

Current Topics

A Point for the Councillors

We would respectfully call the attention of the Council of Churches to the following remarks of Arthur Griffith:—

"The rioting in Derry had no accidental origin. It has been planned and directed by Unionist leaders, in collusion with persons of eminence in England, and with the servants of the English Government in Ireland."

Commenting on this the *New Witness* says:—

"As the fog lifts, one learns that for two days the Nationalists of Derry, *practically unarmed*, were left at the mercy of Unionists armed with rifles firmly guarded by the R.I.C. When they procured some arms and proceeded to defend themselves, *the military and the Unionist shooters fraternised, and later the military fired on the Nationalists.*"

Dear Mr. J. J. North, is it seditious to call attention to this damnable foul play and this campaign of murder carried on by your Orange friends in a small nation?

For Small Nations, Moryah!

The following table gives us the total loss of population which the war caused in Europe, not through deaths alone, but through decline in birth-rate, rise in death-rate, and casualties:—

	Decline in Births	Per Ct.	Rise in Deaths	Per Ct.	War casualties	Per Ct.	Total Losses	Per Ct.
	Thous.		Thous.		Thous.		Thous.	
A.-Hungary ..	3,800	7.1	2,000	4.0	1,500	2.9	5,800	11.0
France ..	1,500	3.8	1,840	4.6	1,400	3.5	3,340	8.4
Germany ..	3,600	5.3	2,700	4.0	2,000	3.0	6,300	9.3
Great Britain ..	850	1.9	1,000	2.1	800	1.7	1,850	4.0
Italy ..	1,400	4.0	890	2.5	600	1.7	2,280	6.4
Eur. Russia ..	8,300	6.1	4,700	3.5	2,500	1.8	13,000	9.6
Belgium ..	175	2.3	200	2.5	115	1.5	375	4.9
Bulgaria ..	115	3.2	120	2.5	65	1.4	275	5.7
Roumania ..	150	2.0	360	4.7	159	2.1	510	6.7
Serbia ..	320	6.8	1,330	28.4	690	14.8	1,650	35.0
Totals ..	20,210	5.0	15,130	3.8	9,829	2.5	35,380	8.8

Remember that much of this happened because Lloyd George told the soldiers they were fighting to secure for peoples the right of choosing their own form of government, and to save weak nations from organised bullies holding them down. Oh, they were great and glorious those war aims, for which Mr. George asked men to die! To-day in a small nation, Commissioner Smyth tells the police that he will like them better the more they shoot, and that he will protect them even if they kill innocent persons, and that they may enter any house they please and throw out the inmates to die in the gutter, and that the more die the merrier. It is certainly high time that all who care for the safety of the British Empire united in protesting against the Orange devilry and the Tory slaughtering among the Irish people. It is well to remember that *all* who fought for Belgium and Poland were not hypocrites.

The Marriage Laws

We are pleased to see that practically every daily of importance in the Dominion has condemned the proposed legislation on Marriage Laws. That this is the case, and that the unanimity is so remarkable is one more proof that the Government does not represent the people of the Dominion. While we have such support from the press, let us not make the mistake of taking things too easy. Our adversaries are unscrupulous and unprincipled. We believe they are animated by a spirit of hostility to Catholics, and the obvious manner in which the leader of the Massey Party in the Council has played into the hands of the P.P. Ass., both before the inquiry and pending it, ought to convince us that he at least will leave no stone unturned in order to get home his blow at our religion.

The proposed legislation certainly is a direct attack on our doctrine, and for that reason we are bound in honor and in conscience to resist it to the bitter end. We ought to lose no opportunity of making it plain that we will not submit to religious persecution inspired by a party of bigots whose sole conception of religion is hatred. Our bishops have given us a splendid lead in this matter, and it is to be hoped that all our clergy and people will take the agitation up in the same spirit as the Hierarchy have done. We note with satisfaction that two Anglican bishops in Dunedin have emphasised the importance of safeguarding the spiritual nature of the Marriage Contract between Christians, and also the supreme need of a fundamental religious education for the youth of this country. The growth of immorality, and the scandalous increase of divorces make it quite clear that a system of education which banished God and teaches indifference towards His Law is corrupting New Zealand. We have fought for religion in the schools and have been penalised by our atheist State for our principles, and we regret to say that we have fought alone. It is a good sign to see that others are awake to the crying need of schools like ours for the children of all creeds, just as it is consoling to read that a public declaration concerning the importance of maintaining jealously the sacred character of Christian wedlock has come from the Anglican authorities. On the schools and on conjugal unions sanctified by God all true reform must hinge. Legislation will never make people moral: nothing can do that but sound principles and habits of virtue, acquired in good homes and fostered in good schools. May we venture to express a hope that Anglican sympathy will not stop at mere words. Anglicans in the past gave us precious little support in battles that we fought for them as well as for ourselves; and, considering their numbers in the Dominion, we can hardly help thinking that much of the evils with which Christians have to contend now are due to the lack of earnest action and the want of organisation of the leaders of the Church of England. However, we have learned not to hope for much from any outside sources. The practical lesson of our history in this country is similar to that so well learned by our friends in Ireland. We must depend on ourselves; we must organise and be ready to fight for our rights as Catholics and as citizens. And we might with profit recall the truth inculcated by Padraic Pearse in another connection: Organised, and ready to make sacrifices, we can never be beaten. While we invite the co-operation of all sincere Christians for the safeguarding of our common ideals, we will at the same time remember always that Sinn Fein is our best motto. Self-reliance, self-sacrifice if need be, and organisation, will enable us to defy even greater bigots and more unprincipled enemies than Orangemen, P.P. Ass. agitators, and their tools in the Government which the bigots boast they have made their very own.

Hunger-Strikes

More than one of our readers has asked us what of the morality of hunger-striking. Is it suicide or not if the strike is persevered in till the striker dies? May a priest absolve a hunger-striker who purposes to keep on till death? The problem is no easy one, and there are differences of opinion concerning many of its aspects. Some eighteen months ago the matter was discussed at great length in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* by two writers well versed in theology and philosophy who in the end agreed to differ. In the present article we would have been aided by reference to this discussion, but we find that some kind person abstracted, hid, or so confused our volumes of the *Record* that we are unable to find what we want just now. If we might be pardoned for the brief digression we would here remark that it is only one who is liable to need his documents at short notice at any time who fully realises the plague that are all those who are much more ready to borrow one's papers or books than to return them. However, *revenant a nos moutons*,