

Current Topics

Mr. Redmond on Terms of Peace

Last week we referred to the serious danger involved in a premature and merely patched-up peace, which would settle nothing but would ultimately lead to even worse horrors than those we are now enduring. Apparently Mr. John Redmond fully shares this view. Mr. T. P. O'Connor has contributed an article to some of the leading New York papers in which he quotes a number of opinions on the question of peace terms which he has gathered from representative men. Amongst these Mr. John Redmond writes as follows:—'I hope we shall have no talk of peace so long as there is a single German soldier left on the soil of Belgium, France, or Alsace-Lorraine.' And that is the man whom a Christchurch paper, having nothing better to do in this great crisis, spends its time in vilifying as 'unpatriotic.'

An Echo From the Past

Apropos of the centenary of the Battle of Waterloo, the *Otago Daily Times* has published as a supplement a four-page reprint of the *London Times* of June 22, 1815, giving the Duke of Wellington's despatch and the official bulletin regarding the great fight. The reprint also contains a number of century-old advertisements, some of which make interesting reading. Here is one: 'Society of Ireland. To-morrow, the 23rd of June, 1815, will be held at the New London Tavern, Cheapside, the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Society for Promoting the Gospel in Ireland. Breakfast at 7 o'clock, the Chair is to be taken at 8 precisely. The principal objects of this institution are to establish schools in Ireland for teaching the native Irish language, and to employ persons to read the Holy Scriptures in Irish to their neighbors.' Alas for Baptist dreams and hopes. The 'Society of Ireland' is now no more; and Ireland is still loyal to the Faith of St. Patrick.

The Advance on Lemberg

The violent German offensive in Galicia, which last week received a temporary hold-up and check, has now been resumed; and at the moment of writing the cables would seem to indicate that General Von Mackensen has some prospect of fulfilling his promise to the Kaiser that he would be in possession of Lemberg by July 1. A refreshing feature of the Russian account is the candor with which it acknowledges the German superiority in the last six weeks' fighting, and readily admits that the Russians have been very badly knocked about. 'Some of the German troops engaged against our Third Army,' says the Russian official 'Eye-Witness,' 'were reserve divisions from the neighborhood of Verdun. The Austrians kept up a ceaseless, futile cannonade. They hardly placed one Russian battery, and their progress in range-finding was long and expensive. It was a different story when the Germans undertook the initiative. The difference in accuracy between the Austrians and Germans was soon clear, and the Russian regiments suffered terribly. The right wing of the Russian advance in the Carpathians was outflanked, and had to come backward. Half a corps rectified its position without serious loss, but the other division had the greatest difficulty in fighting its way through, and lost heavily. The Germans scored a big success in technique, and they wiped out a good number of lives.' The reader has at least the satisfaction of knowing that he is getting the truth—whether it is welcome or not—when a belligerent thus frankly concedes that his enemy has proved superior.

One of the most notable things in the war has been the rapid alternate advances and withdrawals in the eastern theatre, and the Russian retirements have in most cases well served the purpose of the Grand Duke. It is hardly possible, however, to extract any such consolation from the present retreat, for the Grand Duke has been pushed rapidly back in the course of a few

weeks from a point within sight of Cracow to the position which he occupied precisely nine months ago. It must, to put it mildly, be somewhat disappointing; and any other troops but the Russians would be liable to be seriously disheartened and demoralised. In the matter of supporting the trials of retreat, however, there is no army in the field which has a tradition equal to that of the Russian Army. The Russians have been so accustomed in their wars to lure their enemy on, and so well trained in the art of drawing back to leap better, that their loss of *moral*, even in the case of a very real retreat, is almost negligible. It is no surprise, therefore, to be told that they are still firm, and determined to make a strong stand at Grodek and at Lemberg; and we may safely take it that the statement is something more than mere empty talk.

Belfast Recruiting Methods

Some time ago a correspondent forwarded to us a copy of the *Dublin Evening News* in which was reprinted from the *Derry Weekly News* a story so incredible that we did not feel justified in commenting upon it until the astounding statements it contained were definitely confirmed. The statement of the *Derry Weekly News* was to the effect that Mr. P. J. Kelly, of 8 Cottage row, Rosemount, Londonderry, seeing that engineers were wanted in the army, offered himself as a recruit. He was accepted and proceeded to Belfast. From that city he was sent on to Antrim, where he went through his trade test as a stonemason. Having received his kit he returned to headquarters at Belfast. Here an officer in a large room put a series of questions to him, the answers being written down. When Mr. Kelly was asked what was his religion, he replied, 'Roman Catholic.' 'I thought so,' explained the officer, drawing his pen through the entries he had made. 'You must go back to Derry,' added the officer; 'there is no vacancy here.' Mr. Kelly was astonished and asked questions. He was told that he could remain in Belfast only by changing his religion. His appropriate reply was that he would not prove a faithful soldier if he were unfaithful to his religion. This remarkable story has now been authoritatively substantiated. The action of the officer as described in the *Derry Weekly News*, says the *Liverpool Catholic Times*, 'was so extraordinary that we have deemed it well to make enquiry of the editor ourselves, and we are assured by him of the truth of his statement.'

It would seem, moreover, that the case of Mr. P. J. Kelly is not an isolated one. In a letter written by Rev. J. J. McGlade, P.P., Limavady, which appears in the *Derry Journal* of April 21, it is stated that the enrolment of Catholic recruits as Protestants is not a novelty in Belfast. Father McGlade complains that two Catholics from the district, brothers named Kane, aged respectively fifteen and eighteen years, 'were received with open arms into the Ulster Volunteers in defiance of military age regulations and enrolled as Protestants.' When the boys returned home on holidays, at Easter, they denied that they had entered themselves as Protestants, and the parents naturally are indignant, insisting that the elder, who is now of military age, shall be transferred to a Catholic regiment, and that the younger, who is still under military age, shall be restored to them. The general facts in these cases seem to be beyond question, and Mr. R. Dawson Bates, Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Council, openly acknowledges that Catholics who seek to be enrolled in the Ulster Division are treated as ineligible. The action of the Ulster Unionists in thus enlisting a division of troops on the distinct condition that only those of a specified political faith and a defined religious creed are to be admitted, is clearly *ultra vires* and in contravention alike of army tradition and regulations. The matter cannot and will not be allowed to remain where it is; and representations are being made for an official investigation, and for the prompt suppression of the Ulster Unionists' bigoted and high-handed tactics.