

Current Topics

How the Germans Attacked the Nunzio

Certain journals, usually well-informed as to fairy tales, reported that the Spanish ship *Reina Victoria Eugenia*, conveying Monsignor Lauri, titular Archbishop of Ephesus, to Peru, was hit by German submarines, notwithstanding that she was flying the Papal flag. The facts were that entering the Straits of Gibraltar in a storm, she collided with an Italian steamer which sank on the following day. The *Reina Eugenia* was badly damaged, and had to put in at Cadiz for repairs before proceeding on her way.

Treatment of the Dominions Compared with that of Ireland

England has lent to her self-governing colonies the following sums up to the dates specified:—Canada, March 31, 1916, £194,011,439; Australia (Commonwealth), June 30, 1915, £22,586,725 (war loan to date, £14,842,105); States of Australia, June 30, 1915, £342,925,669; New Zealand, March 31, 1916, £109,637,397; South Africa, March 31, 1916, £150,823,734. Naturally a member of one of the Dominions deriving such aid from England should be a whole-hearted Imperialist. And just as naturally an Irishman, seeing practically nothing advanced to his country for public works, its currency drained by a banking system in favor of England, and, in violation of a solemn treaty, an annual robbery of several millions perpetrated, cannot be at the same time a good Irishman and an ardent Imperialist. With reason did Byron say that the union was that of a wolf with a lamb. However it seems certain that never before were the Irish people so wide awake to their national interests as now. For that we have to thank Maxwell and his Prussian methods, which opened the eyes of a slumbering race.

The German Centre Party

What Mathias Erzberger said in his famous July speech is largely a matter of conjecture still, but as one writer puts it, "he took the lid off the seething political kettle" in Germany. A Copenhagen dispatch says that he attacked the Admiralty and Pan-Germans as the great obstacle to peace, advocated peace without annexations or indemnities, and urged a parliamentary Government. According to the *New-Yorker Staats Zeitung* his speech committed a majority of his party not only to immediate reform of the Prussian ballot laws but also to reforms affecting the whole Empire, and "flatly came out for a peace by common consent of such nations as have not completely lost their senses." The minority Socialists have long been in opposition to the Government, and the consequences of the breaking away of the Centrists and the majority Socialists may be gathered from the following figures, which show the distribution of seats in the present Reichstag: "The Socialists have 110 votes, Centrists 91, Conservatives 41, National Liberals 44, Radicals 45, Poles 18, Free Conservatives 12, Anti-Semites 3, Economic Union 9, other parties and independents 24. The Socialists and Centrists when united have thus 201 votes, or a bare majority in the Reichstag." (*New York Times*.) From the American press it seems that Erzberger is strongly supported in South Germany and in Austria. One thing seems fairly certain now: the party in favor of peace without annexations and indemnities is growing more powerful. In every country the people who are suffering from the war are anxious for peace. What is by no means clear is that those who are making money out of it want peace at all.

My Country 'Tis of Thee!

Nobody doubts that our New Zealand ladies are inspired by splendid patriotism. They were we believe the first civilised women to get the franchise, and we witness the beneficent result thereof in the wisdom of the ways of New Zealand majorities, in those expres-

sions of popular opinion which are always dictated by right reason and never by any chance by hysterical catch-cries or sentiment. Not in New Zealand. Nobody would be believed, if going to Patagonia, he were to report that when New Zealand ladies met in patriotic conclave the discussions were limited to the latest fashion in hats. Nor do we suppose that we will be believed when we state that the patriotic ladies of Dunedin have now come to think that they are serving their country by taking up a collection for Dr. Barnardo's Homes. It is incredible; but it is also a fact. Patriotism and a collection for the "Crows' Nest" have become synonymous. We understand that a Catholic lady suggested that if the collection were made, a proportion of it should go to Father Bans' Homes. And, again, nobody would believe us if we told them that that reasonable suggestion was accepted. This time the unbelievers would be right. A collection for the Crows' Nest was quite all right—but Father Bans! oh, dear me, don't mention him. It is a queer world. For the information of Catholic ladies who might in their innocence be induced to help on Dr. Barnardo's Homes, we will explain what such co-operation would mean.

Dr. Barnardo laid down the law very clearly that his Homes were Protestant Homes: "Your child, if admitted, will be brought up in the Protestant faith, and will not be allowed to attend a Roman Catholic chapel or to be visited by a Roman Catholic priest." He said that he did not want Catholic children, but poor women with hunger in their eyes would come and beg him to take the children. Even granting that this was perfectly correct, it often happened that such parents afterwards found work, and were able to live. Then they wanted back the children—wanted them all the more because in their woe they had trafficked with their conscience and put them in a Protestant home. They were then shown an agreement, which they had been driven to sign by hunger, to the effect that they would not get the children back until they were 21 years of age, "except with the willing consent of the managers." And if the managers did consent—as well they might—it became necessary to pay at the rate of six shillings a week for the whole time the children had been maintained in the home. The English law recognised no such agreement. But Dr. Barnardo had a fixed principle never to give up a child on the ground of religion. In these circumstances the ordinary working man was powerless. If the case was taken up—well, Dr. Barnardo had an income of £200,000 a year, and could risk a law-suit, and often did. Dr. Barnardo's Homes were a source of great anxiety to Cardinal Vaughan for many years, and if after long struggles a compromise was arranged between the Catholics and the Doctor, the latter absolutely declined at all times to give up a child once received into the actual Homes. His utmost concession was a promise to send back Catholic children who came to the receiving wards, and even this was guarded by several clauses of limitation.

Homes like Dr. Barnardo's are known in Ireland as "Crows' Nests"; and in Ireland the parent who would, even under stress of direst want, send a child to such Homes was an object of horror to the neighbors. The spirit that enabled starving mothers to kiss the Cross and die rather than deny their faith for food in the famine days was sufficient to counteract the proselytising propensities of Irish "Soupers." In England it was not so, and there were many cases in which weak parents—God alone knows with what extenuating circumstances—sent their hungry children to Protestant homes. That Dr. Barnardo's mission was the occasion of much danger to the faith of poor Catholics is certain. That the character of his homes was rampantly Protestant is also certain. And it is for these institutions that the Catholic ladies who are active members of the Patriotic League have been asked to collect. That such an undertaking is in any way patriotic we cannot see; that it is entirely un-Catholic

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