

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.
Die 4 Aprilis, 1900. LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.
April 4, 1900. LEO XIII., Pope.



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1921.

THE REPLY OF DAIL EIREANN



LOYD GEORGE drew an arbitrary boundary about six counties in the North-East of Ireland and called them "Ulster." In order to make secure in that corner the ascendancy of the enemies of the Irish people he proceeded to gerrymander the constituencies on the lines shown by a quotation from the *New Statesman* in our "Current Topics" this week. Having arranged his garrison he permitted it to prepare for the election by a pogrom of murder and arson intended to drive Catholic and Nationalist voters from the polls. In this manner he secured the return of a majority of Orangemen in Carsonia, which he calls "Ulster." Now that the conjurer had his card up his sleeve he was ready to commence once more a new series of tricks. He told the world that he was offering Ireland a Dominion Home Rule scheme, while at the same time he asserted Britain's right to cut Ireland into such pieces as Britain wished and to reserve to Britain such powers over Ireland as were dictated, not by Ireland's but by Britain's dominant interests. With shameless falsehood, aided by his servile press, he announced that Ireland was offered self-government and a free partnership in the Empire, while at the same time he threatened that if Ireland was not prepared to accept the terms imposed by him he would once more begin a regime of British frightfulness among the Irish people. In substance, such was the proposal made to Ireland by the members of the same British Government which invited Ireland to fight for the right of all small nations to determine their own form of government without any outside selfish interference, and the mouthpiece of that same Government was the David Lloyd George who asked why did God make small nations unless He wished them to be free. We have read with pride the courageous and dignified reply of de Valera. Now, equally noble and consistent, comes the answer of the elected representatives of the people of Ireland.

Dail Eireann assigns as the data of the problem, (1) that the Irish people, asserting their natural and fundamental right to choose for themselves, have by an overwhelming majority declared for independence: "They have set up a Republic and have more than once confirmed their choice"; (2) Britain acts as if

Ireland were bound to her by a contract of union that forbade separation, and claims the right to partition Irish territory and to kill or imprison Irishmen who refuse to acknowledge what England claims. The British proposals of July 20 are based on the latter premises; they are not an invitation to Ireland to enter into a free partnership, but they are an invitation to enter under conditions which if accepted would place Ireland in a status decidedly below that of the Dominions. Dail Eireann goes on to point out that Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand are guaranteed rights which give them equality with England, while no such rights and no such equality are guaranteed to Ireland, which, on the contrary, is asked to accept a settlement backed by a threat and inspired by the selfish and dominant interest of a strong country over a weak. The representatives of the Irish people record their irrevocable refusal to entertain proposals which would place their country in such inferior status. They reiterate their determination to stand by the principle of self-determination, which was the war-cry of Great Britain when Prussia, not England, was the despot crushing to earth a weak people, and on the strength of which England invited Irishmen to fight for her, giving pledges to the Irish people that the war should secure to Ireland the same freedom as it would bring to Poland and Belgium. "We proposed," says Dail Eireann, "government by consent of the governed. On this basis we are ready to appoint plenipotentiaries. The threats of force must be set aside. The respective plenipotentiaries must meet untrammelled by any conditions." The reply of the Dail also tells us that Ireland offered to submit the matter to an impartial arbitrator and that England would not stand that test of her willingness to do what right and justice demanded: "We are willing that an impartial arbitrator should judge; but you refuse this, and threaten to give effect to your views by force." In this sentence we have one more proof that such terms as were offered were offered in full knowledge that they would not stand examination in the white light of justice and sincerity, and one more assertion that England, now that Prussia is down for a short time, is the one power in the world to-day that stands for everything that the war was waged to drive from the face of the earth: for the oppression of a weak nation by a strong; for the exploitation of a small country in the selfish interest of one that is more powerful; for the shameful disregard of pledges made to the living and to the dead—in a word, for all these crimes on account of which England declared seven years ago that Prussia must be destroyed for ever.

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Thus, we have the spectacle of England offering to Ireland a beggar's portion instead of a nation's right and at the same time uttering the threat that refusal to accept would mean a resumption of war on women and children even on a more inhuman scale than ever. John Bull once again stands forth as the arch-hypocrite, secure in the consciousness that he has ten armed men to kill every unarmed Irish man—not forgetting the women and the aged priests. Over against him is another picture: it is that of long-suffering, persecuted, plundered Erin proud in her integrity, fearless in the justice of her cause, unconquered after centuries of frightfulness, proclaiming to the whole world that she will never submit to exist as the slave and the handmaid of the foe that has ruined her churches, killed her priests, burned her convents, murdered her women and children, and fought her men with the vile weapons of calumny and lies. It is good to be an Irishman to-day when the chosen representatives of our land fling in Lloyd George's face his mess of potage with words such as these:

"Force will not solve the problem. If victory is not on the side of justice the problem that faces us will face our successors. Threats must be set aside.

We have proposed the principle of government by consent of the governed. We do not mean this as a mere phrase. . . . On this basis, and on this only, can we see any hope of reconciling the considerations