

IRISH OPINION

The VOICE OF LABOUR

EDITED BY CATHAL O'SHANNON.

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JUNE 15, 1918.

ONE PENNY

I. T. W. U.
& Pierces:

The New Khaki
Plantation.

Wages
Witheld.

The Re-incarnation of Pecksniff.

THE BILLING CASE AND THE MORAL EMPIRE.

(As Passed by Censor.)

The English having failed, so far, to secure victory on the field of honour are determined to prove their Righteousness. Being incapable apparently of producing positive proofs, they have set out to show, that at least they are not so vile as—an American woman and a dead Irishman.

They have prated of their chivalry, for centuries. They displayed it once at Rouen when they burned at the stake the patriot martyr Jeanne d'Arc, who sought to save her native land from the pollution of Anglo-Saxonism. They have not changed.

In any other country, womanhood is a protection. Elsewhere, a lonely, alien woman, earning her living by the exertion of natural talents, might have enjoyed the sympathy of decent people. Not so in England. She is a woman;—they rake the dictionaries of anatomy to find foulness to bespatter her.

She has hidden for years an unhappy family secret. They use their law courts to place her on the rack, and their press to blare a shame that is not her own. Foremost among her persecutors is an English senator. Next is the unhappy inheritor of the Queensberries, of men who bartered Scotland's freedom and spent their bribes in orgies of sensuality and vice, rouses, gamblers and street brawlers. With Billing and Douglas in this sport of baiting and hounding a woman, an American and an Ally, is Bernard Vaughan, the muck-raking sensation-artist, who; whatever else he may be, is an Englishman.

Their poet said—and very truly of his tribe—

The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones.

Unctuously they have parrotted "Of the dead speak nothing but good," but one unhappy soul their hatred and venom has pursued beyond death.

They have never forgiven the most graceful of English writers of his generation for the dual crime of being an Irishman and a genius. From the first declaration of his power they pursued him with hatred, and in his triumph, they entrapped his soul in the foulness that in the modern world has two congenial centres—London and Berlin. From their prison they sent him, broken in body, his powers shattered, into a fearful exile.

His books—the cleanest of his generation—were exploited by their profit-mongering publishers as if they had been prodigies of pornography. They stole his name from his plays, and even in Dublin blazoned "George Alexander's Great Comedy, 'The Importance of Being Ernest.'" It is not ours to probe the hidden things in the life of Speranza's son. In sorrow, he dreed his penance and sought and found peace in the Ark of Salvation. Towards him we have but one duty, to pray that after life's fitful fever he may rest in peace.

But who are these English champions of morality who usurp the Throne of Judgment, who persecute and revile a woman, and desecrate the memory of the dead?

Ask Lord French's sister—the meaning of Regulation 40D.

Read "Hansard"—the record of the proceedings of the Mother of Parliaments—for 5th May, 1918, and note Mr. Hewins' admission, that in Singapore, under the direct control of the Crown Colonial Government and the Colonial Office, women are recruited for brothels by an English official, euphemistically termed "the Protector of Chinese," who, as Mr. Hewins unctuously assures us, is careful to see that no Chinawoman under twenty enters the regulated dens of vice in the segregated districts.

Well and wisely did Wilde say "We are in the native land of the Hypocrite—England."

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You must order your copy of the "Voice of Labour" from your newsagent, in advance. Do it to-day.

THE NEW KHAKI PLANTATION.

Steps are being taken to ensure that land shall be available for men who have fought for their country.—Lord French.

Confiscation of land might be made—not for the first time—the penalty of treason; and the land so confiscated could be planted with those who had proved their loyalty by serving their king and country.—"The Morning Post."

Following James Connolly, Irish Labour holds that the conquest of Ireland was not political only, but economic as well, that there could not have been political conquest until there was economic conquest, that the subjugation of Ireland was not only a conquest of Irish liberties but also a conquest of Irish lands, and that indeed there could not be, and there was not, any conquest of Irish liberties until there should be, and there was, first a conquest of Irish lands.

It was so in the beginning of the battle of two civilisations in Ireland, it continued to be so throughout the varying phases of that battle in all the succeeding centuries, it is so now, and it may well be so for a long time to come.

The question of the ownership of the land of Ireland, of its occupation, and of its use was, and still is, at the root of all the wars that have been fought between the people of Ireland and the governing classes of England. It was the lure of land and plunder that brought over Strongbow and his hungry horde of Anglo-Norman and Welsh-Norman plunderers of high degree. It could not be otherwise, for the roots of the difference between the Norman and the Gael were deep down in the antagonism of two opposing and irreconcilable civilisations. Both civilisations were founded upon different and opposite social systems, of which the land was the material basis, the one Norman feudal, predatory and aristocratic, the other Gaelic, communal, so far as humanly possible, equitable, and essentially democratic. In each the essence was the conception of a tenure of

land, an economic and social polity, and between the two, for this reason, there could not be but continual waging of war until one or other went down in battle. It was on this material basis the spiritual combat was begun and continued, and from this flowed all the warring of these seven centuries.

