

The Irish Cause

Archbishop Mannix on the Present Situation

Addressing recently a large assemblage of men of St. Ignatius' parish at a Communion breakfast, his Grace Archbishop Mannix said in point of numbers it exceeded anything he had ever seen before in the archdiocese, and if it did that he could safely say it had beaten the rest of the world. Wherever he had travelled he had remarked that the Catholics of Melbourne had done something that others had not even attempted. (Applause.)

Referring to Ireland, he said, that he was at the disadvantage of having many things to say which it was not convenient to say, the present being an occasion for reticence. He would say, however, that it was a pity the truce had not been arranged twelve months before. Archbishop Clune had done all that a man could do, and more than others would attempt, in trying to bring it about. In the interval English blood had been spilt, and the fair face of Ireland was drenched with blood. Nor had the English gone up in the esteem of the world in that time. "We hope," he continued, "that the end of the negotiations will be a just and lasting peace between the two countries. I feel that I am a typical Irishman; my own sincere conviction is that if only people will be reasonable—I hope that the English will be; that the Irishmen are, I am sure—there can be peace at once that is honorable to Ireland and that can give no ground for fearing that England would be insecure."

It was said by some that the King had succeeded where Archbishop Clune failed. But we knew quite well that when the King opened the Parliament in Belfast the speech he made was not his; it was the Prime Minister's speech. And Ireland was not prepared to accept partition from the King, or the Prime Minister, or anybody else—(applause)—and it seemed a bad introduction for the peace negotiations that the King, at the bidding of a small minority in North-east Ulster, should go over and give his benediction to that Parliament. Undoubtedly at the present time the greatest obstacle to peace in Ireland—perhaps the only obstacle—was that Parliament. The King probably was all right if he was left alone, but he had been badly advised. His visit, however, had one good result, since it gave the Prime Minister the opportunity of arranging the truce and the negotiations, and of having the Sinn Fein representatives come into conference face to face, and on equal terms, with himself.

It would seem that the King's appeal had borne very little fruit in certain parts of North-east Ulster, where attacks were being made on the lives and the houses of Nationalists. It had been said that the Sinn Feiners were responsible for the lawlessness in Ireland, but surely it was not suggested that they were burning their own houses. (Laughter.) A cabled paragraph regarding Ireland in the previous day's newspaper bore the head lines: "Shooting in Belfast; Sinn Fein Responsible; An Impudent Admission." When the paragraph was read through it was evident that the headings were wantonly misleading. It was stated that while the houses of Nationalists were being attacked the Sinn Fein troops came out to quell the disorder, since no other forces would undertake the work. There was not the least ground for the headings, and the only "impudence" in the matter was that of the editor who had put together the headings. (Laughter.) The headings were very dangerous, since many people took their information from them, and did not read the letter-press underneath. It reminded him of the theatres, where bright lights of different colors could be turned on the stage, and by that means very ordinary people could be made to look quite beautiful. In writing the press headings, they turned on the "yellow" light, and everything appeared beautiful. (Laughter.)

He was not surprised at what was happening in Belfast. The people there were prepared to be good Irishmen if they were let alone; but for years past their passions had been inflamed, and their prejudice excited by outsiders, who were anxious to maintain dissension. That was an extraordinary statement to make, but he could prove it by means of an article which appeared in the London *Morning Post*. That newspaper was as rabid and narrow-minded an enemy of Ireland as could be found in the whole world. It was the organ of the Carsonites, who we know were re-

sponsible for the most of the present trouble. They were always parading their loyalty to the Throne and their unbounded affection for the King; but they remained so only so long as it suited their interests. When the time came to put their professed principles into practice their affection evaporated and their loyalty was found beneath their feet. The *Morning Post*, of July 18, had referred to de Valera's visit to London and to the Sinn Fein flag (which it termed a "murder-flag") having been publicly saluted by English officers in Kingstown Harbor. It then commented:—

"All these things, and many others, have occurred. It matters not what may result from this tragic mountebanking. The bald fact is that England has eaten dirt, and is now a dog for anybody to kick."

Dr. Mannix said: "I shouldn't like to use those words—(laughter)—but that is their view of the negotiations: the truce is only 'mountebanking.'"

"Any bargain resulting from such arrangements is doomed to failure, because it involves a section—Ulster—that will fight for the right, whatever the politicians may promise or threaten or whatever schemes they may devise."

"In July," remarked Dr. Mannix, "these people expected the negotiations to break down; you can see what is at the back of the risings in Belfast. Those, at any rate, were the opinions of a widely-spread newspaper, which found its way into the homes of the wealthier classes in England, and which had a considerable influence on members of the House of Lords. It was no paper of the "gutter-press" type. The outlook of the editor was that of his readers, and they looked forward to trouble in Ulster, and would be prepared to shoot de Valera and all his associates."

Concluding, the Archbishop stated that his reason for mentioning the facts he had was to warn the people against the newspapers, which were prepared to insinuate that the Sinn Feiners could not be trusted. "I want you to keep your eyes open, and not be led away by what you read, especially in the head lines. Read the news through for yourself, and when you have read it don't believe it."

The Mayor of Richmond (Cr. Maurice Joyce) moved a vote of thanks to Archbishop Mannix, and referred to him as the "greatest Archbishop in Christendom."

In addressing a large gathering at the opening of a new Catholic parish hall at the intersection of Grange and Neerim Roads, Glen Huntly, on a recent Sunday afternoon, Archbishop Mannix dealt at some length with the Irish Question. He said that former leaders of Ireland, who were dead, now came in for praise from certain quarters. These included O'Connell, Parnell and Redmond. But the present leaders were called traitors. They were told that the former leaders, such as Parnell, never asked for what was now demanded. Well, the Irish people had erected a monument in Dublin to Parnell. And what were the words at the foot of that monument? They were: "Let no man set bounds to the march of a nation." (Applause.) People were being led to believe that Ireland had received some very generous offer from Mr. Lloyd George. They said it was quite as generous as that given to Australia, Canada, and South Africa, when in reality no such offer had as yet been made to Ireland. The statement as to the offer of Dominion Home Rule was not true. If England did offer Dominion Home Rule, Ireland might or might not accept it; but she could not have refused what, as a matter of fact, had not as yet been offered to her. They were told that Ireland, in refusing the offer was losing the sympathy of the world; but he could tell them that Ireland had not lost a single sympathiser by the course she had taken in the negotiations up to the present. (Applause.)

His Grace referred to the reply of Mr. Lloyd George to Mr. de Valera's letter of August 30, in which, he said, the Prime Minister stated that self-determination was the foundation of British constitutional development. He hoped that Mr. Lloyd George would see his way to apply that principle in the case of Ireland. (Applause.) Mr. Lloyd George had stated what was true; but he added that that principle, if generally applied, would drive the civilised world back to tribalism. Of course, self-determination could be reduced to an absurdity, and in that Mr. Lloyd George had said the correct thing. Of course, 10 or 20 men could not claim self-determination. There was one man who had done that, and who was the man? No other than Mr. Lloyd George himself. (Laughter and applause.)