

struction of all literary and historical traces of Ireland's ancient greatness, at and about the opening years of the sixteenth century, Ireland has never been in any other than a state of war for the recovery of these things, and for a recovery of the sovereign freedom in which they were once comprised. Of all the years that have passed since then, not a year has passed that has not seen that war maintained in thought or by deed. At periodic intervals that war has taken the form of an armed rising-out that has infallibly declared its end to be the achievement of Ireland's absolute and entire freedom. In the intervals between each such rising-out the nation has lain stricken from the last attempt and has prepared for the next. It is now a solemn charge and tradition from generation to generation that each generation shall in its day make another attempt, however hopeless the chances, in order to carry the war forward until the day when Ireland shall take her place among the free and sovereign nations of the world according to her ancient right. During this European War this tradition has been seen fulfilled, and of all the small nations whose cases will arise for attention at the Peace Conference meeting to conclude the problems it has raised Ireland will be the only one who has of her own initiative arisen with arms in her hands to strike for her sovereign freedom.

"5. Because Ireland, by history, by culture, and by language, is a distinctive, individual, and separate nation.

"6. Because Ireland possesses within herself all the moral and material constituents of independent statehood.

"7. Because the geographical position of Ireland now renders the restoration of her independent sovereignty essential to the peaceful development of Europe and the world in general, since an aggressive maritime Power controlling Ireland will dominate the Atlantic Ocean, will control ingress and egress thereto and therefrom, will control ingress and egress to and from other seas, and so will make impossible that freedom of the seas upon which the future peace of the world will depend. Even as before, in times past, the peace of the world and balance of power have made the restoration of sovereignty in other small nations a vital question among the Powers, so now the revolution of time has raised the question of the suppressed sovereignty of Ireland into one of deep significance for the Powers. The world has turned westward. For Europe the Americans have come into a striking new importance. For the Americans the affairs of Europe have become weighted with a new significance. Between them lies the Atlantic; but neither can use the Atlantic to reach the other without coming within range of the sudden swift activities of any fleet of warships that can avail themselves of the ports and harbors of Ireland. Even as the Atlantic is the only rapid means of communication between Europe and America, so Ireland, lying where and as she does, holds the key to the Atlantic. Any great naval Power having at its free use and disposal the ports and harbors of Ireland can at any time interrupt that communication, to north, to south, or to west. Any great naval Power, therefore, controlling Ireland can at any moment it feels so disposed abrogate the freedom of the seas at their most strategic point, in spite of whatever device by which it might be thought that that freedom could otherwise be achieved, and can do so against any other combination of Powers. Any great naval Power, therefore, dominating Ireland must become the dictator of the world, since sea-power is world-power, and other Powers must live at its behest or charity. Such an active irritant in the world's affairs must infallibly lead to future wars, to pluck that Power from an overweening place achieved through an accidental geographical advantage, especially when it is seen that that advantage exists by crushing the moral rights of the sovereign nation of Ireland. The neutralisation of Ireland, however, by the restoration of the exercise of its sovereign nationhood, cancels all this. The neutralisation of Ireland will ensure in great measure the neutralisation of the Atlantic; will ensure, that is to say, the freedom of the seas at their most strategic point (no other great sea being equally commanded at its angle of communication, and no other great sea being of equal importance for international communication) by the single act that gives a long-delayed

justice to an oppressed nation. Moreover, Ireland is well-endowed to protect and ensure that neutralisation once granted. The cost of the expensive administrative machinery by which she is held and oppressed, and the price of which is taxed on her, turned from that immoral purpose would provide a fleet of small craft, submarine and supramarine, with which to defend her shores; and the sufficiency of such small craft for defensive and offensive operations has now been proved. The coast of Ireland is surrounded by hills and high ground, from which batteries could bring warships within range long before they could themselves be governed. And the railways of Ireland have been planned by the Power that suppresses the sovereignty of Ireland, not, as first devised, with a view to developing the resources of the country, but with a view to its military and naval defence. For it is not the desire of the Irish nation to aid any Power in hostile operations against another, when once her sovereign freedom is established and ensured.

"8. Because most of the great Powers in the present European War, which the Peace Conference is to terminate and conclude, have publicly declared that they are contending for the right of small nations to be free, and to decree and continue their government for themselves without fear or dictation from other more powerful nations. On this ground the United States of America have lately entered the war to further the principles enunciated by their President.

"9. Because, particularly, the Power that now suppresses the sovereignty of Ireland has declared that it is fighting in this war for the procurement, the assertion, and the defence of the freedom of small nations.

"10. Lastly, because of the law of God, Who created all things free not bond, and Whose will it cannot be that a hard and hurtful bondage should continue that must inevitably lead to hatred and the renewed shedding of blood. He is the only sovereign; but He has endowed nations and men with that attribute of Himself. Therefore, they must aspire to that sovereign freedom by the law He has implanted in them; and they must hold life as a cheap thing in comparison with the prompting of that law. Until they have seen sovereign freedom, His creatures have not fulfilled the life He gave them.

"Then follows a very lengthy historical, financial, and statistical statement of an extreme Sinn Fein character."

THOMAS MOORE FESTIVAL

ANNIVERSARY COMPETITIONS AND CONCERTS.

The fourth Thomas Moore anniversary festival and competitions held in Wellington under the auspices of the Wellington Hibernian Societies, took place at the Town Hall, Wellington, on Saturday, the 28th ult. (writes our own correspondent). A large number of entries had been received for the competitions, and the concert chamber presented an animated scene during the morning and afternoon, when the events were decided. In the evening an excellent "All Moore" programme, contributed by the competition prize-winners and a number of local vocalists, was provided in the main hall in the presence of an enthusiastic audience. The adjudicators in the competitions (Messrs. L. Watkins and P. J. O'Regan) paid a glowing tribute to the high standard of excellence reached, which made their task of judging most difficult. The talent displayed by the children reflected the greatest credit on their devoted teachers. The competition results are as follow:—

School Choirs Contest.

For Begg Shield.—Test pieces, "Oft in the Stilly Night" and "Love's Young Dream": Petone Convent School (134 points) 1; Sacred Heart Convent School, Island Bay (122 points), 2.

For Bristol Piano Company's Shield.—Test pieces, "Rich and Rare" and "When Thro' Life": Petone Convent School (only entrant), 1.

For Hibernian Shield.—Test pieces, "I Saw From the Beach" and "The Meeting of the Waters": Petone Convent School (154 points), 1; Guilford Terrace (Thorndon) Convent School (152 points), 2; Sacred Heart Convent School, Island Bay (137 points), 3.