War succeeded war, and generation generation, but the cause and the conflict remained the same. Stubbornly, inch by inch and step by step, the Gael opposed the inroads of the invader, now retreating, now advancing, now holding ground, now losing, renewing the battle in one quarter when defeated in another, driven out of his lands here and there, and returning to them again when he felt himself strong enough, or his enemy weak enough, to make re-conquest possible. And so the fight raged through many bloody generations, until by sheer weight of numbers and exhaustion of Irish resources, the English had gained enough land in Ireland to be able to effect settlements of English, Scots and Welsh soldiery in Ireland.

Then began the era of the Plantations. The rise and growth of the English middle and commercial class, and its development in power, demanded that its sons and its hangers-on should be accommodated with homes and lands outside Britain. In Europe there was no room for them, and they sought new countries in the New World. These they made the Plantations which were later to become the British Colonies, and finally the Republic (free now only in the State sense) of the United States. Almost side by side with the American Plantation went on the Plantation of Ireland. Now successful, now failing, the Irish people put up a gallant fight for their lands and their liberties. As bloody wars as any fought in history marked the course of these plantations, the dark night of the people. The broad lands of Munster were seized and given to the soldiery of Elizabeth who had fought for their country and served their queen, the rich lands of Ulster passed into the hands of the men who fought for James, and their confiscation became, not for the last time, the penalty of treason, the reward of loyalty; when North and South and Midlands had been parcelled out, Cromwell completed the process and designed to send the remnant of the Gael "to Hell or Connacht." To Connacht and to the slave-markets of the Barbadoes many indeed went, but they showed no particular hurry to go, and in due time their ghosts came to haunt their dispossessors.

It was in this way the Irish people were driven off their lands, hunted from the plains and valleys and fertile lands, and compelled to eke out a scanty livelihood on the hills and mountains. By open and unconcealed forgery, corruption and tyranny, unequalled anywhere in Europe, the governing classes of England possessed themselves of the lands of Ireland. On the conquered lands they planted the soldiers who had won those lands for them. That is why even to-day in some parts, and until yesterday in many, particularly in Ulster, where the plantations were ultimately most successful, the observer notes that the planters hold, or

held, the rich, level lands, and the dispossessed the poor, hilly country. But just as in the Gaelic polity, the land belonged, not to the chief, but to the community, just as it was this principle that was opposed to the feudal principle of the conquerors, so in their turn the Protestant descendants of the British soldiery who won for English lords and rascals the land of Ireland at Kinsale, Derry and the Boyne, were despoiled and dispossessed by the scions of the noble English houses, for whose fathers the blood of their yeoman sires had purchased this island. The English governing class had conquered Irish liberties because they had conquered Irish lands; they proceeded to conquer the liberties of their own planters by conquering their lands. In the process they drove the planters from their homes to the cities of Great Britain and Ireland and the wilds of America. That process was the exploitation by the governing class, landowning and capitalist, of the farmers and labourers of Ireland, both Protestant and Catholic, an economic exploitation as ruthless as the Plantations themselves. And out of it grew the still divided but yet consciously awakening proletariat of town and country, the Irish working class.

This was Connolly's reading of the history of Ireland, himself of the exploited of both phases of the Conquest. It is the reading of the organised Irish workers, themselves the exploited of both phases. This was the Conquest, and it was conquest of liberties only because it was conquest of lands. To-day, to some extent, the land has been re-conquered, but only to some extent, for it is still the possession of the British Government. There can be no Re-Conquest until it becomes again the possession of the whole people. In the meanwhile the uncompleted Conquest has taken a new turn, and the battle between two civilisations has entered upon a new phase. It is now the battle of the united forces of the exploited against the united forces of the exploiters, of Labour against Capitalism, of the Class war. That is why it is proposed Ireland should be conscripted, that is why conscription is to be enforced by economic pressure, that is why there is to be a new confiscation and a new plantation by khaki, and not by buff and red. That is the explanation of the quotations we have chosen as the texts of our epistle. Lord French and the "Morning Post" recognise that whoever holds the wealth of Ireland rules Ireland, that whoever holds the land of Ireland rules the destiny of Ireland, that if the Conquest needs new men it needs more the old measures, and that Conquest and Re-Conquest alike of liberties and lands must be not only political but economic as well, and economic first. They shall find that they are not the only people who recognise this great primal truth.

