

Current Topics

The Fruits of Victory

We won the war that was to make the world safe for democracy. We blew our trumpets and waved our flags and Mr. Parr made speeches. Soon it was evident that, although certain people did their neighbors in the Great War, the men who did their bit got nothing out of it. The bubble was burst. The lying rhetoric of journalists and politicians was exposed. Versailles which ought to have laid the foundations of peace was a hotbed for the seeds of new wars. The men who talked of hanging the Kaiser proved to be the worst enemies democracy ever had or ever will have, and since the day on which, having excluded God from their sessions, they sat down to their game of grab there has been nothing but confusion. It is now admitted and proved that it was from first to last a gigantic lie that Germany was the cause of the war, but, nevertheless, the punishments inflicted on her by the Versailles scoundrels continue to be exacted and to cause more and more trouble as time goes on. France still demands her pound of flesh to which she is not entitled, and it will not astonish anybody to find, one of these days, that France has caught a tartar. France is looking for trouble and trouble generally comes to those that seek after it. An un-Christian peace has had terrible results, and it may be that the worst is yet to come.

The Facisti

Parliamentary government must have fallen to a low ebb in Italy to make it possible for one man to achieve such a triumph as was won by Mussolini. It is likely that his meteoric success has eclipsed everything in history. What Cromwell gained by murdering a king, what Napoleon achieved by the sword, this Italian, formerly a Socialist, won without striking a blow when he led his voluntary army into Rome and overthrew a weak Government which dared not face him. The Government went down before him as the walls of Jericho fell before the blast of the trumpets, and the King, in his wisdom, hailed the conqueror and assented to the inevitable as gracefully as he could. Mussolini's power is as supreme as was that of Cromwell. In his speeches he makes that fact quite plain. His audacity and his masterfulness carried all before them. The Deputies realised that they were face to face with a strong man and they voted him whatever he asked for. He rules Italy as a dictator, backed by his 300,000 Facisti. He is a living proof of what a man of character can do with a solid and loyal body at his back. He has overthrown corrupt government and exterminated venal politicians and written in his deeds a warning that similar politicians in every country would do well to take heed of. What he had done other people can do, and no doubt other people will imitate him when there is no other redress for their wrongs, and when warnings to fool-Ministers and place-hunters are fruitless. Although there is in the new movement much that is opposed to true liberty, no doubt things will adjust themselves later. On the whole Mussolini has done well and has rooted out many abuses. He is not anti-clerical and he recognises the value of religion far better than a Massey or a Parr or a Dillon Bell. It is noteworthy that his paper was the staunchest supporter of Sinn Fein during the days of Ireland's war with England, and he studied Sinn Fein methods to no small advantage.

The Irish Senate

The new Senate of Ireland includes sixty members thirty of whom are nominated and the others elected. Distinguished Irishmen of all classes and creeds are found among the sixty chosen by the President or by the voters, and, although at present, they are liable to be murdered or to have their homes burned down, in

time they will be found doing good service in the cause of the old land.

Dr. Sigerson was elected by the Senate of the Irish Free State at its first meeting on a recent Monday to the position of president of that body. He is the father of the late Mrs. Dora Sigerson Shorter, the poetess, and has been a prominent figure in Dublin for over half a century. An eminent medical man (he is a professor of biology at University College), he has written a history of land tenures in Ireland as well as other valuable historical works.

The thirty members of the Senate who were elected by the Dail to make, with the thirty nominated by President Cosgrave, the complete body include two women, Mrs. Stopford Green, the widow of the historian J. R. Green, and Mrs. Eileen Costello, a Gaelic scholar who lived at one time in London. There are thus now four women senators. Amongst other notable names is that of Colonel Moore (brother of George Moore), at one time colonel commandant of the Connaught Rangers and later the military chief of the Irish Volunteers. One of the exploits of the "Black-and-Tans" was to take Colonel Moore about with them on an armored car in case they were fired upon.

Sir John Purser Griffith was at one time engineer to the Dublin Port and Harbor Board, and was president of the Institution of Civil Engineers, 1919-20. He was born at Holyhead, where his father was a Congregational minister. Mr. James Douglas, one of the framers of the Irish Constitution and a leading member of the Society of Friends in Ireland, and Mr. E. McLysaght (better known in England as Edward Lysaght, the poet and novelist) are also members. As might have been expected, owing to the P.R. system of election used in the Dail voting "interests" are prominently represented, as in the cases of the chairman of the Irish Farmers' Union and the Irish secretary of the Railway Clerks' Association. Farming generally forms a strong element.

The Poor Journalists

The writer of even a penny-dreadful regards with lordly contempt the journalist. In his own estimation the former is an artist while the latter is a penny-a-liner, a hack, or a slave. There is a common idea that journalists turn out words at lightening speed while writers of fiction are as careful over every syllable as Michael Angelo was with his chisel. The following extract from an exchange may help to disillusion some of our readers:

There has just come out, in Heinemann's very handsome new Vailima Edition of all that Stevenson wrote, the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, always the most read of his books and the only story of his in which he felt, as he worked, that every character was alive and had only got to be reported, not invented, from page to page. And here, in a prefatory note, is his widow confirming what has always been said—that Stevenson wrote the whole 30,000 words of the first draft of the story in three days, and then burnt what he had written and wrote a new version, of the same length, in another three days. A mere journalist shudders to think of such a rate of production. Ten thousand words, Stevenson's daily task for that week, is continuous manual labor, if nothing more, for ten hours. It is as if one journalist were to write in one day every word on this page of the *Manchester Guardian*, and then keep it up for another five days. Journalism knows no such feats. Hers is a sober world, unvisited by such hustlers.

Rumor speaks of journalists who can dictate copiously, but was there ever one who dictated a daily newspaper page every day for a week? And Stevenson did not dictate. He did not even reserve such leisure for pure thought as might be gained by leaving the coolie work with the paper and ink to another. He wrote every word, like Anthony Trollope, who used to turn out chronicles of Barchester, morning after morning, at the rate of 250 words to each quarter of an hour. After writing some thousands Trollope used to knock off and go to repose himself during the heat of the day at a Government office where he was em-

Henry Scott

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