

THE IRISH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SOME FACTS ABOUT ITS WORKING

The agitation to establish a system of higher education in Ireland suitable to Catholic-Nationalists lasted over sixty years—being formulated many years before the modern Home Rule movement (writes W. G. Fallon in the *Edinburgh Catholic Herald*). A remarkable feature of the University agitation was the interest the mass of the Irish people displayed in it from the time the 'demand' was included in the programme of the national movement proper. For, previous to that date, the failure of Cardinal Newman's great scheme had led to a general collapse of interest.

It is, therefore, by no means difficult to believe that the policy and career of the new Irish University is receiving a larger measure of public attention than is usually bestowed on universities. Certainly, Trinity College never received this encouragement in all its long career. Although the beautiful buildings in College Green compel attention, to the Irishman Trinity is to-day a featureless institution. This may be regrettable, nevertheless it is a fact. If one comparison is permissible, it has been observed that the *quality* of the 'National' student is undoubtedly better than that of the undergraduate of Trinity. This is especially noticeable in the case of the medical and practical faculties.

The professors of the National University have also come into the limelight. They can be seen on the public platform as well as in the lecture halls, and several are engaging their talents in solving the many-sided problem of how to rebuild their country. They acknowledge their responsibility. That, added to the fact that the National is an institution governed by the Irish people themselves makes it an object of tender regard, for an institution so governed is unique in Ireland. Not for 107 years had the Irish people the experience of controlling anything tangible. For them, therefore, the establishment of a native-controlled university is regarded as a pleasant augury, and a preparation for the responsibilities that are to come.

If I may venture another observation before describing a few of the more interesting aspects of the Irish University, I would say this: The Irish people shall always remember that it was the Liberals, not the Tories, who introduced and carried the University Bill. Year in, year out, Mr. Balfour used to express a wish for the solution of this problem, but just as freely expressed his intention of leaving it alone. Yet there were not wanting calculating counsellors who advised the Irish people to rely on the Tories, the so-called friends of Irish religious equality and to avoid the anti-Catholic Nonconformists. Throughout these vicissitudes the outstanding fact remains that a year and a-half after their resumption of office saw the anti-religious Liberal Government introduce and carry a Bill setting up an Irish University, with the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin as Chancellor.

Facts and Figures.

The National University consists of three constituent colleges (with an affiliated college), viz., the new college to be established in Dublin, the college at Cork, and the college at Galway. The great ecclesiastical Seminary of Maynooth is the affiliated college. The colleges at Cork and Galway are the old Queen's Colleges of the late Royal University. The old Queen's College of Belfast is now the Queen's University—an institution separate and distinct from the National University, though founded by the same Act of Parliament. Now, while the branches at Cork and Galway are fairly well housed, the University and College at Dublin are obliged to content themselves for the time being with the buildings which were associated with the late Royal, and with those over which the Jesuit Fathers presided during the older regime. By the Universities Act a sum of £150,000 has been allocated for the erection of a building in Dublin. Cork has also been granted £14,000, and Galway £6000 for a like purpose. (The Belfast University has been

allowed £60,000.) It is likely that the site of the late Royal, round Earlsfort Terrace and Stephen's Green South, will be selected for the new buildings. With this object in view Lord Iveagh has generously presented the Senate with a portion of his own grounds. Designs for the new buildings are about to be invited from architects.

With regard to the subsidies, the Dublin College has £32,000 per annum (the administration of the University proper costs nearly £12,000); the college at Cork, £20,000; and University College, Galway, £12,000. (The Belfast University has £18,000 per annum.) These sums are much below those of Trinity College. More than that, the Archbishop of Dublin pointed out that the £82,000 was not all a fresh grant, for it includes old grants to the extent of £35,103. Thus, the combined income of the two new universities is £46,897 (new), plus £35,103 (old)—making a total of £82,000, as detailed above.

The Authorities.

A word as to the governing bodies. The Senate is the chief authority. It consists of the Chancellor (the Archbishop of Dublin), the Vice-Chancellor (Sir C. Nixon, M.D.), the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (A. Anderson, President of Galway College; B. Windle, President of Cork College; and D. Coffey, President of Dublin College), and thirty-three others drawn mostly from the professions—the medical element slightly predominating. The remaining authorities are the general Board of Studies, the Faculties, and Convocation. Each of the constituent colleges has a Governing Body, an Academic Council, a Registrar, a Bursar, and a Librarian.

In addition to the funds conferred by Act of Parliament the National is beginning to receive practical support from the country at large.

Endowments and Compulsory Irish.

Large private endowments go to supplement the Parliamentary incomes of all the older Universities. In this respect therefore the new National will be handicapped for some years. The Belfast University already enjoys a considerable income accruing from the private endowments of the old Queen's College. Under the regime of the late Royal the colleges at Cork and Galway also enjoyed a few private endowments. Like Belfast, they have retained these. But the late University College of Dublin, being merely a makeshift institution, worked at a loss by the Jesuit Fathers, failed to attract the support of University benefactors. The leading college of the National was obliged therefore to set out on its new career with nothing supporting the Parliamentary grant except the O'Curry Prize Medal! But a new departure has been made. The Irish County Councils were empowered to strike a rate for the purpose of creating county scholarships tenable at any of the colleges recognised by the National University. The Councils are now founding these scholarships, and already thirty-three such scholarships are tenable at the Dublin College, and a lesser number at Galway and Cork. The Corporation of Dublin is also about to establish twenty-four scholarships. But both Corporation and County Councils refused to endow any until the University Senate agreed to make the Irish language a compulsory subject for entrance examinations after 1913. Even pending that date students who are not acquainted with Irish are obliged to attend a course of lectures on that subject and acquit themselves to the satisfaction of the Professors of Irish.

Some Interesting Features.

Each year the University offers for competition amongst graduates three travelling studentships, tenable for three years and each of the annual value of £200. The condition is that the student shall apply himself to research work outside Ireland. In 1911 the groups were: (a) natural science, (b) chemistry, and (c) the Irish language.

The University has eight faculties—viz.: Arts, philosophy, and sociology, Celtic studies, science, law, medicine, engineering, and architecture, and commerce.

With regard to the faculty of law. Previous to the establishment of the National University a Catholic