Now let us all turn back and read and re-read Connolly's "Labour in Irish History" and Green's "Irish Nationality," and learn the lesson they teach.

Killarney.

We hold over for next week some interesting notes of labour progress in Kilkenny.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

La na mBan.

For reasons which we need not, because we cannot, indicate, we have been unable to do justice either to the Women's Day or the Women's Pledge against conscription. Sunday's demonstration was a distinct success, and ought to help much in the general campaign. If we have any criticism to make it is to agree with Mrs. Connery, that the more effective display would have been on a working day, and that some earnest of sacrifice and militant policy might have been given. For both there is still plenty of time, and we doubt not the women of Ireland will give in sacrifice and in action whatever is demanded from them. In the meantime we would call attention to the need for pledging the women against taking the places of men "released" from employment against their will, in order that they may be starved into conscription. Operations of this nature are being prepared, and indeed are at work in Sligo district, where farm labourers of military age have been replaced by women. Now that the gravity of the situation is being realised no more need be said. Women and Labour will make it hot for the employer who tries on any trick of conscription by compulsory dismissal.

Connolly and 'Compromise.

"New Ireland" fell into a strange error when it said last week: "There was a time when the Irish Party might have taken into its ranks Pearse, MacDonagh, James Connolly and Eoin MacNeill—in a word, the younger ability." This is an instance of the argument from the general to the particular which the facts do not warrant. We do not know enough of MacDonagh and MacNeill to be emphatic in denying the possibility of "New Ireland's" assumption, but in the case of Pearse we can recollect nothing that lends colour to our contemporary's suggestion. So far as Connolly was concerned we can say with full knowledge (if indeed personal knowledge were necessary, and it is not), that there was never any such time, not even when the Irish Party was at its national zenith under the leadership of Parnell. From first to last Connolly was as uncompromising in his revolutionary nationalism as in his revolutionary socialism, and in literal fact, as he made clear again and again in his writings and speeches from 1896 until 1916, his class-consciousness as much as his republicanism precluded his alliance, much less his identification, with the bourgeois and re-actionary character of the Home Rule movement. There are men still living who remember his breaking away from the committee of the '98 clubs because of its toleration of the Philistines within the centenary movement, and his pamphlets and books leave no doubt as to his fundamental difference not only with the Home Rulers but with all nationalist parties lacking the revolutionary faith and initiative. If "New Ireland" means that there was a time when the Parliamentary Party would have accepted Connolly and Pearse and their comrades into its ranks that may, indeed, be true. But

in justice to the dead "New Ireland" should have said so.

Reforming the Councils.

We had developed our note on the departmentalising of Trades Councils last week when Mr. P. Thompson's letter came to hand. We found ourselves so much in agreement with him on the broad principle and in its general application that we left the advocacy of the idea in detail to our comrade who pursues "The New Way." At that we shall leave the matter for the present, promising to return to it when we have sketched some of the plans we should like to see the Unions send forward before the end of the month to the Waterford Congress.

National Departments.

It is not only the Trades Council but the Congress as well that stands in sore need of re-moulding, and its National Executive is the body upon which, in the first instance, the new system should be grafted. The National Executive requires re-organisation on the basis of departments. At present, as in the past, the business of the Executive is everybody's, and everybody's child is proverbially nobody's. It is only executives and committees which still cling to this obsolete and slipshod method of working, and in real work even the slackest of the trade unions have discarded it. Trade Unions, political parties, commercial companies, co-operative societies, all have their lines of demarcation and definition of duties sharply drawn up. Each official, officer, clerk, has his duties clearly mapped out for him, and he knows, and his colleagues know, his responsibility for the performance of his duty. In this direction the Labour movement must develop and mould its machinery, and first of all the Trades Councils and the National Executive. Not otherwise can Labour secure for its guidance and leading that body of men, each with his well-defined duties and equally well-understood responsibilities, which alone can be worthy of the confidence and obedience of the whole movement, and capable of giving it real leadership. The Executive then should be re-organised on the new basis of departments. If the principle is adopted it will be easy to say into how many and what departments the Executive's activities should be divided. The ordinary division of the activities of executive government, finance, education, international affairs, local government and health, propaganda, etc., with special departments for special activities, such as elections, organisation, movements, etc., gives hints and suggestions on the lines upon which Labour's departments should be organised.

All this needs the more urgent consideration now, because the movement has not been blind, if it has been patiently silent, to the glaring defects of the present outworn system these past twelve months, and especially since the no-conscription campaign was opened in April. Other improvements to which some thought is being given are an assembly of direct representatives of the sections of the movement meeting more

frequently than Congress, the personnel of the Congress and Executive, and the respective functions of each, but these are matters upon which we should like more discussion from the ranks of the workers.

The Congress Time Table.

