I trust that Catholic managers, in conjunction with their flocks, will meet the local Education Authorities with prudence and good temper, and work the Act for all it is worth in the interests, spiritual and temporal, of the coming generation."

The main feature of the Scotch Act, so far as the Church is concerned, lies in the fact that the Catholic schools may be transferred to the Local Education Authorities, upon whom will fall the cost of paying the necessary staff, care having been taken to assure that Catholic teachers will be provided for Catholic schools. What holds true of schools in existence at the passing of the Act will hold true also of those that may be provided in the future. There is no doubt but that the Act will relieve the Catholics of a great and almost intolerable financial burthen, though at the same time the surrender of their schools and with the schools a great deal of their authority to an outside body, may carry with it very serious inconveniences. For some years a sharp division of opinion has manifested itself among the Catholics of Scotland as to the wisdom of standing out from or coming in under a national system of education. And this division became more acute when the Bill was introduced. It was only when Rome had spoken that both sides agreed to sink their differences and to do what was possible to render smooth the working of the measure.

For Ireland, the year 1918, marking definitely as it does a complete change of methods and a reversion to the old demands, has been one of momentous importance. In 1917 England's Prime Minister attempted to satisfy the public opinion of the world by nominating a Convention to settle the fate of Ireland. What a wealth of sarcasm and ridicule he would have lavished on such a proposal if it had emanated from Austria about Bohemia or from Germany about Poland. Lest, however, in spite of all restrictions and wire-pulling the findings of the Convention might prove embarrassing, he took care to shape its decisions by presenting what amounted to little less than an ultimatum. When at last the Convention had finished its labors, the Prime Minister had changed his mind. Without waiting to consult the report he promptly consigned it to the waste-paper basket, and determined to pacify Ireland not by Self-Government but by Conscriptation. Ireland, enslaved herself and without hope or promise of liberty, was to be forced to send her sons to die that Belgium, Poland, and Serbia might be free. Such a cynical proposal, involving as it did the flagrant violation of the elementary rights of nationhood, demanded a defiant answer, and the answer was soon forthcoming. At once the country closed up its ranks and declared with no uncertain voice that Irishmen would never consent to be driven into battle as conscript slaves.

A National Committee was summoned to meet at the Mansion House on the very day that the Bishops of Ireland had come together to decide one of the most important questions that ever the Bishops of a nation were called upon to discuss. By a happy thought a deputation from the Mansion House Conference was despatched to Maynooth to interview the Bishops, and as a result of the combined deliberations the people were called upon to pledge themselves to resist Conscriptation by the most effective means at their disposal. Such a clear statement of policy raised the Irish Question to a higher plane. It served, not indeed to stir up the country, for that was already done, but to convey a solemn message to both the English Government and the Irish people: to the one that the day for negotiations and compromise had passed, and to the

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