

Mr. Asquith's offer it could only be because they preferred shooting to voting. He was certain that the first British soldier or bluejacket, killed by the Orangemen would raise an explosion that the Tories little comprehended. Viewing all the circumstances, Mr. Churchill reaches the natural conclusion that Mr. Asquith's offer is on principle the last one the Government can or ought to make—a declaration which will, as we have said, be welcomed by the Irish people and their friends throughout the world.

The question still remains whether even that offer ought not now to be withdrawn. In a statement made in the House of Commons on Monday, Mr. Asquith intimated that if the Government proposals were to be rejected, it would be a waste of time to formulate details of discussion—and if detailed proposals are not submitted it is difficult to see how the proffered concession can ever be given effect to. It is no doubt true that the Government has strengthened its position by showing the extreme lengths to which it was willing to go in order to bring about conciliation; but, in our judgment, the price to be paid for this advantage is too high. It was never pretended by the Government that the proposal for the temporary exclusion of Ulster was necessary, or called for on its merits, or was in any way desirable except in so far as it might be the means of securing agreement between the parties. If it had been successful in bringing about a settlement by consent, it is, perhaps, arguable that the offer was worth while. But when the parties in whose interest it is advanced scornfully reject it: when 'Ulster' will have none of it and utterly refuses to take advantage of it: and when its only effect is to handicap and cripple the Home Rule scheme—then, it seems to us, the whole case for the concession falls to the ground. After the way in which Mr. Asquith's olive branch has been received, he is fairly justified in withdrawing it: and we are still in hopes that he will feel it his duty to drop the proposal.

The position, at any rate, is now clear, that the Bill will certainly go through: The Government is firm on the point: and it has the weapon for accomplishing its purpose ready to its hand. The fate and fortune of the Home Rule Bill will be the first and, in a sense, the final test of the utility of the Parliament Act. That Act is part of the British Constitution. It was passed to be used. And after the historic struggle through which they passed in their endeavor to place it on the Statute Book it is safe to say that there is not a Liberal, Labor, or Nationalist member of the House of Commons who is not resolved to use it.

Notes

The Reformation and the Blessed Virgin

At the City Temple on Christmas Day the Rev. R. J. Campbell referred to the new sacredness attributed to motherhood and to child-life by the birth of Christ. It is to be regretted, he said, that countries in which the doctrines of the Reformation have prevailed accord such comparatively little honor to the woman through whom this blessing came. It would do us no harm to call Mary blessed more often and more reverently than we do. The mother of Jesus could have been no ordinary woman. She has done more for her sex than all other influences put together. And the worship of the Redeemer of the world as a little child has done more to soften men's hard hearts and lead them to perceive the beauty and sweetness of childhood, with its suggestion of a higher and holier world, than any single spiritual force that could be named.

The Significance of the Dissolution Proposals

The full significance of the Unionist clamor for a dissolution and general election may be realised when

it is remembered that in the event of a dissolution during a session the operation of the Parliament Act ceases, and measures which have come within its scope have to go through all their stages over again. This was made clear by Mr. Percy Illingworth, M.P., Chief Whip of the Liberal Party, in a speech of the first importance delivered at Clayton, near Bradford, just prior to the opening of the present session. 'The next session,' he said, 'would be a great session in the annals of Parliament, and the Liberal Party and the Government were at last able to say that by the beneficent working of the Parliament Act the results would be reaped of fifty, nay, a hundred years of Liberal endeavor. Any mishap which might occur next session would be nothing less than a national calamity. It would make null all the progress that had been made with Home Rule and the other measures which were going forward under the Parliament Act.'

He did not know whether it was realised that the Parliament Act provided that in the event of a dissolution during a session its operation ceased, and was of no effect, and even in the event of a Government victory at the polls all those measures which came within the scope of the Parliament Act would have to go through all their stages over another three years. 'I need hardly say,' observed Mr. Illingworth, 'that such a result is not a result which I have in contemplation, or the Government, but it might ensue were the Government to experience a serious reverse in the lobbies. . . . This is going to be a great and remarkable session. Passions may run high, and no doubt they will, but the Prime Minister, supported by a united party, will fulfil the pledges which he has given to the nation.'

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

The St. Joseph's branch of the H.A.C.B. Society attended St. Patrick's Basilica, South Dunedin, in a body on Sunday, and approached the Holy Table.

There was Solemn High Mass in St. Patrick's Basilica, South Dunedin, on Tuesday, in honor of Ireland's national apostle. His Lordship Bishop Verdon presided in the sanctuary: the celebrant was Rev. Father Liston, deacon Rev. Father Morkane, sub-deacon Rev. Father Collins, and master of ceremonies Rev. Father Buckley. There were also present in the sanctuary the Right Rev. Mgr. O'Leary and Rev. Fathers Delany, D. O'Neill, and Kaveney. The Right Rev. Mgr. O'Leary preached an eloquent and spirited panegyric on St. Patrick. The music of the Mass was devotionally sung by the children. There were large congregations at the early Masses at six and seven a.m., as well as at the High Mass at 9.30.

At the eleven o'clock Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday, Rev. Father Kavanagh preached an impressive and moving discourse on St. Patrick, and on the traditions of the Irish race. After sketching the life and labors of the national apostle, the preacher went on to remind his hearers of all that their ancestors had suffered for the faith. He concluded with an eloquent appeal for the Ireland of Catholic tradition; that all sons and daughters of the Island of Saints might help to preserve not so much the Ireland of material prosperity, the Ireland of legend and story, the Ireland of dauntless courage and sparkling wit: but above and beyond all else, the Ireland of steadfast faithfulness to the Gospel of Christ and the teaching of St. Patrick.

The annual meeting of the A.M.D.G. Guild of the Perpetual Adoration was held at the residence of Mrs. Kennedy, Roslyn, on Thursday, March 12. The council in their annual report say:—An exhibition of church goods was held at St. Dominic's Priory on Friday, January 23. The sewing meetings during 1913 were very poorly attended, in fact the attendance was the lowest on record since the Guild was started. It is to be hoped the meetings to be held every Thurs-