

Contrasts in Tolerance

Take the County of Tyrone in Ulster (says a writer in the *Irish Weekly*). It has a population of 150,567, of which 82,404, or 54.73 per cent., are Catholics and Nationalists, and 68,163, or 45.27 per cent., are Protestants and Unionists. The County Council numbers 29 members, and of these twelve are Catholics and seventeen are Protestants, while thirteen are Nationalists (one Protestant being a Nationalist) and sixteen are Unionists. The officers employed by the council and its committees (exclusive of asylums) are—Catholics, five; Protestants, forty-seven. Many of these officers are ex-Unionist registration agents, who have been appointed as a reward for their services to the Unionist cause. The composition of the committees appointed by the council is as follows: Technical Education Committee—Catholics, 8; Protestants, 15. Agricultural Committee—Catholics, 9; Protestants, 22. Asylums Committee—Catholics, 6; Protestants, 12. Now let us turn to Galway, an intensely Catholic and Nationalist county in Connaught. It has a population of 192,549, and of this 94 per cent. are Catholics. The County Council consists of 32 members, all Catholics, but of these one is a Unionist. The officers employed by the council and its committees number 61, and of these officers, though there is not a single Protestant on the council, 11 are Protestants. This is a strong contrast to Armagh, which, with its Catholic population numbering over 56,000, and its council of eight Catholics and twenty-two Protestants, has a staff of officers consisting of three Catholics and forty-seven Protestants—Unionists.

A False Statement

In replying to a question in the House of Commons by Mr. Kettle as to the administration of the Old-age Pensions Act in Ireland, Mr. Hobhouse said the Government was not responsible for the circulation of the statement that many pensions had been improperly obtained in Ireland. The lie, however, had got a start, and it was exceedingly difficult to catch it up. Unfortunately miscalculations had been made with respect to the cost of old-age pensions, not only as regarded Ireland, but also as regarded Great Britain, and, whatever the cause, there was undoubtedly a serious discrepancy between the number of applicants in Ireland over 70 years and the number of septuagenarians shown by the census. Therefore, he thought the Government had been absolutely justified in deciding to have an inquiry into the circumstances which had led to the discrepancy, not for the purpose of finding fault or reducing the number of pensions, but with the object of obtaining an explanation of the circumstances, which were undoubtedly abnormal. There was no desire to prevent the grant of pensions or to cast reflections upon the honesty of the people of Ireland, and while there was no foundation for the charge of fraud levelled against Ireland, he was also able to assure the committee that it was not true that orders had been issued to pension officers to appeal wherever possible from the local Pensions Committee to the Local Government Board in Ireland. The inquiries which were being made had not yet been completed, but since January 1 2500 had been taken away, of which 1300 related to Great Britain and 1200 to Ireland, so that he thought, on the one hand, the Irish people were exculpated from the charge of obtaining pensions fraudulently, and on the other hand Irish representatives might have conceived an exaggerated idea of the number of pensions which had been revoked.

A Change of Opinion

Mr. John Dillon, M.P., in the course of a speech in Swinford said that the changed attitude of the brewers and distillers towards the Irish Party was amusing and instructive. Before the introduction of the Budget we were, said Mr. Dillon, ruffians of the darkest die—'cattle-drivers' and gentlemen who ought to be put into gaol; but now, when the new whiskey tax is in the air, the big brewers and distillers are all appealing to the Irish Party to protect them. Mr. John Redmond is now a statesman, in the opinion of these gentlemen. 'My answer is, we will do our best for the interests of Ireland. I would like to know whether they are prepared to help us in applying the only remedy for the over-taxation of Ireland—namely, Home Rule.' Referring to the new Land Bill, he said that, as far as Connaught was concerned, it was a good Bill—the best Bill that had ever been introduced by British Ministers.

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People We Hear About

General Sir William Butler has spent much of his time since he was placed on the retired list by age limit in compiling a new life of Napoleon Bonaparte, and this is likely to be published within a month or two. General Butler prefers to call his book a military study rather than a biography.

The late Madame Modjeska had a strange experience in Ireland. She was playing 'Mary Stuart' in Dublin once, and the audience became so riotously enthusiastic over the violent scene in which Mary denounces Elizabeth that nobody knew what to expect next. The management learned that a scheme was on foot to take the horses from the actress's carriage, draw her through the streets, and have a bonfire, together with other doings dangerously near law-breaking, so Modjeska was smuggled out through a private door and driven about the dark streets for hours. There was a crowd in front of her hotel when she ultimately got there, and they wouldn't go away until the actress made a little speech from her balcony, asking them to withdraw and let her rest.

This is a tribute which Mr. Robert J. Collier paid to his father, the late Mr. Peter Fenelon Collier, in a recent issue of *Collier's Weekly*, which he founded. It is in its way a model obituary notice:—'It was my father's wish to die in harness, and so it came to pass. His gallant spirit went forth to meet death with the same smile with which he faced the New Country as a poor Irish boy over forty years ago. He worked his way to success with his strong hands (as a carpenter once in Dayton, Ohio, and at other humble, honorable tasks), and with his unflinching courage and with his big, open, boyish heart. He was absolutely fearless, yet the gentlest, the most easily moved of men. He had friends in all walks of life, sprinkled all over the world. He worked hard and played hard, and he loved his fellow-men, not theoretically, but with a hearty and personal affection. This business he built, this paper he founded, are now thrust upon my shoulders. It is in memory of the most loving comrade in the world that I dedicate them to clean causes such as those for which he would have had me fight. God grant me strength to be worthy of him whom I loved so much.'

At a meeting in Dunedin last week Mr. A. Grant, the retiring traffic superintendent of the Government Railways, told the following stories about the Premier (Sir J. G. Ward), now on his way to England to attend the Naval Conference:—It would seem (says the *Otago Daily Times*) that in 1880 railway conditions in the Invercargill district made retrenchment necessary, and certain valued servants had to go. It was decided that a man had to be dismissed from the Bluff staff, and Mr. Grant had to choose between two men. One was a married man with seven children, the other was single. In Mr. Grant's estimation the single man was highest; but, despite the fact that he was a capable, promising young fellow, it was finally decided that he must be the official to receive notice. The seven children were not to be gainsaid. The young man left. His name was Joseph Ward, now Sir Joseph Ward, Prime Minister. He promptly entered into another walk of life; was apparently not to be kept down. He succeeded, and shortly afterwards was Mayor of the Bluff and then a member of Parliament. Subsequently Mr. Grant met him in Invercargill, and he got a most cordial handshake from the erstwhile railway clerk. He bore Mr. Grant no resentment—said, in fact, that that dismissal was the best thing that ever happened to him. In due course Mr. J. G. Ward became Minister of Railways, and one day he was travelling to Invercargill. He reached Waipahi, and there his train was held up by a washout on the line. There was only one man at the Waipahi station, and, what with the flood, the blocking of traffic, the confusion, and the presence of the Minister of Railways, he was about the most worried railway servant in Christendom. The Minister saw the difficulty and stepped into the breach, offering to attend to the telegraph instrument. The other man gladly accepted. Mr. Ward remained grimly at the instrument until communication was restored, and did the work fairly well. But he had apparently lost the knack of using the key, for the receiver at Dunedin was inclined to be restless. Just before leaving the office, therefore, the Minister sent a wire on his own account, and this is what a horrified telegraph man deciphered: 'Sorry you are not pleased with my work on the wire; did my best; long out of practice.—J. G. Ward.' 'That was the man,' said Mr. Grant, 'who a few years later was knighted by the King. He showed then that he was a real knight, a true gentleman, and one of Nature's noblemen.'

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