

AN ADMIRAL AND AN EARL

(By Professor STOCKLEY, M.A., in the London *Catholic Times*.)

The Irish Bishops at Maynooth, this last autumn, drew up and gave forth a declaration on the present state of Ireland. They spoke of ideas; they went down to principles. They alluded to the pretended war-aims of the Allies; and by the sacrifice of so many lives for ideals they appealed to the whole world to judge whether Ireland, an ancient nation, is not being defrauded of rights to self-government, of the right to freedom in developing according to her own character, tradition, and hope; of the right to be left in peace, without teasing, tormenting, bullying; and whether Ireland, being weak, had not—following so many promises and proclamations—the same right as any nation that is strong to live her life unfettered, for her own people's interest first. Why was Ireland to be denied what was granted to Poland, to Bohemia, to Serbia?

Might and Right.

The answer was plain. As England's Prime Minister has stated it: Austria was defeated; England was not. Might is Right: and the "war-aims" were only what hypocrisy paid as a tribute of vice to over-credulous virtue.

This will not do, say Catholic Bishops in Belgium. And Belgian Bishops had a right to speak, not only in the name of divine justice against the sin of tyranny, and for the ideal of a better and more Christian world, but also for the cause of all small nations. It had indeed been a subject of just surprise to many Irish that the Bishops of Belgium had not spoken before, and had had words only of praise for England's Government, responsible for Versailles, and for the handing over of German Tyrolese to Italy, Montenegrins to Serbia, Chinese to Japan, without principle, without shame. That Belgium got rights was well. That Ireland got no such rights proved how England had as much honour in her word as to fighting against militarism—Prussianism!—and for the people of each country, as had her ally the Czar, with his secret treaty about Poland being his domestic question, not to be touched by any of the allied pretenders to save worlds and democracy. Russia was not victorious. England was. Therefore Russia's Poland got the freedom that England's Ireland did not get.

Belgian Bishops' Mistaken Hopes.

But, at last, the Belgian Bishops do say that they begin to feel indignant. Though they innocently and fatuously add that "the British Government will never tolerate" this bullying and injustice in Ireland! Which remark might surely have made the militarist British Government legitimately smile. But even that remark did not soothe Lord Walter Kerr and the Catholic Union: men do not seem yet to have grasped at the possibility of the idea that England in Ireland stands for tyranny and bullying, for low cunning and dishonour.

The Bishop of Northampton, criticising these men, has not unnaturally suggested that what would most divide English and Irish Catholics in England would be the incapacity to put oneself in another's position, and to ask why England should be rampaging over Ireland, any more than Ireland over England—unless on the basis of some expediency or some inhumanity, gross in its selfishness or its greed, as rooted in miserable materialism, brute force, and dreary irreligion, as it is opposed to what some men really did die for, in the half-forgotten war with its flouted aims.

The Earl of Shrewsbury in 1848.

Half a century ago, the then Earl of Shrewsbury was as much shocked as is now Lord Walter Kerr. Dr. Newman was not shocked—no more than is Bishop Keating—at the Irish people and clergy. Ireland in 1848 was under the same England. The pitiless foeman stood where he stands. Ireland heard

"The shouts and curses of the ravening horde":

she

"Saw the old heroic blood outpoured."

Invaders once more had not been allowed to settle down

comfortably; for they still acted as invaders. House-breakers had not with impunity turned out the householders. There had been persecutors who were meeting with the resistance of the persecuted, and with their "reprisals."

And the Catholic Lord Shrewsbury wrote about this violence and outrage in Ireland, in terms offensive, of course, to the Irish. He did not feel, with Burke, that "we are not born to pity the oppressor and the oppressed." He had no sympathy with the Irish, "the injured": he was proud of being "one of an unscrupulous, tyrannous race," standing on the soil of its victims. He denounced the Irish—those pitiless people who resist when they are attacked, and then are said to "begin it." He urged the Irish clergy to dissociate themselves from lawless deeds, and not to disgrace their English fellow Catholics before the world. (Moryah!) And so on—much grieved, not at telling the lie of being in Ireland for Ireland's good, but at the hurt to the conscience when the lie is found out.

Archbishop McHale and the Government.

Archbishop McHale of Tuam then spoke out for his people. If they were violent, the violence, as he felt and as he judged, was the result of their misery under tyrannous neglect and oppression, and of crying injustice under a Government which, in Grattan's words—and its tradition showed it true to type—went to hell for its principles, and to Bedlam for the men to administer them.

Charles Waterton's Question.

There was one old English Catholic found to write to the Connaught Archbishop—Squire Waterton, of South American Wanderings, the ascetic and the athlete—scorning Lord Shrewsbury's outburst, and adding: "But what is to become of Ireland, now so low, so trodden under foot"—in 1848,—"so famished and despised? I am of opinion that an all-wise Providence has allowed this appalling abasement in order to purify her for the performance of some mighty and regenerating task. Perhaps for the humiliation and conversion of her haughty sister."

Newman's Opinion.

And, concerning a greater than he, Father Whitty (Cardinal Wiseman's Vicar-general in London, afterwards a Jesuit) wrote to the same Irish Archbishop on the "true . . . feelings of the recent Oxford converts towards the Irish Church and Ireland in general. It would be very natural, in Ireland, to suppose them to be mixed up with Lord Shrewsbury and such English Catholics on the subject. Still, I can assure your Grace, from a very intimate acquaintance with the chief of them, that such an idea would be very erroneous. . . . They, including Mr. Newman himself, from whose lips I have it, strongly disapprove of Lord Shrewsbury's letter.

Indeed, Newman understood better whereof he spake. He knew the why and the wherefore. At least, he was not impervious to a new idea when, not long after, he came among us in Ireland, where "an Englishman does not at first recollect, as he ought to recollect, that he comes among the Irish people as a representative of persons, and actions, and catastrophes which it is not pleasant to anyone to think about: that he is responsible for the deeds of his fathers: . . . one of a strong, unscrupulous, tyrannous race, standing upon the soil of the injured. He does not bear in mind that it is as easy to forget injuring as it is difficult to forget being injured. He does not admit, even in his imaginations, the judgment and the sentence which the past history of Erin sternly pronounces upon him." Yet even a Newman's confessions are for past deeds only.

Historical Recollections.

His predecessor, Sydney Smith's, words would hold, a generation after Newman, that the Irish "hate the English from historical recollection, actual suffering, and disappointed hope"—in this 1920 of England's abominations in Ireland.

He that bullies, let him bully no more. He that lies, let him lie no more. He that is a Pharisee, let him say a "Miserere."

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