It should be urged, too, that early in each day Congress should divide up into ad hoc committees to deal with the questions coming before it, and re-assemble in full session in the afternoon to come to decisions, with little debate, on the reports of the morning's committees. This is the practice of the International Congress itself, and from our experience (as an onlooker from the outside!) of a somewhat similar arrangement in the Presbyterian General Assembly (ideas are to be stolen from everybody!) it will enable Congress to get through more business and do it better, though it will also, of course, inevitably cut short many floods of eloquence. But that will harm nobody, even if it hurts some of the orators. Again, since the business of Congress, like the activities of the movement, is twofold, industrial and political, we would have the whole of certain days devoted to industrial problems and the whole of the remaining days to the political programme of Labour and general questions. These, to be sure, are proposals of the most common of sense. They are so obvious that they should require no comment, but, surprising as it is, they do. The reason is that so few are using their brains in thinking out Labour problems, although a hundred and fifty thousand workers are eager to listen. Waterford will have a chance of removing this reproach amongst others.

"No Politics."

A hearty welcome to our new contemporary, "The Worker," weekly organ of the Limerick Mechanics' Institute. Although the title provokes reflection on the great difference between this "Worker" and the "Worker" Connolly published as a stop-gap between the suppressed "Irish Worker" and the insurrectionary "Workers' Republic," the Limerick men are to be congratulated on their enterprise in bringing forward a new ally in Irish Labour journalism. If "The Worker" lacks the kick and cut of that lively little "Bottom Dog" which has been entertaining Limerick for some months past, it is for all that an undertaking which we hope Limerick workers will appreciate and support. "The Worker" is well printed and excellently made up, and ought to do much good for the movement by the walls of Garryowen. We cannot, of course, refrain from criticising its decision not to "indulge in politics." This cry of "no politics" when "no partyism" is meant is one of the fallacies that are cultivated in Ireland. Labour is most emphatically political, for politics is merely the reasoned discussion of and conscious participation in questions, problems, and movements affecting the public interest, local or national. Frankly we are altogether opposed to "The Worker's" decision to hold "sacred" the "interests of the employer," but to that we shall return. Limerick has done well in issuing "The Worker." When will Belfast, Cork, and Derry emulate Limerick's bold action?

Transport Workers Reap the Harvest of 1913.

PIERCES OF WEXFORD.

END OF A GREAT STRUGGLE.

"And Freedom's battle once begun,
Though baffled oft is ever won."

The long and bitter struggle for the recognition of trade unionism has had its issue in the complete recognition of Trade Unionism by the employers of the town, including, at last, the well-known firm of Pierce and Company.

The Trades Council has, during the past year, lent itself to making the town blackleg proof, and succeeded in organising in their several unions the employees at Pierce's. Action followed organisation, and the sawyers, after a two-day strike, secured advances and recognition.

The A.S.E., after fruitless negotiations and abortive efforts at arbitration, were forced to strike, and after six weeks, through the intervention of the Mayor, reopened negotiations, which resulted in a settlement last week on terms which improved the workers' position, gave recognition to the union, and enabled the appointment of shop stewards. In the strike the local men were strongly backed by the trade unionists of the town and the A.S.E. members throughout Ireland.

The Transport Union followed with requests for advances to their members, and on 6th inst. a conference between the parties resulted in satisfactory terms being settled. The significance of this peaceable and reasonable settlement will not be lost on those who recall the bitter fight led by Pierce's against the Transport Union in 1911-12. The faith of the officials and members who upheld the Union flag during the hopeless years since then has been fully justified, and Irish Labour will rejoice with them at the capitulation of this citadel of Murphyism.

Messrs. Pierce and Co. are to be congratulated on their change of attitude, and as they have now decided to give full recognition to the various unions concerned, all can heartily and sincerely wish the firm, of which Wexford is rightly proud, great and ever-increasing prosperity in the future, a prosperity in which the workers have now a guarantee that they will share.

Whispers from the Wind.

That the recognition of the Transport Union by Messrs. Pierce and Co. is the talk of the town. The Wexford Branch has now almost 700 members.

That some of the Unions are changing their delegates to the Trades Council. It's about time.

That it is now almost as hard for a non-unionist to get a job in Wexford as for a profiteer to get into heaven. It's practically blackleg-proof.

That prosperity has its dangers as well as adversity. Thiggin Thu?

That the anti-conscription levy has not been put on in many unions yet. It's about time it was.

That the support given by local labour to the "Voice" is a disgrace.

That Mr. C. Culleton is doing great work in bringing town and country workers in touch. Good man, Christy.
"POOR BOY."

RURAL WORKERS' ARREARS.

