

Current Topics

How 'Ulster' 'Fights'

In company with many of our contemporaries we made merry over the notion that Ulster would fight, either on the occasion of Mr. Winston Churchill's recent meeting at Belfast—prior to which our Orange brethren were painting the papers red with their threats of what would happen if the meeting was persisted in—or even upon the establishment of Home Rule. We declared that all this tall talk was mere bluff, and that 'Ulster' had not the slightest intention of fighting. We now learn that we were wrong: 'Ulster' had said it would fight, and it kept its word. The *Dublin Leader* thus describes how the great fight came off on the night of the day on which Mr. Winston Churchill spoke in Belfast: 'The net result in the way of disturbance at Belfast after all was that a gang of Unionist (Orange) ruffians made an attack on—an hospital! Shortly after 10 o'clock at night a mob of Unionist miscreants attacked the Mater Infirmorum Hospital. A regular fusillade of rivets and large stones were thrown at the hospital. All honor to the brave! How intrepid and fearless these Belfast Unionist hearts were as they fired rivets, not knowing but that at any moment a dying man, or a sick woman, might get up and fling, say, a square of soap at them. And then there was the gallant attack of one hundred girl Unionists on two Catholic fellow workers in a mill.' This display of 'Ulster's' valor was given after the Home Rule meeting—which it had threatened to fight against and prevent—was all over. Sir Edward Carson is right. 'Ulster' will fight—so long as it has nothing more formidable to face than squares of soap.

The Waihi Protest

Some time ago we chronicled how Waihi Catholics asserted themselves in connection with platform attacks on Christianity that were being made in the district by certain political candidates; and once again they have come forward in defence and vindication of the faith. We gave a brief telegraphic summary of the facts in our issue of April 18, telling how one of the leading Socialist lecturers, Mr. R. F. Way, came to Waihi to 'reply' to the Ven. Archdeacon Brodie's recent lecture on Ferrer; how the Archdeacon and many of his Catholic workers attended: how at the close of the lecture the Archdeacon demanded to be heard, mounted the platform, and literally 'riddled' the lecturer—pointing out (what the latter admitted) that he had not seen any note or report of the Archdeacon's lecture, and making him look very small over his ignorance and misrepresentations of Catholic doctrine; and how the Archdeacon finally declared, amidst great applause, that unless an apology were forthcoming for the way in which the Miners' Union platform had been used to attack the Catholic faith, he would advise Catholic members to withdraw from membership, and would form a Christian Workers' Union with the same industrial objects as the present organisation.

Since our summary appeared Archdeacon Brodie has been interviewed by one of the Auckland dailies, and we take the following further particulars from his statement to the Auckland pressman. After indicating the general lines on which he had replied to the rebash of McCabe's book which constituted the staple of the Socialist lecturer's address, the Archdeacon continued: 'In making these statements to the meeting assembled on Sunday night I received an excellent hearing. I told them that I resented and felt keenly the attacks made that evening by the Socialist party against the beliefs of all religious sections of the community. I challenged anyone to prove that I personally had attacked anyone's convictions, Socialist or otherwise, during my eleven years' residence in Waihi. I reminded the meeting that . . . these insults had been uttered from the platform of the Miners' Union Hall, of which many Christian members were part owners. Yet it was being used on such occasions as these for

the purposes of directly insulting the religious beliefs of many members. In conclusion, I said that unless some explanation or apology were given, I was determined to bring about the formation of a Christian Workers' Union in which the members would be banded together for the uplifting of the worker, and in which the members would be perfectly free from attacks of such a description as had been heard that evening. There the matter rests,' concluded the Archdeacon, 'and if the explanation or apology I have asked for is not forthcoming, I shall not hesitate to act on the lines which I indicated at Sunday evening's meeting.'

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Archdeacon Brodie is fully entitled to the congratulations which have been extended to him by the Auckland Hibernians, by St. Benedict's Club, and by several southern papers, of whose comments the subject of them has probably never heard. It is to be noted that from first to last of the episode Archdeacon Brodie has acted, and is acting, purely on the defensive. If the Miners' Union will see to it that speakers on its platform confine themselves to advocating measures for the economic and industrial betterment of the working classes and refrain from dragging religion into their addresses, Catholics will be the last to raise any factious opposition. But when a Socialist lecturer, who has been granted the use of a hall, free of charge, by a Union containing a large number of Christian members, takes advantage of the hospitality extended to him to indulge in wanton vituperation and abuse of the Christian religion, Christians would be flabby and spineless indeed if they did not make protest. It may be added that the lecturer on this particular occasion has addressed a communication to the *Auckland Star*, as a sort of explanation and defence; but the letter is a very limp production, and is manifestly the work of one who has not yet recovered from the surprise packet he received.

Catholics and Welsh Church Disestablishment

Saturday's cables inform us that the Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales has passed its first reading in the House of Commons; and Mr. Lloyd George appears to have indulged in some plain speaking on the occasion. 'He aroused the anger of the Opposition,' says the cable, 'by stating that two-thirds of the Church's property at the Reformation went to laymen to bribe them to sell their faith, and those enjoying the endowments to-day called him a thief because he had tried to take back a half-penny in the £.' The Bill contains a provision that the Church will be permitted to retain any endowments conferred since the 'reformation,' but that endowments conferred before that time will be withdrawn and devoted to secular national purposes. According to the cable, sixty-eight Nationalists voted for the Bill, presumably on the broad ground of supporting the Government.

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There is room for difference of opinion as to the natural and proper attitude to be taken by Catholics on the question. There is, on the one hand, the view that to support the use of public money and endowments for the purposes of the Establishment is nothing less than encouraging heresy; and on the other hand, there is the view, voiced by the *London Tablet*, that 'to apply the money as it has been applied for three hundred years for the maintenance of Anglican clergymen is at least closer to the wishes of the (Catholic) donors than would be its use for the support of rural art galleries or provincial museums or any other purely secular purpose.' In this connection it is interesting to recall the view and policy adopted by the late Cardinal Manning, as expressed in a manifesto issued to the Catholic electors at the time of the Disestablishment campaign in 1885. 'If the Catholic Church,' wrote his Eminence, 'could to-morrow extinguish the Establishment by gathering the millions of the people into its fold by its spiritual and pastoral action, every Catholic would desire that this work of grace might be accomplished before sunset; but to join in a political agitation, in union with multitudes animated by all