

in the fighting line, or waiting the signal that calls them to the front, the Irish non-Catholics on active service, or ready for battle at a moment's notice, should be very nearly 25,000.

I do not believe Sir John French has 5000 men drawn from the ranks of Irish non-Catholic Unionists under his command to-day. Perhaps he has not 3000. I do not suppose he will have 10,000—that is to say, 40 per cent. of their fair proportion on the present *Irish Catholic basis*—if the war lasts six months, or even twelve months. And if Catholic—or, let me say, Nationalist—Ireland under existing conditions furnishes the British Empire with a proportion of real fighting men from two-and-a-half to five times greater than the Irish Tory standard, what might not the rulers of the Empire expect as the result of a call upon Nationalist Ireland's warlike resources if the majority of this country's people were asked to enrol themselves for 'foreign service' in defence of an Empire within whose boundaries they were self-governed freemen in their own land? Even as matters are, the contrast is most remarkable and suggestive; I understand the facts have already impressed themselves deeply on the minds of men whose intellects are not of the Balfour-Carson-Barrie type.

Meagre as the news from the gory 'theatre of war' has been, we have learned enough to realise that much of the brunt of the fighting has fallen upon the Irish soldiers. The bravest deeds yet recorded are to their credit—although many 'leading' Tory papers have been guilty of the incredible meanness of bowdlerising their letters from the front and of wholly suppressing narratives relating to their exploits. Yet only a few weeks ago those Irishmen of the South, East, and West—and of the Nationalist North as well—were hurrying from their harvest fields and mountain sides and from the streets of their towns and cities to the ports of Ireland in response to the 'call to arms.' Thousands, and tens of thousands, of them poured from all parts into Dublin and Cork, Waterford and Limerick. They marched through the streets singing 'A nation once again' and cheering for 'Redmond and Home Rule'; but they did not seek for turgid columns of newspaper advertisement of their bravery; neither did they expect wild eulogiums of their marvellous physique and their capacity for 'swinging' a mile or two without displaying symptoms of fatigue. Thousand after thousand they filed from the fields and streets to the barracks, from the barracks to the quays and the ships' decks, and thence right to the heart and centre of the World's Greatest War—not to learn the difference between the stock and barrel of a rifle in a pleasant camping-ground, but to meet in 'battle's grim embrace' three times, or ten times, their numbers of the Kaiser's well-trained and self-devoted legions. And now thousands of them are

Rotting on the Fields of France

—some of them may survive as wounded prisoners in the hands of relentless enemies—while the campaign of hatred and calumny against their kindred goes on at home as remorselessly as ever.

Really, the tendency to obscure, ignore, and hide away the real facts of 'the military situation' so far as Irishmen's practical and definite connection with the present war is concerned, must be resisted at last. It is a tendency that has, apparently, proved too strong for many Irish Nationalists themselves. Further yielding to it, in the face of current blatancy, pretence, and humbug, would be at once ridiculous and cowardly. Irish Nationalists have already done many times more than might be expected from them were their country as free as Canada, Australia, or South Africa. What has been done by those who have gone right to the front without calling like infuriated stentors upon the wide world to witness their doings is merely an earnest of what the Irish Nation can do—depleted and weakened as our population have been under the system of misgovernment against which they have battled for centuries—and are battling even yet. When that degrading and hideous system has been finally abolished—Well, the future is 'in the lap of the gods.'

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH.'

(A Weekly Instruction specially written for the *N.Z. Tablet* by 'GHIMEL.')

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THE BANNS OF MARRIAGE.

(1) Why are banns of marriage proclaimed in the Catholic Church? (2) What are the regulations as to the times and places of the proclamation? (3) Must the banns be proclaimed in all cases of Catholic marriages? If not, under what circumstances and conditions is exemption allowed?

Answer to (1). The publication in the church of the names of persons intending marriage is designed to discover any impediments that may exist to the celebration of that marriage. It is quite possible for the contracting parties to be, quite unknowingly, related within the forbidden degrees of kindred; it is possible, too, that one of the parties is already married, though the other is not aware of it. In both these cases (two out of many) the simple announcement of the proposed marriage would prevent unhappiness and, in the second case, a grave wrong.

The Council of Trent (16th century) introduced special legislation in regard to this matter. Its object was to put a stop to clandestine (secret) marriages. The omission of the banns does not affect the validity of the marriage, only its lawfulness.

Answer to (2). (a) The parish priest or his deputy makes the announcement in church, usually before or after the sermon. According to the Roman Ritual he is to announce the names of each of the parties, the names of their parents, place of birth or residence. He also states whether the proclamation is the first, second, or third. He is to warn those present that they are under a serious obligation to make known to him as soon as possible any impediment to the proposed marriage. (b) The publication takes place on three consecutive Fast Days (Sundays or Holidays of Obligation), generally, though not necessarily, at the principal Mass. The publication is to be made by the parish priest of the parties, or, supposing they reside in different parishes, by their respective parish priests. In the case of unsettled persons the banns are published where the marriage is to take place, and in the place or places of their birth. In the case of mixed marriages, the general law of the Church forbids publication of the banns. In some places, however, the practice is tolerated, though even here no mention must be made of the religious belief of the non-Catholic party. (c) The obligation of making known the existence of any impediment to an intended marriage is a grave one. The parish priest should be informed of the supposed impediment as soon as possible. It is for him to investigate the statements made and if needs be to report the matter to the bishop, who will decide whether or not a dispensation can or cannot, should or should not, be granted. There is no obligation, however, to make known 'professional' or 'official' secrets,—those acquired, for example, by lawyers, physicians, and especially by confessors in the discharge of their duties.

Answer to (3). There are several reasons recognised by Canon Law for the omission of the banns: fear of a malicious thwarting of the intended marriage; notable condition of age, or condition of life; peril of the good name of either party, etc. These are also omitted in the case of revalidation of marriage. In all cases the dispensing authority must be satisfied that there is a grave reason for the dispensation.

It falls to the bishop in the first instance to dispense with the publication of the banns. He as a rule grants this faculty to a certain number of parish priests, and may even grant it to all of them.

Usually a small fee is charged, not of course for the dispensation itself, but to cover expenses. These fees, like many others, must be devoted by the bishop to works of charity.