From all parts of the country, the Headquarters of the Transport Union is receiving complaints from agricultural workers that the legal minimum wage is not being paid, or that arrears are being withheld. As the complaints require very detailed investigation, a series of questions has been drawn up, and branch secretaries should see that they obtain supplies of this form and have them filled up accurately by members making claims.

Every question should be fully answered. It is not sufficient, for example, to mention the various perquisites. An estimate must be made of the value of each perquisite or allowance. One complainant states he has the use of a donkey. That information conveys nothing to the officials at Liberty Hall, and they cannot make a claim for wages unless they know the money value of the use of the animal.

Secretaries are asked to assist applicants in filling up the forms. Usually the local branch secretary, or the applicant himself, will request the employer to pay the arrears due. If he fails to comply the branch secretary should send full particulars of the complaint to the Agricultural Wages Board, College Green, Dublin, posting a copy of the letter at the same time to Liberty Hall.

The Wages Board officials will either write the employer or send an inspector. Usually that is sufficient to secure payment. Recalcitrant farmers should be prosecuted, and that is the duty of the Wages Board. Up to date we know of only one case in which it has done so. The Board is trying to throw the burden of prosecution on the individual labourer, hoping thereby to save its farmer friends.

The Transport Union will continue to press the Board to discharge its proper function, but meantime its members will be entitled to legal assistance, according to rules, in carrying their cases into court where necessary. Branch committees will find that one good test case in a district, won in the courts, will speedily change the attitude of those farmers who rely on the poverty and helplessness of their labourers to prevent them securing their legal due.

Castle Dermot (Q.C.).

The Labour Association has decided to join the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. Messrs. Wm. O'Brien and T. Farren are to be invited to address a public meeting.

Lucan.

The Transport branch here is now 500 strong. The members have loyally supported their chosen officers in building up the union, and success has marked its efforts in raising the standard of life in the district. Consideration is being given to certain improvements desired at Lucan Woollen Mills.

Naas.

Despite the opposition to the Transport Union, Mr. N. Byrne reports a vigorous growth in this town. Great success has attended the efforts to organise women workers, and upwards of 50 have joined the branch. In numerous cases, by local action, substantial increases of wages have been secured.

Leixlip.

T. Farren spoke here on Friday, 7th inst. The section will be attached to Lucan branch. Leaving Leixlip after 10 p.m., Mr. Farren travelled to Lucan and addressed a meeting, leaving for home about 11.30.

Kilmacthomas.

After visits from L. A. Veale and P. Coates, Kilmacthomas comes into the brotherhood with a strong branch.

Limerick.

Coal carters will carry on work from 6 a.m. until 6.30 for a fortnight, pending the appointment of an arbitrator by Sir Geo. Askwith. Sir George has been urged to lose no time in making the appointment.

Arklow.

The tedious correspondence with Government departments continues. The Ministry of Munitions, writing on 6th inst. to Liberty Hall, says the request for the 12½ per cent. bonus must be made to the Ministry of Labour. Mr. Allsebrook adds: "It will facilitate procedure if a joint reference from your Union and the firm can be sent to that Department."

Mr. Allsebrook must have forgotten that the All-Powerful P. J. Gorman refuses to recognise the Union. Must it be that a strike should occur at Arklow before the Ministries get busy?

Drapers' Porters

are moving for their £1 a week advance on pre-war wages. Looking to the healthy reports of the Limited Companies in the trade, the request is very moderate.

Middleton.

The strikes at Hallenan's and Coppinger's have now been settled by an advance of 2s. a week.

Bolands.

Much shuffling has taken place over the carters' requests. The Food Controller's representative has shown himself desirous of facilitating investigation of the men's demand, but the same cannot be said for the company. Perhaps the Sexton bunch want a strike?

Lucky Carriers.

Messrs. T. Wallis and Sons are giving a 6s. rise to their men at Newbridge, Waterford, Cork and Limerick. Drogheda and Dundalk, please note. The master carriers of Dublin are raising wages by 5s., beginning to-day.

Longford.

Sunday's Labour Demonstration will be addressed by Wm. O'Brien, President, Trade Union Congress and Labour Party, and T. Farren, I.T.W.U.

Only reliable and fair firms can advertise in "The Voice of Labour."

It is a Great Adventure, the Building up of a Civilisation.—A.E.

CO-OPERATIVE NOTES.

Dublin Co-operative.

Messrs. L. P. Byrne and T. Shaw, of the Co-operative Committee, addressed a meeting of the Glasnevin ploholders on the 5th inst. Mr. P. Donnelly presided. A large number of new members will rally to support the Phibsborough branch, to be opened shortly.

The Summer School.

