

Australian people taught them that Dr. Mannix stood for real freedom and for the liberty of the individual which the militarists were aiming at destroying? Therefore, with an unconscious and colossal humorlessness that eclipses the Ballykelly Reading Room for ever the Sydney press decided to snub Dr. Mannix by ignoring him! Wake up, Ballykelly! you have lost the record at last.

The Pope's Discourse to the Cardinals

In the January number of *La Civiltà Cattolica* we read the full text of the Pope's reply to the address of the Sacred College on the Feast of the Nativity. It is a document of intense interest, in which the Holy Father expresses in terms of poignant grief his disappointment at the hostile reception with which his invitation to conclude an honorable peace was received by the nations. With dignity and emotion he tells the cardinals how painful it was for him to see his paternal efforts to stop the suicidal slaughter ignored by the belligerents:—

"From the most authoritative tribunes certain principles of agreement, such as were likely to forward a common understanding, had been announced. We simply collected them in order to invite the heads of the States at war to make them the subject of special consideration with the sole object of more speedily realising that desire which is hidden in the hearts of all. When, however, we recognised that We were not welcomed or that We were not spared calumnies and suspicions, We were compelled to regard Ourselves as the 'sign set for contradiction.' We comforted Ourselves with the reflection that as Our Note was not immediately productive of good results it might be compared to the grain of corn which, as the Divine Master tells us, does not sprout forth until destroyed by the heat of the ground. Moreover, We took comfort from the knowledge that We had the right and the duty to continue in the world the peaceful and peace-making mission of Jesus Christ. No obstacle and no danger seems capable of undoing Our determination to fulfil Our duty as the representative of the Prince of Peace. But we do not deny that the sight of the once flourishing nations driven into a paroxysm of mutual destruction and the fear of the civil suicide of Europe impelled us to ask sadly: When and how will this terrible tragedy end. Your Eminence's words (Cardinal Vanutelli) are most apposite, and We appreciate the opportuneness of your wisdom when, considering the present conflict in the light of faith, you are led by the same faith to the conclusion that the calamities will not end until men return to God. . . . Let those who wish to see God's avenging hand arrested turn then to Him: let unhappy humanity come to reason: return, return to the Lord! As the unbridled lust of the people once plunged two cities into a pool of fire, so in our own day public impiety and atheism elevated into mock civilisation, have plunged the world into a sea of blood. But across the darkness that envelops the earth the light of faith still shines clear and tranquil. Let men raise their obstinate eyes towards its beneficent rays. We, mindful of Our sacred duty, call upon the children of Our age in the words of the ancient prophets: return, return to the Lord."

When we consider calmly the whole story of the reception of the Pope's Note and the insults offered by atheists and bigots to the Father of Christendom, we can readily realise how intense grief that humanity should have fallen so low, and that, after four years of scourging, common-sense or common decency had not yet been vouchsafed to the so-called leaders of the people, filled the Holy Father's heart. What is the story? The Pope issued an appeal founded on the statements of the belligerents themselves. That appeal was ignored by England and France, and by the slavish press, incapable, as we have daily proof, of a high thought or an honest impulse. The august author of the Note was derided and mocked even as

his Master was mocked by the Jews. And then, when the insults and mockery and abuse had subsided in Orange rags and more pretentious dailies, we had a Note from President Wilson, almost identical with the Pope's, hailed with applause and delight by the mercenary sycophants who compose the daily lies. We had, a little later, that elegant phrase from Lloyd George, by which he approved of the attitude of the greatest bigots and put himself on a level with them. We had finally a revelation of the fact that a plot was formed, as a price for Italy's coming into the war, whereby the Pope should be obstructed in his efforts to stay the slaughter. It is a shameful story, and God knows it is no credit to ourselves or to our Allies. It proves clearly that penance and humility are ideals quite beyond us as a people.

Hardship in Britain and Ireland

We have been continually assured that the submarine menace was well in hand, in face of the fact that the man in the street could see for himself that it was nothing of the kind! Now and then the veil is withdrawn and we get a glimpse of the truth. On March 16 we read among the cables a statement from the *Times* that goes to show that the peril is very great and that it is at present a menace of very serious proportions indeed. We are now told that if measures to cope with it are not quickly available there is great danger for the Empire. Further, the press is loud in condemnation of the Government for concealing the real facts from the people. The submarine menace is certainly serious, but to our way of thinking the policy of feeding the people on lies is still worse. The truth must come out sooner or later, and the temper of the people of Great Britain has already been overstrained by a Government that has shown no reason why it should be trusted blindly. As a matter of elementary common sense ought not a Government which depends on people who have been in league with the enemy or who are Prussians by birth be called to account very summarily? The food problem is becoming acute and the shipping tonnage is decreasing as the months go on. In Ireland we are told that a pound of butter now costs 2s 10d, and no more than a pound of sugar is allowed for two persons each week. If the Government had its sweet will Ireland should be deprived of food to feed England. However, the Sinn Feiners are seeing to that. And because they are determined not to let Ireland starve we are regaled at present with laughable tales about Irish outrages which are in no sense outrages. There are all sorts of rumors about an impending crisis, of what sort we know not. One thing is certain: the leaders have climbed down considerably since the days when they were going to remove Turkey from the map and to banish the Kaiser. And we should not be at all surprised to learn one of these mornings that a settlement is at hand. The present outlook is gloomy. It is more serious than it has been since the early days of the war. But the dawn follows the darkest hour. President Wilson still remains sane among the shipwrecked statesmen. A well-informed correspondent writes to say that he does not believe that the Sinn Feiners had anything at all to do with the recent cattle-driving and similar Irish "outrages." Clare has always been a hot-bed of trouble, and from what we know of the Sinn Fein spirit its object is to restrain the people at present. Apropos of "Irish outrages" the following passage from an Irish paper deserves notice: "Sometime ago the steamship *Hare* was sunk off the Irish coast. The crew of the vessel were mostly Irishmen, the captain was a Briton. The *Independent* published an interview with the captain, who stated:—

"They saw five of the crew clinging to an upturned boat, but he and his comrades, he said, were unable to render assistance, because their boat could hold no more and was in danger of being swamped."

The following appeared in the next issue:—"We should like to ask whether the boat to which the British captain put off from the sinking ship was a boat *capable*

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