

lines by Everard Owen, published not long ago in the *London Times*:

There is a hill in England,
Green fields and a school I know,
Where the balls fly fast in summer,
And the whispering elm trees grow,
A little hill, a dear hill,
And the playing fields below.

There is a hill in Flanders,
Heaped with a thousand slain,
Where the shells fly night and noontide
And the ghosts that died in vain,
A little hill, a hard hill
To the souls that died in pain.

There is a hill in Jewry,
Three crosses pierce the sky,
On the midmost He is dying
To save all those who die,
A little hill, a kind hill
To souls in jeopardy.

Signs of Religious Slackening

Apropos of the comments which we have made elsewhere on the subject of the influence of the war upon religion, the following remarks of an English paper, the *Inquirer*, furnish significant if guarded confirmation of the statement there made that the first religious fervor following upon the war has practically died out in England. Writing under the caption, 'Are we getting tired?' the *Inquirer* observes: 'When we ask the question, Are we getting tired? we do not refer to tired bodies. They do not greatly matter, if that is the price we have to pay for unlimited faithfulness to hard and unusual duties. We are thinking of tired minds and spirits that have grown weary. We began our national task eighteen months ago in a mood of high resolve, which cleansed us from many evil things. Our commonplace lives were flooded with moral idealism. We began this effort in a mood of religious exaltation, feeling that God required of us to dare all and to risk all for what we knew to be right. Who are we that we should complain of the length of our task or grow tired under its strain? We must see to it that we keep through all the length of days the cheerfulness and courage, the quiet trust and steadfast faith, which will make the final victory, when it comes, as religious as the initial vow.'

The University of Oxford, which should be representative of England's best, reflects the same mood, and the new term at Oxford finds the editor of *The Varsity* in pessimistic mood. 'The grand gesture of devotion of seventeen months ago, is it ending in the flourish of a bargainer's palm?' he asks. 'This degeneration of the country's spirit is fully exemplified in Oxford. It is true that, to speak plainly, we have not restored the irreligion, the self-indulgence, the merely personal ambitions that made this University before the war the most corrupt of pagan communities. But we equally lack the nobler spirit that even then shone somewhere, sometime, that in the first terms of war, with cynicism and affectations dropped, was brilliant. . . . Yet it is to us and those like us, a little leisured and a little removed from the actual clangour of war, that the nation must look for the principles of its rebuilding.'

The Want of Leaders

Writing on 'The Fruits of Amateurism' in the *Fortnightly Review*, Dr. E. J. Dillon deploras the lack of great leaders on the side of the Allies, and particularly amongst the British military ranks. 'British sea power,' he says, 'is the one impassable barrier between us and defeat. On whatever measure of success that advantage can secure for us we may safely reckon. But beyond that the perspective is cheerless. The generative sources of this desperate plight are many. Chief among them is the absence

of genuine leaders, men of strong will, high purpose, and true insight, who, like Samson of yore, are able to pull down the temple of forms and set the nation on the solid ground of realities. Another cause is the lack of an efficient internal organisation which, run by skilled workers, would have enabled us to dispense with a genius at our head. And this is where the Germans, who are as destitute of a commanding personality as the Allies, score heavily over us.'

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Similar sentiments are entertained in other quarters; and they have found expression in an insistent call on the part of the English press for the re-establishment of Lord Fisher at the Admiralty. 'The most serious handicap of the Allies is the lack of war-genius. They have got everything except a great war-brain. Does such a brain exist? It does,' says Mr. James Douglas. 'There is in England a great master of war. He happens to be a seaman, like Nelson. Because he is a seaman, he has been side-tracked. Lord Rosebery once described Lord Fisher as "the Kitchener of the Navy." It is a curious compliment, but it will serve. If I were asked to pick out the man to win the war I should without hesitation choose Lord Fisher. There is not a war-brain in Germany to match him. If he were a German he would have been in supreme command. The Germans know war-genius when they see it. We are afraid of war-genius. When the history of this war is written it will be recorded that the British were afraid of Lord Fisher.' 'The Kaiser knows,' adds Mr. Douglas. 'On the eve of the war the Kaiser said to an American financier, "Fisher is the most dangerous enemy Germany has." To another personage the Kaiser said, "Germany has vulnerable spots, and that damned fellow Fisher knows them." Nevertheless, by some kind of witchcraft, Germany has been delivered from the menace of her most dangerous enemy: The one man who can win the war is locked up in Victory House (the irony of it!) and kept busy with stinks instead of strategy.' 'Let Lord Fisher be restored to the Navy, and let whatever happened last May be forgotten,' says the *Observer*. 'This war is too grave and its needs are too urgent for convention and etiquette to count. Lord Fisher is the only man living who has beaten Germany at all points in everything that he was called upon to do. He is the creator of the Dreadnought Navy—of the construction and the gunnery which gave us the mastery of the seas from the moment that Major Churchill gave the decisive signal for concentration in the North Sea before the enemy could strike. High as Mr. Balfour's influence stands to-day, he can make it greater yet and command the enthusiasm and gratitude of the country by bringing back Lord Fisher.'

DIocese of Dunedin

Mr. J. A. Scott, Editor of the *Tablet*, who has been on a health trip to Australia for the past couple of months, returned to Dunedin last week.

There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from the 11 o'clock Mass until after Vespers on Sunday at St. Joseph's Cathedral. In the evening there was the usual procession, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Mr C. Little, president of the particular council of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Auckland, who is on a visit to Dunedin, addressed the committee of St. Joseph's conference of the society on Sunday evening, and also gave an interesting address on the work of the society in Auckland to the members of the conference on Tuesday evening in St. Joseph's Hall.

The St. Patrick's conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, South Dunedin, was favored at their usual fortnightly meeting, on Tuesday of last week, with a visit from Mr. Little, president of St. Patrick's conference (men's branch), Auckland, and president of the particular council in that city. At the invitation of the president (Miss Cameron), Mr. Little gave the