In educational effort the Trade Union movement lags far behind the co-operators. This summer a co-operative school will be held during the fortnight beginning 6th July. Prof. Fred Hall will lecture on the "Welfare of the Group," Mr. L. Smith Gordon on "Agricultural Co-operation," while a further series of lectures will deal with Industrial History. The total cost of a week's lectures, board and lodgings is 37s. 6d. Full particulars can be obtained from Mr. Wm. Knox, 18 Frederick St., Belfast.

A Worthy Example.

A committee composed of representatives of the English Trade Union Congress and the Co-operative Union has adopted the following basis of joint action:

(1) Co-operative Societies to recognise the Trade Union rate of wages and conditions of employment as laid down by the Union affiliated to the Trades Union Congress.

(2) Co-operative Societies to encourage all their employees to become members of their respective Trade Organisations.

(3) Trade Unionists to become active members of their local Co-operative Societies. Trade Union officials to take a decided interest in the development of Co-operation, and the officials and members of the Co-operative Movement to become members of and promote the interests of Trade Unions.

Trade Union surplus funds are to be invested in co-operation, thus helping to extend the employment of workers under fair conditions.

Danish Elections.

The Socialist party kept its old seats and won nine and polled 29.5 per cent of the votes cast. The party has now 39 members in a house of 140. Women voted for the first time in this election.

Wisconsin Elections.

For the senatorial election, Victor Berger (Socialist) polled 109,993 votes. The previous highest Socialist vote was 28,908. In Milwaukee, D. W. Hoan has been elected mayor by a majority of 2,110. 12 Socialist aldermen were elected.

A Family Affair.

The contractor for Loch Doon aerodrome, which cost £500,000 and was abandoned as unsuitable, and the Huts at Cleveland erected at a cost of £80,000 and never occupied, was the firm of R. McAlpine and Sons. The head of the firm is now Sir Robert McAlpine, Baronet. His daughter recently married a son of David Lloyd George. We are unable to say whether the marriage was the cause and the contracts the result, or vice versa.

Tadhg Barry.

His article on "The Vineyard and the Labourer's Wage" was reprinted from the "Voice" in the "Shop Assistant" last week.

Grocers' Wages.

A correspondent in the "Telegraph" is whipping up the grocers' assistants to demand a much-needed increase in wages. One difficulty that will face the Grocers and Vintners' Assistants' Union is that another union has already drawn up a minimum wage scale, and has established it in certain houses. Shouldn't both unions consult as to wages scales and combined effort instead of competition in organising?

Galway Drapers.

The I.D.A.A. branch is engaged in the arduous task of inducing the Urban Council to enforce the Shops Act. If Galway Urban Council means business it would authorise prosecutions of those mean employers who steal the all-too-short leisure of their assistants.

Aughrim.

The local Sinn Fein Club has adopted the name of "James Connolly." His principles, too, we hope.

Bray and Kingstown.

The Bray, Kingstown and District Trades and Labour Council, which already have splendidly suitable premises at Bray, has secured additional accommodation for its members at 27 Lower George's St., Kingstown. The practical work of registration is being taken in hand, and when the general and local elections take place, the Labour candidates will be in the field, assured of thoroughly organised support.

Donoughmore.

The long strike at the McClinton Soap Works has been settled by the concession of 1s. 6d. a week to farm labourers and boys and girls, and 2s. to all other hands. Mr. Brown can now give his undivided attention to the claims of the Presbyterian ministers for higher salaries.

Derry.

The Trades Council has, with the support of members who are Unionist in politics, adopted an anti-conscription resolution. Derry, like Belfast, is blessed with a loose-tongued Recorder. Todd (Scots word for tadpole), says a Derry worker, would swear a man's life away for 3d.

Faith and Morals.

We are informed that Fr. P. Gaynor's pamphlet, "The Faith and Morals of Sinn Fein," has sold to the extent of 10,000 copies. A new edition is in preparation.

The Children.

All who wish to see child life brightened and preserved should help to swell the demand for a State grant of 3s. a week for every child. S. MacKenzie Kennedy, Sheheree House, Killarney, will send pamphlets and postcards in English, Irish, and Esperanto, on receipt of 4 penny stamps.

For Freedom's Cause.

Comrade Serrati, editor of "Avanti," has been arrested in connection with the Turin riots, which happened last August, while he was on his way to London. A French Socialist deputy, Lafont, has also been "taken inside."

From "Catholic Socialist Notes."

"So long as the land belongs to a landlord, the landless must pay toll. So long as the factory belongs to idle gentlemen and old ladies, the worker must earn enough to keep himself and the owners. Though he can do this by working four hours a day, still he is cheated.

"So long as the sources of wealth (for all the people) remain the personal property of some of the people, the rest are slaves. Strong language, perhaps, but true. In the nigger days the master controlled his slave by owning his body. Today the master controls the worker by owning the tools which the worker must use to keep his body. Socialism means the public ownership and democratic control of these tools."—"Forward."

