

England's hands. Then the demands made by the Boers and the terms actually conceded to them give a very special point to Ireland's claim and make it indeed irresistible. As one speaker after another at the recent Sydney meeting aptly put it: 'What we have in Australia, what they have in Canada, what we are giving the Boers should be Ireland's too.' It is a point which must appeal to every fair-minded man, whether Liberal or Conservative, and Mr. REDMOND and his colleagues can be safely trusted to make the most effective use of it.

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Another indirect factor in the improved position of Home Rule is the position which the colonies have attained in relation to the Mother Country arising out of this same South African war. It is now notorious that but for the splendid mounted troops supplied so freely by Canada, Australasia, and New Zealand the war would either have still been dragging wearily on, or if it were ended at all it would only have ended by complete and lasting disaster to the British arms. Naturally, therefore, England is in a mood to be particularly civil to the colonies just now. The Colonial Premiers have all been invited to take part in an Imperial Conference, which is now sitting, and though it does not appear likely to have any immediate practical result, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN has intimated that if the Colonies desire it the Mother Country will gladly admit them to direct representation in the Councils of the Empire. There is nothing like striking while the iron is hot, and this then is the time when Colonial Irishmen can most opportunely and most usefully make their voices heard on the great question that is nearest to their hearts. As Senator O'CONNOR eloquently put it at the Sydney meeting:— 'Now when the end of the strain and stress of a great war leaves the English Parliament free to consider other affairs—now is the time when we in Australia, whose voice has been heard, and whose aid has been sought and felt in the building up of the Empire, should be heard and felt when we seek to remove one of the plague-spots in the internal administration of the Empire.'

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To the foregoing considerations must be added the fact that the ordinary chronic grievances of Ireland have been accentuated and aggravated lately in a manner that very forcibly brings out, by way of contrast with the peaceful self-government of the Colonies, the shameful injustice done to Irishmen in their own land. The infamous and outrageous Coercion policy—a policy which is unrelieved by one single justifying or redeeming feature—is being week by week more and more widely and fiercely applied. Only the other day nine fresh districts were declared 'proclaimed,' and, as our Irish readers know, throughout the whole of 'proclaimed' Ireland new crimes are manufactured, public meetings—meetings that would be entirely lawful in any other part of the Empire—are suppressed at the mere nod of a police officer, and trial by jury—the great palladium of our liberties—is abolished. Not content with this, the Government are, by the prosecutions directed against Mr P. McILROY and the editor of the Dublin *Freeman*, making a direct attack on the liberty of the press, while late cables indicate that Dublin Castle, by means of what are known as the DE FREYNE trials, is engaged in a determined attempt to cripple and ultimately destroy the greatest constitutional weapon the Irish people now have for the redress of their grievances, viz., the United Irish League. All this is done too in a country that is admittedly absolutely free from serious crime and in which, as Mr WILLIAM O'BRIEN happily expressed it, 'white gloves are falling like snowflakes' on the judges of the County Courts. Tyranny of this kind is, as Mr O'BRIEN has truly said, an exhibition of weakness and meanness rather than of strength, and its only effect is to crystallise Irish feeling and to weld Irishmen together into one absolutely solid and united body, more determined than ever to carry on the fight until victory is won.

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It is apparent then that recent events have all conspired to solidify the Irish forces and to bring out prominently before the world the glaring injustice which Ireland has so long suffered under, and, as we have said, the outlook for Irish emancipation is most hopeful. With the restoration of Irish unity the cloud that has so long hung over unhappy

Ireland is fast disappearing, and the dawn of a brighter and better day is near at hand. Only let that union be maintained, let Irishmen stand shoulder to shoulder in the old fight, and there is every reason to hope that before many years are over her claim will be allowed and Ireland will have at last obtained the measure of justice and freedom for which she has so long and so nobly struggled.

Notes

Pastoral Letter on Education.

Several of the American Catholic journals published in its entirety the Pastoral Letter on the Education Question issued a few months ago by the Hierarchy of New Zealand. The *New York Freeman's Journal* writes as follows:— 'A magnificent document on Christian Education, the best and ablest we have ever seen, is the Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop and Bishops of New Zealand, given on our first page.'

A Royal Declaration.

The opinion of the average Anglo-Saxon about Spain is that it is a benighted, decadent nation, badly governed, and likely at any moment to become a complete derelict. The people, we are told, are superstitious and narrow-minded, yet what a beautiful contrast we see in the oath taken by the youthful Alfonso XIII, and the declaration made by King Edward VII. The oath taken by the young King of Spain on his accession and coronation was in these words: 'I swear by God, upon those holy relics, to keep the constitution and laws. If I do so, may God reward me. If I fail, may He hold me to account.' Here there is no insult to any person's religion; his advisers do not make him say that some of his subjects are heretics or idolators. If he were to make use of any such offensive terms the whole of the non-Catholic Press of the United Kingdom would ring with denunciation of his bigotry.

The Young King of Spain.

The young Alfonso XIII. comes to the throne of Spain armed with every educational advantage that can grace his royal station. He attained his constitutional majority at sixteen years of age on May 17, and he has been most carefully taught and trained even from infancy. Though he has the slender frame and delicate appearance so frequent among princes of the House of Hapsburg, yet he is not so delicate as he appears to be, and has so far shown no signs of the disease that carried off his father at the early age of twenty-eight. The youthful King succeeds to a heavy load of national troubles. The Carlist movement, the disastrous war in Cuba, and the spread of Republicanism have weakened Spain of late years, and troubles in the succession must arise unless a direct heir is born to the throne. For many years Alfonso XIII. must realise how uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. Yet Spain is far from dead. Though vanquished with ease by the United States, she still plays an important part in the royal game of diplomacy. The importance comes from her position on the Mediterranean. And, strange to say, it is the intrinsically insignificant country of Morocco that is the key of the position. So long as Morocco is independent, no first class Power can establish fortifications along the Mediterranean, and so menace Spain. On this point the interests of Britain and Spain are identical, for such an eventuality would weaken the importance of Gibraltar. Considerable uneasiness has recently been displayed by the Spanish Government with regard to the growing friendliness between Britain and Portugal, which in turn throws some light on our remarks last week touching on Mr Seddon's economiculations about Delagoa Bay. As a matter of fact, the diplomatic relations of the Powers are nearly always as fragile as a house of cards, which a breath may wreck. Into this arena the young King has come. He has capable advisers, and the country is showing signs of the possession of unsuspected resources. Under wise government Spain may yet regain a position worthy of her history.

Old Age Pensions.

There seems, unfortunately, much reason to believe that a number of persons are drawing old age pensions without possessing the necessary qualification of poverty. It is very evident that the Department feels some uneasiness on the subject, for it is understood that a large number of cases are under unsuspected observation, and that some prosecutions may follow. No doubt this was to be expected. The magistrates, as well as the public, were much impressed by the novelty of the sight of the old men and women hobbling up for examination as to their means, and probably in the first blush of enthusiastic beneficence inquiries were not too scrupulously pushed home. But it is evident that on its