

## THE ONLY SOLUTION OF THE IRISH QUESTION

### RETURNING BISHOPS' VIEWS.

The painful position in Ireland was reviewed yesterday by two Australian Catholic Bishops, Dr. Joseph Sheil, Bishop of Rockhampton, and Dr. John McCarthy, Bishop of Sandhurst, who are passengers for Sydney by the *Makura*, which arrived here in the forenoon (says the *New Zealand Herald*, Auckland, for January 7). Pending the resumption of the steamer's voyage to-day the visitors are the guests of Dr. J. M. Liston, Coadjutor-Bishop of Auckland, at Bishop's House, Pounsonby.

The visiting Bishops were in Ireland from the beginning of May until the end of October. They stated that the country was one large armed camp, and the situation was getting more intensive every day. The English were organising their forces, and bringing more and more troops in. Even as early as June last there were military barricades in use in various places. The people of Ireland felt generally that, like every other small nation, they had the right to rule themselves. They were trained up to that during the war, and contended that they were only carrying out what England had taught them, and had claimed to be doing herself in entering into hostilities against Germany.

The Bill, which had lately gone through the British House of Parliament, giving partial Home Rule to Ireland, would never satisfy the Irish people, who had paid no attention to it, and were not taking it into account at all. The previous Bill, before the war, was for all Ireland, and that was what was required.

The visitors stated that rioting was going on in Belfast all the time they were in Ireland. They had heard from a prominent North of Ireland man that the object of the Orangemen was to drive all the Catholics out of Belfast. They had pretty well succeeded in doing this in Lisburn. There were 3000 Catholics there up to the time of the burning of the Catholics' residences, but, after that period, there were only about 200 people in the Catholic Church. However, to drive 100,000 Catholics out of Belfast by such means seemed impossible. The Protestants tried to do it by ousting all the Catholic employees from their employment. These were mostly in the shipyards, and the Protestants there would not work with them, thus getting them thrown out of employment.

### Relations Between Two Denominations.

Both bishops said that this bitterness was merely on the one side. They stated that in the South of Ireland, for instance, the principal business places were in the hands of Protestants, and were supported practically entirely by the Catholics. They dealt with each other on the friendliest terms. It was the same in Dublin. Furthermore, while they were in Ireland, there were letters in the papers every day from prominent Protestants all through the South of Ireland, stating that they had nothing but the most friendly intercourse with the Catholics. The Unionists of the South of Ireland, all Protestants, were calling on the British Government, moreover, to give Home Rule to Ireland.

The position, therefore, narrowed down to this, said the Bishops, that the root of the trouble was in the four northern counties. The people of the rest of Ireland had no antipathy to them on religious grounds, but they wanted them to become part of one Ireland, and all the aims of the Sinn Fein Party were directed toward the end of one undivided Ireland.

At present the people of Ireland considered themselves in a state of war, and held that it was England who made war when she arrested those who had been duly elected by the Irish people, and threw them into English prisons. The forces of England were, of course, superior to those of the Irish people, but the Irish volunteers hoped that they might arouse the sympathy

of the world, and an acknowledgment of the justice of their cause.

### Physical Force and its Results.

The auxiliary police in Ireland, known as the "black and tans," were referred to by the visitors as a most cruel body of men. They frequently "shot up" towns and burned down houses. The method practised by these men was to drive through the streets in lorries, the men seated at the end of which would fire their guns into the air. They would then alight, and sometimes after having drink, would pick out houses where there were known to be Sinn Feiners, and go and burn them down. The two Bishops said they had seen several houses which had thus been destroyed by the "black and tans," and towns ruined by them.

As to the Sinn Feiners, the visitors said they were sure that all were not in favor of physical force. Such as was used by them was used under the ordinary rules of war. Up to 1918 they did not shoot anybody. The arrest of members of the Irish Parliament, and the raiding of houses by posses of military, however, aroused them. Describing these raids, they said that the military would break into houses in the middle of the night, and proceed to the bedrooms. There they would wake the inmates, including women and children, and send them into other rooms while they searched the premises.

The only solutions the Australian Bishops could suggest for the problem of Ireland were, either that Britain should grant the Irish Home Rule, or that they should clear right out of the country. They contended that the Irish could govern their own country equally as well as New Zealanders governed theirs. Under Home Rule, such as obtained in the Dominion, the Irish would, they declared, always feel that it was in the interests of Ireland to foster good relations with England.

The tongue of the slanderer is what St. James terms it, a raging fire which scorches all within its reach, turns its fury against the good and the bad, leaving behind it ruin and desolation. It feeds with delight on what is most sacred and secret, destroys what is most solid, and blackens what it cannot consume.

Our Lady of the Rosary!

What name can be so sweet,  
As when we call thee, when we place  
Our chaplets at thy feet!

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