IRISH
TRANSPORT
and
GENERAL
WORKERS'
UNION.

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The Last Parliament of a Colony

Dr. Sigerson's latest book, "The Last Independent Parliament of Ireland" (M. H. Gill and Son, 5s.), may be described briefly as an informed and enthusiastic narrative of Grattan's Parliament, but something more. It is also an account of the survival of the Irish nation, the story of how a colonial legislature nearly became the legislature of a people. Upon a first reading the book might well strike one most by its descriptive power, its carefully documented statements, its lofty spirit of patriotism. As we have understood history in Ireland until the advent of Mrs. Green, that in itself would be high praise for any Irish historian. One would not err indeed in placing Dr. Sigerson first amongst historical writers pre-eminent as great narrators, fervid recorders of patriotic traditions, masters of splendid tableaux and beauty of style. The reader upon further examination, while acknowledging Dr. Sigerson has all these gifts to a remarkable degree, will, however, hasten to place his work among those true historians who search out the soul of a nation and reconstruct the life of a bygone age in its fulness. He has as profound an understanding of nationality as Mrs. Alice Stopford Green, while, to his eternal credit, he is as controversial and as partial as James Connolly. We are not put off with dead dates, dusty records, or brilliant pen-pictures, although these things we find in their proper place. We might have wished perhaps for fuller details of how the commonalty of Ireland lived and fared those odd hundred and fifty years ago, but the calm and vivid generalisations are certainly more than suggestions in that direction.

The book is inspired by a coherent exposition which deals less with the last Irish Parliament's legal life than with its origin, accomplishments and relations to the old nation of Ireland. Emphasis is laid upon the great work that Parliament achieved, notwithstanding inherent limitations and powerful outside forces which hampered all ameliorative endeavour.

The entire commercial framework of the country was built upon new foundations, infant industries were fostered, commerce grew enterprising and flourished, a famine was averted; harbours and inland communications were improved, the public edifices, the stately mansions, the queenly open spaces we admire as gems among tenement festering streets in our capital city, were planned and commenced in those days. The Dublin Parliament led the way in innovations and reforms. The gaols were emptied of debtors and improved, the rapacity of shipowners restrained, within limits electoral corruption attacked. Unhappily the Parliament represented less than half a nation, a colony merely but a colony which even then nearly soared to the eminence of nationhood.

We may remember Tone's scathing characterisation of the revolution of '82, we may wish with Pinton Lalor not to fall back on '82, but rather to fall upon it, but we shall do well to

retain Dr. Sigerson as a counsellor to do justice to the most eulogised and defamed assemblage in our history. Better than any other he indicates necessary qualifications in either praise or blame.

In early chapters the causes of Irish unsettlement are traced not to race or religion, but the unstability of British Government policy and the stability of the Irish character. We are afforded a short glimpse of the penal, commercial and religious codes which created within the Pale a victim-colony and without the Pale an afflicted and hampered community. We are shown the consequent agrarian unrest, the exodus from Ulster and elsewhere alike of emigrants who proved their valour on continental battle-fields, or taught Cornwallis lessons in America none the worse for having learned them first at home. Grattan, the Volunteers, the successful struggle which gained free trade and a parliament, the years when the French Revolution brought a veritable ferment into Ireland from North to South, the intrigue and corruption which preceded and produced the Union, are described at length with a freshness and comprehensiveness which lend an ever-new interest to the most familiar of stories. In conclusion, the author quotes from a letter of Cornwallis to a Lieutenant-General Scott, a remark which he terms an unexpected prophecy and condemnation verified by time: "I do not conceive the present plan of governing Ireland by a king's lieutenant acting under a minister's deputy can long succeed." Appropriately enough "The Last Independent Parliament of Ireland" is dedicated to the memory of Dora Sigerson Shorter. D.R.

DERRY'S PARALYSIS.

It is, we suppose, the fallacy of "no politics" again that is responsible for the tale which reaches us from Derry. Labour, we are told, is not directly represented on the parish committees in the Maiden City. The reason, it is alleged, is that division of opinion on the Trades Council prevents Labour from claiming direct representation. We hope this is not true, and we can scarcely believe it is. Has the question, we may ask, been raised at the Council, and if so what decision has been come to? We should be glad if Mr. Cassidy or Mr. Logue or Mr. McNulty (or even Mr. McCarron) will assure us that we have been misinformed. Derry was represented at the All-Ireland Conference and did not oppose the stand the conference took, and Derry must do its share of the fighting like other towns and cities. We await Derry's answer.

Other Stuff.

