

not in a position to judge, but his remarks are certainly such as give one furiously to think. *Inter alia* he says:

"In other words, what is coming to pass in Catholic circles in America is this: The Catholic laboring element is being alienated from the Church for three well-defined reasons: (1) The large body of the clergy are apparently apathetic to the problems of the laborer; (2) Only too often their influence is on the side of 'the existing order,' which is always construed as being set over against the interest of the workers; (3) What little well-intentioned work has been done is, in the first place, inadequate, and secondly, for the most part misdirected.

"I do not say that these charges can be substantiated, but I put them down because I believe they correctly represent the attitude of the workers. It would be well for the proper authorities to investigate and determine for themselves whether or not there is ground for these grievances.

"In this connection let me call attention to the fact that the ecclesiastical authorities could do no greater service to both Church and State than to base their programme of social reform on the training of the workers through parish organisations, conducted along truly Catholic lines. English Catholics are now discussing this proposal, and the laborers in that country have established 'Workers' Colleges,' which are an attempt to provide the education necessary in the new era.

"The N.C.W.C. could do no better than to make itself a truly representative laymen's society by gathering together the Catholic laboring men and educating them along truly Catholic lines of industrial society. If this is not done, I fail to see that this body will really accomplish anything for the Catholic laborer. The concern which it has shown as regards hours, wages, the 'open shop,' etc., shows it to be of excellent intentions. The question that is continually being forced upon those of us who are in daily contact with the industrial situation, as we note the attitude of the men on the one hand, and the attitude of our leaders as expressed in programmes and articles like Father Husslein's, on the other, is this: *When are our leaders going to realise that the existing situation is far beyond the control of their present efforts, and that the vast body of the Church's laboring children are being alienated from her true spirit by the lack of adequate interest and co-operation in a matter so vital to their material and spiritual well-being?*"

What About the League?

The Government has decreed (says the *New Witness*) that the League of Nations shall decide on the Polish claims; and the first and most obvious question to ask just now is why it should not pronounce on the Irish claims also. If the Prime Minister says that the League of Nations cannot pronounce upon England and Ireland, he is uttering a most crushing disparagement of the League of Nations at the very moment when he is invoking it to decide upon Poland and Prussia. The League of Nations can be of very little use in Europe if it cannot decide on any of those quarrels about small nationalities and oppressed peoples, that were the principal dangers to peace in Europe. If the League could never have studied any subject nationalities, we may be perfectly certain that it could never have prevented any wars. If it could not have ventured to criticise Turkey in its treatment of Bulgaria, it certainly would not have prevented Russia from coming to the rescue of Bulgaria. If it had been unable to comment on Austrian oppression in Italy, it certainly would not have prevented France from coming to the rescue of Italy. If it dared not whisper a word to Prussia about Alsace, it would certainly not have been able, by any whispering or shouting, to persuade the French to forego an ultimate *revanche*; which, by the way, does not mean revenge, but rather restitution. The League of Nations is supposed to adjudge the questions on which great nations quarrel; and on what question do they quarrel so

much as on the position of subject nations? According to this theory, Poland is now called upon to accept whatever she is given by the League of Nations. But she could not have been given anything when she needed it most. When Poland was utterly prostrate before Prussia, and the two other robbers who were the more reluctant accomplices of Prussia, then by this theory Poland was precisely and literally in the position of Ireland. The three sections of Poland were three provinces which were the lawful property of three empires, and could not therefore be considered by any foreign tribunal. Yet everybody in his five wits knows that the nation, thus dismembered but alive, was a more dangerous element in the peace of Europe than if she had been independent and secure. It was when the cries of the tortured nationality rang across the continent, when her crucifixion was lifted before all men as an ensign of revolt, when the world was full of the smoke of her smouldering wrath, it was in that most perilous of all periods that, according to this argument, Poland did not even exist.

Now this is the real fallacy that will ruin us; the fiction that nations do not exist when they do exist. The fundamental folly of the modern English has been simply this: that they thought they could be patriots without being nationalists. If there be such a thing as a nation, England is a nation, and Ireland is a nation. Because England is a nation we are patriots; and because we are patriots we desire to see these two nations so connected that our own nation shall be protected from danger. But because Ireland is a nation, we must base all our argument upon the fact that she is a nation, and recognise that it is a mere matter of legal accident whether she happens to be a subject nation. If the League of Nations sets out to settle any quarrel between nations, this is an absolutely typical quarrel between nations. Indeed, it is one of the very few quarrels between nations in which the passion of patriotism, and no lower passion, is really the popular force on both sides. We can understand a man saying on behalf of either of the two patriotisms, that the League of Nations is too thin and theoretical a thing to be called in against anything so positive as patriotism. But in that case, why should it be called in about something so positive as Poland? We can understand anybody expressing a fear that the League might be merely the tool of faddism or favoritism, or, worst of all, financial enterprise. But why should the poor Poles be torn in pieces by faddists and financiers any more than anybody else? Poland is a nation, and its claims are those of a nation; but it was just as much of a nation when it was not called a republic. Whether or no Ireland becomes a republic like Poland, what we have to face first of all is that she has never ceased to be a nation like Poland. We may offer her what we consider a reasonable compromise of self-government, just as Russia offered such a concession to Poland just before the war. We may hope the matter may be settled so, by a dominion democracy under the British King, as Russians might reasonably hope the Polish problem could be settled by a separate kingdom under a Russian prince. Perhaps it might have been settled so; perhaps it would have been as successfully settled so; perhaps Poland might have been fully a free nation under a foreign prince. But anyhow, we have already admitted that Poland must be a free nation by granting her a free republic. Anything else must have been a matter of special arrangement; and anything else in Ireland must be a matter of special arrangement. That is the vital thing to seize: that if we really wish to carry through our compromise, the first thing to realise is that it is a compromise. It is *not* an "extreme measure of self-government." It is a moderate measure of nationality. If we can still imagine that Ireland regards herself as something like Rutland, we may call it an extreme and even extravagant vision for a Rutland County Council. But if we are sufficiently wide awake, and in possession of our wits, to know that Ireland regards herself as a thing like Poland, then it is obvious that we are giving less and not more than was given to Poland, even by those who tried to deprive her of Dantzig, and are trying to deprive her of Silesia. In short, the moral of the whole matter is the moral of innumerable modern controversies. It is that confusion is quite as much the enemy of compromise as it is the enemy of completion.