Among other matter awaiting publication we have a virile article by E. Guff in continuance of his controversy with Fr. Gannon, in which he deals severely with the Drawing-room Socialism of P. Thompson. Mr. Robieson's Marx Centenary article has drawn the fire of Selma Sigerson. We hope to find room for her letter soon.

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AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

By Stanislaus Smyth.

It is a noticeable fact that within recent years the Irish farmers are sending their sons in greater numbers to the colleges. This is due, chiefly, to the comparative prosperity which the farmers have been enjoying. The farmers, having money to spare, consider the education of their sons is not a bad investment. But what of the education the sons receive? They have an incomplete mastery of several "subjects" of no practical value in their after-life, on the land, and have lost the advantage of the rule of thumb training in practical farming they would have gained had they stayed at home.

The farmers would send their sons to agricultural colleges if they were convenient; but the number of these colleges in Ireland is totally inadequate. The local colleges might be expected to adapt themselves to their surroundings. That they are capable of adaptation is proved by the fact that formerly they confined themselves to classics, literature, etc., but latterly—realising the importance and the great future of commerce—they introduced business training and kindred classes. It was but right to keep with the times; they must now add agriculture to their curricula.

It cannot be too often emphasised that in order to have agriculture in a high state of efficiency the farmers must be trained—and undoubtedly the proper time to train is when young—to work as scientifically as possible. Antiquated, or rule of thumb, methods must be abandoned.

Before the war, at any rate, great attention was paid to agricultural education in Belgium, Denmark, and other countries, with the result—the inevitable result—that agriculture was a most prosperous industry in these countries.

Later on Irish mineral resources may be explored and developed, and new industries started in the country; but whether or no agriculture will always remain Ireland's chief industry, Ireland's staple industry. And this industry, if properly looked after and managed by dexterous hands would, perhaps, make Ireland an affluent country—make Ireland the granary of the world. When we consider that—so far—Ireland has not been greatly affected by the war, and that other countries—countries which were noted for the amount of agricultural produce they exported—have been adversely affected, the statement does not seem so extravagant. It is important, therefore, that we should keep these facts before us, and fully realise what they mean.

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THIRTY INDUSTRIES RUINED BY LIVE CATTLE TRADE. ::

Irish farmers, meat exporters and co-operative societies should note carefully the statement made by Mr. F. T. Boys, English Director of Meat Supplies, at a Labour Conference convened by the Food Survey Board at Grosvenor House, London, on 1st inst.

Will Godfrey, of the Vehicle Workers' Union, asked why dead meat was brought from Argentina and United States when the importation of live cattle would provide material for about thirty subsidiary industries in England.

Mr. Boys' reply was that economy of ship space was the first consideration. Dead meat, hides, sausage skins, horns, etc., took less space than live cattle, and saved the ton of fodder needed for every head of live cattle and the labour required for tending and feeding.

The argument in Mr. Godfrey's question, and that advanced by Mr. Boys' answer, reinforce the demand made by all forward lookers in Ireland, that the export of live cattle from Ireland should be discouraged, and a traffic in dead meat developed, to secure to the Irish cattle rearer and feeder the fullest return for his labours, and provide the raw material for essential industries at lowest cost.

We do not find the Scots farmer sending his live cattle to the English market, in which Prime Scotch beef is in demand. On the contrary, Scotch farmers are large buyers of Irish calves, cows in calf, and lean cattle, which they rear and fatten for slaughter. Aberdeen has a big trade with London in dead meat. Its hides provide material for Scots tanneries. One result is that Aberdeen and Dundee export as a speciality school bags to all parts of the globe. The Aberdeen

Comb Company has a practical monopoly of the British trade in combs and other articles of horn; while a subsidiary firm beats Birmingham in the production of silver-mounted fancy goods made of horn. The Scots secure for themselves the utmost profit from their cattle trade, and their profits are swelled by the folly that sends Irish cattle to be sold in their markets at any sacrifice the buyers' ring can extort.

Now that we have the argument of saving ship space officially advanced, we look to the co-operative movement to push ahead with its arrangements for erecting cold stores at Dublin, Cork and Belfast. Cold stores under private control already exist, and should be fully used. In Belfast and Dublin there are extensive and well-equipped public abattoirs, the latter of which is not by any means so much used as it ought to be.

Great as is our grievance against England, we would never encourage the killing of meat for export in our noxious private slaughter houses. Upton Sinclair taught the world the need for cleanliness in meat supply, and a new and great trade cannot be developed unless under the most rigid conditions of inspection and sanitation.

The possibilities of the dead meat trade may be gauged from the fact that between 1st January to 26th October, 1916, 1,487,893 live stock were exported from Ireland, and in the corresponding period of 1917 the number was 1,519,129. Included in the latter figures were 294,452 fat cattle.

Surely we can help the British shipping controller in this case, to our own permanent advantage!

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